

Uruka Adventure



The word 'adventure' means 'an unusual and exciting experience'. Look at the picture below. Have you ever experienced a nightly adventure like this? Share with your classmates what kind of an adventure you had. Now read what happened to Mahen and his friends one night!



Mahendra, lovingly called Mahen by his friends, is talkative, restless and always cheerful. On the eve of the Assamese harvest festival *Magh Bihu* this year, his friends Sanju, Nantu, Rinku and Rumon visited him. It was the *uruka* night. They proposed that Mahen should lead them in an *uruka* adventure. Mahen jumped up excitedly and looked at his friends with an air of authority. He was ready for any adventure!

Sanju, the eldest among them, said in an excited voice, "We will spend the night in our *bhelaghar* (feasting house). When everyone is asleep, we will go and pick vegetables and have another feast tomorrow."

"Oh yes! It is our age old custom. We must honour it," Mahen responded gleefully.

Soon the grand *uruka* feast was over. Everyone left for their respective homes. The mischievous five stayed behind, huddling around the big fire. When it was past midnight, Mahen rose and commanded the others to follow him in their nocturnal adventure. They made straight for Shantiram's house at the end of the lane. Shantiram was a retired army man and farming was his hobby. His garden was full of cabbages, brinjals, carrots and other seasonal vegetables.

They walked quietly, pausing just to put aside the bamboos of the *nongola* (gate) and tiptoed into Shantiram's garden. Then Mahen stopped suddenly. "What will we carry the vegetables in? We didn't bring a bag." "Never mind. We'll carry as much as possible in each hand," the friends replied.

It was all very silent in the cold January night. The nightjar (a small species of owl) was screeching eerily at regular intervals. It made the atmosphere all the more haunting. They were all very frightened, but put on brave faces.

Mahen, who had walked ahead of the others, noticed a black heap right in the middle of the rows of vegetables. He thought it was a harmless pile of garbage. But as the boys stretched their hands to pick the vegetables, the black heap suddenly jerked up. To their utter horror, it dashed towards them at great speed. It was none other than Shantiram, who had been sitting like a black heap wrapped in a black blanket, waiting for such *uruka* adventurers.

"Oh my good Lord! It's a ghost! Run, run, r.....un!" Mahen screamed. They all dashed past the open *nongola* and then to the road. The boys ran frantically like antelopes and made good their escape. Soon they were out of the reach of the army man.

Finally, regaining his breath, Mahen exclaimed, "Thank God we are all alive! But can we not think of other types of adventures?"



ACTIVITIES

1. Let's see how much you have understood the story. Answer the questions:

- (a) Who was the leader of the boys in their adventure on *uruka* night?
- (b) What were the names of Mahen's friends?
- (c) What did they propose to Mahen on *uruka* night?
- (d) What was the age old custom that Mahen was referring to?
- (e) What was Mahen's reaction to their proposal?
- (f) What did the boys do after the feast?
- (g) Who was Shantiram?
- (h) Why was Shantiram sitting wrapped in a black blanket? Where was Shantiram sitting?
- (i) What was the black heap of garbage that Mahen noticed?
- (j) What made the night appear more haunting?
- (k) Why did the boys run away from the garden?
- (l) What happened when the boys were about to pick the vegetables?
- (m) Who did the boys think chased them?

2. Here are some of the events that happened on the *uruka* night, but they are not arranged in the proper order.

Arrange the sentences in the proper sequence and then read the lesson to check your answer.

- (a) Mahen saw something like a black heap of garbage in the middle of the garden.
- (b) Shantiram ran towards the boys when the boys were about to pick the vegetables.
- (c) Sanju, Nantu, Rinku, Rumon and Mahen planned an adventure on *uruka* night.

- (d) The boys ran frantically out of the garden, scared that the ghost was after them.
- (e) Just past midnight, the five boys headed towards Shantiram's vegetable garden.
3. Look at the words in the two boxes below. One contains the names and the other contains their descriptions. Match the words to their descriptions and write them in your notebooks.

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- (a) *Uruka*
- (b) Shantiram
- (c) Sanju, Nantu, Rinku and Rumon
- (d) Mahendra
- (e) The Nightjar
- (f) *Nongola*

- (i) the four friends of Mahendra
- (ii) a small species of owl
- (iii) the leader of the adventure on *uruka* night
- (iv) a retired army man who was interested in farming
- (v) a bamboo gate
- (vi) the annual feast ahead of Magh Bihu

4. Here are some words from the lesson. Match the words with their meaning to check your understanding.

- propose
restless
custom
feast
frantically

- unable to stay still
a large or special meal, especially for a lot of people
to suggest a plan, an idea etc.
done quickly and with a lot of activity, but in a way that is not very well organized
an accepted way of behaving or of doing things in society



5. Read the lesson once again and write in the box the name(s) of the person/people who said the lines given below. In which paragraph does each sentence occur?

- (i) "Oh yes! It is our age old custom."
- (ii) "We will spend the night in our *bhelaghar*."
- (iii) "What will we carry the vegetables in?"
- (iv) "Never mind. We'll carry as much as possible in each hand."

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6. Let's learn some grammar:

(a) Read the following two sentences:

- (i) We will spend the night in our *bhelaghar*.
- (ii) We'll carry as much vegetables as possible.

