

Handout
Class: VII-ENGLISH
HONEYCOMB
Poem: CHIVVY
Poet- Michael Rosen

Chivvy means continuously urge someone to do something, often in an annoying way. Chivvying is an endless supply of 'do' and 'don'ts'. This results in funny situations. The poem gives a list of common instructions by grown-ups. One can find a number of examples of such commands. Children are expected to follow them without thinking. This keeps them in a tight spot.

In his poem 'Chivvy', Michael Rosen illustrates many examples of 'do' and 'don'ts'. Through this poem the poet expresses the dilemma of the children when they are continuously instructed by the grown-ups about what to do and not to do.

Stanza-1

In this stanza the poet says that elders/older people always instruct small children, such as to speak properly when they feel shy to speak. Sometimes, children eat and talk at a time. So the grown-ups prevent them from talking while eating. They also instruct not to look at something with great concentration or to direct someone's attention by showing his/her finger. The elders/older also don't like children putting their fingers in their nose. So they tell them frequently not to do so.

Stanza-2.

In this stanza the poet says that grown-ups used to say to sit straight. The small children should say 'please' whenever they need help or something from someone. If the children make loud noise or make chaos, they say to make less noise. If they want to close the door while a child standing near the door they will ask him/her to close the door but will not do it themselves. They will ask you not to drag your feet if you are doing so knowingly or unknowingly. They will ask you whether you are carrying your hankie or not if it is necessary. They don't like to put hands in the pockets so whenever they notice the child doing so they will ask to take the hands out of his/her pockets.

Stanza-3

In this stanza the poet gives other examples of 'do' and 'don'ts'. They ask children to pull up their socks, to stand straight if they are unstable while standing. They also ask them not to interfere in the discussion. They neglect or condemn the child when he/she is trying to make others laugh. They don't like the child putting his/her hands on the table so they ask the child not to do so in front of others.

Last two lines (Couplet)

In the last couplet (two-lines) the poet brings out the contrast in the instructions like 'do' and 'don'ts' by the grown-ups. When the children try to apply their mind to do something with their own at that time they are prohibited to do so. But if they follow their instructions as it is, they are considered that they cannot apply their own mind.

In this way, the poet presents funny situation and dilemma of the children by giving many examples of 'do' and 'don'ts'.