

MCB

STD-VIII

SUBJECT : ENGLISH
CHAPTER NUMBER: 4
PERIOD NUMBER : 2
CHAPTER NAME :MACAVITY: THE MYSTERY CAT
BY T.S. ELIOT

CHANGING YOUR TOMORROW

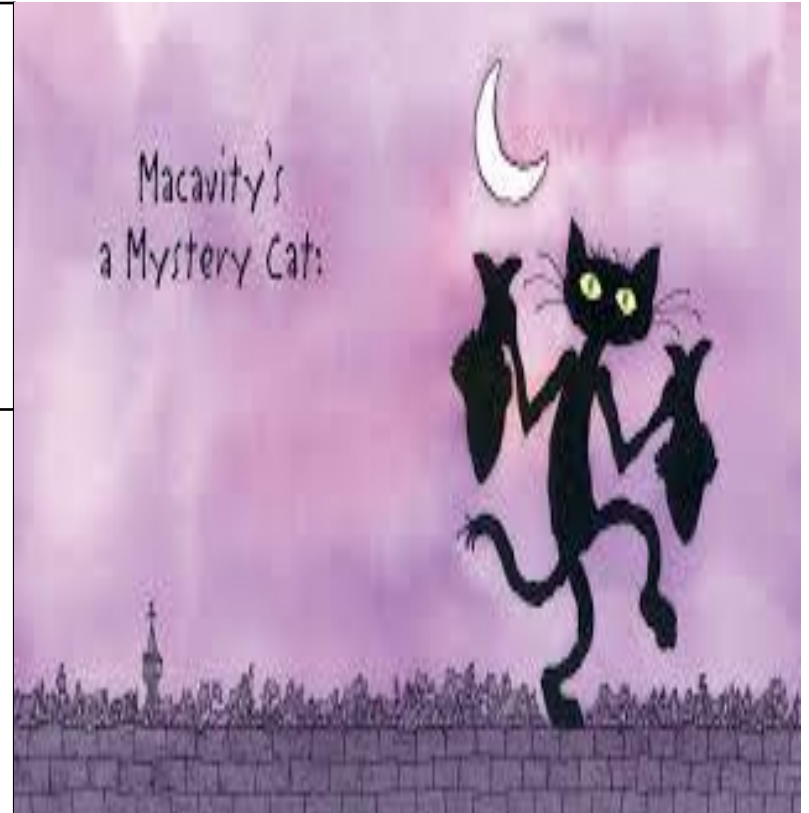
EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- Recitation of the poem
- Being acquainted with poem and poet's biography
- Understanding the idea
- Appreciate the language of the poem
- Developing LSRW Skills

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES/ EXTENDED OBJECTIVES

- Recitation of the poem
- Being acquainted with poem and poet's biography
- Understanding the idea
- Appreciate the language of the poem
- Developing LSRW Skills



INTRODUCTION TO THE POET



Born: 26 September 1888 in St. Louis, Missouri, US. Died: 4 January 1965 (aged 84) in London, England Nationality: American, British Genres: Modernism—Awards: Nobel Prize in Literature 1948.

Thomas Stearns Eliot (26 September 1888 – 4 January 1965) was a poet, essayist, publisher, playwright, literary critic and editor. Considered one of the 20th century's major poets, he is a central figure in English-language Modernist poetry.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, to a prominent Boston Brahmin family, he moved to England in 1914 at the age of 25 and went on to settle, work, and marry there. He became a British citizen in 1927 at the age of 39, subsequently renouncing his American citizenship.

Eliot first attracted widespread attention for his poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in 1915, which was received as a modernist masterpiece. It was followed by some of the best-known poems in the English language, including "The Waste Land" (1922), "The Hollow Men" (1925), "Ash Wednesday" (1930), and *Four Quartets* (1943).^[5] He was also known for his seven plays, particularly *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) and *The Cocktail Party* (1949). He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948, "for his outstanding, pioneer contribution to present-day poetry".

THEME OF THE POEM

Macavity is a mystery cat. He is the master criminal. He can defy and break any law. Even the police force and Flying Squad of England have failed to arrest him. He gives a slip to them. When the police reach the scene of crime, it is too late. The criminal by that time is gone.

Macavity is matchless in his field. He can do any impossible task. He can disappear. He can break Newton's law of gravity and float in the air without support. Even the fakir and the magician are surprised to see his feats. He will outwit you. You may look for him in the basement and in the air, you will have no access to him.

Macavity is a tall and thin cat. His eyes are sunken, and his head is lined. His head is round like a dome. His coat is soiled and his hair is in disorder. He moves like a snake. When you think he is sleeping, he is, in fact, wide awake.

