

Fairness



Once upon a tale...

The rich merchant, Naduk was facing a lot of hardships in business. He decided to leave the city and search his fortune in new lands.

Naduk sold off all his possessions and paid off his debts. Finally, after all arrangements were made, he was left with a heavy iron beam. Naduk did not want to discard the iron beam. So he decided to leave it with his friend, Lakshman.

Naduk took the beam and went to bid goodbye to his friend.

"Lakshman, would you be kind enough to look after this iron beam for me, till I return?"

"Sure," said Lakshman.

Naduk left. He travelled a lot and built a vast fortune.

After some years, he returned to his hometown and bought a new house.

He decided to start another business.

"Before starting my new venture, I must go and meet my good friend Lakshman," Naduk thought to himself and went to Lakshman's house.

"Hello, you are back?" said Lakshman surprised to see his old friend after many years.

Naduk sat for a while at his friend's house. Sipping a cup of tea, he said, "Lakshman, do you remember when I left, I gave you a heavy iron beam? Can I have it back now?"

Lakshman frowned. He was in no mood to return the iron beam. He knew that the iron beam would fetch him a lot of money in the market.

"Naduk, I feel sorry to tell you, but I kept the iron beam in the storeroom and the ...er... mice



ate it up," said Lakshman. Naduk did not seem to mind. He said it was alright. As he was leaving, he asked Lakshman to send his son home with him so that he could hand over the gift that he had bought for him. Lakshman gladly sent his son Shyamu with Naduk. Upon reaching his home, Naduk locked Shyamu in the cellar.

By nightfall, Lakshman was worried about his son. He went to Naduk's house to ask about him. "Your son, Lakshman? Oh! I am so sorry, but the eagle swooped down and carried him away."

Lakshman was livid. He shouted at Naduk, "You liar! How can an eagle carry off a fifteen year old boy? I will go to the magistrate and complain against you."

A big fight ensued. The next day, Lakshman went to court. When the magistrate heard Lakshman's side of the story, he summoned Naduk. Naduk appeared in the court.

"Return the boy to his father, Naduk," said the magistrate sternly. "How can an eagle carry away a boy?"

Naduk replied, "Just as mice can eat a heavy iron beam." Perplexed, the magistrate scratched his beard. He asked Naduk to explain the matter. Naduk told the whole story.

On hearing the incident, everyone in the court began to laugh. The magistrate ordered Lakshman to return the iron beam to Naduk and told Naduk to return Lakshman's son to him.



- TALE TALK**
1. Why did Naduk not react angrily when Lakshman refused to part with the iron beam?
 2. What made-up story did Naduk tell Lakshman about his son?
 3. Why did everyone in the court laugh?
 4. Explain 'tit for tat' in the light of this story.
 5. Do you sometimes extend favours to gain someone's confidence?



Fairness implies doing justice. The Goddess of Justice is a blindfolded woman holding a set of scales. She was referred to as Maat by the ancient Egyptians.



Role-play these 'unfair' situations as class skits.
Record the reaction of the audience in the empty boxes.

■ **Treat people the way you want to be treated.**

Yesterday, Shiny shared her book with Mina when she forgot to bring hers. Today Shiny has forgotten to bring her pencil box, but Mina is not willing to share her pencil with her.

■ **Play by the rules.**

Roy and Dev are playing a game of snakes and ladders. When Roy is looking the other way, Dev cheats by changing the face of the dice.

■ **Do not blame others for your mistakes.**

Rahul has got low marks in his Math test. He blames his tutor for not teaching him well.

