

The Rabbit by Alan Brownjohn

(Questions and answers)

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ONE MARK QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. What do the people wish to see in the poem **The Rabbit**?

Ans. The rabbit.

2. What do the children ask the people who are going to see the rabbit?

Ans. They ask which rabbit the people would see.

3. Which rabbit do the people wish to see?

Ans. The only rabbit in England.

4. Where do the people expect the rabbit to be seen nibbling the grass?

Ans. Behind a barbed-wire fence.

5. What is the fence made of?

Ans. Barbed-wire.

6. What do the people expect the rabbit to be doing sitting behind the barbed wire?

Ans. Nibbling the grass.

7. The only rabbit is in

a) America b) England c) Australia

Ans. B) England.

8. Where is the 'patch of grass' that doesn't count in the poem **The Rabbit**?

Ans. By the hoardings.

9. What is the first means of transport used by the people?

Ans. Escalator.

10. What is the mode of transport used after the escalator?

Ans. Motorway.

11. What is the mode of transport used after the motorway?

Ans. Helicopterway.

12. How do the people travel the last ten yards in **The Rabbit**?

Ans. On foot.

13. What distance do the people cover on foot in **The Rabbit**?

Ans. Ten yards.

14. What does the rabbit nibble?

Ans. Grass.

15. Why was everyone suddenly angry while at the exhibition?

Ans. Because the rabbit had gone.

16. Why were the people at the exhibition jostling/slanging/complaining?

Ans. Because the rabbit had gone.

17. In **The Rabbit** the people were disappointed because

- a) the rabbit was quite ordinary
- b) the rabbit had disappeared
- c) they were not allowed to cross the fence.

Ans. B) the rabbit had disappeared.

18. The rabbit had gone under the

- a) table
- b) escalator
- c) ground

Ans. C) ground.

19. Where does the rabbit hide itself after going under the earth?

Ans. In the warren.

20. At the end of the poem, the rabbit disappears into

- a) the forest
- b) London city
- c) the warren

Ans. c) the warren.

21. The people returned from the exhibition with a feeling of

- a) disappointment
- b) satisfaction
- c) longing

Ans. a) disappointment.

FOUR MARKS QUESTIONS AND MODEL ANSWERS:

Q. 1. Describe the fanfare of the people in *The Rabbit*.

Ans. The people were excited at the prospect of seeing the only rabbit in England. They announced about it to everyone they met. They felt privileged to visit the rabbit's exhibition because the rabbit had gained an astounding popularity due to its rarity.

The people needed to undertake a tedious journey which involved traveling through different modes of transport like the escalator, motorway, and 'helicopterway'. The atmosphere at the rabbit exhibition site increased their longing all the more to see the rabbit. But when they were almost at the verge of seeing the rabbit, they were shocked to realize that the rabbit had disappeared into a warren under the ground. This left the visitors angry and disappointed.

Q. 2. Bring out the significance of ‘the only patch of grass’ and ‘the only rabbit’.

Ans. In his poem **The Rabbit**, Alan Brownjohn writes about how man has destroyed nature due to his self-centeredness. The poet envisages a world where the last surviving rabbit is being exhibited in England. The ‘only rabbit’ is supposed to be sitting on the ‘only patch of grass’ and nibbling it.

Unchecked deforestation, urbanization, and industrialization seem to be the cause of the dire situation in which the last surviving creature is seen sitting on the last patch of grass. The poet indirectly conveys a warning that if man does not stop his habit of taking undue advantage of nature; he will end up as a loser.

Q. 3. How does the poet throw light on the evil effects of urbanization in The Rabbit?

Ans. In the poem **The Rabbit**, Alan Brownjohn presents a world devoid of nature and wildlife. The last surviving rabbit is exhibited with great fanfare in England. The rampant process of urbanization seems to be the root cause of the destruction of world’s flora and fauna.

Man is guilty of destroying forests in the name of development and progress. Urbanization is of course essential, but at what cost, seems to be the pertinent question. It needs to be understood that industrialization is not only a boon, but also a bane to mankind. In the face of the dire situation man is forced to ask a question to himself as to what he can do now to set things right. The last rabbit missing from its place leaves man in a state of shock and disappointment.

Q. 4. Where did the rabbit disappear and what was its apprehension.

Ans. In the poem **The Rabbit**, the only rabbit in England is being exhibited with great fanfare. The rabbit is probably exhausted by the bright lights and the din created by the visitors and the noise of the loudspeakers and bands. It is tired of being in the limelight for wrong reasons.

The rabbit is so scared of man that it disappears into a warren under the ground. But the rabbit does not feel safe even in its own warren; for it fears that sooner or later man will intrude its privacy and find it. This thought makes the rabbit feel sad and lonely.

Q. 5. How is man responsible for the present misery of the rabbit?

Ans. In the urbanized world created by Alan Brownjohn in his poem **The Rabbit**, man has utterly destroyed the flora and fauna of the world. The last surviving rabbit has gained incredible popularity due to its rarity. It is being exhibited to the public. But the rabbit is not pampered by all the glory accorded to it. Instead it is scared and lonely. The rabbit feels lonely for it is the only living rabbit. It is scared at the thought that it wouldn’t take much time for man to finish it off. The rabbit finds itself in a miserable situation.

Q. 6. ‘And what shall we do? What can we do?’ Comment on the significance of these lines from *The Rabbit*.

Ans. *The Rabbit* by Alan Brownjohn presents the picture of the only rabbit in England. People from far away places rush to see the ‘only rabbit in England’ sitting and nibbling grass on ‘the only patch of grass’. They are excited and come with great expectations hoping to see the rabbit. But their excitement is short-lived for they suddenly realize that the rabbit had disappeared. The sudden reversal of their hopes leaves them gasping and wondering. They become angry and start jostling, slanging, and complaining. Now that they are unable to see the rabbit, they ask, “And what shall we do?” Another inevitable question dawns on their minds, “What *can* we do?” They probably realize that the situation had become too grave to be rectified.

