j. Describe the condition of the mariners as expressed in the thirteenth stanza.

k. Why did the mariners hang the albatross around the neck of the Ancient Mariner?

12. Like part one, the second part also has a number of literary devices. List them out in the same way as you had done in question number seven and explain them.

13. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?

14. Find examples of the use of interesting sounds from the poem and explain their effect on the reader.

1. The ice 'cracked and growled, and roared and howled'	Coleridge uses onomatopoeic words which use harsh 'ck' sounds to make the ice sound brutal. He also gives the ice animal sounds to give the impression it has come alive and is attacking the ship

15. The poem is full of strange, uncanny or supernatural elements. Discuss how these elements appear in the poem. You should consider:

- the strange weather;
- the albatross as a bird of "good omen"
- the spirit from "the land of mist and snow"
- the strange slimy creatures seen in the sea
- the ocean appearing to rot
- the death fires and sea water being referred to as witch's oil

Now write a paragraph about the supernatural elements in the poem and how they add to the events that take place in the poem.

16. Every ship is supposed to have a *log book*, which is filled in every day by the captain. If he dies, the next senior officer fills it in (usually the First Mate).. Decide on appropriate dates (the mariner's tale was supposed to be thought of as already very old when the poem was published: it should be no later than about 1700 AD; other clues to the date are the light-house and the mariner's crossbow). If you wish you can make the log look old by staining the pages, by your handwriting and spelling. Write a series of entries for the log for the important

events that take place in the ship as recorded in the poem.The first one has been done as an example

1701 AD

Today we left the shore at 3.30 p.m. under glorious sailing conditions. We have 230 men on board. We are sailing with cargo towards Portugal. The journey is expected to take 90 days. We are well stocked with food and water to last us 250 days in case of any emergency. Hopefully we will not face any untoward happenings. God be with us!

You could also do this as an oral activity, recording the entries on audio tape and using voice effects and other sound effects if you can.

17. Performing the poem

This is a very dramatic poem, excellent for reading aloud or even dramatising it. The class could be divided into groups and given the different dramatic moments from the poem to be performed as follows:

- the first storm that they encounter
- the time spent in the land of mist and snow
- the coming of the albatross and the subsequent events till they move out
- the killing of the albatross till they reach the silent seas
- the suffering of the sailors in the hot region till they hang the albatross around the Ancient Mariner's neck

18. The poem has seven parts to it. The class could be divided into five groups and each group be asked to read one part of the remaining poem. Each group would then have to report their findings. The report can be made interesting with illustrations/power point presentations. Help could be taken from the following websites:

www.online-literature.com/coleridge/646/

www.gradesaver.com/the-rime-of-the-ancient-mariner/

text.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Col2Mar.html

www.enotes.com/rime-ancient-mariner-text

19. In your groups discuss the following:

i. Why did the Ancient Mariner stop the particular wedding guest to listen to his tale?

ii. Why did he have to tell his tale to someone?

iii. What is the poet trying to convey through this poem?

P.6 Snake

D. H. Lawrence

1. **Snakes generate both horror and fascination. Do you agree? Why? Why not?**

2. **Read what W.W.E. Ross feels when he sees a snake and fill in the table given below:**

The Snake Trying

The snake trying
to escape the pursuing stick,
with sudden curvings of thin
long body. How beautiful
and graceful are his shapes!
He glides through the water away
from the stroke. O let him go
over the water
into the reeds to hide
without hurt. Small and green
he is harmless even to children.
Along the sand
he lay until observed
and chased away, and now
he vanishes in the ripples
among the green slim reeds.

What is the snake doing?	Words to describe the snake	Poet's plea

3. Read the poem by D.H. Lawrence about his encounter with a snake.

A snake came to my water-trough
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,
To drink there.
In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark **carob-tree**[1]
I came down the steps with my **pitcher**[2]
And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at the trough before me.

He reached down from a **fissure**[3] in the earth-wall in the gloom
And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down, over the edge of the stone trough
And rested his throat upon the stone bottom,
And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a small clearness,
He sipped with his straight mouth,
Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long body,
Silently.
Someone was before me at my water-trough,



And I, like a second comer, waiting.

He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do,
And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do,
And **flickered**[4] his two-forked tongue from his lips, and **mused**[5] a moment,
And stooped and drank a little more,
Being earth-brown, earth-golden from the burning **bowels**[6] of the earth
On the day of Sicilian July, with Etna smoking.

The voice of my education said to me
He must be killed,
For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the gold are venomous.

1 **carob-tree -** a red flowered tree originally in the Mediterranean area.
2 **pitcher -** tall, round container with an open top and large handle
3 **fissure -** crack
4 **flickered -** moved
5 **mused -** think about
6 **bowels -** bottom of earth

And voices in me said, If you were a man
You would take a stick and break him now, and finish him off.

