which begin with the same consonant (a letter which is not a vowel a, e, i, o or u), for instance, “The silvery shadows slip silently across the sand” or “The rough, rumbling roar of the engine resounded”. This device helps a poet to create an image through sound and a rhythm set up in a poem.

- **Assonance** is another device where words are used which don’t rhyme but sound similar, like moan, mourn, mound. So, for instance, you could have a non-rhyming poem where the last word in each line sounds similar, setting up an odd kind of sound or rhythm, or the use of such words in succession, for example, “beached beetles bleed bleakly”.

- **Euphemism**: the use of a gentler or more sociably acceptable way of referring to something potentially harsh or crude. “Burnt” is harsh; cremated is the milder way of expressing the disposal of a body by fire.

- **Irony** is when we say one thing but mean something else. It is a form of wit, used to draw attention to something by stating the opposite which the reader knows to be untrue. **There are several kinds of irony. We mention three here.**
  - Verbal irony: there is a surface meaning and a hidden meaning. The hidden meaning is directly opposite to the surface meaning.
  - Situational irony: the irony is in the situation taking place and not the words being uttered. (e.g. By a curious irony both her husbands died the same way)
  - Dramatic irony: the reader knows more than the character on stage.

## 5. SYMBOLS and MOTIFS

### SYMBOLS

1. The word “Pi”
2. The colour “orange”
3. Richard Parker
4. The Lifeboat

Symbols are generally concrete things that stand for or represent something else. Through symbols abstract ideas are made concrete. We encounter symbols all the time. Car manufacturers have developed very distinctive emblems or marques identifying their cars.

Writers, too, work using symbols to convey a message. In *The life of Pi* there are several powerful symbols used which you need to explored carefully to appreciate the novel.

1. **Pi**
   - In addition to its being a shortened form of his name, the word “Pi” indicates a mathematical notation. It is an irrational number in Mathematics (it cannot be completed and therefore has no ending). This suggests that Pi, the character, is complex and cannot be understood completely.
• It is also a letter of the Greek alphabet. The other letters referred to are Alpha (the first letter of the alphabet and indicate dominace as in the alpha male; omega, the last letter, suggests passivity.

2. COLOUR ORANGE

• In The Life of Pi, the colour orange is a symbol of hope (page 140).
• Richard Parker is largely orange and he helps Pi to survive.
• Pi's daughter has an orange cat.
• The life-buoy and the whistle are orange.
• The name of the orangutan, which is described as a mother figure, is Orange Juice.

3. RICHARD PARKER

• At the end of the novel, Pi raises the possibility that Richard Parker is a part of himself, his animal-like nature.
• Richard Parker is alternately vicious and passive, feral and tame, watchful and sleepy.
• Pi himself is responsible for some of the ghastly deeds he mentioned.
• Richard Parker forces the reader to consider what s/he would do in similar circumstances; whether they would also act in dreadful ways and perform horrendous acts.

4. NAMES

• Piscine Molitor / Pi
  He was embarrassed when he was teased by being called Pissing by his classmates. He shortens his name to “Pi”.
• Richard Parker was the name of the hunter who captured the cub and its mother. A shipping class confused the name of the hunter with the cub and gave it the name of its captor.
• Tsimsium

Tsimsium is the name of the Japanese ship and its name has a special significance. Pi's reference to his thesis on sixteenth-century Kabbalist, Isaac Luria’s, cosmogony theory is very important to the book as a whole. In essence, Luria’s theory of creation states that God contracted to make room for the universe. This contraction, called Tsimsium, was followed by light, carried in five vessels. The vessels shattered, causing the sparks of light to sink into matter. God reordered them into five figures, which became the dimensions of our created reality. This seemingly unimportant detail actually foreshadows the main event to come: the sinking of the ship, the Tsimsium, which gives Pi the room to create his own version of the events that follow. Interestingly, like the five figures that make up reality for Luria, five characters on the lifeboat (including Pi himself) shape Pi's story. (Wikipedia)

MOTIFS

1. Territorial dominance
2. Hunger and Thirst
3. Rituals

WORDWEAVERS LITERATURE SERIES: THE LIFE OF PI
1. TERRITORIAL DOMINANCE

- This is loosely linked to the theme of boundaries.
- Animals and humans have their own space or territory.
- When their boundaries are encroached upon, they become agitated and may become violent in defending them.
- Pi mentions that even a domesticated dog sees its bed as its lair and protects it.
- While the ocean is boundless, the lifeboat is small - Pi and the tiger have to make this a home if they are to survive, and it is Pi's task to define the boundaries. Pi has to do this very carefully.
- Richard Parker marked the floor as its territory, as animals do, with his urine.
- Pi does likewise with his urine on the tarpaulin and a whistle to help to reinforce that boundary.
- The raft is also his territory.
- If the human story is the true story, then Pi is Richard Parker. Richard Parker would then represent his animal nature.

2. HUNGER AND THIRST

- Pi's principles and beliefs are shaken at their core as a result of the hunger and thirst he suffered. Even though an ardent vegetarian and pacifist, he relinquishes his principles to adapt to extreme circumstances. He kills and eats meat.
- There is a limited supply of provisions on the lifeboat. Food is always at the forefront of his thoughts, as obtaining it is essential for survival. Food and water dominate his daylight hours and his dreams.
- Pi has to make extreme adjustments to his diet and the way he thinks about food.
- Like primitive people, he has to fend for himself to find his own food (which he eats raw) and potable water.
- Pi develops the skills to catch fish, turtles, and even a bird, sometimes by hand.
- Extreme hunger makes him want to eat anything that resembles food, even once contemplating eating Richard Parker's faeces.

3. RITUALS

- Rituals (patterned behaviour which is repeated) are important for both animals and people.
- They give people and animals a sense of security.
- The observant zookeeper knows that animals are unwell when they change their normal behaviour.
- Animals are creatures of habit. Even in captivity, they do not escape if their territory is pleasant.
- All religions are steeped in rituals.
- Pi creates a series of daily routines and these routines help him to cope with his loneliness and help him to maintain his sanity.
- Having these rituals helped him to survive.
- When rituals are disturbed, people and animals become agitated.
6. VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

Many of you will learn a few new words as you read the book. You should keep a personal dictionary (if you have not done so already) to record these words. Doing so will enhance your understanding of the story. Just to get you started, here are a few vocabulary building activities for you to do.

ACTIVITY 1

Some of these words (Column A) are rightly paired with the identifying words and phrase (Column B). Some are incorrectly paired. Identify the correctly paired words and correct the others. Once you have done this, construct sentences using these words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLUMN A</th>
<th>COLUMN B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Amenable</td>
<td>A relating to motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Viscera</td>
<td>B internal organ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cataleptic</td>
<td>C unpredictable change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Vagaries</td>
<td>D willing to co-operate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Buoyant</td>
<td>E able to float</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Raiment</td>
<td>F not to be truthful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Dissemble</td>
<td>G Clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Feral</td>
<td>H wild animal that was once tamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 incongruous</td>
<td>I inappropriate; unsuitable,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 kinetic</td>
<td>J trance-like state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACTIVITY 2

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate word from the box.

mange chromatic arboreal lampooning
mien fermented licit arduous
ungulate olfactory

1 The zebra, like a horse, is a/an _____________ since it has hoofed feet.
2 The teacher asked the boy to stop ________________ the other learner as it was distracting them.
3 The giant panda is a/an ________________ creature, spending most of its time above ground.
4 The statuesque girl was told that she become a model because of her ____________.
5 The dog which was neglected had sores all over its back and was suffering from ________________.
6 The milk which was left outside in the heat had ________________.
7 Even though the journey was ________________, the boy did not complain.
8 After his illness, he temporarily lost his sense of smell as his ________________ passages were swollen.
7. OUTLINE OF THE LIFE OF PI

Plot Structure

The plot structure can be described in the three templates that follow. Remember that each one flows seamlessly into the other.

FIRST PART OF THE NOVEL

Climax

The ship sinks

Rising Action

Follows Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.
Also influenced by an atheist
Father decides to emigrate from India to Canada. June 21, 1977

Falling

Pi has 4 wild animals as companions on the lifeboat. Realises that he is the only human survivor

Exposition

The anonymous author meets Pi through F Adirubasamy.
Pi narrates his story. The author is intrigued because of the claim that he would believe in God after he heard Pi's story.

Resolution

Pi determines what he has to do to survive.
Pi trained Richard Parker to control him. He worked hard to keep Richard Parker in check. Still prayed regularly.

- **Rising Action**: Hunger changed Pi radically. He was a vegetarian and a pacifist and very religious. He struggled desperately to survive. He resolved to survive with Richard Parker.

- **Falling Action**: Found apparently idyllic island but it was in fact carnivorous. Set sail with Richard Parker to find land.

- **Climax**: Pi learned to kill efficiently.

- **Exposition**: Pi was a castaway on board a lifeboat in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. He had 4 animals as fellow survivors.

- **Resolution**: He landed in Mexico and was saved by villagers. Richard Parker disappeared into the jungle.
THIRD PART OF THE NOVEL

Climax

Pi provided two versions of his experience at sea and his survival

Rising Action

Japanese officials of the shipping company interviewed Pi.

Falling Action

Investigators initially rejected the first story but later preferred it to the second story.

Resolution

Pi settled in Canada. He married and had two children.

Exposition

Pi landed in Mexico and was found by some villagers.

PLOT

The author’s note is a part of the story in the novel. This is not a normal function of the Author’s Note which is generally factual. In The Life of Pi, Yann Martell uses the Author’s Note to develop the plot. He presents fictional events as though they are facts. This serves to establish and enforce one of the novel’s main themes: the power of storytelling and the nature of truth.

The anonymous author, acting on the advice of Pi’s uncle, meets Pi and gets him to tell his story. The fictional author who meets Pi tells his readers that the story will be better if it is in Pi’s own voice.

The novel is divided into three parts.
PART 1: TORONTO AND PONDICHERY

- Piscine Molitor Patel, called Pi, is the main narrator in this section. Pi is now a middle-aged Indian Canadian citizen who reminisces about his childhood in Pondicherry, India.

- His father owned a zoo in Pondicherry. Pi, being brought up in an environment of animals, became very familiar with animal psychology. This knowledge enables him to survive on the lifeboat later on.

- Pi discusses how he got his full name, Piscine Molitor Patel, and why and how he changed it to Pi when he started high school.

- When he was fourteen, Pi was introduced to Christianity by Father Martin and to Islam a little later by Santosh Kumar and practices three religions, which are Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

- At the same time, he deeply respected Mr Santosh Kumar, the biology teacher, who was a confirmed atheist.

- Because of political turmoil in India his father decided to emigrate from India to Canada.

Activity: Fill in the template below for Part 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting / Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot/ Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters and characterisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denouement / resolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbolism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART 2: THE PACIFIC OCEAN

- The cargo ship, Tsimtsum, which was transporting the animals and the family to North America sinks a few days out of Manila during a storm.

- Pi is thrown onto the lifeboat by two sailors. A zebra also jumps into the lifeboat, but breaks a leg in the process. Pi later realises that the sailors were not interested in saving him, but had seen a hyena on board and were trying to distract it from attacking them when they board the lifeboat.

- Pi sees Richard Parker swimming to the boat and tries to assist it to safety. When he realises that the tiger will very likely kill him, he tries to chase it away, but is unsuccessful. He jumps overboard to escape from the tiger. When he later gets back onto the lifeboat, he does not see the tiger (which is at the bottom of the boat). Pi thinks that the tiger has drowned.
- To Pi's distress, the hyena starts to eat the zebra alive and later kills and eats the orangutan. At this point, Pi learns that the tiger has been "hiding" in the boat. Richard Parker emerges from under the tarpaulin and kills and feasts on the hyena.
- Pi realises that he is the lone survivor (his family and the crew perished) and contemplates his situation. He is stranded with a fully grown Bengal tiger in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.
- To keep his distance from Richard Parker, he makes a raft which he attaches to the lifeboat, but keeps it a reasonable distance away from the lifeboat.
- Being resourceful, Pi develops strategies to survive. He finds the canned water and other provisions which he knows will not last indefinitely.
- Pi concludes that he needs Richard Parker alive for his own survival; they both have to survive or both will die.
- Using his knowledge of animal behaviour, he starts the process of taming Richard Parker.
- Pi catches marine life which he shares with Richard Parker. He becomes good in obtaining food.
- However, Pi has to be on guard all the time as the tiger can easily turn against him.
- After some time, Pi becomes temporarily blind, and, while he is in this state, another castaway, who coincidentally is also blind, appears. The castaway's intentions are evil; in the struggle that ensues, the castaway landed at the bottom of the boat in Richard Parker's territory and is killed and eaten by Richard Parker.
- Pi sees an unusual island that does not seem to have soil; the trees seemed to grow out of the vegetation.
- Pi and Richard Parker stay here for some time, sleeping in their boat and exploring the island during the day. They feast on meerkats which live there in their thousands.
- Pi discovers that the island is carnivorous when he finds a human tooth in the fruit of a tree.
- They return to the sea and eventually land on the coast of Mexico where some villagers find them.

PART 3 TOMATLAN AND TORONTO

- While he is still in hospital, Pi is interviewed by two investigators who are sent by the Japanese Ministry of Transport to find out what had caused the ship to sink.
- Pi tells them his story of him surviving with Richard Parker – they find this unbelievable. They ask for the real story and Pi then tells them a story without animals.
- The officials see parallels in the two stories: They work out that Pi has replaced the animals with humans in the second story. The people on the lifeboat were the ship's cook, an evil man, his mother, a Taiwanese sailor who had broken his leg.
- Aligning the stories, they work out that it was the cook who kills the sailor and Pi's own mother and eventually Pi kills the cook.
- The officials agree that the story with the animals is the preferred version. It is the better story.
8. CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISATION

PISCINE MOLITOR PATEL (PI)

- He is the chief narrator and the protagonist of the novel. He is in his 40s as he recounts to the author his ordeal which he went through when he was a 16-year-old. His ordeal began when the ship his family was sailing on, the Tsimtsum, sank.
- He was named after a pool in Paris, a pool which was favoured by a family friend.
- He had deep faith in God, so much so that he was a follower of three religions.
- He was very practical, analytical and good at solving problems.
- Even as a middle-aged adult, the ordeal he suffered still affected him. He remembers some of his companions and some of his drastic actions daily in his prayers.
- He loved nature and God.
- He had a good understanding of animal behaviour.

ACTIVITY 1

State whether you agree or disagree with the following description of Piscine. Give reasons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>He is religious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>He is a weak student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>He is not good at solving problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>He enjoys killing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>He is glad that Richard Parker escaped</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>He does not like his father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>He wants to kill Richard Parker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>He refuses to change and clings strongly to his beliefs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>He gives up easily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
ACTIVITY 2
Are the following statements Pi’s strengths or weaknesses? Place each one in the appropriate column and then explain your point of view.
1. Keeps routines on the lifeboat.
2. Has great respect for all religions
3. Wants to befriend the French sailor
4. Calls everyone brother
5. Likes stories
6. Hoards food (jam-packed cupboards with food, etc.)
7. Does not protect the orangutan
8. Drinks the blood of turtles.
10. Is loyal to family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTH</th>
<th>WEAKNESS</th>
<th>REASON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

RICHARD PARKER
- He is an adult Royal Bengal tiger who weighs 450 pounds.
- He was captured as a cub when his mother was captured. He was originally named “Thirsty” but the shipping clerk entered his name incorrectly as Richard Parker in documents, mixing his name with that of the hunter who captured him. He kills the hyena and the French sailor.
- He might be the animal-like nature of Pi himself.

THE NARRATOR WHO IS AN “AUTHOR” (a fictional character not to be confused with Yann Martel)
- He is a restless writer who went to India for inspiration to write a novel set in Portugal. He is disappointed with his effort and discards it.
- In Pondicherry he met Francis Adirabasamy who told him about Piscine whom he subsequently meets in Toronto.
- Much of the story is told directly by Pi, with the author filling in the narrative occasionally.
FRANCIS ADIRUBASAMY

- A close friend of the Patel family and a champion swimmer.
- He taught Piscine swimming.
- Pi was named after his favourite pool in Paris, Piscine Molitor.

