

Before you read

This is a story about a thoughtful and loving son. He works hard to fulfil his parents' wishes and gets some unexpected help.

Taro's Reward

1. A YOUNG woodcutter named Taro lived with his mother and father on a lonely hillside. All day long he chopped wood in the forest. Though he worked very hard, he earned very little money. This



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*chopped: cut
into pieces*



made him sad, for he was a thoughtful son and wanted to give his old parents everything they needed.

2. One evening, when Taro and his parents were sitting in a corner of their hut, a strong wind began to blow. It whistled through the cracks of the hut and everyone felt very cold. Suddenly Taro's father said, "I wish I had a cup of saké; it would warm me and do my old heart good."
3. This made Taro sadder than ever, for the heart-warming drink called saké was very expensive. 'How do I earn more money?' he asked himself. 'How do I get a little saké for my poor old father?' He decided to work harder than before.
4. Next morning, Taro jumped out of bed earlier than usual and made his way to the forest. He chopped and cut, chopped and cut as the sun climbed, and soon he was so warm that he had to take off his jacket. His mouth was dry, and his face was wet with sweat. 'My poor old father!' he thought. 'If only he was as warm as I!'
And with that he began to chop even faster, thinking of the extra money he must earn to buy the saké to warm the old man's bones.
5. Then suddenly Taro stopped chopping. What was that sound he

whistled through:
passed through
with a whistling
sound

cracks: narrow
gaps/openings

saké : a popular
Japanese drink
(‘sa’ is pronounced
like ‘fa’ in ‘father’
and ‘ke’ rhymes
with ‘way’)

expensive: costly

made his way to:
went to

heard? Could it be, could it possibly be rushing water?

Taro could not remember ever seeing or hearing a rushing stream in that part of the forest. He was thirsty. The axe dropped out of his hands and he ran in the direction of the sound.

6. Taro saw a beautiful little waterfall hidden behind a rock. Kneeling at a place where the water flowed quietly, he cupped a little in his hands and put it to his lips. Was it water? Or was it saké? He tasted it again and again, and always it was the delicious saké instead of cold water.
7. Taro quickly filled the pitcher he had with him and hurried home. The old man was delighted with the saké. After

cupped a little in his hands: took some water in his hands (as if in a cup)

delicious: very tasty

pitcher: a pot usually made of mud



only one swallow of the liquid he stopped shivering and did a little dance in the middle of the floor.

8. That afternoon, a neighbour stopped by for a visit. Taro's father politely offered her a cup of the saké. The lady drank it greedily, and thanked the old man. Then Taro told her the story of the magic waterfall. Thanking them for the delicious drink, she left in a hurry. By nightfall she had spread the story throughout the whole village.
9. That evening there was a long procession of visitors to the woodcutter's house. Each man heard the story of the waterfall, and took a sip of the saké. In less than an hour the pitcher was empty.
10. Next morning, Taro started for work even earlier than the morning before. He carried with him the largest pitcher he owned, for he intended first of all to go to the waterfall. When he reached it, he found to his great surprise all his neighbours there. They were carrying pitchers, jars, buckets — anything they could find to hold the magic saké. Then one villager knelt and held his mouth under the waterfall to drink. He drank again and again, and then shouted angrily, "Water! Nothing but water!" Others also tried, but there was no saké, only cold water.

greedily: as if
desiring more
and more

intended: planned



11. “We have been tricked!” shouted the villagers. “Where is Taro? Let us drown him in this waterfall.” But Taro had been wise enough to slip behind a rock when he saw how things were going. He was nowhere to be found.
12. Muttering their anger and disappointment, the villagers left the place one by one. Taro came out from his hiding place. Was it true, he wondered? Was the saké a dream? Once more he caught a little liquid in his hand and put it to his lips. It was the same fine saké. To the thoughtful son, the magic waterfall gave the delicious saké. To everyone else, it gave only cold water.

tricked: deceived

muttering: speaking unclearly

13. The story of Taro and his magic waterfall reached the Emperor of Japan. He sent for the young woodcutter, and rewarded him with twenty pieces of gold for having been so good and kind. Then he named the most beautiful fountain in the city after Taro. This, said the Emperor, was to encourage all children to honour and obey their parents.

[a Japanese story retold]

sent for: called

WORKING WITH THE TEXT

A. Answer the following questions.

1. Why did Taro run in the direction of the stream? (5)
2. How did Taro's father show his happiness after drinking saké?(7)
3. Why did the waterfall give Taro saké and others water? (12)
4. Why did the villagers want to drown Taro? (10, 11)
5. Why did the Emperor reward Taro? (13)

B. Mark the right item.

1. Taro earned very little money because
 - (i) he didn't work hard enough.
 - (ii) the villagers didn't need wood.
 - (iii) the price of wood was very low.
2. Taro decided to earn extra money
 - (i) to live a more comfortable life.
 - (ii) to buy his old father some saké.
 - (iii) to repair the cracks in the hut.

