

1.2 Dick Whittington and his Cat

WARMING UP

1. Discuss the following in groups and write the answers.

- (a) Name the world famous personalities, who reached great heights despite of humble circumstances.



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- (b) Guess the types of hardships they must have faced in their childhood and youth.

(i) (ii)

(iii) (iv)

- (c) What strong qualities possessed by them, could have helped them achieve success and fame, all over?

(i) (ii)

(iii) (iv)

- (d) How do stories / biographies of such famous people help youngsters?

(i) (ii)

(iii) (iv)

2. Syllable : A syllable is a unit of pronunciation that has one vowel sound and may or may not have consonant sounds before / after it.

Examples of words having : **One syllable** : a, I, see, at, on, man, with, thread

Two syllables : mother, seated, giraffe, parrot, active, happy

Three syllables : happiness, wonderful, animal, surprising, adventure, ignorance.

More than three syllables : consequently, encouragement, responsibility, identifying, encyclopedia

Write the names of any 5 of your classmates and list how many syllables each name has.

Dick Whittington and his Cat

◆ *What innocent belief made Dick decide to go to London?*

● **dismay** : great disappointment

● **alley** : a narrow passage between or behind buildings

◆ *What hardships did he face on arriving in London?*

There was once a poor boy called Dick Whittington who lived in a small village in the south of England. He had no proper home, for both his parents had died and he was unkindly treated by many of the villagers. One day, Dick overheard someone say that the streets of London were paved with gold and he decided that he would go there at once and pick his fortune up in gold pieces from the streets, for he thought people might treat him more kindly, if he were rich.

So young Dick set out to walk to London. He had not gone far when a man in a cart stopped and asked him if he was running away from home. "I have no home," Dick answered. "I am on my way to London to find my fortune."

"I'm going to London myself," said the carter. "Jump up here beside me and we will journey together."

They arrived in London just before nightfall and the carter left Dick and made his way to an inn. Poor Dick stood alone and looked around him in **dismay**. Where was all that fine gold? All he could see were dirty streets and lots of unfriendly people. He had nowhere to sleep and in the end he spent the night in the corner of an **alley** where he hoped he would come to no harm.

The next morning Dick woke up cold, miserable and very hungry. He wandered around begging for food, but again and again people shouted at him, "Go away you lazy fellow! Be off with you," and aimed angry blows at his head. At last he collapsed in the street and lay there, too weak to look further for food.

By chance, Dick had fallen in front of a house belonging to a rich merchant called Mr Fitzwarren. The cook was trying to drive Dick away, when Mr Fitzwarren returned home from inspecting his ships. He stopped and said to Dick, "Why don't you work if you need food?"

"I would work," said Dick, "but I know nobody who will give me anything to do."

“Take him into the kitchen,” Mr Fitzwarren ordered the cook. “Feed him first and then find some work for him.”

So Dick was given a home and a living. He had a small corner of the **attic** to sleep in and his job was to help the cook with all the pots and pans in the kitchen. Dick’s life should have been much better than before, but he still had two difficulties to face.

The first was that the attic he slept in was overrun by rats and mice. At night they **scampered** all over him and kept him awake. After a time he solved this problem by saving the few pennies he was paid, and buying himself a cat. In no time at all, the cat chased away all the rats and mice, and Dick was able to sleep peacefully.

The other difficulty, which was not so easy to **overcome**, was the cook’s bad temper. She shouted and screamed all day, and would scold Dick and hit him with a wooden spoon, even when he was working as hard as he could.

One night Dick decided he could stand it no more. Early the next morning before the cook was up, he set out with his cat to seek his fortune elsewhere. The two of them walked as far as Holloway, on their way out of London, then Dick sat down on a stone to rest. It was the first of November, All Saint’s Day, and the church bells were ringing. As Dick sat and listened it seemed they were ringing out a message for him :

*Turn again Whittington,
Thou worthy citizen,
Lord Mayor of London.*

“Lord Mayor of London?” said Dick. “I should like to be Lord Mayor and ride in a fine coach. I can **put up with** a few scoldings from the cook if that is what is in store for me.” So Dick and his cat retraced their steps to Mr Fitzwarren’s house. Luckily they were able to slip back before they had been missed.

