

KILLING OF A TREE

Q1- What does the tree symbolise in this poem?

- A) prosperity
- B) greenery
- C) deep rooted evil
- D) none

Q2- What helps the tree to grow?

- A) earth
- B) air
- C) gardener
- D) none

Q3- Where does the strength of the tree lie?

- A) in leaves
- B) in fruits
- C) in its roots
- D) All

Q4- What killed the tree?

- A) scorching and chopping
- B) floods
- C) irresponsible behaviors
- D) All

Q5- The strength of the tree is exposed' what do these words convey?

- A) roots of the tree taken out of the earth
- B) roots are withered
- C) tree is withered
- D) All

Q6- What is the message of this poem?

- A) cut trees
- B) spoil trees

<p>C) don't cut trees and save them</p> <p>D) None</p>
<p>Q7- What does this poem speak?</p> <p>A) merciless,thoughtless and callous behavior of humans towards trees</p> <p>B) save plants</p> <p>C) human behavior</p> <p>D) None</p>
<p>Q8- How do the trees die?</p> <p>A) when they don't get water</p> <p>B) when they don't get manure</p> <p>C) when their roots are uprooted</p> <p>D) when we cut it with knife or jab</p>
<p>Q9- What is the rhyming scheme of this poem?</p> <p>A) aabc</p> <p>B) abcd</p> <p>C) no rhyming scheme.free verse</p> <p>D) None</p>
<p>Q10- What does the poet equate killing trees with?</p> <p>A) killing animals</p> <p>B) killing insects</p> <p>C) killing human beings</p> <p>D) None</p>

ANSWER KEY

1	C
2	A
3	C
4	A
5	A
6	C
7	A
8	C

9	C
10	C

SHORT ANSWER TYPE

Question 1.

How does a tree become strong?

Answer:

A tree feeds on the earth's crust, consuming nutrients from the earth. The tree also absorbs years of sunlight, air and water. This makes it strong.

Question 2.

"So hack and chop/ But this alone won't do it." What won't this do? Why won't it do it?

Answer:

Hacking and chopping is not enough to kill a tree. The tree endures the pain but continues to live on as it heals over time. The bark which has been chopped will heal itself. Green twigs and small branches will soon emerge from the bleeding bark and in time the tree will regrow to its original size.

Question 3.

What is the meaning of "bleeding bark"? What makes it bleed?

Answer:

Bleeding bark suggests the wound on the tree that is caused by hacking or chopping the tree. When the branches of a tree are chopped off, the tree bleeds as the sap can be seen to flow. It expresses the pain of a tree.

Question 4.

What are miniature boughs? What happens if they are left unchecked?

Answer:

Miniature boughs are new branches which sprout where the tree was hacked or chopped. If they are left unchecked, they expand and become a huge tree. The chopped tree grows back to its former size.

Question 5.

How does the tree heal itself?

Answer:

The tree is equipped with a power to heal itself. When a tree is hacked or chopped, leaves sprout from the wounded bark. From close to the ground curled green twigs rise. Miniature boughs expand again to their former size. The tree, in time, grows back to its former size.

Question 6.

How does the poet describe the growth of the tree in the first stanza of the poem?

Answer:

The poet says that the tree grows slowly getting its nutrients from the earth. Then it absorbs sunlight, water and air for many years. The bark of the tree looks ugly because it is rough and has crooked lines on it. It is very ironical that soft and green leaves come out of the leprous hide. Gradually, it grows into a big tree.

Question 7.

Why does it take so much time to kill a tree?

Answer:

It is not easy to kill a tree simply by hacking or chopping it. The tree has deep roots which give birth to tiny twigs and branches which help the tree attain its old stature. For a tree to be killed, the root has to be uprooted, and it has to be scorched and choked in sun and air. This process takes much time and it requires a lot of effort.

Question 8.

How does the tree grow to its full size? List the words suggestive of its life and activity.

