

# 3

## Leisure

by W.H. Davies

### Pre-reading Task

1. What do you do in free time?
2. List at least five things that you want to do but cannot do because of lack of time.
  - (i) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (ii) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (iii) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (iv) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (v) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you enjoy the fast and hectic life of a metro city or the slow and peaceful village life far away from a city?
4. Make a list of at least five places (hill stations) that you would like to visit.
  - (i) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (ii) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (iii) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (iv) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (v) \_\_\_\_\_

Why would you like to go to these places?

**Now read the poem.**

What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

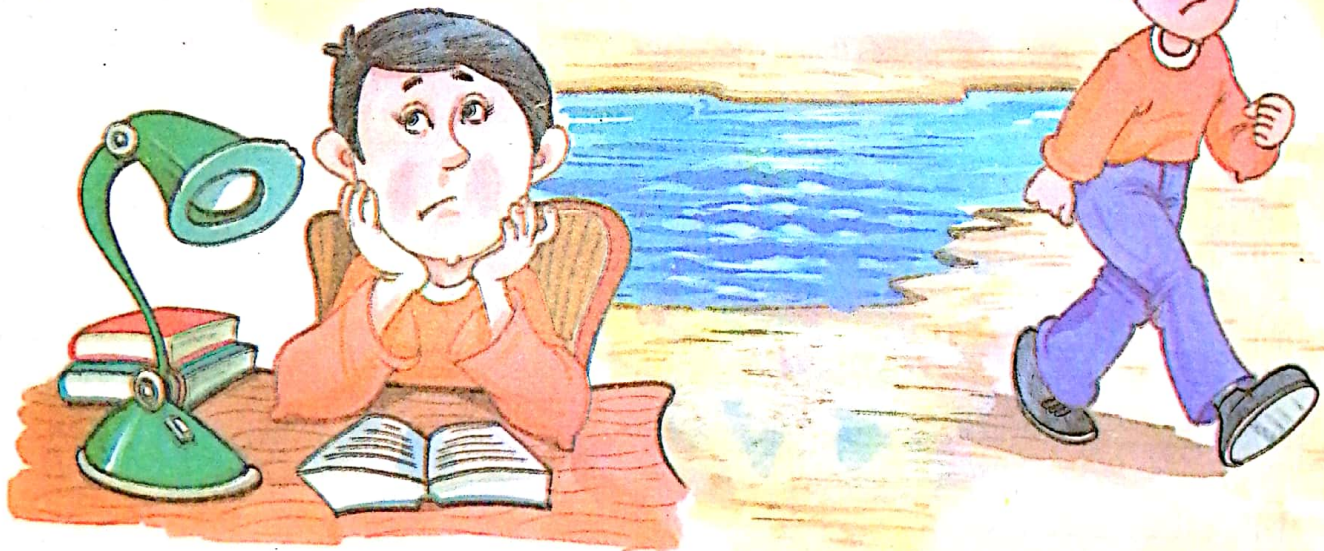
No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass,

No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.



**Note:** W.H. Davies has personified the beauty of the world around us, which many often fail to observe because of a lack of leisure. Dancing feet and Enchanting smile symbolically refer to various aspects of the beauty around us.

