

GENERAL ENGLISH

Fourth Semester

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Fourth Semester

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SYLLABUS

UNIT I PROSE

1. My Financial Career - *Stephen Leacock*
2. The Secret of Work - *Swami Vivekananda*

UNIT II POETRY

1. Where the Mind is without Fear - *Rabindranath Tagore*
2. Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening - *Robert Frost*
3. The World is Too much with Us - *William Wordsworth*

UNIT III SHORT STORY

1. The Gift of the Magi - *O Henry*
2. Rip Van Winkle - *Washington Irving*

UNIT IV ONE ACT PLAY

1. A Marriage Proposal - *Anton Chekov*

UNIT V I GRAMMAR

1. Verb
2. Adverb
3. Concord
4. Tenses

II COMPOSITION

5. Report Writing
6. Reading Comprehension

CONTENTS

UNIT I	PROSE	1
Chapter 1	My Financial Career	3
Chapter 2	The Secret of Work	11
UNIT II	POETRY	25
Chapter 3	Where the Mind is without Fear	27
Chapter 4	The World is Too much with Us	35
Chapter 5	Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening	43
UNIT III	SHORT STORY	51
Chapter 6	The Gift of the Magi	53
Chapter 7	Rip Van Winkle	67
UNIT IV	ONE ACT PLAY	91
Chapter 8	A Marriage Proposal	93
UNIT V	GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION	115
Chapter 9	Grammar	117
Chapter 10	Reading Comprehension	139
Chapter 11	Report Writing	153
<i>Practice Questions</i>		<i>161</i>



UNIT I

PROSE

1

My Financial Career

– *Stephen Leacock*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephen Leacock in full is Stephen Butler Leacock (1869-1944) born in Hampshire, England. After that, he moved to Canada at the age of six and adopted the vocation of teacher. He was also a writer, political scientist, and humourist.

He was the most famous Canadian humorist writer that people recognized him more than Canada even. He was the most widely read English speaking world between 1915 and 1925. His humor was light but mixed with criticism about people's follies.

Stephen started his literary career as a fiction writer, humourist, and short reports writer. Leacock Memorial Medal for honor was named in his respect and honor. Leacock was Royal Society of Canada's Lorne Pierce Medal in 1937. He died of throat cancer in Toronto in 1944.

TEXT

When I go into a bank I get rattled. The clerks rattle me; the wickets rattle me; the sight of the money rattles me; everything rattles me.

The moment I cross the threshold of a bank and attempt to transact business there, I become an irresponsible idiot.

I knew this beforehand, but my salary had been raised to fifty dollars a month and I felt that the bank was the only place for it.

So I shambled in and looked timidly round at the clerks. I had an idea that a person about to open an account must needs consult the manager.

I went up to a wicket marked "Accountant." The accountant was a tall, cool devil. The very sight of him rattled me. My voice was sepulchral.

"Can I see the manager?" I said, and added solemnly, "alone." I don't know why I said "alone."

"Certainly," said the accountant, and fetched him.

The manager was a grave, calm man. I held my fifty-six dollars clutched in a crumpled ball in my pocket.

"Are you the manager?" I said. God knows I didn't doubt it.

"Yes," he said.

"Can I see you," I asked, "alone?" I didn't want to say "alone" again, but without it the thing seemed self-evident.

The manager looked at me in some alarm. He felt that I had an awful secret to reveal.

"Come in here," he said, and led the way to a private room. He turned the key in the lock.

"We are safe from interruption here," he said; "sit down."

We both sat down and looked at each other. I found no voice to speak.

"You are one of Pinkerton's men, I presume," he said.

He had gathered from my mysterious manner that I was a detective. I knew what he was thinking, and it made me worse.

"No, not from Pinkerton's," I said, seeming to imply that I came from a rival agency. "To tell the truth," I went on, as if I had been prompted to lie about it, "I am not a detective at all. I have come to open an account. I intend to keep all my money in this bank."

The manager looked relieved but still serious; he concluded now that I was a son of Baron Rothschild or a young Gould.

"A large account, I suppose," he said.

"Fairly large," I whispered. "I propose to deposit fifty-six dollars now and fifty dollars a month regularly."

The manager got up and opened the door. He called to the accountant.

"Mr. Montgomery," he said unkindly loud, "this gentleman is opening an account, he will deposit fifty-six dollars. Good morning."

I rose.

A big iron door stood open at the side of the room.

“Good morning,” I said, and stepped into the safe.

“Come out,” said the manager coldly, and showed me the other way.

I went up to the accountant’s wicket and poked the ball of money at him with a quick convulsive movement as if I were doing a conjuring trick.

My face was ghastly pale.

“Here,” I said, “deposit it.” The tone of the words seemed to mean, “Let us do this painful thing while the fit is on us.”

He took the money and gave it to another clerk.

He made me write the sum on a slip and sign my name in a book. I no longer knew what I was doing. The bank swam before my eyes.

“Is it deposited?” I asked in a hollow, vibrating voice.

“It is,” said the accountant.

“Then I want to draw a cheque.”

My idea was to draw out six dollars of it for present use. Someone gave me a chequebook through a wicket and someone else began telling me how to write it out. The people in the bank had the impression that I was an invalid millionaire. I wrote something on the cheque and thrust it in at the clerk. He looked at it.

“What! are you drawing it all out again?” he asked in surprise. Then I realized that I had written fifty-six instead of six. I was too far gone to reason now. I had a feeling that it was impossible to explain the thing. All the clerks had stopped writing to look at me.

Reckless with misery, I made a plunge.

“Yes, the whole thing.”

“You withdraw your money from the bank?”

“Every cent of it.”

“Are you not going to deposit any more?” said the clerk, astonished.

“Never.”

An idiot hope struck me that they might think something had insulted me while I was writing the cheque and that I had changed my mind. I made a wretched attempt to look like a man with a fearfully quick temper.

The clerk prepared to pay the money.

“How will you have it?” he said.

“What?”

“How will you have it?”

“Oh”—I caught his meaning and answered without even trying to think—“in fifties.”

He gave me a fifty-dollar bill.

“And the six?” he asked dryly.

“In sixes,” I said.

He gave it me and I rushed out.

As the big door swung behind me I caught the echo of a roar of laughter that went up to the ceiling of the bank. Since then I bank no more. I keep my money in cash in my trousers pocket and my savings in silver dollars in a sock.

SUMMARY

My Financial Career is a funny and humorous story that reflects the writer's fear and embezzlement whenever he entered the bank. Everything related to the bank made him vexed and rattled. He became an irresponsible idiot. It occurred once, he got his salary increased to fifty dollars and he thought to deposit that amount in the bank that seemed to him a safe place. Having fear, he entered the bank and asked the accountant about the manager.

The accountant took him to the manager where the writer informed the manager that he wanted to talk to him in solitude. The manager got anxious and looked at the writer in some alarm and took him into a separate room. He locked the door and misunderstood that the writer had some awful secret to tell and he might belong to some detective agency Pinkerton. The writer informed him that he was not from any secret agency and was there to just open an account.

The manager thought him to be a big businessman and wanted to deposit a big amount in the bank. But he got disappointed on hearing that the writer wanted to deposit fifty-six dollars only in the bank. The manager called the accountant in a loud voice and instructed him to open an account for the writer and said the writer goodbye. The writer found an open door in that room and entered the door considering him the exit but it was safe.

The writer was ordered to go out and the accountant brought him out. The accountant deposited fifty-six dollars in his account and returned him the rest amount. Suddenly the writer thought that he needed six dollars for his routine

use. He signed on the cheque and headed it to the accountant but he wrote fifty-six dollars instead of six. The accountant was surprised to see all that and inquired him if he wanted to withdraw the whole deposited amount.

The writer felt his fault but he did not want to be laughed at. He felt that he was insulted in that bank. He had no intention to deposit the amount in the bank. The accountant returned him fifty-six dollars. The writer came out of the bank and heard a burst of laughter behind him. Since then the writer did not go to the bank and started to put the cash in his trousers' pocket and saving amount in his socks

ESSAY

Introduction

Stephen P. H. Butler Leacock was a Canadian teacher, writer and humorist born in 1869 in England. He is known for his light humour along with criticisms of people's follies. My Financial Career is a humorous story by Stephen Leacock with a humorous content.

The story My Financial Career is an interesting story catching the humour. It accounts Leacock's painfully embarrassing experience of the bank.

Theme of the Story

My Financial Career humorously presents a person's first experience in the bank. The main theme of the story focuses on the tension and stupid actions happened in the bank. There is a much fun and laughter when the narrator makes a clown of himself through his words and behavior.

Visit to Bank

Once the narrator of the story visited the bank. When he goes to the bank, he feels nervous. The bank, the clerks, the wickets, and the sight of the money everything creates horror in the mind of the narrator. As soon as he enters the bank, he becomes an irresponsible idiot. The narrator wanted to open a bank account because his salary had been raised fifty dollars a month. So he thought that the bank was the right place for it

Leacock's Meeting with The Manager

The narrator met the accountant and asked him if he could see the manager alone. He did not know why he said alone. The accountant led him to the manager. The narrator asked him whether he was the manager and if he could see him alone.

The manager looked at him in some alarm. He felt that the narrator had an awful secret to reveal. So, he took him in a private room. They were safe there from interruptions.

Manager's Tension

The manager, from narrator's mysterious manner, thought that he might be a detective. So, he asked the narrator whether he was one of Pinkerton's men. The narrator replied that he was not from Pinkerton's; he came from a rival agency. He said that he was not a detective at all. He had come to open an account. He intended to keep all his money in that bank.

The manager looked relieved but still serious. He concluded that he must be a very rich man, a son of Baron Rothschild or a young Gould. The manager asked the narrator if he wanted to deposit a large amount. But when he learnt that the narrator wanted to deposit only fifty six dollars, his behavior has changed. He instructed the accountant to open the account.

Leacock's Withdrawal of Money

Now, Leacock wanted to withdraw six dollars for the present use. Instead of writing six, he wrote fifty six and gave the cheque to the clerk. The clerk asked him if he was withdrawing the entire amount and not going to deposit any more. The narrator agreed with him and said never. The clerk prepares to pay him. He asked him how he would have it. The narrator replied that he wanted in fifties. He took the money and rushed out. Thereafter, he kept his cash in trouser pockets and silver dollars in a sock. Since then, the narrator never visited the bank. Thus, the financial career of the writer came to a premature end.

Conclusion

In conclusion the man failed because the lack of care from the people in the bank and his shyness, pride. He would not have failed if he was more insistent on getting his job done ignoring his pride or if the people in the bank helped him warmly. The writer thinks both rich and poor people should be treated equally by banks and other companies.

SHORT ANSWERS

1. **What light do the following expressions throw on Leacock's state of mind when he entered the bank? Looked timidly round' Shambled in?**

These expressions reflect the confused state of writer's mind. He was fully confused and could not express his matter properly.

2. **Why did the manager come to think that Leacock had an awful secret to reveal?**

The manager came to think that Leacock had an awful secret to reveal because he insisted to meet manager alone.

3. **What was the attitude of the manager towards Leacock on learning that he only wished to deposit 56 dollars in the bank?**

When the manager learnt the actual amount of the money, he became angry. His attitude was rude and unkind. He asked him to go to the accountant.

4. **What other blunders did Leacock commit after leaving the manager's office?**

After leaving the manager's office, Leacock made a number of blunders. First, he stepped into an iron safe. Then he wrote fifty six instead of six on the cheque. Then instead of admitting his mistake, he pretended to be angry on being insulted by someone.

5. **After this misadventure in the bank where did Leacock keep his money?**

After this misadventure, kept cash money in his trousers pocket and savings in silver dollars in socks.

6. **Give as many examples as you can to show that Leacock was feeling completely lost in the bank all the time he was there?**

Leacock was completely lost in the bank. He made many mistakes there. First, he stepped into an iron safe. Then he wrote fifty six instead of six on the cheque. Then instead of admitting his mistake, he pretended to be angry on being insulted by someone.

7. **How much was the writer's salary raised?**

Writer's salary was raised to 50 dollars per month. He wanted to save it for his future use. Therefore, he decided to keep it in the bank.

8. Who was Mr. Montgomery?

Mr. Montgomery was the accountant in the bank. He was a tall, cool devil. The very sight of him rattled the writer.

9. What was the reaction of the bank staff when he author rushed out of the bank?

When the author rushed out of the bank, the bank staff made a roar of laughter at his blunders.

10. Why did people think he was some invalid millionaire?

They thought him some invalid millionaire because anybody gave him a Cheque book, and someone told him how to write it.

The Secret of Work

– *Swami Vivekananda*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A versatile genius of India, Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) was born in Calcutta on 12 January 1863. His original name was Narendranath Datta. His father Vishwanath Datta was an Attorney of Calcutta High Court. His talent and personality were influenced by his parents. He studied his school education in Metropolitan institution at Calcutta and obtained B.A degree from the Presidency College, Calcutta. He was very eager to see God face to face.

In 1881, he became a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and received enlightenment. He was named as “Swami Vivekananda” when he became a monk. He was India’s representative at the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1893. His call to the nation was “Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached”. His works were compiled to form a nine volume set The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda.

TEXT

Helping others physically, by removing their physical needs, is indeed great, but the help is great according as the need is greater and according as the help is far reaching. If a man’s wants can be removed for an hour, it is helping him indeed; if his wants can be removed for a year, it will be more help to him; but if his wants can be removed for ever, it is surely the greatest help that can be given him.

Spiritual knowledge is the only thing that can destroy our miseries for ever; any other knowledge satisfies wants only for a time. It is only with the knowledge of the spirit that the faculty of want is annihilated for ever; so helping man spiritually is the highest help that can be given to him. He who gives man spiritual knowledge is the greatest benefactor of mankind and as such we always find that those were the most powerful of men who helped man in his spiritual needs, because spirituality is the true basis of all our activities in life. A spiritually strong and sound man will be strong in every other respect, if he so wishes. Until there is spiritual strength in man even physical needs cannot be well satisfied. Next to spiritual comes intellectual help. The gift of knowledge is a far higher gift than that of food and clothes; it is even higher than giving life to a man, because the real life of man consists of knowledge. Ignorance is death, knowledge is life. Life is of very little value, if it is a life in the dark, groping through ignorance and misery. Next in order comes, of course, helping a man physically. Therefore, in considering the question of helping others, we must always strive not to commit the mistake of thinking that physical help is the only help that can be given. It is not only the last but the least, because it cannot bring about permanent satisfaction. The misery that I feel when I am hungry is satisfied by eating, but hunger returns; my misery can cease only when I am satisfied beyond all want. Then hunger will not make me miserable; no distress, no sorrow will be able to move me. So, that help which tends to make us strong spiritually is the highest, next to it comes intellectual help, and after that physical help.

The miseries of the world cannot be cured by physical help only. Until man's nature changes, these physical needs will always arise, and miseries will always be felt, and no amount of physical help will cure them completely. The only solution of this problem is to make mankind pure. Ignorance is the mother of all the evil and all the misery we see. Let men have light, let them be pure and spiritually strong and educated, then alone will misery cease in the world, not before. We may convert every house in the country into a charity asylum, we may fill the land with hospitals, but the misery of man will still continue to exist until man's character changes.

We read in the Bhagavad-Gita again and again that we must all work incessantly. All work is by nature composed of good and evil. We cannot do any work which will not do some good somewhere; there cannot be any work which will not cause some harm somewhere. Every work must necessarily be a mixture of good and evil; yet we are commanded to work incessantly. Good and evil will both have their results, will produce their Karma. Good action will entail upon us good effect; bad action, bad. But good and bad are both bondages of the soul. The solution reached in the Gita in regard to this bondage-producing nature of work is that, if we do not attach ourselves to the work we do, it will not have any binding effect on our soul. We shall try to understand what is meant by this "non-attachment to" to work.

This is the on central idea in tile Gita: work incessantly, but be not attached to it. Samskâra can be translated very nearly by “inherent tendency”. Using the simile of a lake for the mind, every ripple, every wave that rises in the mind, when it subsides, does not die out entirely, but leaves a mark and a future possibility of that wave coming out again. This mark, with the possibility of the wave reappearing, is what is called Samskâra. Every work that we do, every movement of the body, every thought that we think, leaves such an impression on the mind-stuff, and even when such impressions are not obvious on the surface, they are sufficiently strong to work beneath the surface, subconsciously. What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. What I am just at this moment is the effect of the sum total of all the impressions of my past life. This is really what is meant by character; each man’s character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good; if bad, it becomes bad. If a man continuously hears bad words, thinks bad thoughts, does bad actions, his mind will be full of bad impressions; and they will influence his thought and work without his being conscious of the fact. In fact, these bad impressions are always working, and their resultant must be evil, and that man will be a bad man; he cannot help it. The sum total of these impressions in him will create the strong motive power for doing bad actions. He will be like a machine in the hands of his impressions, and they will force him to do evil. Similarly, if a man thinks good thoughts and does good works, the sum total of these impressions will be good; and they, in a similar manner, will force him to do good even in spite of himself. When a man has done so much good work and thought so many good thoughts that there is an irresistible tendency in him to do good in spite of himself and even if he wishes to do evil, his mind, as the sum total of his tendencies, will not allow him to do so; the tendencies will turn him back; he is completely under the influence of the good tendencies. When such is the case, a man’s good character is said to be established.

As the tortoise tucks its feet and head inside the shell, and you may kill it and break it in pieces, and yet it will not come out, even so the character of that man who has control over his motives and organs is unchangeably established. He controls his own inner forces, and nothing can draw them out against his will. By this continuous reflex of good thoughts, good impressions moving over the surface of the mind, the tendency for doing good becomes strong, and as the result we feel able to control the Indriyas (the sense-organs, the nerve-centers). Thus alone will character be established, then alone a man gets to truth. Such a man is safe for ever; he cannot do any evil. You may place him in any company, there will be no danger for him. There is a still higher state than having this good tendency, and that is the desire for liberation. You must remember that freedom of the soul is the goal of all Yogas, and each one equally leads to the same result. By work alone men may get to where Buddha got largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Buddha was a working Jnâni, Christ was a Bhakta, but the same goal was reached by both of them. The difficulty is here. Liberation means entire freedom

— freedom from the bondage of good, as well as from the bondage of evil. A golden chain is as much a chain as an iron one. There is a thorn in my finger, and I use another to take the first one out; and when I have taken it out, I throw both of them aside; I have no necessity for keeping the second thorn, because both are thorns after all. So the bad tendencies are to be counteracted by the good ones, and the bad impressions on the mind should be removed by the fresh waves of good ones, until all that is evil almost disappears, or is subdued and held in control in a corner of the mind; but after that, the good tendencies have also to be conquered. Thus the “attached” becomes the “unattached”. Work, but let not the action or the thought produce a deep impression on the mind. Let the ripples come and go, let huge actions proceed from the muscles and the brain, but let them not make any deep impression on the soul.

How can this be done? We see that the impression of any action, to which we attach ourselves, remains. I may meet hundreds of persons during the day, and among them meet also one whom I love; and when I retire at night, I may try to think of all the faces I saw, but only that face comes before the mind — the face which I met perhaps only for one minute, and which I loved; all the others have vanished. My attachment to this particular person caused a deeper impression on my mind than all the other faces. Physiologically the impressions have all been the same; every one of the faces that I saw pictured itself on the retina, and the brain took the pictures in, and yet there was no similarity of effect upon the mind. Most of the faces, perhaps, were entirely new faces, about which I had never thought before, but that one face of which I got only a glimpse found associations inside. Perhaps I had pictured him in my mind for years, knew hundreds of things about him, and this one new vision of him awakened hundreds of sleeping memories in my mind; and this one impression having been repeated perhaps a hundred times more than those of the different faces together, will produce a great effect on the mind.

Therefore, be “unattached”; let things work; let brain centers work; work incessantly, but let not a ripple conquer the mind. Work as if you were a stranger in this land, a sojourner; work incessantly, but do not bind yourselves; bondage is terrible. This world is not our habitation, it is only one of the many stages through which we are passing. Remember that great saying of the Sāṅkhya, “The whole of nature is for the soul, not the soul for nature.” The very reason of nature’s existence is for the education of the soul; it has no other meaning; it is there because the soul must have knowledge, and through knowledge free itself. If we remember this always, we shall never be attached to nature; we shall know that nature is a book in which we are to read, and that when we have gained the required knowledge, the book is of no more value to us. Instead of that, however, we are identifying ourselves with nature; we are thinking that the soul is for nature, that the spirit is for the flesh, and, as the common saying has it, we think that man “lives to eat” and not “eats to live”. We are continually making this mistake; we are regarding

nature as ourselves and are becoming attached to it; and as soon as this attachment comes, there is the deep impression on the soul, which binds us down and makes us work not from freedom but like slaves.

