

1.2 An Encounter of a Special Kind

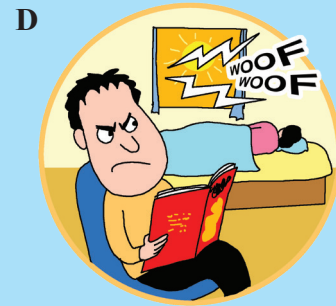
Warming up!

Chit-Chat

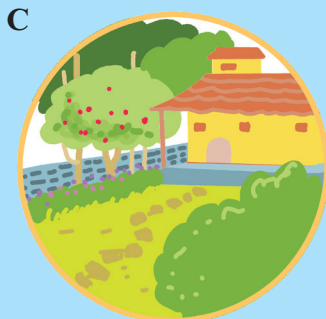


- What do you see in the picture?
- What do you think the girl is trying to do? why?
- If you were in the place of that girl, what would you do?
- Do you think she will become successful in her mission?

Match the appropriate headings with the images.



1. Our luxurious bungalows.
2. My favourite pastime.
3. What a commotion!
4. Engrossed in my book.

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An Encounter of a Special Kind

- ◆ What was the profession of the writer's father?
- ◆ Describe the campus where the writer's family lived.

- **engrossed** : occupied in

- **unfolded** : revealed

- **new dimension** : new factor

- **hearty** : sufficient and wholesome

- ◆ How did the family relax after lunch?

- **intermittent** : frequent

- **shrill** : very high and loud sound/voice

- **commotion** : noise and confusion

- **hapless** : unfortunate

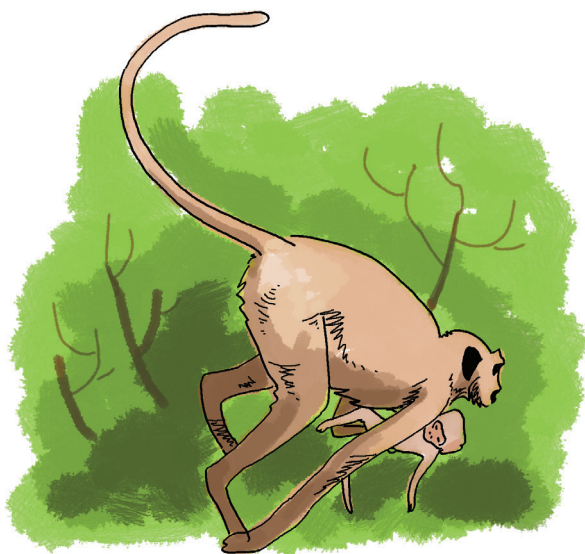
- **cacophony** : loud, harsh noises

My father was a medical professional working for a private company in Raniganj in West Bengal. The officers of the company were housed in individual bungalows inside a large campus. Our house was in a corner of the campus. The officer's club was adjacent to the boundary wall of our garden. The compound was luxurious with green grass, colourful flowers and a host of tall and majestic trees. The seasonal vegetables in the kitchen gardens of the households and the magnificent trees constantly attracted squirrels and many species of birds; a group of langurs had even made their den in an *aswatha* tree nearby. They had all become a part and parcel of our existence and daily life.

A small incident on a Saturday afternoon left a profound effect on me and **unfolded** before my eyes **a whole new dimension** to the wonders of God's creation. It was a few days into the Puja vacation. Just like for any other child, the holidays provided an opportunity for me to become **engrossed** in various magazines and storybooks published specially for children in the festive season.

After a **hearty** lunch, my parents and my younger sisters lay down for an afternoon nap and I settled down with a storybook. The quiet afternoon presented the perfect backdrop for reading an adventure story. The silence was occasionally broken by the sound of my family snoring, the **intermittent** chirping of house sparrows, the harsh cawing of a crow the **shrill** call of a kite flying high above the ground. Minutes ticked by. I became deeply absorbed in the book.

Suddenly, I heard a group of street dogs barking furiously in the distance. I chose to ignore the **commotion** thinking that the pack of dogs might have cornered a **hapless** pig. But soon, the barking became louder and more aggressive and the alarmed cawing of a flock of crows added to the **cacophony**. I also heard the disturbance approaching closer.



Curiosity **got the better of** me. Leaving the book aside, I rushed to the veranda to see what was going on.

