



MIIM Grammar School (G-11 Campus)

Date: 6th May, 2021

Class: 7th

Subject: English

Unit: 2

Topic: Folk tale from Russia (How much land does a man need?)

Activity: Reading with explanation. Page#140 to 143

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXd1sbhIOAo>

my name.

✓ People in general

Folk tale from Russia

This Russian folk tale was retold by Leo Tolstoy, the great Russian writer, in 1886. Tolstoy's most famous works are *War and Peace* (1865) and *Anna Karenina* (1875).

Pahom is a hard-working farmer who is happy with his achievements, until he hears that beyond the River Volga, the land is better and cheaper. So he moves there, and he does indeed become ten times better off than he had been. Then, one day, Pahom is told about wonderful land owned by the Bashkirs who would allow him to buy ten times as much land as he already had. Pahom set off for the land of the Bashkirs and found that he could indeed buy as much land as he wanted. For one thousand roubles (Russian currency), he could have as much land as he could cover on foot between sunrise and sunset.

The Bashkirs took him to a little ^{small hill} hillock and one of them placed his fox-fur hat to mark the spot to which Pahom had to return before sunset to claim his land. ^{glad, happy} Delighted, Pahom sets off to walk thirty miles before sunset, marking out his ^{area} territory as he goes by digging out little mounds of earth with his ^{spade} spade.

↓
tool for digging



Pahom looked back. The hillock could be ^{clearly} distinctly seen in the sunlight, with the people on it. At a rough guess Pahom concluded that he had walked three miles. It was growing warmer. He took off his under-coat, flung it across his shoulder, and went on again. Further on, he looked at the sun and decided it was time for breakfast.

'The first shift is done, but there are four in a day, and it is too soon yet to turn. But I will just take off my boots,' said he to himself.

He sat down, took off his boots and went on. It was easy walking now.

'I will go on for another three miles,' thought he. 'Then I'll turn to the left. Oh, but this bit is so rich; it would be a pity to lose it. This land just gets better and better!'

Lesson

He went straight on for a while, and when he looked round, the hillock was scarcely visible and the people on it looked like black ants, and he could just see something glistening there in the sun. He stopped, dug a large hole, and heaped up pieces of turf to mark his territory. Next he untied his flask, had a drink, and then turned sharply to the left. The grass was high and it was very hot. Pahom was tired and saw by the sun that it was noon.

'Well,' he thought, 'I must have a rest.'

He sat down, and ate some bread and drank some water, but he did not lie down, thinking that if he did he might fall asleep. So he went on, at first strengthened by the food, but it had become terribly hot and he felt sleepy, yet still he went on, thinking: 'An hour to suffer, a lifetime to live.'

He went a long way in this direction also, and was about to turn to the left again, when he perceived a damp hollow: 'It would be a pity to leave that out,' he thought. 'Flax would do well there.' So he went on past the hollow, and dug a hole on the other side of it before he turned the corner. Pahom looked towards the hillock. The heat made the air hazy; it seemed to be quivering, and through the haze the people on the hillock could scarcely be seen. He was still ten miles away from the fur hat. Now he walked with difficulty. He was exhausted from the heat, his bare feet were cut and bruised, and his legs began to fail. He longed to rest, but it was impossible if he meant to get back before sunset. The sun waits for no man, and it was sinking lower and lower.

'If only I had not gone so far trying for too much!' he thought bitterly.

He looked towards the hillock and at the sun which was already near the rim. Pahom walked on and on; it was very hard walking and even though he pressed on, he was still far away. He began running, threw away his coat, his boots, his flask, and his cap, and kept only the spade which he used as a support.

'I have grasped too much! What a fool I have been! I can't get there before the sun sets.'

And this fear made him still more breathless. Pahom went on running, his soaking shirt and trousers stuck to him and his mouth was parched. His chest was working like a blacksmith's bellows, his heart was beating like a hammer, and his legs were giving way as if they did not belong to him. Pahom was seized with terror lest he should die of the strain. Though afraid of death, he could not stop. He ran on and on, and as he drew nearer, he heard the Bashkirs yelling and shouting to him. He gathered his last strength and ran on.

Lesson

The sun was close to the rim. It was cloaked in mist and looked large and red as blood. It was about to set! Pahom could already see the people on the hillock waving their arms to hurry him up. He could see the fox-fur cap on the ground, and the Chief holding his sides with laughter.

'There is indeed plenty of land,' thought Pahom. 'But will God let me live on it?'

Pahom looked at the sun, which had reached the earth: one side of it had already disappeared. With all his remaining strength he rushed on, bending his body forward so that his legs could hardly follow fast enough to keep him from falling. Just as he reached the hillock it suddenly grew dark. He looked up—the sun had already set! He gave a cry. But then he remembered that though to him, from below, the sun seemed to have set, they on the hillock could still see it. He took a long breath and ran up the hillock. It was still light there. He reached the top, fell forward with outstretched hands, and reached the fur hat.

'What a fine fellow!' exclaimed the Chief, laughing. 'See how much land he has gained!'

The servant came running up and tried to raise him, but he saw that blood was flowing from his mouth. Pahom was dead! The servant picked up the spade, dug a grave long enough for Pahom to lie in, and buried him in it. Six feet from his head to his heels was all he needed.



Reading for understanding and interpretation

1. Pahom is confident and strong when he sets off. Explain how his feelings change as the day progresses.
2. What were the Bashkirs' terms for selling the land? Why do you think they were offering it for sale so cheaply?
3. In what directions did Pahom intend to walk when marking out the land? Why did he keep changing his intended route?
4. To which two different uses did Pahom put his spade?
5. Why was the Chief laughing as he watched Pahom?

Six feet from his head to his heels was all he needed

