

# The blind man and the elephant

Read this poem to the class as part of the Orientation.

It was six men of Indostan  
To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
(Though all of them were blind),  
That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant,  
And happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side,  
At once began to bawl:  
'God bless me! but the Elephant  
Is very like a wall!'

The Second, feeling of the tusk  
Cried, 'Ho! what have we here,  
So very round and smooth and sharp?  
To me 'tis mighty clear  
This wonder of an Elephant  
Is very like a spear!'

The Third approached the animal,  
And happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his hands,  
Thus boldly up he spake:  
'I see,' quoth he, 'the Elephant  
Is very like a snake!'

The Fourth reached out an eager hand,  
And felt about the knee:  
'What most this wondrous beast is like  
Is mighty plain,' quoth he;  
'Tis clear enough the Elephant  
Is very like a tree!'

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,  
Said: 'E'en the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most;  
Deny the fact who can,  
This marvel of an Elephant  
Is very like a fan!'

The Sixth no sooner had begun  
About the beast to grope,  
Than, seizing on the swinging tail  
That fell within his scope.  
'I see,' quoth he, 'the Elephant  
Is very like a rope!'

And so these men of Indostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong!

