



Grade VIII

Lesson 2. The Tsunami

PROSE

Summary of the chapter

Stories from Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Ignesious's Story Ignesious was completely unaware on the morning of 26th December, sleeping peacefully when his wife woke him up at 6 am, after she felt an earthquake. As a precautionary measure, he removed the television set from the table and placed it on the ground, in order to save it from falling off the table. Then, the entire family rushed out of their house. However, as the tremors of the earthquake stopped, they were shocked to see the sea levels rising. They were utterly confused, not knowing what was happening. In this confusion, they started to run in a chaotic fashion. Half of his family members ran in one direction and the others ran in the opposite direction. He never saw his wife, here father, brother and his two children ever again. Perhaps they were swept away and were now dead. Luckily, his three children that accompanied him were saved.

The Story of Sanjeev and Meghna

Sanjeev was a policeman in the Katchall island of the Nicobar group of islands. He managed to save himself, his wife and his baby daughter from the waves. However, after he jumped into the sea, hearing the Guesthouse cook, John's wife screaming, he failed to save either the cook's wife or himself. Both of them got drowned in the gush of the waves. Meghna along with her parents and seventy seven other people was swept away by the wave. However, she kept floating in the sea for two days. For two days, she held on to a wooden door, which kept her afloat and saved her. During these two days, several times she saw the rescue helicopters, but they couldn't see her. Later, she was brought to the shore by another very strong wave. Meghna was just thirteen when she had to go through the pain of having lost her parents.



Almas Javed's Story

Ten years old, Almas Javed, had lost both her parents as well as her grandfather. On that had last morning, Almas's father was the sea water moving back than it's usual point. He was sure that the water would come back with a greater fore. He woke everyone up and tried to rush out the family, to a safer place, but is was too late by then. In a attempt to save to grandfather, Almas's father too, was swept away by the waves. Alams fainted at the sight of this great loss. She was later rescued and taken to a hospital in Kamorta and then to Port Blair, but she continues to be in a traumatic condition and refuses to talk about the incident. Almas's mother and aunts climbed to the leaves of a coconut tree, but the waves uprooted the entire tree.

Stories from Tailand

Tilly Smith and her Heroic Acts

Tilly Smith, a British school girl, saved many lives at a beach resort in Southern Thailand, where she had gone to celebrate Christmas with her family. Tilly Smith on seeing the condition of the sea was reminded of her geography lesson in which the geography teacher had shown the students a video of the tsunami that had struck Hawaiian islands in 1946. Tilly was sure that the rising levels of the sea, the formation of the foam, the bubbles and the whirlpool were all symptomatic of the tsunami, as shown in the video.

Tilly began screaming and asked her family to leave the beach. The other tourists on the beach did the same. Nobody, except Tilly, knew what was happening. They were just alarmed by Tilly's reactions and did as she advised. They took refuge in the topmost floor, the third floor of the building and were saved. Had they stayed on the beach, they would have been swept away by the waves.

The Animals and their Sixth Sense

It was strangely observed that a little before the waves struck the coasts of India and Sri Lanka, the animals had some kind of intuition and were reacting strangely. The dogs refused to step outdoors, the flamingoes refused to come down to low-lying breeding areas and other zoo animals too rushed to their shelters. It is believed that perhaps animals could feel the vibrations of the Earth their acute hearing powers saved them from this massive earthquake under the sea.



The proof of this is that the giant waves killed more than 50000 people across countries, but hardly any animals were reported dead. Examples-Along India's Cuddalore coast, thousands of people died, but buffaloes, goats and dogs remained unharmed. The Yala National Park and the Patanangala beach in Sri Lanka sixty visitors were swept away by the ways, but no animal carcasses were found. It is very strange because the Yala National Park is home to a variety of animals and more than 30 species of birds.

NCERT Corner

Before you Read

Now read the sentences below. Rewrite the incorrect ones after correcting the mistakes.