Macavity is a devil in cat's shape. He is morally corrupt. You can meet him in a lane and in open grounds. But you will not find him where the crime has been committed.



MACAVITY'S A MYSTERY CAT: HE'S CALLED THE HIDDEN PAW
FOR HE'S THE MASTER CRIMINAL WHO CAN DEFY THE LAW.



EXPLANATION OF THE 5th STANZA

He's is outwardly respectable. (They say he cheats at cards.)
And his footprints are not found in any file of Scotland Yard's
And when the larder's looted, or the jewel case is rifled
Or when the milk is missing, or another Peke's been stifled,
Or the greenhouse glass is broken, and the trellis past repair
Ay, there's the wonder of the thing! Macavity is not there.



Context : The poet highlights how Macavity carries out his work relentlessly

Explanation : Macavity **is outwardly respectable** (i.e. he is respected by people) because some **say** that **he cheats at cards** (i.e. he cheats in a way that no one can discover). **His footprints** (name) **are not found in any file of Scotland Yard** (Police).

However, he commits every crime. Whenever he loots **the larder** (food) or steals **jewel** or **milk** or makes a **Peke** (dog) **stifle** (suffocate) or breaks **greenhouse glass** or **trellis** (architecture), he vanishes away quickly and is never found **there**.

EXPLANATION OF THE 6th STANZA

And when foreign office find a treaty's gone astray
Or the Admiralty lose some plans and drawings by the way,
There may be a scrap of paper in the hall or on the stair-
But it's useless to investigate- Macavity is not there!
And when the loss has been disclosed, the secret service say:
It must have been Macavity!'- but he's a mile away.
You'll be sure to find him resting, or a-licking of his thumb;
Or engaged in doing complicated long division sums.



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Context : The poet highlights Macavity's acts of criminality

Explanation : ***When the Foreign Officer finds a treaty gone astray*** i.e. a law broken, ***or when the Admiralty*** (police) ***lose some plans and drawings by the way*** (i.e. find that their papers on which plans to catch Macavity are missing), they find them later on but ***in the hall or on the stairs but it is useless to investigate*** as ***Macavity*** vanishes away.

When the loss is disclosed, ***the Secret Service would say*** that it was Macavity who did this. But now it is useless as ***he is*** already ***a mile away***. One can find him either ***resting*** somewhere or licking ***his thumb or engaged in doing complicated long division sums*** (i.e. doing some calculations)

EXPLANATION OF THE 7th STANZA

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
There never was a cat of such deceitfulness and suavity
He always has an alibi, and one or two to spare
At whatever time the deed took place-Macavity wasn't there!
And they say that all the cats whose wicked deeds are widely known
(I might mention Mungojerrie, I might mention Griddlebone)
Are nothing more than agents for the cat who all the time
Just controls their operations: The Napoleon of crime.

Context : In these lines, the poet describes the appearance of Macavity.

Explanation : In the final stanza, the poet says that *no one is like Macavity* as *there* can be no *cat* as deceitful and suave (confident and charming) as him.

Next, the poet tells that he does not commit crimes alone. *He always has an alibi* (some companions who accompany him in committing crime) *and one or two to spare* (one or two other companions). However when *the deed* (crime) takes *place*, he vanishes away as always.

In the next line, the poet says that his companions are also well known because of their crimes. He mentions their names as well; *Mungojerrie* and *Griddlebone*). However, they *are* just *agents for the Cat who all the time* (i.e. Macavity). They *just* control *operations of the Napoleon of Crime* (Macavity).



VOCABULARY

- larder– a room or a large cupboard for storing food
- rifled– stolen or carried away
- Peke – a Chinese breed of small dogs
- stifled – suffocated/choked
- trellis– a metal or a wooden framework used as a support for trees or creepers
- astray- away from correct path
- suavity-the quality of being polished/sophisticated

Home Assignment:

1. Trace the special powers of Macavity .
2. 1 page handwriting

POETIC DEVICES USED IN THE POEM..

Personification: Personification is giving human characteristics to animals or non-living things. Here in the poem, Macavity is personified as he does all the things like humans.

Anaphora: It is the repetition of a phrase in a poem. In the poem various words and phrases are repeated to create poetic effect. e.g. *“Macavity, Macavity”, “Macavity’s not there”* etc.

Alliteration: It is the repetition of consonant sound in the line.
e.g. *“Macavity’s Mystery”, “head is highly”, “side to side”* etc.

Symbolism: The poet uses various symbols in the poem. e.g. his appearance symbolises his villainous character, *footprints* symbolise his name etc

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