

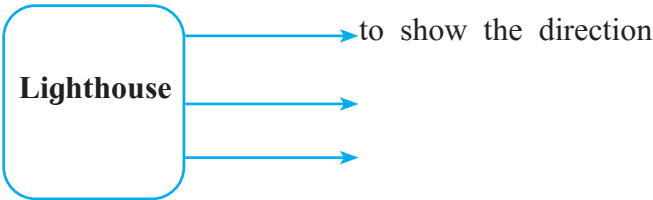
## 2.3 The Inchcape Rock

### ICE BREAKERS

- Prepare a word register related to marine life.

Sailors .....  
.....

- The functions of a lighthouse are -



- Discuss in pairs the various famous rocks in the world and mention the places where they are.

| Famous Rock    | Place         |
|----------------|---------------|
| Balancing Rock | Mahabalipuram |
| .....          | .....         |
| .....          | .....         |
| .....          | .....         |

- Narrate in the class a story about someone who destroyed or spoilt someone else's good work.
- Discuss in pairs and groups the following expressions. Take the help of your teacher.

- (a) As you sow so shall you reap  
(b) Crime gets its own punishment  
(c) What goes around comes around  
(d) Tit for tat  
(e) Evil digs a pit for others but falls into the same

**Robert Southey (1774 to 1843)** He was born in Bristol, England. He was the son of a draper, educated at Westminster School and Balliol College, Oxford.

He was a Poet Laureate of England from 1813 to 1843. Some of his short poems like 'The Scholar', 'The Battle of Blenheim', 'Bishop Hatto', 'The Inchcape Rock' etc. are very popular with the school children.

'The Inchcape Rock' is a ballad. It's the story of the 14<sup>th</sup> century attempt by the Abbot of Aberbrothok to install a warning bell on Inchcape, a notorious sandstone reef about 11 miles (18km) off the east coast of Angus, Scotland, near Dundee and Fife, occupied by the Bell Rock Lighthouse.

Southey was inspired by the the legendary story of a pirate who removed the bell on the Inchcape Rock placed by the Abbot of Aberbrothok. The poem gives us a message that those who do wrong things will meet with due punishment.



## The Inchcape Rock

**Abbot :** head of Abbey of monks (Abbey : a building where monks or nuns live or used to live)

**buoy :** floating object anchored in the sea to mark dangerous places

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,  
The ship was as still as she could be,  
Her sails from heaven received no motion,  
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock  
The waves flow'd over the Inchcape Rock;  
So little they rose, so little they fell,  
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The **Abbot** of Aberbrothok  
Had placed that bell on the Inchcape Rock;  
On a **buoy** in the storm it floated and swung,  
And over the waves its warning rung.





When the Rock was hid by the **surge's swell**,  
The mariners heard the warning bell;  
And then they knew the **perilous** Rock,  
And **blest** the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

The Sun in heaven was shining gay,  
All things were joyful on that day;  
The sea-birds scream'd as they **wheel'd round**,  
And there was joyance in their sound.

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen  
A darker **speck** on the ocean green;  
**Sir Ralph the Rover**, walk'd his deck,  
And he fix'd his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring,  
It made him whistle, it made him sing;  
His heart was mirthful to excess,  
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float;  
**Quoth** he, "My men, put out the boat,  
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,  
And I'll **plague** the Abbot of Aberbrothok'.

The boat is lower'd, the boatmen row,  
And to the Inchcape Rock they go;  
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,  
And he cut the Bell from the Inchcape float.

Down sunk the bell with a **gurgling sound**.  
The bubbles rose and burst around;  
Quoth Sir Ralph, 'The next who comes to the Rock  
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok.'

*Give reasons for the sailor's appreciation of The Abbot.*

**surge's swell** : sudden and great rise in the level of the sea

**perilous** : dangerous

**blest** : old English form of 'blessed'

*Guess the meaning of :  
'wheel'd round'.*

**speck** : a tiny dot

**Sir Ralph the Rover** : a sea pirate

*Describe the state of mind of Sir Ralph.*

**quoth** : said

**plague** : cause pain or trouble

*When the Rover spotted the bell, he cut the bell from the buoy. This was an act of-*

i. hatred


ii. anger

iii. jealousy

iv. frustration

**gurgling sound** :

Find the figure of speech.