I glanced towards the roof of the club house and saw something horrible. A big male langur, apparently the leader of its group, was holding a baby langur in his hands and **mercilessly** biting it all over with a definite intent to kill. The helpless mother of the baby and other lesser members of the langur group were scattered on the roofs of the buildings nearby watching the baby being killed. I recalled the terrible custom in the animal **clan** according to which a **dominant** male usually does not allow another male baby or adult to survive within its group.

Without losing any time, I gathered a **stout** stick in one hand and **hurled** a piece of stone at the **marauding** langur. The langur was so infuriated that it hardly took any notice of my **assault**. But then I started throwing more stones. The dogs on their part raised their pitch of cry.

The changed circumstances and the sudden unexpected attack from unknown quarters forced the langur to drop the baby from the sloping roof over the veranda. The baby was **listless** and appeared to be dead. As its body started to **slide down**, the excitement of the pack of dogs grew **manifold** at the **prospect** of a good kill and meal. Keeping the dogs

- **got the better of** : overpowered, defeated
- **mercilessly** : cruelly
- **clan** : a very large family
- **dominant** : powerful, superior
- **stout** : heavy
- **hurled** : threw forcefully
- ✦ What wicked custom is practised by animals who live in groups?
- **marauding** : searching for something to steal or attack
- **assault** : attack
- **listless** : without any energy
- **slide down** : move downwards
- **manifold** : more and more
- **prospect** : future benefit

- **inert** : powerless, motionless

- **coop** : cage for poultry

- **oozing** : releasing, overflowing

- **muffled** : quietened/ suppressed sound

- **stir** : move

- ✦ What attempts helped the baby langur to revive?

- **trauma** : great distress

Guess the meaning of :

- shaky
- uncanny
- bosom
- welled up

- ✦ When did baby langur finally find comfort?

- **descended** : moved downwards
- **cuddled** : held closely
- **solace** : comfort and peace

at bay with the stick, I managed to catch hold of the baby langur's tail just as it tipped over the edge of the tiled roof. The baby appeared **inert** and lifeless. It was indeed a male baby.

By this time, my parents and sisters had come out on to the veranda and were witnessing my rescue operation. Some of our neighbours had also gathered in the distance.

I took the baby langur to our backyard and gently laid him on the floor inside the poultry **coop**. His body was full of deep bite marks and scratches. Blood was **oozing** from some of the wounds. The baby remained motionless. My father provided first aid to clean the wounds and stop the bleeding. I was relieved to find out that the baby was breathing, even though his breaths were shallow.

Splashes of cold water made the baby **stir** and after a few shaky attempts, he sat up. He was in state of shock and started trembling like a leaf in the wind. His two little twinkling eyes **welled up** with tears and he started to sob with a **muffled** cry – just like a human child would after experiencing **trauma**. I offered him a peeled banana which he accepted with his unsteady hand and began taking hesitant bites.

My attention was fixed on the revival of the baby langur. Suddenly, I had an **uncanny** feeling of being watched. I turned away from the coop and looked up. There sat the mother langur on our kitchen roof, watching every move I made. She simply sat there quietly, as if convinced that no harm was being done to her child.

Meanwhile, the baby sensed the presence of his mother and started to sob and cry a little louder. I retreated from the door of the coop to allow the mother access to her baby.

Immediately, the mother **descended** on the floor of the coop and picked up the baby in her arms. She gave the baby a thorough body inspection to check his injuries and then **cuddled** him tightly in **her bosom**. The baby found great **solace** in her

caring arms. The mother sat still with the baby in her lap for a few minutes. It was almost as if she was **pondering** over her options and trying to figure out how she could keep the baby safe from further assault.

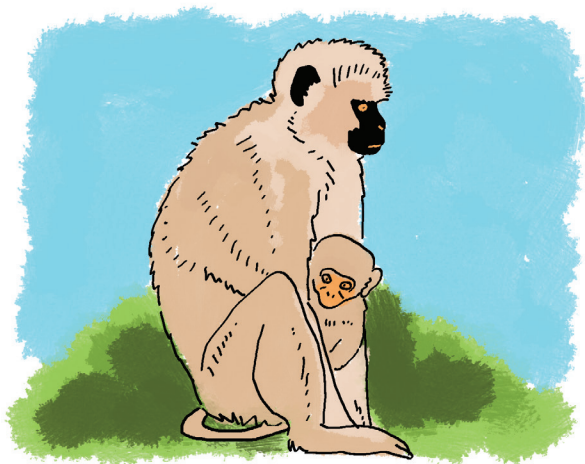
For a few seconds, the mother langur looked straight into my eyes. Even today, I cannot forget that look in her eyes, showering silent gratitude on me for saving her child. I was overwhelmed by the emotion, the sentiment and the way she said thanks to me. There sat a **universal** mother holding a **stricken** child in her lap.

