



QUESTION BANK – A TIGER IN THE ZOO-by Leslie Norris

Class: X

Sub: ENGLISH

**I. SUMMARY-**

In this poem, Leslie Norris has given an appropriate description of a tiger. This poem contrasts a tiger in the zoo in his cage with the tiger in its natural habitat. The poem moves from the zoo to the jungle, and back again to the zoo. The poet sees a tiger full of rage but quiet, moving in his cage on a starry night. The poet feels that the tiger should have been moving freely in the forest and hunting at his will. But now he is locked in a concrete cell behind the bars. At night he watches the stars with his brilliant eyes and longs for freedom.

**Stanza1**

The tiger moves up and down of his cage. The stripes on his body are of strong bright colour. The tiger moves quietly on his velvet pads. He is full of rage but is quiet. (because he knows that he is helpless.)

**Stanza2**

Looking at the imprisoned tiger, the poet is filled with pity. He says that the caged tiger should have been in his natural habitat. Then he would have been lying in the shadows of trees and sliding quietly through the long grass. There, near the water hole, he would be waiting for some fat deer to pass that way. Thus he would be lying there in expectation of a heavy feast.

**Stanza3**

Here the poet imagines what the tiger would be doing in case he failed to find any prey in his natural habitat. He says that the tiger would be growling at the edge of jungle near some village. He would be showing his white fangs and claws while moving here and there. He would thus become a cause of terror for the villagers. (a hint that if humans destroy the natural habitat of tigers, they will be forced to turn to the villages to find their food.)

**Stanza 4**

The poet sees the tiger confined in a concrete cell in the zoo. In spite of all his strength, he now lies imprisoned behind the bars. Very slowly and silently, he moves up and down along the length of the cage. He takes no note of the visitors who come to the zoo to have a look at him.

**Stanza 5**

The tiger knows no rest during the day because of the visitors. Even at night he remains disturbed due to the noise of the patrolling cars. He keeps staring at the brilliant stars with his brilliant eyes. Perhaps he is asking heaven why he has been imprisoned there. He longs for freedom.

**Poetic Devices:**

**Rhyme Scheme:** There are two different rhyme schemes in the poem. They are *abcb* and *abcd*. The rhyme scheme for first, second, third and fifth stanza is *abcb* and for and fourth stanza is *abcd*.

- i. **Personification** - The poet refers to the tiger as 'he'. Thus, the tiger has been personified.
- ii. **Metaphor** - The paws of tiger have been compared with velvet. "On pads of velvet quiet"
- iii. **Enjambment** - The sentence is being continued to the next line.

*Sliding through long grass*

*Near the waterhole*

- iv. **Alliteration** - It is the repetition of a letter at the start of closely placed words –  
"plum pass". There is repetition of the letter 'p'.  
"behind bars". There is repetition of the letter 'b'.  
"he hears". There is repetition of the letter 'h'.

v. **Imagery**

- Detailed visual description about the tiger –  
'He stalks in his vivid stripes.'
- A brief description of the tiger's activities  
'lurking in shadow', 'sliding through long grass'.

vi. **Oxymoron** –

The two words "*quiet rage*" which are opposite in meaning.

- vii. **Synecdoche** - Here, the phrase 'vivid stripes' is used for the whole body of the tiger.
- viii. **Onomatopoeia** - In this stanza, the word 'snarling', denotes the aggressive sound made by the tiger.
- ix. **Repetition** - The words 'quiet' and 'brilliant' has been repeated.

*On pads of velvet quiet, In his quiet rage.*

*And stares with his brilliant eyes, At the brilliant stars.*

**II. Read the extracts and answer the questions that follow.**

1. "He stalks in his vivid stripes  
The few steps of his cage,  
On pads of velvet quiet,  
In his quiet rage".

(a) Who is 'He' in the above lines?

He refers to the Tiger.

(b)Where is he?

He is in a small cage at the zoo.

(c) Where and how is he walking?

He walks in his cage slowly and quietly with firm strides in a proud manner.

(d) In which mood is he? Why?

He is angry because instead of moving freely in the forest, he is confined to a small cage.  
Tiger's freedom is curtailed.

2. "He should be lurking in shadow,  
Sliding through long grass

Near the waterhole  
Where plump deer pass”.

(a) Where is the tiger hiding?

He is hiding in a shadowy dark place in the long grass.

(b) Who is going to be his prey?

A fat deer that will come that way to drink water is going to be his prey.

(c) Why should he be lurking in shadow?

He should be lurking in shadow to attack the deer that comes to drink water at the waterhole as it is the tiger’s prey (food).

(d) What is the rhyme scheme of these lines?

a b c b.

3. He should be snarling around houses

At the jungle’s edge,

Baring his white fangs, his claws,

Terrorising the village!

