

1.6 The Alchemy of Nature

Warming Up!

1. Rearrange the good qualities in each set, so that the first letter of each of the words should make a meaningful word. Join the sets and get message.

Set 1 Understanding/Adaptable/Tolerant/Neat/Encouraging Resourceful.

- The word is

Set 2 Selfless/Inspiring

- The word is

Set 3 Youthful/Modest

- The word is

Set 4 Affectionate/Compassionate/Empathetic/Earnest/Honest/Reliable/Trustworthy

- The word is

- The message is
.....

2. Various aspects of Nature have special features that make them differ from one another.

For example, Birds :- appearance, shape, colour, size, food habits, habitat, sound etc.

- Write such special features of each of the following.

Land

Water

Trees

Animals

Insects

3. Make a list of living creatures in the alphabetical order. You can write more than one beginning with the same letter.

A	K	U
B	L	V
C	M	W
D	N	Y
E	O	Z
F	P	
G	Q	
H	R	
I	S	
J	T	



Alchemy of Nature

*To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour*

- William Blake

Something, as tiny as a grain of sand, can spark off an idea or imagination of a huge significance to the world. One can witness and experience the beauty of Heaven in something as small as wild flower and derive joy forever. Only one should have the eyes and time to see it.

Infinity is endless space; but your small palm can hold the destiny of earth through your efforts.

Eternity is endless time; but just an hour in your life can make a difference to the world forever.

(Great deeds can surpass the limits of time and space. They never die.)

♦ How does the Hibiscus flower make the most of its short life span ?

- **instinctively** : by a natural instinct
- **enhancing** : enriching
- ♦ What role does nature play in our lives?
- **awe** : great wonder and amazement

- **wilting** : drying and drooping
- **withers** : dries and decays

Guess the meaning of :

- **splendour**

We **instinctively** turn to outdoor activities and nature as a way of relaxing and **enhancing** our well being. Nature soothes and nurtures. Nature fulfils and motivates. Nature whispers and commands.

Are you listening?

When I do, it leaves me in complete **awe**.

We have a hibiscus plant in our garden. Every fortnight a flower blooms on it – big, bright and tender. Through the day it smiles with the sun and dances with the wind, but as evening approaches, it starts **wilting**. The morning after, it **withers** completely and by evening it falls and becomes one with the earth again. The flower comes to life only for a day, yet it does so in full **splendour**. What if we too lived our life, however short, to its fullest?

We went to a rocky beach and saw the spread of the majestic ocean and the rocks alongside, carved, sculpted and shaped by the water. Water is so gentle,



rock so hard, yet, as the water flows over it every day, for years, the rock gives in. It takes the shape that the water commands. Our problems are so **colossal** and we are so small, yet if we persist...

We saw small bits of grass peeping through the small cracks in a concrete pavement. It left us thinking : however impossible things may look, there is always an opening...

We saw a tree bare of all leaves in the cold winter months. We thought its **chapter was over**. But three months passed, spring set in and the tree was back to its green majesty once again, full of leaves, flowers, birds and life. What if we too had the **conviction** that, however difficult things are right now, it will not remain so for ever. Remember, this too shall pass.

We saw an army of ants **lugging** a fly which was at least ten times the ant's size. The ants organized themselves around the fly, lifted it on **frail feelers** and carried it to quite a distance. Their teamwork and **perseverance** were impressive. What if we too are **consistent**, organized, focused... Spider webs are delicate, yet very strong. A rainbow colours the entire sky. Oysters take in a grain of sand they open up with a pearl. Innumerable stars shine across the infinite sky. Clouds take new shapes with every passing moment. The wind makes trees dance with **unhindered** passion. Water, without hint of ego, changes its form according to the dictates of the sun and the wind. When we see a caterpillar turn into a butterfly, a flower turn into a fruit, we experience the **alchemy** of nature... we touch it and become gold ourselves.

– Raksha Bharadia

ALCHEMY

An ancient forerunner of Chemistry, about attempts to convert base metals into gold (Here, it refers to a mysterious, magical process of transforming things.)

♦ *Who is stronger- water or rocks? Justify your response .*

• **colossal** : huge, massive

♦ *What teaches us that hard times do not last forever? How?*

• **chapter was over** : life was over

• **conviction** : strong, firm belief

• **lugging** : pulling with great difficulty

• **frail feelers** : weak legs

• **perseverance** : constant efforts inspite of obstacle

• **consistent** : steady

• **unhindered** : without disturbance

• **alchemy** : mysterious power or magic that can change things



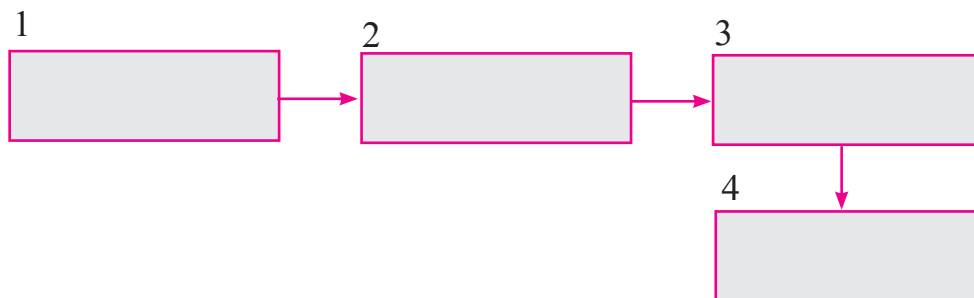
1. What things in nature teach us the following :