Then, in a flash, she jumped with her baby clinging to her belly and reached our kitchen roof. She surveyed the area for the **vicious** male langur and then leapt away in the direction opposite to the place of the violent encounter.

The brief meeting with the mother and the baby langur convinced me that interspecies communication and mutual trust is indeed a reality and should anyone strike the right chord, the relationship **hums into action**. The mother langur showed me that food was not the only means of communication between man and animal but that there were other means of establishing a bond through trust, **compassion** and mutual understanding.

Fifty-five years have passed since that day. I am now seventy years old. But I still fondly remember that 'encounter of a special kind'.

- Tapan Mukherjee



♦ What truth about animal-human relationship did this incident reveal to the narrator?

- **ponder** : think over deeply
- **stricken** : to be hit hard, suffer
- **universal** : existing everywhere or involving everywhere
- **vicious** : evil, wicked

♦ What did the mother seem to convey to the narrator?

- **hums into action** : becomes active
- **compassion** : sympathy and kindness

1. State whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. Justify your choice with proper reasons.

- (a) The compound where the writer was living, was rich in nature's bounty.
- (b) Holidays provide us an opportunity to read various magazines and storybooks.
- (c) The narrator made a mistake by saving the baby langur.
- (d) Animals cannot convey emotions.
- (e) The narrator was fifty-five years old when this incident occurred.

2. Match the phrases given in Group 'A' with their meanings in Group 'B'.

Group A	Group B
(a) to be a part and parcel of	(i) to observe and give attention
(b) to be engrossed in	(ii) to be able to solve a problem
(c) to take notice of	(iii) to find comfort and peace
(d) to figure out	(iv) to think about seriously
(e) to ponder over	(v) to be completely occupied in
(f) to be overwhelmed by	(vi) to be an essential or integral part
(g) in a flash	(vii) to be affected emotionally in a powerful way
(h) to find a solace	(viii) very quickly

3. Write in your own words.

- (a) Why did the narrator ignore the barking of dogs?
 - (i)
 - (ii)
- (b) Why did mother-langur make no effort to grab her baby from the coop?
 - (i)
 - (ii)

4. Read the text carefully and arrange the occurrence of happenings in the text in a sequential order.

1	I took the baby langur to the backyard.	
2	I cannot forget that look in her eyes.	
3	I heard the disturbance approaching closer.	
4	I recalled the terrible custom in the animal clan.	
5	I became deeply absorbed in the book.	
6	I was engrossed in various magazines and storybooks.	1
7	I offered him a peeled banana.	
8	I still fondly remember that encounter.	
9	I gathered a stout stick and then started throwing stones.	
10	I saw something horrible.	
11	I was showed that food was not the only means of communication.	
12	I managed to catch hold of the baby langur's tail.	
13	I allowed the mother, access to her baby.	

5. Discuss the following and write about it in your own words in 5-6 lines.

(a) What would you do, if you find an injured bird while returning from your school?

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(b) What opinion do you form about the narrator, from the story?

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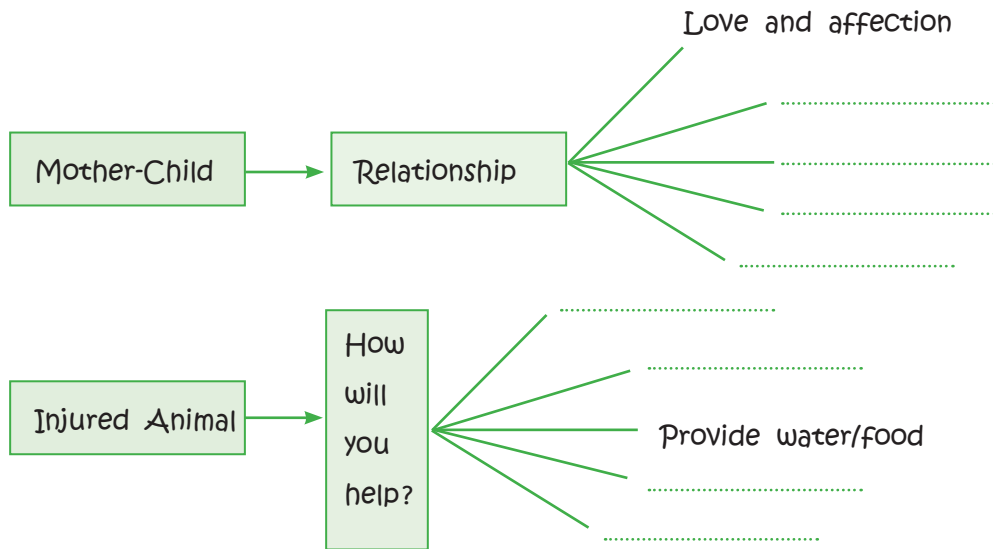
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6. Complete the following and write a paragraph on each of the given activities.