RAVI

- Pi's elder brother. Being a good sportsman, he was very popular at school.
- Teased Pi at times

SANTOSH PATEL

- Pi's father. He owned the Pondicherry Zoo. Prior to being a zookeeper, he was a hotelier.
- Unlike Pi, he was not religious.
- Seemed to be a pessimist: worried that his sons might forget how dangerous wild animals are; that the country they were emigrating to was not going to be a good place to live in.

GITA PATEL

- She was very protective of her children.
- She encouraged Pi to read widely.
- Like her husband, she was not very religious.
- She might be "Orange Juice" in the other story.

SATISH KUMAR (BIOLOGY TEACHER)

- He was crippled by polio as a young boy.
- He was an atheist and a communist. He was very scientific in his approach to all things.
- He made a great impact on Pi, who took up the study of Zoology at University.

SATISH KUMAR (BAKER)

- He, too, had a great effect on Pi.
- Pi was inspired to study religion after being greatly influenced by this mystic.
- He wanted Pi to embrace only Islam

FATHER MARTIN

- He introduced Pi to Christianity.
- He was a gentle person who treated Pi with great respect and answered all Pi's questions and cleared his doubts.
- He wanted Pi to embrace only Christianity.

THE PANDIT

- He is upset when he learns that Pi practices other religions.
THE FRENCH COOK

- In Pi's second story, he is the hyena equivalent. He is an evil, brutal man. He kills the sailor and Pi's mother.
- He cannibalises the sailor after using the sailor's amputated leg as bait.

THE CHINESE SAILOR

- In the second story he is the zebra equivalent. Like the zebra, he broke his leg while jumping on to the lifeboat.
- The cook cuts off his leg and he suffers great pain before he dies.

THE BLIND FRENCHMAN

- He tries to kill Pi, but is, instead, killed by Richard Parker. (Could be the French Cook)

MR TOMOHIRO OKAMOTO

- He is an official of Japanese Ministry of Transport who investigates the sinking of the Tsimshtum.
- He interviews Pi. Initially, he does not believe the first story Pi tells him.

MR CHIBA

- Mr Okamoto's young assistant. He is an inexperienced investigator.

HYENA

- An ugly, vicious animal, it threatened the safety of all the others on the lifeboat until Richard Parker killed it.
- It kills the zebra and the orangutan.
- The human equivalent may be the cowardly cook or the French castaway.

ORANGE JUICE (ORANGUTAN)

- It arrives at the lifeboat floating on a raft of bananas.
- Gentle and maternal, it was one of Pi's favourite animals in the zoo.

ZEBRA

- A beautiful animal, it is a source of fascination to the Kumars and an affirmation of their beliefs. It breaks a leg while jumping into the lifeboat. The hyena starts to eat it alive. It suffers stoically.

MEENA PATEL: Pi's wife

NIKHIL PATEL: (Nick) Pi's son

USHA PATEL: Daughter
9. THEMES

1. LIFE IS A STORY

- There are several layers of stories in the Life of Pi. The author has stated elsewhere that life is a story.
- Generally one prefers to believe what one considers the better story.
- Yann Martel does say that “You can choose your story” (that is choosing what to believe) and “a story with God is the better story”.
- A story also suggests that it is not only facts that are important and that people will accept a story if they think it is believable (“And so it is with God”).
- Everything about life is a story and we can choose our own story. Martel’s point is that the story that is more imaginative is the better story.
- The reader can choose whether Pi’s life is real-life fiction or imaginative fiction. Pi presents the Japanese officials investigating the sinking of the ship (and the reader) with two stories - the first one with animals in it and the other with humans in it, since they found the version with the animals incredible.
- Story-telling might bring us closer to universal truths than facts.
- Sometimes reality is so harsh that it is made more acceptable through rearranging the facts and rewriting the events. A story also suggests that facts are not as important as the narrative, which might be embellished but remains credible.
- Pi also looks at the different religions in terms of their stories and he finds beauty in their stories.
- Pi invents stories or imagines scenes, conversations and actions which help him to remain sane.

2. SCIENCE AND RELIGION

- Religion is introduced as a major theme in the opening chapters. Francis Adirubasamy tells the fictional author that he has a story that will make him believe in God.
- As a curious young boy, Pi looked at different religions without showing any signs of prejudice.
- Even though his parents were not religious, Pi becomes a devout Hindu, meets a Catholic priest who introduces him to Christ and he gets himself baptised.
- The Muslim mystic who he meets introduces him to Islam which he also follows.
- He follows the three apparently different religions much to the chagrin of their priests who are settled in their dogma.
- For Pi, spirituality is not about dogma, but the essential nature of God which is love.
- He says to the three priests that “I just want to love God”.
- Faith and belief are more important than religious truths.
- Scientists like the biology teacher believe that science can explain everything.
- The theists see natural phenomena as signs of God.
- Pi merged both views in his life. His knowledge of animal behaviour and their characteristics and his deep faith helped him to cope with the challenges he faced at sea and to survive.
3. THE WILL TO SURVIVE

- The will or the desire to survive is apparent again and again in *The Life of Pi*, not only in Pi, but also in the animals, even though the odds are seemingly impossible.
- This desire to survive is so strong in Pi that he is prepared to let go of lifelong beliefs. Pi, a vegetarian, became a meat eater, catching, killing and eating all forms of marine life.
- He decided to live with the dangerous tiger rather than attempt to kill it.
- He even became cannibalistic at a certain point when he ate the bait made from the body of the French cook. This is unlike the French cook who resorted to murder and feeding on his fellow companions in order to survive.
- The orangutan, a peaceful creature, became aggressive when she was threatened by the hyena.
- Pi became extremely resourceful and coped with living on the ocean with a fully grown adult tiger as a companion.

4. GROWTH THROUGH ADVERSITY

- Difficult conditions allow one to draw on one’s own resources and to grow.
- Pi changes from a pacifist and vegetarian into a dominant alpha male mainly through adverse circumstances.
- In order to make them aware of the dangers and the threats posed by animals, Pi’s father made his family watch a tiger killing and devouring a goat.
- As the survivor on a lifeboat with a tiger as a companion, he trained himself to become the alpha male as it was essential for his survival.

5. BOUNDARIES

- Defining boundaries is also a recurring theme.
- In the animal kingdom each animal has its own boundary or flight distance.
- On the lifeboat, Pi had to train Richard Parker to accept the tarpaulin area by marking it with his urine and Richard Parker the bottom of the boat.
- Religious leaders guarded their boundaries.

6. BEING TRULY RELIGIOUS

- Pi wants to see God without dogma.
- Unlike the priests who are settled in their dogma, Pi’s vision is not limited by dogma.
- For the religious, spirituality is not about dogma, but the essential nature of God which is love.
When you analyse a text for themes, look for incidents and characters’ beliefs to support your views.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textual Reference/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Life is a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Science and religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Being truly religious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Growth through adversities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. CLOSE READING AND DISCUSSION OF TEXT

Through studying the chosen extracts carefully, you can engage in some of the critical issues in the text. You need to explore your own ideas, emotions and feelings as you read and think about the text, the characters and their action.

Some passages have been selected for you to study more carefully. You should explore the excerpts closely using them as a point of engagement with the text. This should contribute to your overall understanding of the novel. There are questions based on the excerpts which you should study and answer. Sample answers are provided at the end of the guide.

THE AUTHOR’S NOTE

Yann Martell blends fact with fiction. He writes the author’s note, which is really a part of the story, as a fictional writer. The writer (fictional) is in India seeking inspiration to write his story which is set in Portugal. Upon completion of the story, and extremely dissatisfied with it, he tours the south of India and Pondicherry, a French colony. There he meets Francis Adirubasamy, who tells him that he has a story that will make him believe in God. The protagonist of the story, Piscine Patel, lives in Toronto. When he is back in Canada, he looks up Mr Patel who agrees to meet with him and tell him his story, which he does over several meetings. The narrator also contacts others involved as part of his research. He decides to tell the story through the eyes and voice of Piscine Patel.
Questions

1. Read the Author’s Note carefully and make a list of the facts and fiction.
2. Why does the writer mix fact and fiction?

PART ONE: TORONTO AND PONDICHERRY

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO PISCINE

- The author, following up on the lead given to him by Francis Adirubasamy, interviews a middle-aged Piscine Molitor Patel in Toronto, where he has settled. The chapter begins with Piscine narrating his story.
- He states that he has suffered greatly and that his suffering has left him “sad and gloomy”.
- A feature of his life after he settled in Canada is that he adheres to strong routines which include his academic studies and his strange way of practising religion.
- The strong routines he practices help him to remain normal.
- Significantly for the story, Piscine studied religion and Zoology.
- He still feels sad that he did not say a proper goodbye to Richard Parker.
- The people in Mexico were incredibly kind to him.

COMMENT

- We learn that some great tragic event had befallen Pi but don’t know what it was. The event left him feeling him sad and depressed. He managed to cope with his tragedy through his studies and his practice of religion. However, he still feels sad that he did not say a proper farewell to Richard Parker. This seems to weigh heavily on his mind. This sets the tone for a story which is likely to be filled with suffering.
- The author has created suspense by getting the reader to wonder about the great event that Pi experienced which left him sad and gloomy, as well as mentioning Richard Parker, without giving any details about him.

Some of the major themes are introduced in this chapter.
1. Science and religion, both of which help Pi to cope with his ordeal.
2. Life is a story.
3. The will to survive.

VOCABULARY

You need to find out the meanings of unfamiliar words that you come across in the text. Most of the foreign words are included in the glossary and are not repeated here. Words that are explained in the text are generally not included here.
agnostic: person who is uncertain whether God exists
atheistic: believing that God does not exist
cosmogony: theory about the origins of the universe
fool's gold: pyrite which, glistens like gold but is valueless.
meditation: deep form of concentration
sambar: popular South Indian dish
slight: insult
smart: hurt

TASK: Study the extract below and answer the questions that follow.
Extract 1

Sometimes I got my majors mixed up. A number of my fellow religious-studies students — muddled agnostics who didn’t know which way was up, who were in the thrall of reason, that’s fool’s gold for the bright — reminded me of the three-toed sloth; and the three-toed sloth, such a beautiful example of the miracle of life, reminded me of God.

I never had problems with my fellow scientists. Scientists are a friendly atheistic, hard-working, beer-drinking lot whose minds are preoccupied with sex, chess and baseball when they are not pre-occupied with science.

1. Why did some of his fellow religious students remind him of the sloth?

2. Why did the sloth remind him of God?

3. How do the science and religious study students’ attitudes to religion differ? Which group of students does Pi seem to prefer? Give a reason for your answer.

4. State the theme contained in the extract above.

CHAPTERS 2 – 4 THE EARLY YEARS

- In chapter 2, the (anonymous) narrator describes Piscine.
- In the next chapter, Pi tells the author how he was taught to swim by Francis Adirubasamy, a close family friend.
- Pi describes the zoo and its animals. He has good knowledge of their behavior; knowledge which he draws upon later in his ordeal.

COMMENT

- The writer described Pi as a middle-aged, small person.
- Pi seemed to have been associated with water all his life, commencing with his name, which means fish-like, in English.
• The focus was also on routines adopted in the zoo. The animals had to be fed regularly and their dens or cages had to be kept clean. This association with animals and his deep understanding of their nature helped him to survive later on. The zoo also allowed him to interrogate the concept of territory and boundaries and territorial aggression when boundaries are breached.
• He also thought deeply about the relative nature of freedom. The difference between living in the wild and in the zoo, for animals, is that in the zoo animals are fed and therefore they do not have to struggle for survival.
• The zoo was important in Pi's life and it helped to shape him.

VOCABULARY

aquatic guru: swimming teacher
artesian wells: water spouts out without being pumped
cesspool: unhygienic and filthy place
colonial administration: British rule
compulsion: being forced to do something
iridescent: having many bright colours that seem to change in different light
lascivious: lustful
Ritz: famous hotel for the wealthy
swim lore: knowledge relating to swimming
social hierarchy: arranged according to importance for the society
Tamil: large south Indian group of people
Tantrum: outburst of anger or temper

TASK: Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Extract 2

Animals in the wild lead lives of compulsion and necessity within an unforgiving social hierarchy in an environment where the supply of fear is high and supply of food is low and where territory must constantly be defended and parasites forever endured.

What is the meaning of freedom in such a context? Animals in the wild are in practice free neither in space nor time, nor in their personal relations.

1. Paraphrase the problems animals experience in the wild.

2. To what does “social hierarchy” refer?

3. Do you agree with Pi’s contention that animals are in fact better off in well-kept zoos? Give reasons for your answer.

4. Identify the dominant theme/s in this extract.
Extract 3

I know that zoos are no longer in people’s good graces. Religion faces the same problem. Certain illusions about freedom plague them both.

1. Identify the theme contained in this extract.

2. In which ways are zoos similar to religion?

CHAPTERS 5 – 6

TAking Control

• Pi tells the narrator how he got his nickname. He was teased by being called “Pissing” at his primary school and he very artfully changed his name to “Pi”.

• This is an instance of him “training” teachers and classmates to use his new name. Later on he trains Richard Parker.

• The narrator (chapter 6) mentions that his cupboards are stacked with provisions.

COMMENT

• Pi was resourceful in the manner in which he changes his nickname to Pi. He repeated the action in every class, indicating that he understood the importance of repetition in training.

• Pi’s cupboards are filled with food. His cupboards reflect his underlying fear that he might run out of food – he is still traumatised by his experience as a castaway, where, for long periods, he was in a state of extreme hunger. He was paranoid that he might run out of food, a lasting result of his prolonged period of starvation at sea.

• There are several references or allusions to religious imagery drawn from Christianity and Islam. Pi explored different religions and found that, at the heart of each, love was the essence. For him, all religions are true and good.

VOCABULARY

corrugated: folded into parallel ridges and troughs
execution: operation
irrational number: a number that cannot be expressed as the exact ratio of two integers
(22/7)
lackey: a person who shows unquestioning obedience
Roman Soldier: reference to a torturer; a Roman soldier stabbed Jesus when he was dying
siege: military or police operation to cut off access and supplies to a town to force surrender

TASK: Read the extracts and answer the questions that follow

Extract 4: I repeated the stunt with every teacher. Repetition is important in the training not only of animals but also of humans.
1. Explain what the **stunt** was.
   
2. What does this extract reveal about Pi?
   
**Extract 5**

Behind every door, on every shelf, stand mountains of neatly stacked cans and packages. A reserve of food to last the siege of Leningrad.

1. Why do you think Pi has food stored in such vast quantities?
   
2. Which theme does this extract relate to?
3. Refer to chapter 5: Identify all references and imagery pertaining to Christianity and Islam.

**CHAPTER 7 THE ATHEIST TEACHER**

- Pi describes one of his favourite teachers, Mr Satish Kumar, the biology teacher.
- Unlike Pi, Mr Kumar is an avowed atheist. He believes in science and thinks that religion is superstitious (darkness).
- As a young boy, Kumar was stricken by polio and it was medicine and not religion that cured him.
- This is the first time Pi hears an atheist articulating his views.
- Pi sees these views as a belief in science which was another form of worship. Mr Kumar saw science as the answer to the creation and not God. However, he believed in the scientific view.

**COMMENT**

- Pi was able to accept other views even if he himself did not believe them. He saw Mr Kumar as a believer, not necessarily in God, but as a person who saw science as the answer. Mr Kumar referred to the zoo as his “temple”.
- Pi later used both his knowledge of animals and religion to maintain his sanity and to survive.

**Extract 6**

"Religion will save us," I said. Since when I could remember, religion was close to my heart.

"Religion?" Mr Kumar grinned broadly. "I don’t believe in religion. Religion is darkness. Darkness? I was puzzled. Darkness is the last thing that religion is. Religion is light.

"There are no grounds for going beyond a scientific explanation of reality and no sound reason for believing anything but our sense experience. A clear intellect, close attention to detail and a little scientific knowledge will expose religion as superstitious bosh. God does not exist."
QUESTIONS

1. What are Mr Kumar’s views on God and science?

2. According to him, what three things are needed to expose religion as ‘superstitious bosh’?

3. Consider: Religion is darkness / Religion is light
   These comments are made by different speakers. What do these statements reveal about each speaker’s religious beliefs?