1. Katchall is an island.
2. It is part of the Andaman group of islands.
3. Nancowry is an island in the Nicobar group.
4. Katchall and Nancowry are more than a hundred miles apart. (Hint: the scale of the map is given)
5. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are to the West of India.
6. The Nicobar islands are to the North of the Andaman Islands.

1. Katchall is an Island.
 2. It is part of the Nicobar group of Islands.
 3. Nancowry is an Island in the Nicobar group.
 4. Katchall and Noncowry are not more than hundred miles apart.
 5. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are to the South-East of India.
 6. The Nicobar Islands are to the South of the Andaman Islands.
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Comprehension Checks

CHECK 1

Say whether the following are true or false.

1. Ignacious lost his wife, two children, his father -in-law and his brother-in-law in the tsunami.
2. Sanjeev made it to safety after the tsunami.
3. Meghna was saved by a relief helicopter.
4. Alma's father realised that a tsunami was going to hit the island.
5. Her mother and aunts were washed away with the tree that they were holding on to.

1. True	2. False	3. False	4. True	5. True
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CHECK 2

Answer the following in a phrase or sentence.

1. **Why did Tilly's family come to Thailand?**

Tilly's family came from England to Thailand in order to celebrate Christmas.

2. **What were the warning signs that both Tilly and her mother saw?**

Both Tilly and her mother felt the sea water to be swelling and coming towards them, whereas the beach was getting smaller and smaller.

3. **Do you think Tilly's mother was alarmed by them?**

No. Tilly's mother was not alarmed by them. She was alarmed by her daughter's reactions and when Tilly screamed and asked the family to get off the beach, she was sure that something serious was happening.

4. **Where had Tilly seen the sea behaving in the same strange fashion?**

Tilly had seen the sea behaving in a similar fashion in one of the videos shown by her geography teacher to her class. The video was of the tsunami that had struck the Hawaiian islands in 1946.

5. **Where did the Smith family and the others on the beach go to escape from the tsunami?**

The Smith family and the other tourists who were forewarned by Tilly took refuge in the third floor of the hotel and thereby escaped the tsunami.



6. How do you think her geography teacher felt when she heard about what Tilly had done in Phuket?

Tilly's geography teacher became very proud of Tilly's presence of mind and the way Tilly had applied the teachings during that geography lesson. The teacher was overwhelmed because indirectly she was also responsible in safeguarding of so many lives.

CHECK 3

1. In the tsunami 150000 people died. How many animals died?

The death count of human beings was very high. But, hardly any animals were reported dead in the tsunami.

2. How many people and animals died in Yala National Park?

Sixty visitors died in the Yala National Park and only two water buffaloes were found dead.

3. What do people say about the elephants of Yala National Park?

It was observed that the animals of Yala National Park had fled to safety an hour before tsunami. The elephants screamed and ran away to higher grounds, dogs refused to step outdoors and so on. This is why no animal carcasses were found there, except for two water buffaloes.

4. What did the dogs in Galle do?

Dogs in Galle refused to go for their daily run, something that they were usually excited about.

Working with the Text

Discuss the following questions in class. Then write your own answers.

1. When he felt the earthquake, do you think Ignacious immediately worried about a tsunami? Give reasons for your answer. Which sentence in the text tells you that the Ignacious family did not have any time to discuss and plan their course of action after the tsunami struck?

No, Ignacious only feared the earthquake. He did not know it was a tsunami. He only thought about protecting the television set and his family from the earthquake. No other



measures were taken by him. The Ignacious family indeed did not have any time to discuss or plan their course of action. This is proved by the fact that half of the family members ran in one direction, while the others ran in the opposite direction in utter chaos and confusion. Ignacious also lost his wife and the three children who ran with their nine-mother's father and brother in the other direction.

2. Which words in the list below describe Sanjeev, in your opinion? (Look up the dictionary for words that you are not sure of.)

cheerful	ambitious	brash	brave	careless
heroic	selfless	heartless	humorous	

Use words from the list to complete the three sentences below.

