

## READING SECTION

### PRACTISE PASSAGE

Read the passage given below :

1. A fisherman, enfeebled with age, could no longer go out to sea so he began fishing in the river. Every morning he would go down to the river and sit there fishing the whole day long. In the evening he would sell whatever he had caught, buy food for himself and go home. It was a hard life for an old man. One hot afternoon while he was trying to keep awake and bemoaning his fate, a large bird with silvery feathers alighted on a rock near him. It was Kaha, the heavenly bird. "Have you no one to care for you, grandpa?" asked the bird. "Not a soul." "You should not be doing such work at your age," said the bird. "From now on I will bring you a big fish every evening. You can sell it and live in comfort." True to her word, the bird began to drop a large fish at his doorstep every evening. All that the fisherman had to do was take it to the market and sell it. As big fish were in great demand, he was soon rolling in money. He bought a cottage near the sea, with a garden around it and engaged a servant to cook for him. His wife had died some years earlier. He had decided to marry again and began to look for a suitable woman.

2. One day he heard the royal courtier make an announcement. Our king has news of a great bird called Kaha," said the courtier. "Whoever can give information about this bird and help catch it, will be rewarded with half the gold in the royal treasury and half the kingdom!" The fisherman was sorely tempted by the reward. Half the kingdom would make him a prince!

3. "Why does the king want the bird?" he asked. "He has lost his sight," explained the courtier. "A wise man has advised him to bathe his eyes with the blood of Kaha. Do you know where she can be found?" "No...I mean ...no, no..." Torn between greed and his sense of gratitude to the bird, the fisherman could not give a coherent reply. The courtier, sensing that he knew something about the bird, informed the king. The king had him brought to the palace.

4. "If you have information about the bird, tell me," urged the king. "I will reward you handsomely and if you help catch her, I will personally crown you king of half my domain." "I will get the bird for you," cried the fisherman, suddenly making up his mind. "But Kaha is strong. I will need help." The king sent a dozen soldiers with him. That evening when the bird came with the fish, the fisherman called out to her to wait. "You drop the fish and go and I never get a chance to thank you for all that you've done for me," he said. "Today I have laid out a feast for you inside. Please alight and come in." Kaha was reluctant to accept the invitation but the fisherman pleaded so earnestly that she finally gave in, and alighted. The moment she was on the ground, the fisherman grabbed one of her legs and shouted to the soldiers hiding in his house to come out. They rushed to his aid but their combined effort could not keep Kaha down.

5. She rose into the air with the fisherman still clinging onto her leg. By the time he realised he was being carried away, the fisherman was too high in the air to let go. He hung on grimly, and neither he nor Kaha were ever seen again.

1.1 On the basis of your understanding of the above passage, answer each of the questions given below by choosing the most appropriate option: 1 X 4 = 4

(a) Why was the king desperately looking for Kaha the bird?

i. The king wanted a pet bird.

ii. A wise man advised the king to capture the bird for good luck.

iii. Kaha was the only heavenly bird with silvery feathers.

iv. The king was blind and required Kaha's blood for his eyes.

(b) Why did the bird volunteer to bring fish for the old man ?

- i. The old man was inexperienced at fishing.
- ii. The bird took pity on the old man and wanted to help him.
- iii. The bird had caught more fish than required.
- iv. The bird wanted to make the old man rich.

(c) What led the courtier to sense that the fisherman might know something about Kaha ?

- i. The courtier had observed Kaha alight at the fisherman's house every evening.
- ii. The courtier had seen the fisherman talk to Kaha.
- iii. The fisherman fumbled when asked about Kaha.
- iv. Word went around that the fisherman was in contact with Kaha.

(d) Which of the following is not true about Kaha ?

- i. Kaha was a very considerate bird.
- ii. The blood of Kaha was precious.
- iii. Kaha was a strong bird.
- iv. Kaha saved the fisherman from the King's wrath.

1.2 Answer the following questions briefly:

1 X 6 = 6

- a. Why did the fisherman stammer when asked if he knew about the bird ?
- b. How did the fisherman get Kaha to come down ?
- c. What does the phrase 'rolling in money' in the passage refer to ?
- d. Why was the fisherman doubtful about revealing information about Kaha to the courtier ?
- e. Mention two traits of farmer's character revealed through the story.
- f. How did the bird manage to escape?

1.3 Pick out the words/phrases from the passage which are opposite in meaning to the following:

1 X 2=2

- i. Take off (Para 1)
- ii. Released (Para 4)