



THE FLOWER-SCHOOL

Rabindranath Tagore

A. Lead- in :

Flowers are a beautiful creation of God. We enjoy their beauty, smell their fragrance to refresh our mind. But do you know they also go to school? Where is their school? Who teaches them? Do they have full freedom at school or have some restrictions? Do they have holidays?

Let's read the poem to know the answer to these questions.

B. Let's listen to the Poem :

Your teacher reads the poem aloud. Listen to the teacher without opening the book. S/he reads the poem again. Now open the book and follow him/her line by line to mark the ways of reading and get the meaning and message out of the text.

C. Let's read the Poem :

Read the poem silently. You may refer to the notes and glossary to understand it.

D. The Text :

When storm-clouds rumble in the sky and June
showers come down,
The moist east wind comes marching over the
heath to blow its bagpipes among the bamboos.

Then crowds of flowers come out of a sudden,
from nobody knows where, and dance upon
the grass in wild glee.

Mother, I really think the flowers go to school underground.

They do their lessons with doors shut, and if they want to come out to play before it is time, their master makes them stand in a corner.

When the rains come they have their holidays.

Branches clash together in the forest, and the leaves rustle in the wild wind, the thunder-clouds clap their giant hands and the flower children rush out in dresses of pink and yellow and white.

Do you know, Mother, their home is in the sky, where the stars are.

Haven't you seen how eager they are to get there?
Don't you know why they are in such a hurry?

Of course, I can guess to whom they raise their arms;
they have their mother as I have my own.

E. About the Poet :

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was born in Kolkata on 7th May 1861. He was a great poet, painter, patriot, playwright, novelist, storyteller, philosopher and educationist. The common theme in his writing is nature. Nature left a deep-seated impression on him. He was enchanted by nature. It inculcated a sense of freedom in him. It is also the inner voice of his poetry. He became the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 for his collection of poems, "Gitanjali". He is also well known for his contribution to art and music.

F. About the Poem :

In this poem the speaker is excitedly watching the monsoon rain and noticing small flowers that have bloomed all over the place. He wonders where they had been all the year round. He imagines they must have been in school just like him. The speaker wonders why the pretty flowers are so eager to come out and play. He concludes that they too need the warmth and love of their mother.

G. Notes and Glossary :

- rumble : to make a long deep sound or series of sounds
- showers : a fall of rain lasting a short time
- moist : slightly wet
- heath : a large open area of wild unfarmed land covered with rough grass and other small wild plants
- bagpipes : a musical instrument
- in wild glee : in a very excited and happy way
- master : here, the teacher
- clash : here, hit against one another during a storm
- rustle : to make a sound of leaves moving or rubbing together
- giant : very large

H. Let's understand the Poem :

Read the poem silently and answer the following questions.

1. What is the poem about?
2. What rumbles in the sky?

3. What comes marching over the heath?
4. Which word tells that the east wind is not dry?
5. How does the moist east wind come?
6. How do the crowds of flowers come out?
7. Where do the flowers dance and how?
8. Which season is described in the poem?
9. Where are the flowers all the year round?
10. Who are the flowers compared to?
11. How do they do their lessons? Why?
12. Who does 'their master' refer to?
13. Their master is strict or lenient? Which line in the poem tells us so?
14. When are they made to stand in a corner?
15. When do the flowers have their holidays?
16. What changes take place in nature when the rain comes?
17. How do the flower children enjoy their holidays?
18. Who is the speaker sharing his thoughts with?
19. Where is the home of the flower children?
20. Why are they eager to go to the sky?
21. What does the speaker guess?
22. Why are the flower children raising their arms?
23. Why are they in a hurry?
24. Which line tells that the speaker also longs for his mother?

I. Let's appreciate the Poem :

- A)**
1. Why do you think the flowers dance upon the grass in wild glee?
 2. Do you think the speaker feels that holidays are funnier than school days?
 3. Why does the speaker think that the flowers go to school underground?
 4. How does the speaker describe the storm?
 5. Do you think that the speaker's description about the flowers and their school has any reality in real life?
 6. Which elements of nature celebrate holidays with the flower children and how?
 7. Identify the lines and phrases in the poem which indicate that the flower children have a strict system of schooling?