(i) I don't know if Sanjeev was cheerful, _____ or _____

(ii) I think that he was very brave, _____ and _____.

(iii) Sanjeev was not heartless, _____ or _____.

(i) humorous, ambitious

(ii) heroic, selfless

(iii) brash/ careless

3. How are Meghna and Almas's stories similar?

Meghna and Almas's stories are similar because both lost their families at a very young age.

Both Meghna and Almas managed to survive by holding on to wooden planks. Meghna held on to a wooden door and Almas held on to a log of wood.

4. What are the different ways in which Tilly's parents could have reacted to her behaviour? What would you have done if you were in their place?

Tilly's parents could have chided her for her extreme reactions, not knowing that their daughter could be knowledgeable about the graveness of the matter. They could have simply ignored her. Had I been in their place, I would have heard her and would have done what she said as a precautionary measure, for the sea was surely behaving strangely.

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5. If Tilly's award was to be shared, who do you think she should share it with—her parents or her geography teacher?

Tilly's award must be shared with her Geography teacher, for it was the lesson that she taught and the video that she showed the students that enabled Tilly to understand what was happening, something that her parents failed to comprehend.

6. What are the two different ideas about why so few animals were killed in the tsunami? Which idea do you find more believable?

Very few animals died in the tsunami because it is believed that the animals have a sixth sense. They had the intuition about the upcoming danger and therefore, managed to survive the tsunami. Experts also believe that the animals have acute hearing powers. They could, therefore, feel the vibrations of the Earth much in advance. Both the theories are equally believable.

Working with Language

1. Go through Part - I carefully and make a list of as many words as you can find that indicate movement of different kinds.

(There is one word that occurs repeatedly—count how many times!) Put them into three categories.

fast movement slow movement neither slow nor fast

Can you explain why there are many words in one column and not in the others?

Fast Movement	Slow Movement	Neither Slow nor Fast
Rushed out Rushed in Jumped into Rushing back Rush them Ran Rushed to Entire sea had come out after Surge Slammed Fled to safety	Floating Brought to the shore walking	Swept away (thrice) Recede Washed away (twice) Kept coming in



The word 'rushed' occurred repeatedly, at least 6 times. This was so because during tsunami, people were rushing away from the sea or rushing to the aid of their dear ones and family members. The number of words are more under the category of "Fast Movement" because the suddenness and the force of the waves compelled the people to move faster than usual.

2. Fill in the blanks in the sentences below (the verbs given in brackets will give you a clue).

- (i) The Earth trembled, but not many people felt the _____ (tremble)
- (ii) When the zoo was flooded, there was a lot of _____ and many animals escaped into the countryside. (confuse)
- (iii) We heard with _____ that the lion had been recaptured. (relieve)
- (iv) The zookeeper was struck in a tree and his _____ was filmed by the TV crew. (rescue)
- (v) There was much _____ in the village when the snake charmer came visiting. (excite)

Ans. (i) tremors (ii) confusion (iii) relief (iv) rescue (v) excitement

3. Study the sentences in the columns A and B.

Column A	Column B
Meghna was swept away.	The waves swept Meghna away.
Alma's grandfather was hit on the head.	Something hit Alma's grandfather on the head.
Sixty visitors were washed away.	The waves washed away sixty visitors.
No animal carcasses were found.	People did not find any animal carcasses.

Compare the sentences in A to the ones in B. Who is the 'doer' of the action in every case? Is the 'doer' mentioned in A or in B? Notice the verbs in A: 'was swept away', 'was hit', 'were washed away', 'were found'. They are in the passive form.

The sentences are in the Passive voice. In these sentences, the focus is not on the person who does the action.

In B, the 'doer' of the action is named. The verbs are in the active form. The sentences are in the Active voice. Say whether the following sentences are in the Active or the Passive voice. Write A or P after each sentence as shown in the first sentence.



- (i) Someone stole my bicycle. A
- (ii) The tyres were deflated by the traffic police_____.
- (iii) I found it last night in a ditch near my house_____.
- (iv) It had been thrown there_____.
- (v) My father gave it to the mechanic_____.
- (vi) The mechanic repaired it for me_____.

