

Lesson 7

A Child's Beauty

You have probably seen many beautiful children in your family and neighbourhood. In pairs, tell each other about a child who you think is beautiful. Why is the child beautiful?

Here is a story about a beautiful child who lived during the reign of Emperor Akbar. Let us read how Birbal, Emperor Akbar's famous minister, helps the Emperor learn more about the beauty of children.



Emperor Akbar was very happy as his son Salim had a son. The king was very fond of his grandson. He spent hours playing with the child and had started neglecting the affairs of the state. Whenever he came to the court, he would discuss only his grandson. He used to say, "There is no child more beautiful than my grandson." Everyone agreed with Akbar, except Birbal as they were scared of the king. Birbal remarked, "Huzur, the young prince is very beautiful, but all parents find their children beautiful."

Akbar became angry when he heard this. "How dare you say this, Birbal? No child is more beautiful than my grandson!" One minister then said, "Tomorrow, let us all bring a child who we think is beautiful. Then we can judge for ourselves."

The next day, everybody brought a child to the court except Birbal. Akbar asked him, "Why have you not brought a child? Where is the child that is more beautiful than my grandson?"

"I have found a child who is the most beautiful child in the entire country. The mother is refusing to let me bring the child to the court. She does not want strangers to cast an evil eye on her child," replied Birbal.

To this, Akbar said, "If this is so, we can go and see the child in disguise."

So Akbar, Birbal and a few other ministers disguised themselves and went to see the child. Birbal led them to a small dirty hut where they saw a child playing on a heap of sand. All of them were shocked, as they had never seen an uglier child.

The child had a running nose. He had chicken pox marks all over his body. One of his eyes was half shut and was full of dirt.

Akbar was irritated and said, "Birbal you call this child the most beautiful! I hope God will forgive me, but I have never seen an uglier child in my life!"

The child's mother overheard Akbar. She was very angry.

She picked up the child and screamed at Akbar, "How dare you call my child ugly! He is the most beautiful child God could have given me. Get out of here! I don't want strangers to cast their evil eye on my child!"

She wiped her child's face and kissed him. Taking the child inside, she closed the door. Akbar finally agreed with Birbal. He said, "You are right, Birbal. All children seem beautiful to their parents."



ACTIVITIES

1. Match the following facts about the story you just read.

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (a) Akbar | was Salim's son. |
| (b) Salim | was a minister in the court of Akbar. |
| (c) Birbal | was the Emperor. |
| (d) The young prince | was Akbar's son. |

2. Do you remember the story? Rearrange the sentences as they happened in the story to see how well you remember what happened.

- Each minister brought a child to judge who was the most beautiful child.
- Birbal said that all parents found their children very beautiful.
- Akbar said that no child was more beautiful than his grandson.
- The mother did not let Birbal bring the child to the court.
- Akbar with his minister went in disguise to see the child.
- The mother got angry when she heard Akbar's words.
- They found a child playing on a heap of sand.
- Akbar said he had never seen a child uglier than this.
- Akbar agreed with Birbal that all parents find their own children beautiful.
- The mother took the baby inside and shut the door.

3. Read the lesson once again and find answers to the following questions. Work with a partner. Discuss the answers with your partner and share them with the class.

- Why was Akbar happy?
- Who used to say, "There is no child more beautiful than my grandson."?
- Why did each minister bring a child to the court?
- Why didn't Birbal bring any child?



- (e) Why did Akbar and the ministers go in disguise to see the child that Birbal could not bring to court?
- (f) Why did the mother of the child scream at Akbar?
- (g) What did Akbar realize?

4. Find out from the lesson who said the following sentences. Write the name of the person next to each sentence.

- (a) "I have found a child who is the most beautiful child in the entire country."

- (b) "If this is so, we can go and see the child in disguise." _____
- (c) "He is the most beautiful child God could have given me." _____
- (d) "Then we can judge for ourselves." _____

5. Let's practise speaking in English. Some sentences are missing in the conversation below. Complete the following conversation with your own sentences. Then, in groups, do a role play, where each of you will take one role and take part in a conversation.

Meera : You know what! I saw the most beautiful little girl on my way to school today.

Adnan : What's her name? Where did you see her?

Ranil : Do you know her?

Asha : Why didn't you bring her with you?

Meera : Wait, wait! I'm telling you one thing at a time!
I saw her

.....
.....

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Asha : And then?

Ranil : But,

Adnan :

Meera :

6. Let's learn some grammar:

(a) In the story you came across the words happy, angry and beautiful. Each of these words tells us something about the related noun e.g. a beautiful child. Here the word beautiful describes the quality of the child. Such words that describe the quality of something or someone are called *adjectives*.

Note that adjectives have three degrees of comparison: positive, comparative and superlative.

(i) **Positive degree**: Tomorrow each of us will bring a child whom we find beautiful.

In this sentence the adjective describes the quality of one person.

(ii) **Comparative degree**: There is no child more beautiful than my grandson.

In this sentence, the adjective is used to compare one child with another.

(iii) **Superlative degree**: I have found a child who is the most beautiful child in the entire village.

The adjective in this sentence compares one child with all other children.

We can arrange adjectives in their degrees as shown in the columns below:

Positive

Comparative

Superlative

beautiful

more beautiful

most beautiful

happy

happier

happiest

When the adjective has more than two syllables (i.e. when the word is longer) we use *more + adjective* in the comparative and *most + adjective* in the superlative degrees.

When the adjective is a short word we add **er** in the comparative and **est** in the superlative degrees.

Note that when the adjective ends in 'y' we change it to 'i' before adding 'er'. There are a very small number of adjectives outside this rule.