4. Comment on the word “darkness”

5. Does religion help Pi in his dark moments? Discuss your views.

CHAPTER 8 THE LESSON

- Pi’s father realises that his sons may not fully understand the danger wild animals can pose to them so he teaches them a lesson using a live goat to feed a tiger.
- Pi’s mother is worried about the psychological impact this can have on her children.

COMMENT

- While Mr Patel was concerned about the physical dangers that wild animals can present, his mother was also aware of the psychological impact of such a drastic experience.
- The tiger was starved for a few days before she was fed. Her ferocious attack on the goat was even more terrible because she was driven by hunger. Later on, Pi, driven by hunger, descends to animalistic behaviour.
- We understand the challenges that Pi will have to face later on when he is stranded with an adult tiger on a lifeboat without any caged area.
- Pi and Richard Parker defined their own territory.
- Pi, who understands the ferocity of a tiger, was constantly alert and wary of his companion. He did not want to become a ‘goat’.

VOCABULARY

- Anthromorphised: to give a non-human creature a human form or characteristics as though they are humans ((When I went by the rhinoceros pit I fancied the rhinos’ heads were hung low with sadness over the loss of one of their dear companions)
- Consort: spouse of a monarch; partner
- Dismember: to cut off or remove limb from a person or animal
- Placid: calm; placid
- Redoubtable: formidable
- Sadists: people who enjoy inflicting suffering or seeing others suffer

WORDWEavers LITERATURE SERIES: THE LIFE OF PI 28
The lesson was over. Ravi and I sulked and gave father the cold shoulder for a week. Mother ignored him too. When I went by the rhinoceros pit I fancied the rhinos’ heads were hung low with sadness over the loss of one of their dear companions. But what can you do when you love your father? Life goes on and you don’t touch tigers. Except that now, for having accused Ravi of an unspecified crime he hadn’t committed, I was as good as dead. In years subsequent, when he was in the mood to terrorise me, he would whisper to me, “Just wait till we’re alone. “You’re the next goat!””

1. Explain what the lesson was?

2. Why did Mr Patel feel the need to teach his children this lesson?

3. Why did they give their father the cold shoulder?

4. Did their mother approve of this lesson? Give reasons for your answer.

5. Why did Pi feel terrified when Ravi would whisper: “You’re the next goat!”

CHAPTERS 9 – 11 DEFINING BOUNDARIES

- Pi describes in detail animal nature and the habit animals have of defining territories. Each animal has its own safe distance; once its territory is breached it becomes agitated and may become aggressive.
- When animals are kept in unsuitable enclosures, they try to escape.
- The contented animal will not escape; even if it leaves its enclosure it will very likely return on its own accord.

COMMENT

- Pi again showed in-depth knowledge of animal behaviour.
- The animals all have their own rituals and an astute observer can pick up problems when s/he notices changes in the animal’s behavior.
- Rituals are an important motif in the novel; not only animal rituals, but also religious rituals. Later on Pi ritualises his behaviour on the lifeboat and this helped him to retain his sanity.
- Of particular significance is the flight distance which all animals have.
- Later on, Pi uses this knowledge in his taming of Richard Parker.
VOCABULARY

gauge: estimate
animal anthropomorphicus: animals behaving like humans
detrauctor: someone who devalues somebody or something
habitat: home, surroundings

QUESTIONS

Extract 8

The key aim is to diminish an animal’s flight distance, which is the minimum distance at which an animal wants to keep a perceived enemy.

How does a zookeeper or a person working with animals use this knowledge?

Extract 9

"And they expected to find – ha! In the middle of a Mexican tropical jungle, imagine! Ha! Ha! It’s laughable, simply laughable. What were they thinking?"

CHAPTERS 12 -14 UNDERSTANDING THE ALPHA MALE

- In reliving his story as he narrates it to the anonymous narrator, the older Pi is still deeply affected by his ordeal at sea, “At times he gets agitated."
- He explains the principles animal trainers use in their training of wild animals. For instance, the actions and steps that lion tamers take to become the alpha lion and what will happen when this status is lost.
- The nature of circus trainers’ ability to control the lion is psychological.
- Socially inferior animals are easier to tame and subdue.
- Hediger says, “When two creatures meet, the one that is able to intimidate its opponent is regarded as socially superior...”.

COMMENT

- A lion (wild animal) attacks a person in a zoo, not because it is hungry and wants to food, but because its territory has been invaded.
- When the lion trainer is working with a lion, he must, at all times, be a super alpha male. If this status is lost then he will be attacked.
- An omega animal (low status on the social hierarchy) is easier to train than an alpha male.
VOCABULARY

anarchy: situation where there is loss of order or control
brawn: being physically very strong
cantankerous: difficult to get along with, easily angered; grouchy
compliant: ready to conform or agree to do something
demeanour: somebody's outward behaviour or manner or appearance
dollop: spoon sized quantity of a thick liquid or ice-cream
super-alpha male: the leader; others in the pack submit to; one who controls activities of a group

QUESTIONS  Extract 10

"It is a question of brains over brawn. The nature of the circus trainer's ascendency is psychological."

a. Explain what "brains over brawn" means.

b. How does the trainer use this principle when training wild animals?

c. How does Pi later make use of this knowledge?

CHAPTER 15  PI'S HOUSE

The anonymous author describes Pi's house, noting his catholicity of views and respect for all religions.

VOCABULARY

Words from different religions – see glossary
(Ganesha / Krishna/ Murthi's, etc.)
Choreographic: planned steps or movements for a dance
Cross: symbol of Christianity
Fretwork: ornamental woodwork with decorative patterns made by cutting holes in the wood

COMMENT

- Earlier in his life he had experimented with the different religious faiths and had found truth in each one; therefore he continued to accept the different faiths. To him, all religions had love at their core.
- Pi surrounded himself with symbols of several religions. Not only one religion was important. Each had its own story. Each individual should have faith in its story. The story of a religion contains deep spiritual truth. It is that which is important.
**QUESTIONS**
Extract 11

**Chapter 14**

- Identify the different religious symbols in Pi’s House.

- Explain why he keeps these different religious symbols?

** CHAPTERS 16 - 20 **  ** RELIGIOUS SIMILARITIES **

- Pi reflects on religion and how by chance people are born or socialised into it. The practices and rites make one accept the religion one is born into.
- People see the world, not only through one perspective, and they will not become fanatics or fundamentalists.
- When he was 14 he “meets” Jesus Christ through Father Martin.
- Pi is puzzled by aspects of the “Jesus” story; he has his questions and doubts cleared by Father Martin.
- A year later, Pi encounters a Muslim mystic, Mr Satish Kumar, who introduces him to Islam. These meetings with him encourage him to follow the Islamic path as well.

**COMMENT**

- After going over the rituals of animals, Pi reflected on the rituals of religion.
- Pi noticed the differences between Hinduism (numerous forms of God) and Christianity (one God).
- He looked at the differences and was puzzled and initially thought that Christianity was wanting. However, as his understanding deepened, he changed. (Father Martin pointed out the emphasis was on “Love”. (“He bothered me, this Son”). When looking at other religions, he was prepared to go beyond the lens of his initial religion.
- When Pi understood the key message of different religions, he embraced them enthusiastically, rituals and all.
- These chapters highlight the theme of the universality of religions.

**VOCABULARY**

- blighted: ruined state
- callisthenic: type of exercise that uses the body weight to develop strength
- charismatic: possessing great charm; religious groups characterized by inspired or ecstatic experiences
- cosmic: relating to the universe
- exaltation: feeling of extreme joy and happiness; religious ecstasy
fundamentalists: belief that religious or political doctrines should be interpreted literally
hallowed: sacred
imam: Muslim religious leader
limbo: in a state of uncertainty or kept waiting; souls can be in limbo
petulant: sulky
prologue: an introductory passage or speech before the main action of a novel, etc.
resignation: reluctant acceptance of something
serene: calm
severity: strictness or sternness; in a state of being very strict or stern
tantamount: equivalent to a particular thing in effect;
usurpers: use or take something without having the right to do so
weft: horizontal threads of a woven fabric or tapestry

QUESTIONS
Extract 12

Catholics have a reputation for severity, for judgment that comes down heavily. My experience with Father Martin was not at all like that. He was very kind. He served me tea and biscuits in a tea set that tinkled and rattled at every touch; he treated me like a grown-up; and he told me a story. Or rather, since Christians are so fond of Capital letters, a Story.

And what a story! The first thing that drew me in was disbelief.

1. Does Father Martin fit into the opinion that Pi has about Catholics? Discuss

2. What point is Pi making by using a capital letter for “Story”?

3. Comment on the significance of stories for Pi.

4. Identify and discuss another theme contained in this extract.

Extract 13

Mr and Mr Kumar taught me biology and Islam. Mr and Mr Kumar led me to study zoology and religious studies at the University of Toronto. Mr and Mr Kumar were the prophets of my Indian youth.
1. Who are Mr. and Mr. Kumar?

2. Briefly explain why Pi refers to them as “the prophets of my Indian youth.”

Extract 14

I described Mr Kumar’s place as a hovel. Yet no mosque, church or temple ever felt so sacred to me. I sometimes came out of the bakery feeling heavy with glory. I would climb onto my bicycle and pedal that glory through the air.

One such time I left town ... and on my way back I suddenly felt that I was in heaven.

1. “Yet no mosque, church or temple ever felt so sacred to me.” Comment on this statement.

2. Explain what he meant by: pedal that glory through the air

3. When else did Pi have a profound religious experience?

CHAPTERS 21 – 25  RELIGIOUS LEADERS’ DIFFERENCES

- The conversations with Pi and hearing his story have a deep impact on the narrator.
- Pi focuses on his religious development and his views on God. He mentions that the agnostic is really not to be admired. Faith and belief provide richness to experience.
- The Imam, Priest and Pandit all meet Pi and his parents on the street. Pi refers to them as the three wise men.
- Each is surprised that Pi has been associating with the others and that Pi has had a similar relationship with them.
- They confront Pi and want him to choose one religion.
- Pi’s response is that he just wants to love God and that all religions are true.
- Pi differentiates between the outer forms of religion and its core truths or essence which is love. He states that he wants to love God (and not necessarily the story of a religion).
- Pi comes across religious bigots who prevent him from going to their institutions. Their behaviour replaces dignity with depravity. It is not always easy for Pi to observe the religions. At times he is turned away from all the religious centres of worship.

COMMENT

These are some of the most important chapters in the book.
- Pi saw different religious routines, rituals and objects which give the believer comfort – objects such as the statues or paintings of Christ (for Christians) or Ganesha (for Hindus).
- Pi realised that religion was more than rituals and symbols - There was something much bigger.
- The need for religion is because it makes life more meaningful and bearable.
- The three wise men of religion did not seem to have Pi’s grasp of why people need religion. They were in love with their own stories. Pi’s response to their demand that he chooses one startled them into silence: “he only wants to love God”. They were forced to accept his outlook. Not so with the narrow-minded religious bigots who excluded Pi from their congregation.

**VOCABULARY**

agnostic: someone who believes it is impossible to know whether or not god exists
dallying: waste time; flirt; deal lightly with something
depravity: state of moral corruption
dry yeastless: not interesting or appetising
factuality: consisting of the truth or including only those things that are actual
inevitably: inescapable
pause: south Asian money
pastoral: giving religious guidance
synagogue: Jewish house of worship

**QUESTIONS** Extract 15

The pandit spoke first. “Mr Patel, Piscine’s piety is admirable. In these troubled times it’s good to see a boy so keen on God. We all agree on that.” But he can’t be a Hindu, Christian and a Muslim. It’s impossible. He must choose.”

“I don’t think it is a crime, but I suppose you are right,” Father replied.

The three murmured agreement and looked heavenward, as did Father, whence they felt the decision must come.

1. The pandit spoke first. “Mr Patel, Piscine’s piety is admirable. In these troubled times it’s good to see a boy so keen on God. We all agree on that.” But he can’t be a Hindu, Christian and a Muslim. It’s impossible. He must choose.”

   Paraphrase the point made by the Pandit.

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

2. Why did the priests look heavenward?

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

3. Were the priests satisfied with Pi’s subsequent response? Give a reason for your answer.

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. Why is the reference to the priests as “three wise men” ironic?

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
CHAPTERS 26 – 29  EMIGRATION

- Pi wants his father to approve of his baptism (Christianity) and prayer rug (Islam) and questions why he can’t follow both religions.
- His parents fail to understand Pi’s seriousness and dismiss it as a passing fancy. While they accept it, they do not understand it and hope that it is a passing phase.
- Because of the political turbulence in India and its certainties, Pi’s father decides to emigrate from India to Canada.

COMMENT

- Pi’s parents did not appreciate the strength of his religious zeal. He would feel more and more isolated as a person because of the rejection that he was experiencing.
- His father did not have any logical answers to convince him otherwise and asked his wife to attend to his request.
- His mother tried to change the subject him by offering him novels but he, refused to be sidetracked. Significantly, she offered him “Robinson Crusoe”, a novel about a man who is shipwrecked.

VOCABULARY

- chagrin: anger at being let down
- cusp: a point
- dictatorial: telling others what to do
- strait: difficult situation
- unfazed: remain calm; not to be perturbed

CHAPTERS 30 – 32  INTERESTING MEETINGS

- The narrator meets Pi’s wife for the first time.
- Mr Kumar, the atheist biology teacher, and Mr Kumar, the Sufi baker, meet at the zoo.
- Pi provides examples of animal anthromorphism - animal bonding with other species.

COMMENT

- The anonymous narrator did not notice signs that Pi was married. The house seemed to show Pi’s dominant personality or the complete focus of the narrator on Pi’s narrative so that he failed to notice all signs of family life.
- Both the Kumars marvelled at the Zebra: The atheist attributed its beauty to order and perfection in science and the religionist saw it as an expression of God’s miracle.
- The atheist and the theist shared the same name and yet were opposite in their view of the universe. Pi saw this as superficial as the atheist himself held a strong belief in science.
Mr and Mr Kumar looked delighted.

"A zebra, you say?" said Mr Kumar.

"That's right," I replied. "It belongs to the same family as the ass and the horse."

"The Rolls-Royce of equids, said Mr Kumar.

"What a wondrous creature," said Mr Kumar.

"This one's a Grant zebra," I said.

Mr Kumar said, "Equus burchelli boehmi."

Mr Kumar said, "Allah Akbar."

I said, "It's very pretty."

We looked on

1. List the different ways in which the zebra is described.

2. What do their descriptions indicate about their beliefs?

CHAPTERS 33-36     PI'S EARLY LIFE

- Pi shows the anonymous author some of his photographs, including some from India. Pi only has four pictures of his earlier life.
- Pi can no longer remember his mother clearly. When he tries to imagine her, her image lasts only momentarily.
- Mr Santosh makes all the arrangements for emigrating from India to Canada. The big task is to sell or take the animals abroad. He sells most of the animals to a North American zoo.
- The narrator meets Pi's son and daughter for the first time even though he has visited several times.

COMMENT

- It is strange or puzzling that Pi cannot remember his mother. There are many other things he remembered and remembered daily.
- The emigration meant that they were going into the unknown and were therefore taking a risk because of the prevailing political environment.
- Pi had not previously introduced his family to the narrator who seemed surprised that Pi had a family at all or was even married. The conversation with Pi thus far had been so intense that there had been very little talk about the present and his current situation.
VOCABULARY

- apparelled: dressed
- Canucks: somebody from Canada
- colossal: very large; impressive
- Columbus: famous explorer reputed to have discovered America.
- deputation: person who represents or acts for another or others
- Diwali: festival of lights-most widely celebrated Hindu festival celebrating the triumph of good over evil.
- incredulous: difficult to believe
- memorabilia: personal items that are collected (photos, etc.)
- rack: framework for holding things (a piece of furniture); medieval instrument of torture

PART TWO: THE PACIFIC OCEAN

CHAPTERS 37 – 42 THE LIFEBOAT COMPANIONS

- The ship takes in water and starts to sink.
- Pi is thrown onto a lifeboat by two Chinese sailors; later he realises that they knew that there was a hyena on the lifeboat and wanted to use Pi as a distraction.
- Pi helps to save Richard Parker and then realises that the danger he was getting himself into and jumps overboard. He stays afloat on a lifebuoy.
- Pi relates his feelings and emotions very vividly as though he is still experiencing them. He describes the forces of nature as a great play or drama, only to realise that it was a reality and that the ship was in fact sinking.
- A zebra leaps onto the lifeboat, breaking its leg in the process.
- Despite the difficulties experienced, Pi survives. His initial companions on the lifeboat are a hyena and a zebra and a tiger.
- An orangutan, another survivor, comes floating along on an island of bananas.