But must I confess how I liked him,
How glad I was he had come like a guest in quiet, to drink at my water-trough
And depart peaceful, pacified, and thankless,
Into the burning bowels of this earth?

Was it cowardice, that I dared not kill him? Was it **perversity**[7], that I longed to talk to him? Was it humility, to feel so honoured?
I felt so honoured.

And yet those voices:
If you were not afraid, you would kill him!

And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid, But even so, honoured still more
That he should seek my hospitality
From out the dark door of the secret earth.

He drank enough
And lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken,
And flickered his tongue like a forked night on the air, so black,
Seeming to lick his lips,
And looked around like a god, unseeing, into the air,
And slowly turned his head,
And slowly, very slowly, as if thrice adream,
Proceeded to draw his slow length curving round
And climb again the broken bank of my wall-face.

And as he put his head into that dreadful hole,
And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders, and entered farther,
A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his withdrawing into that horrid black hole,
Deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly drawing himself after,
Overcame me now his back was turned.

I looked round, I put down my pitcher,
I picked up a clumsy log
And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter.

7 **perversity -** The quality of being unreasonable, illogical

I think it did not hit him,
But suddenly that part of him that was left behind **convulsed**[8] in undignified haste.
Writhed[9] like lightning, and was gone
Into the black hole, the earth-lipped fissure in the wall-front,
At which, in the intense still noon, I stared with fascination.

And immediately I regretted it.
I thought how **paltry**[10], how vulgar, what a mean act!
I despised myself and the voices of my accursed human education.

And I thought of the **albatross**[11]
And I wished he would come back, my snake.

For he seemed to me again like a king,
Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,
Now due to be crowned again.

And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords
Of life.
And I have something to **expiate**[12]
A pettiness.

About the author

D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930), English novelist, storywriter, critic, poet and painter, is one of the greatest figures in 20th-century English literature. The poem Snake was composed in 1923 and forms part of the Reptiles section of D.H. Lawrence's book Birds, Beasts, and Flowers. It details a powerful few moments when Lawrence is confronted by a snake at Lawrence's water trough, in Taormina, Sicily. The poem is unrhymed, written in free verse, and is representative of modernist literature.

4. Given below is the summary of the poem Snake in short paragraphs. However they are jumbled. Work in pairs and put the summary into a logical sequence.

a) After drinking water to satisfaction, the snake raised his head dreamily and flickered his forked tongue and licked his lips. The snake looked around like a God and then slowly proceeded to curve round and move away from the water trough.

b) The poet felt much like the ancient mariner who had killed the albatross for no reason. He wishes that the snake would come back. He thinks of the snake as a king in exile

8 **convulsed -** violent movement
9 **Writhed -** to twist and turn
10 **paltry -** worthless
11 **albatross -** an allusion to Coleridge's "Rime of the ancient mariner" .He wishes for its return.
12 **expiate -** make amends

who has to be crowned again. He also regrets having missed his opportunity of knowing and understanding one of the lords of life.

c) As the snake put his head into the hole to retreat into the earth, the poet was filled with a protest against the idea of the snake withdrawing into his hole. The poet put down his pitcher, picked up a log and hurled it at the snake. The snake twisted violently and with great alacrity vanished into the hole in the wall.

d) A snake visited the poet's water trough on a hot afternoon to quench his thirst. The poet who had also gone to the trough to fill water in a pitcher waited for the snake since he had come at the trough prior to the poet.

e) The voices of education inside the poet tell him that it was the fear for the snake that made him refrain from killing him. However, the poet feels that though he was quite afraid of the snake, he did actually feel honoured that a snake had come to seek his hospitality from the deep recesses of the earth.

f) He is guilt-ridden and feels that he has to atone for the meanness of his action of throwing a log at the snake.

g) The snake rested his throat upon the stone bottom and sipped the water into his slack long body. After drinking water, he raised his head just like cattle do and flashed his forked tongue, thought for a moment and then bent down to drink some more water.

h) Education and social conventions make the poet think that the golden brown poisonous snake must be killed and that as a brave man he must undertake the task of killing the snake.

i) The poet instantly felt sorry for his unrefined and contemptible act and cursed the voices of education and civilization that had shaped his thought processes and urged him to kill the snake.

j) However, the poet instinctively likes the snake, treats him like a guest and feels honoured that it had come to drink at his water trough. The poet questions himself and wonders whether his not daring to kill the snake proved that he was a coward and whether his desire to talk to the snake reflected his perversity.