SIX MARKS QUESTIONS & MODEL ANSWERS:

Q. 1 M. K. Gandhi said, “Urbanization is a cancerous growth”. Do you agree that Alan Brownjohn concurs with the idea of Gandhi? Substantiate.

Ans. People commonly believe that urbanization is a symbol of progress. That of course, it is. But Alan Brownjohn wishes to expose the darker side of the process of urbanization. He hints upon the thought that industrialization and urbanization are achieved at a great cost. So man needs to do some rethinking about his treatment of Nature. Man’s greed has taken a heavy toll on nature and deforestation has been the inevitable end of it all. The poet’s words ‘the last patch of grass’ is very poignant in this connection.

By saying that urbanization is a cancerous growth, Gandhi made it clear that the end result of urbanization can never be good. Utter destruction of wildlife is one of the negative by-products of urbanization. Brownjohn definitely seems to concur with this idea of Gandhi. In his poem the world is presented is one without much flora and fauna. At the end of the poem man is left disappointed and the rabbit sad. Neither man nor animal is left happy. This tragic situation can logically be the only end where excessive urbanization and industrialization take place.

Q. 2. Bring out the irony in the poem *The Rabbit*.

Ans. *The Rabbit* by Alan Brownjohn is a wonderful piece of work challenging the very outlook of man towards the world, towards other creatures, and towards his own self. Modern man is so much obsessed by the mantra of progress that he has simply become blind to the ill effects that progress brings along with it. Brownjohn is very effective in his ironical presentation of man who thinks of himself as wise, but acts like a fool. By destroying nature in the name of progress, man has hit the axe on his own foot. Instead of being shocked by the fact that there is only one rabbit in England, people appear jubilant and excited. Their callous attitude and their disregard for nature is most evident in the poem.

The modes of transport may superficially speak of man's achievement, but as an understatement, they ironically depict how man has made his own life miserable and tedious. The people intend to see the rabbit but eventually fail to do so, for the rabbit had hid itself under the ground. They express their anger at not being able to see the rabbit. But they don't seem to regret their share of responsibility in creating this strange situation.

Though the rabbit is the last living one, it has no protection whatsoever. It feels threatened by man even while sitting in its warren. Man, sooner or later, will hunt the last living rabbit too.

The note of irony reaches its climax when the poet makes the rabbit feel pity for humans. Though humans have ill treated the other creatures, here is a rabbit that is magnanimous enough to show pity on man.

Q. 3. How does the poet Alan Brownjohn describe the plight of endangered species?

Ans. The Rabbit, written by Alan Brownjohn, is a beautiful and thought-provoking poem. The rabbit in the poem becomes a symbolic representative of all the endangered species. A very common creature like it has acquired astounding popularity due to its rarity. The words, 'the only rabbit in England' ring loud announcing total extinction of animals due to man's disregard of Nature.

Brownjohn seems to suggest that man has been slaughtering all creatures indiscriminately for his own selfish ends. The poet warns of a day that might dawn without any flora and fauna left on this earth. He fears that if man doesn't stop promoting his selfish needs at the cost of other creatures' lives, he risks heading towards a dire situation.

England is described as having just the last existing rabbit. It is exhibited with great pomp and splendor. People flock to see it. The rabbit is supposed to be sitting behind a fence of barbed-wire. The words 'fence' and 'barbed-wire' suggest among other things seclusion, cruelty, and an artificial habitat.

The rabbit is in a miserable plight. It hides under the ground in a warren. It is scared of man and fears that he would, sooner or later, find it and do the damage. The idea of 'one rabbit' itself is indicative of the fact that it is the end of all rabbits, as reproduction is impossible by a single rabbit.

Q. 4. Bring out the contrast between the natural world and the man-made world as depicted in the poem The Rabbit.

Alan Brownjohn's poem **The Rabbit** presents the natural world juxtaposed with the man-made world. The rabbit in the poem is representative of the natural world. The words 'only rabbit in England' and 'only patch of grass' imply that man has systematically destroyed the natural world and has brought it to the brink of complete extinction. The last remnants of world's flora and fauna are being exhibited for the public.

The man-made world represented by the words like ‘escalator’, ‘underground’, ‘motorway’, ‘helicopterway’, etc. show how man’s life is not simple any more. The people have to undertake a tedious journey just to see a rabbit. Words like ‘floodlights’, ‘neon lights’, ‘sodium lights’ stand for the commercial world that man has created. The poet seems to suggest that in the man-made world everything is profit-oriented. The words ‘fence’ and ‘barbed-wire’ imply isolation, selfishness, and cruelty. There is little scope for kinder human emotions.

The anger of the visitors, made obvious by their jostling, slanging, and complaining, definitely shows that ‘something has gone wrong’ in the man-made world. When the rabbit goes missing, people face two pertinent questions: “And what shall we do? What *can* we do? A sense of hopelessness prevails within man.

Q. 5. Why does the rabbit become a spectacle in England?

Ans. England is known for its greenery and abundance of rabbits. Alan Brownjohn in his poem **The Rabbit** presents England as exhibiting its last living rabbit; a situation that has cropped up due to man’s indiscriminate killing of all creatures in order to promote urbanization of the whole world. An ordinary creature like a rabbit has gained incredible popularity because of its rarity.

People are excited at the prospect of seeing the rabbit. They announce the matter to everybody saying, “We are going to see the rabbit, We are going to see the rabbit” They travel from far away places with the hope of watching the rabbit sitting and nibbling grass ‘on the only patch of grass’. They undertake a tedious journey of traveling through escalators, motorways, helicopterways, etc. to reach the spot where the rabbit is exhibited.