Now Mr Fitzwarren used to send ships far across the sea to trade with other countries. He would load a ship with goods for the captain and ship’s crew to sell in faraway places and then they would bring back goods that could be sold at home.

◆ *How did Mr Fitzwarren favour Dick?*

● **attic** : a very small room inside a pointed roof

◆ *What difficulties did Dick have to face at Mr Fitzwarren’s house?*

● **scampered** : ran here and there

◆ *How did the cat prove to be very useful?*

● **overcome** : succeed in dealing with a problem



● **put up with** : tolerate

◆ *What inspired Dick to return back to Mr Fitzwarren’s home?*

One day he called his household together. "I am sending a ship to the African coast to trade," he said. "Would any of you like to send something of yours on it? You can then share in the profits if the voyage is successful." Everyone produced something except for Dick, who had nothing to offer. "Have you nothing of your own, Dick?" asked Mr Fitzwarren kindly, and Dick replied, "Only my cat."

"Then let your cat go on the ship," said Mr Fitzwarren. His daughter, Alice, said, "Dick loves his cat. Let me put something in for him." But her father said, "No, it must be his, not something belonging to someone else."

So Dick fetched his cat and said goodbye to it sadly. The captain of the ship was delighted, for the cat was an excellent **mouser** and so he had no trouble with rats and mice on his voyage.

After some months the ship arrived at a place on the African coast, Barbary, where people called the Moors lived. The captain sent a message to the king to say he had fine goods for sale and he was invited to the palace to show them. While he was talking to the king and queen some dishes of food were brought in, but almost immediately rats and mice ran up and before the captain's eyes, ate all the food. The captain was astonished and asked if this was what normally happened.

"Alas, yes!" came the reply. "The country is suffering from a **plague** of rats and mice and we cannot get rid of them."

"I think I may have the answer on my ship," said the captain, and he sent a message asking for Dick's cat to be brought to the palace. More food was laid out and the rats and mice appeared as before. The cat immediately pounced, killing at least a dozen before they scattered. Everyone was delighted and the queen asked, "What do you call this animal?"

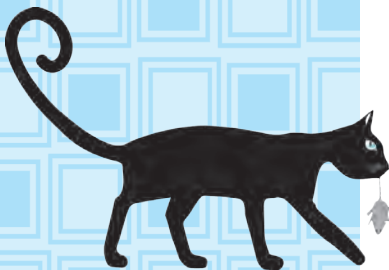
"Puss is the name she answers to," said the captain and when the queen called, "Puss, puss," the cat went over to her and purred. The queen was a little alarmed at first, as she had seen how fiercely the cat had

◆ *Why was the Captain of the ship so overjoyed?*

● **mouser** : an animal that catches mice

◆ *What happened when food was brought in, at the palace?*

● **plague** : (here) a thing that causes great trouble



◆ *Why was the queen afraid of the cat?*

attacked the rats and mice, but the captain told her not to be anxious. "Puss is very friendly with people," he said, "and would soon rid your kingdom of rats and mice."

"I would give great wealth to own this animal," said the queen.

So the captain began bargaining and it was agreed that the king would buy the whole cargo from Mr Fitzwarren's ship to pay a fine price for it and for the cat alone the king paid ten times the sum again.

When the ship came back to the Port of London, the captain showed Mr Fitzwarren the gold and jewels he had brought from Barbary and told him the story of the cat, the merchant sent for Dick. "From now on, Dick" he said, "we should all call you Mr Whittington, for you are a rich man." Mr Fitzwarren then paid him all the money the captain had received for the cat.

