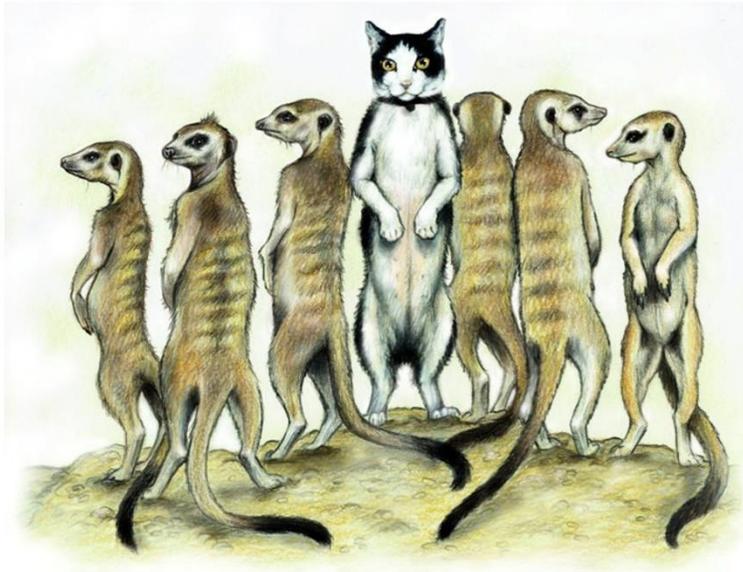


# The Meerkat Wars



H. S. Toshack

Sheena the PYP Cat



Study Guide for  
*The Meerkat Wars*  
STUDENT COPY

**Sheena the PYP Cat: Whole Book Tasks for *The Meerkat Wars* by H.S. Toshack**  
(book and other resources available at <http://www.litworks.com>)

*In this resource, we focus on two major aspects of the IB Programme – the **Learner Profile** (Task 1) and the **PYP Transdisciplinary Themes** (Task 2).*

**Task 1: Explain how well Sheena fits the IB Learner Profile.**

Here is the list of Profile characteristics, set out so that you can add your ideas (with examples or quotations from the story if you can think of some). We have included a list of pages on which you may find material to help you answer. Try to work without using those to begin with, however, and go back and add in other ideas (using the page numbers) later.

How does Sheena show herself to be...	Your Ideas
An Inquirer?	<p>You may find some more ideas on these pages: 7-8, 26-27, 100-101, 145-147, 162, 223</p>

**Knowledgeable?**

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 6, 7, 47, 57, 123, 132, 152, 172, 175, 178, 183, 223

**A Thinker?**

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 12, 33, 35, 78, 102, 108, 129, 153, 161, 188-190, 213, 220-223, 213

**A Communicator?**

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 7, 16, 20, 35-36, 37, 43, 45, 109, 175-178, 200-201, 204-206, 208, 213-214, 217

**Principled?**

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 75, 78, 94-95, 108, 114, 179

**Open-minded?**

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 102, 139, 163-165, 185, 191, 226

**Caring?**

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 14, 44, 51-52, 75, 199

**A Risk-taker?**

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 5, 18, 30, 108, 116, 148-50, 155

**Balanced?**

There are no precise references; just think (and write) about the way Sheena's different qualities complement each other, and work together.

She is also aware of the importance of balance in our lives and our attitudes, so think of some ways in which she shows that awareness.

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 114-115, 180, 195, 201

**Reflective?**

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 123-124, 142, 158-159, 165-166, 185

**Task 2: Remind yourself of the PYP's six transdisciplinary themes. How, in the course of the story, has Sheena shown herself to be aware of some of those ideas?**

Here is the list of themes, set out so that you can add your ideas (including examples or quotations from the story). We have included references to pages on which you may find material to help you answer. Try to work without using those to begin with, however, and go back and add in other ideas (using the page references) later.

Themes	Page References and Teaching Notes
<b>Who we are</b>	You may find some more ideas on these pages: 28, 45, 58, 119-120, 123-124, 158, 170, 214, 241, 244
<b>Where we are in place and time</b>	You may find some more ideas on these pages: 45-48, 61, 136, 229

**How we express ourselves**

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 5-6, 56-57, 89-90, 94, 174-178, 216

**How the world works**

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 54-57, 65-66, 113-115, 123-124, 208, 246