Elaborate arrangements are made at the site of the exhibition of the rabbit. There are mounted policemen patrolling the area. Loudspeakers and banners are used. The bands play music. The floodlights, neon lights, and sodium lights are used to keep the rabbit in the lime light. By virtue of it being the last rabbit in England, it has become a rare spectacle.

ANNUAL QUESTION PAPERS OF PREVIOUS YEARS

July, 2006

How is man responsible for the state of misery as depicted through the phrases “the only patch of grass” and “the only rabbit” in The Rabbit?

March, 2007

How does Alan Brownjohn explain the effects of urbanization through the phrases ‘only rabbit’ and ‘only patch of grass’?

March, 2008

How do the phrases ‘the only rabbit in England’ and ‘the only patch of grass’ reflect upon the prevailing situation all over the world, in the poem The Rabbit?

June, 2008

The poem The Rabbit is a grim warning about the evil effects of urbanization. Discuss.

March, 2009

What light does the poem ‘The Rabbit’ throw on the evil effects of urbanization?

June, 2009

‘People go to see the rabbit with a lot of fanfare.’ How is it brought out in the poem?

June, 2010

Bring out the significance of the phrases ‘the only patch of grass’ and ‘the only rabbit in England’.

NOTE MAKING

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Note:

Note making is similar to comprehension exercise except that we don't have to write complete sentences as answers. Mere words are enough as answers.

Purpose:

To develop the skill of making notes while reading.

Uses:

- Facilitates reading comprehension.
- Helps easy recall when required.

Question no. 39

Read the following passage and make notes by drawing and filling in the boxes given below.

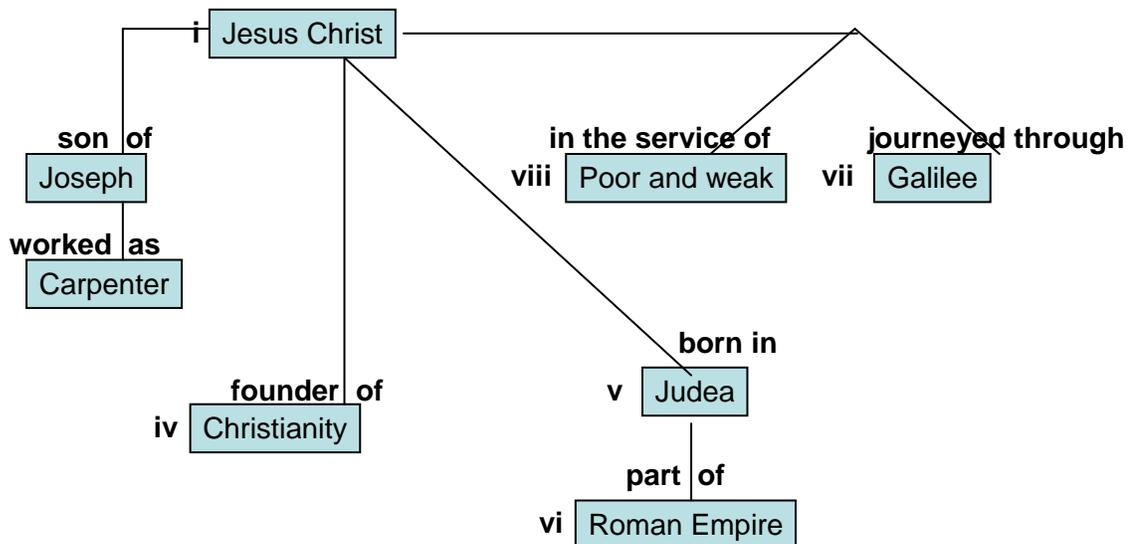
Method of Note Making

1. First read the complete passage carefully to know its main subject. Most of the times the main subject will be the word/words for the first box.
2. Next look at the diagram of boxes especially paying attention to the link words printed along with the boxes. These clues will guide you in filling the right words in the right places.
3. It is of utmost importance to notice the numbers given beside the boxes. Care should be taken to see that the sequence expected is not violated.

Collected examples

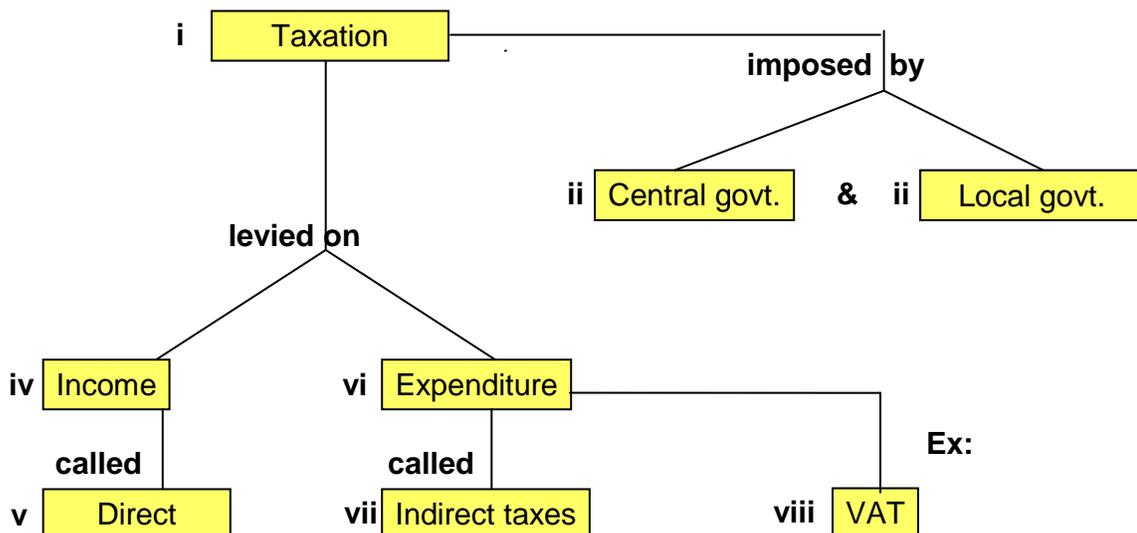
Example 1

Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, was born in a poor family in a province called Judea. The province was then a part of the Roman Empire. Jesus' father Joseph was a carpenter. At the age of thirty, Jesus was baptized by his cousin, John. Then he undertook two missionary journeys through Galilee. Between A.D. 30 and 33, he was engaged in the service of the poor and the weak. He showed them love and sympathy; and upheld the importance of peace and forgiveness.