Answer:

The tree grows to its full size by consuming nutrients from the earth, feeding upon its crust absorbing years of light, air and water. Consuming, rising, feeding and absorbing are the words suggestive of its life and activity.

Question 9.

The poet uses several images of death and violence in the poem. Can you list them?

Answer:

The images of death are "hack, chop, scorching, choking, browning, hardening, twisting and withering". The words that show violence are "roped, tied, pulled out and snapped out entirely from the earth's crust"

Question 10.

Why does the poet use the word 'kill' rather than 'cut'?

Answer:

The poet makes a distinction between cutting a tree and killing it. Cutting a tree, or hacking and chopping, does not destroy the tree completely, and the tree regrows by sending out new shoots and miniature boughs. The poet then gives step-by-step instructions on the total annihilation of a tree. Once the roots of the tree are pulled out, and are exposed to sun and air, the killing of the tree is complete. The tree will have no second life.

Question 11.

How does the poet personify the tree?

Answer:

The poet describes the tree as if it was a human being. Like man, the tree has grown

slowly consuming the earth, eating and drinking from it, absorbing and soaking in innumerable years of air, sunlight and water. The bleeding bark is compared to the discoloured skin of a man suffering from leprosy. It too feels pain and pleasure alike the human beings. So he uses the expression 'killing the tree' rather than 'destroying' or 'cutting' it.

Question 12.

The bark of the tree is described the 'leprous hide'. Bring out the irony in the fact that the leprous hide sprouts leaves?

Answer:

The poet describes the broken, discoloured bark of a tree that has been hacked and which resembles a leper's skin. Leaves grow from the leprous hide or the bark of the tree. This is ironic because leprosy usually eats away the body. It does not promote growth. But, here, the leprous hide has been depicted as a source of growth.

Question 13.

Explain the meaning of "anchoring earth" and "earth cave"?

Answer:

"Anchoring earth" refers to the earth under which the roots of a tree are held firmly, thereby providing strength and nourishment to it. "Earth cave" refers to the hollow space in the earth where the roots were which have now been pulled out. The poet calls it so, as the roots, which are the most sensitive part of the tree, stay hidden securely under the earth.

Question 14.

How can the tree be killed?

Answer:

The tree is killed when its roots are uprooted and they get scorched and choked in sunlight and air. This process leads to the browning, hardening, twisting and thereby, withering of the roots. This kills the tree

Question 15.

How will the "bleeding bark" heal?

Answer:

In the poem 'On Killing a Tree' Gieve Patel says that if a tree is hacked repeatedly, this alone will not be able to kill a tree. The bleeding bark will heal as 'curled green twigs' and miniature boughs of the tree will grow from the bark. These branches and boughs will expand and the tree will regrow to its full size again."

Question 16.

How does the poet describe the killing of a tree?

Answer:

A tree cannot be killed by jabbing at it with a knife nor hacking at it with an axe. To kill a tree, the root of the tree should be pulled out of the earth. It should, then, be roped, tied

and snapped out. So it should be pulled out entirely from the earth cover. It should be exposed to sunlight. This, according to the poet, is the complete process of uprooting a tree.

Question 17.

Where does the strength of the tree lie? Why is it referred to as 'the source'? Why is the source most sensitive one?

Answer:

The strength of the tree lies in its root. The root is the source of the tree's life. It is the most sensitive because it has been hidden for years inside the earth and once the root is exposed to sun and air, it shrivels and withers and the tree dies.

Question 18.

How do the roots look like when they are pulled out?

Answer:

The real strength of the tree lies in its roots, which are held underground by the anchoring earth. When the roots are pulled out, they are white and wet.

Question 19.

Why does the poet describe the killing of a tree in such graphic detail?

Answer:

Gieve Patel treats the tree as a living organism. He feels that the tree should not be denied the right to live. He, therefore, describes the killing of a tree in such graphic detail as to evoke sympathy to trees. According to him, to hurt a tree is akin to hurting a human being.