- B)**
1. The poet presents a lively description of nature during the monsoon showers in June. The objects of nature seem to behave like human beings. Such a device in poetry is known as personification. Personification means that a thing, an idea or an animal is given human qualities and described as a living thing.

Pick out as many such examples as you can from the poem. One is done for you.

- Storm clouds rumble in the sky.

2. Poets use word pictures to bring out comparison between persons, ideas or objects with similar quality or appearance.

What are the things below compared to in the poem you just read?

One is done for you.

- the bamboos — bagpipes
- the flowers
- the underground
- the rains

- pink, yellow and white
- the sky
- the stars

3) The theme of a poem is the main idea of the poem. The theme may not always be stated, but can be hinted at indirectly. Which of the following ideas support the theme of 'The Flower- School'? Tick your choice.

- * love for wildlife
- * appreciation of nature
- * praise of God
- * featuring imagination of a flower school
- * dislike for the strict school system
- * lauding the schoolmaster
- * longing for the mother

4) The poet's longing for his deceased mother creates _____ in the reader's mind.

- (a) pity (b) panic (c) pathos (d) pride

J. Let's do the activities

1. Role-play

The students play the roles of 'Small Boy' and 'Flower Child' in pair and practise the dialogue naturally. They are to be invited to the front of the class to play the role. They change their role after the first round.

- Small Boy** : Flower Child, Flower Child, where are you going?
Flower Child : I'm going to school.
Small Boy : School! You're going to school!
 Which school do you go to?
Flower Child : I go to school underground.
Small Boy : Really? Who teaches you there?
Flower Child : Our master.

- Small Boy** : Nice. Does anybody disturb you there?
- Flower Child** : No, not at all. We do our lessons with doors shut.
- Small Boy** : How is your master?
- Flower Child** : He's very strict.
He makes us stand in a corner when we play before the school is over.
- Small Boy** : Thank God. Do you always study ?
Don't you have any holidays to enjoy?
- Flower Child** : Of course. We have.
We have holidays when the rains come.
- Small Boy** : What do you do then ?
- Flower Child** : We wear colourful dresses and come out to enjoy the beautiful nature.
- Small Boy** : Where is your home?
- Flower Child** : It is in the sky. My mother lives there.
I am eager to go there.
- Small Boy** : Oh really? My mother also lives there.

2. Listen and Correct :

The teacher reads aloud the following sentences with some intentional factual errors. The students listen and correct them saying: "Excuse me, Sir/Ma'm. I think it is not _____, but it is _____".

Sentences (with errors):

- i. When the storm clouds rumble on the earth, June showers come down.
- ii. The moist west wind comes marching over the heath.
- iii. The wind blows the bagpipes among the pine trees.

- iv. The crowds of flowers dance upon the bamboos in a very excited way.
- v. The flowers go to school on the top of a hill.
- vi. The flower children do their lessons with their classroom doors open.
- vii. Their teacher makes them stand under a tree.
- viii. They have their holidays at the advent of summer.
- ix. Their home is in the sea.
- x. The flowers are eager to go to their school.

3. Writing

1. Given below is the summary of the poem "The Flower -School". Fill in the blanks with suitable words to complete the summary. You may take the help of "HELP BOX" given below.

After the first shower of June, when the (a) _____ wind approaches blowing its (b) _____ to herald the advance of (c) _____, the (d) _____ bloom and (e) _____ upon the grass in (f) _____ happiness. The poet thinks that before the arrival of spring, the flowers go to a school (g) _____ and learn their lesson. They have their holidays only when it rains and they come out rushing in colourful dresses. The sky is their home towards which they raise their (h) _____ because their (i) _____ lives there and they are always in a (j) _____ to go home.

HELP BOX			
mother	arms	hurry	great
east	bagpipes	flowers	rain
underground	dance		

2. Imagine that you are a child of the Flower- School. Write a letter to your mother describing your experience and feelings in your school. You may begin your letter as follows: -

	Flower School
Dear Mother,	Date-
How are you? You'll be glad to know that I go to school every day. Do you know how and where our school is? The school is situated underground. _____	
_____ We make a lot of fun. But our class teacher is	

I am looking forward to the holidays.	
I miss you a lot, Mom.	
	Yours lovingly, (Name)