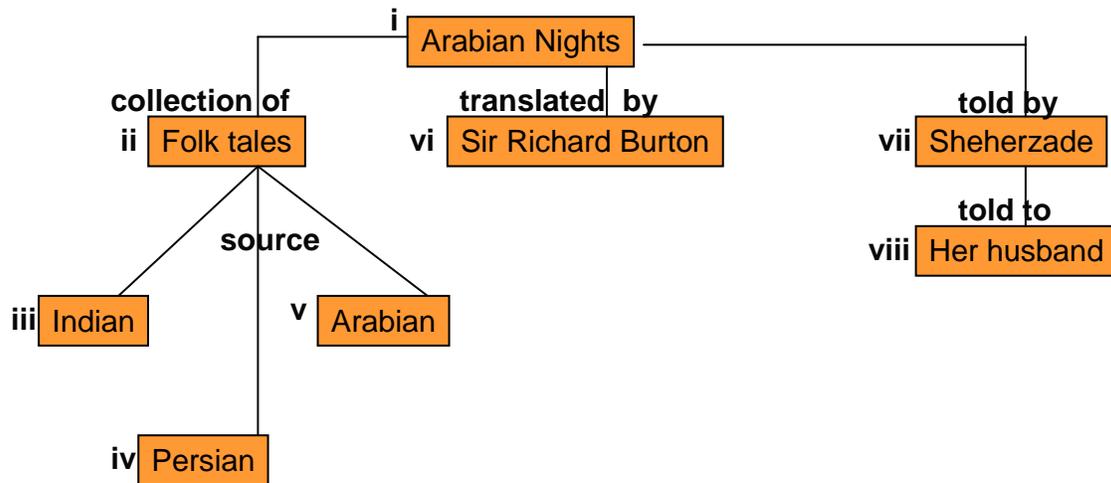
Example 2

Taxation is compulsory levy imposed by central and local governments. Most taxes are levied on income and expenditure. Taxes on income and capital gains are called direct taxes, while those on expenditure, such as VAT, are called indirect taxes.



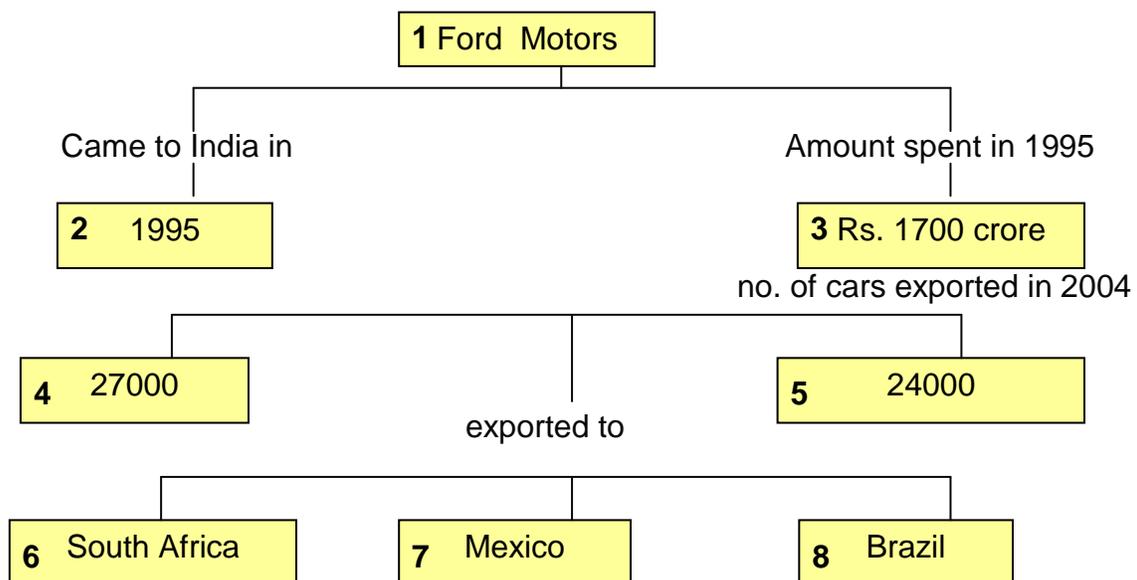
Example 3

The Arabian Nights is a collection of folk tales from Indian, Persian, and Arabian sources. One of the best known versions of the work is the English translation made by the explorer Sir Richard Burton who wrote it between 1885 and 1888. The tales are told by Sheherzade to her husband, a king who was in the habit of executing his wife soon after the first night of his wedded life.



