

## UNIT 8

# Be the Best of Whatever You are

*Douglas Malloch (1877 – 1938)*

### Students Learning Outcomes:

**On the completion of this unit, the students will be able to:**

- use pre-reading strategies to predict the content of the text from title etc.
- analyze how a poet uses language to appeal to the senses through use of figurative language including use of similes, metaphors and imagery.
- read a given poem and write its theme.
- write a compare and contrast essay.
- proofread and edit a given text.
- evaluate and use expressions for giving a class presentation.
- use nouns, noun phrases and clauses in apposition.

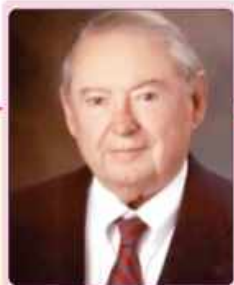
### Pre-reading:

- What idea comes to your mind by reading the title of the poem, "Be the Best?" Discuss.

If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill,  
Be a scrub in the valley but be  
The best little scrub by the side of the rill;  
Be a bush if you can't be a tree.  
If you can't be a bush be a bit of the grass,  
And some highway happier make;  
If you can't be a muskie then just be a bass--  
But the liveliest bass in the lake!  
We can't all be captains, we've got to be crew,  
There's something for all of us here,  
There's big work to do, and there's lesser to do,  
And the task we must do is the near.



If you can't be a highway then just be a trail,  
If you can't be the sun be a star;  
It isn't by size that you win or you fail—  
Be the best of whatever you are!



### About the Poet

*Douglas Malloch (1877–1938)*

He was an American poet, short story writer and associate editor of American Lumberman, a trade paper in Chicago. He became known as a “Lumberman’s Poet” both locally and nationally. He is noted for writing “Round River Drive” and “Be the Best of whatever you are” in addition to many other creations.

## Reading and Thinking Skills

### 1. Answer the following questions.

- i) What is the difference between pine and scrub?
- ii) Why does the poet say that we should be a best scrub?
- iii) Why cannot we all be captains?
- iv) Does the poet want to say that everyone should perform his / her duty well?
- v) What is the main theme of the poem?

### 2. Choose the correct answer.

- i) If you can't be a pine on the top of the rill:
  - a) be a school boy
  - b) be a scrub in the valley
  - c) be a teacher
  - d) be a tall tree
- ii) The poet says that we should be:
  - a) the best little boy
  - b) the best little fellow
  - c) the best little scrub by the side of the rill.
  - d) the best little tree

- iii) We should be like:
  - a) a bush by the side of a highway
  - b) a tree by the side of a highway
  - c) grass by the side of a highway
  - d) plants by the side of a highway
- iv) The poem "Be the Best of Whatever You are" is written by:
  - a) William Wordsworth      b) Douglas Malloch
  - c) John Keats                d) William Blake
- v) The poet wants to convey the message that:
  - a) one should be best at one's own place
  - b) one should be a good person
  - c) one should be a mischievous fellow
  - d) one should be a bad fellow

**3. Re-read the poem and write the missing words in each line.**

- i) If you can't be a \_\_\_\_\_ on the top of the hill.
  - a) tree      b) pine      c) apple tree      d) flower
- ii) Be a \_\_\_\_\_ if you can't be a tree.
  - a) tree      b) pine      c) bush      d) flower
- iii) We can't all be captians, we have got to be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) crew      b) players      c) students      d) teachers
- iv) If you can't be the sun be a:
  - a) planet      b) star      c) moon      d) heavenly body
- v) Be the \_\_\_\_\_ of whatever you are.
  - a) good      b) worse      c) bad      d) best

## Use of Figurative Language

The writers and poets often use figurative language to appeal to the senses, and make their stories and poems more interesting. For this purpose, the following literary techniques / elements of literature are used:

- i) Similes:** Similes are a kind of figurative language, in which the

words "like" or "as" are used to show comparison. For example:

- a) He ran like wind.
- b) She is as beautiful as a rose.

**ii) Metaphor:** A metaphor is a way of describing something by comparing it to something else. For example:

- a) Qasim has a heart of stone.
- b) He is a lion.

**iii) Imagery:** Imagery is such a figurative language, which creates mental images, figures or pictures through use of descriptive language. The use of imagery improves the reader's experience through five senses. For example:

If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill  
Be a scrub in the valley--but be  
The best little scrub by the side of the rill;

#### Activity

Form groups of five to ten students. Read the poem "Be the Best of Whatever You are", and discuss figurative language used by the poet. Also discuss how the poet is creating pictures or images in your mind.