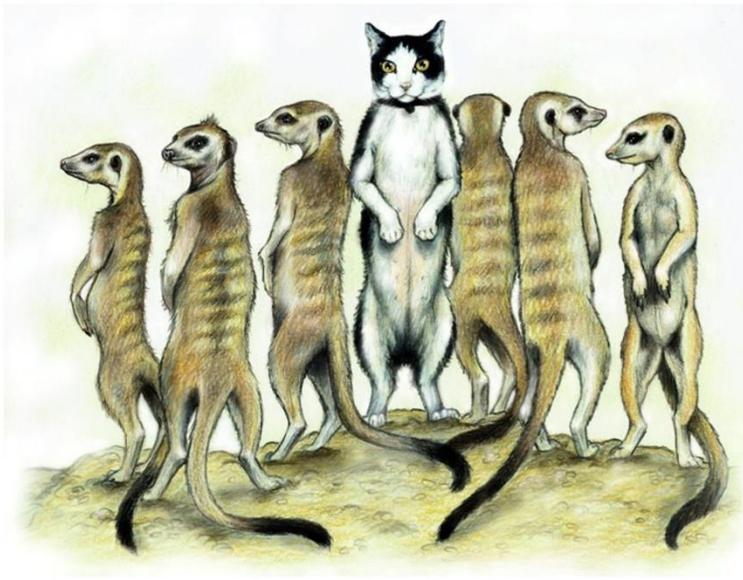
**How we organise ourselves**

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 68-69, 75, 85, 94, 102, 144-145, 182-185, 241-242

**Sharing the planet**

You may find some more ideas on these pages: 69, 79-81, 97-98, 107-111, 161-162, 223-237, 241

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Teaching copy - to be given to students only for the purposes of self-assessment

*In this resource, we focus on two major aspects of the IB Programme – the **Learner Profile** (Task 1) and the **PYP Transdisciplinary Themes** (Task 2).*

**Task 1: Explain how well Sheena fits the IB Learner Profile.**

Here is the list of Profile characteristics, set out so that you can add your ideas (with examples or quotations from the story if you can think of some). We have included a list of pages on which you may find material to help you answer. Try to work without using those to begin with, however, and go back and add in other ideas (using the page numbers) later.

How does Sheena show herself to be...	Page References and Suggested Responses
<b>An Inquirer?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pages 7-8: She asks lots of questions of the scorpion. To begin with this is to help her decide whether she is in any danger from this strange creature, but she then seems to take a genuine interest in it.</li> <li>• Pages 26-27: She continues to ask questions (and does so all the way through the book, when there is something useful or interesting to be learned).</li> <li>• Pages 100-101: She asks Crossclaw a question that has begun to puzzle her, and also wants to explore the idea of there being two suns (but doesn't have time on this occasion).</li> <li>• Pages 145-147: She begins to ask 'spying' types of question – and she is very well equipped to do that, since she has a natural inquisitiveness.</li> <li>• Page 162: Some of her questions here have to do with spying; she asks others, however, because she is genuinely interested – or, as in this case, 'puzzled'.</li> <li>• Page 223: She stays behind to find out why the Land Rovers are here.</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledgeable?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 6: She recognises the scorpion as soon as she sees its tail.</li> <li>• Page 7: She has learnt a lot of information (about scorpions, among many other things) from, and alongside, Thomas.</li> <li>• Page 47: 'Sheena knew about grooming.'</li> <li>• Page 57: She knows what a 'dunzi' is in Kiswahili, since she has been one.</li> <li>• Page 123: She knows something about belief and faith, and how they can affect the way we behave.</li> <li>• Page 132: She immediately recognises the ticks for what they are.</li> <li>• Page 152: She knows something about monitor lizards, since she once met one.</li> <li>• Page 172: She recognises the hyenas' calls, and knows something about those animals.</li> <li>• Page 175: She's right – birds of prey are called raptors. (She's confused the word with 'rappers', of course.)</li> <li>• Page 178: She knows that the part of the body behind the ankle can be hurt very easily (although she gets its medical name slightly wrong).</li> <li>• Page 183: She knows about the traditional use villagers in Africa put sungusungu to.</li> <li>• Page 223: She knows what Developers are, and what they can do.</li> </ul>