(a) What does the poet try to suggest through these lines?

(b) How does the tiger scare the people?

(c) Why does ‘he’ snarl?

(d) How does ‘he’ show his presence?

**Answer:**

(a) The poet is trying to suggest that the tiger should be allowed to live in his natural habitat.

(b) The tiger scares the people by growling at them and showing his teeth and claws.

(c) ‘He’ snarls to show his anger and helplessness.

(d) ‘He’ shows his presence by snarling, baring his white teeth and claws.

4. But he’s locked in a concrete cell,

His strength behind bars,

Stalking the length of his cage,

Ignoring visitors.

(a) What does the phrase ‘his strength behind the bar’ suggest?

(b) Why does the tiger ignore the visitors?

(c) What is the tiger doing in the cage?

(d) What does the expression ‘stalking the length of the cage’ imply?

**Answer:**

(a) It means that he is helpless as he is locked in a cage.

(b) The tiger ignores the visitors because he considers them devoid of feelings as none of them tries to help him out of the prison.

(c) The tiger is moving slowly and quietly along the length of the cage.

(d) It implies walking to and fro in helplessness.

5. He hears the last voice at night,  
The patrolling cars,  
And stares with his brilliant eyes  
At the brilliant stars.

- (a) What kind of voices does the tiger hear?
- (b) Where does the tiger look at in the night?
- (c) What do you mean by 'patrolling'?
- (d) What is the effect of the repeated use of the word 'brilliant'?

**Answer:**

- (a) The tiger hears the voice coming from the patrolling cars at night.
- (b) The tiger looks at the brilliant stars shining in the sky at the night.
- (c) 'Patrolling' means to go around an area at regular times to check that it is safe.
- (d) The repeated use of brilliant shows the contrast. The brilliant stars are free while the brilliant eyes are inside the cage.

**III. Answer the following questions in 40-50 words:**

**1. What do you understand by 'His strength behind bars'? What kind of a cage is he locked in?**

The tiger is wretched in its cage. 'His strength behind bars' means the tiger's power is confined behind the bars of the cage at the zoo. He was locked in a small cage where he is devoid of freedom. He feels unhappy, frustrated, restless and angry.

**2. The tiger in the poem 'A Tiger in the Zoo' has some obvious limitations, describe them in contrast to its natural habitat.**

The tiger in the zoo was confined to a small space. He was angry that he couldn't be free to move, hunt and do what he pleased but is forced to be a showpiece; and the cage's bars obstructed his view of the starry night. This was all unlike his natural habitat where he hunted fiercely and slept peacefully.

**3. How does the poet contrast the tiger in the cage with the tiger in the forest?**

The poet says that the caged tiger is imprisoned. He is not free. He is angry. On the other hand, the tiger in the jungle is free. He walks in the tall grass and hunts the deer that pass near the water hole. He could be free to move, hunt and do what he pleased.

**4. Where should the tiger have been according to the poet?**

The poet thinks that the tiger should have been in the jungle, lurking in the shadow of long grass to prey on the deer near the water hole. He should also be on the outskirts of the jungle snarling around houses and terrifying villagers.

**5. Why do you think the tiger looks at the stars?**

The tiger feels very helpless in the cage. He stares with hope at the brilliant stars shining in the sky. He hopes for the day when he would be able to run free in the wild. The brilliant stars, thus, provides him with some sort of comfort.

**6. What does the poet convey through the poem?**

The poet tries to expose the miserable life led by the animals in the zoo. He compares the life of the tiger in the zoo with its life at a natural habitat. The animals have the right to freedom and should not be caged. They should be allowed to run free in the wild.

**IV. Answer the following question in 100-120 words:**

**1. Animals, big and small, is being used by humans for their selfish ends? What is your opinion regarding the exploitation of animals? Mention some examples that you can see a possible solution to this problem.**

**Ans.** It is true that animals, big and small are being used by humans for their selfish ends. We use them for our own benefits. Animals are killed, poached and captured for commercial benefits. Humans have encroached on their space and sheltered them in zoos which are truly inhuman. In the poem, the poet has shown the plight of a tiger. He is captured and confined in a small cage. He is frustrated, angry and restless. It longs for freedom. Confinement brings bondage and bondage is cruelty.

Every day we see many animals suffering due to humans. Monkeys and bear captured and made to dance on roads, Elephants are chained and forced to lift heavy loads. Many animals are sheltered in zoos for the entertainment of human beings. They are kept in poor conditions. We should learn to respect nature and its inhabitants. After all, these animals too need to share the earth with us.