- (b) Let's practise using adjectives of degree and see how much you remember.

Fill the columns below with the correct forms of the adjectives:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
(i) ugly	_____	_____
(ii) _____	_____	angriest
(iii) _____	dirtier	_____
(iv) big	_____	_____
(v) important	_____	_____

- (c) Now, in your notebook, make three sentences using an adjective from each of the three columns:

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7. Let's come back to clauses. You have learnt that a clause is a group of words that contains a verb that shows tense. The verb which shows tense is called a finite verb.

(a) Look at the following sentences:

- (i) The child's mother overheard Akbar.
- (ii) Akbar became angry when he heard this.

Notice that the whole sentence in (i) has been underlined as a group of words whereas sentence (ii) has been underlined as two groups of words. The underlined parts are called clauses.

(b) Read the following sentences. Identify the subject and the finite verb in each clause in the sentences. Write 'S' under the subject and 'F' under the finite verb.

- (i) He plays cricket for the school team.
- (ii) Rita will not come today because she has gone to town.
- (iii) She took the umbrella as it was raining.
- (iv) I forgot to bring my book.
- (v) Ron was reading a novel when I came to his house.

The predicate contains the finite verb which may be followed by phrases. But it may not be so always. Sometimes the predicate may just be a one-word verb. For example:

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The child cried.

In this sentence, 'The child' is the subject. The predicate contains only the finite verb 'cried'. Here the sentence is made up of one clause.

A clause may be a sentence or a part of a sentence. Now, look at sentence (i) and sentence (ii) again.

- (i) The child's mother overheard Akbar.
- (ii) Akbar became angry when he heard this.

You might have noticed that sentence (i) is formed with one clause whereas sentence (ii) is formed with two clauses.

(c) **Underline the clauses in the following sentences.**

- (i) Whoever came to this house was chased by that dog.
- (ii) After the man came, the boy closed the library door.
- (iii) Swimming is my favourite summer time activity.
- (iv) The bananas look ripe but they are not ready to be eaten.
- (v) She ate an apple from the basket.



8. Learning how to debate:

Your teacher will divide the class into four groups and ask each group to read the following content that explains what a debate is and the rules of debate.

A debate is a discussion which involves looking at a particular topic from different view points. In a debate, arguments are put forward to argue opposite viewpoints. Debates occur in public meetings, academic institutions, legislative assemblies, etc. It is a formal type of discussion, often with a moderator and an audience, in addition to the participants of the debate.

Arguments **for or against the motion** must be based on facts, logic and examples.

In debating competitions, teams compete against each other and are judged on certain criteria, or a set of pre-decided standards, and fixed rules. It is presided over by two or more judges. Both sides seek to win against the other while following the rules. One side is **in favour of** the given topic statement (**for the motion**), the other is **against** the given topic statement (**against the motion**). Each side must give clear arguments to explain their stand/viewpoint.

Each team member of either side is given a fixed period (say five minutes) to speak on alternating viewpoints, that is one '**for**' and one '**against**' the motion. Then again one team speaks '**for**' and the other speaks '**against**' the motion and the process is repeated till all the team members of both sides have spoken.

Then there is an '**open house**' (for a short interval, perhaps ten minutes), where views from the audience may be entertained. The winning team is decided by the judge.

As you read in the lesson, even a child considered ugly by others looks beautiful to its mother. You must have seen, read or heard about differently abled children. There are children who cannot see, hear or talk; there are



children with no limbs or ill-formed limbs, and there are children born with conditions such as Autism (having problems with social and communication skills) or Down syndrome (delay in physical and mental growth). These children are called children with special needs (CWSN). Do you think parents will love their child less if it is not born with perfect physical and mental health?

Your teacher will write the following topic on the blackboard for a class debate.

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“All mothers love their children and think their child is the most beautiful.”

Half the groups will prepare arguments *for the motion*. The other half will prepare arguments *against the motion*. The group members will discuss and write down at least six points *in favour of or against the motion*, respectively. The group leader or any member chosen by the group will represent the views of the group at the debate. The other members can add more points when the debate is open for the house. The teacher will preside over the debate and judge the winning side.

9. Write a short paragraph on what you understand from the following statement- ‘All children seem beautiful to their parents.’
10. Read the conversation below. Some of the sentences are missing. Write them and enact the conversation in the class.

Akbar : Look, how beautiful my grandson is!

Minister : Yes, Huzur, there is no child more beautiful than your grandson.

Birbal : The young prince is very beautiful, but

.....

Akbar : Then, let’s find out tomorrow.

Minister : Tomorrow each of us will bring a child whom we find beautiful and we can then judge.

[Next day]

Akbar : Birbal, why are you without a child?

Birbal : Sorry Huzur, the mother is refusing to let me bring the child to the court.

Akbar : How dare she! Let's go and see the child in disguise.

Birbal :

.....

Akbar : I have never seen an uglier child than this before in my life!

Birbal :

.....

Akbar :

.....



11. Choose the correct synonyms from the options given below:

(a) beautiful

- (i) idle
- (ii) good
- (iii) pretty
- (iv) happy

(b) happy

- (i) sweet
- (ii) glad
- (iii) lovely
- (iv) good

(c) dirty

- (i) daring
- (ii) filthy
- (iii) ugly
- (iv) unhealthy

(d) scared

- (i) fearless
- (ii) worried
- (iii) afraid
- (iv) concerned

(e) disguise

- (i) to cheat
- (ii) to tell lies
- (iii) to hide
- (iv) to change appearance

(f) screamed

- (i) phoned
- (ii) shouted
- (iii) called out
- (iv) whispered