The whole gist of this teaching is that you should work like a master and not as a slave; work incessantly, but do not do slave's work. Do you not see how everybody works? Nobody can be altogether at rest; ninety-nine per cent of mankind work like slaves, and the result is misery; it is all selfish work. Work through freedom! Work through love! The word "love" is very difficult to understand; love never comes until there is freedom. There is no true love possible in the slave. If you buy a slave and tie him down in chains and make him work for you, he will work like a drudge, but there will be no love in him. So when we ourselves work for the things of the world as slaves, there can be no love in us, and our work is not true work. This is true of work done for relatives and friends, and is true of work done for our own selves. Selfish work is slave's work; and here is a test. Every act of love brings happiness; there is no act of love which does not bring peace and blessedness as its reaction. Real existence, real knowledge, and real love are eternally connected with one another, the three in one: where one of them is, the others also must be; they are the three aspects of the One without a second — the Existence - Knowledge - Bliss. When that existence becomes relative, we see it as the world; that knowledge becomes in its turn modified into the knowledge of the things of the world; and that bliss forms the foundation of all true love known to the heart of man. Therefore true love can never react so as to cause pain either to the lover or to the beloved. Suppose a man loves a woman; he wishes to have her all to himself and feels extremely jealous about her every movement; he wants her to sit near him, to stand near him, and to eat and move at his bidding. He is a slave to her and wishes to have her as his slave. That is not love; it is a kind of morbid affection of the slave, insinuating itself as love. It cannot be love, because it is painful; if she does not do what he wants, it brings him pain. With love there is no painful reaction; love only brings a reaction of bliss; if it does not, it is not love; it is mistaking something else for love. When you have succeeded in loving your husband, your wife, your children, the whole world, the universe, in such a manner that there is no reaction of pain or jealousy, no selfish feeling, then you are in a fit state to be unattached.

Krishna says, "Look at Me, Arjuna! If I stop from work for one moment, the whole universe will die. I have nothing to gain from work; I am the one Lord, but why do I work? Because I love the world." God is unattached because He loves; that real love makes us unattached. Wherever there is attachment, the clinging to the things of the world, you must know that it is all physical attraction between sets of particles of matter — something that attracts two bodies nearer and nearer all the time and, if they cannot get near enough, produces pain; but where there is real love, it does not rest on physical attachment at all. Such lovers may be a thousand miles away from one another, but their love will be all the same; it does not die, and will never produce any painful reaction.

To attain this un-attachment is almost a life-work, but as soon as we have reached this point, we have attained the goal of love and become free; the bondage of nature falls from us, and we see nature as she is; she forges no more chains for us; we stand entirely free and take not the results of work into consideration; who then cares for what the results may be?

Do you ask anything from your children in return for what you have given them? It is your duty to work for them, and there the matter ends. In whatever you do for a particular person, a city, or a state, assume the same attitude towards it as you have towards your children — expect nothing in return. If you can invariably take the position of a giver, in which everything given by you is a free offering to the world, without any thought of return, then will your work bring you no attachment. Attachment comes only where we expect a return.

If working like slaves results in selfishness and attachment, working as master of our own mind gives rise to the bliss of non-attachment. We often talk of right and justice, but we find that in the world right and justice are mere baby's talk. There are two things which guide the conduct of men: might and mercy. The exercise of might is invariably the exercise of selfishness. All men and women try to make the most of whatever power or advantage they have. Mercy is heaven itself; to be good, we have all to be merciful. Even justice and right should stand on mercy. All thought of obtaining return for the work we do hinders our spiritual progress; nay, in the end it brings misery. There is another way in which this idea of mercy and selfless charity can be put into practice; that is, by looking upon work as "worship" in case we believe in a Personal God. Here we give up all the fruits our work unto the Lord, and worshipping Him thus, we have no right to expect anything from mankind for the work we do. The Lord Himself works incessantly and is ever without attachment. Just as water cannot wet the lotus leaf, so work cannot bind the unselfish man by giving rise to attachment to results. The selfless and unattached man may live in the very heart of a crowded and sinful city; he will not be touched by sin.

This idea of complete self-sacrifice is illustrated in the following story: After the battle of Kurukshetra the five Pândava brothers performed a great sacrifice and made very large gifts to the poor. All people expressed amazement at the greatness and richness of the sacrifice, and said that such a sacrifice the world had never seen before. But, after the ceremony, there came a little mongoose, half of whose body was golden, and the other half brown; and he began to roll on the floor of the sacrificial hall. He said to those around, "You are all liars; this is no sacrifice." "What!" they exclaimed, "you say this is no sacrifice; do you not know how money and jewels were poured out to the poor and every one became rich and happy? This was the most wonderful sacrifice any man ever performed." But the mongoose said, "There was once a little village, and in it there dwelt a poor Brahmin with his wife, his son, and his son's wife. They were very poor and lived

on small gifts made to them for preaching and teaching. There came in that land a three years' famine, and the poor Brahmin suffered more than ever. At last when the family had starved for days, the father brought home one morning a little barley flour, which he had been fortunate enough to obtain, and he divided it into four parts, one for each member of the family. They prepared it for their meal, and just as they were about to eat, there was a knock at the door. The father opened it, and there stood a guest. Now in India a guest is a sacred person; he is as a god for the time being, and must be treated as such. So the poor Brahmin said, 'Come in, sir; you are welcome.' He set before the guest his own portion of the food, which the guest quickly ate and said, 'Oh, sir, you have killed me; I have been starving for ten days, and this little bit has but increased my hunger.' Then the wife said to her husband, 'Give him my share,' but the husband said, 'Not so.' The wife however insisted, saying, 'Here is a poor man, and it is our duty as householders to see that he is fed, and it is my duty as a wife to give him my portion, seeing that you have no more to offer him.' Then she gave her share to the guest, which he ate, and said he was still burning with hunger. So the son said, 'Take my portion also; it is the duty of a son to help his father to fulfill his obligations.' The guest ate that, but remained still unsatisfied; so the son's wife gave him her portion also. That was sufficient, and the guest departed, blessing them. That night those four people died of starvation. A few granules of that flour had fallen on the floor; and when I rolled my body on them, half of it became golden, as you see. Since then I have been travelling all over the world, hoping to find another sacrifice like that, but nowhere have I found one; nowhere else has the other half of my body been turned into gold. That is why I say this is no sacrifice."

This idea of charity is going out of India; great men are becoming fewer and fewer. When I was first learning English, I read an English story book in which there was a story about a dutiful boy who had gone out to work and had given some of his money to his old mother, and this was praised in three or four pages. What was that? No Hindu boy can ever understand the moral of that story. Now I understand it when I hear the Western idea — every man for himself. And some men take everything for themselves, and fathers and mothers and wives and children go to the wall. That should never and nowhere be the ideal of the householder.

Now you see what Karma-Yoga means; even at the point of death to help anyone, without asking questions. Be cheated millions of times and never ask a question, and never think of what you are doing. Never vaunt of your gifts to the poor or expect their gratitude, but rather be grateful to them for giving you the occasion of practicing charity to them. Thus it is pain that to be an ideal householder is a much more difficult task than to be an ideal Sannyasin; the true life of work is indeed as hard as, if not harder than, the equally true life of renunciation.

ABOUT THE LESSON

In the lesson ‘The secret of work’, Vivekananda says that the miseries of the world cannot be cured by physical help. Unless man’s character is changed, his miseries will not be solved. The only solution to the problem is to make mankind pure. He feels that ignorance is the major cause of human misery. Everyone should be educated and spiritually enlightened. He uses the words of the Bhagavad Gita which suggests to work continuously.

Vivekananda explains that every work must necessarily be a mixture of good and evil but we are ordered to work without interruption. The word Samskara means inherent tendency. Whatever the action we do, which is either good or bad, leaves continuous impressions in our mind and they don’t die out entirely. The character of a person is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail the character becomes good if bad, becomes bad. A man of character can be compared to a tortoise. As the tortoise tucks its feet and head inside the shell, and even if you kill it and break it in pieces, it will still not come out in the same way, if a man controls his own inner forces, nothing can draw them against his will. Liberation means full freedom from the bondage of good, as well as from evil.

Vivekananda asserts that we should work like a master and not like a slave. He feels that ninety nine percent of men work like slaves and the result is misery, it is selfish work. Always work with freedom, inspired by love. There is no true love possible in the slave. Every act of love brings happiness. Real existence, real knowledge and real love are permanently connected with one another. Attachment comes only when we expect a return. If working like slaves results in selfish attachment, working as masters of our own mind gives rise to the bliss of non-attachment. We can work continuously without expecting anything in return with love and liberation.

Vivekananda believes that might and mercy are the two things that guide the conduct of men. The exercise of might is invariably an act of selfishness. Mercy is heavenly, to be good we all have to be merciful. There is another way in which this idea of mercy and selfless charity can be put into practice, that is, by treating work as worship.

ESSAY

Introduction

The secret of work is written by Swami Vivekananda. It is taken from “The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda Vol. II” Swami Vivekananda was one of the greatest Indian philosophers. He was also a preacher and a writer. This essay

is about the importance of spiritual help. According to Vivekananda a person can help others by different ways. According to that there are mainly three types of help. They are as follows:

- 1) Physical help
- 2) Intellectual help
- 3) Spiritual help

Types of Helps

Vivekananda speaks about three kinds of help, Physical help, intellectual help, and Spiritual help. The miseries of the world cannot be cured by physical help only until man's nature changes, because the physical needs are endless. So as long as these physical needs arise so long as the miseries are felt and no amount of physical help cure them completely.

Good Work and Bad Work

Swami Vivekananda reminds us of the sayings from Bhagavad Gita. In Bhagavad Gita again and again we read that we must all work incessantly, which means continuously. We cannot separate the works good and bad because every work must necessarily be a mixture of good and evil. Yet we are commanded to work continuously.

Good and evil will both have their results on us. Good actions will show good effects and the same way bad action bad effects. But anyway good and bad both are bondage of the soul. This means they show the effects on our mind either positively or negatively.

Remove Attachment to the Work

We should not attach ourselves to work, and then only we can keep away our soul from the bondage. The central idea in the Gita is to work incessantly but without any attachment to the work. Swami Vivekananda compares our mind with a lake.

So like a ripple in a lake, every wave that rises in the mind does not die out entirely but leaves a mark and there is a possibility of that wave coming out again. So, this possibility of the wave reappearing is called Sanskar.

Good and Bad Impressions

Our actions either good or bad leave continuous impressions in our mind. The character of a person is determined by the total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good, and if bad then it becomes bad.

If a man continuously hears bad words, thinks bad thoughts, does bad actions his mind will be full of bad impressions and the resultant must be evil and that man will be bad. Similarly, if a man thinks good thoughts and does good works, the total of these impressions will be good.

A man of character can be compared to a tortoise. As the tortoise tucks its feet and head inside the shell, and even if you kill it and break it in pieces it will still not come out. In the same way, if a man controls his inner forces nothing can draw them against his will.

Liberation or Full Freedom

Freedom from the bondage of good as well as from evil. So when we have this liberation, a golden chain is as much a chain as an iron one. For example, if we have a thorn in our finger, we use another thorn to take it out.

After taking the thorn we throw both of them aside because there is no need of keeping the second thorn, both are thorns after all. So the bad tendencies are to be counteracted by the good ones and the bad impressions on the mind should be removed by the fresh waves of good ones. But after that, the good tendencies have also to be conquered.

Thus the attached becomes unattached. We should have to work but we should not allow the action to produce a deep impression on our mind. Let the ripples come and go, let huge actions proceed from the muscles and the brain, but let them not make any deep impression on the soul. We should have to remember only one thing that this world is not our habitation. It's only one of the many stages through which we are passing.

Work like a Master

Swami Vivekananda speaks about how we should work. He says that we should have to work like a master and not as a slave. We should have to work incessantly. It doesn't mean to work like a slave. He says that 99% of the people in the present-day world are working like slaves and the result is misery.

So whenever we feel misery, it's all selfish work. Work through freedom, work through love, means it's a very difficult word to understand. Without freedom we won't get love, we never feel love. There is no true love possible in slavery. So whenever we feel freedom then definitely we work with love.

If you buy a slave, and tie him down in chains and make him work for you, how does he work? He will work like a dredge but there will be no love in him. Every act of love brings happiness. There is no act of love that doesn't bring peace and blessedness as its reaction. Real existence, real knowledge, and real love are permanently connected with one another.

Vivekananda gives one example of unattached work. Once Krishna says to Arjuna, "Look at me arjuna if I stop from work for one moment the old universe will die. I have nothing to gain from work. I am the one lord but why do I work? Because I love the world. So God is unattached because he loves, that real love makes us unattached. Attachment comes only when we expect a return.

Working like slave results in selfish attachment, but working as masters of own mind gives rise to the bliss of non-attachment. So, work continuously without expecting anything in return with love and liberation.

Strength and Being Kindness

Most people talk about right and justice but in the present-day world, we find these two words right and justice are mere babies talk. Vivekananda believes that might and mercy are the two things that guide the conduct of men. So might means having the strength and in the same way, mercy means being kind.

The exercise of might is invariably an act of selfishness. Mercy is heavenly. To be good, we all have to be merciful. Even justice and right should stand on mercy. The only way that might and mercy can be put into practice is by treating our work as worship.

Here we give up all the fruits of our work unto the Lord and worship him. Thus we have no right to expect anything from mankind for the work we do. The lord himself works incessantly and is ever without attachment. So finally swami Vivekananda saying that we should have to work incessantly but without any attachment to the work and treating our work as worship.

Conclusion

In this way "The Secret of Work" explain the importance of Physical, Intellectual and Spiritual help. So it is known as one of the best work of Swami Vivekananda in English literature.

PARAGRAPH ANSWERS

1. Explain the idea of work as worship, according to Swami Vivekananda.

Man has to change his character and become pure. He has to be educated and become spiritually strong to get relief from the miseries of the world. The Bhagavad-Gita says that we must all work incessantly. The nature of work is such that every work must necessarily be a combination of good and evil. Good and evil actions will have their consequences. Good actions bring good and bad actions lead to bad. We have to work continuously without any attachments. By continuous good thought and good deeds, good impressions will be made on subconscious mind. Then we are inclined to do good deeds only. Thus, we will be able to control our sense-organs and build character.

Our work should not affect our mind. When we work like stranger to the land without bonding ourselves to it. If we are able to work like that, we are working like masters. If we are bound by our work, we are doing our work as slaves. We have to work with love and without attachment. We must not be selfish while working. Selfish work is slave's work. Every act of love brings happiness, peace and blessedness. Real love makes us 'unattached'. We have to look upon work as 'worship', dedicating the result of our work to God.

2. What is true liberation? How can this be achieved? Trace the course of Swami Vivekananda's argument to prove the truth of this statement.

By continuous good thought and good deeds, good impressions will be made on subconscious mind. Then we are inclined to do good deeds only. Thus, we will be able to control our sense-organs and build character. After attaining good character, we have to aim for liberation, full freedom. We must counter bad deeds with good deeds till no evil is left in us. We must be 'attached' to doing good in this phase. Just as we remove a thorn with another thorn, we have to nullify impressions of bad deeds with good deeds. Then we have to detach ourselves from good deeds also to achieve total liberation. This is the idea of true liberation.

Our work should not affect our mind. When we work like stranger to the land without bonding ourselves to it. If we are able to work like that, we are working like masters. If we are bound by our work, we are doing our work as slaves. We have to work with love and without attachment. We must not be selfish while working. Selfish work is slave's work. Every act of love brings happiness, peace and blessedness. Real love makes us 'unattached'. We have to look upon work as 'worship', dedicating the result of our work to God.

3. What are the two ways in which we can work without expecting anything in return?

There are two effective ways which we can work without expecting anything in return. The first one is 'love'. When we do some work having love in it, we will find happiness in it. Every act of love, as Vivekananda opines, brings happiness. There is no act of love which does not bring peace and blessedness in its result. We should love others like we love the members of our family, relatives and beloved ones.

The second way in which we can work without expecting anything in return is to become free. We should be free from the attachment with this world. We can attain it only when we do not expect anything in return of whatever we do for others. Vivekananda remarks that we do love our children do anything for them without expecting anything in return. Likewise, we should assume the same attitude towards anybody we come across in our life as we have towards our children- whatever we do for any person, a city or a state. Hence we should be free from attachment with the things of the world. We should work like masters of our mind to make ourselves free from the bondage of nature. Then we can see nature clearly as she is.

SHORT ANSWERS

1. What is the most direct method of curing the miseries of the world, according to Swami Vivekananda?

According to Swami Vivekananda, physical help alone cannot cure the miseries of the world. Even if we convert every house in the country into a charitable asylum and fill the land with hospitals, we cannot eradicate human misery. Ignorance is the cause of human misery and evil. Man has to change his character and become pure. He has to be enlightened, educated and become spiritually strong to get relief from the miseries of the world. Otherwise, his needs will go on increasing, which leads to more miseries. Man must work incessantly without attachment.

2. What is the nature of work? How should work be performed?

The Bhagavad-Gita says that we must all work incessantly. The nature of work is such that every work must necessarily be a combination of good and evil. Good and evil actions will have their consequences. Good actions bring good and bad actions lead to bad. We have to work continuously without any attachments. Then only, our soul can be free of bondage. Every work we do leaves an impression on the subconscious region of the mind. The sum total of such impressions makes our character. We have to do good work without expecting result to build a good character.

3. Explain 'Samskara'. How good and bad actions influence one's 'Samskara'?

The rippling effect of the work done by us is called 'Samskara'. Good and evil actions will have their consequences. Good actions bring good and bad actions lead to bad. We have to work continuously without any attachments. Then only, our soul can be free of bondage. Every work we do leaves an impression on the subconscious region of the mind. The sum total of such impressions makes our character. We have to do good work without expecting result to build a good character. If our 'Samskara' is good our character will be good.

4. How is good character said to be established?

The rippling effect of the work done by us is called 'Samskara'. Good and evil actions will have their consequences. Good actions bring good and bad actions lead to bad. We have to work continuously without any attachments. Then only, our soul can be free of bondage. Every work we do leaves an impression on the subconscious region of the mind. The sum total of such impressions makes our character. We have to do good work without expecting result to build a good character. Thus, according to Swami Vivekananda good character can be established.

5. What does Vivekananda want to convey by drawing a comparison between a human being and a tortoise?

Vivekananda opines that a man of character can be compared with a tortoise. As tortoise hides its feet and head inside the shell and will not come out unless it wishes, even though we may break the shell into pieces. Likewise, a man of character will never deviate from his ideal principles and norms. He will totally have control over his motives, his thought process and over his physical organs.

Vivekananda says that a man of character will not commit evils or sins even in the moments of extreme difficulties. Even when he is placed in any company, under any typical circumstance there is no danger for him and he will not commit evil actions. He controls his inner forces and nothing can deviate him from his right path and from his strong will. This is what Vivekananda wants to convey with this comparison.

6. What is meant by working 'like a master' and not as a slave?

We have to work continuously without being 'attached' to it. Our work should not affect our mind. When we work like stranger to the land without bonding ourselves to it. If we are able to work like that, we are working like masters. If we are bound by our work, we are doing our work as slaves. We have to work with love and without attachment. We must not be selfish while working. Selfish work is slave's work. Every act of love brings happiness, peace and blessedness. Real love makes us 'unattached'. We have to look upon work as 'worship', dedicating the result of our work to God.



UNIT II

POETRY

Where the Mind is without Fear

– *Rabindranath Tagore*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rabindranath Tagore (7 May 1861 – 7 August 1941) was a Bengali polymath—poet, writer, playwright, composer, philosopher, social reformer and painter. He reshaped Bengali literature and music as well as Indian art with Contextual Modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Author of the “profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful” poetry of *Gitanjali*, he became in 1913 the first non-European and the first lyricist to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. Tagore’s poetic songs were viewed as spiritual and mercurial; however, his “elegant prose and magical poetry” remain largely unknown outside Bengal. He was a fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society. Referred to as “the Bard of Bengal”, Tagore was known by sobriquets: *Gurudev*, *Kobiguru*, *Biswakobi*.

Tagore modernised Bengali art by spurning rigid classical forms and resisting linguistic strictures. His novels, stories, songs, dance-dramas, and essays spoke to topics political and personal. *Gitanjali* (*Song Offerings*), *Gora* (*Fair-Faced*) and *Ghare-Baire* (*The Home and the World*) are his best-known works, and his verse, short stories, and novels were acclaimed—or panned—for their lyricism, colloquialism, naturalism, and unnatural contemplation. His compositions were chosen by two nations as national anthems: India’s “Jana Gana Mana” and Bangladesh’s “Amar Shonar Bangla”. The Sri Lankan national anthem was inspired by his work.