<p><b>A Thinker?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 12: She thinks about the fact that the scorpion’s sting may have gone right through this animal’s cheek, and imagines what that will mean for him.</li> <li>• Page 33: She calculates how fast she should run in order to keep Nyegere chasing her without letting him catch her.</li> <li>• Page 35: She thinks up an ‘extension’ to her plan.</li> <li>• Page 78: As usual in such situations, Sheena comes up with a plan.</li> <li>• Page 102: She thinks of two reasons why you should not stand behind a porcupine.</li> <li>• Page 108: She comes up with another plan.</li> <li>• Page 129: She thinks of a way to modify the rules of the slashing competition so that she can win it and escape.</li> <li>• Page 153: She remembers the advice, ‘Use the difficulty’, and thinks of a way to do that, here.</li> <li>• Page 161: She has done some thinking ahead – an important kind of thinking.</li> <li>• Pages 188-190: She uses the difficulty once again.</li> <li>• Page 213: Her suggestion that the meerkats might travel around The Gorge instead of through it is an example of lateral thinking (thinking sideways, ‘outside the box’) something she is particularly good at.</li> <li>• Page 220-223: She quickly thinks of a way they can escape the cheetahs without losing total sight of the sun, and changes her plan when it begins to fail.</li> <li>• Page 213: She can be intrigued by difficult, ‘philosophical’ questions – ‘Didn’t something with one end have to have another one?’</li> </ul>
<p><b>A Communicator?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 7: She knows that answering a question with a question can be ‘very irritating’, but it’s one way of proceeding ‘cautiously’, and finding out more about the situation.</li> <li>• Page 7: Then she tries to get a conversation going in order to reduce the element of confrontation.</li> <li>• Page 7: She searches for a phrase that the scorpion might understand, when it clearly doesn’t know what she means by ‘pack a pretty powerful punch’.</li> <li>• Pages 16, 20,43: She has remembered the difficult medical terms Sandstepper used in his ‘lecture’ and is now able to match her own symptoms against them, and refer to them again later.</li> <li>• Pages 35-36: She is able to explain her plan quickly, despite the pressure she is under.</li> <li>• Page 37: She tries to stop Nyegere with ‘sharp little words’.</li> <li>• Page 45: She has a keen sense of the fun to be had from language (she decided that meerkats on guard duty should be called ‘scentinels’).</li> <li>• Page 109: She finds a way of communicating with the hrrummffalo that he cannot fail to understand.</li> <li>• Page 175-178: She is more than a match for the hyenas in this rapping contest.</li> <li>• Pages 200-201: She speaks persuasively to the Duwara (but with mixed success).</li> <li>• Pages 204-206: She uses different language styles in speaking to the Duwara, again not wholly successfully (but she’s able to modify the way she talks, as necessary).</li> <li>• Page 208: She has spoken softly, and with good effect in the end (but the big stick has played its part).</li> <li>• Pages 213-214: Her speech here is the longest one she makes in the story, and very fluent – and Mpole is impressed.</li> <li>• Page 217: She uses casual conversation (‘chit-chat’) as a way of keeping the peace.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principled?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 75: She has become close to the Duwara, and approves of the way they live, so she does not hesitate to help them, as friends.</li> <li>• Page 78: She helps further, by offering them a plan.</li> <li>• Pages 94-95: She feels responsible for what has gone wrong, so knows she must stay to help further.</li> <li>• Page 108: She risks her life once more to protect her friends and their home.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 114: She lives her life according to the principle that what is happening now is more important than what has happened previously, or what may happen in the future. That principle guides her thinking also.</li> <li>• Page 179: Her Grand Plan is based on the principle of fairness: it is designed to put the Duwara and the Utongo on an equal footing so that they'll 'have to talk'.</li> </ul>
<b>Open-minded?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General: She asks lots of questions, often to get a second point of view.</li> <li>• Page 102: She is disappointed to find that the porcupines have changed sides, but is willing to accept that they may have had a good reason for doing so – 'Parents sometimes did strange things, however, when an offspring's future was involved'.</li> <li>• Page 139: She is beginning to find her preconceptions about the Utongo challenged.</li> <li>• Page 163-165: She questions her own allegiances, and is perhaps moving towards a new view of the Utongo (and Slash) – and of the Duwara.</li> <li>• Page 185: The fact that she has seriously considered the idea that there might be two suns suggests that she is open to new possibilities in her thinking, however much they challenge her previous assumptions.</li> <li>• Page 191: Although Slash is pursuing her angrily, she cannot view him as an enemy, and hopes Mondo will not hurt him too badly.</li> <li>• Page 226: She is beginning to hope that the meerkats, too, can learn to be open-minded – 'Perhaps there <i>was</i> a place in the meerkat mind for questions rather than just answers'.</li> </ul>
<b>Caring?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 14: She is initially reluctant to carry Pebble, but does so when she realises he badly needs help.</li> <li>• Pages 44: She is concerned to see how ill Pebble looks.</li> <li>• Pages 51-52: She feels close to Pebble as they fall asleep, close together.</li> <li>• Page 75: She has come to care about Pebble – 'To save a life is to become a part of it'.</li> <li>• Page 199: She shows great sympathy, in several directions.</li> </ul>
<b>A Risk-taker?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 5: She has returned to Baragandiri even though she has faced much danger on her previous two visits; and she is now looking forward to more 'fat adventures', although 'fat' may mean 'dangerous', once again.</li> <li>• Page 18: She keeps following Sandstepper because it is the best thing to do, even though he has advised her not to and the animals on the mound are very threatening.</li> <li>• Page 30: She takes a risk in order to save Sandstepper.</li> <li>• Page 108: 'She took a grave risk' in running between the Hrrummffaloes' legs.</li> <li>• Page 116: Going through The Gorge is obviously going to be a dangerous business.</li> <li>• Pages 148-50: It is courageous of her to leave the chamber at night, in order to do some spying.</li> <li>• Page 155: She takes a further risk in biting Kenge's tail.</li> </ul>
<b>Balanced?</b>	<p>There are no precise references; just think (and write) about the way Sheena's different qualities complement each other, and work together. You may find it helpful to look back at the answer you gave in Whole Book Task No. 3.</p> <p>She is also aware of the importance of balance in our lives and attitudes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her open-mindedness (see the earlier section dealing with that) means that she sees it as important to take a balanced view of things, and be aware of opposing points of view.</li> <li>• Pages 114-115: She suggests that 'herstory' would be as important as 'history' as a way of recording world events.</li> <li>• Page 180: 'Balance was important throughout nature, Sheena knew.'</li> <li>• Page 195: She takes, now, a very balanced view of the two meerkat tribes, and finds them to be 'as bad, and as good, as each other'.</li> <li>• Page 201: She realises that balance can be destructive, however, when it's a 'see-sawing' kind of balance.</li> </ul>