- (a) Nothing is impossible to achieve
- (b) Problems are not permanent
- (c) Be humble and adjust
- (d) Make the best use of time and opportunity
- (e) Be persistent
- (f) Many hands make work light
- (g) Delicate structures are not a sign of weakness

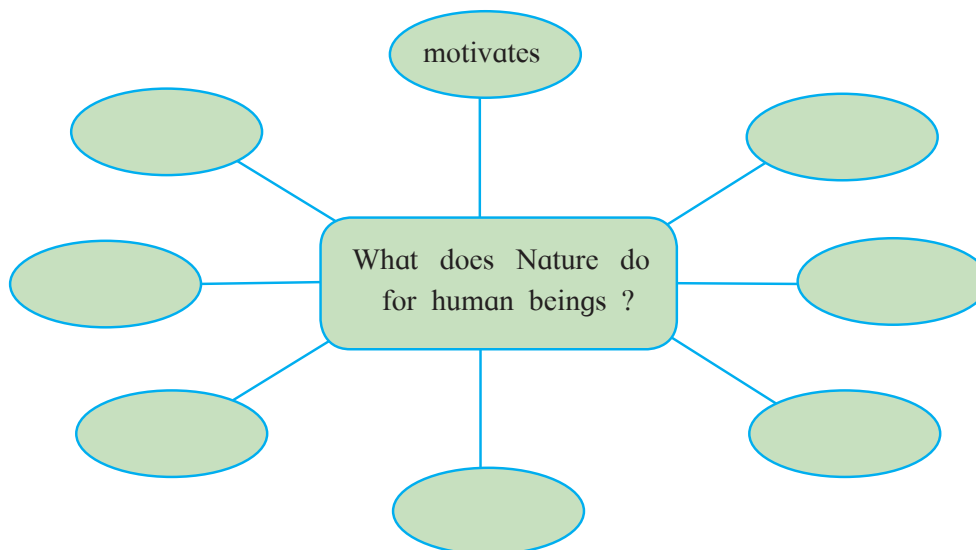
2. Read the questions from the lesson. What do they imply?

- (a) Are you listening?
- (b) What if we too lived our lives, however short, to its fullest?
- (c) What if we too are consistent, organised, focused . . . ?

3. Go through the lesson again and complete the flow-chart that highlights the life of a 'hibiscus' flower.



4. Fill in the web.



5. The writer explains the contrasting features of 'water' and 'rock' in the lesson. Write all the features of both water and rock in the given table.

Water	Rock
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

6. The writer has very positively described the different things in nature. Discuss with your partner the special features of each one of them. Add on the list.

Part of Nature	Special feature	Value learnt
1. Rainbow
2. Caterpillar
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

7. Think and answer in your own words.

- How should you deal with difficulties and problems?
- 'An oyster turns a grain of sand into a pearl.' What can we learn from this example?
- How does nature succeed in its 'Alchemy'? What can it turn a small person into?
- Which two aspects of nature teach us to accept change and adjust according to the situation?
- Why does the writer begin by quoting the lines from William Blake's poem (Auguries of Innocence)?

8. (A) Pick out from the lesson 10 examples of each.

- Concrete Nouns (that you can touch or see)

For example, sand

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

- (8)
 (9)
 (10)

• **Abstract Nouns (that which you cannot touch or see)**

For example, infinity

- (1)
 (2)
 (3)
 (4)
 (5)
 (6)
 (7)
 (8)
 (9)
 (10)

(B) Underline the verbs in the sentences below and say whether they are Transitive (needing an Object) or Intransitive (need not have an Object).

- (1) One can witness and experience the beauty of Heaven.
 (2) It leaves me in complete awe.
 (3) Nature soothes and nurtures.
 (4) It withers completely.
 (5) The flower comes to life only for a day.
 (6) A rainbow colours the entire sky.
 (7) It smiles and dances.

9. (A) Compose about 8 to 10 sets of imaginary dialogues between a bird, a tree and its fruit regarding the effects of environmental changes. Write it in your notebook.

(B) Prepare a Fact file of any of the following plants/trees, using the points given.

[coconut / neem / basil / cactus / apple]

- Name of Plant/Tree
- Scientific name
- Region and climate
- Features
- Growth
- Size, shape and colour
- Uses
- Any special feature



10. 'Impossible' itself says 'I M possible'. Do you agree? Justify your answer by citing something that you have experienced or heard from someone.
11. You have an environment protection week celebration in your school. You have invited an environmentalist. Your friend interviews him/her about how to save the environment. Frame suitable Interview Questions.
12. Write a News Report on the 'Environment Day' celebrated in your school.
13. Just For Laughs! Enjoy!

- Divide the class into two groups. On 12 to 15 slips of paper, Group A writes 12 to 15 conditional clauses beginning with 'If'.

(For example, If I work very hard,)

Group B writes 12 to 15 main clauses.)

(For example, I would/shall have a pizza.)

Now, one student from Group 'A' reads the first conditional clause (possibility) and one student from Group 'B' reads the first main clause. It forms crazy sentences, just for laughter and fun. ENJOY!

