

# ATOMIC ENERGY EDUCATION SOCIETY

SUB : ENGLISH

CLASS VIII

POEM : MACAVITY : THE MYSTERY CAT

## HANDOUT 1

This poem is divided into two Modules. The first module explicates the poem based on a mischievous mystery cat named Macavity, written by T S Eliot.

### 1.1 About the Poet :

Thomas Stearns Elliot born on 26th September, 1888 was an essayist, a critic, a playwright and one of the well-known poets of the twentieth century. Some of his famous poems are 'The Waste Land', 'Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', 'Journey of the Magi', 'Naming of Cats' etc. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948.

### 1.2 Stanza 1

This cat is known by the name 'Hidden Paw' as he is the criminal mastermind who disregards law. He is an enigmatic figure to even the specialized detective agencies of the world like the Scotland Yard and the Flying Squad. These agencies had accepted their defeat by this clever cat and therefore he is considered as the 'bafflement' of the Scotland Yard.

### 1.3 Stanza 2:

For when they reach the scene of crime-Macavity's not there.' Macavity is too clever to be caught and he is nowhere near at the crime spot. The poet says that Macavity disobeys all human laws and also the law of gravity. His levitation is so powerful that it causes a fakir to stare bewildered. But when the crime spot is reached, Macavity is not there. The poet says that we may search him in the basement or we may look up in the air but Macavity is not there.

### **1.4 Stanza 3**

T.S Eliot describes Macavity as a ginger cat who is both tall and thin. He can be recognized from his eyes which are deeply sunken in. This cat has lines on his forehead steeped with thoughts; he has a head that is highly domed while his coat is untidy and his whiskers uncombed. Macavity moves like a snake and whenever he is mistaken to be asleep, he is wide awake.

### **1.5 Stanza 4**

The poet says there is no one like Macavity. He is a devil in disguise of a cat; he is a monster of wickedness. One may meet him in a by-street or in the square but when the crime is discovered, Macavity is not there.

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