#### Critical Thinking

What is the role of the best person in his / her profession in the society? Discuss.

#### Writing Skills

### Compare and Contrast Essay

The compare and contrast essay discusses the similarities and differences between two things, people, places, concepts, etc.

**For example:**

1. The similarities and differences between two places, like Quetta and Ziarat.

2. The similarities and differences between two religions, like Islam and Christianity.
3. Two people like my brother and myself.

#### Activity

Work in groups of five to ten. Select two cities of your choice. Brainstorm the similarities and differences. Make a mind map of such information. Each student should write a compare and contrast essay. Then proof read and edit each other's essays.

### Oral Communication

#### Class Presentations

- (a) Make a list of works which benefit mankind.
- (b) Make a list of great people and the works they did for the mankind.
- (c) Draft your presentation.
- (d) Proof-read it and re-draft it.
- (e) Present it in the class.

### Grammar

#### Noun

A noun is a word that functions as the name of something or set of things, such as living creatures, objects, places, actions, qualities, states of existence or ideas.

#### Examples:

- i) The cat sat on the mat.
- ii) They studied in school for ten years.
- iii) Cleanliness is the half faith.
- iv) The man who controls anger is a strong man.

## Uses of a Noun

In a sentence, nouns can play the role of subject, object, complement or appositive.

### Nouns as Subjects

Every sentence must have a subject and that subject is usually a noun.

#### Examples:

- i) Ahmed is an intelligent student.
- ii) My friend secured A<sup>+</sup> grade in M.Phil.

### Nouns as Objects

Nouns can also be objects of a verb in a sentence. An object can either be a direct object or an indirect object.

#### Example:

I gave many books to my friend.  
("Books" is a direct object and "friend" is an indirect object).

### Nouns as Complements

He is a very good teacher.  
("Teacher" is a complement. It tells what "He" is.)  
They appointed him as a lecturer.  
("Lecturer" is a complement, which tells what "him" is.)

### Nouns as Appositives

An appositive noun is a noun which immediately follows another noun in order to further define it.

#### Example:

My brother, Ali is 25 years old.  
("Ali" is an appositive here, which further defines "My brother".)

### Noun Phrases

A noun phrase is a phrase that has a noun as its head and can occupy the same slot as a single noun in a sentence.

#### Examples:

- i) I am afraid of spiders. (noun)

- I am afraid of black spiders. (noun phrase)
- ii) She was reading a book. (noun)  
She was reading her favourite book. (noun phrase)

## Uses of Noun Phrases

**i) Noun phrase as a subject:** Subject of a sentence can be a noun phrase.

**Examples:**

- a) A boy with short hair was standing outside the departmental store.
- b) The books on the shelf belong to my brother.

**ii) Noun phrase as an object:** Object of a sentence can also be a noun phrase.

**Examples:**

- a) He was talking to a boy with short hair.
- b) He ordered for the books on the shelf.

**iii) Noun phrases as complement:** Noun phrases can also be used as complement of a sentence.

**Examples:**

- a) This room is the guest room.
- b) This is a two litre bottle.

**iv) Noun phrases in apposition:** We can put two noun phrases together to refer to the same person or thing. This is called apposition.

**Examples:**

- a) The bookshelf, a modern piece of furniture, was moved into the house first.
- b) The insect, a large and hairy creature, scared the children.

## Noun Clauses

A noun clause is a subordinate clause that can have the same function

or fill the same slot in a sentence as a noun.

### Uses of Noun Clauses

#### i) Noun Clause as Subject

- a) Whoever ate my lunch is in big trouble.
- b) That the department cancelled the lecture disappoints me.

#### ii) Noun Clause as Object

Examples:

- a) Do you know when the train will arrive?
- b) I do not know who he was talking to.

#### iii) Noun Clause as Complement

Examples:

- a) The truth is that he secured A+ grade.
- b) The committee has announced the winner whoever wrote the essay on noun clauses.

### Noun Clauses in apposition

Examples:

- a) That man, whoever he is, bought some books to read.
- b) The problem, that the earthquake demolished the town, affected his senses.

#### Activity

Write five sentences of nouns, noun phrases and noun clauses in apposition.