(i) A	(ii) P	(iii) A	(iv) P	(v) A	(vi) A
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Speaking and Writing

1. Suppose you are one of the volunteers who went to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for relief work after the tsunami. You work in the relief camps, distributing food, water and medicine among the victims. You listen to the various stories of bravery of ordinary people even as they fight against odds to bring about some semblance of normalcy in their lives. You admire their grit and determination. Write a diary entry.

You may start in this way.

31st December, 2004

The killer tsunami struck these islands five days ago. But the victims are being brought in even now. Each one has a story to tell...

31st December, 2004. I went to Andaman islands five days after the killer Tsunami had struck these islands. The sheer destruction and devastation, the sight of the islands told the story of how nature had wrecked havoc in these areas. This story became more vivid and painful as the number of victims continued to increase in the relief camps and each one of them had their own story of woe, loss, pain and suffering. There was not one person who had not lost a dear one or not injured by the giant waves or not rendered homeless because of the tsunami. All stories were different yet so similar. Loss became a repetitive factor of these stories. As a volunteer working in the relief camp, I thought of restoring some sense of normalcy to the victims and therefore I brought with me packets of food, bottles of water, some clothes and medicines. However, these are bare essentials. The victims have not just suffered



physically, but also mentally they have been affected. They have been traumatised to the worst degree. The suddenness of the tsunami has rendered some mute. However, there are many others who have exhibited their courageous side and saved lives of many. There are some who have rescued others, not caring about their own lives. I salute such masters of humanity.

It remains a terrible sight. Tears keep welling up within me as I see these people's sufferings. I develop cold feet as I see small children orphaned, but still searching for their parents. I wish to run away from the relief camp. It is impossible to bear the sight, but I am encouraged by these people who are victims of nature, but heroes too. I have decided to stay here and do my bit of service towards humanity. May God give all of us strength to cope with this face of nature.

2. The story shows how a little girl saved the lives of many tourists when a tsunami struck the beach, thanks to the geography lesson that she had learnt at school. She remembered the visuals of a tsunami and warned her parents.

Do you remember any incident when something that you learnt in the classroom helped you in some way outside the classroom? Write your experiences in a paragraph of about 90-100 words or narrate it to the whole class like an anecdote.

My mother while working in the kitchen, absent mindedly left the burner on, while there was very little oil in the pan that was placed above the stove. The pan soon caught fire as the little oil in the pan was heated to an extreme level. On seeing the situation, everybody in my house, that is my mother, my elder sister and my younger brother began to panic. Not knowing what to do, they began to scream. I immediately took a towel, placed it under the tap of running water and then used the wet towel to extinguish the fire. I had learnt at school that water acts as an insulator of heat, but pouring water directly may be harmful, as the splash might momentarily increase the expanse of fire. I also immediately turned off the burner for further contact between fire and the gas supply. I had also learnt that the next good insulator of heat is sand. I remembered my teacher telling us that on the beaches sand acts as an insulator to Sun's heat. Therefore, I immediately went downstairs where some construction work was going on, got some sand in a packet and emptied the contents of the packet on the pan as the final remedial measure.

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Very Short Answer Type Questions.

1. How many times did Meghna see the relief helicopters?

Meghna saw the relief helicopters at least eleven times, but the rescue team did not see her even once.

2. To which place had Tilly and her family travelled to celebrate Christmas?

Tilly and her family had come from South East England to Phuket beach in Thailand to celebrate Christmas.

3. How did Tilly become aware of the upcoming calamity?

Tilly had become aware of the upcoming calamity because of a video that she had seen in her geography class.

4. Where was Ignacious working?

Ignacious worked in a co-operative society in Katchall group of Nicobar islands.

5. In which school did Almas Javed study?

Almas Javed was a student of Carmel Convent School in Port Blair.

6. How old was Tilly Smith and her sister?

Tilly Smith was 10 years old and her younger sister was seven.

