



UNIT 5

The Giving Tree

Shel Silverstein



Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this unit, the students will be able to:

- Speak confidently and fluently in a wide range of contexts, for example, (conflict resolution, panel discussion, role-play, dialogue etc.) to fulfil different purposes (exposition, argumentation etc.).
- Read and use inference and deduction to recognise implicit meaning (e.g. look for supporting details within a text/paragraph) using prior knowledge and contextual cues effectively.
- Link new facts, terms, and concepts with prior knowledge. Choose words and phrases for effect.
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
 - Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.
 - Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
 - Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
 - Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
 - Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
 - Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
 - Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.



Pre-reading:

- What do you think a true friend should do for someone he loves?
- Have you ever received help or kindness from someone? How did it make you feel?

Once there was a tree... and she loved a little boy. And every day the boy would come and he would gather her leaves and make them into crowns and play king of the forest. He would climb up her **trunk** and swing from her branches and eat apples. And they would play hide-and-go-seek. And when he was tired, he would sleep in her shade.

And the boy loved the tree... very much. And the tree was happy.

But time went by. And the boy grew older. And the tree was often alone. Then one day the boy came to the tree and the tree said, "Come, Boy, come and climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and eat apples and play in my **shade** and be happy."

"I am too big to climb and play," said the boy. "I want to buy things and have fun. I want some money?"

"I'm sorry," said the tree, "but I have no money. I have only leaves and apples. Take my apples, Boy, and sell them in the city. Then you will have money and you will be happy." And so, the boy climbed up the tree and gathered her apples and carried them away. And the tree was happy.

But the boy stayed away for a long time... and the tree was sad.

And then one day the boy came back and the tree **shook** with joy and she said, "Come, Boy, climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and be happy."

"I am too busy to climb trees," said the boy. "I want a house to keep me **warm**," he said. "I want a wife and I want children, and so I need a house. Can you give me a house?"

"I have no house," said the tree. "The forest is my house, but you may cut off my branches and build a house. Then you will be happy."

And so, the boy cut off her branches and carried them away to build his house. And the tree was happy.

But the boy stayed away for a long time. And when he came back, the tree was so happy she could hardly speak. "Come, Boy," she **whispered**, "come and play."

"I am too old and sad to play," said the boy. "I want a boat that will take me far away from here. Can you give me a boat?"

"Cut down my trunk and make a boat," said the tree. "Then you can **sail** away... and be happy."

And so, the boy cut down her trunk and made a boat and sailed away. And the tree was happy... but not really.



And after a long time, the boy came back again.

"I am sorry, Boy," said the tree," but I have nothing left to give you - My apples are gone."

"My teeth are too weak for apples," said the boy.

"My branches are gone," said the tree. " You cannot swing on them - "

"I am too old to swing on branches," said the boy.

"My trunk is gone, " said the tree. "You cannot climb - "

"I am too tired to climb," said the boy.

"I am sorry," **sighed** the tree. "I wish that I could give you something.... but I have nothing left. I am just an old **stump**. I am sorry...."

"I don't need very much now," said the boy. "Just a **quiet** place to sit and rest. I am very tired."

"Well," said the tree, straightening herself up as much as she could, "well, an old stump is good for sitting and resting. Come, Boy, sit down. Sit down and rest."

And the boy did.

And the tree was happy.

Theme

The theme of "The Giving Tree" by Shel Silverstein centers on unconditional love and selfless sacrifice. The tree represents a figure who gives everything without expecting anything in return. Throughout the story, the boy takes from the tree at different stages of his life, showing human desires and changing priorities. The tree's happiness in giving highlights the idea that true love often involves sacrifice. At the same time, the story also suggests the imbalance that can exist in relationships where one side only takes. It reflects how people may overlook or take for granted those who care for them deeply. Overall, the story teaches the importance of love, generosity, and appreciating those who give selflessly.

About the author

Shel Silverstein was an American writer, poet, and illustrator known for his unique and imaginative style. He was born in 1930 in Chicago, USA, and became famous for writing children's literature. His works are loved for their simplicity, humor, and deep moral meanings. Besides writing, he was also a cartoonist, songwriter, and musician. Some of his well-known books include *The Giving Tree* and *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. His writing often combines playful language with serious themes, making it appealing to both children and adults.



Glossary

Words	Meanings
quiet	calm, silent, not noisy
sail	to travel on water in a boat

shade	a cool, dark area protected from the sun
shook	moved quickly back and forth
sighed	breathed out slowly, often showing tiredness or sadness
stump	the remaining part of a tree after it has been cut down
trunk	the main, thick stem of a tree
warm	having a comfortable, slightly hot temperature
whispered	spoke very softly or quietly



Reading and Critical Thinking

A. Answer the following questions:

1. Who are the main characters in the story?
2. How did the boy first play with the tree?
3. Why was the tree happy when the boy took her apples, branches and trunk?
4. What did the boy want when he grew older?
5. How did the boy use the tree's apples, branches, and trunk?
6. How did the tree feel when the boy stayed away for a long time?
7. What lesson does the story teach us about love and giving?
8. How does the boy's needs change as he grows older?
9. What does the stump symbolize at the end of the story?
10. Why is the story considered a tale of selfless friendship?