**2. Some animals are becoming extinct; the tiger is one such animal. What do you think could be the reason? Should this decrease in number be stopped? Why?**

**Ans.** The primary threats to the survival of tigers are poaching and habitat loss due to intensive development. The Tigers are getting extinct. The Tigers are on the list of endangered species and the reason behind it is human interference. Humans hunt tigers for their commercial benefits. The loss of habitats also leads to a reduction in prey animals, so the area can support fewer tigers. Moreover, tigers are poached for trophies such as teeth and fur and for traditional medicines. The growing population clears the forest areas to make them agricultural land for food. This creates a problem of the tiger's habitat. Tigers are the backbone of food web and forest and hence should be protected.

**3. Love for freedom is the natural instinct of every living being. Comment.**

**Ans.** It is rightly said that love for freedom is the natural instinct of every living being. Everyone loves freedom and does not want to live in confinement. Similarly, the tiger also longed for freedom. He was so fed up being caged that he even ignored the visitors. He took to and fro steps in the cage as if trying to while away the time. The tiger wanted to escape this captivity. God has made all living beings equally and thus, the animals too have the right to freedom. They should not be caged. It is their right to enjoy their natural habitat i.e. the forest and run freely in the wild. We should, thus, respect their freedom and should not put them in the zoo.

## **V. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

**1. What does a tiger have on his body?**

- (A) spots (B) stripes  
(C) stars (D) all of the above

**Ans. (B) stripes**

**2. How does the tiger feel in a cage?**

- (A) happy (B) contented  
(C) free (D) angry

**Ans. (D) angry**

**3. How are the pads of a tiger?**

- (A) Soft like velvet (B) rough  
(C) hard (D) all of the above

**Ans. (A) Soft like velvet**

**4. What does the tiger hunt near the water hole?**

- (A) lions (B) elephants  
(C) deer (D) all of the above

**Ans. (C) deer**

**5. Where should the tiger be snarling?**

- (A) at the jungle's edge (B) at the cage's edge  
(C) in the cage (D) all of the above

**Ans. (A) at the jungle's edge**

**6. A tiger is happy when.....**

- (A) he is in the cage (B) he is near the cage  
(C) he frightens the visitors (D) he is free in the forest

**Ans. (D) he is free in the forest**

**7. What is the tiger's attitude towards visitors?**

- (A) loving (B) hating  
(C) ignoring (D) threatening

**Ans. (C) ignoring**

**8. What is patrolling at night?**

- (A) cars (B) tigers  
(C) deer (D) all of the above

**Ans. (A) cars**

**9. How are the eyes of the tiger?**

- (A) dull (B) brilliant  
(C) sleepy (D) sad

**Ans. (B) brilliant**

**10. What is ‘brilliant’ in the poem ‘Tiger in the Zoo’?**

- (A) the tiger’s eyes (B) the stars  
(C) both (A) and (B) (D) none of the above

**Ans. (C) both (A) and (B)**

**TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Thinking about the Poem (Page 30-31)

**Question 1: Read the poem again, and work in pairs or groups to do the following tasks.**

(i) Find the words that describe the movements and actions of the tiger in the cage and in the wild. Arrange them in two columns.

<b>In the Cage</b>	<b>In the Wild</b>
Stalks Few steps of his cage Quiet rage Locked in concrete cell Stalking the length of his cage Ignoring visitors Stares with his brilliant eyes at the brilliant stars	Lurking in shadow Sliding through long grass Snarling around houses Baring his white fangs, his claws Terrorising the village

(ii) Find the words that describe the two places, and arrange them in two columns. Now try to share ideas about how the poet uses words and images to contrast the two situations.

<b>Cage</b>	<b>Wild</b>
Few steps of his cage Locked Concrete cell Behind bars Visitors Patrolling cars	Shadow Water hole Long grass Plump deer Houses at the jungle’s edge Village

**Question 2: Notice the use of a word repeated in lines such as these:**

(i) **On pads of velvet quiet, In his quiet rage.**

(ii) **And stares with his brilliant eyes, At the brilliant stars.**

**What do you think is the effect of this repetition?**

Answer: This repetition used by the poet is a poetic effect in order to increase the intensity of the tiger’s rage and his silent helplessness from the concrete cell of the cage. ‘Velvet quiet’ refers to

the velvet pads of the tiger which are quiet as he is unable to run or leap. The tiger could do nothing but just walk around the limited space of his cage. The use of 'quiet rage' signifies the anger and ferocious nature of the tiger that is building up inside him as he wants to run out freely into the forest and attack a deer. However, the tiger's rage is quiet as he is locked inside the cage and is in a helpless condition. The repetition of 'quiet' has given a lyrical beauty to the poem. Similarly, the use of the term 'brilliant' for both the tiger's eyes and the stars also portrays the majestic nature of these lines. The tiger stares at the brilliant stars with his brilliant eyes as he dreams about how beautiful and pleasing life he could have led in the forest. Thus, the repetition depicts a wonderful effect and brings magnificence to the poem.