TEXT

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
 Where knowledge is free
 Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
 By narrow domestic walls;
 Where words come out from the depth of truth;
 Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
 Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
 Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
 Where the mind is led forward by thee
 Into ever-widening thought and action
 Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,
 let my country awake.

ESSAY

1. What kind of country is the poet dreaming of in “Where the Mind is Without Fear”?

Introduction

Where the Mind is Without Fear” is a thought-provoking poem by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, an Indian writer. Tagore is a poet, dramatist and often refers to as ‘the Bard of Bengal’. It is one the best poems in the anthology called “Gitanjali” which was published in 1912 and won the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. In 1913 he became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

His goal was to blend the best of Indian and Western poetry, an element of his writing clearly present in his poem, *Where the Mind is without Fear*. During the time in which this poem was written India was still under the control of the British Empire. In 1915, only 5 years after this poem was written, Tagore was awarded a knighthood but gave it up in protest only four years later when British troops killed 400 Indian demonstrators. He died in 1941 in Calcutta.

The urge of awakening

When Tagore composed this poem, his mind was confined by the chains of slavery-like any other common citizens of India because India was under the clutch of the British Rule where freedom was like a day-dreaming. This poem is written in the form of prayer to God, the true bearer of freedom. He urges God throughout the poem with his mysterious concept of freedom from the struggle for awakening to his countrymen. “Where the Mind is Without Fear” is a pre-independent poem in which the poet sincerely urges to God to awake his fellow beings for the realization that the essential need to live in a free and united country. He wants his countrymen to awake and enjoy the life of full dignity and honor.

Aspiration on countrymen

His countrymen would not be superstitious or believers of blind faith rather than they would lead the life of enlightened and educated. He wishes to the people, to be honest, open-minded and industrious. Then only they would stretch their ‘arms towards perfection’ and the nation can actually achieve the apex of success. They need to use their reasons over their blind faiths and must be ready to accept new thoughts and ideas. He requests God to free his country from manipulation, corruption, and slavery. He yearns for an awakened country where there would be freedom of the mind and expression of ideas.

Patriotic and inspiring

The poem invokes the deep patriotic feelings. Our country is subjugated by castes, creed, superstitious beliefs and biased ideas. Tagore earnestly appeals to God that a country would be where people’s ‘head is high’ and ‘knowledge is free’. His country would not be divided and fragmented into pieces due to their narrow thoughts. They should express their words not from the mind but from ‘the depth of truth’ and heart.

He urges God to guide his countrymen for moral awakening to fight for their rights against British inhuman rules. Liberate them from the fear of oppression, repression, and subjugation. Unshackle the chains of fear and direct them to the paths of progress and prosperity.

Clear Stream of reasons

They should be confident not confined. There would not be injustice and inequality in the country on the basis of caste, creed, and gender. Countrymen should be unprejudiced and open-minded accepting the new challenges and changes. They should lead their lives of decency and dignity.

Conclusion

To conclude “Where the Mind is without Fear” is a poem in which Tagore reveals his personal quest for the Divine and characterized by a variety of original themes both in thought and expression. Therefore, this poem is remarkable to a great extent which expresses the intensity of the feeling of freedom. His poem is universal in its appeal and envisions the ‘heaven of freedom’ and wishes for the happier future for mankind.

PARAGRAPH ANSWERS

1. What is the universal message the conveyed in the poem Where the Mind is Without Fear?

In his poem Where the Mind is Without Fear the poet Rabindranath Tagore prays to the Almighty to lift his country to a state where freedom would be felt and enjoyed in the best way possible a heaven of freedom. This poem was written when India was under the British rule. So, he wanted his country to get freedom from the hands of the external rulers. But the poet felt that mere political freedom was not so important if his countrymen were not good and virtuous enough to enjoy that freedom fully. That is why he prayed to the God to make his country a place “where the mind is without fear and the head is held high”. Moreover, people should be knowledgeable, rational, truthful, hard-working and broad-minded to make his nation achieve true freedom a kind of spiritual freedom. He wants his countrymen to enjoy being citizens of a free nation, where they can lead their lives with honour. He dreams of a nation where people would be knowledgeable. His countrymen should be honest and hard-working only then, the nation can gain success. The reason has to overpower blind faith. People must accept new thoughts and ideas and work upon them. In short, the poet wishes that his countrymen should be united, truthful, hard-working, honest, and progressive. The world should not be divided into smaller parts by narrow thoughts. Thus, the country would be a heaven. The prayer has a universal message which makes it immortal.

2. What is a critical analysis of the poem “Where the Mind is Without Fear” by Rabindranath Tagore?

The poem is a lovely lyric, a patriotic song, and a dream of nobility. The theme is suggested by the opening line. It rouses the reader’s curiosity to learn about the place like heaven on earth where the mind is without fear. Is there any place on the earth where ideal civilization exists? That’s not the question, because the poet has his ideal dream for his nation. He prays for its fulfilment. He wants his countrymen to be free from outmoded customs and superstitious beliefs. According to the poet, true freedom lies in liberty from narrow considerations of caste, color, and creed like factors. cynics discover the poem unrealistic and unworkable. We cannot expect the world to be full of virtuous people who are

always telling the truth and leading an honest life. But an ideal must always be high enough to exceed the grip of its pursuer. Herein lies the poem's beauty that creates immediate appeal. Simile and metaphor poetic instruments have been used. Abstract thoughts have been clothed in pictorial imagery.

3. State the poet's wish that is expressed through the poem?

The poem 'Where the Mind is Without Fear...' has been taken from his Nobel-winning collection of poems 'Gitanjali', a profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse. It was originally written in Bengali and subsequently translated into English by Rabindranath Tagore himself. In this poem, the noble laureate beautifully pours out his overwhelmed heart in his much-praised literary work "Where the Mind is Without Fear" in which he exhibits his vision of a hassle-free nation by bestowing his heartfelt reliance on the master of the Universe. From a feminist point of view, this poem is appreciated as an inspiration for the woman race to improve their social status and economic status. Women of India need to come out of their narrow domestic walls by increased means of education and social justice. This thought-provoking poem also conveys the idea of eliminating the dreary desert sand of dead habits like Sati System, Dowry, and Child Marriage, from our Indian Culture to uplift our Indian Women. Our Women shall actively support and participate in the nationalist movement and secure eminent positions and offices in administration and public life in free India. This research article aims at stimulating the country to raise the voice for the freedom of women. It channelizes the empowerment of women by directing their efforts towards perfection.

SHORT ANSWERS

1. What is meant by 'mind is without fear'?

The expression 'Mind is without fear' suggests the fact that our minds should be courageous. We ought not to be overwhelmed by the shackles of tyranny and oppression. Dread should not be able to discourage us. Our heads should be held high, with no type of dread or confinement.

2. Explain: 'head held high'.

'Head held high' signifies to have confidence. The heads of the countrymen are held down as a result of the horrifying mistreatment suffered by them in the hands of the British. The poet wants their heads to be held high with most extreme pride and poise and not bowed down.

3. Whose mind is the poet talking about and why?

The poet is discussing the minds of the countrymen. He wants his comrades to be courageous and not remain grasped in dread. His comrades were under the grip of the British when he composed this poem. So, his vision is of a daring India.

4. What is the vision of the poet?

The poet envisions a 'World of Freedom' that can be acquired only if the people are fearless. Only a fearless mind can keep upright and straight his head. He wrote this poem when the British controlled the Indians. So, without any internal domination, he visualizes a mental image of free India without any external hegemony.

5. Why does the poet feel that his countrymen should not feel any kind of fear?

The poet knows how magnificent India used to be in the past, how India soared high before its views were chained. With the advent of the British, the people had lost their pride, confidence, and self-esteem. So, the poet dreams of a free nation where his countrymen would not feel any kind of fear or oppression. People would keep bravely their heads high and voice their opinions freely.

6. How would the countrymen be able to hold their heads high?

The countrymen would be able to keep their heads high if they were free from any kind of oppression. They would derive power from their access to knowledge that could assist them to become confident. Their knowledge would not be confined to small thoughts and ideas. Narrow walls would bind them into chains, all of which would assist them to keep their heads high.

7. Explain 'Where knowledge is free'.

The sentence 'Where knowledge is free' occurs in the poem 'Where the Mind is Without Fear' by Rabindranath Tagore. The poet wanted an atmosphere in which knowledge would be freely available to everyone and not limited to a specific segment of society. Not only the wealthy and wealthy parts should be provided with the chance to gain understanding. It should be accessible to everyone, whether the rich or the poor, without any social obstacles of any kind. It should not be limited by narrow ideas and social backwardness because it is only the light of knowledge that can obliterate the darkness of ignorance.

8. 'Our nation should awaken from the darkness of the night'. Explain.

'Our nation should awaken from the darkness of the night', means that the people of the nation should break free from the shackles of the oppressive colonial rule which was like a dark, long night and breathe in the fresh air of freedom.

9. The words we speak should reflect the truth. Justify.

The poet wants a world for his countrymen where they can speak the truth without any hesitation. He wants them to be free in every sense of the word so that their words reflect nothing but the truth.

10. Elaborate on the effect the word ‘where’ creates at the beginning of each line of this poem.

The use of the word ‘where’ at the beginning of each line creates emphasis on the fact that the poet is describing an ideal country. It creates a continuity of thought and links each of the factors that the poet describes into the whole idea of a heavenly country.

11. State the poet’s wish that is expressed through the poem.

In the poem, the poet wants God to guide his compatriots for freedom from the oppressive colonial rule and lead his nation to an intellectual and moral awakening where its people are broad-minded, rational and proactive.

12. Explain the lines, “Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action”.

The lines mean the following:

- i) The poet wishes that the minds of his countrymen are enlightened by the Almighty so that they see the power of reason and don’t give in to age-old superstitious beliefs.
- ii) He prays to God to help his countrymen progress so that they become individuals who think and act logically, are progressive and have a broad-minded outlook.

The World is Too Much with Us

– *William Wordsworth*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William Wordsworth was born on April 7, 1770 at Cockermouth, England. Wordsworth attended Hawkshead Grammar School, where his love for poetry was firmly established and he made his first attempt at verses. After Hawkshead, he studied at St. John's College, Cambridge. There he set out on walking tour of Europe, an experience that influence both his poetry and his political sensibilities, while tour in Europe, Wordsworth came in contact with French Revolution. Wordsworth met Samuel Taylor Coleridge and along with him he published the famous 'Lyrical Ballads' in 1798. The collection, which contained Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey', introduced Romanticism to England poetry. Wordsworth also showed his affinity for nature with the famous poem 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud'. He became England's poet laureate in 1843, a role he held until his death in 1850. He was the most fortunate of the great five romantic poets, who had a long poetic career lived a long span of life. He was a great worshipper of nature.

WORKS

- Lyrical Ballads
- The Solitary Reaper
- To the Cuckoo
- The Prelude
- Lucy Gray

TEXT

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
 Little we see in Nature that is ours;
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
 This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
 The winds that will be howling at all hours,
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
 It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
 So might I, standing on his pleasant lea,
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

“The World is too much with us” is a *Sonnet* by William Wordsworth, published in 1807, is one of the central figures of the English Romantic Movement. The poem laments the withering connection between humankind and nature, blaming industrial society for replacing that connection with material pursuits. Wordsworth wrote the poem during the First Industrial Revolution, a period of technological and mechanical innovation spanning the mid 18th to early 19th centuries that thoroughly transformed British life.

SUMMARY

The material world – that of the city, our jobs, our innumerable financial obligations controls our lives to an unhealthy degree. We are always rushing from one thing to the next, we earn money one day just to spend it the next. The result of this is that we have destroyed a vital part of our humanity. We have lost the ability to connect with and find tranquility in nature. In exchange for material gain, we have given away our emotions and liveliness. This ocean that reflects the moonlight on its surface, and the peaceful, momentarily windless night, which is like flowers whose petals are folded up in the cold, these natural features still exist, but we just can't appreciate them. Our lives have nothing to do with the rhythms of the natural world. As a result, those rhythms have no emotional impact on us.

My God, I wish that I were raised in a culture that worshipped many Gods. Though that religion is now outdated. That way, standing on his pleasant patch of grass, I might be calmed and heartened by the image of the ocean before me. I might see the Greek Proteus taking shape before my very eyes, or hear another Greek God, Triton, blow his legendary spiral-grooved conch shell.

ESSAY ANSWERS

1. Enumerate Wordsworth view on nature and materialistic world. (OR)

Briefly explain the summary of the poem “The world is too much with us”

THE DIVINITY OF NATURE

*The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;*

The speaker begins ‘The World is too much with us’ with the term “the world”. Here the speaker tells about worldly cares and concerns such as money, possessions and power. We care far too much about these worldly things. He gives more depth of thought to this idea when he suggests that by using our time, mind and energy in ‘getting and spending’ that we ‘lay waste our powers’. In other words, people have powers beyond that which they have tapped into because they are so busy in getting and spending. They are tied up in their greed for more money and their time is accounted for their actions of getting money, spending money and caring for their possessions. He believes that money and worldly possessions are far more important to people than they should be.

IMPORTANCE OF NATURE

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

The speaker contrasts Nature with the world. He reveals that while people spend their time in acquiring worldly possessions, the true beauty of the earth cannot be owned. He reveals very few things people see in nature actually belong to them. He then **laments**, we should enjoy nature, though it is not ours own, instead we are filled with greed and we acquire wealth and worldly possessions rather than enjoying nature.

BEAUTY OF NATURE

*This sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;*

The speaker describes the beauties of nature that most people are missing out on. He describes the sea, the wind and the flowers. His description of these parts of nature use **personification** to help the reader to connect with each description. The sea, 'bares her bosom to the moon' which suggests an intimacy between the moon and the sea. The winds 'howl', this gives the wind human emotion. The flowers 'sleep'. Giving these parts of nature human attributes helps the reader to feel this connection with nature. It paints a picture of nature and makes the reader understand what they are missing out on by being caught up in worldly possessions and greed.

PAGAN AND WORLDLY WEALTH

It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be

A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;

'We are out of tune' with nature because we are so caught up in worldly wealth. Here, the speaker swears an oath that he would rather be a poor pagan than be so distracted by worldly wealth so as to render himself unable to enjoy the true beauties of life. He appeals to God and even exclaims that he would rather be a pagan than to be out of touch with nature.

PROTEUS-TRITON

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;

Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

The speaker reveals that if he were a poor pagan, he would have 'glimpses' of nature that would give him joy and hope or at least make him feel 'less forlorn'. He would rather be poor and helpless and connected with nature than rich and powerful and alienated from it. In the final two lines, he refers to two pagan Gods. Proteus was thought to be able to tell the future, though he avoided doing so if he could. The speaker implies that he had been a pagan, perhaps he could imagine being in touch with Proteus or at least catching a glimpse of him as he stares out across the sea. Triton was the pagan God that was said to be able to calm the waves of the sea, enjoying nature, long enough to see Triton and Proteus. The speaker refers to these two pagan Gods after he first appeals to God and swears that he would rather be a pagan than be alienated from nature.

SHORT ANSWERS

1. Explain the figures of speech in the poem.

Enjambment: It is defined as a thought in a *verse* that does not come to an end at a *line break*, rather, it rolls over to the next line.

For example,

“Great God! I’d rather be

A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn.”

Personification: Personification is to attribute human characteristics to non-human or even inanimate objects. The poet has used *personification* at several places in this poem such as, “sea that bears her bosom to the moon”; “The winds that will be howling at all hours” and “sleeping flowers.” All these expressions make nature possess human-like qualities like yearning for love, sleeping and soothing.

Allusions: *Allusion* is an indirect or direct reference to a person, place, thing or idea of historical, cultural, political or literary significance. This poem contains allusions to Greek mythology,

“Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;

Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.”

Imagery: The use of *imagery* makes the readers visualize the writer’s feelings, emotions or ideas. Wordsworth has used images appealing to the sense of hearing such as, “winds that will be howling” to the sense of touch as “sleeping flowers;” and to the sense of sight as “Proteus rising from the sea.”

Consonance: Consonance is the *repetition* of consonant sounds in the same line such as the sound of /s/ in “Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea” and /f/ and /t/ sounds in “For this, for everything, we are out of tune.”

Simile: *Simile* a device used to compare something another thing to let the readers know what it is. There is only one simile used in line seven of the poem, “And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;” The poet has linked the howling of the winds with the sleeping flowers.

Metaphor: There are two *metaphors* used in this poem. One of the metaphors is in the tenth line, “Suckle in a creed outworn.” Here creed represents mother that nurses her child.

Assonance: *Assonance* is the repetition of vowel sounds in the same line such as /o/ sound in “Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn”.

2. Enumerate the themes of the poem.

Nature, Materialism, and Loss

In “The World is Too Much with Us,” the speaker describes humankind’s relationship with the natural world in terms of loss. That relationship once flourished, but now, due to the impacts of industrialization on everyday life, humankind has lost the ability to appreciate, celebrate, and be soothed by nature. To emphasize this central loss, the poem describes it from three angles:

economic, spiritual, and cultural. Notably, the poem does not suggest a way to **regain** what is lost. Rather, its tone is desperate, arguing that humankind's original relationship with nature can never be revived.

The Individual vs. Society

The poem explores how modernity has eroded not just people's connection to nature, but also people's sense of individual identity and agency. The poem subtly suggests that modern city life has led to a sort of uniformity of experience, and that individuals are powerless to resist society's homogenizing effects.

With the pronoun “we” in the poem's first half, the speaker thus describes how industrial life has isolated people in general from nature and partially erased their unique identities. With the switch to “I” in the second half, the speaker attempts to respond to those changes—and in doing so, provides an example of a person living within that industrialized society.

What Proteus and Triton **do** represent is the individualism inherent to a society that worshipped many gods, each with unique identities and means of worship. These ancient mythical figures contrast with the Christian God—a single entity, the worship of whom homogenizes religious activity in much the same way that industrialization and the thirst for material gain homogenize life within a big, industrialized city.

3. Define the sonnet form in the poem.

The world is too much with us” is an Italian **sonnet**, also known as a Petrarchan sonnet (named after *Francesco Petrarca*, the Italian Renaissance poet who popularized the form). These sonnets include an octave (two quatrains, or four-line stanzas) and a sestet (two tercets, or three-line stanzas). In this and all of Wordsworth's sonnets, each unit is mashed together into a single 14-line stanza.

In the traditional Italian sonnet, the octave presents a problem, and the sestet responds to that problem. The problem is known as the “proposition,” and the transition into the resolution is known as the “turn.” In this poem, the problem is expressed pretty clearly in the title: “The world is too much with us.” The octave explains the problem and its consequences, namely that industrial society has killed humankind's connection with nature. The sestet responds to the problem via the speaker's individual perspective.

In this poem, that transition to the sestet and this personal perspective is clearly marked. In the middle of the ninth line, the **apostrophe** “Great God!” breaks the somewhat meandering description of the moonlit ocean. The rest of the sestet is also clearly distinguished. Whereas the octave uses only first-person plural pronouns, the sestet uses only first-person singular pronouns.

4. Why does the poet prefer to be ancient pagan than a member of civilized society. Explain?

Wordsworth is deeply disturbed by the materialism and consumerism, brought to us by the industrialization. It has encompassed humanity, who is too busy 'getting and spending'. He mourns that humanity has such wonderful power that are being laid waste. The mankind has given her heart away to this destructive blessing, oxymoron. Thus, Wordsworth decides to become a pagan and prays to God. Pagan were the people of Southern Europe, they were not worshippers of monotheistic God. They were rustics or rural folk. Wordsworth admires their tradition and perceives that to be close to nature, he should be one of them. He wishes to feed and relish the mesmerizing beauty of the nature.

He wishes to enjoy the sea he stands on, so that he might feel a little less lonely. He wants to have the glimpses of the countryside and wants to taste the rural and rustic life that a pagan lives. He wishes to go back in time where he might get a chance to see 'The Old Man of the Sea', Proteus, rising from the sea. He wishes to see 'The Messenger of the Sea', Triton, the son of Poseidon. Wordsworth wishes to be in absolute harmony with the nature.

5. Critically appreciate the poem "The World is too much with us".

The material world of the city, our jobs, our innumerable financial obligations control our lives to an unhealthy degree. We are always rushing from one thing to next, we earn money one day just to spend it the next day. The result of this is what we have destroyed a vital part of our humanity; we have lost the ability to connect with and find tranquillity in nature. In exchange for material gain, we have given away our emotions and liveliness. This ocean that reflects the moonlight on its surface, and the peaceful, momentarily windless night, which is like flowers whose petals are folded up in the cold these natural features, still exists but we just can't appreciate them. Our lives have nothing to do with rhythms have no emotional impact on us. My God, I wish that I were raised in a culture that worshipped many Gods, though that religion is now outdated. That way, standing on this pleasant patch of grass, I might be calmed and heartened by the image of the ocean before me. I might see the Greek God Proteus taking shape before me very eyes, or hear another Greek God, Triton, blow his legendary, spiral-grooved conch shell.