COMMENT

- With the sinking of the Tsintsum, there was utter chaos. Pi’s life was thrown into complete disarray. He had to cope with life doing all the things for survival like finding food on his own.
- If he did not do this he would perish.
- Pi’s ordeal, which was hinted at in the opening chapter, is now related. He spent 227 days as a castaway and underwent enormous suffering.
- Fellow survivors were all animals. Pi referred to the animals as though they were his “extended family”. One animal, in particular, dominated his thoughts.

VOCABULARY

- contraption: device or machine - (normally strange)
- davits: small crane on a ship from which a lifeboat hangs
- dyspeptic: having acid indigestion; easily angered
- flotsam: debris floating in water after shipwreck, etc.
- geotectonic: relating to the large scale structure of the earth’s crust
I woke up to what I was doing. I yanked on the rope. “Let go of that lifebuoy, Richard Parker! Let go, I said. I don’t want you here, do you understand? Go somewhere else. Leave me alone. Get lost. Drown! Drown!” He was kicking vigorously with his legs. I grabbed an oar. I thrust it at him, meaning to push him away. I missed and lost hold of the oar. I grabbed another oar. I dropped it in an oarlock and pulled as hard as I could, meaning to move the lifeboat away. All I accomplished was to turn the lifeboat a little, bringing one end closer to Richard Parker. I could hit him on the head! I lifted the oar in the air. He was too fast. He reached up and pulled himself aboard. “Oh my God!” Ravi was right. Truly I was to be the next goat.

1. “I woke up to what it was doing.”
Paraphrase this sentence.

2. Why are the words “woke up” particularly effective in describing his state?

3. Explain what happened to the oar which he tried to use as a weapon?

4. “Truly I was the next goat”.
Discuss the reference to a goat and explain why this was painful to him.

5. What survival measures did Pi take when he realised his new threat?

Extract 18

“I ran for the stairs to the bridge. Up there was where the officers were, the only people in the ship who spoke English, the masters of our destiny here, the ones who would right the wrong. They would explain everything. They would take care of my family and me. I climbed to the middle for the bridge. There was no one on the starboard side. I ran to the port side. I saw three men, crew members. I fell. I got up. They were looking overboard. I shouted. They turned. They looked at me and at each other. They spoke a few words. They came towards me quickly. I felt gratitude and relief welling up in me. I said, “Thank God I’ve found you. What is happening? I am very scared. There is water at the bottom of the ship. I am worried about my family. I can’t get to the level where our cabins are. Is this normal? Do you think—”

One of the men interrupted me by thrusting a life jacket into my arms and shouting something. I Chinese I noticed an orange whistle dangling from the life jacket.
1. Why did Pi go to the bridge when he saw the threat to the ship?

2. Did the two Chinese sailors on the bridge try to help him?

3. Comment on the significance of the color orange (orange whistle, etc.)

4. What was Pi’s biggest challenge at this point?

5. Identify and discuss the irony in this passage.


CHAPitERS 43-49 THE REALISATION

- Pi’s immediate concern is survival; the hyena is a formidable predator.
- The hyena is sick, runs around in circles and then collapses behind the zebra.
- Pi becomes more anxious as he has to spend another night at sea.
- To comfort himself, Pi thinks about how his family would converse with him.
- He then notices that the hyena has bitten off the broken leg of the zebra. The zebra stoically withstands the pain.
- The hyena starts to eat the zebra alive; Orange Juice becomes worried about the danger posed by the hyena and starts to make threatening gestures to fend off the hyena.
- The hyena kills Orange Juice.
- Pi sees the tiger, Richard Parker, hidden in the hold of the lifeboat. He describes how it got its name.
- The power shifts from being centred on the hyena to the tiger.
- He also realises that the lifeboat should be stocked with food and water.

COMMENT

- From this point onwards Pi focused on surviving. Even the animals struggled to survive against all odds.
- The hyena represented danger, while the zebra and the orang-utan were relatively harmless.
- Initially Pi’s eyes were glued to the hyena; the hyena terrified the other animals and Pi.
- The hyena started to eat the zebra alive. Once before Pi saw this happen, when the tiger, Mashisa, was fed a live goat.
• The zebra did not die immediately. Pi was amazed that it lived so long, even after its innards were fed upon.
• The Orangutan, normally a peaceful creature, showed streaks of aggression in trying to fend off the hyena. We realise that people will change when they are desperate, as happened to Pi who forsook a lifetime of vegetarianism.

VOCABULARY

abomination
befuddled
callously
cataleptic
chromatic
diligent
empirical
fistula
gait
haughty
herbivores
incongruous
marauder
redemption
simians
stupor
sublimity
torso
viscera
zenith

something horrible; that is immoral disgusting or shameful
confused; perplexed
hard-hearted; showing no concern
remain rigid in a trancelike state
relating to colour
persistent and hard-working
based on observation and experiment
opening between an organ and skin caused by injury or disease
manner of walking, running or moving on foot
behaving in a superior or condescending manner
animal that feeds on grass and other plants
unsuitable or out of place
plunderer; raider
act of saving somebody from a declined or corrupted state
resembling or characteristic of monkeys and apes
dazed state; lack of alertness
showing great beauty
upper part of the body not including the head or arms
abdominal area
highest point or climax of something

QUESTIONS: Extract 19: Study the following extracts and identify and discuss the themes.

1. I went through a dozen versions of what it was going to be like on the rescue ship, variations of the theme of sweet reunion.
2. When your own life is threatened, your sense of sympathy is blunted by a terrible selfish hunger for survival.
3. I have not forgotten that poor zebra and what it went through. Not a prayer goes by that I don’t think of it.

•

•

•

WORDWEAVERS LITERATURE SERIES: THE LIFE OF PI

41
1. Briefly explain how Richard Parker got his name. Compare this with how Piscine got his name and nickname.

CHAPERS 50 -56  SURVIVAL PLANS

- The lifeboat, home to Pi and the animals, is described in some detail, as is the symbolism of the colour “orange”. (p140)
- Pi discovers where the food has been stored on the lifeboat.
- He draws up an inventory of all things, including the creatures on the boat. Most of the items listed are useful for survival. The mention of animals reminds us of his focus and immediate danger and of God for his solace. (p 145)
- Being alone on board the lifeboat with a tiger terrifies him.
- To ensure his safety, Pi builds a raft from what the oars and lifebuoys and anything that can provide buoyancy for his raft. He tethers the raft to the stern of the lifeboat.
- Now he feels slightly safer as he may be beyond Richard Parker’s immediate reach. (p147)
- Survival occupies his entire mind - he has enormous will to survive. (I will not die)
- While in a staring match with Richard Parker, he throws him a rat, which Parker eats. This appases Richard Parker.
- He attaches the raft to the lifeboat and spends the night in it.
- Pi, being analytical, works out plans to survive. The six initial plans he thinks about are not practical; he knows he has to come up with something better. (pp. 159-165)

COMMENT

- Pi analysed his situation rationally. For his survival, it was important that he did not panic or go into a depression.
- He took stock to assess what he had at his disposal and, using these resources, he developed his plans.
- The threat posed by Richard Parker became the overriding factor for his safety.
- Being frightened of the tiger, he constructed a raft which he tethered to the stern of the boat. However, he knew that Richard Parker was a good swimmer and there was only 40 feet separating the lifeboat from the raft – Richard Parker from him.
- He knew that the first set of the plans that he came up with simply would not work. Drawing on his knowledge and his faith in his ability he determined to see Richard Parker as a fellow travelling companion. His faith in his ability grew as he obtained ascendancy over Richard Parker.

VOCABULARY

brazen  showing boidness and a complete lack of shame
buoyancy  tendency to float
gaffs  hooked fish pole that is used to hold and land a large fish
hasp  hinged metal fastener
QUESTION: Extract 20: Re: Chapter 52

1. Which items in the inventory do not relate to survival?

Extract 21

It seems orange — such a nice Hindu colour — it is the colour of survival because the whole inside of the boat and the tarpaulin and the life jackets and the lifebuoy and the oars and most every other significant object aboard the boat was orange. Even the plastic, beardless whistles were orange.

The words Tsimtsum and Panama were printed on each side of the bow in stark, black roman capitals.

1. Comment on the significance of the colour orange.

2. Examine the inventory list Pi drew up. What do we learn about his character?

3. Why does Pi include God in his inventory list?

4. Point out how the hyena and the tiger differ from the rest of the list.

7. Which aspect of Pi’s character is most noticeable in these chapters?

8. Review Pi’s “plans” to get rid of Richard Parker. What do they reveal about his state of mind?
CHAPTERS 57 - 60: TRAINING RICHARD PARKER

- Pi's new plan is based on the realisation that he has to tame Richard Parker to survive his ordeal.
- It has to be both Richard Parker and himself together to survive and not just one or the other.
- Coming from a background as a zookeeper's son and understanding how animal trainers work, he looks at the resources he has at his disposal.
- He can imagine the (circus) stage, the equipment and knowledge to tame Richard Parker.
- He finds important help in the survival manual.
- He devises his own training programme to become the alpha male on the boat.
- When Richard Parker stakes his boundary at the bottom of the boat, Pi realises that he can try to do likewise on the tarpaulin above the hold.
- He has to live on the raft until such time that boundaries are defined and understood.
- Pi learns how to manoeuvre the boat so that he can make it feel rough or move smoothly. This knowledge enables him to control Richard Parker.

COMMENT

- Pi realised that he could not live with Richard Parker indefinitely without controlling him. The moment he decided that he would have to co-exist with Richard Parker, his approach to survival strategies changed. His aim then was to make Richard Parker realise that he, Pi, was the alpha male and Richard Parker, the omega male, so that Richard Parker should obey him.
- From then on, he had to draw on his practical knowledge together with the limited resources for his survival.
- He used the whistle he had as the lion tamer's whip, and controlled the movement of the raft to induce seasickness and food to reinforce his superiority.

VOCABULARY

- **cryptic**: secret; ambiguous or obscure; using codes
- **evanescent**: fleeting; disappearing after a short time
- **injunction**: command; order
- **intolerable**: impossible to bear; very unpleasant
- **luminescence**: light emission without heat
- **manipulate**: control somebody or something; operate something
- **mien**: general appearance or facial appearance; manner, look or demeanour
- **petrifying**: frightening, terrifying; scary
- **phosphorescent**: giving off greenish light

QUESTIONS

I had to tame him. It was at this moment that I realised this necessity. It was not a question of him or me, but of him and me. We were, literally and figuratively, in the same boat. We would live — or we would die — together. He might be killed in an accident, or he could die shortly of natural causes, but it would be foolish to count on such an eventuality. More likely the worst would happen; the simple passage of time, in which his animal toughness would easily outlast my human frailty. Only if I tamed him could I possibly trick him into dying first, if we had to come to that sorry business.

But there is more to it. I will come clean. I will tell you a secret: a part of me did not want Richard Parker to die at all, because if he died I would be left alone with despair, a foe even more formidable than a tiger.
1. "I had to tame him"
   What is the effect of using "had" and not another word like "should"?

2. What realisation does Pi arrive at? Account for it.

3. "But there is more to it."
   To what does 'it' refer?
   Explain fully the meaning of this statement.

4. "A part of me didn’t want Richard Parker to die at all; because if he died I would be left alone with despair, a foe even more formidable than a tiger."
   Account for Pi’s ambivalent feelings towards Richard Parker.

5. Which dominant themes are apparent in this extract?

6. From this extract, what do we learn about Pi’s character?

Extract 23

“I looked around at the horizon. Didn’t I have a perfect circus ring, inescapably round, without a single corner for him to hide in? I looked down at the sea. Wasn’t this an ideal sort of treats with which to condition him to obey? I noticed a whistle hanging from one of the life jackets. Wouldn’t this make a good whip with which to keep him in line? What was missing her to tame Richard Parker? Time? It might be weeks before a ship sighted me. I had all the time in the world. Resolve? There’s nothing like extreme need to give you resolve. Knowledge? Was I not a zookeeper’s son? Reward? Was there any greater reward than life? Any punishment worse than death? I looked at Richard Parker. My panic was gone. My fear was dominated. Survival was at hand.

Let the trumpets blare. Let the drums roll. Let the show begin. I rose to my feet. Richard Parker noticed.

Identify all words relating to circuses. Why does Pi use imagery drawn from the circus to describe his story?

Explain why this is a turning point in Pi’s life. Quote to substantiate your answer.
"I had to devise a training programme for Richard Parker"

- Explain fully why he felt that he had to develop this programme.

- Assess how successful was he in his training of Richard Parker?

CHAPTERS 61 - 63  

PI STRUGGLES TO KILL

- He makes his raft secure and knows that it will keep him safe from Richard Parker. He spends most of the time on the raft and continues to do so until he gets Richard Parker to accept their boundaries.
- On his raft, he becomes aware of the abundance of life at sea. He also becomes aware of his resources and conserving them. His actions become more deliberate.
- A shoal of flying fish pass over the lifeboat and Richard Parker gets his meal.
- Pi struggles with his conscience to kill a fish.
- He gets Richard Parker to obey his whistle command. It seems as though he gets Richard Parker to go under the tarpaulin when he blows the whistle incessantly and aggressively.
- The solar stills work and increase their fresh water supply.
- He mentions that the secret for his survival over 7 months was that he kept himself busy. He develops a strong routine for the day.

COMMENT

- Pi crossed a boundary. He had to kill for survival. The first kill was difficult because he was affected emotionally and psychologically. He couldn't bring himself to killing the fish directly, so he covered it with a blanket and used the blunt side of the hatchet.
- His most pressing task was to create boundaries for Richard Parker and himself. Richard Parker was already on the floor of the lifeboat so Pi had to establish the tarpaulin area as his domain.
- Pi used the whistle as a whip and food as a further treat to get himself accepted as the alpha male.
- The routines helped him maintain his sanity. Earlier, he realised that rituals and routines had a deeper meaning and they made life bearable. His busy routines helped him psychologically.

VOCABULARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bronco</td>
<td>untrained horse or one which habitually bucks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exasperation</td>
<td>frustration; irritation; annoyance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irresolvable</td>
<td>unachievable; impossible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>martyrdom</td>
<td>suffering or dying for a cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mayhem</td>
<td>chaos; disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>putrefied</td>
<td>rotten; decomposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puttering</td>
<td>idling; fiddling; dilly-dallying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanguinary</td>
<td>blood thirsty; involving bloodshed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanguine</td>
<td>cheerfully optimistic; confident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Several times I started bringing the hatchet down, but I couldn’t complete the action. Such sentimentalism may seem ridiculous considering what I had witnessed in the last days, but those were the deeds of others, of predatory animals. I suppose I was partly responsible for the rat’s death, but I’d only thrown it; it was Richard Parker who had killed it. A lifetime of peaceful vegetarianism stood between me and the willful beheading of a fish.

I covered the fish’s head with the blanket and turned the hatchet around. Again my hand wavered in the air. The idea of beating a soft, living head with a hammer was simply too much.

1. Discuss the reasons for Pi’s dilemma.

2. Mention some of the things that he had recently witnessed.

3. Later on, Pi kills without being emotional. Do you agree with the explanation that he lives for this? Discuss.

4. What does this extract reveal about Pi’s character?

5. Identify the theme/s that is / are apparent in this extract.

CHAPTERS 64 – 69 COPING AND CHANGING

- The lifeboat drifts on the open sea and Pi goes where the current takes him.
- Through trial and error, Pi becomes adept at catching and killing fish and turtles and other marine forms of life.
- He becomes aware of the rich sea life which grows around his raft.
- He sleeps for short spells, unlike Richard Parker, who seems to sleep most of the time. He has to be wary of Richard Parker and the ever present danger of the tiger.
- Pi’s hopes of being spotted fade.
COMMENT

- Pi subsisted on canned water and sea-water filtered from the solar stills, the rations in the lifeboat for emergencies and whatever he caught from the sea.
- The routines he had established helped him to survive as they offered some structure to his day.
- He did not expect to be rescued; he came to terms with his circumstances. Religion helped him to cope. Even in the harshness of the elements he marvelled at the miracles of the divine.
- Pi’s attitude to killing underwent radical change. He worked out how to kill efficiently and became adept at killing. As he mentioned, there was no more that “prissiness” in using blankets.

VOCABULARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ambit</th>
<th>range or boundary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>barnacles</td>
<td>small sea creatures that live on rocks, clings to boat hulls, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hallucination</td>
<td>something imagined; seeing something or somebody not really there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prissy</td>
<td>behaving in a very prim or prudish or proper way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rocket flares</td>
<td>used to alert rescuers about their location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sextant</td>
<td>navigational equipment incorporating a telescope</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS

"I quickly lost my revulsion in touching sea life. None of this prissy blanket business anymore."

1. Why was it necessary for him to be able to touch sea life?

2. Explain the reference to: prissy blanket business

CHAPTERS 70 - 75

SOLVING PROBLEMS

- Pi describes the challenges he faces with killing a turtle. Now he focuses on the practical difficulties it poses. It is not so much the act of killing, but how to kill, that becomes his challenge.
- His big concern still remains Richard Parker. For their mutual survival, he has to determine how he is going to carve out his territory and get Richard Parker to respect it. He uses his knowledge of animal behaviour and how to control the lifeboat to his advantage. Through understanding the effect the raft can have on the movement of the lifeboat, Pi can manipulate how Richard Parker, who is a poor seafarer, feels.
- Through using the whistle and strong eye contact, he starts to establish his authority over Richard Parker. Understanding the body language and different sounds that tigers make, further enables him to get Richard Parker to accept him as the alpha male.
- Drawing on his experience, Pi gives advice, step-by-step on how to tame a wild animal.
- Pi mentions that one of the items he missed greatly was a book to read.
- He manages to maintain a diary in which he records productive stuff.
- He also mentions that, through his entire ordeal, his faith in God helped him to survive.
COMMENT

- Repetition in life is necessary for animals and humans. Once a pattern is broken for animals, they act out of sorts. In Pi’s situation, however, the mundane routines wore him down.
- While repetition is good in a normal situation, it can become a threat on the lifeboat: eating and drinking and normal sleeping are no longer possible. Anything out of the normal would interest Pi. Killing of the fish for the first time engaged him mentally and psychologically, but later, killing became a routine activity. He no longer felt the tremendous guilt that he had initially experienced.
- The lifeboat was like a zoo. Pi had to maintain Richard Parker’s enclosure as a zookeeper would. The raft, in a sense, became his cage, keeping him free from the wild animal.

VOCABULARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ordnance</th>
<th>weapons; guns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sullenly</td>
<td>resentfully; gloomily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forbearance</td>
<td>patience; restraint; self-control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piqued</td>
<td>upset; irritated; annoyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peeved</td>
<td>piqued; upset; annoyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malaise</td>
<td>feeling of sickness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incapacitating</td>
<td>preventing from operating effectively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS  Extract 27

“I took hold of a hatchet and brought it down on the turtle’s neck, gashing it. Bright red blood shot out. I grabbed the beaker and collected about 300 millilitres, a pop can’s worth. I might have got much more, a litre I would guess, but the turtle’s beak was sharp and its front flippers were long and powerful with two claws on each. The blood I managed to collect gave off no particular smell. I took a sip. It tasted warm and animal, if my memory is right. It’s hard to remember first impressions. I drank the blood to the last drop.

1. Do you think that Pi used the blunt side of the hatchet? Give reasons for your answer.

2. How does Pi’s description of this killing contrast with his earlier killing?

3. Does Pi’s drinking of the turtle’s blood seem barbaric? How do you think he would have regarded performing such an action when he was in Pondicherry?

4. Which theme does this extract highlight?
CHAPERS 76 – 82 ENCOUNTERS WITH MARINE LIFE

- Pi has to do the cleaning up of the lifeboat out of necessity. Knowing animal husbandry, he realises that he has to do as much as he possibly can to maintain basic cleanliness.
- He uses Richard Parker’s faeces to further intimidate and subdue him.
- Food has become such an acute problem that the type of things he eats increases considerably. Now he will eat what he had previously discarded or what would not have been considered food. Hunger reduces him to such a state that he even attempts to eat the tiger’s faeces.
- He can see the signs of his own body deteriorating.
- The elements impact on his state of mind, changing from calmness to storms. He now experiences the elements in their raw form and feels their immense power.
- On one occasion, while “fishing” he pulls out a mako shark which he flips in his attempt to land it on Richard Parker’s side of the boat. Richard Parker fights the shark and makes a meal of it.
- With the passing days, Pi grows in confidence and attains greater mastery over Richard Parker. To do this, he also effectively exploits Richard Parker’s seasickness.
- One of the questions that Pi answers is why Richard Parker did not attack him. He provides his own reasons.
- Pi’s main concern is to keep Richard Parker appeased and this concern dominates all his waking moments.

VOCABULARY

curmudgeonly discreet exhilarated expendable flaunt forestall gregarious incessantly stricken sustenance ultramarine vaulted bad-tempered; cantankerous subtle; inconspicuous thrilled not-essential; disposable shows something off (negative connotation) prevent or hinder; anticipate very friendly and sociable non-stop; unremittingly, ceaselessly troubled; tormented nourishment; something that supports life coming from or lying beyond the sea; deep blue colour leaped

WORDWAEVERS LITERATURE SERIES: THE LIFE OF PI 50
29: QUESTIONS
1. Why did Pi get into the habit of cleaning up after Richard Parker?

2. Pi suggests reasons why Richard Parker did not attack him. How plausible are these reasons?

3. Explain how Pi managed to keep Richard Parker appeased.

CHAPTERS 83 – 89 DESPAIR, THE DEADLIEST FOE

- A devastating storm batters the lifeboat and, in the process, the raft is lost. Later there is an electrical storm.
- Fortunately, after the first storm, Pi finds the orange whistle as he is bailing out the water. The whistle is key to controlling Richard Parker.
- Pi has an encounter with a whale and this triggers within Pi the kinds of conversations the whales would have among themselves.
- When a bird lands on the lifeboat, Pi catches and kills it.
- He sees an oil tanker which passes the lifeboat without seeing it. This sends Pi into depression.
- By this time Pi goes into a daze or a deep dream state to pass time.
- As part of the flotsam from the wreckage, Pi picks up a bottle and encloses a message in it for someone somewhere to pick up. The message refers to the sinking of “Tsimtsum” on 2 July 1977.
- The long exposure to the sea is taking its toll. Both Pi and Richard Parker’s conditions deteriorate – the tiger physically and Pi both physically and mentally. Pi now spends more and more time using the “dream rag”. Depression and the tremendous challenges he faces alone are taking their toll.

COMMENT

- The experiences at sea bring Pi even closer to the elemental forces of nature; forces that he might not have observed in the comfort of his house. At times he marveled at the beauty of the bigger sea creatures that he saw – whales and dolphins. Again, he was reminded about the beauty of God’s creations.
- For a short while he pretended to talk to the whales, remembering them from fables in his childhood days. Later he started to talk to Richard Parker.
- He also became more aware of his descent into his more basic nature - being reduced to an animalistic mode of existence.
- To counter his depression, he spent more time using his “dream rag” which has an intoxicating effect on him.
- After the storm, he was unable to catch fish and had resigned himself to death. He sank into one of the low points in his life.
VOCABULARY
archipelago group or chain of islands
celestial tree heavenly tree
juggernaut a force that is relentlessly destructive, crushing
languishing deteriorating; deteriorating; weakening
relentlessly persistently, ceaselessly
scrutinized observe somebody or something closely; analyse; inspect
shard fragment; sliver; chip
splayed spread; opened; expanded
unfettered freed; unrestricted; unbound

QUESTIONS  Extract 30

"The boat was swamped. I heard Richard Parker roar. I felt death upon us. The only choice left to me was death by water or death by animal. I chose death by animal."

1. What was Pi’s dilemma? Account for the choice he makes.

Extract 31

"As quickly as it appeared, the bolt vanished—the spray of hot water I had not finished landing upon us and already it was gone. I was dead, thunderstruck—nearly in the true sense of the word. But not afraid. "Praise be to Allah, Lord of all worlds, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Ruler of Judgement Day!" I muttered. To Richard Parker I shouted, "Stop your trembling! This is a miracle"

1. Explain why Pi chooses to refer to Allah at this point.

2. Does PI seem to be normal?

Extract 32

"I love you!" The words burst out pure and unfettered, infinite. The feeling flooded my chest. "Truly I do. I love you, Richard Parker. If I didn’t have you now, don’t know what I would do. I don’t think I would make it. No I wouldn’t. I would die of hopelessness. Don’t give up, Richard Parker, don’t give up. I’ll get to land, I promise, I promise."

a. Place this extract in its context.

b. Comment on “The words burst out pure and unfettered, infinite.”

c. Describe Pi’s state of mind at this point.
2. "But the dream rag gave a special quality to daze. It must have been the way it restricted
my air intake. I would be visited by the most extraordinary dreams, trances, visions,
thoughts, sensations, remembrances."

a. What is the “dream rag” that Pi refers to?

b. How does it help him at this point?

CHAPTER 90  BLINDNESS

• Both Pi and Richard Parker become temporarily blind.
• In this state, a blind French sailor, who is the sole person on a boat, meet the lifeboat. It takes Pi
  sometime to realise that he is not imagining the sailor. For a while, he believes that Richard Parker
  has the power of speech and that the tiger is conversing with him.
• The subject of their conversation is food and the different delicacies that they are fond of.
• Pi continually refers to the sailor as “brother”; the sailor, himself, is harbouring evil intentions.
• When the sailor boards the lifeboat, he tries to kill Pi, probably with the intention of cannibalising
  him. Even at this juncture, Pi claims that he referred to the sailor as “brother”.
• In the ensuing struggle, the sailor falls into Richard Parker’s territory and is instantly killed. Pi tried
  to warn the sailor about the tiger but the sailor was too intent on his meal.
• Pi salvages some parts of the sailor’s body and uses the flesh as bait; he admits that he ate some of
  the bait as well.

COMMENT

• Several interesting incidents occurred, some natural and some which seemed to defy reality. Again,
  the writer seems to test the readers’ credulity.
• There was a sudden terrible storm in which the lifeboat was damaged and the raft was lost; an
  ocean tanker passed the lifeboat without seeing it; Pi hallucinated that Richard Parker was
  conversing with him and Pi went blind; a little later, a blind French castaway appeared
  unexpectedly and Pi found a mysterious carnivorous island.
• Pi started to hallucinate and imagined Richard Parker conversing with him.
• At that point, and very improbably, out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, a blind castaway
  appeared and Pi’s conversation with Richard Parker blends into talking with the castaway.
• Symbolically the three characters were all blind. They are lost souls not knowing where they are
  going to.

VOCABULARY

Amoral  without caring about good behaviour or moral standards; unprincipled
conjures  invokes; summons
infernal  very annoying or unpleasant
sacrilegious  disrespectful; profane; blasphemous
tether  chain; tie; fetter
34. QUESTIONS

1. Why did Pi not to see through the sailor’s motive?

2. Comment on the conversation that Pi and the sailor have.

3. Does Pi feel any guilt that Richard Parker killed the sailor? Give reasons for your answer.

4. Is the state of blindness of Pi, the tiger and the castaway symbolic? Discuss.

CHAPTER 91 CANNIBALISM

- Pi recovers his sight through crying; the tears clear his vision.
- Richard Parker sups on the dead sailor and, in the process, mutilates his face so Pi is unable to know what he really looked like. He boards the dead sailor’s boat to salvage anything useful.
- Pi admits that he ate some of his “brother” as well.

COMMENT
- The castaway was killed and Pi admits that he, too, cannibalised him. Pi acknowledges his darker side which surfaced as a result of the extreme hunger and harsh conditions he suffered.

VOCABULARY
- eviscerated
disemboweled; gutted; filleted

QUESTIONS

Extract 35

I will confess that I caught one of his arms with the gaff and used his flesh as bait. I will further confess that, driven by the extremity of my need and the madness to which it pushed me, I ate some of his flesh... They slipped into my mouth nearly unnoticed. You must understand my suffering was unrelenting and he was already dead... I pray for his soul every day.

1. What reasons does Pi give for eating parts of the sailor?

2. “I ate some of his flesh. I mean small pieces, like strips I meant for the gaff’s hook.”

   What is the effect of “I mean”? 

WORDWEAVERS LITERATURE SERIES: THE LIFE OF PI
3. Account for the change in Pi regarding his eating habits.

CHAPTER 92  THE ISLAND

- Pi sees trees and lush green vegetation but thinks that he is imagining it.
- The island he sees is strange in many ways:
  o No sand
  o No life form except meerkats and vegetation
  o Trees and algae are bonded together.
  o The ponds are 40 metres in diameter and are all about the same size.
  o The presence of tens of thousands of meerkats.
  o Dead fish surface on the top of the pond in numbers.
  o The island is carnivorous.
  o Meerkats sleep on trees and do not climb down at night.
- Sensing the danger that night poses, Richard Parker returns to the boat in the evening.
- Pi decides to sleep on a tree in the island.
- Pi realises that the idyllic world is, in fact, dangerous.
- They sail again, Pi placing his faith in the divine.

COMMENT

- Boundaries of credibility are again being pushed.
- The island seemed an idyllic place with lots of fresh water and food readily available.
- The island itself was dangerous and far from being a haven, it was in fact a hell, as it would eat living creatures. The tree on which Pi found a fruit showed, at its core, a human tooth.
- Symbolically the island could be seen as despair which can eat at the soul of an individual.

VOCABULARY

bedraggled
chimera
Dappled
demurely
desolation
euphoria
hysteria
incoherent
indelibly
lumberjacks
mangrove
phenomenon
rote
tangible
vertigo
untidy; messy; grubby
something that you hope for and imagine that you see but it does not exist.
spotted; variegated
shyly; modestly
misery; despair; sadness
excitement; ecstasy
panic; frenzy
jumbled; confused; illogical
permanently; forever
a man whose job is to cut down trees
swamps in tropical and sub-tropical areas; m. trees
sensation; occurrence; wonder
repetition; routine; habit
touchable; physical; concrete
dizziness or giddiness; faintness
QUESTIONS  Extract 36

“Richard Parker! Land! Land! We are saved!” I shouted
The smell of vegetation was extraordinary strong. As for the greenness, it was so fresh and
soothing that strength and comfort seemed to be physically pouring into my system
through my eyes.

1. Why does Pi say “we”? What earlier comment did Pi make about their survival?

Extract 37

As my heart exalted Allah, my mind began to take in information about Allah’s works. The
tree did indeed grow right out of the algae, as I had seen from the lifeboat. There was not the
least trace of soil. Either there was soil deeper down, or this species of tree was a
remarkable instance of commensal or a parasite.”

2. Why is the reference to Allah appropriate?

3. Comment on the use of language in “Either... parasite”.

4. Find further instances of this use of type of language in this chapter.

5. What prompts Pi to leave the island?

6. Do you find this part of the story credible? Give reasons for your answer.

CHAPTERS 93 – 94 MAINLAND

- At sea, the hardships continue.
- Pi finds solace in God.
- They reach land - Mexico.
- Pi is rescued by a group of Mexican villagers.
- He regrets deeply not bringing closure to his relationship with Richard Parker.
- From Mexico he goes to Canada.
COMMENT

- The lifeboat landed on the shores mysteriously once it left the island. The time in between could be anything from three to four months but that is not dwelled on, except for Pi mentioning that the rest of the story was “grief, ache and endurance”.
- In this ‘bereft and desperate state’, Pi turned to God for solace.
- The villagers showed great concern and went out of their way to help him. The bureaucrats were not too interested in his mental and emotional state.

VOCABULARY

berief                      deprived of something loved or valued
endurance                   ability to bear prolonged hardship
throes                      the effect of

QUESTIONS Extract 38

I wept like a child. It was not because I was overcome at having survived my ordeal, though I was. Nor was it the presence of my brothers and sisters, though that too was very moving. I was weeping because Richard Parker had left me so unceremoniously. What a terrible thing it is to botch farewell. I am a person who believes in form, in the harmony of order. Where we can, we must give things a meaningful shape. For example, could you tell my story in exactly one hundred chapters, not one more, not one less? I'll tell you that’s one thing I dislike about my nickname, the way that number runs on forever. It’s important in life to conclude things properly. Only then can you let go.