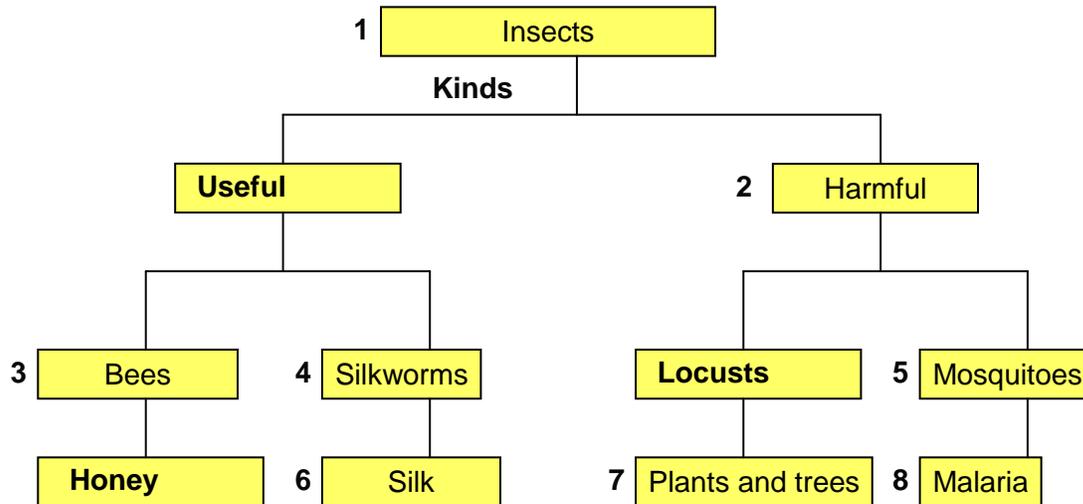
Example 4

Ford Motors, an American company, is one of the world's largest automobile manufacturers with production spread over 26 countries of the world. Ford Motors came to India in 1995 and spent Rs.1700 crore to set up a large plant near Chennai. By the year 2004, Ford Motors was selling 27000 cars in the Indian markets and 24000 cars were exported from India to South Africa, Mexico, and Brazil. The company wants to develop Ford India as a component supplying base for its other plants across the globe.



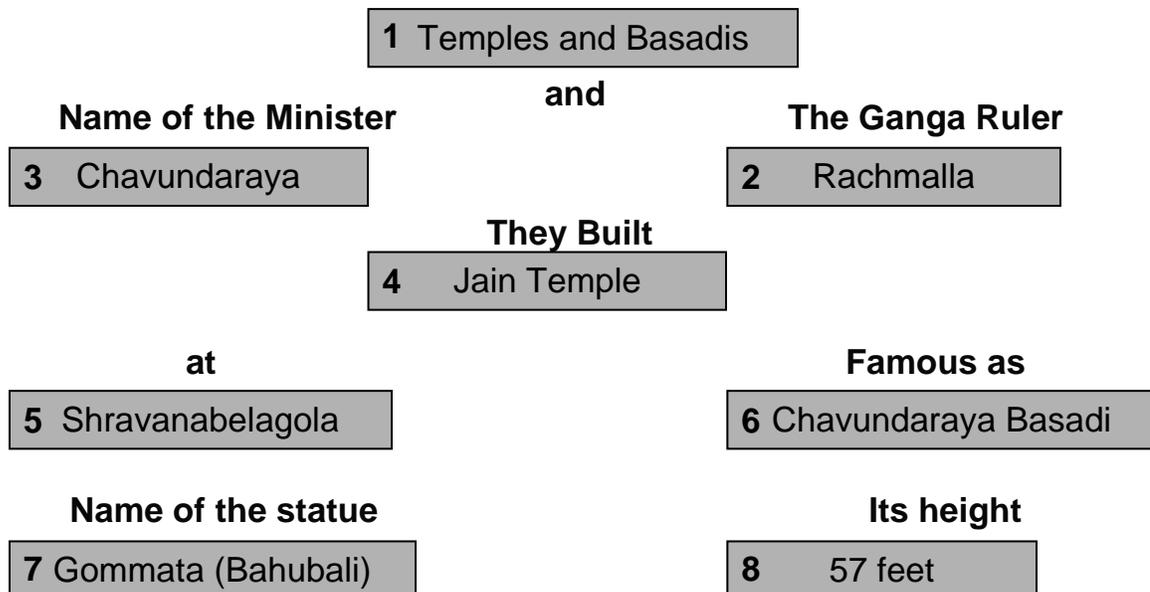
Example 5

Insects are small creatures. They are the most plentiful of all living creatures. An insect's body has three parts. Insects can be classified under two categories : those which are useful to man and those which are harmful. Bees and silkworms are examples of useful insects. Bees collect honey from flowers. Silkworms supply us with fine silk. Locusts and mosquitoes are harmful to man. Locusts eat up growing plants and trees. Mosquitoes spread dangerous diseases like malaria.



