

# Indian Weavers

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learning how a seemingly simple poem deals with several layers of meaning: Poetry appreciation.
- Reading and reciting the poem correctly with the rhythm and correct emphasis.
- Answering questions on the poem.
- Learning words, meanings, spellings, pronunciation, rhymes.
- **Outcome:** Appreciation and analysis of a poem: understanding the various layers of meaning and nuances in poetry.
- Understanding the poem well.
- Learning to pronounce perfectly by reciting the poem.

- This poem is by Sarojini Naidu, who was one of India's leading freedom fighters. She came to be known as the 'Nightingale of India' because of her beautiful poetry. This poem is written in the form of a dialogue between the poet and the weavers in each stanza. It describes the weavers at work: making beautiful fabric at their looms. There are two distinct layers to the understanding of this poem. At the literal level, it describes the weavers at work. Then there is a metaphorical meaning which is about God as the Great Weaver. He weaves all our destinies on the Loom of Life. The first stanza talks about weaving a dress for a new-born child. Here the comparison is with a hummingbird – small, light and wildly flitting all over the place at great speed. The weavers are working 'at break of day', a time of hope and new ideas, a time of birth, infancy and childhood. The second stanza talks of a marriage-veil fit for a queen; it is the stage of a human being's involvement with the world – its social and family commitments and tasks. Here the comparison is with a peacock – flamboyant and confident as an adult in his prime. Here the time is the 'fall of night' – twilight, the time when the day's work is done and there is a feeling of fulfilment and looking forward to rest. The last stanza talks about weaving the shroud for a person who has died. This is white as a feather, the feather perhaps of a dove. The time is of 'the moonlight chill', the dead of the night, when all things, including the weavers, are 'solemn and still'. The thought of the poem, the time, the mood and the metaphors all form a part of the whole in a beautiful way to create this poem. It is significant that Sarojini Naidu talks of them as 'Indian Weavers' and they are weaving a blue cloth, because during the British rule one of the worst affected groups were the indigo farmers and the weavers. In order to strengthen the British textile mills and find a market for their

## Read and Understand

	<p>cheaper machine-made cloth, the British had systematically destroyed the vibrant and very prosperous handloom industry of India. This is the skill of Sarojini Naidu's work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Read aloud and enjoy the rhythm, rhyme and meaning of the poem.</li> <li>➤ Explain the poem clearly to the students so that they understand how the poet is explaining the poem.</li> <li>➤ Explain words unfamiliar or nuanced ideas to students, bringing the symbolism to their notice: halcyon; peacock, white feather; the time of day and the metaphor of the weavers.</li> <li>➤ Read aloud and enjoy the rhythm, rhyme and meaning of the poem.</li> <li>➤ Discuss the exercises and ask students to answer them orally, before writing the answers down.</li> <li>➤ Ask them to learn the poem and recite it correctly in turns in class. Correct them where necessary.</li> </ul>
<b>Word Power</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Exercise A: Briefly explain the exercise and then let the students do it on their own.</li> <li>➤ Announce the answers and the students can check their work.</li> </ul>
<b>Appreciating the Poem</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Exercise A: The students already know what alliteration means. So let them do the exercise on their own.</li> <li>➤ Exercises B and C: Let the students do these exercises on their own.</li> <li>➤ Announce the answers of Exercises A-C, and the partners can check.</li> </ul>
<b>Project Work/ AIL Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Explain the activity and give the students time to gather the information and materials required to do it. Help them with any doubts or questions they may have.</li> <li>➤ Share their work in the class.</li> </ul>