**scour'd** : (here) travelled freely, energetically for ships to rob

**plunder'd store** : big amount of looted wealth

**steers** : directs the course of the ship

**haze** : thin mist


**methinks** : it seems to me (archaic form of 'I think')

**drift** : move slowly


*'O Christ ! It is the Inchcape Rock' - What made Ralph the Rover to exclaim this line?*

**tore** : pulled hard

**knell** : the sound of a bell rung solemnly after death or at funeral announcement of death



Sir Ralph the Rover, sail'd away,  
He **scour'd** the seas for many a day;  
And now grown rich with **plunder'd store**,  
He **steers** his course for Scotland's shore.



So thick a **haze** o'erspreads the sky,  
They cannot see the Sun on high;  
The wind hath blown a gale all day,  
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand,  
So dark it is they see no land.  
Quoth Sir Ralph, 'It will be lighter soon,  
For there is the dawn of the rising Moon.'

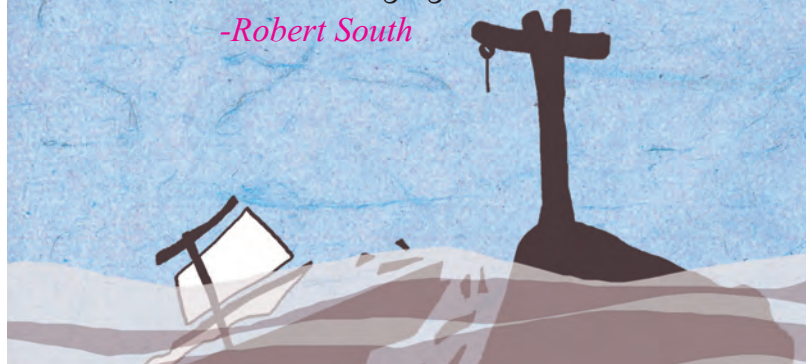
'Canst hear', said one, 'the breakers roar?  
For **methinks** we should be near the shore'.  
'Now where we are I cannot tell,  
But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell'.

They hear no sound, the swell is strong;  
Though the wind hath fallen they **drift** along,  
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock,—  
'O Christ! it is the Inchcape Rock!'

Sir Ralph the Rover **tore** his hair;  
He curst himself in his despair;  
The waves rush in every side,  
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But even in his dying fear  
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear,  
A sound as if with the Inchcape Bell,  
The Devil below was ringing his **knell**.

*-Robert South*



## BRAINSTORMING

(A1) Narrate in groups the scene described in the beginning of the poem.

(A2) (i) Complete the following statements.

- (a) The Abbot of Aberbrothok placed a bell on the Inchcape Rock because..
- (b) The mariners were grateful to the Abbot of Aberbrothok because.....
- (c) The result of the thick haze that covered the sky was that.....
- (d) The Rover in frustration pulled his hair and cursed himself because.....

(ii) Given below are the events that give the theme of the poem in a jumbled form. Arrange in a proper sequence as per their occurrence.

- (a) The waves were so small that they did not move enough to ring the bell at the Inchcape Rock.
- (b) The Abbot of Aberbrothok had placed the bell on a buoy on the rock.
- (c) There was a thick haze spread over the atmosphere.
- (d) Ralph bent over from the boat.
- (e) Sir Ralph cursed himself in despair and in his frustration tore his hair.

(iii) Describe the qualities of the Abbot of Aberbrothok in your own words.

|   |   |             |
|---|---|-------------|
| Qualities of<br>the Abbot of<br>Aberbrothok | → | Benevolent  |
|   | → | Big-hearted |
|   | → | .....       |
|   | → | .....       |
|   | → | .....       |

(iv) 'Jealousy' is the most incurable defect. Justify.