From this time on Dick worked with Mr Fitzwarren and became a successful merchant himself. He married Mr Fitzwarren's daughter Alice and three times he was elected Lord Mayor of London. He was also in time **knighted** by the king and became Sir Richard Whittington. He was not only famous, but he was popular too, for he always helped the poor with his money. Sometimes when he was old, he would tell his grandchildren the story of his cat, and how the bells of London had called him back when he was only a poor boy :

*Turn again Whittington,
Thou worthy citizen,
Lord Mayor of London.*

◆ *How much did the king pay for the cat?*

● **knighted** : given a highly honoured title

◆ *What changes had the cat brought to Dick's life?*

ENGLISH WORKSHOP

1. (A) Arrange the following set of words in the alphabetical order in your notebook.

ship, small, successful, scoldings, stone, saving, someone, stood, streets, still, screamed, sat, seemed, saint, share.

(B) Remove the Affixes (Prefix and Suffix) and write the Root-word.

(1) successful

(2) immediately

(3) retrace

(4) mouser

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| (5) unfriendly | (6) fallen |
| (7) unkind | (8) wooden |
| (9) luckily | (10) belonging |

2. (A) Find from the story one word for the following.

- (a) a small room just below a sloping roof
- (b) a very narrow passage between buildings
- (c) the highest - ranking officer in the Municipality of a city/town
- (d) the highest ranking official who commands a ship
- (e) any animal that catches mice
- (f) a low constant sound made by cats

(B) Make sentences of your own using the following expressions.

- (1) overcome :
.....
- (2) put up with :
.....
- (3) bargain :
.....

3. Rearrange the following events as they occur in the story. Put the correct number in the boxes.

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| (a) Mr Fitzwarren provided shelter to Dick. | <input type="text"/> |
| (b) A carter gave Dick a lift to London. | <input type="text"/> |
| (c) The cat sailed to the African coast. | <input type="text"/> |
| (d) The captain sold the cat for a very high amount of money. | <input type="text"/> |
| (e) Dick left his village on foot, to go to London. | <input type="text"/> |
| (f) Dick became rich, and later, the Mayor of London. | <input type="text"/> |
| (g) Dick was homeless, helpless, cold and hungry. | <input type="text"/> |
| (h) Dick bought a cat to get rid of the mice. | <input type="text"/> |
| (i) The rats and mice ate up all the dinner, laid for the king and queen. | <input type="text"/> |

4. Think and answer.

- (a) What decision taken by Dick changed his fortune?
- (b) What message does this story bring out for youngsters?

5. (A) Break the words below into syllables as shown in the first one.

- (a) belonging : be – long – ing (f) morning :
- (b) unfriendly : (g) citizen :
- (c) anything : (h) message :
- (d) difficulty : (i) mayor :
- (e) captain : (j) elected :

(B) Degrees of Comparison of Adjectives.

Read the sentences.

- (i) Yatin is strong.
(ii) Amit is stronger than Yatin.
(iii) Pravin is the strongest of all.

In sentence (i) the Adjective ‘strong’ is in its simple form. It is called **Positive Degree**.

In sentence (ii) the Adjective ‘stronger’ refers to a higher degree, when there is a comparison of two nouns. It is called **Comparative Degree**. (-er is added to the basic Adjective)

In sentence (iii) the adjective ‘strongest’ refers to the highest degree of comparison of one with more than two nouns. It is called **Superlative Degree**. (-est is added to the basic Adjective)

Complete the table of degrees of comparison.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
(1) great	.....	.....
(2) famous	.....	.....
(3)	easier	.....
(4)	worse	.....
(5) .....	.....	poorest
(6) .....	.....	laziest
(7) little	.....	.....
(8)	worthier	.....
(9) popular	.....	.....

6. Select any one of the famous personalities mentioned in ‘Warming up 1’ on page no. 5. From the library or internet find out their success story. Write it in your own words in about 20 to 30 lines of your notebook.

Give your write-up a suitable title.