3. The neighbour left Taro's hut in a hurry because
- (i) she was delighted with the drink.
 - (ii) she was astonished to hear Taro's story.
 - (iii) she wanted to tell the whole village about the waterfall.

WORKING WITH LANGUAGE

- A. Strike off the words in the box below that are not suitable.

Taro wanted to give his old parents everything they needed.
This shows that he was ...

thoughtful	hardworking	loving	honest
considerate	trustworthy	efficient	kind

- B. 1. "This made Taro sadder than ever."
'This' refers to
- (i) a strong wind that began to blow.
 - (ii) Taro's father's old age.
 - (iii) Taro's inability to buy expensive saké for his father.
- (Mark the right item.)
2. "This, said the emperor, was to encourage all children to honour and obey their parents."
'This' refers to
- (i) the most beautiful fountain in the city.
 - (ii) rewarding Taro with gold and giving the fountain his name.
 - (iii) sending for Taro to hear his story.
- (Mark the right item.)

- C. Arrange the words below in pairs that rhyme.

Example: young – lung
money – sunny

young	sad	money	chop	lung	last
wax	could	bad	sound	axe	wood
way	stop	sunny	fast	round	day

D. 1. Fill in the blanks with words from the box.

lonely little hard young
thoughtful delicious beautiful

A _____ woodcutter lived on a _____ hillside. He was a _____ son who worked _____ but earned _____ money. One day he saw a _____ waterfall hidden behind a rock. He tasted the water and found it _____.

2. Find these sentences in the story and fill in the blanks.

- (i) This made Taro _____ than ever. (3)
- (ii) He decided to work _____ than before. (3)
- (iii) Next morning, Taro jumped out of bed _____ than usual. (4)
- (iv) He began to chop even _____. (4)
- (v) Next morning, Taro started for work even _____ than the morning before. (10)

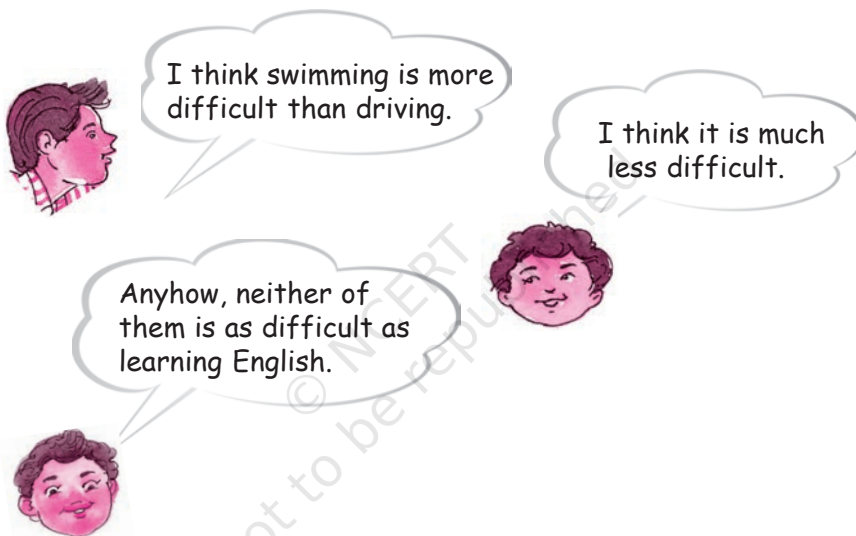
SPEAKING AND WRITING

A. Speak the following sentences clearly but as quickly as you can. Learn them by heart.

- (i) How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck would chuck wood.
- (ii) Betty bought a bit of butter, but the bit of butter was a little bitter so she bought some better butter to make the bitter butter better.

B 1. The story 'Taro's Reward' shows that Taro is thoughtful, hardworking and also wise. Read aloud the parts of story that show these qualities in Taro.

2. (i) Like Patrick in the story 'Who Did Patrick's Homework', Taro is helped by magic. Do you believe in magic? What are the magical things that happen in these stories?
- (ii) Which story do you like better, and why? Do you know such stories in other languages? Discuss these questions in class.
3. Now write a paragraph or two about these two stories, comparing them.
- C. 1. Listen to these children. What are they talking about?



2. Work in groups. Come to some agreement on each of the activities given below. Decide which is the most interesting, duller, most dangerous, safest, most rewarding, most exciting.

cooking	fishing	playing football
knitting	dancing	listening to music
reading	sewing	mountain climbing
walking	swimming	learning languages
painting	watching TV	stamp collecting

DICTATION

1. Your teacher will speak the words given below. Write against each two new words that rhyme with it.

1. bed _____
2. wax _____
3. fast _____
4. chop _____
5. young _____

Know Your Country

1. Which are the two states that flank New Delhi's borders?
2. Name the states through which the Narmada flows.

Answers on page 40