(v) 'But the Rover's mirth was wickedness'. Explain this line in your own words with the help of the poem.

(A3) Some words in the poem are related to different parts of a ship or a mariner's life. Given below are the meanings of those terms. Identify the word.

- (a) Helps in steering the ship
- (b) The lowest part of the ship
- (c) Floating object that shows direction
- (d) Another name for a ship
- (e) Sinking sound

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
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|  |
|  |

**(A4) (i) Ballad**

A ballad is a song that tells a story, and it can be dramatic, funny or romantic.

Traditionally the ballad has been considered a folkloric verse narrative which has strong associations with communal dancing. Generally, the term is used for a narrative poem which uses an elliptical and highly stylized mode of narration. The technique of repetition with variation may play an important part in it.

From the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, collections of folk / ‘popular ballads’ began to be made. The form was taken up by some of the most influential poets of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as a folkloric form of expression.

A typical ballad consists of stanzas that contain a quatrain, or four poetic lines. Some ballads have a refrain, or a repeated chorus, just like a song does. The rhyme scheme adds musical quality to the poem.

One famous ballad is ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ by English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

**(ii) Select the appropriate figure of speech from the box given below and complete the table.**

Metaphor, Alliteration, Repetition, Personification, Inversion,  
Simile, Apostrophe, Onomatopoeia

| Examples  | Figure of speech | Explanation  |
|---|------------------|--|
| 1. Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair.           | Alliteration     | The close repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words |
| 2. No stir in the air no stir in the sea.       |                  |  |
| 3. On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung. |                  |  |
| 4. Down sank the bell with a gurgling sound.    |                  |  |
| 5. The devil below was ringing his knell.       |                  |  |
| 6. The ship was as still as she could be.       |                  |  |
| 7. On the deck the Rover takes his stand.       |                  |  |
| 8. Oh Christ !                                  |                  |  |

**(A5) (i) Write an appreciation of the poem, ‘The Inchcape Rock’.**

**(ii) Compose 4 to 6 lines on ‘sea’.**

(A6) (i) Expand the ideas on your own on the following topics.

- (a) Pride goes before a fall.
- (b) Time and tide wait for none.
- (c) Man proposes, God disposes.
- (d) Look before you leap.

(ii) The poem begins with :

‘Without either sign or sound of their shock,

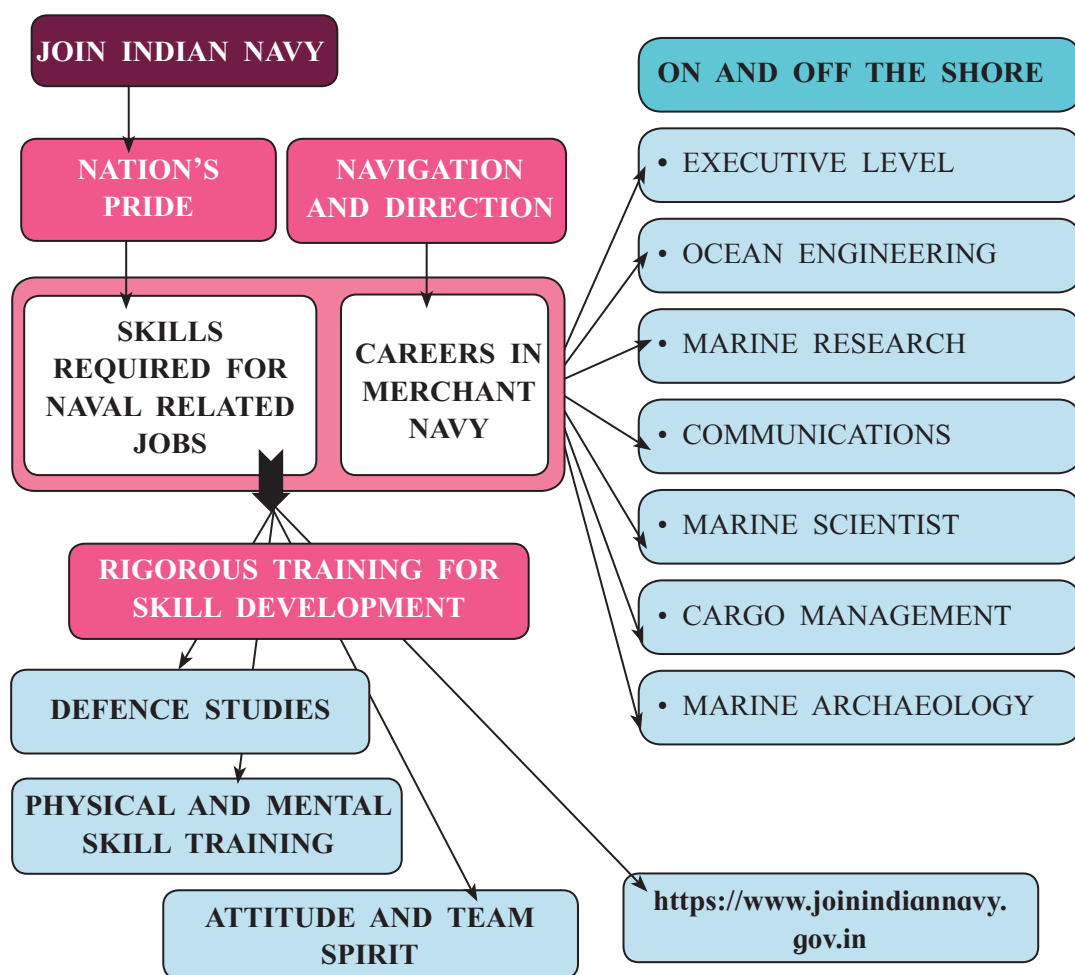
The waves flowed over the Inchcape Rock.’