SHORT ANSWERS

1. What is the meaning of the phrase 'The world is too much with us'?

The World is Too Much with Us can be interpreted as, people have become too concerned with worldly material things and have the least concern for nature. Wordsworth was a romantic poet who stressed on the importance of emotions and connection with nature. In fact, romanticism meant a

return to nature and escape from the contamination of modern civilization. Wordsworth was concerned that people were becoming materialistic during his time. Industrialization was happening, thus causing people to 'give their hearts away'.

2. How do we lay waste our powers?

We are always trying to get more and spend even more than that but all of this is a waste because we are losing harmony with nature.

3. Why does man see little in nature according to the poet?

According to the poet, man believes that there is little to gain from spending time amidst nature than spending money and time to fulfil our materialistic demands.

4. Why does the poet use pronouns 'we' and 'us' in the poem?

The poet uses pronouns 'we' and 'us' to suggest that it is not just him or somewhere person. Instead it is people all over the world and their materialistic demands which have thrown us out of harmony with nature.

5. Who is a pagan and why does Wordsworth mention him/her in the poem?

The poet chooses the pagan world because they were close to nature and knew how to respect and cherish nature. The poet would rather be a pagan who worships an outdated religion, so that when he gazes out on the ocean, he might feel less saddened. If he were a pagan, he would see wild mythological Gods like Proteus, who can take many shapes and Triton, who looks like a merman.

6. What is the meaning of 'sordid boon'?

The poet calls the harmony with nature with our increasing materialistic demands a 'sordid boon'. Sordid refers to something which is dirty, vile and selfish. Boon is something that is beneficial, helpful, considered a blessing.

7. According to Wordsworth what is 'out of tune' refers to.

The speaker here tells that everything in nature including the sea and the winds is gathered up in a powerful connection with which humanity is 'out of tune'. Humans are not experiencing nature as they should. The sea and the wind are two aspects of nature and stands as representatives for everything in the natural world. At present, winds are not blowing so they seem to him to be gathered in a bundle like sleeping flowers. He says that humanity is 'out of tune' which means it is detached from nature.

Stopping by Woods on A Snowy Evening

– *Robert Frost*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Lee Frost was born on March 26, 1874, San Francisco, California, U.S. He was an American poet who was much admired for his depictions of the rural life of New England, his command of American colloquial speech, and his realistic verse portraying ordinary people in everyday situations. Robert graduated from high school in 1892 and his graduation in Dartmouth College. Meanwhile, he continued to labour on the poetic career he had begun in a small way during high school; he first achieved professional publication in 1894 when *The Independent*, a weekly literary journal, printed his poem “My Butterfly: An Elegy”. Frost resumed his college education at Harvard University in 1897 but left after two years’ study there. Frost died on January 29, 1963, Boston, Massachusetts.

WORKS

- A Boy’s will
- After Apple- picking
- In the Clearing
- Mending Wall
- Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening
- The Road Not Taken

AWARDS

- Pulitzer Prize
- Bollingen Prize (1962)

TEXT

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village, though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near

Between the woods and frozen lake

The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sound's the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” was written by American poet Robert Frost in 1922 and published in 1923, as part of his collection *New Hampshire*. The poem is told from the perspective of a traveller who stops to watch the snow fall in the forest, and in doing so reflects on both nature and society. Frost claimed to have written the poem in one sitting. Though this is likely apocryphal, it would have been particularly impressive due to the poem’s formal skill: it is written in perfect iambic tetrameter and utilizes a tight-knit chain rhyme characteristic to a form called the Rubaiyat stanza.

ESSAY ANSWERS

“Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village,”

The narrator of the poem *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* stops by some woods on his way one evening. The narrator knows the owner of the woods and even where he lives. He is a bit relaxed thinking that the owner of the woods lives in the village and so he won't see the narrator stopping here. Therefore he can continue watching the natural beauty of his snow-covered woods.

“My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farm house near

The narrator of the poem says that his dear horse, whom he is using as his carriage, must think it strange to stop here between the woods and the frozen lake in a dark evening, as he normally stops near a farmhouse. The narrator calls his horse **“my little horse”**, as it is very dear to him or may be the horse is a little one in the literal sense, i.e., a pony. It may also suggest that the speaker is a humble and ordinary citizen and cannot afford to buy an expensive horse. He also personifies the horse by indicating that it has a thought process and also referring it as “he” in the next stanza.

“Between the woods and frozen lake

darkest evening of the year.”

In this stanza the narrator suggest that the weather is cold enough to freeze a lake. The expression **‘darkest evening’** could suggest several things. May be the narrator-traveller was very depressed due to his long journey or the cold weather. Otherwise it may also refer to the longest night of the year – the night with the most hours of darkness. In that case, it is 21st or 22nd December, when the winter solstice occurs in the northern hemisphere.

“The only other sounds the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.”

The horse is shaking its head ringing the bell attached to its harness, as if ‘he’ is asking his master whether there is any problem, as it is unusual for him to stop by the woods in the darkness. And the important thing in this stanza of the poem *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* is the sound imageries. There is only three sounds – the sounds of the harness bell, light wind and the snowflakes.

*“The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,”*

The narrator describes the woods using three adjectives – lovely, dark and deep. This indicates that he is enjoying the scene and wants to do so for long. But he has other responsibilities in life. He has to go a long way before he sleeps. So he cannot get the enjoyment for long. He has to move on. And the important thing here is that the poet repeats the last line to attract the attention of the readers. In this very last line lies the allegorical interpretation. Here “sleep” may refer to death. We, in our real life, have many things to look at with awe, many things to enjoy, but in most cases we cannot simply because we have other things to do in our short lifespan, so we have to move on.

PARAGRAPH ANSWERS

1. Explain the themes in the Stopping by woods in a snowy evening.

NATURE VS SOCIETY

In “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” the speaker describes stopping to watch the snow fall while riding a horse through the woods at night. While alone in the forest, the speaker reflects on the natural world and its implicit contrast with society. Though Frost’s poem resists a definitive interpretation, the natural world it depicts is at once “lovely” and overwhelming. The poem presents the natural world as distinctly separate from human society.

The complete lack of signs of civilization, meanwhile, further emphasizes the distance between society and nature. There are no farm houses nearby, and the only sound apart from the “harness bells” of the speaker’s horse is that of the wind.

The woods are “lovely” enough that they tempt the speaker to stay a while, complicating the idea of nature as an entirely unwelcoming place for human beings. Indeed, though the setting seems gloomy, the speaker also recounts the “sweep / of easy wind and downy flake.” However raw and cold, then, nature also allows for the kind of quiet reflection people may struggle to find amidst the stimulation of society.

SOCIAL OBLIGATION VS PERSONAL DESIRE

The speaker is torn between duty to others—those pesky “promises to keep”—and his or her wish to stay in the dark and lovely woods. The poem can thus be read as reflecting a broader conflict between social obligations and individualism.

This responsibility and desire is clearest in the final stanza. Although “the woods are lovely,” the speaker has other things to which he or she must attend. This suggests that the speaker is only passing through the woods on some sort of business—which, in turn, helps explain how unusual it is that the speaker has stopped to gaze at the forest filling with snow. Indeed, the fact that the speaker’s horse must “think it queer”—even a “mistake”—that they’re stopping implies that the speaker’s world is typically guided by social interaction and regulations, making solitary, seemingly purposeless deeds especially odd. The speaker doesn’t seem to be the kind of person who wastes time or reneges on his promises.

The speaker seems to show some ambivalence toward these social obligations. The speaker subtly juxtaposes his or her interest in the woods with regret about his or her duties to others: the woods are lovely, “but I have promises to keep.” The promises seem to be a troublesome reality that keeps the speaker from doing what he or she actually wants to do—that is, stay alone in the woods for a little while. “lovely, dark and deep,” implying the woods contain the possibility for respite from the comparatively bright and shallow world of human society. Social responsibilities thus inhibit the chance for meaningful reflection.

HESITATION AND CHOICE

The speaker starts and ends the poem in a state of hesitation. In the first line, the speaker says, “Whose woods these are I think I know,” a statement which wavers between a sure declaration (“I know”) and doubt (“I think”). This may suggest that the central conflict of the poem will be the speaker’s battle with uncertainty.

The speaker also notably pauses “between the woods and frozen lake”—literally between two landmarks. On top of that, the speaker has stopped on the “darkest evening of the year.” If we understand this to mean the Winter Solstice, then the poem also occurs directly between two seasons, autumn and winter. Thus, the speaker is physically poised on the brink between a number of options, suggesting the possibility of choice between physical worlds, and, later in the poem, between duty to others and a personal wish to rest in solitude.

2. Enumerate the symbol present in the poem, ‘Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening’.

The woods in “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” may represent not only the natural world that stands in opposition to the world of society and culture, but also the allure of individualism and, even further, the possible allure of death.

On the one hand, the woods seem to epitomize a certain freedom for the speaker. In the woods, as in lines 1 and 4, the speaker can move easily and freely, without the owner noticing. The woods offer the speaker a kind of radical freedom that is unencumbered by the normal rules or regulations of society (such as rules of ownership that would make the speaker's actions into trespassing). In so doing, the woods also symbolize that freedom from those rules of society, represented by the "village" in which the owner lives.

At the same time, that "freedom" offered by the woods can also be viewed in darker terms. In spite of the speaker's apparent reverence for the woods, the woods are also described in somewhat morbid terms. Lines 7 and 8 note the woods' frigidity and darkness, while line 13 calls them "dark and deep." All of these terms gesture toward desolation and nothingness, the opposite of life and vitality. And yet, the speaker still seems to be drawn toward the woods, calling the wind "easy" and likening the snow to the "downy" qualities of a bed in line 12. The wish to sleep in the "dark and deep" woods, of course, would eventually be fatal. Thus, the speaker's interest in the woods as a place to rest and "sleep" may be read as the woods' larger symbolism as a place of ultimate rest, or death, which offer the ultimate escape from the burdens of life and society (those wearily repeated "miles to go"). Ultimately, social bonds ("promises to keep") and sense of responsibility (the "miles to go") keep the speaker from succumbing to that fatal dream of rest, but nonetheless in the speaker's internal struggle against the attractions of the woods, the poem captures the way that all people sometimes long for an escape from the wearying responsibilities of life.

3. Explain the form and rhyming scheme of the poem.

FORM

The poem features four quatrains written in a Rubaiyat stanza form. A Rubaiyat features a chain rhyme scheme, in which one rhyme from a stanza carries over into the next, creating an interlocking structure. A Rubaiyat has no specified length, but in the case of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," the poem has four stanzas of four lines each, with each line made up of four iambic feet or beats.

This precise, interlocking structure contributes to a sense of carefully constructed unity in the poem. In conjunction with the perfect meter and rhyme, the form helps achieve a pristine tightness in the poem that allows it to be read easily, almost seamlessly, like a song or even lullaby. Such a feel is fitting: just as a lullaby often offers a gentle tune that hides something more complicated or darker beneath (think about the lyrics to Rock-a-bye Baby, for instance), "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" seems initially to be about the promise of freedom or rest offered by the woods, but on a closer read might also suggest the freedom or rest that can be found in death.

RHYMING SCHEME

The poem follows a chain rhyme, in which one rhyme from each stanza is carried into the next, creating an interlocking structure. In this case, the first, second, and fourth line of every stanza rhyme, while the third doesn't. This third line, however, rhymes with the first, second, and fourth lines of the following stanza, and so on. Then, in the final stanza, the lines resolve into one continuing rhyme. This results in the following scheme:

AABA BCBB CDCC DDDD

Frost exposed deep metaphysical ideas of nature, freedom, and responsibility within these clear, precise lines. The only deviation from this scheme, in the strictest sense, is the repetition of the final two lines, which causes the final two rhymes to be identical words: "sleep". This choice to use the same word twice for the final rhyme places a special significance on the idea of "sleep," suggesting its thematic centrality to the poem and the speaker. In other words, rhyming "sleep" with itself suggests just how deeply tired the speaker is.

SHORT ANSWERS

1. **What information does the poet highlight about the season and the time of the day in the poem?**

There is snow falling in its full swing. Snowflakes are downy. So, it is winter season. The time of the day is the darkest evening of the year. Thus, the poet highlights the season and the time of the day.

2. **In which way is the reaction of the speaker different from that of the horse? What does it convey?**

The poet is compelled to stop to stare at the beauty of the woods. The horse is thinking it queer to stop by the forest before reaching the farmhouse. It conveys the contradictory ideas over a certain action.

3. **What are the sounds heard by the poet?**

The poet heard the sound of the harness bells and the wind blowing through the trees besides the falling of the snowflakes.

4. **The poet is aware of two choices. What are they? What choice does he make ultimately?**

The poet can wait and watch the lovely woods or he can go home and attend to the important business. His ultimate choice was to go a long way and reach home.

5. **How is 'woods' different from 'forest'?**

The 'woods' refers to small jungles near which there can be locality. No wild beasts are there. Forest is a deep, dense, vast patch of land covering trees and trees. lions, tigers live there.

6. How do the speaker, the owner of the woods and the horse react to the beauties of nature?

The speaker fell in love with the beauty of nature. The horse and the owner were materialistic. They had no sense of beauty, no poetic feelings. They were detached towards the woods. The woods itself offers natural beauty through frozen lake, downy flake, sweep easy wind, deep, dense foliage.

7. What is the message of stopping by woods on a snowy Evening?

The main message given by the poem is that the conflict between one's desire to enjoy life and the need to work hard get somewhere in life. Our life is shaped by the calling that we give in to. In the fact that we shouldn't be tempted by our surrounding and all of us should fulfill our duties before our time ends or before our death.

8. Describe the setting of the poem?

The poem presents the natural world as distinctly separate from human society. More specifically, the speaker is "between the woods and frozen lake." The setting is also mostly silent, with the exception of the sound of wind and snowfall. Finally, the woods are expansive, as evidenced in the description "dark and deep."

9. What does 'And miles to go before I sleep' suggest?

The poet reminded himself that he had to travel long before he might take rest. So, he resumed his journey. He thought that he had to keep his promises. He had thus to go miles before he could take rest. He had to cover a long distance before he could enjoy sleep. In this connection the sense of duty became stronger. He altogether, rejected temptation of stopping there.

10. What does 'harnessbell' suggest here?

Here in this poem the 'harness bell' is very indicative and suggestive. These two words indicate the true motto of the poem. The poet is staying in the woods, the master of the woods is not present there. But the poet is so charmed with the beauty of the nature that he wants to stay there at night. But his horse was standing there. The horse was very much disturbed. Why his master was not marching ahead. The horse here stands for man who sees the realities. The harness bell of the horse gives the sound. It means the sound suggests that the poet is forgetting his duties to life. He has to do a lot of work. He should not stay there. He should remember his responsibilities. The poet becomes conscious as soon as he hears the harness bell. So, the harness bell is very suggestive and indicative. It suggests the duties and responsibilities of life.



UNIT III

SHORT STORY

6

The Gift of the Magi

– O Henry

TEXT

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing left to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the look-out for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey backyard. To-morrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling - something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honour of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an \$8 Bat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its colour within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Young's in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out of the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she cluttered out of the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: 'Mme Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds.' One Eight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the 'Sofronie.'

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take her hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quick" said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation - as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value - the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 78 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task dear friends - a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do - oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please, God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two - and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stepped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again - you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice-what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet, even after the hardest mental labour.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you - sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year - what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs - the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise-shell, with jewelled rims - just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men - wonderfully wise men - who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI – CHARACTERS

The main characters in "The Gift of the Magi" are Della and Jim Dillingham Young.

- Della Dillingham Young is a young housewife. Though Della and her husband, Jim, are poor, Della still wants to buy him a nice gift, so she sells her beautiful hair to earn money.
- Jim Dillingham Young is Della's husband, who bears the burden of supporting himself and his wife on a meager income. He sells his prized heirloom watch in order to afford a set of beautiful combs for Della.

SUMMARY

The Gift of the Magi is a well-known short story by American short story writer **O. Henry**, the pen name of **William Sydney Porter**. The story first appeared in The New York Sunday World on December 10, 1905 and was later published in O. Henry's collection *The Four Million* on April 10, 1906.

The story tells of a young married couple, **James**, known as Jim, and **Della Dillingham**. The couple has very little money and lives in a modest apartment. Between them, they have only two possessions that they consider their treasures: Jim's **gold pocket watch** that belonged to his father and his grandfather, and Della's lustrous, **long hair** that falls almost to her knees.

It's Christmas Eve, and Della finds herself running out of time to buy Jim a Christmas present. After paying all of the bills, all Della has left is \$1.87 to put toward Jim's Christmas present. Desperate to find him the perfect gift, out she goes into the cold December day, looking in shop windows for something she can afford.

She wants to buy Jim a chain for his pocket watch, but they're all out of her price range. Rushing home, Della pulls down her beautiful hair and stands in front of the mirror, admiring it and thinking. After a sudden inspiration, she rushes out again and has her hair cut to sell. Della receives \$20.00 for selling her hair, just enough to buy the platinum chain she saw in a shop window for \$21.00.

When Jim comes home from work, he stares at Della, trying to figure out what's different about her. She admits that she sold her hair to buy his present. Before she can give it to him, however, Jim casually pulls a package out of his overcoat pocket and hands it to her. Inside, Della finds a pair of costly decorative hair combs that she'd long admired, but are now completely useless since she's cut off her hair. Hiding her tears, she jumps up and holds out her gift for Jim: the watch chain. Jim shrugs, flops down onto the old sofa, puts his hands behind his head and tells Della flatly that he sold his watch to buy her combs.

The story ends with a comparison of Jim and Della's gifts to the gifts that the **Magi**, or three wise men, gave to **Baby Jesus** in the manger in the biblical story of Christmas. The narrator concludes that Jim and Della are far wiser than the Magi because their gifts are gifts of love, and those who give out of love and self-sacrifice are truly wise because they know the value of self-giving love.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. **Why does Della count her money again and again? What was her state of mind?**

Della counted her money again and again because she wanted to make it sure that the amount was large enough for the Christmas gift she wanted to give to Jim. It shows her anxiety and disappointment at not having been able to save enough money for the intended Christmas gift for her husband. She tried her best to save sufficient amount of money but could not do so.

2. **How had Della saved that amount?**

She had been saving every penny she could for months. She saved it by pressurizing the grocer, the vegetable man and the butcher into selling their things a little cheaper. She was excessively careful in using her money and completely avoided wastefulness. Notwithstanding her prudent way of spending money, she could not save enough money to buy a Christmas gift for her husband.

3. **What was wrong with the letterbox, the electric bell and Jim's nameplate?**

The letterbox, the electric bell and the nameplate were in poor condition so much so that their purpose for which they were meant was not solved. No letter would not go into the letterbox. The button of the electric bell was out of order. The letters on Jim's nameplate had faded and become dim and could not be read easily.

4. **What were the young couple's proud possessions and what was their significance?**

There were two precious possessions in which they both took a mighty pride. The first was Della's beautiful long hair that could devalue the Queen of Sheeba's jewels and gifts. The second was Jim's rare gold watch which could make King Solomon pluck his beard with envy. However, they parted with their precious possessions in order to please each other on Christmas by presenting gifts.

5. **Do you approve of Della's decision to sell her hair? Why?**

Yes, we approve of Della's decision to sell her beautiful long hair. She sold it to buy a chain for her husband's gold watch. Her sacrifice shows her deep love and care for her husband. Although the gift proved to be useless for Jim yet it was invaluable and full of warm affection.

6. **What criteria did Della apply to select a gift for Jim?**

She wanted to buy a suitable chain for Jim's gold watch. She wanted a simple but rare design which she found in a platinum fob chain. It suited the gold watch in value and not merely in its decorative character.

7. How did Della get ready to receive Jim?

She showed prudence and reason in welcoming Jim. She wanted to look as beautiful as she had been with her precious hair. She covered her head with small, close-lying curls that made her look beautiful. However, she was a little anxious about her looks and the response of her husband, Jim.

8. Why was Della afraid, as she waited for Jim?

Della was afraid on account of her uncertainty about how her husband would react when he sees her without her beautiful hair. She prayed to God to make her husband feel that she was still pretty without her treasured long hair. This uncertainty was the real reason of Della's anxiousness.

9. What type of person does Jim appear when we see him for the first time?

When we see Jim for the first time, he appears thin and very serious. He is only twenty and looks as if he is burdened with family cares. He has no gloves and needs a new overcoat. All this shows that he doesn't have sufficient income for proper upkeep of his family.

