

WALT explain the meaning of words in context (R4) and predict what might happen from details stated and implied (R6)

# Krishna fights the Serpent King

These questions will help you practise:

- ★ explaining the meaning of words in context
- ★ explaining how narrative content contributes to meaning
- ★ identifying and explaining how language choices enhance meaning
- ★ identifying key details from fiction
- ★ making predictions
- ★ explaining inferences.

Kaliya, the Serpent King, was no ordinary snake. He had five heads and was so large that he could crush humans to death in a matter of seconds. The Serpent King lived under the darker whirlpools of the Yamuna River and this is where he held his court. Whenever he so wished, he would rise out of the water and lay waste the countryside, ferociously breathing fire and black smoke wherever he went.

Krishna was almost twelve years old by now. Even at this tender age, he was the acknowledged leader among his friends and looked upon with great respect by the large community of nomadic cowherds that moved wherever the pasture was good.

One day, a group of cowherds came to Krishna and said, 'Kaliya must be stopped. He has already swallowed 300 chickens, 178 goats, and 83 cows. Yesterday he killed the blacksmith's son. This is the last straw. Anyone that tries to cross the river, swim, graze cattle, grow watermelons, milk goats or even walk by the river is in danger. Something must be done.'

Krishna collected a group of brave friends and walked towards the edge of the water. Suddenly, a cloud of black smoke rose above the river. Shooting flames swirled upwards and, in one quick swipe, Kaliya encircled all of Krishna's friends in the curl of his body and dragged them down to the bottom of the river.

Having done their dirty deed, the five dreaded heads bobbed up again, breaking the surface of the water. This time the Serpent King was floating along casually, mockingly.

Krishna took one flying leap and landed on all the five hooded heads of the dreaded snake. He crushed one head under one arm and another head under another arm. With his feet he began a heavy-footed dance on the remaining three.

Kaliya felt as if all the mountains of the Himalayas were raining on his head. Such was the power of Krishna's feet.

He decided to dive into his underwater court. He would drown Krishna this way.

*Seasons of Splendour* by Madhur Jaffrey