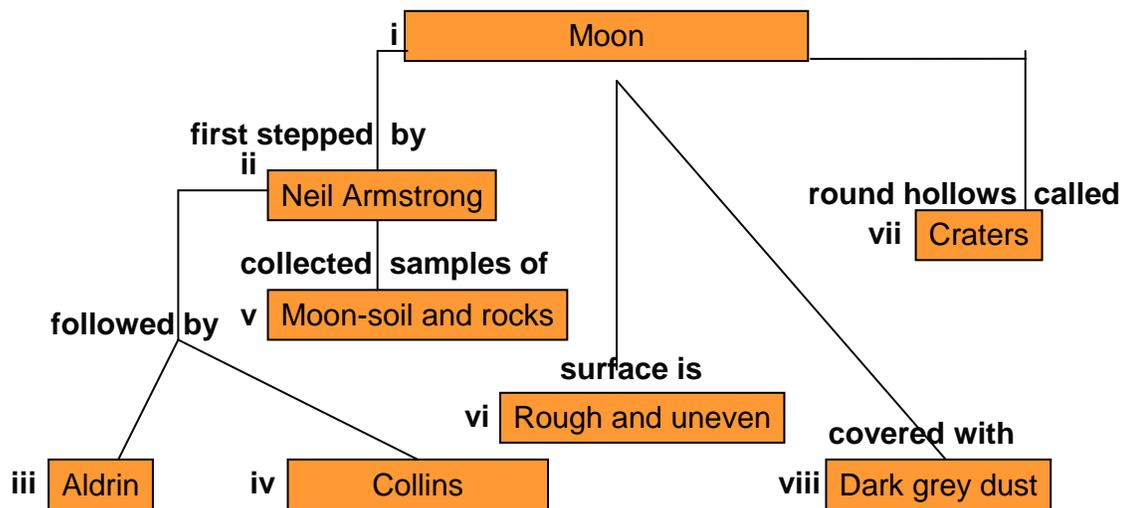
Example 6

Many temples and basadis were built during the period of the Gangas. Chavundaraya, the minister and Rachmalla, the Ganga ruler, built a beautiful Jain temple at Shravanabelagola. This has become famous as 'Chavundaraya basadi'. The statue of Gommata (Bahubali) sculpted at Shravanabelagola is the greatest monolith of the Ganga period. This statue is about 57 feet tall. This is one of the tallest monoliths of the world.



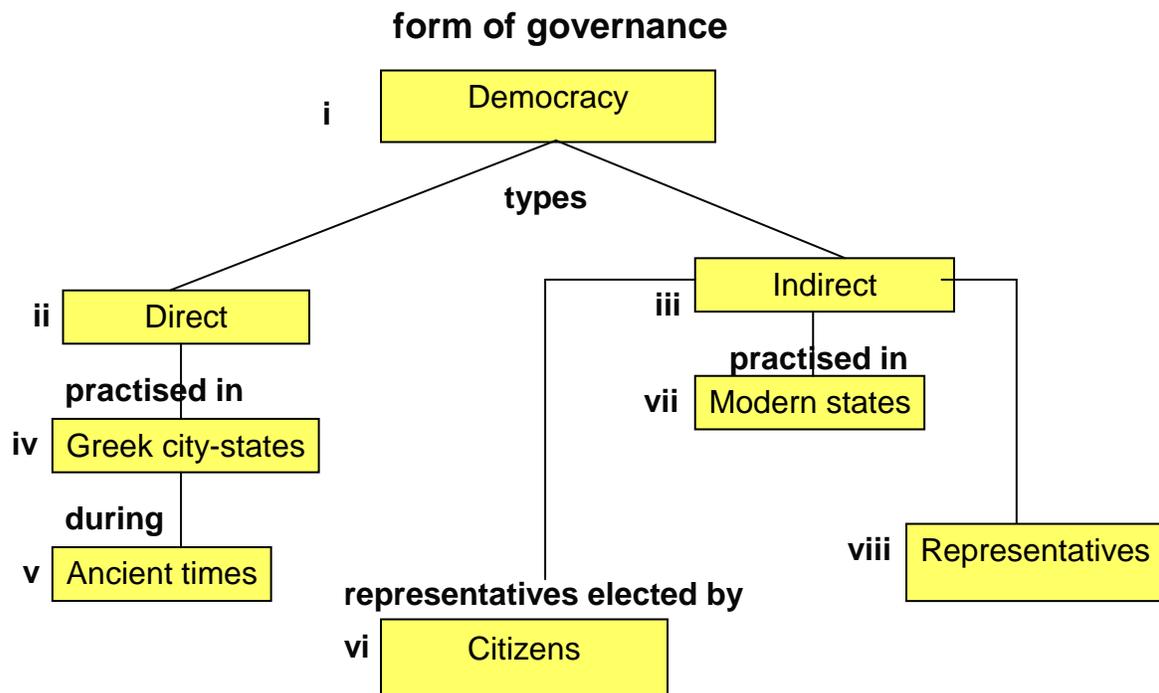
Example 7

Neil Armstrong was the first man to step on the moon followed by Aldrin and Collins. The crew collected samples of moon-soil and rocks. The photographs of the moon show that its surface is rough and uneven. There are big and round hollows called CRATERS. The moon is covered with dark grey dust. Most part of the moon is bare with rocky deserts and mountains.



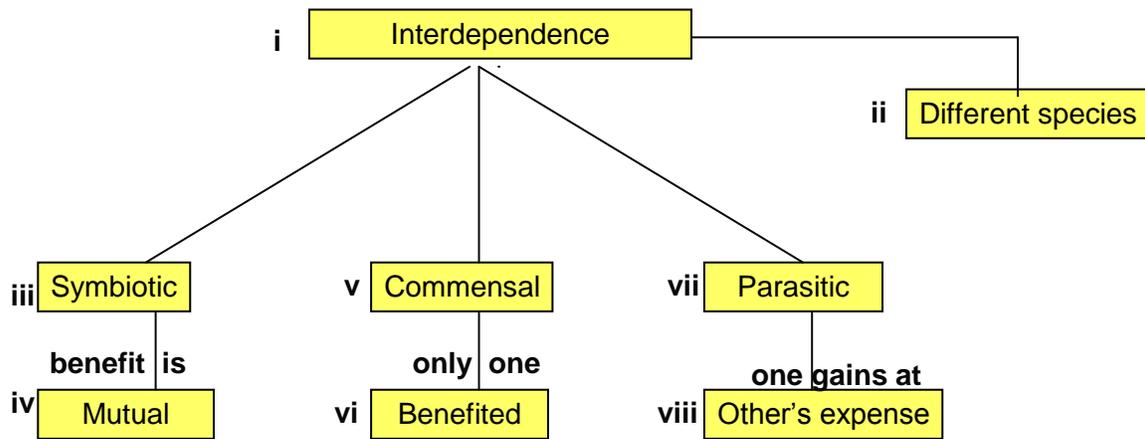
Example 8

Democracy is a form of governance. There are two types of democracy : direct and indirect. Direct democracy was practised in Greek city-states in the ancient times. In this type, each citizen directly participated in the affairs of the State. But because the modern states are populous and vast, such form of democracy is not possible now. Instead indirect democracy is practised. In this set up the citizens elect their representatives to look after the affairs of the state.