<b>Reflective?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pages 123-124: When Kinyonga performs his colour changing trick, Sheena sees similarities between that and the behaviour of people, and reflects on the way what we believe we are affects what we actually are.</li><li>• Page 142: During Sunwake she reflects on ‘more deeply personal things’ – her own life and how unimportant it seems.</li><li>• Pages 158-159: She spends the rest of the night thinking about what she has achieved by ‘her little foray’, and what further problems she may have caused.</li><li>• Pages 165-166: She is forced to face some truths about the consequences of her plan to defend Deepden.</li><li>• Page 185: She has thought hard about the question of whether there might be two suns, and has returned to her belief that there can not be.</li></ul>
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**Task 2: Remind yourself of the PYP's six transdisciplinary themes. How, in the course of the story, has Sheena shown herself to be aware of some of those ideas?**

Here is the list of themes, set out so that you can add your ideas (including examples or quotations from the story). We have included references to pages on which you may find material to help you answer. Try to work without using those to begin with, however, and go back and add in other ideas (using the page references) later.

Themes	Page References and Teaching Notes
<b>Who we are</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 28: She feels ‘something of an affinity’ with this new arrival, since, like her, it is black-and-white. We develop a sense of identity partly by being aware of our similarities and differences in comparison with other individuals, groups and species.</li> <li>• Page 45: She is reminded of the importance of names in saying something about who and what we are.</li> <li>• Page 58: She mistakenly suggests that all the animals in particular species are ‘like’ each other and so should not be at war; then she learns that our beliefs can make us see ourselves as different from others, and bring us into conflict with them.</li> <li>• Pages 119-120 (and also 172, 219): Sometimes ‘who we are’ seems to be more than one person.</li> <li>• Pages 123-124: Her encounter with Kinyonga says something to her about how we can change what we are.</li> <li>• Page 158: She notes how we can be surprised by what other creatures suddenly show themselves to be.</li> <li>• Page 170: ‘Sheena did wonder in passing what effect it might be having on Duwara pups to be fed Utongo milk.’ She is interested, clearly, in what makes us who we are. (The nature/nurture debate is in the background.)</li> <li>• Page 214: She implies that trying too hard to establish and maintain our separate identities can make us forget how much we have in common.</li> <li>• Page 241: The two tribes have in a sense given the sun a new identity (as the only sun); and they themselves will now have to adjust their view of who and what they are.</li> <li>• Page 244: Fara seem to have changed who she is, and has earned a new name.</li> </ul>
<b>Where we are in place and time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pages 45-48: She notes the similarities and differences between the scorpion and the lobsters she remembers from her early life in the Caribbean – so it could be said that she has something of a ‘world view’.</li> <li>• Page 61: She realises how frightening it can be not to know ‘where we are’ – to be lost, in other words. Later in the story, when the meerkats realise that some of the things they believe cannot be true, they too feel lost, and afraid.</li> <li>• Page 136: ‘Which sun is it?’ Sheena asks. She is trying to orientate herself – not only geographically, but also in relation to the meerkats’ strange thinking.</li> <li>• Page 229: She has worked hard, and taken some big risks, to bring the meerkats to an understanding that there is only one sun in the sky. They will now know more clearly where they are (in space/place).</li> </ul>
<b>How we express ourselves</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General: The meerkats express their feeling of closeness by being physically close much of the time – particularly when they are asleep.</li> <li>• Pages 5-6: She understands that we express ourselves by the questions we ask as well as by the answers we give.</li> <li>• Pages 56-57: The meerkats express themselves by several means other than ‘talking’.</li> <li>• Pages 89-90: She realises that the meerkats communicate by relay in order to pass messages across a large area.</li> <li>• Page 94: We can communicate in ingenious ways (by, in this instance, thumping on the ground to send messages to those beneath).</li> <li>• Pages 174-178: She picks up quickly on the art of rapping, and uses it to show the hyenas she is a match for them.</li> <li>• Page 216: She wonders what feelings the Utongo are expressing when they turn away from the rising sun.</li> </ul>