7. List the survivors of the Ignacious family.

Ignacious and his three children who accompanied him survived the tsunami. His other two children and his wife and wife's father and brother were probably dead.

8. For whom did Sanjeev risk his life?

Sanjeev risked his life for the sake of humanity. He jumped to save the guesthouse cook's wife.

9. During the tsunami, what was common between the Indian and the other stories from other parts of the globe?

Death, destruction and devastation were the common features between the stories from India and elsewhere during the tsunami.

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Short Answer Type Questions.

1. How was the fate of other tourists different from the tourists who were present on the Phuket beach?

The fate of the other tourists was very different from that of the tourists present at the Phuket beach. The tourists on the beach had been forewarned by Till's screaming and shouting. Along with Tilly's family, they too left the beach. The other tourists, however, had lost their entire families. They were swept away by enormous waves.

2. Why does Almas Javed refuse to talk about the incident?

Almas Javed lost her grandfather, father, mother and aunts in the tsunami. She refused to talk about the incident because she was in a state of shock and traumatised because of the intensity of loss.

3. Who all lived in the Yala National Park?

The Yala National Park in Sri Lanka was home to a variety of animals and more than 130 species of birds. Elephants, dogs, goats, water buffaloes, flamingoes and various other animals and birds lived in the National Park which also had a good number of visitors.

4. Who was responsible for the deaths of Almas Javed's father and grandfather?

In their attempt to rush out of the house and save themselves from the waves, Almas's grandfather hit his head against something and fell on the ground. Almas's father came to his father's rescue, but it was too late to do something to save their lives. They were not initially swept by the waves, but the chaos and panic created by the giant waves was responsible for their deaths.

Long Answer Type Questions.

1. Discuss the significance of the geography lesson.

Tilly's geography lesson played a crucial role in saving the lives of a number of people. Tilly had already seen the video of the sea during a 1946 tsunami that had struck the Hawaiian Islands. Therefore, she was aware of the strangeness of the sea on that morning. She used that knowledge to warn her family and the tourists who were present on the Phuket beach when the tsunami struck that area.



2. Discuss the stories of the tsunami victims as narratives of pain and suffering.

The chapter is packed with the narratives of pain and suffering. The suddenness of the natural calamity, the unawareness of its symptoms, the panic created by the giant waves leads to innumerable people losing their lives. Every family had lost one or more of its family members. They had also lost their houses and property to the waves. What was left after tsunami was mourning for the deaths of their near and dear ones and for the loss of their houses.

Value Based Question

Tilly's story had some important messages attached to it. What were they?

Tilly's story had many important messages attached to it.

- (i) It is important that students are taught such lessons which give them knowledge about their immediate environment.
- (ii) Tilly not just learnt about tsunami in the geography lesson, but also applied her knowledge and with her presence of mind saved many lives.
- (iii) Tilly could have shared this geography lesson with her parents and sister, thereby increasing the number of aware people and therefore quickening the rescue works.

Extract Based Questions

Extract 1

Directions (Q. Nos. 1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

"Sanjeev was a policeman, serving in the Katchall Island of the Nicobar group of islands. He somehow managed to save himself, his wife and his baby daughter from the waves. But then he heard cries for help from the wife of John, the guesthouse cook. Sanjeev jumped into the waves to rescue her, but they were both swept away."

1. Who all were saved from the waves?

- (a) Sanjeev's wife and daughter
- (b) Cook and his wife
- (c) Sanjeev, his wife and his daughter



(d) Sanjeev, his wife, his daughter and the cook's

(a) Sanjeev's wife and daughter were saved from the waves.

2. Who was John?

(a) Inspector (b) Guest house cook (c) Doctor (d) Teacher

(b) John was a Guest house cook.

3. What was the occupation of Sanjeev?

(a) Policeman (b) Guest house cook (c) Doctor (d) Teacher

(a) Sanjeev was a policeman.