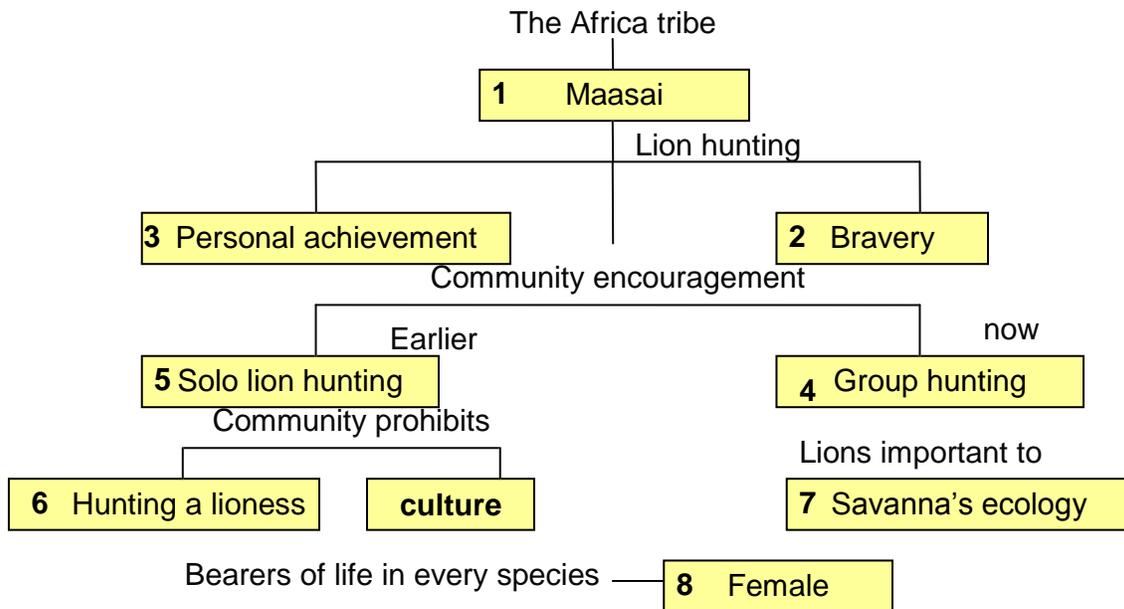
Example 9

Interdependence in nature allows three types of relationships among individuals of different species : symbiotic, commensal, and parasitic. In a symbiotic relationship there is mutual benefit. For example, a flower is fertilized when a pollinating insect obtains food from it. Where only one is benefited, the relationship is said to be commensal. If one gains at the other's expense, it is parasitic.



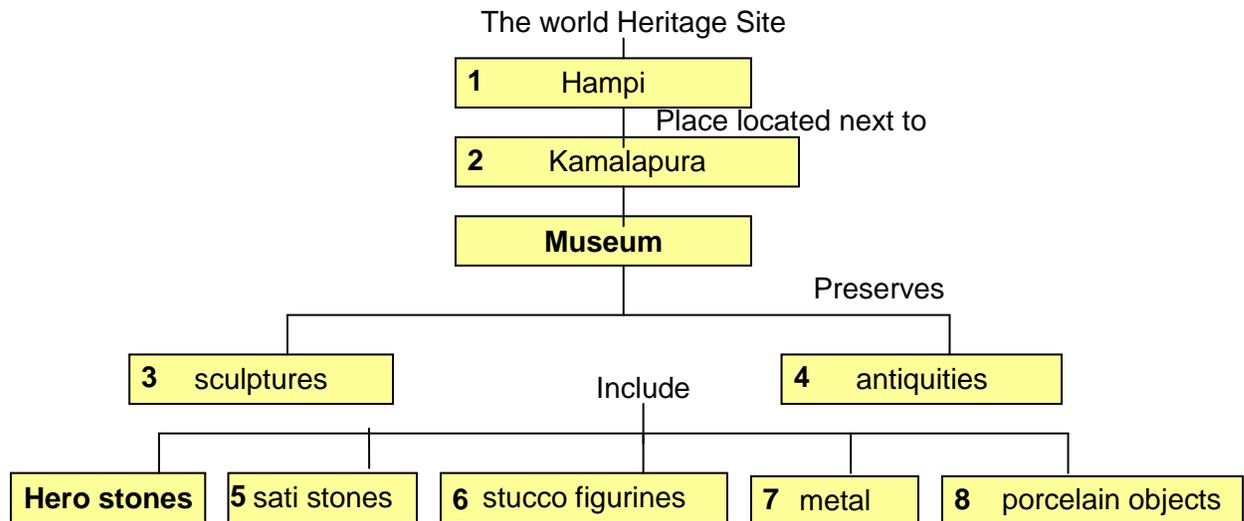
Example 10

The Maasai tribe in Africa looks at lion hunting as a sign of bravery and personal achievement. Earlier, the community encouraged solo lion hunting, but over the last ten years, due to the decline of lion population, the community has adopted a new rule that encourage group hunting. It gives the lion population a chance to grow. The Maasai prohibit hunting a lioness since females are the bearers of life in every species. The Maasai also understand that lions are important to the Savanna's ecology and culture.



