

“Rikki Tikki Tavi” Comprehension Questions

Page 1 questions:

1. List the characters that are mentioned and write down any important details that are included about them.
2. Where will this story, specifically the “great war”, take place?

Page 2 questions:

1. Examine these lines, "There are more things to find out about in this house," he said to himself, "than all my family could find out in all their lives. I shall certainly stay and find out." Looking at Rikki's thoughts, what does this reveal about his personality? How does this connect to what we learned about the motto of the mongoose?
2. As Rikki roams the house, what actions does he take that demonstrate his curiosity and need to explore?
3. Examine these lines, "Teddy's safer with that little beast than if he had a bloodhound to watch him. If a snake came into the nursery now—" Based on these lines, what potential conflict may arise later in the story? Using details from the story to make an inference, what might the dad have said had he finished this sentence?

Page 3 questions:

1. Examine this line, “When he had lifted one-third of himself clear of the ground, he stayed balancing to and fro exactly as a dandelion tuft balances in the wind, and he looked at Rikki-tikki with the wicked snake's eyes that never change their expression, whatever the snake may be thinking of.” What type of figurative language is used here? Determine its meaning within the context of the sentence.
2. Using evidence from this page, describe Nag. Based on these descriptions, make an inference as to why Darzee and his wife hid from Nag.
3. Examine these lines, “...he knew that all a grown mongoose's business in life was to fight and eat snakes. Nag knew that too and, at the bottom of his cold heart, he was afraid.” Using these details, make a prediction about what might take place between these two characters later in the story.
4. Using evidence from this page, what does “to make an end of him” mean?
5. Using evidence from this page, when dealing with Nagaina, what mistake did Rikki make and why does he make it?

Page 4 questions:

1. Using evidence from the story, why might Nag be mad at Darzee? What role did he play in Rikki attacking Nagania?

2. Look closely at the paragraph that begins “Rikki-tikki felt his eyes growing red....” In what ways do Nag and Nagaina have the upper-hand on Rikki?
3. Look at the paragraph that begins “If you read the old books of natural history....” Use details from these lines to make an inference as to why Rikki feels better about himself.
4. Using evidence from the bottom of page 4, why is Karait just as dangerous, if not more so, than a cobra?

Page 5 questions:

1. Compare and contrast Rikki’s fight with Karait versus that of his fight with Nagaina. How does Rikki respond in this fight compared to when he fought Nagaina?
2. In the second full paragraph on this page, why is Rikki making his war cry? What does he want to do and why?
3. Using evidence from this page, make an inference as to why Chuchundra never runs into the middle of the room.
4. Using evidence from this page, based on Chuchundra’s actions and the descriptions of him, why did Rikki think by threatening Chuchundra he could get him to talk?

Page 6 questions:

1. For their next actions, what are Nagaina and Nag planning to do? Why? What is a big motivation for their plan?
2. Nag says that he does not want to hunt Rikki, as he believes if they kill the family, or at least the parents, Rikki will leave. However, this is probably not the only reason Nag does not want to hunt Rikki. Using previous evidence from the story, make an inference as to why Nag might not want to hunt Rikki.

Page 7 questions:

1. What is Rikki’s plan in how to attack Nag?
2. In the second full paragraph, look at this description: “Then he was battered to and fro as a rat is shaken by a dog—to and fro on the floor, up and down, and around in great circles, but his eyes were red and he held on as the body cart-whipped over the floor, upsetting the tin dipper and the soap dish and the flesh brush, and banged against the tin side of the bath.” What type of figurative language is used in this description? Determine its meaning within the context of these lines.
3. Examine this line, “As he held he closed his jaws tighter and tighter, for he made sure he would be banged to death, and, for the honor of his family, he preferred to be found with his teeth locked.” What do we learn about Rikki’s attitudes or beliefs in this line?
4. Using evidence from the story, why might Nagaina be worse than fighting five Nags?
5. Using evidence from the story, why might Rikki be angry at Darzee for celebrating the death of Nag?

Page 8 question:

1. How will Darzee's wife attempt to help Rikki?

Page 9 questions:

1. Why is Rikki destroying Nagaina's eggs?
2. Nagaina has gone into the veranda; what might she want to do there? Why is Darzee's wife so scared?
3. When Nagaina enters the house, how does she have the upper-hand in the situation that is described?
4. In the last paragraph on this page, what does Rikki reveal to Nagaina? What might he hope Nagaina will do because of this information?

Page 10 questions:

1. In the paragraph that starts "Tricked! Tricked!" (this paragraph starts at the end of page 9) Look carefully at how Rikki is responding to Nagaina. How has Rikki changed toward her since his first fight with her?
2. Nagaina tells Rikki if he just gives her the egg she will leave and never return. Using evidence from the story, why might Rikki be so set on fighting her and not just giving her the egg and let her go away?
3. Locate at least three examples of similes used in this page and determine what they mean in the context of the lines or paragraphs they are used in.
4. With the episode the paragraph that begins "Rikki-tikki knew he must catch her," in what way(s) is Rikki now in danger?

Page 11 question:

1. Using evidence from the story, what has Rikki accomplished that he should be proud of?