

Text Type: Fable
Suggested finishing time: 25 mins



Listen!

Let's Think!

1. Are there any people or things that you feel grateful for?
2. Do you agree that 'we are all connected in the circle of life'?

More to Take Away

'Circle of Life' teaches the importance of respecting the delicate balance in everything that exists. The Chinese proverb 'Falling leaves return to their roots' likewise explains the revolving cycle of the evolution of life.

Moral

The Virtue of Gratitude is highly appreciated in Chinese culture. Many Chinese idioms are about gratitude for blessing and wellspring.

Which character remains neutral towards the animals' decision to leave Grumble Village?

- A. Squirmy
- B. Griper
- C. Oak
- D. Hedwig

To locate the characters' names, skim for words with the first letter capitalised. Then, figure out the stance of each character based on the quoted dialogue that follows.

[1] It had been raining for eight months in Grumble Village since March. The owl, Hedwig, convened a village assembly, on behalf of Oak, the 3,000-year-old tree. Under Oak gathered some grumpy folks, grumbling about the doom and gloom of the extreme weather—heavy rainfall most of the time, but severe droughts in winter. The grumpy squirrel Squirmy whined, 'There is never enough water for us to get through the deadliest months! I wonder how much more water we'll need, since each of us has been storing no less than ten buckets of water daily!' Other grumpy folks chimed in. The aged monkey Chimp screeched, 'The endless drizzle mists up my sight and makes my joints and bones ache!' The rabbit Bunny grouched, 'The downpours ruined my carrot harvest!' The cat Griper growled, 'I am caked with mud every time I go to work.' Squirmy, irritated as he listened to the folks' comments, proposed, 'Folks, we do have no choice but to migrate, to leave this sickening village and make a fresh start elsewhere!' The folks howled and were determined to follow his lead. 5

[2] Having listened to all their groans, Oak remained in stillness while Hedwig questioned them, 'Why do you all hate your homeland so much? How could you all just leave Oak behind?' 'So, you expect us to stay here and perish, don't you?' replied Chimp. Hedwig tried to remain calm and pleaded, 'But together, we can get through this...and we're obliged to...' 'Leave it at that! We have our rights to leave!' Griper interrupted petulantly as she stomped off, 'If you fail to understand what's wrong, just leave us alone!' Seeing the folks leaving, Hedwig let out a resigned sigh, and said to Oak, 'My old buddy, though you have not said a word, I do know it's heartrending for you to see them leave...' 10

[3] Hedwig decided to seek advice from nearby villages. The night before he set off, he reminded the legions of little leaves to take good care of Oak while he was away. Overnight, he collected buckets of water, for fear that the rainless days might come before his return. Upon leaving, he assured Oak that he would spare no effort to save Grumble Village, 'I'm really grateful to you, our guardian angel, for 15

Which of the following does NOT describe how Hedwig felt on his return to Grumble Village?

- A. overwhelmed
- B. hopeful
- C. uneasy
- D. unexpected

In paragraph 5, the adjectives 'alien' and 'startled' suggest that Hedwig hardly felt positive when he returned. The interjection 'Oh my god' also indicates surprise.

giving us owls a comfy home. Oak, do wait for my return!' Then he added, 'if only they could see the good in things.'

[4] What Hedwig saw as he flew past Idle Village in the west was appalling 35
enough to make him hover in a circle around the village—cracked
ground, hellish wildfires, dried rivers, dead crops, and thousands of lifeless
animals on the barren land. 'May Grumble Village be blessed, and may
the grace to the village not be seized,' Hedwig frowned and prayed.

[5] The fruitless quest to seek help had taken Hedwig almost a hundred 40
days, and as he was back hovering over Grumble Village, he felt his home
was alien to him and was startled by the deadly desert scenes. 'Oh my
god, rain must have halted after I had left.' He flew to Oak right away,
amidst the burning beams of the sun. 'Hey, my friend! I'm back!' Hedwig 45
exclaimed as he perched on a branch of his old buddy's. Yet, having been
sunbaked for over two months, Oak could barely hear anything. 'Oak!
Didn't you promise to wait for my return?' The sudden realisation hit
Hedwig as he saw all the wilted little leaves on the ground.

[6] For days, Hedwig leaned against Oak, mourning for him and his little leaves. He remembered 50
his old buddy Oak once told him, 'In the "circle of life", all living things take life from earth at one
time and then give it back to her at another. When we die, we give rise to another life form.' Hedwig
seemed to have finally understood his old friend's words, as he looked at his silhouette, accompanied by
the fallen little leaves. 'Goodbye, my dearest Oak, and thanks for spending your entire life providing us
with shade, shelter and fruit,' murmured Hedwig, with a long-lost smile of hope on his face.

[7] When the drought is over, rainy days return: a law of nature. Hedwig, inheriting the little leaves' 55
practice, watered the land day in, day out. As time rolled by, Grumble Village became revitalised, as
little buds, and a baby oak tree, flourished near Hedwig's old home. 'What an amazing circle of life!
Hedwig exclaimed, 'Good to see you again, Oak!'

~740 words



Looking into Grammar

The auxiliary verb 'do' can be used before a main verb in its base form to give emphasis. We can also emphasise a command by putting 'Do' before the imperative verb.

- ✓ He **did** tell (~~did~~ told) lies.
- ✓ **Do** tell me what you think about the party.

? Circle THREE verbs before which 'do' is used for emphasis in paragraphs 1-3.

Part A Multiple Choice Questions


Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the fable. Choose the best answer by blackening the appropriate circle.