<p><b>How the world works</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 54-57: She learns about how the sun ‘works’ for the meerkats early in the morning – by doing much more than just warm their bodies.</li> <li>• Pages 65-66: She has a good practical sense – the ‘mechanics of the situation’ (the porcupines’ entanglement) are clear to her; but she also knows how families ‘work’, and knows that she must allow Spickle’s mother to be cautious.</li> <li>• Pages 113-115: She remembers enough of Dad Allen’s home lectures to know that the way the world works can be described in different ways – from a historical, economic, religious or military viewpoint.</li> <li>• Pages 123-124: She is interested in the way this lizard ‘works’, in particular because of what it tells her about how we can become anything we want to be.</li> <li>• Page 208: She has learnt that negotiation is an important tool in keeping the world running smoothly; but big sticks can be important too.</li> <li>• Page 246: She and Mpole agree that life is One Big Test.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How we organise ourselves</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pages 68-69: We cooperate with each other by coming to ‘agreements’ about things.</li> <li>• Page 75: Sheena is impressed by the meerkats’ closeness, and the principles by which they live their lives together.</li> <li>• Page 85: She learns how the meerkats share out tasks, according to what she already knows as the Principle of Division of Labour.</li> <li>• Page 94: She notes that the principle of Division of Labour can be set aside when the situation demands – ‘it seemed that all female meerkats were Ndugu when they needed to be’.</li> <li>• Page 102: Some elements in the way we organise ourselves (in this case cooperate with each other by means of agreements) are not always reliable, and Sheena is disappointed by that fact.</li> <li>• Pages 144-145: She has the impression that the Utongo have organised themselves in a more militaristic way than the Duwara.</li> <li>• Pages 182-185: She experiences what it is like to be the victim of an attack from one of the most organised species on earth.</li> <li>• Pages 241-242: The Duwara and the Utongo will now have to re-organise themselves.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sharing the planet</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 69: The porcupines share Rockhome in a sense – the meerkats ‘own’ it, but allow Nungunungu to use it, through the agreement they have come to.</li> <li>• Pages 79-81: She takes an interest in how the Duwara manage their relationships with the Utongo – and how that has led to conflict.</li> <li>• Pages 97-98: It becomes clear to Sheena that sharing is not always successful – when, as here, one side decides to take, and keep.</li> <li>• Pages 107-111: Sometimes it is necessary to do some ‘steering’ (as Sheena does in the hrrumffalo episode) to make sure that sharing arrangements work.</li> <li>• Pages 161-162: She is very careful not to make it seem as if she wants a permanent part of the Utongos’ space, since she knows that ‘territory’ is a key cause of conflict.</li> <li>• As far as Sheena can see, sharing is all a matter of balance, particularly in ‘trying to get along with your neighbours’.</li> <li>• Pages 223-237: Sheena realises the significance of the Developers’ arrival here: the ‘sharing’ boundaries (between humans and animals) are about to be moved.</li> <li>• Page 241: Sunwake and Sunwatch have been renamed as Sunshare.</li> </ul>