

**A The Mountain and the Squirrel**

Quickly make a list of the words that come to your mind when you think of

1. a mountain. 2. a squirrel.

Discuss your list in class.

Now read this poem about a conversation between a mountain and a squirrel.

The mountain and the squirrel  
Had a quarrel;  
And the former called the latter 'Little Prig'.  
Bun replied,  
'You are doubtless very big;  
But all sorts of things and weather  
Must be taken in together,  
To make up a year  
And a sphere.  
And I think it no disgrace  
To occupy my place.  
If I'm not as large as you,  
You are not so small as I,  
And not half so spry.  
I'll not deny you make  
A very pretty squirrel track;  
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;  
If I cannot carry forests on my back,  
Neither can you crack a nut.'

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Read to understand

A. Answer these questions with reference to the context.

'And the former called the latter "Little Prig".'

1. Who are the 'former' and the 'latter' in this line?

Ans: The mountain is the former and the squirrel is the latter in this line.

2. Why did the former call the latter 'Little Prig'?

Ans: The former called the latter 'Little Prig' because the mountain was very much annoying to see small creature like the squirrel.

3. What was the latter's reply?

Ans: The latter's reply was that you are very big but all sorts of things and weather must be taken in together to make up a year and a sphere.

B. Fill in the blanks with words from the poem to complete it's summary.

One day, the mountain and the squirrel had a quarrel. The huge mountain called the tiny squirrel a Little Prig. The squirrel, whose name was Bun, replied that while it was not as big as the mountain, the mountain was not even half as spry as the squirrel. To make up a year and a sphere, all sorts of things and weather must be taken into consideration. The talents of both the mountain and the squirrel differed greatly. If the squirrel could not carry the forrest on its back, then the mountain could not crack a tiny nut.

C. Answer these questions briefly.

1. How many times does the mountain speak in the poem?

Ans: The mountain speaks only once in the poem.

2. What two things does the squirrel acknowledge that the mountain can do?

Ans: The two things are-

- i) It can carry forest on its back.
- ii) It makes a very pretty squirrel track.

3. How does the squirrel justify its place in creation?

Ans: The squirrel justifies its place in creation by saying although it is small, it is lively and energetic. If it cannot carry forest on its back, neither the mountain can crack a nut. They both have different talents.

Read to appreciate

Tick (✓) the statements that you think tell us the theme of this poem.

- 1. Mere size is not everything.
- 2. We all think too much of ourselves.
- 3. None is superior or inferior in this world.
- 4. Everything is gifted with different talents.
- 5. There is a reason for the existence of everything.
- 6. It is all right to judge merely by appearances.

Ans: 1, 3, 4, 5.