

THE LAST STONE MASON

LESSON OVERVIEW

| L.No. | Title of the Lesson | Skills | | | Grammar/Figures of speech | Life Skills |
|-------|----------------------|--|-------------------------|----------------|---|---|
| | | Listening/speaking | Reading | Writing | | |
| 13 | The Last Stone Mason | Motivational speech using contracted forms | Prose (narrative story) | Report writing | Past perfect tense, statements, interrogative forms, use of non-finites ('ing' words) | Empathy, Valuing our heritage and culture |

SUMMARY

'The Last Stone Mason' is a story of a sculptor who belonged to a family of artisans where the traditional art was handed down from one generation to another. For generations, the family had been carving statues of gods and goddesses for temples. The old mason found much pleasure and satisfaction in doing so. Although he turned out beautifully carved statues, he did not earn much money. But he loved his profession so much that he couldn't think of doing anything else to make more money. His young son, however, had a different opinion. He was young and ambitious and refused to pursue the family profession. He felt that it would be better to relocate to Agra and trade in gifts for tourists which are mass produced in factories. These were quick selling items and an individual could make more money in a short time. He decided to move to Agra leaving his old father alone. The old mason was saddened by this development. He worried that if the entire young generation thought like his son, there would be no one to pursue the tradition and then it would soon die; in that case, he would be the last stone mason left in this world.

The Mason, however, had a young helper, Salim (his son's age). Salim had seen his master's passion for his art and how worried he was. He had admired his skills and secretly practised stone sculpting at the quarry. He knew that perfection comes when people do things out of love. One day, the mason fell unconscious while working. When he regained his consciousness, he heard a hammering sound from the adjacent room. He thought perhaps his son had returned but when he peeped in, he saw, to his pleasant surprise, young Salim trying to complete his work.

He was happy – at last his fears were allayed.

PRINCIPAL POINTS

- Most arts like sculpting, music, dance forms, etc. are part of a family tradition and have been handed down from one generation to another.

- Families take pride in their art.
- Most art forms were dedicated to gods and goddesses; so people felt that they were serving God and derived happiness from the thought.

- Artisans generally lived in a state of poverty as their art did not fetch them much money.
- The new generation does not conform to the ideals of their forefathers. They are more ambitious and want to be rich. So they are not interested in pursuing the family tradition.
- If this happens, countries will lose their rich culture and heritage.

LET'S LEARN NEW EXPRESSIONS

- Literature is not just a compilation of stories for amusement and enriching language. Through stories, one gets to understand not just what people did but also their thoughts, emotions, etc. This also gives a glimpse of the art, culture and traditions of a society.
- Stories help readers to analyse why characters behave the way they do.

ENHANCE YOUR PERFORMANCE

Report Writing

A report is a systematic, well-organised document which defines and analyses a subject or problem, and may include:

- the record of a sequence of events/happenings
- an interpretation of the significance of these events or facts

The most common types of reports that we see in our day-to-day life are newspaper reports or those of events held by one's organisation.

Reports must have the following two features:

Format

- Place, date and name of the reporter
- Headings and sub-headings

Content

- Accurate and to the point
- Narrate events without bias
- Written in the third person and the past tense

GRAMMAR

I. 1. Present Perfect Tense

- In the lesson, "Kondiba – A Hero", you learnt about Past Perfect Tense.
- You will recall that 'tense' denotes a verb which also tells us something about the time of an action.
- You will also recall that Past Perfect Tense tells us that an action was completed in the past.
- You can, therefore, guess that the Present Perfect Tense tells us that an action has just been completed in the recent past time and is relevant in the present time also. It uses the following pattern: has/have + past participle
E.g. I **have finished** reading the book.
(have + finished)

The plane **has landed**. (has + landed)

2. To construct a sentence with a negative meaning we use *not* or *never* between has/have and past participle

E.g. We **have never flown** in an aircraft. (have + never + flown)

She has **not finished** her project. (has + not + finished)

3. Interrogative sentences using the present perfect tense

- Interrogative sentences ask questions. To make interrogative sentences in present perfect tense we start the sentence with 'en' form of words or use do/have/has + pronoun/noun + past participle.

E.g. Has she seen the movie 'Taare Zamin Par'?' (has + she + seen)

What **have you decided** to do now?
What + have + you + decided)

4. Non-finite verbs using 'ing'

- There are some verbs to which the suffixes 'ing' or 'ed' are attached but they do not function as main verbs.

Such verbs are called non finite verbs. They do not undergo any change even when the subject changes. Also, they do not tell us anything about time.

E.g. **Rama loves** playing cricket.

Rama loved playing cricket.

They love playing cricket.

- In all the above sentences you would have noticed that the word ‘playing’ did not undergo any change even when the underlined words (subject + verb) changed.
- In this lesson you have practised only ‘ing’ form of non –finites. You will learn about ‘ed’ forms later.

II. Adverbs of manner

- An adverb of manner is a word which tells us how some action happens.

E.g. He worked **tirelessly**.

She spoke **softly**.

- The underlined words tell us something more about the verbs ‘worked’ and ‘spoke’.
- Most adverbs of manner use ‘ly’ at the end.

TEST TYPES

1. MCQ/Objective type question (inferential type)

When the mason told Salim, ‘Go ahead, you have it in your heart’, he meant that:

- Salim was very good at chiselling stones.
- Salim was a sincere and creative craftsman.
- Salim was passionate about sculpting.
- Salim loved and respected the old stone mason.

2. VSA type (higher order thinking)

Complete the following statement.

The word ‘goodbye’ in the lesson is suggestive of two types of meaning –literal and figurative.

In the literal sense, the word ‘goodbye’ is an act of leaving. The hidden meaning of this word could also mean

3. SA (inferential)

Why does the mason tell Salim, ‘There is nothing I can teach you’? Answer in 30-40 words.

4. LA (extrapolatory)

Unless the government takes some serious steps to promote the arts and the artisans, the future of the traditional arts is bleak. Discuss the statement in the light of the story, ‘The Last Stone Mason’.

Or

Industrialisation will pronounce the death of traditional arts. Do you agree?