1. Which of the following is NOT true about Grumble Village near the end of the year?

- A. deadly
- B. soggy
- C. sunbaked
- D. stuffy

2. If it hadn't been because of _____, the grumpy folks might not have wanted to leave Grumble Village.

- A. the rebellion sparked off by the squirrel
- B. the provocative remarks made by some animals
- C. the extreme weather
- D. all of the above

 3. In paragraph 1, what is most animals' attitude towards life in Grumble Village?

- A. thankful
- B. laid-back
- C. negative
- D. indifferent

4. At last, Hedwig's attitude towards the leaving animals turned _____.


- A. passive
- B. confrontational
- C. sympathetic
- D. unforgiving

4 Hedwig's attitude change is indicated by the corresponding ways he dealt with the folks: first, by questioning; then, by pleading; and lastly, by sighing.

5. When Griper roared 'Leave it at that!', she was _____ and thought that _____.

- A. exhausted...the folks should leave Hedwig there with Oak
- B. disappointed...her duties were overly emphasised when her rights were not protected
- C. impatient...it was time to leave Grumble Village
- D. annoyed...it was time to stop arguing with Hedwig

5 Do not base your answer on general knowledge, but on what happened before and after Griper roared. Also, consider what kind of emotion the word 'roared' implies.

 6. Which of the following did NOT happen in Idle Village?

- A. The land failed to produce fruits.
- B. Wildfires were raging.
- C. Water and food were scarce.
- D. Villagers migrated elsewhere.

7. In the last paragraph, the flourishing of the little buds was due to _____.

- A. the rainy days
- B. the death of Oak and the little leaves
- C. Hedwig the faithful owl
- D. all of the above



Please scan the QR code on P.6 to access the checklist for evaluating your own reading progress.

Part B Pre-HKDSE Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the fable. For question 2, answer in a complete sentence.

1. Name THREE ways in which Hedwig addressed Oak.

2. Which incident(s) demonstrate(s) the ‘circle of life’? Explain your answer.



3. Find more synonyms of rain and arrange them according to the intensity of the rainfall.

Mild	Neutral	Heavy
(i)	rain	(iii)
(ii)	rainfall	

4. Look for words in the fable that are similar in meaning to the following:

(i) guaranteed (v.)	_____	(para. 2-3)
(ii) unfamiliar (adj.)	_____	(para. 4-5)
(iii) revived (v.)	_____	(para. 6-7)

4 When it comes to words ending in *-ed*, distinguish between those that are verbs in the passive voice and those that are participial adjectives.



5. Put the correct letters in the boxes by matching each quote with its most likely speaker.

A. Oak	B. Hedwig	C. Chimp	D. Griper	E. Squirmy
--------	-----------	----------	-----------	------------

(i) ‘Leaving is our last resort, for we can no longer stand the rough weather.’

(ii) ‘What else can I say, it’s up to them to make the decision.’

(iii) ‘No one should be left behind! Together we sustain Grumble Village.’

(iv) ‘Rainy days give me pain and poor vision.’

(v) ‘Why are you so obsessed with the village?’

6 A fact is a statement provable by the text. An opinion is a statement that usually contains a subjective adjective.

6. Determine whether each of the following statements is a fact (F) or an opinion (O). Write the correct symbols ‘F’ or ‘O’ in the spaces provided.

Statement	F/O
(i) The weather in Grumble Village has been severe throughout the year.	
(ii) It is wise to save buckets of water before a drought.	

Part C Vocabulary Bank

Match the idioms in the left column with the descriptions in the right column. Write the correct letters in the boxes.

A. rain cats and dogs

B. save money for a rainy day

C. a cold day in July

D. have a face like thunder

E. chase rainbows

F. under the weather

1. unwell or in low spirits

2. to look extremely angry

3. a time or event that seems unlikely or will never come to pass

4. to reserve something, especially money, for a time when it might be needed unexpectedly

5. to constantly and unrealistically go after things that are too good to happen

6. to rain very heavily

Word Craft



Idioms are used to present ideas in a more interesting and lively way. Sometimes, certain historical and cultural knowledge is required to understand them.

Let's Discuss!



1. Do you agree that it is necessary for organisms to perish in order to maintain the circle of life?
2. If you were Hedwig, would you find it difficult to accept the departure of Oak?

Part D Cloze Passage

Complete the diary entries below with the appropriate idioms introduced on the previous page.

Reminder



Pay attention to the use of gerunds, participial phrases and correct tenses.

18th July, 20XX

Rainy

I was on my way home from the supermarket this morning when I suddenly heard the sound of thunder. Then it began to rain lightly. Very relaxing and calming was the sound of the falling raindrops, but the rain soon grew so heavy that it started

(1) _____

before I knew it, and I got soaked from head to toe even with an umbrella. Though

I had dried myself immediately, I felt a bit

(2) _____.

I must have caught a cold. That's why I'm now writing this in bed. What an awful day!

31st July, 20XX

Sunny

I decided to delay my trip to London last Sunday, after a piece of unexpected good news: I received an interview invitation from St. Ives Drama College for its drama course! It was like

(3) _____.

For a long time, becoming an actor has been the dream of my life.

(4) _____

you may call it, but I'm not going to give it up. Just now, I paid \$500 for changing the flight. Luckily, I've been

(5) _____

with several part-time jobs. Phew!

5th August, 20XX

Cloudy

I'm staying in London now with Aunt Lily and my seven-year-old cousin Leo. Unlike his mum, Leo is playful and talkative. We played with each other all the time. At dinner this evening, Leo poured gravy into his soup in order, he said, to make it 'taste better'. But, being a helpful child, he did the same for Aunt Lily and me. (6) _____,

Aunt Lily said she could not bear his misbehaviour any more. At that moment, Leo reacted incredibly: with tears in his eyes, he apologised and said that he would consume all the three bowls of soup!