It ends with :

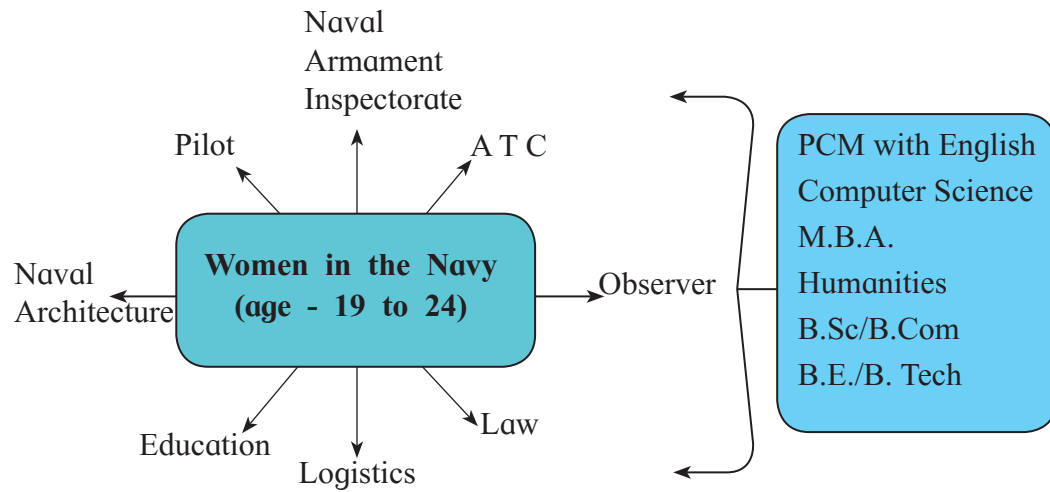
‘Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock.’

On the basis of these lines explain the change in mood of the poem.

(A7) (i) Read the following tree diagram and find out more information about opportunities in ‘on and off the shore’ the Indian Navy.



**(ii) Required qualifications and various fields / opportunities for women to join in the Navy.**



**(iii) Colleges that provide education in oceanography -**

- National Institute of Oceanography, Goa
- National Institute of Oceanography, Mumbai
- MBA (Logistic Shipping Management), IIKM Business School, Calicut, Kerala
- Indira Gandhi College of Distance Education IGCDE, Tamil Nadu