10. Why did Jim look about the room curiously?

Jim looked about the room curiously because he couldn't see the beautiful long hair of Della for which he had brought a jewelled comb set and which Della had sold for a proper gift for him. Obviously, he was uneasy and anxious about the beautiful possession of Della which both of them prized very highly.

11. What gift did Jim bring for Della?

Jim had as much love for his wife as she had for him. He had brought a set of combs for Della's beautiful hair. It was made of pure tortoise-shell with jewels on each comb. Jim sold his precious possession, the gold watch, so that he could present this comb-set to Della as a Christmas gift.

12. What was Della's reaction to Jim's gift for her?

As she opened the gift, she gave a scream of joy. She had wanted to buy that set for a long time and hence felt elated. After a while, when she realized that she had already sold her beautiful long hair, she started crying and wept for a long time out of joy as well as sorrow.

13. What did Della and Jim do when they discovered that they could not 'use' their gifts?

When Della and Jim discovered that they could not 'use' their gifts, they consoled themselves. Della wished to use the comb set when her hair grew again and Jim, with a smile, asked Della to keep the gifts away because they were too nice to be used.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. **“The Gift of the Magi” is a well-knit story with a twist at the end so as to mingle pathos and humour. Discuss.**

“The Gift of the Magi” is a well-knit story which produces an effect where pathos is mixed with humour. It is based on a special incident in the life of Jim and Della, a couple with deep love and care for each other. Della’s beautiful long hair is a precious possession for her. Jim, on the other hand, has a rare gold watch. Both of them sell their valuable treasures to present gifts to each other on Christmas. Della sells her hair to buy a chain for Jim’s watch and Jim sells his watch to gift Della a jewelled comb set. Their sacrifices became useless and futile yet, the writer says, they were the wisest gifts that could be given in their situation. The unexpected twist in the story is the situation their mutual love creates for them. They do this without either telling the other anything about the gifts each one intends to give on Christmas.

We feel pathos because both of them part with their precious possessions for gifts which turn out to be of no use. We sympathize with Jim and Della because their spirit of sacrifice, even if it produces a situation in which their gifts are of no use to them, reveals their deep love for each other. Both of them are troubled and feel pained not to be able to use their individual gifts. They are victims of adverse circumstances. In order to please each other, they sacrifice their treasures. Their gifts show their love and care for each other. At the same time, we find humour in the situation in which they put themselves. They create this humorous and awkward situation by not letting each other know what they are going to do. In an attempt to give a surprise to each other, both of them find themselves in a situation which they had not anticipated. It looks funny that they part with their precious possession only to find that the gifts they give to each other are no longer of any use to them. We can conclude that O. Henry provides us a mixed feeling of pathos and humour in the story by giving it an unexpected twist.

2. **Comment on the significance of the title of the story “The Gift of the Magi.”**

“The Gift of the Magi” is a well-knit beautiful story by O. Henry. It gives an account of the life of a happily living couple who sacrifice their precious possessions in order to please each other. Della takes pride in her long and beautiful hair while Jim loves his rare gold watch. Della sells her hair to gift Jim a platinum fob chain for his gold watch. Jim, on the other hand, sells his gold watch to present Della a jewelled comb set for her beautiful long hair. Their sacrifices show their deep love and care although they were unable to utilize their gifts.

Magi were the wise old men who brought gifts for Christ on the day of his birth. They brought different things. Their wisdom lay in their special knowledge that Christ was divine and the King of Kings. Their gifts were of special value on account of this recognition of Christ's divinity. Otherwise, they were ordinary things. The gifts of the Magi gave rise to the custom of presenting gifts on Christmas day to somebody you loved. Della and Jim show the same love and care for each other as the Magi has shown for Christ. They become like Magi in the spirit of love they show for each other. In "The Gift of the Magi", O. Henry highlights this and brings out the real value of the gifts of Della and Jim. The title of the story, we can see, is highly appropriate. Its significance lies in underlining the rare value of the gifts they give to each other.

3. Why does O. Henry describe Della and Jim as "the wisest" of all who give others gifts?

"The Gift of the Magi" revolves round Jim and Della – an affectionate and happily living couple. Both of them part with their dearest possessions to make each other happy. Jim sells his gold watch to gift Della a jewelled comb set for her beautiful hair. Della sells her hair to gift Jim a chain for his gold watch. Like O. Henry's other stories, there is a twist near the end of the story that makes Jim and Della realize the immediate futility of their sacrifices. Neither of them could make use of the gifts they gave to each other. Della consoles herself by saying that her hair grows terribly fast and she could use the jeweled comb set after some time. Jim, on the other hand, asks her to forget about the gifts and adds that their gifts were too beautiful to be used.

O. Henry calls Della and Jim 'the wisest' among those who give others gifts. They very happily sacrificed their precious possessions and felt neither worried nor disturbed by the fact of parting with their prized possessions for buying these gifts. Both of them value the love and care associated with the gifts. They consoled themselves and exhibited no sign of regret over the futility of their sacrifices. Although the writer said that they "most unwisely sacrificed" their dearest treasures yet he also praises them for the deep love they have for each other. It is this love which makes the gifts valuable. They are the wisest among those who give gifts to one another because they have the insight and love comparable to those of the Magi.

4. Did Jim and Della sell their dearest possession to no purpose?

"The Gift of the Magi" is a beautiful story by O. Henry. It highlights an episode in the life of Jim and Della – an affectionate and happily living couple. Both of them wanted to see each other happy. This desire prompted them to sell their dearest possessions. Della sold her hair to gift Jim a platinum fob chain. But,

to our surprise Jim had already sold his gold watch to gift Della a jewelled comb set. When it is discovered that they could not utilize their respective gifts, it looks as if their sacrifices were futile and apparently served no purpose at all. But actually it is not so.

At the deeper level, we find that their sacrifices show their deep love for each other. They did it only out of love. It shows that they cared for each other's happiness. On realizing the value of the gesture they had shown for each other, they did neither feel bitter nor made any fuss about the loss of their precious possessions. The writer compares them with the wisest persons and calls them the Magi. Hence, it could be safely said that the selling of their dearest possessions did not go in vain. It, in fact, brought to the fore the feeling of love that bound them together and made them truly happy in their married life.

ESSAY

1. **What is important about the title? Does it suggest that the story has a religious lesson, or just that Christmas will figure into the plot somehow?**

Jim and Della are husband and wife who live a very humble life. The story opens with Della counting her hard-earned savings. She has saved one dollar and eighty-seven cents. She could save that amount by bulldozing the grocer, the vegetable man and the butcher. She counted the money three times to ensure herself about the amount of money. The amount was not enough to buy a gift for Jim on the occasion of Christmas. She sat on her bed and reflected that life was made up of sniffles and smiles where sniffles dominate. They lived in a furnished flat at \$8 per week. It was a humble abode. There was a letter box into which no letter would go. Nobody could make bell from the electric button meant for this purpose. The letter on the nameplate had become blurred. Mr. James Dillingham Young's earning was small-only \$20 a week. Whenever Jim came home he was treated warmly and affectionately by his wife Della. Della wept and after cleaning her wet cheeks, she estimated that the expense had been greater than she had calculated. She was saving for months and wished to gift Jim something nice on Christmas. She stood before the pier glass and had a look before it. Something occurred to her mind that made her eyes shine brilliantly but at the same time her face lost its colour. Quickly, she pulled her hair down and let it fall to its full length.

Jim's ancestral gold watch was his precious heritage in which he would have a mighty pride. On the other hand, Della's hair was a proud possession for her. The beauty of Della's hair could make the Queen feel ashamed of her jewels and gifts. Similarly, Jim's gold watch could turn King Solomon jealous and pluck at his beard and make his treasure insignificant.

Della's hair was an ornament for her and when she let her hair fall, it reached below her knees and made a garment for her. She tried to make it nervously, felt sad and a tear or two fell down on the worn red carpet. She, then, put on her old brown jacket and hat. With brilliance in her eyes, Della quickly went down the stairs to the street and stopped before a hair saloon. She asked Madame Safronie – the owner of the shop, “Will you buy my hair?” Madame agreed and after having a glimpse of the hair, told that she would pay twenty dollars for it. Della sold her precious possession and after two hours, she was keenly looking for some suitable Christmas gift for Jim.

At last she found a worthy gift for him. After ransacking several stores. Della found a platinum fob chain, a fit match for Jim's gold watch. The chain was simple but chaste in design and its merit lay in its substance. She compared Jim to chain and found them equal in quietness and value. Then she returned home and showed prudence and reason. She didn't want Jim to be angry with her and hence she made her hair carefully. She had a careful glance of her reflection in the mirror and critically analysed it. She looked quite young.

Jim was always on time. Della kept the chain in her hand and sat beside the entrance.

When she heard his footsteps, she became white for a while and prayed, “Please, God, make him think I am still pretty.” Jim was thin and had a sober look. He was only twenty-two but looked burdened by the family. He had no gloves and needed a new overcoat. His eyes were fixed on Della which she could not read. She found no anger, surprise, disapproval, fear in those eyes which she had been prepared for. She went to

Jim and told that she had sold her hair to purchase a nice gift for him. She bade him “Merry Christmas” and asked not to bother about her hair because they grow awfully fast. Jim could not digest the fact easily and asked Della why she sold it. Della in return, asked Jim affectionately whether he liked her just as she was. Jim did not answer but looked curiously for the hair. Della stated that it went for him and, with a sweetness, said that nobody could guess how much she loves him. Jim hugged Della. After a while he threw a package upon the table and said that nothing can make his love for her less. He explained that haircut does not matter for him and added that if Della unwraps the package she will learn why he got surprised at first.

Della, opened the package and gave a cry of joy but quickly filled with tears and cries. She found the set of combs which she craved for. They were beautiful. Tortoise-shell with jeweled rims and fit to be worn in the beautiful vanished hair. Nevertheless, she embraced them and with dim eyes and a smile said, “My hair grows so fast Jim”. Now it was Dell's turn to show her gift for Jim. She brought the gift out on her palm and presented it to Jim. She

said that it would match his wrist watch and asked for the watch. Jim did not respond and fell on the couch, put his hands under the back of his head and said that the gifts are “too nice to use just as present”. He told Della that he had sold the watch to buy her combs.

The story ends with the writer’s comments on the Magi – wonderfully wise men who brought gifts for the babe Christ. They started the custom of giving presents. The writer calls Jim and Della fools because they most unwisely sacrifice their greatest treasures. But he calls them the wisest also because it was their love for each other which made them sacrifice their precious possessions.

Rip Van Winkle

– *Washington Irving*

TEXT

The following Tale was found among the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker, an old gentleman of New York, who was very curious in the Dutch History of the province and the manners of the descendants from its primitive settlers. His historical researches, however, did not lie so much among books as among men; for the former are lamentably scanty on his favorite topics; whereas he found the old burghers, and still more, their wives, rich in that legendary lore, so invaluable to true history. Whenever, therefore, he happened upon a genuine Dutch family, snugly shut up in its low-roofed farm-house, under a spreading sycamore, he looked upon it as a little clasped volume of black-letter, and studied it with the zeal of a bookworm.

The result of all these researches was a history of the province, during the reign of the Dutch governors, which he published some years since. There have been various opinions as to the literary character of his work, and, to tell the truth, it is not a whit better than it should be. Its chief merit is its scrupulous accuracy, which indeed was a little questioned on its first appearance, but has since been completely established; and it is now admitted into all historical collections, as a book of unquestionable authority.

The old gentleman died shortly after the publication of his work; and now that he is dead and gone, it cannot do much harm to his memory to say that his time might have been much better employed in weightier labors. He, however, was apt to ride his hobby his own way; and though it did now and then kick up the dust a little in the eyes of his neighbors, and grieve the spirit of some friends, for whom he felt the truest deference and affection, yet his errors and follies are remembered “more in sorrow than in anger,” and it begins to be suspected, that he

never intended to injure or offend. But however his memory may be appreciated by critics, it is still held dear among many folks, whose good opinion is well worth having; particularly by certain biscuit-bakers, who have gone so far as to imprint his likeness on their new-year cakes, and have thus given him a chance for immortality, almost equal to the being stamped on a Waterloo medal, or a Queen Anne's farthing.]

Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed, every hour of the day produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains; and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapors about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a Village, whose shingle roofs gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village of great antiquity, having been founded by some of the Dutch colonists, in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of the good Peter Stuyvesant (may he rest in peace!), and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing within a few years, built of small yellow bricks, brought from Holland, having latticed windows and gable fronts, surmounted with weathercocks.

In that same village, and in one of these very houses (which, to tell the precise truth, was sadly time-worn and weather-beaten), there lived, many years since, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, a simple, good-natured fellow, of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkles who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Christina. He inherited, however, but little of the martial character of his ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple, good-natured man; he was, moreover, a kind neighbor, and an obedient henpecked husband. Indeed, to the latter circumstance might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity; for those men are apt to be obsequious and conciliating abroad, who are under the discipline of shrews at home. Their tempers, doubtless, are rendered pliant and malleable in the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation, and a curtain-lecture is worth all the sermons in the world for teaching the virtues of patience and long-suffering. A termagant wife may, therefore, in some respects, be considered a tolerable blessing, and if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed.

Certain it is, that he was a great favorite among all the good wives of the village, who, as usual with the amiable sex, took his part in all family squabbles, and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossipings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village, he was surrounded by a troop of them hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighborhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor. It could not be for want of assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling-piece on his shoulder, for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never refuse to assist a neighbor even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man in all country frolics for husking Indian corn, or building stone fences; the women of the village, too, used to employ him to run their errands, and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them. In a word, Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact, he declared it was of no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; everything about it went wrong, in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than anywhere else; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some out-door work to do; so that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst-conditioned farm in the neighborhood.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes, of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away, in perfect

contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife, so that he was fain to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house—the only side which, in truth, belongs to a henpecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much henpecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting in honorable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods—but what courage can withstand the evil-doing and all-besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house, his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground, or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a sidelong glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle, he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village, which held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of his Majesty George the Third. Here they used to sit in the shade through a long, lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless, sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions which sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveller. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the school-master, a dapper learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun, and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbors could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sun-dial. It is true, he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every great man has his adherents), perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When anything that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to

smoke his pipe vehemently, and to send forth, frequent, and angry puffs; but when pleased, he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds, and sometimes, taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapor curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this stronghold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquillity of the assemblage, and call the members all to nought; nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative, to escape from the labor of the farm and the clamor of his wife, was to take gun in hand, and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it; but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity, I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind, on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favorite sport of squirrel-shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees, he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs, and scarcely lighted by the reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on this scene; evening was gradually advancing; the mountains began to throw their long blue shadows over the valleys; he saw that it would be dark long before he could reach the village; and he heaved a heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend, he heard a voice from a distance hallooing: "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!" He looked around, but could see nothing but a crow winging its solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him, and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry ring through the still evening air, "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"—at the same

time Wolf bristled up his back, and giving a low growl, skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension stealing over him; he looked anxiously in the same direction, and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented place, but supposing it to be some one of the neighborhood in need of his assistance, he hastened down to yield it.

On nearer approach, he was still more surprised at the singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short, square-built old fellow, with thick bushy hair, and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion—a cloth jerkin strapped round the waist—several pairs of breeches, the outer one of ample volume, decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulders a stout keg, that seemed full of liquor, and made signs for Rip to approach and assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance, Rip complied with his usual alacrity; and mutually relieving each other, they clambered up a narrow gully, apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent. As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard long rolling peals, like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine, or rather cleft between lofty rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to be the muttering of one of those transient thunder-showers which often take place in the mountain heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphitheatre, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky, and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time Rip and his companion had labored on in silence; for though the former marvelled greatly what could be the object of carrying a keg of liquor up this wild mountain, yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown, that inspired awe, and checked familiarity.

On entering the amphitheatre, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level spot in the centre was a company of odd-looking personages playing at ninepins. They were dressed in quaint outlandish fashion; some wore short doublets, others jerkins, with long knives in their belts, and most of them had enormous breeches, of similar style with that of the guide's. Their visages, too, were peculiar; one had a large head, broad face, and small piggish eyes; the face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugar-loaf hat, set off with a little red cock's tail. They all had beards, of various shapes and colors. There was one who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance; he wore a laced doublet, broad belt and hanger, high-crowned hat and feather, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, with roses in them. The whole group reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting, in the parlor of Dominie Van Schaick, the village parson, and which had been brought over from Holland at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip was, that though these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal, the most melancholy party of pleasure he had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled, echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals of thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them, they suddenly desisted from their play, and stared at him with such a fixed statue-like gaze, and such strange uncouth, lack-lustre countenances, that his heart turned within him, and his knees smote together. His companion now emptied the contents of the keg into large flagons, and made signs to him to wait upon the company. He obeyed with fear and trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence, and then returned to their game.

By degrees, Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage which he found had much of the flavor of excellent Hollands. He was naturally a thirsty soul, and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another; and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often, that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.

On waking, he found himself on the green knoll whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes—it was a bright sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. “Surely,” thought Rip, “I have not slept here all night.” He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with the keg of liquor—the mountain ravine—the wild retreat among the rocks—the woe-begone party at ninepins—the flagon—“Oh! that flagon! that wicked flagon!” thought Rip—“what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle?”

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean well-oiled fowling-piece, he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel encrusted with rust, the lock falling off, and the stock worm-eaten. He now suspected that the grave roysterers of the mountains had put a trick upon him, and, having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf, too, had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him and shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoes repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening's gambol, and if he met with any of the party, to demand his dog and gun. As he rose to walk, he found himself stiff in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity. “These mountain beds do not agree with me,” thought Rip, “and if this frolic, should lay me up with a fit of the rheumatism, I shall have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle.” With some difficulty he got down into the glen: he found the gully up which he and

his companion had ascended the preceding evening; but to his astonishment a mountain stream was now foaming down it, leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs. He, however, made shift to scramble up its sides, working his toilsome way through thickets of birch, sassafras, and witch-hazel; and sometimes tripped up or entangled by the wild grape vines that twisted their coils and tendrils from tree to tree, and spread a kind of network in his path.

At length he reached to where the ravine had opened through the cliffs to the amphitheatre; but no traces of such opening remained. The rocks presented a high impenetrable wall, over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here, then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog; he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in the air about a dry tree that overhung a sunny precipice; and who, secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities. What was to be done? The morning was passing away, and Rip felt famished for want of his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and gun; he dreaded to meet his wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and, with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

As he approached the village, he met a number of people, but none whom he new, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country round. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture, induced Rip, involuntarily, to do, the same, when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long!

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his gray beard. The dogs, too, not one of which he recognized for an old acquaintance, barked at him as he passed. The very village was altered: it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors—strange faces at the windows—everything was strange. His mind now misgave him; he began to doubt whether both he and the world around him were not bewitched. Surely this was his native village, which he had left but a day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains—there ran the silver Hudson at a distance—there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been—Rip was sorely perplexed—”That flagon last night,” thought he, “has addled my poor head sadly!”

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay—the roof had fallen in, the

windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half-starved dog, that looked like Wolf, was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed.—"My very dog," sighed poor Rip, "has forgotten me!"

He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. This desolateness overcame all his connubial fears—he called loudly for his wife and children—the lonely chambers rang for a moment with his voice, and then all again was silence.

He now hurried forth, and hastened to his old resort, the village inn—but it too was gone. A large rickety wooden building stood in its place, with great gaping windows, some of them broken, and mended with old hats and petticoats, and over the door was painted, "The Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle." Instead of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there now was reared a tall naked pole, with something on the top that looked like a red nightcap, and from it was fluttering a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes—all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognized on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George, under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe, but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was held in the hand instead of a sceptre, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, "GENERAL WASHINGTON."

There was, as usual, a crowd of folk about the door, but none that Rip recollected. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquillity. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder, with his broad face, double chin, and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco-smoke, instead of idle speeches; or Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, doling forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these, a lean, bilious-looking fellow, with his pockets full of handbills, was haranguing, vehemently about rights of citizens—elections—members of Congress—liberty—Bunker's hill—heroes of seventy-six—and other words, which were a perfect Babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle.

The appearance of Rip, with his long, grizzled beard, his rusty fowling-piece, his uncouth dress, and the army of women and children at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded round him, eying him from head to foot, with great curiosity. The orator bustled up to him, and, drawing him partly aside, inquired, "on which side he voted?" Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and rising on tiptoe, inquired in his ear, "whether he was Federal or Democrat." Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle,

with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat penetrating, as it were, into his very soul, demanded in an austere tone, "What brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder, and a mob at his heels; and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village?"