Question 20.

Bring out the sarcasm in the poem On Killing a Tree.

Answer:

"On Killing a Tree" is a sarcastic poem about man's indiscriminate destruction of trees. The tree is presented as an enemy to man. The poem begins ironically, describing the crime committed by the tree. For years, it has consumed the earth's crust. Like a thief, it has absorbed sunlight, air and water. It has grown up like a giant. So the tree must be killed. But it is not an easy task. A simple jab of knife will not do it. From close to the ground it will rise up again. To kill it, the tree should be tied with a rope and pulled out from the anchoring earth, exposing its bleeding white root. Once the root withers and chokes, the tree will die.

Question 21.

Justify the title of the poem 'On Killing a Tree'.

Answer:

In On Killing a Tree Gieve Patel makes a sarcastic comment on man's systematic destruction of the environment. He gives man step-by-step instructions on how to kill a tree so that it doesn't grow again. In the first two stanzas the poet talks about Nature's

through the images of a feeding tree and a healing tree. In the following two stanzas he talks of the execution of a tree. Thus, the poem, from its beginning to the end, describes in detail the process and consequences of killing a tree. So the title is appropriate and drives the poet's point home in a superb way.

LONG ANSWER TYPE

Question 1.

What is the theme of the poem On Killing a Tree?

Answer:

The main theme of the poem is deforestation. The poet emphasises that killing trees is not a simple task. Merely cutting the branches or the stem of a tree will not serve the purpose. The tree clings on to life with great tenacity, as it fights all odds and grows back again. He highlights the cruelty with which humans try and destroy trees by describing in detail the painstaking process required to destroy or kill a tree, using images of violence, as if it were a cold -blooded murder.

The roots of the tree will have to be pulled out and dried in the sun so that the tree ultimately dies. Thus, the poet seems to be revere Mother Nature and suggest that it will take a lot of effort and planning to destroy an organism rooted in nature than a simple "jab of knife."

Question 2.

How can a tree be killed?

Answer:

In the poem 'On Killing a Tree', Gieve Patel says that it is not an easy task to kill a tree. It can't be done by a simple jab of knife. A tree grows slowly by consuming the earth's nutrients. It absorbs sunlight, air and water for years. So, it cannot be killed by hacking and chopping. It causes pain but the tree does not die. Its bleeding bark heals itself. From close to the ground, its trunk produces twigs and small branches.

If they are left unchecked, they will expand to the former size. If a tree is to be killed, the roots of the tree must be pulled out from the earth-cave. After uprooting it is scorched and choked in sun and air. Then, it goes through a process of browning, hardening, twisting and withering. Ultimately, the tree is killed.

Question 3.

Justify the title of the poem 'On Killing a Tree'.

Answer:

The title, 'On Killing a Tree' is ironical, and is apt and justified. The tree has been personified by the poet Gieve Patel. He laments the deforestation that is taking place. The poet says that the act of killing a tree is a ceremonial task. The tree grows up

consuming nutrients from the soil and absorbing sun, air and water and becomes stronger.

A simple jab with a knife, or hacking and chopping cannot kill a tree, because the tree will regenerate. To kill a tree, the roots have to be pulled out of the anchoring earth, exposed to the sunlight and air for scorching and choking. The act of killing a tree becomes complete when the tree becomes completely withered and dies.

Question 4.

How can a tree be killed in 'On Killing a Tree'. Or, How does the poet describe the methods of killing a tree in the poem 'On Killing a Tree'?

Answer:

In the poem 'On Killing a Tree', the poet Gieve Patel describes how a tree is tortured by man for its complete annihilation. Killing a tree is a difficult task because a tree grows slowly by consuming the earth and absorbing sunlight and air. It cannot be killed by a simple jab of knife, or even by hacking and chopping. The bleeding bark of the tree will heal itself, sending out shoots and branches that will help it regrow to its former size.

