



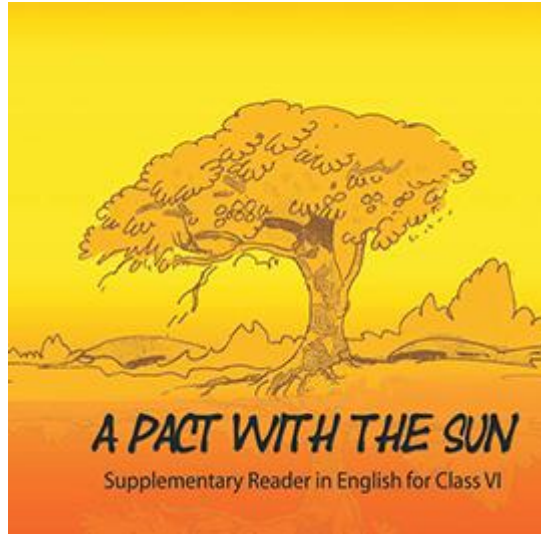
Learn English Through Stories

A1 Stories

Elementary Level

**Adapted and modified by
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

<https://learn-by-reading.co.uk>



A PACT WITH THE SUN

Supplementary Reader in English for Class VI

1. A Tale of Two Birds

THERE once lived a bird and her two new-born babies in a forest. They had a nest in a tall, shady tree and there the mother bird took care of her little ones day and night.

One day, there was a big storm. There was thunder, lightning and rain, and the wind blew down many trees. The tall tree in which the birds lived also came down. A big, heavy branch hit the nest and killed the bird. Fortunately for the baby birds, the strong wind blew them away to the other side of the forest. One of them came down near a cave where a gang of robbers lived. The other landed outside a *rishi's* ashram a little distance away.

Days passed and the baby birds became big birds. One day, the king of the country came to the forest to hunt. He saw a deer and rode after it. It ran deep into the forest followed by the king. Soon the king lost his way and didn't know where he was.

He rode on for a long time till he came to the other side of the forest. Very tired by now, he got off his horse and sat down under a tree that stood near a cave. Suddenly he heard a voice cry out, "Quick! Hurry up! There's someone under the tree. Come and take his jewels and his horse. Hurry, or else he'll slip away." The king was amazed. He looked up and saw a big, brown bird on the tree under which he was sitting. He also heard faint noises issuing from the cave. He quickly got on to his horse and rode away as fast as he could.

Soon, he came to a clearing which looked like an ashram. It was the *rishi's* ashram. The king tied his horse to a tree and sat down in its shade. Suddenly he heard a gentle voice announce, "Welcome to the ashram, Sir. Please go inside and rest. The *rishi* will be back soon. There's some cold water in the pot. Please make yourself comfortable." The king looked up and saw a big, brown bird in the tree. He was amazed. 'This one looks like the other bird outside the cave,' he said to himself aloud.

"You are right, Sir," answered the bird. "He is my brother but he has made friends with robbers. He now talks as they do. He doesn't talk to me anymore." Just then the *rishi* entered the ashram.

"Welcome, Sir," he said to the king. "Please come inside and make yourself at home. You look tired. Rest for a while. Then you can share my food."

The king told the *rishi* the story of the two birds and how each had behaved so differently though they looked so alike. “The forest is full of surprises,” he said.

The holy man smiled and said, “After all, one is known by the company one keeps. That bird has always heard the talk of robbers. He imitates them and talks about robbing people. This one has repeated what *he* has always heard. He welcomes people to the ashram. Now, come inside and rest. I’ll tell you more about this place and these birds.”

Questions and Answers

1. How did the two baby birds get separated?

Answer: One day, there was a big storm, and the wind blew down many trees including the tall tree in which the birds lived. A big, heavy branch hit the nest and killed the bird. But the strong wind blew the baby birds away to the other side of the forest. Both landed at different places. This is how the two birds were separated.

2. Where did each of them find a home?

Answer: One baby bird found a home near a cave where a gang of robbers lived, the other landed outside a *rishi*’s ashram a little distance away.

3. What did the first bird say to the stranger?

Answer: The first bird cried out to the stranger to hurry up and come quick as there was someone under the tree. It said come and take away his jewels and his horse in a hurry, or else he would slip away.