"Alas! gentlemen," cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, "I am a poor, quiet man, a native of the place, and a loyal subject of the King, God bless him!"

Here a general shout burst from the bystanders—"a tory! a tory! a spy! a refugee! hustle him! away with him!" It was with great difficulty that the self-important man in the cocked hat restored order; and having assumed a tenfold austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit, what he came there for, and whom he was seeking. The poor man humbly assured him that he meant no harm, but merely came there in search of some of his neighbors, who used to keep about the tavern.

"Well—who are they?—name them."

Rip bethought himself a moment, and inquired, Where's Nicholas Vedder?

There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied, in a thin, piping voice, "Nicholas Vedder? why, he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There was a wooden tombstone in the churchyard that used to tell all about him, but that's rotten and gone too."

"Where's Brom Dutcher?"

"Oh, he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the storming of Stony-Point—others say he was drowned in a squall at the foot of Antony's Nose. I don't know—he never came back again."

"Where's Van Bummel, the schoolmaster?"

"He went off to the wars, too; was a great militia general, and is now in Congress."

Rip's heart died away, at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself thus alone in the world. Every answer puzzled him too, by treating of such enormous lapses of time, and of matters which he could not understand: war—Congress—Stony-Point;—he had no courage to ask after any more friends, but cried out in despair, "Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?"

"Oh, Rip Van Winkle!" exclaimed two or three. "Oh, to be sure! that's Rip Van Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree."

Rip looked, and beheld a precise counterpart of himself as he went up the mountain; apparently as lazy, and certainly as ragged. The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment, the man in the cocked hat demanded who he was, and what was his name?

“God knows!” exclaimed he at his wit’s end; “I’m not myself—I’m somebody else—that’s me yonder—no—that’s somebody else, got into my shoes—I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they’ve changed my gun, and everything’s changed, and I’m changed, and I can’t tell what’s my name, or who I am!”

The by-standers began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly, and tap their fingers against their foreheads. There was a whisper, also, about securing the gun, and keeping the old fellow from doing mischief; at the very suggestion of which, the self-important man with the cocked hat retired with some precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh, comely woman pressed through the throng to get a peep at the gray-bearded man. She had a chubby child in her arms, which, frightened at his looks, began to cry. “Hush, Rip,” cried she, “hush, you little fool; the old man won’t hurt you.” The name of the child, the air of the mother, the tone of her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind.

“What is your name, my good woman?” asked he.

“Judith Cardenier.”

“And your father’s name?”

“Ah, poor man, Rip Van Winkle was his name, but it’s twenty years since he went away from home with his gun, and never has been heard of since,—his dog came home without him; but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by the Indians, nobody can tell. I was then but a little girl.”

Rip had but one more question to ask; but he put it with a faltering voice:

“Where’s your mother?”

Oh, she too had died but a short time since; she broke a blood-vessel in a fit of passion at a New-England pedler.

There was a drop of comfort, at least, in this intelligence. The honest man could contain himself no longer. He caught his daughter and her child in his arms. “I am your father!” cried he—“Young Rip Van Winkle once—old Rip Van Winkle now—Does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle!”

All stood amazed, until an old woman, tottering out from among the crowd, put her hand to her brow, and peering under it in his face for a moment exclaimed, “sure enough! it is Rip Van Winkle—it is himself. Welcome home again, old neighbor. Why, where have you been these twenty long years?”

Rip’s story was soon told, for the whole twenty years had been to him but as one night. The neighbors stared when they heard it; some were seen to wink at each other, and put their tongues in their cheeks; and the self-important man in the cocked hat, who, when the alarm was over, had returned to the field, screwed down the corners of his mouth, and shook his head—upon which there was a general shaking of the head throughout the assemblage.

It was determined, however, to take the opinion of old Peter Vanderdonk, who was seen slowly advancing up the road. He was a descendant of the historian of that name, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of the province. Peter was the most ancient inhabitant of the village, and well versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighborhood. He recollected Rip at once, and corroborated his story in the most satisfactory manner. He assured the company that it was a fact, handed down from his ancestor, the historian, that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed that the great Hendrick Hudson, the first discoverer of the river and country, kept a kind of vigil there every twenty years, with his crew of the Half-moon; being permitted in this way to revisit the scenes of his enterprise, and keep a guardian eye upon the river and the great city called by his name. That his father had once seen them in their old Dutch dresses playing at ninepins in the hollow of the mountain; and that he himself had heard, one summer afternoon, the sound of their balls, like distant peals of thunder.

To make a long story short, the company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election. Rip's daughter took him home to live with her; she had a snug, well-furnished house, and a stout cheery farmer for a husband, whom Rip recollected for one of the urchins that used to climb upon his back. As to Rip's son and heir, who was the ditto of himself, seen leaning against the tree, he was employed to work on the farm; but evinced an hereditary disposition to attend to any thing else but his business.

Rip now resumed his old walks and habits; he soon found many of his former cronies, though all rather the worse for the wear and tear of time; and preferred making friends among the rising generation, with whom he soon grew into great favor.

Having nothing to do at home, and being arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench, at the inn door, and was revered as one of the patriarchs of the village, and a chronicle of the old times "before the war." It was some time before he could get into the regular track of gossip, or could be made to comprehend the strange events that had taken place during his torpor. How that there had been a revolutionary war—that the country had thrown off the yoke of old England—and that, instead of being a subject to his Majesty George the Third, he was now a free citizen of the United States. Rip, in fact, was no politician; the changes of states and empires made but little impression on him; but there was one species of despotism under which he had long groaned, and that was—petticoat government. Happily, that was at an end; he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased, without dreading the tyranny of Dame Van Winkle. Whenever her name was mentioned, however, he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and cast up his eyes; which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate, or joy at his deliverance.

He used to tell his story to every stranger that arrived at Mr. Doolittle's hotel. He was observed, at first, to vary on some points every time he told it, which was, doubtless, owing to his having so recently awaked. It at last settled down precisely to the tale I have related, and not a man, woman, or child in the neighborhood, but knew it by heart. Some always pretended to doubt the reality of it, and insisted that Rip had been out of his head, and that this was one point on which he always remained flighty. The old Dutch inhabitants, however, almost universally gave it full credit. Even to this day, they never hear a thunder-storm of a summer afternoon about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of ninepins; and it is a common wish of all henpecked husbands in the neighborhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon.

NOTE

The foregoing tale, one would suspect, had been suggested to Mr. Knickerbocker by a little German superstition about the Emperor Frederick der Rothbart and the Kypphauser mountain; the subjoined note, however, which had appended to the tale, shows that it is an absolute fact, narrated with his usual fidelity.

“The story of Rip Van Winkle may seem incredible to many, but nevertheless I give it my full belief, for I know the vicinity of our old Dutch settlements to have been very subject to marvellous events and appearances. Indeed, I have heard many stranger stories than this, in the villages along the Hudson; all of which were too well authenticated to admit of a doubt. I have even talked with Rip Van Winkle myself, who, when last I saw him, was a very venerable old man, and so perfectly rational and consistent on every other point, that I think no conscientious person could refuse to take this into the bargain; nay, I have seen a certificate on the subject taken before a country justice, and signed with cross, in the justice's own handwriting. The story, therefore, is beyond the possibility of doubt. “D. K.”

POSTSCRIPT

The following are travelling notes from a memorandum-book of Mr. Knickerbocker:

The Kaatsberg or Catskill mountains have always been a region full of fable. The Indians considered them the abode of spirits, who influenced the weather, spreading sunshine or clouds over the landscape, and sending good or bad hunting seasons. They were ruled by an old squaw spirit, said to be their mother. She dwelt on the highest peak of the Catskills, and had charge of the doors of day and night to open and shut them at the proper hour. She hung up the new moons in the skies, and cut up the old ones into stars. In times of drought, if properly propitiated, she would spin light summer clouds out of cobwebs and morning dew, and send them off from the crest of the mountain, flake after flake, like flakes of carded cotton,

to float in the air; until, dissolved by the heat of the sun, they would fall in gentle showers, causing the grass to spring, the fruits to ripen, and the corn to grow an inch an hour. If displeased, however, she would brew up clouds black as ink, sitting in the midst of them like a bottle-bellied spider in the midst of its web; and when these clouds broke, woe betide the valleys!

In old times, say the Indian traditions, there was a kind of Manitou or Spirit, who kept about the wildest recesses of the Catskill mountains, and took a mischievous pleasure in wreaking all kind of evils and vexations upon the red men. Sometimes he would assume the form of a bear, a panther, or a deer, lead the bewildered hunter a weary chase through tangled forests and among ragged rocks, and then spring off with a loud ho! ho! leaving him aghast on the brink of a beetling precipice or raging torrent.

The favorite abode of this Manitou is still shown. It is a rock or cliff on the loneliest port of the mountains, and, from the flowering vines which clamber about it, and the wild flowers which abound in its neighborhood, is known by the name of the Garden Rock. Near the foot of it is a small lake, the haunt of the solitary bittern, with water-snakes basking in the sun on the leaves of the pond-lilies which lie on the surface. This place was held in great awe by the Indians, insomuch that the boldest hunter would not pursue his game within its precincts. Once upon a time, however, a hunter who had lost his way penetrated to the Garden Rock, where he beheld a number of gourds placed in the crotches of trees. One of these he seized and made off with it, but in the hurry of his retreat he let it fall among the rocks, when a great stream gushed forth, which washed him away and swept him down precipices, where he was dished to pieces, and the stream made its way to the Hudson, and continues to flow to the present day, being the identical stream known by the name of the Kaaterskill.

CHARACTERS

- Rip Van Winkle Asleep Hoppin
- The Catskills Parsons
- Rip Van Winkle and The Children Darley
- Dame Van Winkle's Lecture
- Village Politicians
- Rip and The Dog
- Rip and The Rising Generation
- Catskill Falls Wm. Hart
- Catskill Lake Wm. Hart
- Father Time Hoppin

SUMMARY

In a village near the Catskill Mountains in New York lives a man named Rip Van Winkle – a kind neighbour and henpecked husband. He is dutiful and quick to help his friends and neighbours, and is well liked. In addition to his ‘termagant’ or fierce wife, he has children, including a son, also named Rip, who bears a strong resemblance to his father.

Rip Van Winkle also has a dog, Wolf, who is also put upon by ‘Dame Van Winkle’, Rip’s wife. Rip’s farm is a constant source of trouble for him, and the only pleasure he derives is from his regular meetings with other men of the village, who meet outside the local pub, named after King George the Third of Great Britain, to discuss village gossip and other topics.

One day, Rip Van Winkle goes for a walk up the Catskill Mountains, with his dog Wolf for company. As he is about to descend, he hears someone shouting his name. A strange, short man with a grey beard appears, wearing antique Dutch clothes. He beckons Rip to follow him, and they arrive at a woodland amphitheatre where strange people are playing ninepins. They are also dressed in old clothes. The man who has led Rip here has a keg of alcoholic drink, which he shares with these figures.

Rip tries the drink, and takes such a shining to it that he ends up drinking too much of it, and he sinks into a deep sleep. When he wakes up, all of the strange figures have gone, including the man with the keg of liquor. Rip’s dog has also gone. The gun he’d taken with him up the mountain has gone, and a rusted gun is there next to him instead.

As he walks home, Rip realises his beard has grown a foot long. When he arrives back in his village, he meets people he doesn’t know, and who don’t know him. All of the shops and houses look different. When he goes into his home it’s to find that it’s rundown and deserted. Going out into the street, he finds that the pub he used to meet with friends outside has changed from the King George the Third to the General Washington.

Rip speaks with the villagers and asks if any of them know two of his oldest friends, whom he names. They tell him that those two friends have died. Rip asks them if anyone knows a man named Rip Van Winkle. They point to a man who looks just like Rip: his son, now grown up and resembling his father.

Rip’s daughter, also grown up, appears with a baby. Rip asks her who her father was. She replies that his name was Rip Van Winkle, but that he disappeared twenty years ago after he went for a walk in the mountains. They feared he’d been captured by Native Americans, or had shot himself. It turns out that Rip Van Winkle thought he’d slept for one night, but he had in fact been asleep for twenty years.

Rip asks his daughter what happened to her mother (Rip's wife). Upon learning that she has died, Rip is relieved, so henpecked was he! At this point, Old Peter Vanderdonk, a descendant of a great historian, appears and corroborates Rip's story: he says that his ancestor told of Hendrick Hudson, the great explorer who helped to found North America and after whom the Hudson River was named, keeping a vigil in the Catskill Mountains every twenty years with his crew. Rip's visit to the mountains just happened to coincide with one of these vigils.

Rip settles down to watch his grandchild grow, and his son tends to the farm while Rip Senior enjoys his retirement. He eventually reacquaints himself with his remaining friends in the village, who take up their regular meets outside the pub, and Rip Van Winkle becomes revered as a village elder and patriarch who remembers what the village was like before the American Revolutionary War.

ANALYSIS

'Rip Van Winkle' is perhaps the most famous homegrown American fairy tale. It has supernatural elements, the idea of an enchanted wood, and focuses on simple village life, such as we find in many classic European fairy stories. But the mention of the pub's name – shifting from King George the Third to General Washington – reveals that this is a specifically and unmistakably *American* tale.

'Rip Van Winkle', like many other stories which attain the status of modern myths or archetypes – *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Frankenstein* are two other famous examples – has become more famous as an idea than a tale, at least outside of the United States.

The story's time setting is central: Rip Van Winkle goes to sleep before 1776 when the American colonies are still ruled by the British, and wakes up after the American War of Independence, which has succeeded in shaking off the British yoke and creating the independent nation of the United States of America.

Curiously, Washington Irving wrote 'Rip Van Winkle' in, of all places, Birmingham – Birmingham, England, that is, rather than Birmingham, Alabama. What's more, Irving had never been to the Catskill Mountains which are so central to the story's plot and atmosphere when he wrote the tale!

Nor was the central idea of the story – a man falling asleep for many years and waking up to find the world around him substantially changed – entirely new. Indeed, it was an ancient idea: the Greek historian Diogenes Laërtius, writing some 1,500 years before Irving, tells a similar story concerning Epimenides of Knossos, who fell asleep in a cave for fifty-seven years. The Christian myth of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, who fell asleep for two centuries to escape persecution, is another important precursor to 'Rip Van Winkle'.

But the clearest influence was Johann Karl Christoph Nachtigal's German folktale 'Peter Klaus'. Like Irving's story, it features a man from a simple village who discovers some strange men drinking in the woods; like Irving's story, the hero falls asleep after partaking of their drink, and, like Irving's story, he wakes up to find twenty years have passed. Why did Irving recycle this old plot device for his story about the American Revolution? And how should we interpret the story?

One interpretation is that Irving, through this light-hearted tale, is actually trying to downplay the American Revolution. Rip Van Winkle manages to sleep right through it, which is quite a feat when you think about what a noise there must have been. When he gets back to his village, although several of his friends have died – one presumably in the war itself – the others have survived, and he soon goes back to sitting and gossiping with them outside of the pub where they used to chatter together.

The name of the pub may have changed – to represent the shift from one George to another, from King George to George Washington – but life for these simple villagers is largely the same as it was before. Rip's son is his 'ditto', or spitting image: the next generation is much the same as the last.

The humour of the story – chiefly in Rip Van Winkle being a henpecked husband – also supports this analysis of the story. If Dame Van Winkle is like Old Mother England, lording it over Rip (representing the American colonies), then her death is a blessed release for Rip, but nothing more momentous than that. He is relieved rather than anything more dramatic.

SHORT ANSWERS

1. Where did Rip van winkle live?

Rip van winkle lived in a little village, at the foothills of the Kaatskill Mountains.

2. What kind of a man was ripping?

Rip was simple and good natured man .He was a kind neighbour, ready to help anyone . Everyone in the village even the children liked him very much because of his kind behaviour.

3. Why did the children of the village shout whenever they saw Rip?

The children of the village shouted with joy whenever they saw Rip because he played with them , he taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles. He also told them long interesting stories.

4. What is the problem of Rip?

1. The only problem of Rip is that he is very lazy and he does not work on his own farm and just idle away his time.

2. Describe the condition of Rip's from?

As he did not work on his from, the fences were falling to pieces, His caw was going astray. Weeds grew on his farm.

3. Describe the state of those odd looking men.

The odd looking men were all dressed the same way and all of them had beards of various shapes and colours. They were playing a game. Their faces were serious.

4. Which sound did echo in the mountains?

The only sound that echoed in the mountains was the noise of the balls.

5. What did Rip see after waking up?

After walking up he saw that he was at the same place where he had first met the old man. He also found that wolf was missing.

6. What did the old woman exclaim to Rip?

The old woman exclaimed to rip, welcome home again our old neighbour. She also asked rip that where have he been these long twenty years.

7. What was the only problem with Rip?

The only problem with Rip was that he was very lazy. He did no work on his own farm and just idled away his time. His fences were falling to pieces. His cow was going astray

PARAGRAPH ANSWERS

1. Complete the following sentences.

- i) Rip's village was situated _____
- ii) The children of the village loved him because _____
- iii) _____ was his constant companion.
- iv) The villagers stared at him because _____
- v) The old woman who recognised Rip was _____

Answer:

- i) Rip's village was situated at the foothills of Kaatskill mountains.
 - ii) The children of the village loved him because he played with them and told them stories.
 - iii) Wolk the dog was his constant companion.
 - iv) The villagers stared at him because they could not recognise him.
 - v) The old woman who recognised Rip was his neighbour.
- 2. Say whether the following sentences are True or False.**
- i) Rip was kind to children. _____
 - ii) Rip was a hardworking man. _____
 - iii) The short old man on the mountain was his constant companion.

 - iv) Rip helped the old man on the mountains because he wanted to have a drink from the barrel. _____
 - v) Rip was away for twenty years because he was asleep on the mountains.

 - vi) The drink from the barrel made him fall asleep for twenty years.

 - vii) Nobody recognised Rip when he came back because he had reached the wrong village. _____

Answer:

- (i) True (ii) False (iii) False (iv) False (v) False (vi) True (vii) True
- 3. Sometime we join two words to make a describing word. For example, Rip was a good-natured man, everybody liked him. Here are some more describing words. Use them to complete the given paragraph.**

long-sleeved high-heeled well-dressed

open-mouthed sweet-looking odd-looking

part-time

Mrs. Das has a _____ job in a clothes shop. Yesterday, an _____ woman walked into the shop. She was wearing _____ shoes. A _____ dog was with her. "I want a _____ shirt for my dog, please," she said. "For your dog?" asked Mrs. Das, _____ in surprise. "Yes," replied the woman. "I want him to be _____ for my next party."

Answer:

part-time well-dressed high-heeled open-mouthed
 long-sleeved odd-looking sweet-looking

4. Choose one story and explain how its epigraph contributes to it.

The “Christmas” section of the book opens with a line from a hue and cry given after Christmas ends every year: “But is old, old, good old Christmas gone? Nothing but the hair of his good, gray old head and beard left? Well, I will have that, seeing I cannot have more of him.” Although in their usual context, these lines are just about the yearly passing of Christmas, by placing it here, Crayon is emphasizing his concerns about change and his disappointment with the old Christmas rites no longer being celebrated. The idea of taking, at least, what one can get is depicted in the Christmas celebrations with the Squire, who keeps as much of tradition going as he can, despite making some sacrifices.

5. How does “Rip Van Winkle” deal with what became named “the American Dream”?

The protagonist of “Rip Van Winkle” seems completely antithetical to the American work ethic that is said to make Americans work toward the American Dream of prosperity, the possibility of raising oneself above where one was born through hard work. Rip instead loses much of what his family worked for, through pure indolence, and he shows absolutely no ambition, except an ambition to do nothing as long as he can. This life ends up working out for Rip, but the morality of the tale does not condone it, for Rip only ends up in better straits with the help of magic, which makes him sleep through his working years long enough to enjoy his undeserved retirement. In this way he is an American anti-hero who enjoys the American fantasy of a life of leisure, not the American Dream.

6. Compare Dame Van Winkle with Mary, Leslie’s wife, with respect to what it means to be a wife.

Dame Van Winkle is presented as the worst a wife can be, one who complains and offers nothing in return, not even showing pleasantness to the family dog. It is true that her criticism of her husband’s indolence is justified, but she goes too far, and any wife who henpecks her husband too much risks turning him off from the relationship altogether. Mary, on the other hand, also has a husband who is incapable of supporting her in the manner to which they were both accustomed, but she, unlike Dame Van Winkle, supports him fully. They remain happily in love, even through hardship. Although both of these women are strong, each one is strong in a different way as she supports her family. Mary is exalted for making the relationship work, although one might hope she has more to her life than making a rural paradise for her husband.

