

Grade VIII - English

Lesson 8. A Short Monsoon Diary

Prose

Soul of the Chapter

June 24

The writer describes the beauty of nature. At the same time, he also describes how the newly appeared monsoon mist makes a blanket and conceals the hills and affects all the elements of nature. The birds fall silent, their song could no longer be heard. The mist brings with it a death-like silence. The writer then hears the voice of Bijju, who is calling his sister. The writer cannot, however, see him because of the mist.

June 25

To the writer, the place appears like a paradise. He could feel the warm and humid early monsoon rain; see the cobra lily flowers emerging out of its plant leaf and so on. It appeared as if all his senses were overpowered with the beauty of the hill station.

June 27

The writer describes the entry of some seasonal visitors with the onset of the rainy season. These visitors are leopards, scarlet minivets and a thousand leeches. The leopard distressed everyone with its naturally brutal and violent tendencies. It attacked the dog from the servant's quarters and Bijju's cow, but fled at the approach of Bijju's mother. The scarlet minivets, on the other hand, added to the beauty of nature because of their bright colours. However, these minivets were chased away by some other set of birds like the drongos. The rains also provided food to various other birds, as the insects were to be found in abundance.

August 2

The writer describes how the rains helped him to be awake all night, for he liked the sound of rain falling on the tin roofs. Also, the leaking of tin roofs made the writer feel in constant contact with the rain, despite the rain not touching him.

August 3

The writer describes the scene after the rain stops. The begins to show up from behind the clouds, the crow shakes off rain water from its feathers, the women resume work and so on. The song of the whistling thrush ends the silence and appears like a “dark sweet secret”.

August 12

Endless rain becomes the topic of discussion of this particular day. It had been eight or nine days of continuous rain and the writer hasn't seen the sun for these many days. The cold is much less, but there is mist everywhere. The appearance of the late monsoon flowers catches the attention of the writer.

August 31

Describing the last day of August, the writer notes the lush monsoon growth, the blossoming of flowers and orchids, beautiful butterflies and so on; as if all of these were doing a fashion show.

Snakes and rodents, on the other hand, don't remain far behind too. 'chuchundars', shouts the grandmother of one of the children, bring luck and money and the writer links it up with his receiving of a cheque.

October 3

The monsoon rain gets replaced by winter rain and snow at high altitudes. The evening gets marked by a hailstorm, but later the hills suffuse with golden light.

January 26

The writer almost ends up writing poetry. He describes the silence and loneliness in the absence of his friend. The rain creates a certain rhythm, but it stops too often. He feels that just like him the trees too become grey because of loneliness.

March 23

It is the end of winter. The writer could see the rainbow forming.

Next Generation School

Comprehension Check-1

1. Why is the author not able to see Bijju?

The author was unable to see Bijju because of monsoon mist.

2. What are the two ways in which the hills appear to change when the mist comes up?

The mist climbs up the hill and conceals it. It also blankets the mist in silence.

Comprehension Check-2

1. When does the monsoon season begin and when does it end? How do you prepare to face the monsoon?

The monsoon season begins in the month of June and ends by the time August comes to an end. One prepares for the season by arranging umbrellas and raincoats.

2. Which hill-station does the author describe in this diary entry?

The author was sharing details about Musoorie.

3. For how many days does it rain without stopping? What does the author do on these days?

It rained for almost eight to nine days continuously.

The author could not do anything much or go anywhere because of the rains. He would only pace up and down the room and gaze out of the windows.

4. Where do the snakes and rodents take shelter? Why?

The snakes and rodents that had flooded out of their holes because of rain water take shelter in the roofs, attics and godowns.

5. What did the author receive in the mail?

The author received a cheque of small amount in his mail.

Working with the Text

1. Look carefully at the diary entries for 24-25th June, 2nd August and 23rd March.

Now write down the changes that happen as the rains progress from June to March.

24th June was the first day of the monsoon. More than the monsoon, there are descriptions of the mist. 25th June one witnesses the first real shower. All aspects of nature welcome the rainy season. It is no less than a 'paradise'. 2nd August indicates that the rains have been on for a considerable time.

And though the writer admires the rains, there is also certain monotony in the pattern of the rains that makes this period. 23rd March nearly marks the end of winter. The rains are replaced by rainbows.

2. Why did the grandmother ask the children not to kill the chuchundar?

The grandmother asks the children not to kill the children because she believed that the 'chuchundars' brought luck and money.

3. What signs do we find in nature which show that the monsoons are about to end?

The blackest clouds that were cast over the sky hailed marbles for half an hour to clear the sky. Soon after this, the rainbow appeared in the sky. These were clear indications that monsoons had come to an end.