4. What did the second bird say to him?

Answer: The second bird welcomed the stranger in a gentle voice to the ashram, and requested him to go inside and rest. He then said that the *rishi* would be back soon, and asked him to drink some cold water and make himself comfortable.

5. How did the rishi explain the different ways in which the birds behaved?

Answer: The rishi smiled and explained the different ways in which the birds behaved by saying after all one is known by the company one keeps. The first bird has always heard the talk of robbers, imitates them and talks about robbing people. The other bird repeats what he always hears and so welcomes people to the ashram.

6. Which one of the following sums up the story best?

(i) A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.

(ii) One is known by the company one keeps.

(iii) A friend in need is a friend indeed.

Answer: The line that sums up the story best is "One is known by the company one keeps".

2. The Friendly Mongoose

ONCE, a farmer and his wife lived in a village with their small son. They loved him very much. “We must have a pet,” the farmer said to his wife one day. “When our son grows up, he will need a companion. This pet will be our son’s companion.” His wife liked the idea.

One evening, the farmer brought with him a tiny mongoose. “It’s a baby mongoose,” said his wife, “but will soon be fully grown. He will be a friend to our son.”



Both the baby and the mongoose grew. In five or six months the mongoose had grown to its full size — a lovely animal with two shining black eyes and a bushy tail. The farmer’s son was still a baby in the cradle, sleeping and crying alternately.

One day, the farmer’s wife wanted to go to the market. She fed the baby and rocked him to sleep in his little cradle. Picking up the basket, she said to her husband, “I’m off to the bazar. The baby is sleeping. Keep an eye on him. Frankly, I don’t like to leave the child alone with the mongoose.”

“You needn’t be afraid,” said the farmer. “The mongoose is a friendly animal. It’s as sweet as our baby and they are the best of friends, you know.”

The wife went away, and the farmer, having nothing to do in the house, decided to go out and take a look at his fields not far away. He ran into some friends on the way back and didn’t return for quite some time.

The farmer’s wife finished her shopping and came back home with a basketful of groceries. She saw the mongoose sitting outside as if waiting for her. On seeing her he ran to welcome her, as was customary. The farmer’s wife took

one look at the mongoose and screamed. "Blood!" she cried. The face and paws of the mongoose were smeared with blood.

"You wicked animal! You have killed my baby," she screamed hysterically. She was blind with rage and with all her strength brought down the heavy basket full of groceries on the blood-smeared mongoose and ran inside to the child's cradle.



The baby was fast asleep. But on the floor lay a black snake torn and bleeding. In a flash she realised what had happened. She ran out looking for the mongoose. "Oh! You saved my child! You killed the snake! What have I done?" she cried touching the mongoose, who lay dead and still, unaware of her sobbing. The farmer's wife, who had acted hastily and rashly, stared long at the dead mongoose. Then she heard the baby crying. Wiping her tears, she went in to feed him.

Questions and Answers

1. Why did the farmer bring a baby mongoose into the house?

Answer: The farmer brought a baby mongoose into his house because they needed a pet so that their son had a companion when he grew up. The baby mongoose would be a friend to their son in the future.

2. Why didn't the farmer's wife want to leave the baby alone with the mongoose?

Answer: The farmer's wife was afraid of the mongoose harming her child and so she didn't want to leave her baby alone with the mongoose.

3. What was the farmer's comment on his wife's fears?

Answer: The farmer told his wife that she needn't be afraid as the mongoose was a friendly animal. It was as sweet as their baby and they were the best of friends.

4. Why did the farmer's wife strike the mongoose with her basket?

Answer: The wife saw the mongoose face and paws smeared with blood and concluded that it must have killed the baby. She cried 'blood' and continued screaming hysterically and accusing the wicked animal of having killed her baby. She was blind with rage and with all her strength she brought down the heavy basket full of groceries on the blood smeared mongoose.

5. Did she repent her hasty action? How does she show her repentance?

Answer: Yes, she repented her hasty and rash action, she realized that the mongoose had actually saved her child by killing the black snake. She rushed outside looking for the mongoose. She repented by saying that the mongoose had saved her child and look what she had done to repay it. She touched the mongoose that lay dead and still unaware of her sobbing. She stared long at the dead mongoose.