4. Should we call Sanjeev a failure?

No, Sanjeev could not be called a failure. He immediately jumped to the rescue of his cook's wife. However, he did not manage to save either her or himself, but he gave up his life in that attempt.

5. What does this story reveal about the incident?

The story reveals the suddenness of the incident and the chaos and panic created by it. People did not have the time to think and reflect before acting; they did what best they could do to save their lives and the lives of the people around them.

6. Is there a difference between the nature of suffering of Ignesium's family and Sanjeev's?

There is hardly any difference between the nature of suffering experienced by Ignesium or Sanjeev. Both the families get caught by the suddenness of the tsunami and are unable to save themselves and all their family members. Ignesium loses his wife and children. Sanjeev loses his own life in trying to save others.

Extract 2

Directions (Q. Nos. 1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

"The Smiths later met other tourists who had lost entire families. Thanks to Tilly and her geography lesson, they had been forewarned. Tilly went back to her school in England and told her classmates her terrifying tale."

1. How was Tilly forewarned?

(a) Because of her geography lesson.

(b) Because of the warning written on the board near the beach.



- (c) Because of her friends who called her up.
- (d) Because of the news she saw on the television.

(a) Tilly was forewarned because of her geography lesson.

2 Find from the passage a proper noun, a collective noun and an adjective

- (a) The Smiths, lesson, tourists
- (b) Tilly, classmates, terrifying
- (c) England, school, classmates
- (d) Geography, families, terrifying

Ans. (b) Tilly - proper noun
Classmates - collective noun
Terrifying - adjective

3. Where was Tilly's school?

- (a) Thailand (b) India (c) England (d) Sri Lanka
- (c) Tilly's school was in England.

4. Did Tilly's lesson help others besides her own family?

Yes, Tilly along with her family managed to warn the other tourists too, who left the beach along with them and were saved.

5. What was the reaction of Tilly's mother on seeing the sea?

Tilly's mother later narrated the incident and said that the sea was behaving in a strange manner. She saw the sea getting smaller and the water constantly swelling, but she could not understand what was happening.

6. What was the difference between the Smiths and the other tourists they later met?

Unlike the Smith's family, not ever tourist was forewarned. Some of them had lost their entire family in the tsunami and had tales of woe to narrate.

Extract 3

Directions (Q. Nos. 1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

"Along India's Cuddalore coast, where thousands of people perished, buffaloes, goats and dogs were found unharmed. The Yala National Park is home to a variety of animals including



elephants, leopards and 130 species of birds. Sixty visitors were washed away from the Patanangala beach inside the park; but no animal carcasses were found, except for two water buffaloes. About an hour before the tsunami hit, people at Yala National Park had observed three elephants running away from the Patanangala beach.

1. List the animals that lived in the Yala National Park.

- (a) Kangaroos, buffaloes, leopards and goat.
- (b) Buffaloes, goats, dogs and elephants.
- (c) Tiger, lion, chimpanzee and dogs.
- (d) Buffaloes, goats, sheep and horse.
- (b) Buffaloes, goats, dogs and elephants.**

2. How many people died in the Patanangala beach?

- (a) Eighty
- (b) Sixty
- (c) One hundred and thirty
- (d) Two hundred
- (b) Sixty people died in the Patanangala beach.**

3. Where is the Yala National Park situated?

- (a) Thailand (b) England (c) India , (d) Sri Lanka Ans.
- (d) Yala National Park is situated in Sri Lanka.**

4 Why were no animal carcasses found?

Most of the animals either ran away, including elephants or refused to come out of their secured areas. This is how they were not washed away by the waves.

5. What are the theories that explain why hardly any animal deaths were reported?

According to certain theories it is believed that the animals have a very strong sixth sense. This sixth sense alerted the animals of the upcoming danger.

Also, it is believed that their hearing power is of such an intensity that they could even hear the vibrations of the Earth, therefore, they could sense the earthquake or the tsunami.

6. Why could water buffaloes not escape?

Water buffaloes were unable to escape because the water was their prime component habitat and they could not have left the water and run across the land.