5. Based on your reading of the poem, answer the following questions by ticking the correct options:

1. *'he lifted his head from his drinking as cattle do'* - The poet wants to convey that the snake

a) is domesticated

b) is innocent

c) is as harmless as cattle

d) drinks water just like cattle

2. *'Sicilian July'*, *'Etna smoking'* and *'burning bowels of the earth'* are images that convey that

   a) there are snakes in volcanic areas

   b) the poet lived in a hot area

   c) it was a really hot day when the snake came

   d) Sicilian snakes are dangerous

3. *'A sort of horror , a sort of protest overcame me'* - The poet is filled with protest because

   a) he doesn't want to let the snake remain alive

   b) he fears the snake

   c) he doesn't want the snake to recede into darkness

   d) he wants to kill it so that it doesn't return

4. In the line *'And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders, and entered farther'* the phrase *snake easing'* his shoulders means

   a) loosening its shoulders

   b) slipping in with majestic grace

   c) moving slowly

   d) moving fast

5. *'He seemed to me like a king in exile…'* The poet refers to the snake as such to emphasize that the snake

   a) is like a king enduring banishment

   b) Is like a king due to be crowned

   c) Is a majestic king who came for a while on earth

   d) is a majestic creature forced to go into exile by man

6. *'I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act'* -The poet is referring to

   a) the snake going into the dreadful hole

   b) the accursed modern education

   c) the act of throwing a log of wood at the snake

   d) the act of killing the snake

6. Answer the following questions briefly:

a) Why does the poet decide to stand and wait till the snake has finished drinking? What does this tell you about the poet? (Notice that he uses 'someone' instead of 'something' for the snake.)

b) In stanza 2 and 3, the poet gives a vivid description of the snake by using suggestive expressions. What picture of the snake do you form on the basis of this description?

c) How does the poet describe the day and the atmosphere when he saw the snake?

d) What does the poet want to convey by saying that the snake emerges from the 'burning bowels of the earth'?

e) Do you think the snake was conscious of the poet's presence? How do you know?

f) How do we know that the snake's thirst was satiated? Pick out the expressions that convey this.

g) The poet has a dual attitude towards the snake. Why does he experience conflicting emotions on seeing the snake?

h) The poet is filled with horror and protest when the snake prepares to retreat and bury itself in the 'horrid black', 'dreadful' hole. In the light of this statement, bring out the irony of his act of throwing a log at the snake.

i) The poet seems to be full of admiration and respect for the snake. He almost regards him like a majestic God. Pick out at least four expressions from the poem that reflect these emotions.

j) What is the difference between the snake's movement at the beginning of the poem and later when the poet strikes it with a log of wood? You may use relevant vocabulary from the poem to highlight the difference.

k) The poet experiences feelings of self-derision, guilt and regret after hitting the snake. Pick out expressions that suggest this. Why does he feel like this?

l) You have already read Coleridge's poem The Ancient Mariner in which an albatross is killed by the mariner. Why does the poet make an allusion to the albatross?

m) 'I have something to expiate'-Explain.

7. The encounter with the snake and the dual response of the poet to his presence at the water trough reflect a conflict between civilized social education and natural human instincts. The poet writes a diary entry highlighting how he was torn between the two voices. Write his diary.

8. **Alliteration** is the repetition of sounds in words, usually the first sound. **Sibilance** is a special form of alliteration using the softer consonants that create hissing sounds, or sibilant sounds. These consonants and digraphs include s, sh, th, ch, z, f, x, and soft c.

Onomatopoeia is a word that imitates the sound it represents for a rhetorical or artistic effect of bringing out the full flavor of words. The sounds literally make the meaning in such words as "buzz," "crash," "whirr," "clang" "hiss," "purr," "squeak," etc.It is also used by poets to convey their subject to the reader. For example, in the last lines of Sir Alfred Tennyson's poem 'Come Down, O Maid', m and n sounds produce an atmosphere of murmuring insects:

... the moan of doves in immemorial elms,

And murmuring of innumerable bees.

Notice how D H Lawrence uses both these devices effectively in the following stanza.

He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the gloom

*And trailed his yellow-brown **s**lackness **s**oft-bellied down, over the edge of*

*the **s**tone trough*

*And rested his throat upon the **s**tone bottom,*

*And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a **s**mall clearness,*

*He **s**ipped with his **s**traight mouth,*

***S**oftly drank through his **s**traight gums, into his **s**lack long body,*

***S**ilently.*

To what effect has the poet used these devices? How has it added to your understanding of the subject of the poem? You may record your understanding of snake characteristics under the following headings:

a) Sound

b) Movement

c) Shape

9. The poet has also used both repetition and similes in the poem. For example--'must wait, must stand and wait' (repetition) and 'looked at me vaguely as cattle do' (simile).Pick out examples of both and make a list of them in your notebooks. Give reasons why the poet uses these literary devices.

10. A calligram is a poem, phrase, or word in which the handwriting is arranged in a way that creates a visual image. The image created by the words expresses visually what the word, or words, say. In a poem, it manifests visually the theme presented by the text of the poem. Read the poem given below. Try to compose a calligram. You could pick a subject of your choice.

Snake

Snake glides
through grass
over
Pebbles
forked tongue
working
never
speaking
but its
body
whispers
listen.

Keith Bosley