B. Choose the correct option.

1. Who is happy in the story?
a) the boy b) the tree c) both d) neither
2. What does the boy first play with?
a) apples b) leaves c) stump d) boat
3. Why does the boy take the tree's branches?
a) to sell b) to build a house c) to eat d) to play
4. What does the tree become in the end?
a) apple tree b) stump c) branches d) boat
5. What lesson does the story teach?
a) honesty b) friendship & love c) hard work d) adventure

Inference and Deduction in Reading: **Inference** is the process of drawing conclusions or making educated guesses about information that is not explicitly stated in a text. It involves using prior knowledge, contextual cues, and supporting details to understand implied meanings. **Deduction** is a related process where readers use

logical reasoning to arrive at a specific conclusion based on the evidence provided in the text and their background knowledge.

In simpler terms, inference is like reading between the lines to figure out what the author is suggesting, while deduction involves piecing together clues to reach a logical conclusion.

Example:

Text: Sarah walked into the kitchen, her shoes leaving muddy footprints on the floor. She glanced at the clock and sighed, realizing she was late for dinner again.

Inference: Sarah has been outside, possibly in the rain or a muddy area, since her shoes are muddy. Her sigh suggests she might be frustrated or tired, possibly because being late is a recurring issue.

Deduction: Based on the muddy footprints and her being late, we can deduce that Sarah might have been caught up in an outdoor activity (e.g., walking, working, or playing) that caused the delay.

Read the following text carefully:

The old house on the hill was dark, its windows boarded up. Every evening, a single light flickered in the attic, but no one ever saw anyone enter or leave the house. The neighbours whispered about strange noises at night.

C. Write down 2–3 inferences about what might be happening in the house.



Vocabulary and Grammar

Demonstrate Understanding of Figurative Language, Word Relationships, and Nuances in Word Meanings: It involves recognizing and interpreting non-literal uses of language, such as metaphors, similes, and idioms, as well as exploring how words connect through synonyms, antonyms, or homonyms. It also requires grasping subtle differences (nuances) in connotations, the emotional or cultural associations of words that share similar literal meanings. This skill enhances reading comprehension, writing precision, and critical analysis by revealing how authors use language to convey deeper ideas, emotions, or tones beyond surface-level definitions.

Example: Figurative language often appears in poetry or prose to create vivid imagery or emphasize themes. For instance, in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (Act I, Scene I), Romeo exclaims: "O brawling love! O loving hate! O anything, of nothing first create! O heavy lightness, serious vanity..." Here, phrases like "loving hate" and "heavy lightness" are oxymorons, figures of speech combining contradictory terms to highlight the emotional turmoil of love and conflict. In context, these oxymorons underscore Romeo's inner paradox, making his passion feel intense and chaotic, which drives the play's tragic tone.

A. How does the simile "Her smile was like sunshine after rain." use figurative language to convey emotion? What word relationships does it rely on, and how does it differ from a literal description?



Oral Communication Skills

Speaking confidently and fluently means expressing ideas clearly, without hesitation, and with the right tone and body language, in order to suit the situation and purpose. It is the ability to speak in different contexts like a debate, role-play, dialogue, or discussion while keeping the audience engaged and understanding the goal of communication i.e. informing, persuading, resolving conflict, etc.

A. Divide the class into small groups of 3–4. Each group will pick one context: *conflict resolution, panel discussion, role-play, or dialogue*. Students will prepare a presentation or role-play to show confident and fluent speaking. Ask them to use clear voice, eye contact, and suitable expressions. After each group, peers will give short feedback on confidence, fluency, and clarity.



Writing Skills

Narrative Writing: It involves crafting stories based on real or imagined experiences or events. It focuses on using effective storytelling techniques, carefully selected details, and a logical sequence of events to engage readers and convey meaning. Narratives can be personal stories, fictional tales, or creative retellings, and they often aim to entertain, inform, or evoke emotions. Writing narratives means creating a story that unfolds real or imagined events in a structured way, incorporating techniques like character development, plot progression, and descriptive language to make the story compelling and cohesive.

A. What real-life experience could you turn into a narrative, and how would you structure its events to build excitement?

For the
Teacher:



- Guide the students to see the story as a lesson in selfless love, sacrifice, and the importance of appreciating those who give without expecting anything.
- Help the students speak clearly, use simple words, and express their ideas with confidence without fear of making mistakes.
- Guide the students that narrative writing tells a story by describing events, characters, and feelings in a clear and engaging way.