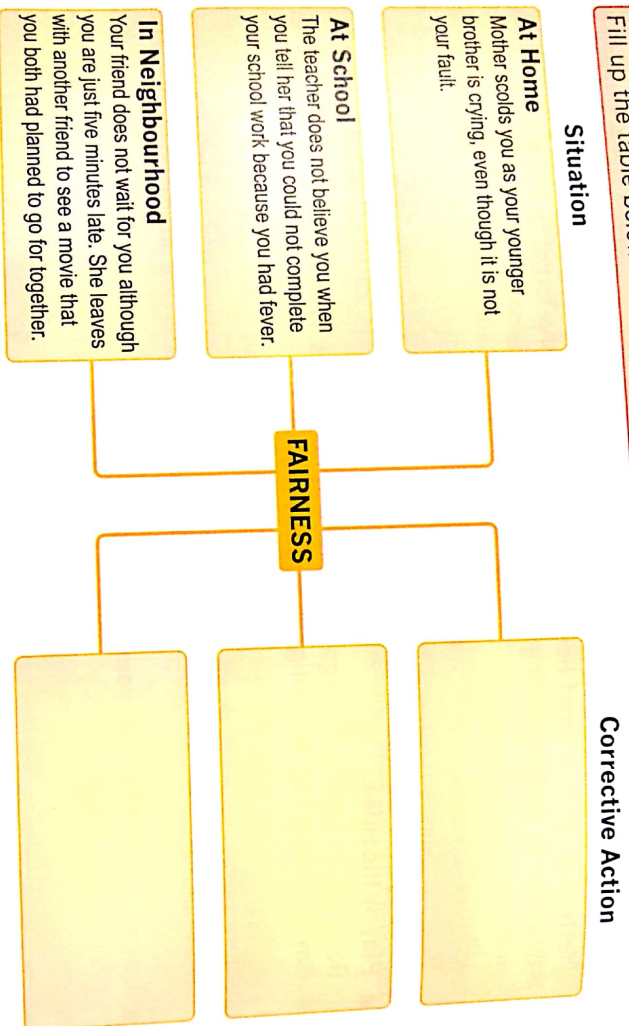
■ **Do not take advantage of other people.**

Ali gets to stand ahead in a long queue in the cafeteria, by lying that he has to get back home to tend his ill mother.

■ **Do not play favourites.**

Bina has got the chance to choose the *kho-kho* team of the school. She decides to choose her best friend, although she is not a good player.

It is nothing new being caught up in an unfair situation. However, there is always a way to come out of a sticky situation. Fill up the table below and find out how fair you are.



STUDENT ACTIVITIES



1. Explain the maxim: 'Do unto others as you want others to do unto you'.
2. You are the class leader. Your teacher has asked you to assign roles for a class play. How will you distribute the roles when everyone around you seems to demand the best roles? What if some other children call you 'unfair' after you have done the job?
3. Jot down five things that you feel are 'really unfair'.
4. Describe an 'unfair situation' in your community. Prepare a report on it and mention what remedial action can be taken.
5. Take on the role of a king or a queen. Have a palace courtroom session in class over classroom problems like bullying, having to be a certain age to drive a vehicle, etc.
6. Many times some choices are levied on us like wearing a uniform to school.
List any five ways in which if you are allowed to make choices, you will make fair choices.
7. Make a list of laws of your government that are 'fair' for everyone. Example: equal pay for both men and women that do the same kind of work.

STAR TRACK Mahabali

According to Indian folklore, a demon king named Mahabali ruled Kerala. He was a judicious ruler loved by all his subjects for his fairness and integrity.

His fame as an able king was known far and wide.

The gods felt challenged and began to fear his growing powers.

So Lord Vishnu transformed himself into a young Brahmin boy called Vamana and approached Mahabali just after he had performed his morning prayers and was preparing to grant boons to the Brahmins.

Vamana asked for a simple gift—three paces of land.

The king agreed. Vishnu, then in the guise of Vamana increased his stature and with the first step covered the whole of earth and with the second, covered the entire sky. Lord Vishnu as Vamana asked Mahabali, "O great King, where shall I keep the third step?" Mahabali realised that the poor boy was no ordinary Brahmin. With folded hands, Mahabali bowed before Vamana and asked him to place his last step on his head.

Vishnu's third step pushed Mahabali to Patala, the Nether World. However, pleased with the fair justice, Vishnu granted Mahabali a boon. Since Mahabali was very attached to his kingdom and his people, he was allowed to return once a year from exile. Onam is the celebration that marks the homecoming of the fair and trustworthy king, Mahabali.



Mahabali

Mahabali

Mahabali



1. Do you know that on November 20, 1959, the United Nations issued its 'Declaration of the Rights of the Child'?

Find out your rights as a child and list them.

2. Read from the epic Mahabharata about the unfair methods that the Kauravas adopted to win over the Pandavas. Share their stories in class.



Quote Note

When circumstances are unfair, you can show good character by continuing to do the best you can do.

Family

2

Once upon a tale...

This is a legendary story about Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati who had two sons, Kartikeya and Ganesha. Both the boys were very sweet. They used to play all kinds of games around their father and mother. The mischievous and playful acts of the boys brought great joy to the parents.