1. What was the main reason for Pi’s weeping? _____________________________________________________________

2. What does his crying reveal about his state of mind? _______________________________________________________

3. Explain how Richard Parker left Pi. ________________________________________________________________

4. List some of the other partings that Pi had experienced. Which one do you think affected him the most? Give reasons for your answer. ____________________________________________________________

PART 3: BENITO JUAREZ INFIRMARY, TOMATLAN, MEXICO

CHAPTERS 95 – 97

THE INTERVIEW

- The narrator fills in the gap. He makes contact with Mr Okamoto who describes the difficulties he and his assistant experienced in getting to Tomatlan.
- The conversation (3 hours long) is taped and the author is given access to it. Pi seems to be in a state of constant hunger.
- Okamoto and Chiba interview Pi when he is recovering in hospital, a few days after being rescued.
Even though Pi has been well fed, he states that he is hungry and constantly asks for food from the interviewers.

Pi recounts events that occurred at sea.

**COMMENT**
- While the island itself seemed unbelievable, Pi also referred to the zoological and botanical facts to make his story difficult to dispute outright.
- Two interpretations of the events were put forth by Pi. Often the one that seems more believable to the hearer is accepted, sometimes because it is put in a language form that is more acceptable. In the process, the essence of what really happened could be lost.
- Sometimes our dependence on science and scientific facts prevents us from seeing the deeper story.

**QUESTIONS**

Extract: 39

He and Mr Chiba spoke with Piscine Molitor Patel for close to three hours, taping his conversation. What follows are excerpts from the verbatim transcript. I am grateful to Mr Okamoto for having made available to me a copy of the tape and of his final report. For the sake of clarity I have indicated who is speaking when it is not immediately apparent. Portions printed in a different font were spoken in Japanese, which I had translated.

1. Explain what a *verbatim* translation is.

2. Why does the narrator not include the entire conversation?

**CHAPTERS 98 – 100**

**THE ALTERNATE STORY**

- The Japanese officials, Mr Okamoto and Mr Chiba, think that the story Pi told them was ridiculous. Mr Okamoto expresses his disbelief, pointing out what he considers as flaws in the story: carnivorous trees / Fish eating algae that produces fresh water / rodents dwelling in trees, etc.
- When challenged about the authenticity of the story, Pi artfully counters all their rational and logical objections. He argues that, since people do not know what creatures, big and small, are in a city like Tokyo, how can one be expected to find a predator, the nature of which is to keep itself hidden, in a jungle?
- Pi becomes angry and agitated.
- During the interview there are prolonged pauses.
- Eventually Pi tells the alternate story. The officials see the parallels in the stories.
- When asked by Pi which story they prefer, Mr Okamoto says the one with the animals is the better story.
- During the interview, Pi keeps requesting food items, an indication of the trauma he suffered on the journey.
- Mr Okamoto reveals interesting information in his report-back which he shares with the narrator. In the report there is no mention of Pi's survival journey or his companions.
Mr Okamoto focused on facts. There were many facts at hand and, therefore, the actual events at sea will remain unknown. The few facts that Mr Okamoto could establish are that the Tsimtsum sank and Pi was a survivor. He was at sea for 227 days before he reached Mexico.

- He does say that the story with the animals was the better story.

**Vocabulary**
- bonsai
- feral
- art of growing miniature trees
- domesticated animals which have gone wild

**Questions**

Extract 40

“He was such an evil man. Worst still, he met evil in me – selfishness, anger, ruthlessness. I must live with that.”

1. Who is the “he” Pi refers to?
2. Was “he” in fact evil? Give reasons for your answer.

Comment on: “Worst still, he met evil in me.”

---

**Extract 41**

Mr Okamoto: Both the Zebra and the Taiwanese broke a leg, did you notice that?

“No, I didn’t.”

“And the hyena bit off the zebra’s leg just as the cook cut off the sailor’s.”

“Ohhh, Mr Okamoto –san, you see a lot.”

The blind Frenchman they met in the other lifeboat – didn’t he admit to killing a man and a woman?"

“Yes, he did.”

The cook killed the sailor and his mother.”

“Very impressive.”

“His stories match.”

“So the Taiwanese sailor is the zebra, his mother is the orang-utan; the cook is ... the hyena – which means he’s the tiger!”

“Yes. The tiger killed the hyena – and the blind Frenchman - just as he killed the cook.”

Pi Patel: “Do you have another chocolate bar?”

1. Why is Mr Okamoto interviewing Pi?
2. Pi tells him two stories. Why does he do the second story?
### 11. TIMELINE ACTIVITY

**ARRANGE THE FOLLOWING INCIDENTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER**

- Mr Santosh Patel teaches Pi and his brother about the danger inherent in wild animals.
- Pi meets Father Martin who introduces him to Christianity.
- Pi’s aunt teaches him about Hinduism.
- Pi meets Satish Kumar, the baker, and Sufi, who introduces him to Islam.
- Family leaves on the *Tsimtsum*, for Canada.
- Hyena kills Orange Juice.
- Hyena kills the zebra.
- Goes temporarily blind because of dehydration.
- Richard Parker kills the blind French castaway.
- Pi builds a raft to maintain a safe distance from Richard Parker.
- Starts to tame Richard Parker.
- Pi kills a bird that lands on the lifeboat.
- Pi kills and drinks the blood of a turtle that he catches.
- Richard Parker kills the hyena.
- Meets a blind French castaway in the ocean.
- Pi lands on a mysterious island.
- The lifeboat lands in Mexico.
- Pi settles in Canada.
- The anonymous author meets Francis Adirubasamy.  (ANSWERS: Page 65)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. CONTEXTUAL QUESTIONS

In the exams you will be tested on either one long contextual extract or two shorter contextual extracts totalling 25 marks. The answers may not come from the text provided; you will have to refer to the whole book. Make certain that you answer all parts of the question. The length of your answer should be guided by the number of marks for the answer.

READ THE EXTRACTS AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW

Extract 1 A

Killing it was no problem. I would have spared myself the trouble — after all, it was for Richard Parker and he would have despatched it with expert ease — but for the hook that was embedded in its mouth. I exulted having a dorado at the end of my line — I would be less keen if it would be a tiger. I went about the job in a direct way. I took the hatchet in both my hands and vigorously beat the fish on the head with a hammerhead (I still didn’t have the stomach to use the sharp edge.) The dorado did a most extraordinary thing as it died; it began to flash all kinds of colours in rapid succession. Blue, green, red, gold and violet flickered and shimmered neon-like on its surface as it struggled. I felt I was beating a rainbow to death. (I found out later that the dorado is famed for its death-knell iridescence). At last it lay still and dull-coloured, and I could remove the hook. I even managed to retrieve a part of my bait.

You may be astonished that in such a short period of time I could go from weeping over the muffled killing of a flying fish to gleefully bludgeoning to death a dorado. I could explain it by arguing that profiting from a pitiful flying fish’s navigational mistake made me sanguine and self-assured. But in point of fact the explanation lies elsewhere. It is simple and brutal: a person can get used to anything, even to killing.

QUESTIONS

1. Place this extract in the context of the novel. (1)
2. Quote two words which describe Pi’s state when he caught the dorado. (2)
3. Why didn’t he feed the dorado as it was to Richard Parker? (1)
4. Describe his reference to “weeping over the muffled killing”. (2)
5. Account for the change in Pi towards killing. Substantiate your answer with appropriate reference to the text. (2)
6. What is the dominant theme in this excerpt? Discuss (2) (10)

Extract 1 B

I had to tame him. It was at that moment that I realised this necessity. It was not a question of him or me but of him and me. We were literally and figuratively, in the same boat. We would live — or we would die — together. He might be killed in an accident, or he could die shortly of natural causes, but it would be foolish to count on such an eventuality. More likely the worst would happen: the simple passage of time, in which his animal toughness would easily outlast my human frailty. Only if I tamed him could I possibly trick him into dying first, if we had to come to that sorry business.

But there’s more to it. I will come clean. I will tell you a secret: a part of me was glad about Richard Parker. A part of me did not want Richard Parker to die at all, because if he died I would be left alone with despair, a foe more formidable than a tiger. If I still had the will to live, it was thanks to Richard Parker. He kept me from thinking too much about my family and my tragic circumstances. He pushed me to go on living. I hated him for it, yet at the same time I was grateful. I am grateful. It’s the plain truth: without Richard Parker I wouldn’t be alive today to tell you my story.
QUESTIONS
1. Place this extract in the context of the novel. (2)
2. “It was not a question of him or me but of him and me.” (2)
   Why does Pi feel compelled to tame Richard Parker?
3. Why do you think a part of him did not want Richard Parker to die? (3)
4. Discuss a major theme evident in this extract. (3)
5. What does this extract reveal of Pi’s character? (2)
6. How does Pi keep the tiger alive? (1)
7. Was it a good strategy on Pi’s part to keep the tiger alive? Discuss your views. (2) (15)

Long Extract 25 marks
Read the extract and answer the questions that follow

He dropped like a stone. And died. He didn’t say anything. He had no last words. He only coughed up blood. A knife has a horrible dynamic power; once in motion, it’s hard to stop. I stabbed him repeatedly. His bloods soothe my chapped heart. His heart was a struggle - all those tubes that connected it. I managed to get it out. It tasted delicious, far better than the turtle. I ate his liver. I cut off great pieces of his flesh.

“He was such an evil man. Worse still, he met evil in me - selfishness, anger, ruthlessness. I must live with that.”

Solitude began. I turned to God. I survived."
[Long silence]

“Is that better? Are there any parts you find hard to believe? Anything you would like me to change?”

Mr Chiba: “What a horrible story.”
[Long silence]

Mr Okamoto: “Both the zebra and the Taiwanese sailor broke a leg, did you notice that?”
Mr Chiba: “No I didn’t.”

“And the hyena bit of the zebra’s leg just as the cook cut off the sailor’s.”

“Ohhh, Okamoto-san, you see a lot.”

“The blind Frenchman they met in the other lifeboat, didn’t he admit to killing a man and a woman”

Yes, he did.”

The cook killed the sailor and his mother.”

“Very impressive”

His stories match”

“So the Taiwanese sailor is the zebra, his mother is the orang-utan, the cook is... the hyena – which means - he’s the tiger!”

“Yes. The tiger killed the hyena – and the blind Frenchman just as he killed the cook.”

Pi Patel: “Do you have another chocolate bar?”

Mr Chiba: “Right away!”

“Thank you.”

Mr Chiba: “But what does it mean, Okamoto-san?”

WORDWEAVERS LITERATURE SERIES: THE LIFE OF PI

62
QUESTIONS

1. Place this extract in the context of the novel. (1)
2. According to Pi, the person did not put up much of a struggle. Why didn’t he? (2)
3. Pi describes a knife as having "horrible dynamic power". Is Pi making excuses for his action? Explain. (3)
4. Comment on the effect of the short sentences in the first five lines. (3)
5. How did the cook affect him? Quote to substantiate your answer. (3)
6. Quote a sentence or part of a sentence that shows that Pi feels badly about the killing. (1)
7. What is the effect of the periods of long silence? (2)
8. Why did Pi tell them this story? (2)
9. Which story do you think is more likely to be real? Give reasons for your answer (3)
10. "Do you have another chocolate bar?"
    Explain why Pi asks for a chocolate bar. In addition to eating some of the food he gets, what does he do with it? (3)
11. Discuss the relationship between the two Japanese officials. (2)

TIMELINE ACTIVITY: ANSWERS

1. Pi's aunt teaches him about Hinduism.
2. Mr Santosh Patel teaches Pi and his brother about the danger inherent in wild animals.
3. Pi meets Father Martin who introduces him to Christianity.
4. Pi meets Satish Kumar, the baker and Sufi, who introduces him to Islam.
5. Family leaves on the Tsimtsum, for Canada.
6. Hyena kills the zebra.
7. Hyena kills Orange Juice.
8. Richard Parker kills the hyena.
9. Pi builds a raft to maintain a safe distance from Richard Parker.
10. Pi starts to tame Richard Parker.
11. Pi kills a turtle.
12. Pi kills a bird.
13. Pi and Richard Parker go temporarily blind because of dehydration.
15. Richard Parker kills the blind French castaway.
16. Pi lands on a mysterious island.
17. The lifeboat lands in Mexico.
18. Pi settles in Canada.
19. The anonymous author meets Francis Adirubasamy.
13. HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY
TERMINOLOGY AND WHAT IT MEANS

DISCUSS
This means that you should provide some general background about the subject and give some opinions both for and against the topic, eventually concluding which one you agree with, given the evidence you have supplied.

Evaluate, assess, appraise are all similar to discuss and serve as keywords which require a comprehensive coverage of the topic or text provided.

Analyse: means to examine critically the text or topic provided with a view to dissecting it and evaluating it to arrive at some conclusion.

Key words such as ‘GIVE YOUR OPINION’ or ‘DO YOU AGREE’ suggest that an independent viewpoint is required, although this must be backed up by evidence, not necessarily quoted material, but examples from the plot and what we have learned about the characters.

Demonstrate, Illustrate/draw on examples from the text or a passage given to show a particular theme or specific characteristics of one of the role-players or how the plot works: means that one is required to use the given text and its context (set against the backdrop of the novel/play as a whole) to explain how it contributes towards carrying the plot to its desired conclusion; keeping the character true to him/herself or expanding and introducing one of the themes of the novel/play.
There are also terms which ask you to write an essay expressing the opinions of an article in your own words, or by rephrasing, paraphrasing, interpreting or restating some text which is given to you, however these are quite rare.

You could also be asked to define, identify, pinpoint, list or describe how or why something happens. In such cases you are meant to provide details which are more specific than the actual text given.

Let us examine some samples of essay-type questions. Try to breakdown each question and determine for yourself what type of response you think is required each time.

**The hero always dies in a tragedy.**
Assess the validity of this statement in relation to your set work and respond in essay form, providing your opinion.

Explain the significance of the hero’s actions when he... in terms of the plot of the novel/play.

Analyse the behavior of the character as presented in the extract below and state whether this is typical of the character or unusual and whether or not this behavior affects the reader in his/her understanding of the novel/play.

The main character in this play/novel is driven by a strong emotion. Determine whether this statement is true or false using the extract given and the context of the play/novel.

Compare the behavior of the villain to that of the hero and discuss why the reader finds one more believable than the other.

The extract provided shows an example of irony and is one of many such which appear throughout the novel. Evaluate the validity of this statement.
STRUCTURE OF THE ESSAY

The essay should consist of three parts:

An Introduction
- Don’t repeat the essay topic
- Outline the approach you are taking toward the essay
- Explain how you understand the topic and will show your opinion

The Body
- This is the main part of the essay
- Set out the points here which contain your argument, explanation or show your understanding
- Each main idea should be set out in a new paragraph.

The Conclusion
- This is the paragraph where you end your essay
- Sum up here the points you have made
- Make a statement about the topic: agree or disagree or introduce a different opinion
- Do not introduce any new ideas in the conclusion

Style
- Don’t use slang, SMS or text language, numbering, headings, unnecessary abbreviations or bullets
- Use complete sentences which have a subject, verb and object
- Each paragraph should deal with a specific point or idea
- This may not always be possible, but at least try to link your ideas

The Golden Rule

Read over your completed essay carefully.
Check that:
- You have made sense (not just to yourself, but to anyone else who reads what you have written)
- You have not made any obvious spelling or grammar mistakes
- You have answered the question
- You have written enough for the mark allocation

SAMPLE ESSAY QUESTIONS (25 MARKS)

Write essays on the following topics. Make certain that your essay has an introduction, body and conclusion. If there are more than one part to the question, make certain you answer each part of it. The length of your essay should be between 400 and 450 words.

1. Examine critically the significance of religion in Pi’s life and show how it helped him to survive? (25 marks)

   Hint: Analyse the topic: Has two parts: You need to think about the role of religion in Pi’s life and show how it helped him practically.
   - Examine critically (you must give your own opinions)
     E.g. From childhood – intensely religious
Looked at all religious teachings and went beyond superficial understanding of it.
Saw religion as light.
Raw elements of nature were seen as miracles.
- Show how religion helped him (i.e. how it helped him to survive).
  Helped him to cope with ordeal – despair.
  Part of daily routine (5 or more times a day) maintained his sanity.