4. Complete the following sentences.

- (i) Bijju is not seen but his voice is heard because
- (ii) The writer describes the hill station and valley as
- (iii) The leopard was successful in but had to flee when
- (iv) The minivets are easily noticed because
- (v) It looks like a fashion display on the slopes when
- (vi) During the monsoon season, snakes and rodents are found in roofs and atticks because

Ans.

- (i) Of the mist that concealed everything.
- (ii) A paradise.
- (iii) Attacking in Bijju's cow, the grandmother screamed at it.
- (iv) Of their attractive and bright colours.
- (v) It ferns start turning yellow and colourful orchids and butterflies appear on the scene.

(vi) The rain water floods their holes.

5. 'Although tin roofs are given to springing unaccountable leaks, there is a feeling of being untouched by and yet in touch with, the rain.'

(i) Why has the writer used the word, 'springing'?

The author uses the word 'springing' to suggest that the roof tins begin to leak without giving any warning.

(ii) How is the writer untouched by the rain?

The writer is literally untouched by the rain because he is inside the room and that protects him from the same.

(iii) How is the writer in touch with the rain at the same time?

The writer hears the loud sounds produced by the rain falling on the tin roof. Also, the leaks in the tin roof make the rain water enter the room like a distant shower.

6. Mention a few things that can happen when there is endless rain for days together.

Endless rains create a number of problems. The work gets obstructed as it makes difficult for people to step outside their homes.

If there is no proper drainage system, it leads to problems of water logging and traffic jams on roads.

During rains, there is an increase in the insect population, which could also cause diseases. Sometimes, due to excessive rains, the crop gets destroyed.

7. What is the significance of cobra lily in relation to the monsoon season, its beginning and end?

The popping up of cobra lily is an indication that the monsoons have arrived. As the seeds of cobra lily turn red, it signifies the end of the season.

Working with Language

1. Here are some words that are associated with the monsoon. Add as many words as you can to this list. Can you find words for these in your language?

(downpour, floods, mist, cloudy, powercuts, cold, umbrella)

Rainwater -

Water logging -

Traffic jam -

Damp	-
Soggy	-
Leaks	-
Thunder	-
Floods	-
Mist	-
Cloudy	-
Powercuts	-
Cold	-
Umbrella	-

2. Look at the sentences below.

- (i) Bijju **wandered** into the garden in the evening.
- (ii) The trees were **ringing** with birdsong.

Notice the highlighted verbs.

The verb **wandered** tells us what Bijju did that evening. But the verb **was ringing** tells us what was happening continually at same time in the past (the birds were **chirping** in the trees).

Now look at the sentences below. They tell us about something that happened in the past. They also tell us about other things that happened continually, at the same time in the past.

Put the verbs in the brackets into their proper forms. The first one is done for you.

- (i) We (get out) of the school bus. The bell (ring) and everyone (rush) to class.

Ans.

- (i) We got out of the school bus. The bell was ringing and everyone was rushing to class.
- (ii) The traffic (stop). Some people (sit) on the road and they (shout) slogans.
- (iii) I (wear) my raincoat. I t (rain) and people (get) wet.
- (iv) She (see) a film. She (narrate) it to her friends who (listen) carefully.
- (v) We (go) to the exhibition. Some people (buy) clothes while others (play) games.
- (vi) The class (is) quite. Some children (read) books and the rest (draw).

Ans.

- (ii) The traffic stopped. Some people were sitting on the road and they were shouting slogans.
- (iii) I was wearing my raincoat. I t was raining and people were getting wet.

- (iv) She had seen a film. She was narrating it to her friends who were listening carefully.
- (v) We went to the exhibition. Some people were buying clothes while others were playing games.
- (vi) The class was quite. Some children were reading books and the rest were drawing.

3. Here are some words from the lesson which describe different kinds of sounds.

(Drum, swish, tinkle, caw, drip)

(i) Match these words with their correct meanings.

- (a) to fall in small drops
- (b) To make a sound by hitting a surface repeatedly.
- (c) to move quickly through the air, making a soft sound
- (d) harsh sound made by birds
- (e) ringing sound (of a bell or breaking glass, etc.)

(ii) Now fill in the blanks using the correct form of the words given below.

- (a) Ramesh..... on his desk in impatience.
- (b) Rain water..... from the umbrella all over the carpet.
- (c) The pony.....its tail.
- (d) The..... of breaking glass woke me up.
- (e) The..... of the raven disturbed the child's sleep.

Ans.