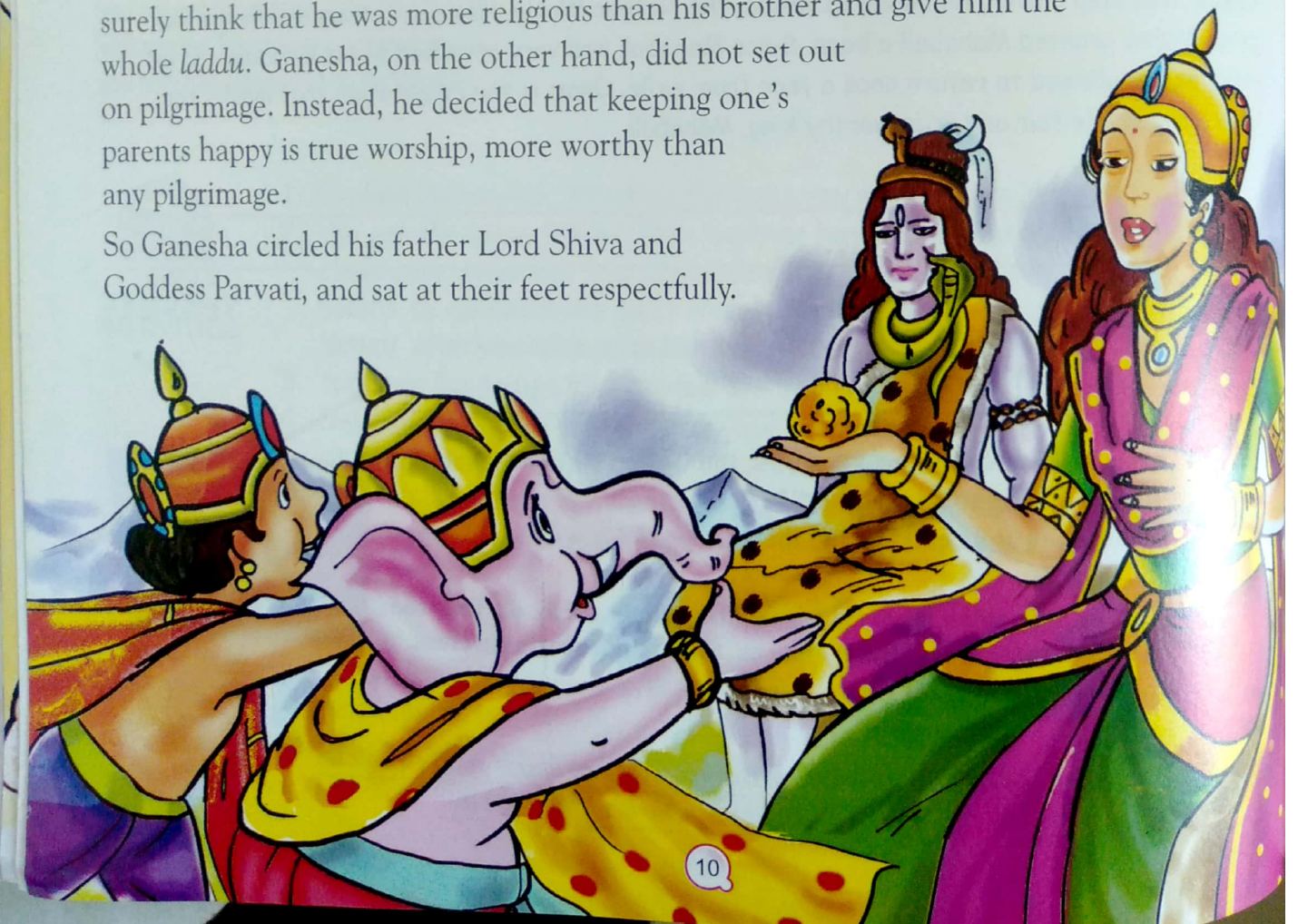
One day, Kartikeya and Ganesha were playing as usual. The atmosphere was full of love and happiness.

Goddess Parvati showed a *laddu* to her sons. Kartikeya and Ganesha, both asked for it. Both the boys wanted the whole *laddu*. Parvati found herself in a difficult situation. She devised a plan. She said to her sons, "I will give the *laddu* to whoever proves himself to be more religious."

Kartikeya took out his peacock chariot. He quickly set on a pilgrimage to various religious places.

He thought that if he completed the pilgrimage first, Goddess Parvati will surely think that he was more religious than his brother and give him the whole *laddu*. Ganesha, on the other hand, did not set out on pilgrimage. Instead, he decided that keeping one's parents happy is true worship, more worthy than any pilgrimage.

So Ganesha circled his father Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, and sat at their feet respectfully.



Eventually, Kartikeya returned from his pilgrimage and asked for the *laddu*. Ganesha also asked for the prize. Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati had something to say to their sons.

"Listen to us carefully, Kartikeya and Ganesha. One who is good to one's parents, brothers and sisters, shares and gives love, seeks advice from family members and finds joy in the happiness of his family members is more religious than any other worshipper who does vast charity and pilgrimage."