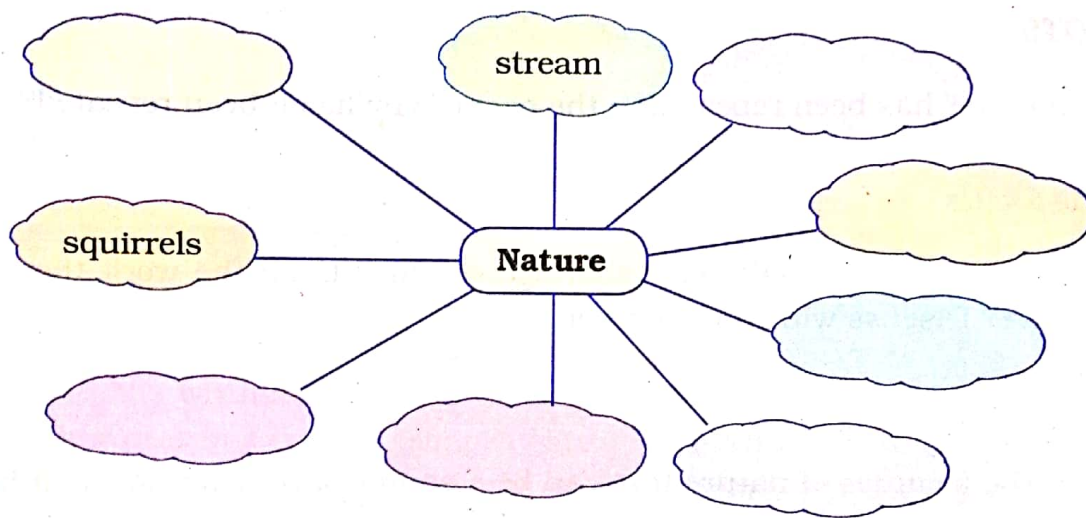


## I Understanding the Poem

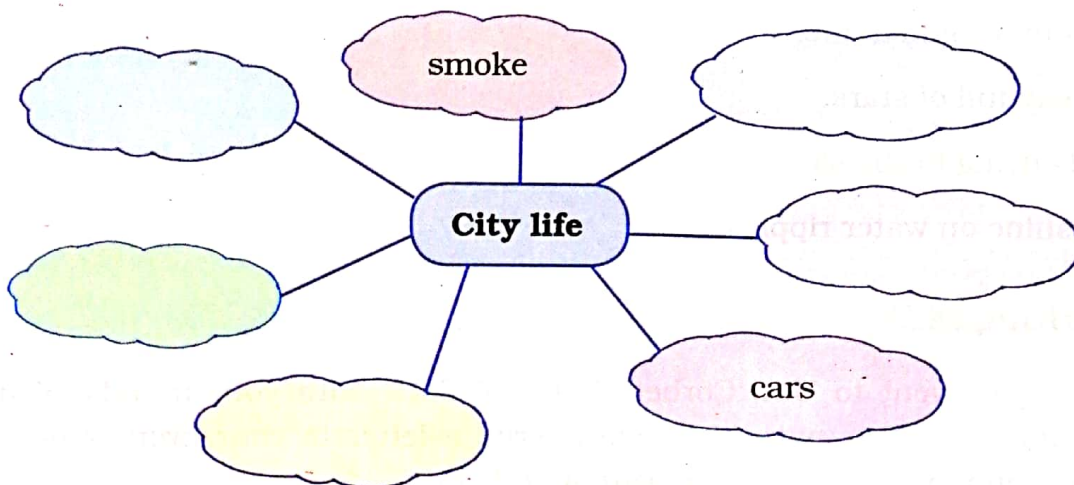
### A. Answer the following questions briefly:

1. What does the speaker miss because of lack of time?
2. What do 'stars in the stream' (line 8) refer to?
3. List the pairs of rhyming words in the poem.

### B. In the poem 'Leisure', the poet depicts various things and animals as attributes of nature. Read the poem and complete the chart given below by filling in the names of appropriate things/animals in the bubbles:



### C. Now complete the chart given below by filling in the names of various animals/ things that you relate to city life.



Now bring out the contrast between the nature and city life.

## II HOTS

The phrase 'no time' has been repeated in the poem. Why has it been repeated?

## III Life Skills

Why do people in cities normally face shortage of time? Is all the work they are busy doing productive? Discuss with your partner.

## IV Values

- A. Point out the beauties of nature that can be a source of pleasure for man in his day to day life.
- B. Whenever the poet sees the streams in broad daylight, he is reminded of the skies at night. Explain why. How do you feel when you see—
  - 1. squirrels dancing and running.
  - 2. ants moving in a line.
  - 3. the sky full of stars.
  - 4. birds flying in the sky.
  - 5. sunshine on water ripples.

## V Writing Skills

Last summer you went to 'Jim Corbett National Park' with your friends. You enjoyed watching animals in their natural habitat. Write a letter to your brother describing to him the satisfaction you derived from watching them.

'No time to see, when woods we pass'

In the above extract, the sound /w/ occurs repeatedly. This occurrence of the same sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words is called **alliteration**. The use of alliteration gives a musical effect to the poem. Read the poem and find out two other examples of alliteration.

Given below is an amusing example of alliteration (in the form of a tongue twister). Try to speak it aloud three times without stopping.

"Betty bought some butter but the butter was bitter, so Betty  
bought some better butter to make the bitter butter better."

### About the Author

W.H. Davies was an English poet born in a poor family in Wales. He has written mostly about nature or life on the road. He writes in a natural, simple, earthy style. His poem 'Leisure' depicts the predicament of the modern man who has gained the whole world but lost his own soul.