- (i) (a) drip (b) drum
(c) swish (d) caw
(e) tinkle
- (ii) (a) drummed (b) dripped
(c) swished (d) tinkle
(e) caw

4. And **sure enough, I received a cheque in the mail.**

Complete each sentence below by using appropriate from the ones given below.

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| (Sure enough | colourful enough | serious enough |
| kind enough | big enough | Fair enough |
| brave enough | foolish enough | anxious enough) |

- (i) I saw thick black clouds in the sky. And it soon started raining.
- (ii) The blue umbrella was..... for the brother and sister

- (iii) The butterflies are..... to get noticed.
- (iv) The lady was..... to chase the leopard.
- (v) The boy was..... to call out to his sister.
- (vi) The man was..... to offer help.
- (vii) The victim's injury was..... for him to get admitted in hospital.
- (viii) That person was..... to repeat the same mistake again.
- (ix) He told me he was sorry and he would compensate for the loss. I said, '.....'.

Ans.

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| (i) Sure enough | (ii) big enough |
| (iii) colourful enough | (iv) brave enough |
| (v) anxious enough | (vi) kind enough |
| (vii) serious enough | (viii) foolish enough |
| (ix) fair enough | |

Speaking

1. Do you believe in superstitions? Why or why not? Working with your partner, write down three superstitious beliefs that you are familiar with.

No, I don't believe in superstitions. Superstitions are nothing but obsolete truths of a previous age. With changes in lifestyle, certain truths lose their meaning. A blind and continued following of such meaningless truths could be termed as superstitions.

Three familiar superstitions are

- (i) not to broom any surface in evening.
- (ii) not to cut nails at night.
- (iii) not to sneeze while stepping out of the house.

2. How many different kinds of birds do you come across in the lesson? How many varieties do you see in your neighbourhood? Are there any birds that you used to see earlier in your neighbourhood but not now?

In groups discuss why you think this is happening.

There are a number of birds that we come across in the lessons, like minivets, drongos, thrush, crow and so on.

Birds that could be seen very often in the neighbourhood, but have now disappeared are eagles, peacocks and white parrots.

These birds can no longer be seen because of high-rise buildings and increase in the levels of pollution.

Writing

- 1. The monsoons are a time of great fun and even a few adventures: playing in the rain and getting wet, wading through knee-deep water on your way to school, water flooding the house or the classrooms, powercuts and so on. Write a paragraph describing an incident that occurred during the rains which you can never forget.**



The monsoons indeed are a time of great fun. It is easy to use rains as an excuse for not attending school. One day, I did not go to school on accounts of rains. My mother agreed to this only on the condition that I would not drench myself in the rains. However, my father made paper boats for me and encouraged me to make them swim in the rainwater that got collected in the roads outside our house. It was such a fun filled moment seeing my father enjoying the boat game like a young child.

(Or)

Write a poem of your own about the season of spring when trees are in full bloom.

When the spring comes the flowers begin to bloom. It puts an end to the last autumn's gloom. Anywhere we see, there is a lot of colour.

The birds, the flowers, the Earth; nothing is duller. It is the season of joy. Everyone seems to sing. Be it a girl or a boy. Spring is such a season of joy.

Chapter Practice

Very Short Answer Type Questions

1. In what form has the chapter been written?

The chapter has been written in the form of a diary entry.

2. Write two adjectives used to describe the early monsoon rain.

Warm and humid are the two adjectives used to describe the early monsoon rain.

3. What is the colour of the minivets that arrive with the rains? How does the writer describe them?

The male minivets are scarlet in colour, while the female ones are yellow. The writer describes them as 'brilliant jewels'.

4. "There is no dearth of food for the insectivorous birds." Explain, why?

With monsoon come a lot of insects. The birds that survive on insects, therefore, have food in abundance during this season.

5. What happens when the rain stops on 3rd August?

As the rains stop, people resume with their day to day activities. The woman begins chopping the wood; the sound of cowbells could now be heard.

The birds shake off rainwater from their feathers and so on.

6. Why does the grandmother shout imprecations at the leopard?

The grandmother shouts a series of curses at the leopard as it attacked the dogs and cows.

7. Why does the writer call the mist melancholy?

The writer calls the mist melancholy because it covers everything in silence. It casts a blanket over the hills and the other elements of nature, concealing everything in silence.

8. Why does the writer feel lonely?

The writer feels lonely as his friend had gone and everything was quite except for the rhythm of the rain.

9. What changes in the trees does the writer describe in his diary entry on 26th August?

The writer notes that the rain had put a dark blanket on everything around the house. The trees didn't appear green anymore. They had gone grey; threatening the writer with their darker shades.

10. List down the words that indicate sound.

Ans. Tinkle, caw, drum, swish and drip.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Why was the writer unable to sleep on the night of 2nd August?