7. Explain what Crayon might be recommending for England based on “John Bull.”

John Bull is presented as a character with a good heart who makes many mistakes and gets too much into others’ business. Crayon seems to think that many of these mistakes come because John Bull is both generous and proud, which makes his actions very expensive. The possible metaphor here is that Crayon might be saying that England is overextending herself in worrying about her empire and colonies. Crayon’s advice to John Bull, and thus to England, is to focus on the domestic, or else Britain and its traditions will fall apart.

8. Explain what distinctions Crayon makes between Europe and the United States, and describe how well they hold up.

Crayon presents America as a youthful, exciting country, but one without much history, tradition, literature, or culture, while Europe’s age means that it has history everywhere, including living history in its cultures and traditions. This distinction largely holds throughout the book, although the history is not always positive—it can mean a significant lack of freedom. The exception is that when Crayon deals with American Indians, it becomes clear that America and Europe are fairly similar after all in relation to this third set of cultures.

9. Explain how Rip Van Winkle can be seen as a parallel to Crayon.

Rip Van Winkle is the extreme portrayal of an indolent man, a man who escapes from life in his imagination, and who has no responsibility. Because he is such an extreme figure, he is only able to maintain this lifestyle through supernatural means. Crayon is similar in that he has a highly dominant imaginative life which often gives him a means of escape and little responsibility, but not nearly to the same extreme. After all, Crayon has a great deal of leisure time as he travels. Since Crayon does something useful with his time, however, and can distinguish between fiction and reality, in Crayon we can see the positive side of the imaginative, leisured life.

10. What are Crayon’s views about literature, writing, and authorship? Consider Crayon as a self-reflective author.

Crayon argues that, thanks to the mutability of the English language, mediocre works, published at greater and greater rates, will fall into decay, allowing new genius to flourish. True genius, however, achieves a mythical immortality for the work, the author, and even for his language. A writer must find his own material in the common things of human nature and human life in order to have a chance of such success, not just take bits and pieces from others. This is what Crayon does as a writer, valuing what romantic, private, rural, stories and histories show about people rather than focusing on what general

histories about great political figures have to offer. Crayon claims that as a storyteller, his task is to spread as much pleasure as possible, but he makes sure to leave plenty of instruction in his tales for those who are interested to look for i

11. Crayon clearly loves history, but it is not always a good thing in The Sketchbook. How can history have a negative effect?

While Crayon loves coming face to face with history, in certain of the stories he passes on, the weight of history can be restrictively heavy. In “The Spectre Bridegroom,” Baron Von Landshort lives beyond his means in order to live up to the traditions of his ancestors, but the draw of historical prominence will not allow him to give up his castle. His daughter also almost misses out on her true love because of an ancient feud with no modern relevance. Traditions reflect history, but if they are followed without any understanding of their meaning, they make history bind us instead of fulfilling us.

ESSAY

1. In what ways is Rip Van Winkle distinctly American? In what ways is he a typical protagonist from folklore?

Rip Van Winkle is a story written by Washington Irving in 1819. It was written during the duration surrounding the American Revolution. Colonies united to break free from British rule. Later, these colonies amalgamated to form one great nation. The period prior to the revolution and after was marked with change. The society shifted in communal, political and logical aspects. Freedom was their objective. In comparison, *Rip Van Winkle* is also a story about change and transformation. The story revolves around a family man known as Rip. He had no desire to do any productive work. Instead, he preferred to have fun with the children and chitchat. One particular day, he strolled in to the mountains. While he was there, he stumbled across spirits playing. He then got drunk and fell asleep. The next time he woke up, he had grown old. On his way back to the village, he began to notice change. Everything he had grown familiar too had changed. This story just like the American Revolution is about change and this change influences society. Change is inevitable in every society. The Rip Van Wrinkle symbolizes the change and transformation during the American Revolution.

Discussion

The story interprets the time of radical societal and political revolution that came up because of the revolution. The story is told in two parts, before Rip fell asleep and after he woke up. The twenty years that Rip was asleep represents the years that American was under the British rule. The first part is marked by the period before the revolution. Thoughts are changing; the

people became uncomfortable with the British rule. Strategies were formed and alliances built. A storm was brewing up. In the same manner, Rip got tired with helping everyone it was not easy for him to manage his family and the farm (Irving 50). He desired change. This period was characterized by uselessness and redundancy. Rip had no desire to work, he preferred to spend his time roaming around and amusing himself with the children. This idleness caused him to go roaming around the mountains. While he was there, he drank himself to sleep and missed the revolution. The same redundancy was experienced in America. The country was not developing because all the benefits were channeled to Europe. The British rule exploited the American people. No one had the desire to work in order to build another Nation.

In the story, Rip symbolizes an American citizen while his wife Dame represents the British rule. His wife used to be in authority and she could go about dominating everyone. Even the dog was afraid of her. She is symbolic of the British rule, which had a strong arm. Dame constantly nagged and shouted at his husband. She often talked about his laziness and careless ways. His wife harassed him and controlled him (Irving 36). All this time, Rip said nothing. He had endured the harassment for a long time. He was afraid to talk back and voice out his opinions and feelings. He feared that his wife would shout more and continue mistreating him. This can be connected to the period before the revolution. Just like Rip, the Americans were afraid of opposing the British rule. They lived in constant fear of torture by the British rulers. The period before Rip fell asleep represents the period before the revolution. The Americans used to be in bondage. When Rip first returns home, everything is different. The village stands for the American community. Suddenly, there is color and life all around him. This symbolizes the moments after the revolution. Dame is dead thus, the period of bondage is over. There is life in America, the scholars begin to think and invent. The citizens get a new zeal for life. All the efforts are channeled to developing the countries.

In Rip Van Winkle, a new picture of General George Washington has replaced the picture of King George III (Irving 436). It represented the dawning of a new day, a change in governance. This symbolizes a change in government. The story further talks about the important things in life. When Rip woke up, he could not recognize the material things that surround him. His gun was rusty and the houses were destroyed. He only remembered people. In the same way, after the revolution, people were important to each other. The buildings were damaged. The economy was not stable. After struggling to gain their independence, the colonies united to form a great nation. Rip also joined his family and they lived happily. Dame was no longer there to shout and yell at him. One of the lessons that can be learned from this book is about participation. Rip did not actively play a part in the revolution. While the revolution was going on, Rip was asleep. This signifies his desire in staying

on the sidelines instead of playing a role and helping out. This story further reminds us that change will come with different generations. However, family and loved ones will always remain. The norms and values that we treasure and uphold will also keep on alive and blossoming.

Conclusion

The Rip Van Winkle story supports the American Revolution. Most of the events during and before the revolution are symbolic to the plot in the book. The story talks about change between two different generations. This represents before and after Rip fell asleep in the mountain. The village stands for the American community. The changes in the surrounding symbolize the changes in America. A different regime had come into power. Rip's lazy character describes the Americans at that period. They had no desire and zeal to work. Rip's wife, Dame represents the British rule. She was constantly pestering and shouting. She had a dominant character or personality (Irving 36). Her family was afraid of her, even the dog behaved differently when she was around. The story talks of one important lesson, which is to participate in the revolution.



UNIT IV

ONE ACT PLAY

A Marriage Proposal

– *Anton Chekov*

TEXT

(The scene of the play is the Chubukov living room. A sofa with pillows on it is at LC and a small table with an armchair on each side of it is at RC. On the table are a wine decanter, both wine and water glasses, and a small water pitcher. The only entrance to the room is an opening UC. UC off R is the front door of the house and UC off L is a hallway leading to the other rooms. When the curtains open, the voice of CHUBUKOV is heard UC off R. In a moment, he and LOMOV enter, with Chubukov leading the way. Chubukov uses a cane, but he is not dependent on it for support.)

Chubukov: My dear fellow, whom do I see! Ivan Vassilevitch! I am extremely glad! [Squeezes his hand] Now this is a surprise, my darling... How are you?

Lomov: Thank you. And how may you be getting on?

Chubukov: We just get along somehow, my angel, thanks to your prayers, and so on. Sit down, please do... Now, you know, you shouldn't forget all about your neighbours, my darling. My dear fellow, why are you so formal in your get-up! Evening dress, gloves, and so on. Can you be going anywhere, my treasure?

Lomov: No. I've come only to see you, honoured Stepan Stepanovitch.

Chubukov: Then why are you in evening dress, my precious? As if you're paying a New Year's Eve visit!

Lomov: Well, you see, it's like this. [Takes his arm] I've come to you, honoured Stepan Stepanovitch, to trouble you with a request. Not once or twice have I already had the privilege of applying to you for help, and you have always, so to speak... I must ask your pardon, I am getting excited. I shall drink some water, honoured Stepan Stepanovitch.

[Drinks.]

Chubukov: [aside] He's come to borrow money. Shan't give him any! [aloud] What is it, my beauty?

Lomov: You see, Honoured Stepanitch... I beg pardon Stepan Honouritch... I mean, I'm awfully excited, as you will please notice... In short, you alone can help me, though I don't deserve it, of course... and haven't any right to count on your assistance...

Chubukov: Oh, don't go round and round it, darling! Spit it out! Well?

Lomov: One moment... this very minute. The fact is I've come to ask the hand of your daughter, Natalya Stepanovna, in marriage.

Chubukov: [joyfully] By Jove! Ivan Vassilevitch! Say it again — I didn't hear it all!

Lomov: I have the honour to ask...

Chubukov: [interrupting] My dear fellow... I'm so glad, and so on... Yes, indeed, and all that sort of thing. [Embraces and kisses Lomov] I've been hoping for it for a long time. It's been my continual desire. [Sheds a tear] And I've always loved you, my angel, as if you were my own son. May God give you both — His help and His love and so on, and so much hope... What am I behaving in this idiotic way for? I'm off my balance with joy, absolutely off my balance! Oh, with all my soul... I'll go and call Natasha, and all that.

Lomov: [greatly moved] Honoured Stepan Stepanovitch, do you think I may count on her consent?

Chubukov: Why, of course, my darling, and... as if she won't consent! She's in love; egad, she's like a lovesick cat, and so on. Shan't be long!

[Exit.]

Lomov: It's cold... I'm trembling all over, just as if I'd got an examination before me. The great thing is, I must have my mind made up. If I give myself time to think, to hesitate, to talk a lot, to look for an ideal, or for real love, then I'll never get married. Brr... It's cold! Natalya Stepanovna is an excellent housekeeper, not bad-looking, well-educated. What more do I want? But I'm getting a noise in my ears from excitement. [Drinks] And it's impossible for me not to marry. In the first place, I'm already 35 — a critical age, so to speak. In the second place, I ought to lead a quiet and regular life. I suffer from palpitations, I'm excitable and always getting awfully upset; at this very moment my lips are trembling, and there's a twitch in my right eyebrow. But the very worst of all is the way I sleep. I no sooner get into bed and begin to go off, when suddenly something in my left side gives a pull, and I can feel it in my shoulder and head... I jump up like a lunatic, walk about a bit and lie down again, but as soon as I begin to get off to sleep there's another pull! And this may happen twenty times...

[Natalya Stepanovna comes in.]

Natalya: Well, there! It's you, and papa said, "Go; there's a merchant come for his goods." How do you do, Ivan Vassilevitch?

Lomov: How do you do, honoured Natalya Stepanovna?

Natalya: You must excuse my apron and negligé. We're shelling peas for drying. Why haven't you been here for such a long time? Sit down... *[They seat themselves.]* Won't you have some lunch?

Lomov: No, thank you, I've had some already.

Natalya: Then smoke. Here are the matches. The weather is splendid now, but yesterday it was so wet that the workmen didn't do anything all day. How much hay have you stacked? Just think, I felt greedy and had a whole field cut, and now I'm not at all pleased about it because I'm afraid my hay may rot. I ought to have waited a bit. But what's this? Why, you're in evening dress! Well, I never! Are you going to a ball or what? Though I must say you look better... Tell me, why are you got up like that?

Lomov: *[excited]* You see, honoured Natalya Stepanovna... the fact is, I've made up my mind to ask you to hear me out... Of course you'll be surprised and perhaps even angry, but a... *[aside]* It's awfully cold!

Natalya: What's the matter? *[pause]* Well?

Lomov: I shall try to be brief. You must know, honoured Natalya Stepanovna, that I have long, since my childhood, in fact, had the privilege of knowing your family. My late aunt and her husband, from whom, as you know, I inherited my land, always had the greatest respect for your father and your late mother. The Lomovs and the Chubukovs have always had the most friendly, and I might almost say the most affectionate, regard for each other. And, as you know, my land is a near neighbour of yours. You will remember that my Oxen Meadows touch your birchwoods.

Natalya: Excuse my interrupting you. You say, “my Oxen Meadows”. But are they yours?

Lomov: Yes, mine.

Natalya: What are you talking about? Oxen Meadows are ours, not yours!

Lomov: No, mine, honoured Natalya Stepanovna.

Natalya: Well, I never knew that before. How do you make that out?

Lomov: How? I’m speaking of those Oxen Meadows which are wedged in between your birchwoods and the Burnt Marsh.

Natalya: Yes, yes... they’re ours.

Lomov: No, you’re mistaken, honoured Natalya Stepanovna, they’re mine.

Natalya: Just think, Ivan Vassilevitch! How long have they been yours?

Lomov: How long? As long as I can remember. NATALYA : Really, you won’t get me to believe that!

Lomov: But you can see from the documents, honoured Natalya Stepanovna. Oxen Meadows, it’s true, were once the subject of dispute, but now everybody knows that they are mine. There’s nothing to argue about. You see my aunt’s grandmother gave the free use of these Meadows in perpetuity to the peasants of your father’s grandfather, in return for which they were to make bricks for her. The peasants belonging to your father’s grandfather had the free use of the Meadows for forty years, and had got into the habit of regarding them as their own, when it happened that...

Natalya: No, it isn’t at all like that! Both grandfather and great-grandfather reckoned that their land extended to Burnt Marsh — which means that Oxen Meadows were ours. I don’t see what there is to argue about. It’s simply silly!

- Lomov:** I'll show you the documents, Natalya Stepanovna!
- Natalya:** No, you're simply joking, or making fun of me. What a surprise! We've had the land for nearly three hundred years, and then we're suddenly told that it isn't ours! Ivan Vassilevitch, I can hardly believe my own ears. These Meadows aren't worth much to me. They only come to five dessiatins, and are worth perhaps 300 roubles, but I can't stand unfairness. Say what you will, I can't stand unfairness.
- Lomov:** Hear me out, I implore you! The peasants of your father's grandfather, as I have already had the honour of explaining to you, used to bake bricks for my aunt's grandmother. Now my aunt's grandmother, wishing to make them a pleasant...
- Natalya:** I can't make head or tail of all this about aunts and grandfathers and grandmothers. The Meadows are ours, that's all.
- Lomov:** Mine.
- Natalya:** Ours! You can go on proving it for two days on end, you can go and put on fifteen dress jackets, but I tell you they're ours, ours, ours! I don't want anything of yours and I don't want to give anything of mine. So there!
- Lomov:** Natalya Stepanovna, I don't want the Meadows, but I am acting on principle. If you like, I'll make you a present of them.
- Natalya:** I can make you a present of them myself, because they're mine! Your behaviour, Ivan Vassilevitch, is strange, to say the least! Up to this we have always thought of you as a good neighbour, a friend; last year we lent you our threshing-machine, although on that account we had to put off our own threshing till November, but you behave to us as if we were gypsies. Giving me my own land, indeed! No, really, that's not at all neighbourly! In my opinion, it's even impudent, if you want to know.
- Lomov:** Then you make out that I'm a landgrabber? Madam, never in my life have I grabbed anybody else's land and I shan't allow anybody to accuse me of having done so. [Quickly steps to the carafe and drinks more water] Oxen Meadows are mine!
- Natalya:** It's not true, they're ours!
- Lomov:** Mine!
- Natalya:** It's not true! I'll prove it! I'll send my mowers out to the Meadows this very day!

Lomov: What?

Natalya: My mowers will be there this very day!

Lomov: I'll give it to them in the neck!

Natalya: You dare!

Lomov: *[Clutches at his heart]* Oxen Meadows are mine! You understand? Mine!

Natalya: Please don't shout! You can shout yourself hoarse in your own house but here I must ask you to restrain yourself!

Lomov: If it wasn't, madam, for this awful, excruciating palpitation, if my whole inside wasn't upset, I'd talk to you in a different way! *[Yells]* Oxen Meadows are mine!

Natalya: Ours!

Lomov: Mine!

Natalya: Ours!

Lomov: Mine!

[Enter Chubukov]

Chubukov: What's the matter? What are you shouting for?

Natalya: Papa, please tell this gentleman who owns Oxen Meadows, we or he?

Chubukov: *[to Lomov]* Darling, the Meadows are ours!

Lomov: But, please, Stepan Stepanovitch, how can they be yours? Do be a reasonable man! My aunt's grandmother gave the Meadows for the temporary and free use of your grandfather's peasants. The peasants used the land for forty years and got accustomed to it as if it was their own, when it happened that...

Chubukov: Excuse me, my precious. You forget just this, that the peasants didn't pay your grandmother and all that, because the Meadows were in dispute, and so on. And now everybody knows that they're ours. It means that you haven't seen the plan.

Lomov: I'll prove to you that they're mine!

Chubukov: You won't prove it, my darling.

Lomov: I shall

Chubukov: Dear one, why yell like that? You won't prove anything just by yelling. I don't want anything of yours, and don't intend to give up what I have. Why should I? And you know, my beloved, that if you propose to go on arguing about it, I'd much sooner give up the Meadows to the peasants than to you. There!

Lomov: I don't understand! How have you the right to give away somebody else's property?

Chubukov: You may take it that I know whether I have the right or not. Because, young man, I'm not used to being spoken to in that tone of voice, and so on. I, young man, am twice your age, and ask you to speak to me without agitating yourself, and all that.

Lomov: No, you just think I'm a fool and want to have me on! You call my land yours, and then you want me to talk to you calmly and politely! Good neighbours don't behave like that, Stepan Stepanovitch! You're not a neighbour, you're a grabber!

Chubukov: What's that? What did you say?

Natalya: Papa, send the mowers out to the Meadows at once! CHUBUKOV : What did you say, sir?

Natalya: Oxen Meadows are ours, and I shan't give them up, shan't give them up, shan't give them up!

Lomov: We'll see! I'll have the matter taken to court, and then I'll show you!

Chubukov: To court? You can take it to court, and all that! You can! I know you; you're just on the look-out for a chance to go to court, and all that. You pettifogger! All your people were like that! All of them!

Lomov: Never mind about my people! The Lomovs have all been honourable people, and not one has ever been tried for embezzlement, like your grandfather!

Chubukov: You Lomovs have had lunacy in your family, all of you!

Natalya: All, all, all!

Chubukov: Your grandfather was a drunkard, and your younger aunt, Nastasya Mihailovna, ran away with an architect, and so on...

Lomov: And your mother was hump-backed. [Clutches at his heart] Something pulling in my side... My head.... Help! Water!

Chubukov: Your father was a guzzling gambler!

Natalya: And there haven't been many backbiters to equal your aunt!

Chubukov: My left foot has gone to sleep... You're an intriguer Oh, my heart! And it's an open secret that before the last elections you bri... I can see stars... Where's my hat?

Natalya: It's low! It's dishonest! It's mean!

Chubukov: And you're just a malicious, doublefaced intriguer! Yes!

Lomov: Here's my hat. My heart! Which way? Where's the door?

Oh I think I'm dying! My foot's quite numb...

[Goes to the door.]

Chubukov: *[following him]* And don't set foot in my house again!

Natalya: Take it to court! We'll see!

[Lomov staggers out.]

Chubukov: Devil take him!

[Walks about in excitement.]

Natalya: What a rascal! What trust can one have in one's neighbours after that!

Chubukov: The villain! The scarecrow!

Natalya: The monster! First he takes our land and then he has the impudence to abuse us.

Chubukov: And that blind hen, yes, that turnip-ghost has the confounded cheek to make a proposal, and so on! What? A proposal!

Natalya: What proposal?

Chubukov: Why, he came here to propose to you.

Natalya: To propose? To me? Why didn't you tell me so before?

Chubukov: So he dresses up in evening clothes. The stuffed sausage!

The wizen-faced frump!

Natalya: To propose to me? Ah! *[Falls into an easy-chair and wails]* Bring him back! Back! Ah! Bring him here.

Chubukov: Bring whom here?

Natalya: Quick, quick! I'm ill! Fetch him! [Hysterics.]

Chubukov: What's that? What's the matter with you? [Clutches at his head]
Oh, unhappy man that I am! I'll shoot myself! I'll hang myself! We've done for her!

Natalya: I'm dying! Fetch him! CHUBUKOV : Tfoo! At once. Don't yell!