Kartikeya and Ganesha understood the true meaning of pilgrimage.

They looked at each other and nodded their heads.

The whole *laddu* was now broken into four pieces for the four family members. Lord Shiva, Goddess Parvati, Kartikeya and Ganesha enjoyed a piece each.



1. What did Goddess Parvati show to the boys?
2. What was Goddess Parvati's plan?
3. What did Kartikeya do to prove that he was religious?
4. What did Ganesha do?
5. What did Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati tell the children?
6. How was the *laddu* finally divided?
7. Like the two brothers, are you also loving towards your brothers and sisters?

TALE
TALK



Family Day is the name of a public holiday in South Africa, in a few Canadian provinces, in some American states, and in Vietnam.

I

Here are pictures of what we commonly see in our families. Talk about them.



II

Can you answer these questions about your great grandparents? You may search for information in family records, photo albums and journals to find the answers.

Which country did they migrate from?

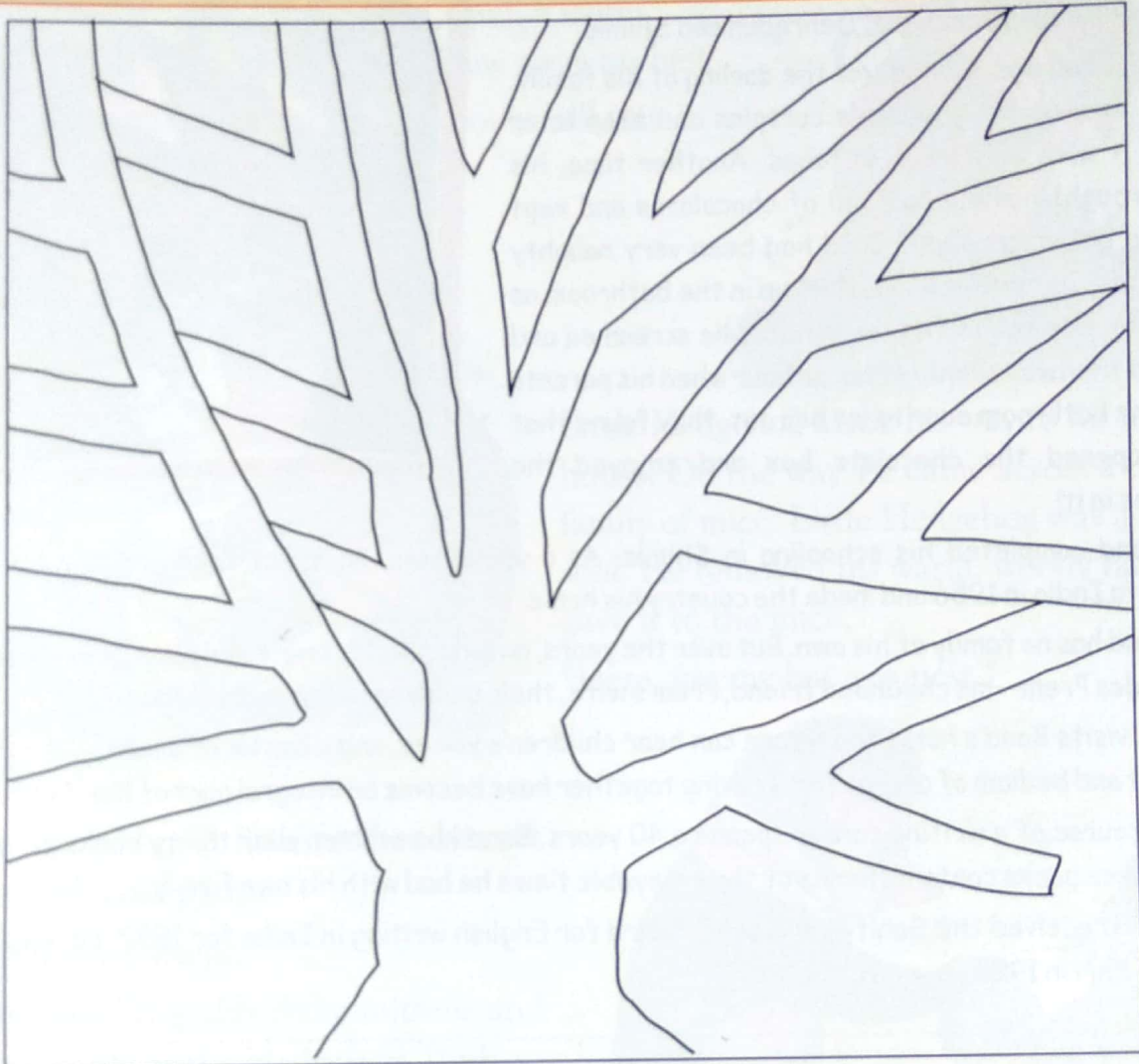
Where did they live?