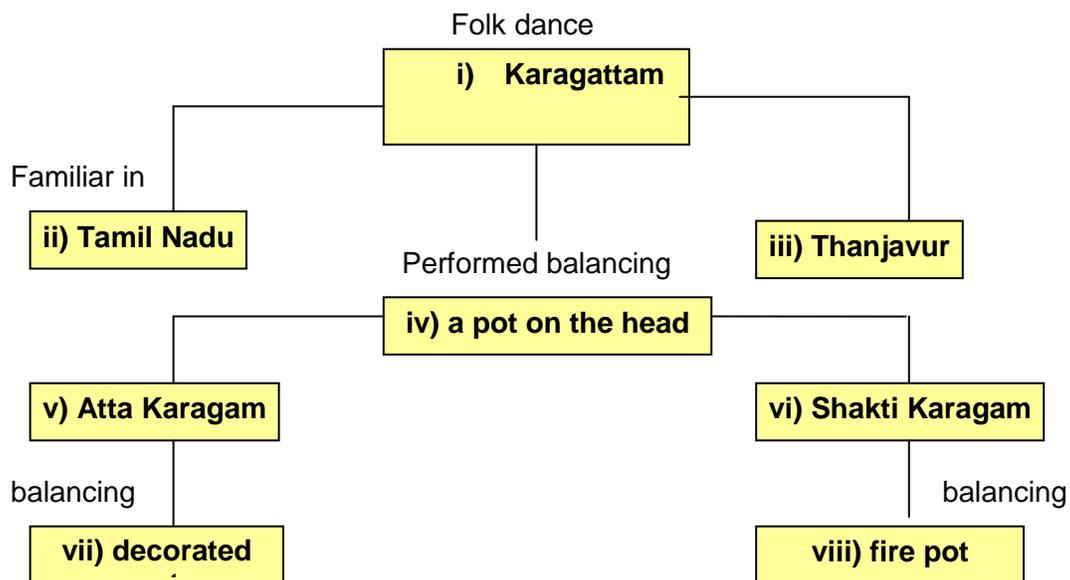
Example 11

Kamalapura is located next to the World Heritage Site, Hampi. Kamalapura has a museum which showcases Hampi's past. The Archaeological Survey of India established this museum 40 years ago for preserving sculptures and antiquities found during its archaeological excavations. Apart from beautiful idols and stone carving belonging to the Vijayanagar period, the museum has rare collections of antiquities identified with pre-historic and medieval periods. The antiquities include hero stones, sati stones, stucco figurines, metal and porcelain objects. In addition to these, the museum has various denominations of gold and copper coins.



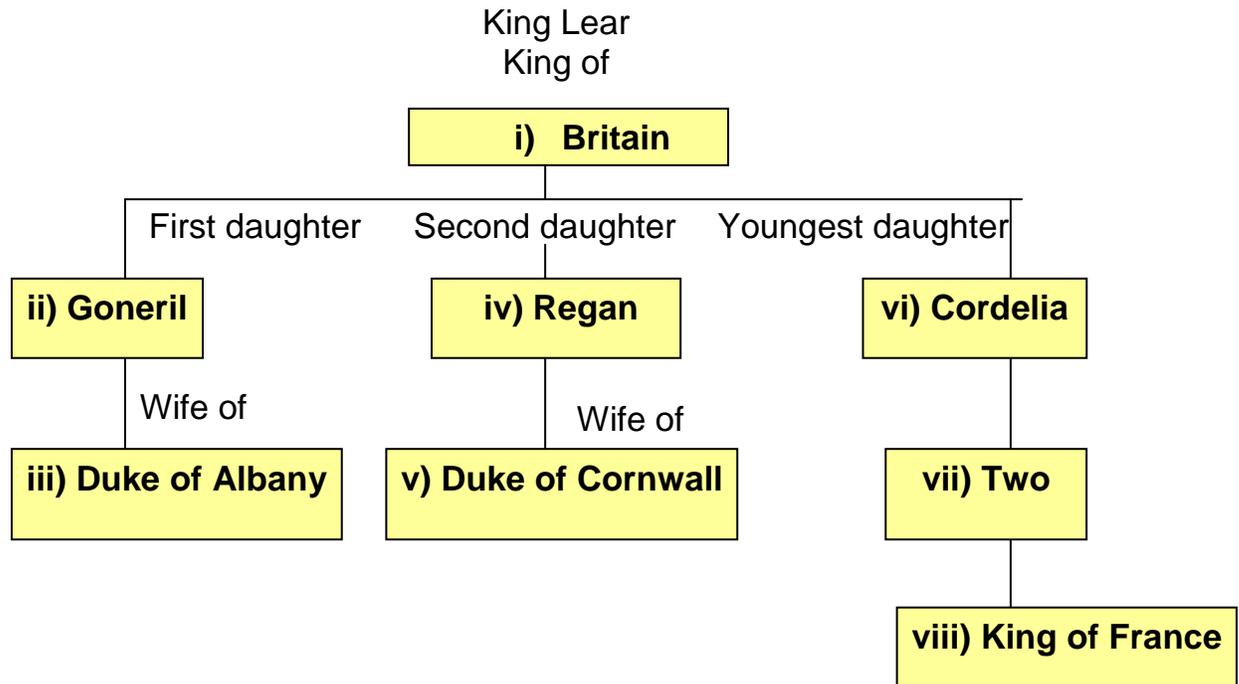
Example 12

Karagattam is a popular folk dance across Tamil Nadu. Though its birth place is said to be Thanjavur. Karagattam is performed balancing a pot on the head. It has two divisions: Atta Karagam and Shakti Karagam. While the latter is performed with fire pot on the head, the former is performed with a decorated pot.



Example 13

King Lear, King of Britain had three daughters: Goneril, the wife of Duke of Albany. The second daughter Regan, the wife of Duke of Cornwall, and the youngest daughter Cordelia who was still unmarried. Two suitors came to woo her. The first two daughters were given the kingdom, but the youngest was turned out from the kingdom. Later the King of France married her.



Example 14

Books in the form of comics and cartoons, and films provide ideal amusement to children. The word ‘comics’ originated from ‘komicos’ which meant periodicals with narrative in pictures. Cartoons are amusing drawings that excite laughter and fun amongst children. Films are made by the composition of a number of drawings presented in sequence.