Note the following:

- (i) We can write ***we will*** as ***we'll***.
- (ii) ***We'll*** is a shorter form of ***we will***.



Now rewrite the following sentences using the short form of *will*.

- (i) Mahen said, "We will make a *bhelaghar*."
- (ii) They will spend the night in the *bhelaghar*.
- (iii) Sanju thought, "When everyone is asleep, I will pick vegetables."
- (iv) Mahen said, "We will help each other to cook the food."
- (v) They will have an *uruka* adventure.

(b) Now read the following sentences:

- (i) We'll carry as much as possible in our hands.
- (ii) I shall wait to see who comes to steal my vegetables.

Note the following:

We use words like ***will*** and ***shall*** to talk about something that is going to happen in the future.

(c) Note the difference in meaning between the first two sentences and the third:

- (i) We ***will spend*** the night in the *bhelaghar*.
- (ii) We shall go and pick vegetables.
- (iii) We ***spent*** the night in the *bhelaghar*.

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The first two sentences express future time and the third sentence expresses past time.

(d) Note the forms of negative sentences:

- (i) We ***will not*** spend the night in the *bhelaghar*.
- (ii) We ***did not*** spend the night in the *bhelaghar*.

We use ***will not*** or ***won't*** and ***did not*** or ***didn't*** to express a negative meaning.

Now check your grammar. Rewrite these sentences by changing the underlined verbs to express future time.

- (i) Mahen called his friends to his house.
- (ii) Mahen jumped up in joy.
- (iii) They decided to celebrate *Uruka* together.
- (iv) They planned to hold the feast in Mahen's house.
- (v) We went to pick vegetables from Shantiram's garden.

7. Read the story and write down the words ending with – ly. One is done for you.

- (a) excitedly (b) (c) (d)

Now look up the dictionary and write the meanings of these words. Use the words in sentences of your own.

8. (a) Read the paragraphs given below carefully. They describe what the friends did on *uruka* night.

All the words highlighted in italics bold refer to actions that took place in the past.

Mahen and his friends **decided** to hold a feast together. They **planned** to hold the feast at Mahen's compound. Mahen and Sanju **said** that they would do the shopping for the feast at the nearby market. Mahen's friends Nantu and Rinku **suggested** that they should cook for the feast themselves.

Rumon **offered** to cook the vegetables and the fish. Sanju and Nantu **said** that they would cook the rice, the lentils and the chicken. The five friends **proposed** that they would spend the entire night at Mahen's compound.

As planned earlier, the five boys **built** a big shed using straw and bamboo. Rumon's uncle **helped** them with the task. The boys joyfully **cooked** for the feast with a little supervision and help from Mahen's mother. When the feast **was** over, Mahen **commanded** his friends to follow him on their nocturnal adventure. They **made** straight for Shantiram's house at the end of the lane. The five friends **tiptoed** into his garden after crossing the nongola. Suddenly, they **saw** a black heap of garbage in the middle of the rows of vegetables. They **thought** it was inert and harmless. But when the boys **stretched** their hands to pick the vegetables, the heap suddenly **moved**. To their utter horror, they **discovered** it was none other than Shantaram himself, covered in a black blanket. Terrified, they **fled** from the scene. What a narrow escape they **had**!

Now sit in groups. Then, using verbs in similar forms, tell the group how you celebrated one of your festivals this year. Did you have an adventure like Mahen or was it a rather ordinary experience for you?

Remember to include the following points to describe your experience:

- How you planned for the festival
- With whom you celebrated it
- What was prepared for the festival
- What you ate and who did the cooking
- What adventures you had with your friends

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(b) Name a festival that all Indians celebrate in the month of January.
Discuss with your partner and write a few lines on it.

9. Read the verbs in column A and write their past forms in column B, as shown in the example:

A	B
buy	bought
catch
teach
bring
fight



10. What did you notice about the words in column B above?

Notice that the 'ght' in all the past forms is pronounced as the 't' is pronounced in 'cot'.

bought

caught

taught

brought

fought

Can you think of more words ending with 'ght'? Work with a friend. Practise saying aloud the words you have listed.

11. Look at the pictures in box A and read the dialogue in the bubble. Now choose the correct response from those in box B to fill up the bubble C.

A	 	<p>Let's run! Are you OK?</p>	B
C			<p>(i) I am sorry. I do apologies for my fault. (ii) Don't worry. I am OK. You carry on. I'll join you in a while. (iii) I am not OK. I am suffering from fever.</p>

Now, practise the dialogue with your partner.

12. Read the following words. Some of them are related to adventure. Find out the meanings of those words and make sentences with them:

plan	thrill	excitement	enjoyment	feast
cooperation	custom	experiment	night	voice

13. Let's do:

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Magh Bihu is a festival which is linked to nature and its nurture. It is also a celebration of the northward movement of the sun called *Uttaraayana* (*uttar* means north and *aayana* means movement).

Bihu, Karbi-Dehal-Kachir-Dom, Karam Puja, etc. are all festivals closely linked to nature.

In groups, choose a festival like the above and make a poster on it. Remember to use pictures and interesting captions (headings) along with short descriptions of the food, dress, rituals, etc. that are part of the festival.