The tree's roots are firmly fixed in the anchoring earth and, in order to kill a tree, it must be uprooted. It is to be roped, tied and pulled out from the earth-cave. After uprooting, the root is to be exposed to sunlight, and air for scorching and choking. Then, it goes through a process of browning, hardening, twisting and withering. Then only is the tree killed completely.

Question 5.

Give a brief summary of the poem.

Answer:

The poet speaks about the killing of a tree. He says that a lot of work has to be done in order to kill a tree and it cannot be killed by merely attacking it with an axe. The tree has fed upon the earth and grown from its crust by absorbing water from the soil for many years. It has also taken years of sunlight and oxygen to grow. Hacking and chopping is not enough for killing it as the bark heals itself. The part of the trunk which is close to the ground may give rise to new twigs, and the discoloured bark of the tree gives rise to new leaves.

Soon the tree grows to its former size. The poet says that to kill a tree one must attack its roots by pulling it out of the earth where it has been hiding safely all these years. When the root is pulled out of the earth, it is white and wet as it is very sensitive. The root, which is the strength of the tree, is then left exposed to the air and the sun where it starts drying and discolouring. It goes through stages of browning, hardening, twisting and withering before it finally dies.

REFERENCE TO CONTEXT

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

Question 1.

*It takes much time to kill a tree,
Not a simple jab of the knife
Will do it. It has grown
Slowly consuming the earth,
Rising out of it, feeding
Upon its crust, absorbing
Years of sunlight, air, water,
And out of its leprous hide
Sprouting leaves.*

(a) Why does it take so much time to kill a tree?

Answer:

It takes much time to kill because killing a tree is not a simple or easy task.

(b) What does it consume?

Answer:

The tree consumes nutrients from the soil.

(c) What does a tree absorb?

Answer:

It absorbs sunlight, air and water

(d) Explain "leprous hide".

Answer:

Leprous hide means the disfigured and irregular bark of the tree which seems as if it is diseased or suffering from leprosy.

Question 2.

*It takes much time to kill a tree,
Not a simple jab of the knife
Will do it. It has grown
Slowly consuming the earth,
Rising out of it, feeding
Upon its crust, absorbing
Years of sunlight, air, water,
And out of its leprous hide '
Sprouting leaves.*

(a) What kind of task is it to kill a tree?

Answer:

It is very difficult task to kill a tree and it takes much time

(b) Why can a “simple jab of the knife” not kill a tree?

Answer:

The tree is too strong to be killed by a simple jab of the knife as it is firmly held by the earth for so many years and its roots are safe.

(c) How is the task of cutting a tree represented in the poem?

Answer:

The task of cutting a tree is represented as a killing or murder of a tree.

(d) What happens if the branches of a tree are cut off?

Answer:

The branches that are cut off are replaced by new boughs, which will grow into their former size.

Question 3.

So hack and chop

But this alone won't do it.

Not so much pain will do it.

The bleeding bark will heal

And from close to the ground

Will rise curled green twigs,

Miniature boughs

Which if unchecked will expand again

To former size.

(a) Why does the poet say ‘killing’ a tree rather than cutting it?

Answer:

The tree has been personified and hence the word ‘killing’ instead of ‘cutting’ has been used.

(b) “But this alone won't do it..- What does ‘this’ refer to here? What does ‘it’ refer to?

Answer:

The word ‘this’ refers to hacking and chopping of the tree. ‘It’ refers to the killing of a tree

(c) What does the phrase ‘bleeding bark’ mean?

Answer:

“Bleeding bark” refers to the area on the tree trunk where it has been hit with the axe, It bleeds because the wood cutter has wounded the tree by cutting and chopping it. The area is oozing sap.

(d) What are processes suggested to do it?

Answer:

The root of the tree has to be roped, tied and pulled out entirely from the earth-cave till the root of the tree is exposed. It will then shrivel, choke and die.