7. Work in pairs and make as many words as you can, using letters in the word. 'ENCOUNTER'.

Three-letter words	Four-letter words	Five/Six-letter words
TEN	TOUR	ENTER

Allow the students to use other bigger words from the story time to time to make different words.

8. Translate the following proverbs in English.

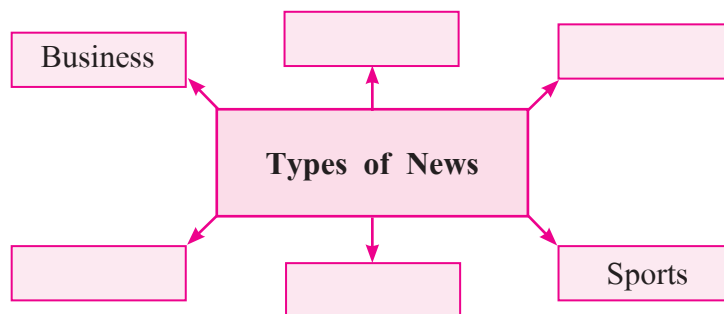
- (1) जनसेवा हीच खरी ईश्वरसेवा.
- (2) पेरावे तसे उगवते.

Encourage students to find such proverbs/slogans/maxims in their mother tongue and English.

9. Write a paragraph and give an appropriate title to it. Use the following points.

Birds and Animals	Love and Affection
Loyal	Our Best Friends
Serve us	Protection and Security
Kindness, honest, compassion	Do not hurt or destroy us
Loneliness Avoided	

10. (A) Complete the remaining blocks determining the types of news.



Template for a News Report

- (a) Headline (Title)
- (b) Dateline (Day, Date, Place, Resource)
- (c) Intro (Covering Maximum WH questions)
- (d) Short continuing paragraph (Details)

(B) Read the following headline and write a news report. Follow the steps as given.

- Headline : 'Tiger attacks 8 year old at Rajiv Gandhi National Park.'
- Date line
- Leadline
- Body of the Report
- (Use only 3rd person
- pronouns/Passive voice)

(C) Read the following Headlines and write the dateline, intro and a short continuing paragraph.

Achievers narrate their success stories at career counselling events.

India's first ever tourism university to be established by IIHM

Ask the students to read different news from English Newspaper and write the given points in news.

Language Study

1. **Present Participle** : The form of a verb, ending in 'ing', which is used in forming continuous tenses. For example, He is sitting here.

Present participle can also be used as an adjective. For example, He uses a walking stick.

Now, find out the 'ing' forms from the story and classify them into the following table.

Present Participle used as an Adjective	Present Participle used as a Verb in the Continuous Tense
twinkling eyes	was oozing
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

2. **Spot the error and correct the following sentences.**

- (a) My grandparents laid down for an afternoon nap.
- (b) A stranger were knocking at our door.
- (c) My sister and I shares a study room.
- (d) One of my friend, is leaving school.
- (e) A flock of birds were flying overhead.

3. **Rewrite the sentences as per instructions given alongside.**

- (a) I took the baby langur to our backyard.
(Rewrite the sentence in the Past Perfect Tense)
- (b) She simply sat there quietly.
(Rewrite the sentence in the Present Continuous Tense)
- (c) The mother langur looked straight into my eyes.
(Rewrite the sentence in the Simple Present Tense)
- (d) She surveyed the area for the vicious male langur.
(Rewrite the sentence in the Simple Future Tense)