What was their lifestyle?

What were their occupations?

What did they enjoy doing in their spare time?

Here is a Family banyan tree. Fill in the names of your family members in the main branches. Write the names of the people who support your family from the outside (friends, relatives, etc.) on the outer branches.



**STUDENT
ACTIVITIES**

1. A family story/recipe/tradition or something else might have been passed down in your family over the generations. Note it down in a paragraph.
2. Write down one nice thing (in a riddle) about each of your close relatives on slips of paper. Fold the slips and put them in a box. Now take out one slip at a time and read the riddles. Are the members of the family able to make correct guesses?
3. Find out about the childhood of any four prominent Indians (movie star, politician, artist and dancer). Collect their pictures from the newspaper and paste in your scrapbook.
4. Collect information on the pros and cons of a nuclear family and joint family. Have a class debate.
5. Find out when and why we celebrate Mother's Day and Father's Day.

Ruskin Bond is an Anglo Indian author who mostly writes for children. He was born in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, in 1934. He grew up in Jamnagar, Dehradun and Shimla.

As a child, Bond was 'wicked' yet the darling of his family. Once he tore up his grandma's curtains and then later repaired it with ugly large stitches. Another time, his father brought home a box full of chocolates and kept them on a bathroom shelf. Bond had been very naughty that day and his mother locked him up in the bathroom as punishment. For ten to fifteen minutes he screamed and yelled and then was silent. After an hour when his parents opened the bathroom door to let him out, they found that he had opened the chocolate box and enjoyed the chocolates in it!

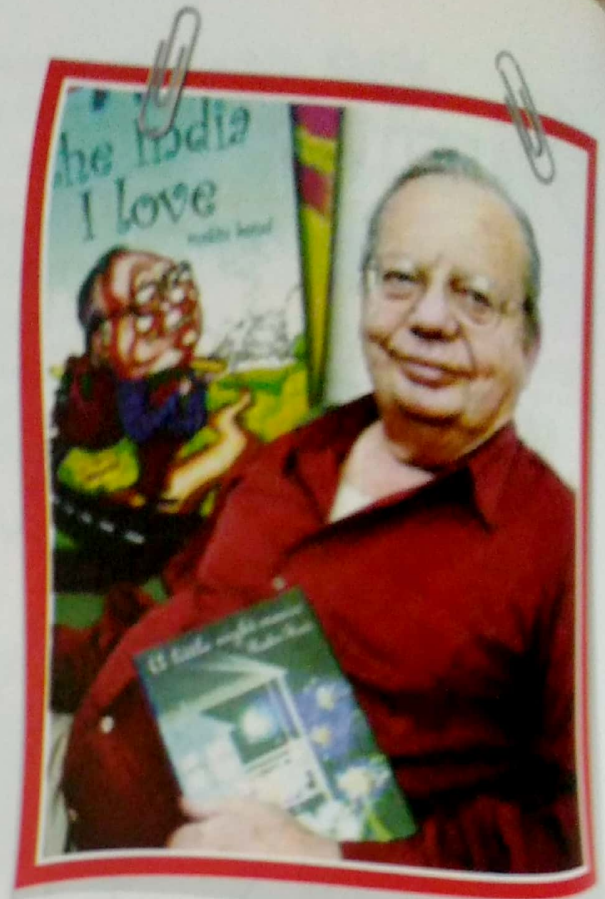
Ruskin Bond completed his schooling in Shimla. As a young man, he spent four years in London. He returned to India in 1956 and made the country his home.

Ruskin Bond has no family of his own. But over the years, an extended foster family has 'grown' around him that includes Prem—his childhood friend, Prem's wife, their children and grandchildren.

When one visits Bond's home today, one can hear children's voices, and a bustle of activity. All the noise, merriment and bedlam of a large family living together have become an integral part of Bond's life.

Over the course of a writing career spanning 40 years, Bond has written over thirty books for children. Most of these books contain stories of the enjoyable times he had with his own family.

Ruskin Bond received the Sahitya Akademi Award for English writing in India for 1992. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999.



Ruskin Bond

Ruskin Bond



1. Read a story about Swami: *Malgudi Days*, R. K. Narayan
2. Watch the movies: *Finding Nemo*, *The Lion King*, *Pinocchio*, *Little Mermaid*
Discuss the love shared by a father and a daughter/son.



A family living in harmony will prosper in everything.