2. Pi realises the need to communicate. Point out the different ways in which he does this. How does he benefit from communicating, including diarising events on the lifeboat? (25 marks)

This topic has two main parts:
- Different ways in which Pi communicates.
- Benefits of communicating.

Different ways and benefits:
- Changing his name from Piscine to Pi in class (benefitted because childhood torture of being a perpetual laughing stock came to an end).
- As a religious seeker - with the priests and pandit (benefit – treated him respectfully).
- Training of Richard Parker (benefit).
- Diarising events of his ordeal, etc. (benefit- kept him busy as part of a routine for the first part of his ordeal; retaining his sanity).
- Between his wife and children (informal and bonding).

3. In a well thought-out essay of about 400-450 words, compare the two versions that Pi gives of his experience as a castaway and discuss which version you find more credible. (25 marks)

This essay has two main parts: compare the stories and your opinion.

Hint: in your preparation draw a table and plot both stories in it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story with animals – First story</th>
<th>Story with people – alternate story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second part of the question: Since you have to discuss your opinion, you need to indicate why you have arrived at this decision.

4. Are the deeds that he commits to survive and of which he is ashamed justifiable given the context in which they were committed? (25 marks)
5. "A part of me did not want Richard Parker to die at all, because if he died, I would be left alone with despair, a foe even more formidable than a tiger. If I still had the will to live, it was thanks to Richard Parker."

In an essay of 400-450 words, assess the validity of this statement made by Pi. Make sure you explain how Richard Parker helped Pi to survive? (25 marks)

Analysing the topic
You are required to study the quotation and to determine how true it is. Look for evidence from the novel:

- Feared Richard Parker – took his mind from his plight of being a castaway.
  Focused on him and forgot temporarily his other dangers.
- Pi would have been alone without Richard Parker. A case of a dangerous companion preferred to utter loneliness.
- Kept him alert and therefore retained sanity. Devised plans to survive an attack from him and indirectly helped to survive.
- Forced to harvest water and fish for food, etc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>14. GLOSSARY</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allabu Akbar</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arati Lamp</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arjuna</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asanas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ashram</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atman</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avatar</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bhajans</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brahman</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Darshan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dirga</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diwali</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ganesha</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Garden of Gethsemane</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gideons</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hanuman</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hafiz</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hejira</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jerusalem</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kaaba</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kapil Dev</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Karma</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kathakali Dancers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kerala</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imam</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kumkum Powder</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lakshmi</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lassi</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maharaja</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mamaji</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mecca</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mohammed</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Murtis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nadaswaram</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parvati</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prasad</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Puja</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qibla</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ramayan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sambar</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Samskara</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shiva as Nadaraja</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sufi</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tamil Nadu</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Varanasi</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vishnu</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. TWO REVIEWS OF THE LIFE OF PI

REVIEW 1

Life of Pi is an emotional story written by Yann Martel, a Canadian novelist, in which he describes an unbelievable adventure of a teen boy.

The action starts in India, where Pi’s family decides to move to Canada with their zoo, but on the way their ship crashes and young Pi is left alone on a boat with a tiger.

I should say that the plot itself is really riveting and interesting and it entirely captures your attention. It actually makes you feel just like you’re present on that boat.

One of the best things about this book is the detailed portrayal of the marine life which Pi discovers while hunting in order to eat. The species of fish and other creatures are described really well; in this way even if you’re not a specialist in animals you understand everything.

If you have the chance, make sure you read this novel, because it is a very original and beautiful story!

REVIEW 2

PHILOSOPHICAL PI MISSES THE MARK

by Finlo Rohrer (BBC News Online entertainment staff)

When something is billed as the story of a shipwrecked boy called Pi stuck in a lifeboat with a Bengal tiger called Richard Parker, you know you are on full steam towards Whimsyville. The cast also features a zebra with a broken leg, an orangutan, and a hyena, as well as a chorus line of Mako sharks, flying fish and turtles.

Full of philosophical musings, and practical details on how to operate a solar still, Life of Pi takes you on a journey from Pondicherry in India across the searing heat of the Pacific.

Imagine a metaphysical Castaway if Tom Hanks’ was an adolescent scamp - rather than a paunchy 40-something - with a companion who weighed 450 pounds and marked out his territory with musky urine.

Mixed bag

But after the blurb is out of the way, Yann Martel’s novel is a real curate’s egg. The surreal, allegorical narrative often raises a faint smile with its modest sprinkling of charm and even occasional wit. But for the most part, it lacks emotional weight, and bearing in mind there is only one real “human” character, Little Pi is as thin as tracing paper.

The rare moments of true charm are outweighed by too many indifferent moments when your eyes skim over the words as fast as the lifeboat it describes. The first 90 pages are a chore, full of unnecessary lumps of cod-philosophy and theology, and what strands there are to be brought together at the end are dealt with in a convoluted way.

Device

It is only in the mid-section of the book, that Martel’s prose comes alive, and you find that the mental processes surrounding the catching, landing, killing, butchering and eating of a hawksbill turtle can actually hold your interest.

At this book’s heart is not a solid central premise but a gimmick. For someone brought up around a zoo, and who dislikes the anthropomorphisation of animals, how would the opposite process play?

It is the nugget of a good idea, but it is spread out over 300 pages by an author who seems to have a knack for making the fantastic seem utterly mundane. Martel’s storytelling is that of the inveterate traveller. Assuming you come pre-impressed by the sights and sounds they recount, its effort is always misdirected.

WORDWEAVERS LITERATURE SERIES: THE LIFE OF PI
16. ANSWERS TO ACTIVITY QUESTIONS

SOME VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1
ANSWERS 1-d 2-B 3-J 4-C 5-e 6-g 7-f 8-h 9-l 10-a

ACTIVITY 2
ANSWERS: 1. ungulate
2. lampooning
3. Arboreal
4. mien
5. Mange
6. fermented
7. arduous
8. olfactory

ACTIVITY 3: ANSWERS: 1-A; 2-B;
3-C; 4-B; 5-B; 6-B; 7-B; 8-A; 9-A; 10-A

CLOSE READING AND DISCUSSION OF TEXT

THE AUTHOR’S NOTE:

Answer 1

FACT
Pondicherry was once a French colony
Zoo (Now defunct)
Coffee House
Botanical Gardens
Canada Council for Arts
Moacyr Scliar

FICTION (All the characters)
Narrator (He is not Yann Martel)
Francis Adirubasamy
The Japanese officials

2. He wants to blur the distinction between fact and fiction. Sometimes a story carries a message more powerfully than dry facts. This approach becomes one of the major themes of this novel.

PART ONE: TORONTO AND PONDICHERY

CHAPTER 1: Extract 1 ANSWERS

1. The university students were confused about God; many were agnostics. They did not have a deep understanding of God because their faith was untested. The sloths hang upside down from trees and the students were like the sloths in not knowing the right way up.

2. The sloth is a living creature and is a miracle of creation. Seeing a sloth as part of God's creation reminds him of God. For the Muslim, miracles are found in nature.

3. The science students are generally atheists and the religious studies students seem to be agnostics. Pi seems to prefer the atheists (friendly, hardworking, cheerful and doing normal activities, etc.). The agnostics are confused and muddled.

4. The boundaries between the real world and religion blur for Pi.

Chapter 2 – 4 Extract 2: Answers

1. Animals in the wild are driven by their need for food and they have to observe their place in the herd or group. The alpha animal is the leader and the other animals have to submit to him. Their lives are a constant struggle dominated by foraging or hunting for food and they have to keep other animals away from their territory as well as being constantly troubled by predators, disease or parasites.

2. The pecking order among the animals. The animals observe a rigid social order with the alpha male being the leader and the others following him.

3. Any answer supported by sound reasoning is acceptable.

4. Survival / Boundaries and freedom
Extract 3: Answers

2. Both are losing support. Both are no longer in people's good graces. People have felt that it is wrong to cage animals and therefore do not support visiting zoos. Consequently, zoos are becoming smaller or are closing down. Many do not attend church and churches are closing down.

Chapters 5 and 6 Extract 4: Answers

1. He went to the board and wrote his name and the shortened form which he went on to explain the mathematical meaning of.
2. He is resourceful and can solve problems even if it meant doing daring actions. He also felt terribly hurt by constant teasing.

Extract 5: Answers

1. Pi is still affected by his ordeal as a castaway when he suffered hunger greatly. Subconsciously, this is shown in the amount of food he has at home. He is paranoid about starving and ensures that he has sufficient food at all times.
2. Survival.

Chapter 7 Extract 6: Answers

1. Mr Kumar does not believe in anything that cannot be observed and tested by one's senses. For him, careful scientific observation is all that is needed to understand the world. Attributing the unknown to God is being superstitious.
2. A clear intellect, close attention to detail and a little scientific knowledge.
3. Mr Kumar, the biology teacher, is an atheist and Pi is a theist.
4. The word "darkness" refers to ignorance. Mr Kumar believes that people who are religious are merely superstitious and that religion prevents clear thinking.
5. Pi feels that he has been saved because of his faith in religion. It is his strong faith and his regular prayer routines that saw him through his dark periods on the ocean.

Chapter 8 Extract 7: Answers

1. Wild animals should not be petted as all wild animals are dangerous. Mr Patel was afraid that his sons might forget this and put their lives in danger. In teaching them this lesson, Mr Patel got his sons to witness a tiger devouring its live prey.
2. He was afraid that his sons might forget how dangerous the wild animals are since they were always surrounded by wild animals and could easily drop their guard. The sense of familiarity with wild animals might make them forget the constant danger posed by animals. Some of the wild animals looked cute and innocent, but they were dangerous nevertheless.
3. They were upset at the violence of what they saw; their mother added to this as she argued with her husband about the need for showing them the tiger killing a goat.
4. The mother did not approve of the method the father had used. She remonstrated with him because she thought that the children could be traumatised and affected psychologically.
5. Ravi was playing on this shared memory of the tiger's killing the goat. He knew that Pi was deeply affected by this experience and taunted him by referring to him as a goat ready to be killed.

Chapters 9-11 Extract 8: Answers

- They get the animals used to their presence. They understand the boundaries and work accordingly with the animal.
Extract 9: Answers

- He is referring to the expectation that the local authorities could find a tiger in the jungle. A tiger, like any wild animal, knows how to hide. The expectations were unrealistic and not finding the tiger did not mean that it did not exist. Animals in urban surroundings were difficult to find and therefore it would be much more difficult to find a tiger in a jungle.

Chapters 12 - 14 Extract 10: Answers

a. Reason and intelligence can be more effective than just brute force. Intelligence and knowledge can be used to out-think and outdo muscular strength.

b. The trainer asserts himself as the alpha male. He occupies the territory first and then stands erect, gazes at the animal; uses a whip or a whistle. Body language and actions understood by the animal are important in the training.

c. Pi defines the boundaries in a way in which Richard Parker would understand and uses a whistle to dominate him.

Chapter 15 Extract 11: Answers

- He is a pantheist. He does not just pay lip-service to the ethic that all religions believe in God as at their core and that love is the essence of the religions, but shows this in his home.

- Pi has accepted all religions as true. As a practitioner of different faiths, he keeps icons or symbols of each faith in his house.

Chapter 16-20 Extract 12: Answers

1. Father Michael is different from the stereotype of a Catholic. He is welcoming, hospitable and friendly and treats Pi as an adult. The opinion Pi had had of Catholics was that they were austere and dogmatic.

2. This is not just another story but a very special one which all Catholics would know.

3. Stories are what gives flesh to facts and can be connected to our beliefs. We believe the better story. At the end of the narrative, Pi tells two stories to the Japanese officials and asks them to choose whichever they want to believe.

4. Acceptance of other people's views on religion.

Extract 13: Answers

1. One is his biology teacher and the other a Muslim mystic (Sufi).

2. Both of them were very influential in his life: He studies Zoology (the impact of Mr Kumar the biology teacher) and religious studies (Mr Kumar the Sufi) at university as a result of their engagement with him.

Extract 14: Answers

1. Pi had visited many places of worship. He did not find any as sacred and as inspiring of religious fervor as he experienced in Mr Kumar's place.

2. After praying at the bakery he felt profound peace and religious exultation. He carried this religious experience with him into the areas around, spreading the experience he had had.

3. Much later in life when he was in Canada, he had a vision of the Virgin Mary. He was visiting a friend in the country and, while returning to the house after a longish walk, he saw the vision.

Chapters 21 - 25 Extract 15: Answers

1. Pi's religious fervor is admirable but he needs to follow one path. It is not possible to follow three religions.

2. Traditionally, heaven is regarded as being above and the priests wanted heavenly guidance. Could indicate their exasperation with Pi.

3. Partially. While they each wanted Pi to become one of theirs, they could not openly fault Pi's response—which was that he only wanted to love God.
Chapter 30-32  Extract 16: Answers

1. Mr Kumar, the atheist, calls it "The Rolls-Royce of equids" and its scientific name "Equus burchelli boehmi".
   The Sufi mystic refers to it as "a wondrous creature" and Pi, by its species' name "a Grant zebra".
2. Mr Kumar, the atheist, is a man of science and classifies it; the religious mystic sees it as a wonder of nature
   and as a creation which is the miracle of God. Pi is not clear in this extract except that he is practical. Pi
   reconciles the religious and the scientific world.

PART TWO: THE PACIFIC OCEAN

Chapters 37 – 42  Extract 17: Answers

1. He realises that he was trying to save a deadly enemy, the tiger, which would very likely kill him.
2. He was acting on instinct and suddenly realised that, in trying to be helpful, he was endangering his own life.
   Hence, he "woke up".
3. He lost the oar as he tried to thrust the tiger away with it.
4. When he was eight years old he was forced to witness a tiger devouring a live goat. Now he could very likely
   be the live victim of the tiger on board. His brother, who knew of his terror and how traumatised he was by
   this experience, taunted him that he could end up like the sacrificial goat. Now this situation seems very
   likely to happen.
5. He throws himself overboard into the sea.

Extract 18: Answers

1. The bridge was normally manned by officers who could speak English. Pi believed that as senior staff, they
   would know what was happening and that they were in control or could take control. .
2. Ironically, they did. The sailors thought that they were feeding Pi to the hyena. He survived the throw.
3. The colour orange symbolises survival. The whistle which was used to attract attention and later to tame
   Richard Parker was orange, as was the life buoy and much of the lifeboat.
4. Survival. He had to fend off the wild animals and the forces of nature.

Chapters 43 – 49  Extract 19: Answers

1. The first extract reflects the theme of story-telling. Pi creates stories to help him cope with the harshness of
   reality.
   • In the second extract, the theme of survival is apparent. The desire to survive is so dominant that it overrides
     all other emotions and feelings and beliefs.
   • The reference to religion is the theme that is apparent in the third extract. Religion helps one to come to
     terms with one's deeds and it gives us solace. Pi is comforted in some measure in that he prays for the zebra.
   • The hunter who shot a tiger with a cub was called Richard Parker. The cub was taken to a zoo. When
     recording the name of the hunter and the cub, which was called Thirsty, the clerk mixed them up and named
     the cub Richard Parker.
2. Piscine was named after a popular pool in Paris - Piscine Molitor. Mr F Adirubasamy, a family friend, was a
   champion swimmer and his favourite pool in Paris was Piscine Molitor. At school, classmates deliberately
   changed the pronunciation of his name to "Pissing". Very cleverly, Piscine got people to call him "Pi".

Chapters 50 - 56  Extract 20: Answers

• The last four items on the list. (Although it may be argued that in the context they were all related to
   survival.

WORDWEAVERS LITERATURE SERIES: THE LIFE OF PI 74
Extract 21: Answers

1. The colour orange is associated with survival.

2. Pi is serious about surviving and believes that he must act and not wait on fate or God. His approach to his survival is practical in that he notes the resources he has. He also comes up with plans to survive.

3. Being religious, Pi has immense faith in God.

4. The other items will assist him to survive. The animals pose a constant source of danger to him.

5. His determination. His analytical mind. His approach to problem-solving is scientific and methodical, etc.

6. He's analytical and determined to survive. He is clear-thinking and unemotional, even though most of his plans are far-fetched.