Question 4.

So hack and chop

But this alone won't do it.

Not so much pain will do it.

The bleeding bark will heal

And from close to the ground

Will rise curled green twigs,

Miniature boughs

Which if unchecked will expand again

To former size.

(a) Explain "hack and chop"?

Answer:

Hack or chop means to cut off something, usually with a sharp instrument or weapon.

(b) What do you mean by 'not so much pain will do it'?

Answer:

It means that hacking and chopping of the tree will cause it pain but will not kill it.

(c) Where will the curling green twigs rise from?

Answer:

After hacking and chopping the curling green twigs will rise from the remaining part of tree that is close to the ground.

(d) What finally kills the tree?

Answer:

Uprooting the tree and exposing its roots to heat and scorching and choking them kills the tree.

Question 5.

No,

The root is to be pulled out –

Out of the anchoring earth;

It is to be roped, tied,

And pulled out-snapped out

Or pulled out entirely,

Out from the earth-cave,

And the strength of the tree exposed

The source, white and wet,

*The most sensitive, hidden
For years inside the earth.*

(a) What does the poet mean by the word “No”?

Answer:

The poet says “No” in the beginning of the third stanza suggesting that a simple jab of knife will not kill a tree. It will grow again.

(b) Why should the root be pulled out?

Answer:

Pulling out its root is the only way of killing a tree.

(c) What is the meaning of “anchoring earth”?

Answer:

Anchoring earth’ implies that the trees are held secure with the help of the roots in the earth. So long as the roots are firmly held by the earth, the tree is safe and cannot be killed by a simple jab of a knife.

(d) What is the condition of the root of the tree?

Answer:

The root of the tree looks wet and white.

Question 6.

No,

The root is to be pulled out –

Out of the anchoring earth;

It is to be roped, tied,

And pulled out-snapped out

Or pulled out entirely,

Out from the earth-cave,

And the strength of the tree exposed

The source, white and wet,

The most sensitive, hidden

For years inside the earth.

(a) Where does the strength of the tree lie?

Answer:

The real strength of a tree lies in its roots.

(b) How does the earth protect the tree?

Answer:

The earth protects the tree by giving it nourishment and allowing its root to spread under the earth.

(c) What role do the sun and air play in killing a tree?

Answer:

The sun and the air play a vital role in killing a tree by scorching and choking the root.

(d) Explain the meaning of “earth cave”?

Answer:

‘Earth-cave’ suggests the space created in the earth by uprooting a tree. When the roots are pulled out of the earth, the large hollow where the roots were hidden, is exposed.

Question 7.

Then the matter

Of scorching and choking

In sun and air,

Browning, hardening,

Twisting, withering,

And then it is done.

(a) How do the roots look like when they are pulled out?

Answer:

When the roots are pulled out, they are white and wet.

(b) What happens to the tree after it is pulled out?

Answer:

The root gets scorched and choked after it is pulled out. It becomes brown, hardens and withers.

(c) What happens to the tree after withering?

Answer:

It is killed after withering.

(d) “And then it is done” – What is done?

Answer:

The act of killing a tree completely is accomplished; the tree is killed.

Question 8.

Then the matter

Of scorching and choking

In sun and air,

Browning, hardening,

Twisting, withering,

And then it is done.

(a) "Then the matter.." What does 'Then' refer to?

Answer:

'Then' here refers to what happens to the root after it is exposed,

(b) What role do the sun and air play in killing a tree?

Answer:

The sun and the air play a vital role in killing a tree by scorching and choking the root after it is pulled out.

(c) "The strength of the tree exposed." Explain.

Answer:

The root, which is the strength of a tree, must be pulled out of its cave, in order to kill the tree.

(d) What will happen if the miniature boughs are left unchecked?

Answer:

If the miniature boughs are left unchecked, they will expand to their former size.