The writer was kept awake by the sound of the rain water falling on the tin roofs. The writer was able to read the sounds; the sound of the rains outside and the silence within him. It provided him some kind of peace and he spend the night observing the pattern of the rain.

2. How does the writer get to know that the monsoon was coming to an end?

The writer notices the leaves of the cobra lily turning red and realises that soon the ferns would turn yellow too, though as of now they were firm and green. The writer knows that these' changes signify the end of the monsoon season.

3. Give description of the atmosphere when the winter came to an end.

As the winter was coming to an end, the writer saw the blackest cloud cast in the sky hailing marbles.

The hailstorm cleared the sky. No sooner had this happened that the writer saw the appearance of rainbow in the sky.

4. Describe the general atmosphere of the hill-station. How does it get changed with the coming of the monsoons?

The general atmosphere of the hill station, Musoorie, is high altitude cold. With the coming of the monsoons, it turns warm and humid. The writer celebrates this change, as the mist offers some warmth and privacy and turns the entire place into a paradise.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. Assume yourself to be a tourist who has gone to Musoorie during the monsoon. Write a note describing your experiences.

As I reached Musoorie, the weather was extremely cold and unbearable. Within two days, however, with the onset of the monsoons it changed to become warm and pleasant. Not just did the weather change, but the entire place got transformed. A variety of birds and flowers that were not to be seen in the first two days of my stay came from somewhere and added a lot of colour to the surroundings.

Along with the sound of the rain, the songs of the birds reverberated in the air turning the hill-station into a paradise.

2. Describe the writers day on 31st August.

The last day of August marks the last few days of the monsoon. The writer notices that the monsoons have already reached the peak and now the rains would come to an end as indicated by different elements of nature. He see the seeds of cobra lily turning red and the ferns beginning to get yellowish in colour. At the same time, he also sees a variety of colourful flowers and butterflies. It gives delight to the writer. The writer also gets a pay cheque on this day.

Extract Based Questions

Extract 1

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

"The rains have heralded the arrival of some seasonal visitors- a leopard and several thousand leeches. Yesterday afternoon the leopard lifted a dog from near the servant's quarter below the school. In the evening it attacked one of Bijju's cows but fled at the approach of Bijju's mother, who came screaming imprecations. As for the leeches, I shall soon get used to a little bloodletting everyday".

1. Who are the obnoxious visitors that arrive at the hill station?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| (a) Leopards and leeches | (b) Drongos and minivets |
| (c) Drongos and leopards | (d) Leopards and minivets |

Ans. (a) Leopards and leeches

2. Whom does the leopard attack?

- (a) Dog (b) Minivet
(c) Leeches (d) Crows

Ans. (a) Dog

3. Fearing whom does the leopard run away?

- (a) Bijju (b) Bijju's sister
(c) Bijju's grandmother (d) Bijju's mother

Ans. (c) Bijju's grandmother

4. What does the writer mean by 'bloodletting'?

The leeches are known for sucking blood. They are also most commonly found in hilly areas.

Since the writer is spending time there, he would have to get used to the leeches sucking blood from his body.

5. Why do the leopards and leeches come to the hills during the monsoon?

The weather at the hills during the monsoon was conducive for leopards and leeches.

6. How does Bijju's cow get saved?

The leopard attacks Bijju's cow, but ran away at the approach of Bijju's grandmother.

Extract 2

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

"Endless rain and a permanent mist. We haven't seen the sun for eight or nine days. Everything damp and soggy. Nowhere to go. Pace the room, look out of the window at a few bobbing umbrellas. At least it isn't cold rain.

The hillsides are lush as late-monsoon flowers begin to appear - wild balsam, dashlias, begonias and ground orchids."

1. For how long did the writer not see the sun?

- (a) Two (b) Three
(c) Seven (d) Eight

Ans: (d) Eight

2. Choose two adjectives that describe the atmosphere during this period.

- (a) Damp and soggy (b) Hot and humid
(c) Warm and frigid (d) Cool and frosty

Ans. (a) Damp and soggy

3. The hillsides are lush because of the appearance of flowers during..... .

- (a) early monsoon
- (b) mid monsoon
- (c) late monsoon
- (d) end of monsoon

Ans. (c) late monsoon

4. What kind of activities does the writer indulge in during this period?

The writer has no option but to pace up and down in the room and stare out of the window because of continuous rains.

5. What could be term used to describe such activities?

Such activities that are done merely to pass time are called inconsequential actions.

6. What does the writer find relief in?

The writer is relieved that the rain wasn't cold. Also, the lush hillside was a sight of beauty.