Chapters 57 – 60: Extract 22: Answers

1. The word “had” suggests that it was necessary or obligatory (that he does this); “should” that it was a possible action but not essential.

2. He realises that he has to co-exist with Richard Parker on the lifeboat. He knows that without Richard Parker for him to focus on, he will die, since he probably will give in to depression or fear and perish in the process.

3. The word refers to the reasons why he had to tame Richard Parker and to the “sorry business”. He admits that he had other reasons for wanting Richard Parker alive. Richard Parker kept him company; without him, he would be alone in the Pacific Ocean.

4. Richard Parker was a foe that he could see. If the tiger died, then he would very likely give in to depression which he regarded as a greater enemy. So, while he was afraid that the tiger might kill him, he also felt that his survival depended on the tiger remaining alive.

5. The theme of survival.

6. Pi is brave and resourceful in that he wants to coexist with a tiger. He also analyses the situation carefully and considers options that might not be easy to do, but which he knows that are essential for his survival.

Extract 23: Answers

- Circus ring; whip; trumpets; drums, etc.

Extract 24: Answers

- He had to plan what he needed to do carefully. Taming a tiger would require careful consideration since any mistake or oversight could be fatal.

- He was very successful in “taming” Richard Parker he survived the ordeal of living with a tiger for over 200 days. He conditioned Richard Parker to respond to his whistle and kept him contented through providing him with food.

Chapters 61 – 63 Extract 25: Answers

1. Pi has been a lifelong vegetarian and a pacifist. He realises that now he has to kill in order to survive. He has great difficulty in taking this step to kill, yet he knows that this is essential for his survival.

2. He notices how the other creatures on board have been wiped out. The hyena had fed on the zebra while it was still alive and had killed the orang-utan; the rat and cockroaches all perished and Richard Parker had killed the hyena.

3. Killing becomes easier as he becomes accustomed to it. He knows that, for his survival, he has to feed Richard Parker as well.

4. He is able to make changes if need be. He realises that to survive, one has to be practical. Hunger can strip one of all one’s principles.

5. The theme of survival.
Chapters 64-69 Extract 26: Answers

1. He had to catch fish or turtles by hand or bring them onto the boat using his hand. Earlier, he found performing such actions repugnant, but, out of necessity, he could touch sea life without flinching.

2. When he first had to kill a fish he used a blanket to mask his action and to make the act of killing more acceptable for himself. He could not kill heartlessly; later he did not need a blanket to mask what he was doing.

Chapters 70-75 Extract 27: Answers

1. Pi used the sharp edge. At this point he had become used to killing marine life and set about performing the task without sentiments. He understood that obtaining food was essential for survival.

2. Earlier he described how he had to fight with his conscience before he could kill and, even then, he did not want to cause hurt (used the blunt side of the hatchet, etc.). He was affected psychologically by the act of killing; later killing became only a physical act.

3. As a bona fide vegetarian, it would have seemed unthinkable for him to do this. In Pondicherry he would certainly not have entertained this thought. However, the will to survive was so great, that he knew he had to do whatever it took to survive.

4. Theme of survival.

Chapters 76-82 Extract 29: Answers

1. It would have been easy for Richard Parker to pick up infections if the faeces were left there. The habit of animals is to eat anything that resembles food. Pi also used this to keep Richard Parker under his control. When he observed that Richard Parke was uncomfortable having defecated in front of him, Pi understood that the tiger was showing him deference. He used this insight to bully Richard Parker further.

2. Initially, it was because Richard Parker had poor sea legs and was not interested in attacking Pi. Later on, he realised that Pi was responsible for his food and water which he seemed to have obtained miraculously. Being raised in a zoo, he would have understood the function of a keeper. Pi was performing that role.

3. Whenever Richard Parker was aware that there was food, Pi hurriedly gave some to him.

Chapters 83-89 Extract 30: Answers

1. If he remained exposed on the deck he would have been swept away to certain death... going under cover would have increased his chances of survival as the tiger was not going to be a threat at that point.

Extract 31 Answers

2. For the Muslim, the miracles of God are all around like the falling of rain, the flying of birds and plants growing. He regards this lightning as another miracle of Allah.

   Earlier, Satish Kumar, the Muslim, explained that the miracles of God (Allah) are all around.

3. Pi is showing signs of deteriorating mentally.

Extract 32: Answers

a. Pi has just gone through two heavy storms, one which almost killed him. Salvation for him meant being rescued. An oil tanker passes them without stopping.

b. Pi acknowledges the importance of his companion and realises how critical Richard Parker is to his survival.

c. Pi is suffering from deep depression. He is lonely, in anguish, and is suffering greatly.
Extract 33: Answers

a. A wet piece of blanket which he places over his face. With the reduced oxygen, he hallucinating.
b. It makes time go by unnoticed.

Chapter 90 Extract 34: Answers

1. Pi is desperate for companionship. He has been a castaway for a prolonged period of time with only Richard Parker as a companion. Pi was generally trusting. (Did not see the evil motive of the two sailors who killed him to the hyena)
2. They converse mainly about food and the delicacies that they are missing. Pi is in a state of almost perpetual hunger.
3. He regrets it. He says: “Something in me died then that has never come back to life.”
4. At this stage, Pi was concerned only with survival. It could be that he was blind then to all other teachings and religious conventions. So, in a way, he was blind to ethics, etc.

Chapter 91 Extract 35: Answers

1. He ate the sailor’s flesh in extreme hunger which drove him to madness. He had initially dried the sailor’s body partly to use as bait, but since it looked like animal flesh, he could not resist eating small parts of it.
2. It is almost apologetic, as though he wants to put this act of his into perspective, by indicating that he did feed on the sailor with gluttonous zeal.
3. Extreme hunger had stripped him of his lifelong principles of being a vegetarian. On board, there was no food; he could eat only what he caught at sea.

Chapter 92 Extract 37: Answers

1. The attraction for Pi regarding Islam was its reverence for nature and the elements. Rain falling and flowers growing were all miracles of God (Allah).
2. The words – species, commensal and parasite are part of biological science. This hints at Pi’s training in biology, science.
3. Cordate, ...
4. He realises that the island is dangerous – the vegetation is carnivorous.

Chapter 93-94 Extract 38: Answers

1. He did not bid a proper farewell to Richard Parker, his companion for 227 days, who was responsible for his survival.
2. He was heavy with remorse; he was probably troubled because he did not bring closure to his relation with Richard Parker.
3. When they landed in Mexico, Richard Parker got onto the shore and walked immediately into the jungle without looking back at Pi.
4. Leaving Pondicherry and India; from his family... He was more affected by the parting with Richard Par They were fellow survivors for 227 days; he had spent most of his time thinking about Richard Parker keeping him in check.

PART 3: BENITO JUAREZ INFIRMARY, TOMATLAN, MEXICO

Chapter 95-97 Extract 39: Answers

1. “Word for word”, exactly as it occurred, without any changes being made.
2. The conversation was very long (3 hours) and he only included the gist of it.

WORDWEAVERS LITERATURE SERIES: THE LIFE OF PI
Chapter 98 – 100  Extract 40: Answers

1. The Cook
2. Yes or No (Reasons are important).
3. The Cook brought out the evil in Pi. They selfishly consumed more than their share of food, etc.

Extract 41: Answers

1. He is a representative of the shipping company that owned Tsimtsum. He is trying to find out the reason why the ship sank.
2. The first story with the animals seems incredible and the officials did not believe it. He therefore told another story without animals.

CONTEXTUAL QUESTIONS Extract 1 A  (10 MARKS)

1. Pi, a castaway, and has a tiger for a companion, has landed a dorado, a fish. He has to get over his revulsion for killing as he was a vegetarian and a pacifist in order to hunt for food which, in the circumstances, means catching marine life. (1)
2. Exulted/gleefully (bludgeoned). (2)
3. It still had a hook in its mouth and this might, at the same time, be swallowed by the tiger. He too would need to eat. (1)
4. Pi was extremely emotional when he tried to kill for the first time. He couldn’t bring himself to bash the head of the flying fish directly. After many attempts, he managed to wrap the live fish in a blanket and hammered its head and tried breaking its neck, while still covering the fish with the blanket. While he did so, he wept. Even now, while he hammered the head of the fish, he used the blunt side of the hatchet. He still was not completely brutal as he would expect us to believe and he still remembered the first fish he killed in his prayers. (2)
5. While he had to kill out of necessity, he realised that killing after some time became routine. “... a person can get used to anything, even to killing.” He disengaged himself emotionally from the process and attended to killing pragmatically. (2)
6. Survival. Pi is prepared to give up his lifelong principles of vegetarianism and pacifism to survive. (2)

CONTEXTUAL EXTRACT B  (15 MARKS)

1. Pi had many difficult problems to face. In addition to surviving as a castaway, he had to cope with an adult tiger as a companion. He had to plan on surviving and initially, he thought along the lines of killing the tiger. At this point he had realised that killing the tiger was not the best solution for him. (2)
2. Prior to this, Pi focused on developing plans to kill the tiger. However, now he realised, or thought that his survival depended on the tiger being alive as well. His entire mindset had changed. Together they could survive as he would not fall victim to depression. (2)
3. His rational mind understood the threat posed by a tiger. However, if he was alone on board, he would probably give in to extreme depression and lose the will to live. While Richard Parker was alive, he would focus on the tiger and not “be left alone with despair, a foe more formidable than a tiger”. (3)
4. The theme of survival. Out of necessity, one makes major changes to one’s core principles or ways of thinking. Under normal circumstances, one would not want a Bengal tiger as a companion. However, in one’s desire to survive, one might choose this option. In the novel, Pi made many changes when his principles clashed with his survival instincts. (3)
5. Pi is a deep thinker. He does not make rash decisions and is prepared to act according to ways which might be counter to normal wisdom. He is courageous in that he wants to train an adult tiger as part of his survival strategy. (2)
6. Pi ensures that the tiger is fed regularly - he has to fish all the time in order to do this; he ensures Richard Parker gets a constant supply of water and he keeps his enclosure as clean as possible. (1) (accept any one answer)
7. (This is an open-ended question and so marks will be dependent on reasons advanced)
   E.g.: Yes. Both Pi and Richard Parker survived the ordeal. Pi’s circumstances were so difficult that it would
   have been easy to succumb to despair. However, Pi survives without much psychological damage. (2)

LONG EXTRACT (25 MARKS)

1. Pi is in a hospital in Mexico and is being interviewed by two Japanese government officials who are
   investigating the sinking of the Japanese ship, Tsissiuni. (1)
2. The person, the ship’s cook, was probably ashamed at the depth to which he had sunk. He had cannibalized
   a shipmate and killed a lady, Pi’s mother. (2)
3. Pi is being objective in his description and is explaining a common phenomenon. He points out that, under
   the influence of evil, one cannot easily control oneself and it is the weapon (evil aspect of one’s nature) that
   seems to be controlling the individual. (3)
4. The short sentences create tension. The scene described relates to evil and murder being committed, and to
   the speaker committing the murder. (3)
5. The cook brought out the evil of selfishness, anger, ruthlessness in him. The evil within was dormant, but the
   evil actions of the cook acted like a catalyst and “met evil in me” (Pi). (3)
6. “I must live with that.” (1)
7. Pi is narrating a story that is highly sensitive and emotive and is reliving the traumatic experience that he
   went through. (2)
8. The interviewers did not believe the story with the animals as they thought that was most unlikely. When
   they insisted in finding out what really happened, Pi told them the story with fellow humans as survivors.
   The real events could have been too painful for Pi, so he could have presented information in the form of a
   story. (3)
9. Marks only given if answer is supported. (2)
10. Pi lived through a harrowing experience where starvation and thirst were ever-present realities. The fear of
    starvation was so great that he started to hoard food. This fear is carried through into his adult life where all
    his cupboards are stocked with all kinds of canned food. (3)
11. Mr Chiba is the junior partner and Mr Okamoto takes the lead in the interrogation. Mr Okamoto chides Mr
    Chiba when his comments detract from the line of questioning that Mr Okamoto pursues. (2)

REFERENCES

1. Finlo Rohrer (BBC News Online entertainment staff)
2. Life of Pi: Novel and Study Notes (2014) OUP
3. The Guardian review by Justine Jordan
4. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Life of Pi

SYMBOLISM / MOTIFS / IMAGERY

Pi

Piscine’s nickname, Pi, has a symbolic relationship with the mathematical pi (p). The ratio of the circumference (circular) of a circle to its diameter (linear) is pi. The correlation between the linear journey to North America and the cycles of doubt and faith are experienced by Pi. Mathematical relationships are calculated and explained logically and rationally by the irrational number pi. Unbelievable experiences and irrational events are explained logically and rationally by Pi. Neither Pi nor pi can be confined by logic or taken to a coherent ending point. Pi is sixteen when he is shipwrecked, and pi is the sixteenth letter of the Greek alphabet. Pi even uses pi (p) to work out the circumference of the algae island.

Algae Island

The island itself is symbolic as a Garden of Eden. It offers temporary salvation to Pi, but he must leave the island Eden once he discovers the black “forbidden fruit” on the twisted branches of the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” His illusion of the island is shattered. There is a kind of heaven and hell associated with day and night. By day the meerkats eat without having to kill and show no fear, even of Richard Parker. At night, the island becomes carnivorous and the ecosystem feeds on itself. (See Chapter 92 Notes)

Tsimtsum

The name of the ship comes from the Kabbalist concept of tsimtsum, where God withdraws himself to make room for the creation of the universe. The sinking of the ship may symbolize God withdrawing from Pi to make room for Pi to develop as an independent creature. Tsimtsum is necessary for creatures that are to become independent so they can freely choose a relationship with God. (See Chapters 35 and 37 Notes)

Orange

Orange is the color of survival. The whistles, life jacket, lifebuoy, tarpaulin, and Richard Parker are orange. It is also the color of the second Hindu chakra. (See Chapter 40 Notes)
Animals

The animals in Pi’s lifeboat symbolize human traits and may also represent people. hyena - French cook, cowardliness orangutan - Pi’s mother, maternal instincts zebra - Chinese sailor, exoticism tiger - Pi, animal nature meerkats - mirage, meekness

Pi’s Story

The lifeboat ordeal is a metaphor for the human condition. We aspire to higher things (religion, justice, salvation), but we are entrenched in our own basic animal needs. These aspirations and needs are brought together in the lifeboat. If the aspirations are grand, the journey will be perilous.

MOTIFS

The motif of the reconciliation of science and religion as equal ways to understand the world stems from the concept of pi - using the irrational to explain the rational. Throughout the book science and religion, two seemingly opposite areas of study, intermingle and complement each other. The two Kumars represent these concepts, and even they come together to marvel at the zebras in the zoo. Next, Pi's knowledge of science and his faith combine to effect his survival. And the adult Pi ends up with degrees in both zoology and religious studies.
Transcript of Tsimtsum in Life of Pi

Tsimtsum in Life of Pi

If God is an omnipresent being, how could he create a world with sin and imperfection?

What is Tsimtsum?
Literally means "a reduction" of the divine energy that creates worlds the idea that creation occurs when God contracts himself existence requires some sort of connector to the Creator He hides His light from us, so that we can make our own choices, but He is present within being hidden He is more present in His absence than in His presence

Background of Tsimtsum
In Life of Pi by Yann Martel, the author utilizes the name of the ship, Tsimtsum, in order to display the significance of God throughout Pi's journey. "We left Madras on June 21st, 1977, on the Panamanian-registered Japanese cargo ship

Tsimtsum
Her officers were Japanese, her crew was Taiwanese, and she was large and impressive" (Martel 90).

Hebrew word meaning "contraction"
The Jewish culture believes that God is everywhere, so there would be no room for creation.
Can also describe shrinking oneself in order to understand God's divinity.

Thesis
Martel utilizes many different ethnic groups and portrays different lives that will experience this journey.

Effect: Displays how many different species that Pi will encounter on his journey.

Author's Choice
WTP?
Martel's use of the name Tsimtsum presents even more diversity within the novel. The boat is Japanese and though the name sounds like it is as well, it is actually Jewish. This contributes to the various religions within the novel. With the name being as important as it is, Pi's personal journey now incorporates religion even more than it previously did.

"You said the weather improved quickly. The ship sank and right after it was a beautiful day" (315).