[Runs out. A pause.]

Natalya: [Natalya Stepanovna wails.] What have they done to me?

Fetch him back! Fetch him! *[A pause. Chubukov runs in.]*

Chubukov: He's coming, and so on, devil take him! Ouf! Talk to him yourself; I don't want to...

Natalya: *[wails]* Fetch him!

Chubukov: *[yells]* He's coming, I tell you. Oh, what a burden, Lord, to be the father of a grown-up daughter! I'll cut my throat I will, indeed! We cursed him, abused him, drove him out; and it's all you... you!

Natalya: No, it was you!

Chubukov: I tell you it's not my fault. [Lomov appears at the door] Now you talk to him yourself.

[Exit.]

Lomov: *[Lomov enters, exhausted.]* My heart's palpitating awfully. My foot's gone to sleep. There's something that keeps pulling in my side....

Natalya: Forgive us, Ivan Vassilevitch, we were all a little heated.

I remember now: Oxen Meadows... really are yours.

Lomov: My heart's beating awfully. My Meadows... My eyebrows are both twitching....

Natalya: The Meadows are yours, yes, yours. Do sit down. [They sit] We were wrong.

Lomov: I did it on principle. My land is worth little to me, but the principle...

Natalya: Yes, the principle, just so. Now let's talk of something else.

- Lomov:** The more so as I have evidence. My aunt's grandmother gave the land to your father's grandfather's peasants...
- Natalya:** Yes, yes, let that pass. [aside] I wish I knew how to get him started. [aloud] Are you going to start shooting soon?
- Lomov:** I'm thinking of having a go at the blackcock, honoured Natalya Stepanovna, after the harvest. Oh, have you heard? Just think, what a misfortune I've had! My dog Guess, who you know, has gone lame.
- Natalya:** What a pity! Why?
- Lomov:** I don't know. Must have got his leg twisted or bitten by some other dog. [sighs] My very best dog, to say nothing of the expense. I gave Mironov 125 roubles for him.
- Natalya:** It was too much, Ivan Vassilevitch.
- Lomov:** I think it was very cheap. He's a first-rate dog.
- Natalya:** Papa gave 85 roubles for his Squeezer, and Squeezer is heaps better than Guess!
- Lomov:** Squeezer better than Guess? What an idea! [laughs] Squeezer better than Guess!
- Natalya:** Of course he's better! Of course, Squeezer is young, he may develop a bit, but on points and pedigree he's better than anything that even Volchanetsky has got.
- Lomov:** Excuse me, Natalya Stepanovna, but you forget that he is overshot, and an overshot always means the dog is a bad hunter!
- Natalya:** Overshot, is he? The first time I hear it!
- Lomov:** I assure you that his lower jaw is shorter than the upper.
- Natalya:** Have you measured?
- Lomov:** Yes. He's all right at following, of course, but if you want to get hold of anything...
- Natalya:** In the first place, our Squeezer is a thoroughbred animal, the son of Harness and Chisels while there's no getting at the pedigree of your dog at all. He's old and as ugly as a worn-out cab-horse.

- Lomov:** He is old, but I wouldn't take five Squeezers for him. Why, how can you? Guess is a dog; as for Squeezer, well, it's too funny to argue. Anybody you like has a dog as good as Squeezer... you may find them under every bush almost. Twenty-five roubles would be a handsome price to pay for him.
- Natalya:** There's some demon of contradiction in you today, Ivan Vassilevitch. First you pretend that the Meadows are yours; now, that Guess is better than Squeezer. I don't like people who don't say what they mean, because you know perfectly well that Squeezer is a hundred times better than your silly Guess. Why do you want to say he isn't?
- Lomov:** I see, Natalya Stepanovna, that you consider me either blind or a fool. You must realise that Squeezer is overshot!
- Natalya:** It's not true.
- Lomov:** He is!
- Natalya:** It's not true!
- Lomov:** Why shout madam?
- Natalya:** Why talk rot? It's awful! It's time your Guess was shot, and you compare him with Squeezer!
- Lomov:** Excuse me, I cannot continue this discussion, my heart is palpitating.
- Natalya:** I've noticed that those hunters argue most who know least.
- Lomov:** Madam, please be silent. My heart is going to pieces.
[shouts] Shut up!
- Natalya:** I shan't shut up until you acknowledge that Squeezer is a hundred times better than your Guess!
- Lomov:** A hundred times worse! Be hanged to your Squeezer! His head... eyes... shoulder...
- Natalya:** There's no need to hang your silly Guess; he's half-dead already!
- Lomov:** *[weeps]* Shut up! My heart's bursting!
- Natalya:** I shan't shut up.

[Enter Chubukov.]

Chubukov: What's the matter now?

Natalya: Papa, tell us truly, which is the better dog, our Squeezer or his Guess.

Lomov: Stepan Stepanovitch, I implore you to tell me just one thing: is your Squeezer overshot or not? Yes or no?

Chubukov: And suppose he is? What does it matter? He's the best dog in the district for all that, and so on.

Lomov: But isn't my Guess better? Really, now?

Chubukov: Don't excite yourself, my precious one. Allow me. Your Guess certainly has his good points. He's purebred, firm on his feet, has well-sprung ribs, and all that. But, my dear man, if you want to know the truth, that dog has two defects: he's old and he's short in the muzzle.

Lomov: Excuse me, my heart... Let's take the facts. You will remember that on the Marusinsky hunt my Guess ran neck-and-neck with the Count's dog, while your Squeezer was left a whole verst behind.

Chubukov: He got left behind because the Count's whipper-in hit him with his whip.

Lomov: And with good reason. The dogs are running after a fox, when Squeezer goes and starts worrying a sheep!

Chubukov: It's not true! My dear fellow, I'm very liable to lose my temper, and so, just because of that, let's stop arguing. You started because everybody is always jealous of everybody else's dogs. Yes, we're all like that! You too, sir, aren't blameless! You no sooner begin with this, that and the other, and all that... I remember everything!

Lomov: I remember too!

Chubukov: [*teasing him*] I remember, too! What do you remember?

Lomov: My heart... my foot's gone to sleep. I can't...

Natalya: [*teasing*] My heart! What sort of a hunter are you? You ought to go and lie on the kitchen oven and catch black beetles, not go after foxes! My heart!

Chubukov: Yes really, what sort of a hunter are you, anyway? You ought to sit at home with your palpitations, and not go tracking animals. You could go hunting, but you only go to argue with people and interfere with their dogs and so on. Let's change the subject in case I lose my temper. You're not a hunter at all, anyway!

Lomov: And are you a hunter? You only go hunting to get in with the Count and to intrigue. Oh, my heart! You're an intriguer!

Chubukov: What? I am an intriguer? [shouts] Shut up!

Lomov: Intriguer!

Chubukov: Boy! Pup!

Lomov: Old rat! Jesuit!

Chubukov: Shut up or I'll shoot you like a partridge! You fool!

Lomov: Everybody knows that — oh, my heart! — your late wife used to beat you... My feet... temples... sparks... I fall, I fall!

Chubukov: And you're under the slipper of your house-keeper!

Lomov: There, there, there... my heart's burst! My shoulders come off! Where is my shoulder? I die. [Falls into an armchair] A doctor!

Chubukov: Boy! Milksop! Fool! I'm sick! [Drinks water] Sick!

Natalya: What sort of a hunter are you? You can't even sit on a horse! [*To her father*] Papa, what's the matter with him? Papa! Look, Papa! [*screams*] Ivan Vassilevitch! He's dead!

Chubukov: I'm sick! I can't breathe! Air!

Natalya: He's dead. [*Pulls Lomov's sleeve*] Ivan Vassilevitch! Ivan Vassilevitch! What have you done to me? He's dead. [*Falls into an armchair*] A doctor, a doctor!

[*Hysterics.*]

Chubukov: Oh! What is it? What's the matter? NATALYA : [wails] He's dead... dead!

Chubukov: Who's dead? [Looks at Lomov] So he is! My word! Water! A doctor! [*Lifts a tumbler to Lomov's mouth*] Drink this! No, he doesn't drink. It means he's dead, and all that. I'm the most unhappy of men! Why don't I put a bullet into my brain? Why haven't I cut my throat yet? What am I waiting for? Give me a knife! Give me a pistol! [*Lomov moves*] He seems to be coming round. Drink some water! That's right.

Lomov: I see stars... mist... where am I?

Chubukov: Hurry up and get married and — well, to the devil with you! She's willing! [He puts Lomov's hand into his daughter's] She's willing and all that. I give you my blessing and so on. Only leave me in peace!

Lomov: *[getting up]* Eh? What? To whom?

Chubukov: She's willing! Well? Kiss and be damned to you! NATALYA : *[wails]* He's alive... Yes, yes, I'm willing.

Chubukov: Kiss each other!

Lomov: Eh? Kiss whom? *[They kiss]* Very nice, too. Excuse me, what's it all about? Oh, now I understand ... my heart... stars... I'm happy. Natalya Stepanovna... *[Kisses her hand]* My foot's gone to sleep.

Natalya: I... I'm happy too...

Chubukov: What a weight off my shoulders, ouf!

Natalya: But, still you will admit now that Guess is worse than Squeezer.

Lomov: Better!

Natalya: Worse!

Chubukov: Well, that's a way to start your family bliss! Have some champagne!

Lomov: He's better!

Natalya: Worse! Worse! Worse!

Chubukov: *[trying to shout her down]* Champagne! Champagne!

PARAGRAPH ANSWERS

1. What was Lomov's cause of going to Chubukov's house? What was his dress? What was Chubukov's reaction to seeing Lomov?

Lomov went to Chubukov's house with a marriage proposal for his daughter Natalya. Lomov put on a dress jacket and white gloves. Lomov was received warmly by Chubukov. He addressed Lomov as 'my darling', 'my angel', 'my treasure' etc. At first, Chubukov thought that Lomov had come to borrow money, but he said to himself that he would not give him any. Chubukov then asks Lomov about his intention for visiting his place. Lomov replied that he came to ask for Natalya's hand in marriage. Chubukov hearing this became extremely happy and embraced Lomov. According to Chubukov, Lomov is suitable for Natalya.

2. Why is the marriage proposal in the play *The Proposal* important to all the characters?

Anton Chekhov's play 'The Proposal' is a one-act play. The play deals with 19th-century Russian society where marriage is considered an important institution. In the play, all of the characters are some way or the other influenced by the marriage proposal. Lomov has reached the critical age of mid-thirty. So he is desperate for a wife. He decides to marry Natalya considering that she would make a useful housewife. Natalya is willing to marry a rich man like Lomov. But she has not found her dream man. Natalya becomes a 'lovesick cat' as she cannot find her man. Chubukov thinks her daughter is a burden and wants her to get married soon. In this way, the marriage proposal becomes very important to all the characters.

3. What are the reasons that Lomov wants to marry Natalya?

Lomov is one of the major characters in Chekhov's one-act play 'The Proposal'. He is thirty-five (35) years old. He is an eligible bachelor. He visits Chubukov's house to propose Natalya. He puts a few reasons why he should marry. According to him, he is mid-thirty, so should marry immediately. He also wants to lead a quiet and normal life. He suffers from palpitation, he is excitable and he always gets upset. He cannot sleep at night. Whenever he gets into bed, his left side gives pull. This pulling happens again and again. These are the reasons that Lomov wants to marry Natalya.

4. Discuss Anton Chekhov's attitude towards marriage as revealed in his play, 'Marriage Proposal'.

Anton Chekhov has satirized marriage in his play *Marriage Proposal*. The author has sketched the Russian society in his time where marriage was nothing but purely a business deal. Property and wealth were essential criteria for marriage. In the play, we find Natalya and Lomov decide to get married though they do not love rather despise each other. Even Chubukov detests Lomov. Yet he is desperate to get them married. Natalya herself takes recourse to lie and throwing tantrums to ensure that Lomov is entrapped. Ironically Lomov could not bring himself to utter the proposal in front of Natalya yet her father declared that she was willing and she followed suit. Lomov also doesn't like the Chubukov family but he has his own reasons to marry Natalya. Marriage thus becomes a business deal as Chubukov rightly points out -- "there's a merchant come for his goods."

5. Describe the character of Lomov.

Lomov is a funny character in the play, 'Marriage Proposal'. The author has brilliantly sketched the character of Lomov. He is thirty-five (35) years old. He is hesitating in nature. He is egoistic. He is actually a hypochondriac, a person who thinks he is always sick. He gets excited easily and he is extremely

nervous. He tries to propose to Natalya but cannot do the same because he is nervous. His point of discussion always shifts from marriage proposals to some other things like oxen meadows and pet dogs. He is ridiculous in making his decision. Thus we can say he is a fickle mind. Lomov's argumentative nature and his nervous representation make him an interesting and funny character.

6. Describe the character of Natalya.

Natalya is one of the major characters in Chekov's one-act play 'Marriage Proposal'. The author has brilliantly sketched the character of Natalya. She is twenty-five (25) years old. She is pretty and well-educated. She is an expert in managing home affairs as well as agricultural works. Natalya is argumentative in nature and suffers from hysteria. She is adamant and equally changes Lomov in hot debate. When Lomov exits and she comes to know about his marriage proposal, she behaves like a 'lovesick cat.' She becomes highly tense when Lomov is found dead –like on an armchair. She becomes happy when Lomov revives from faintness. Being the only female character in the play, she has played the most important part.

7. Comment on the character of Chubukov.

Chubukov is one of the major characters in Chekov's one-act play 'Marriage Proposal'. The author has brilliantly sketched the character of Chubukov. He is in his seventies. He is a big landowner. He is also a shrewd businessman. He has a daughter named Natalya. He is anxiously conscious regarding his daughter's marriage. When Lomov asks his daughter's hand in marriage, Chubukov becomes delighted. He regards Lomov as his own son. But when he sees his daughter Natalya engaged in a hot exchange of words with Lomov, he takes the side of his daughter. He even abuses his would-be son-in-law. He is a habit of saying "all that" and "so on "now and then and thus adding spice to the comic situations. Undoubtedly, Chubukov is a lovable character.

8. Justify 'The Proposal' as one-act play.

A one-act play is written concisely. There are fewer characters and single sitting. Moreover, there is a unity of time, place, and action. Chekhov's play 'Marriage Proposal' is set in the house of Chubukov and also ends there. In the play, there are only three characters --- Chubukov, Lomov and Natalya. The drama begins suddenly with Chubukov's assertion and with an insignificant conversation. There is little scope of development of character or plot in the play. In the course of time, the marriage proposal becomes important to every character. All the characters revolve around the theme of the play in the single act in the drawing-room of Chubukov's house. To sum up it can be said that 'The Proposal' is a good example of a one-act play.

9. Write a brief character sketch of Lomov.

Lomov is a man who is of marriageable age. He also suffers from a weak heart and sleeplessness. So, he is desperate to settle down in life and lead a quiet and regular life. Despite his ailments, Lomov was a rich and prosperous farmer. This makes Chubukov secretly wish him to marry his daughter Natalya. As for Lomov, he did not love her, though he was desperate to have a life partner, and so marry Natalya. Lomov was however hesitant to ask for her hand from Chubukov. That made him beat around the bush, argue with Natalya and leave without proposing. Thus we can find that Loom's conditions overpower the other traits he has. He is an eligible, assertive, rich, bachelor, who will be liked by any girl. However, we also know that he is nervous, lacks confidence and is prone to talk in a long-winded manner.

10. Describe how Chubukov got Natalya married with Lomov.

Chubukov was thinking that Lomov had come to borrow money from him but when he told him that he had come to propose to his daughter he was overjoyed and even shed a tear. He kissed and embraced Lomov. He told Lomov that he was hoping it for a long time. He also told Lomov that he loved him as his own son.

In fact, Chubukov, secretly wished Lomov to marry his dither as he knew that Lomov was a rich and prosperous farmer and his only daughter could lead a comfortable life with him. No wonder, he was overjoyed to know that Lomov was there to propose to his daughter.

SHORT ANSWERS

1. Who is the main character of the play A Marriage Proposal?

A Marriage Proposal is a rattling good story about a young man, Ivan Lomov, who presents a marriage Proposal to his neighbour, Stepan Chubukov, for his unmarried daughter, Natalya.

2. Why did Lomov come to Chubukov's house?

Lomov came to Chubukov's house with a marriage proposal for Natalya.

3. How old were Lomov and Natalya?

Lomov was thirty-five years old and Natalya was twenty-five years old.

4. What does Chubukov at first suspect that Lomov has come for?

Lomov arrives in a formal evening dress. On seeing him, Chubukov thinks that he has come to borrow money. He decides not to lend it to him but talks to him quite politely.

5. Who is Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov?

Ivan Vassilivitch Lomov is a prententious, proud, self-serving, argumentative, impetuous, hysterical hypochondriac. A wealthy landowner, he comes to his neighbor with the overt intentions of marriage, but he really wishes to expand his own land boundaries.

6. What kind of a man is Lomov?

Lomov is a man of thirty-five years old. He is really a very funny and comical character. He comes to make a proposal to Natalya. But he is so nervous and excitable that he continues quarrelling with the girl over trifles, and fails to make the proposal. He has no confidence and no self-control.

7. Who was Natalya Stepanovna?

Natalaya was a young unmarried girl of twenty five years. She lived in the neighbourhood of Lomov, a young unmarried man. She was an excellent housekeeper.

8. Who is the heroine of the play A Marriage Proposal?

Natalya is the heroine of the play 'A Marriage Proposal'. She is twenty-five years old. She is still unmarried. It causes great worry to her father.

9. Why does lomov decide to marry?

Lomov is concerned about his marriage because he is already thirty five and he is not healthy and fit enough. Apart from that, he wants to be settled and he suffers from anxiety and palpitations or strange fear. So he decided to marry Natalya because she will be a suitable wife for him who will take care of him.

10. What does Lomov quarrel over with Natalya for the first time?

Lomov quarrels over ownership the right of Oxen Meadows.

11. What is Oxen Meadows in Marriage Proposal?

The oxen meadows are grasslands for the animals to graze.

12. Who is the real owner of oxen Meadows?

Lomov is the rightful owner of the disputed Oxen Meadows. The Meadows belongs to his ancestors. He has evidence and documents in support of his claim.

13. What do they quarrel over for the second time?

For the second time, they quarrel over the quality of their dogs.

14. What makes Lomov come up with a proposal for marriage to Natalya?

Due to his health and mental problems, Lomov wishes to settle down by getting married. He knows Natalya since childhood and knows that she is an excellent housekeeper, well educated and not bad looking girl from a high status rich family. So, he proposes to Natalya.

15. How does Lomov behave when he is excited?

When Lomov is excited his heart starts palpitating. His right eyebrow starts twitching. His foot goes to sleep. In the play, he becomes so excited that he falls unconscious.

16. Why does Natalya marry Lomov?

Natalia is excited to marry Lomov because she loved him so much. She wanted to marry him for a long time but when she knew that he had come to propose to her she decided to marry and asked her father to take him back.

17. What is the theme of a Marriage Proposal by Anton Chekhov?

The play is about the tendency of wealthy families to seek matrimonial ties. The real purpose is to increase their estates and landed properties.

18. What is the story all about A Marriage Proposal by Anton Chekhov?

It was written in 1888 - 89. This one act play is about the tendency of wealthy Russian families or people to seek marriage ties with other wealthy families or people to increase their estates by encouraging marriages that make good economic sense.

19. What is the message conveyed by Anton Chekhov in his play?

Anton Chekhov does convey the message that the principle of 'forgive and forget' helps a lot in maintaining cordial relationship with one's neighbours.

20. Justify the title of the play. 'A Marriage Proposal'

Anton Chekhov has aptly titled the play, 'The Proposal'. The title justifies the main theme—the marriage of Natalya and Lomov. No doubt, both Lomov and Natalya want to be life partners. However, unnecessary quarrels over Oxen Meadows and their dogs Squeezer and Guess temporarily spoil their game. The message is very clear. The main issue must not be clouded and lost sight of by indulging in unnecessary and avoidable quarrels.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Justify the Title of the one act play 'A Marriage Proposal'

OR

Consider 'A Marriage Proposal' a farce summary.

OR

Discuss 'A Marriage Proposal' as a farcical satire.

About the Author

Antony Chekhov was a great playwright and story writer. He was born on 29 January 1860 in a village in Southern Russia. His father ran a grocery store. His mother, Yevgeniya was an excellent storyteller. Chekhov was an established physician. He is considered to be among the greatest writers of short stories in the world. Chekhov once said, "Medicine is my lawful wife and literature is my mistress."

Introduction

Anton Chekov (1860-1904) was a famous writer. He is chiefly known for his short stories. This story 'The Proposal' is a romantic story of a neighbour named Ivan Lomov. He is a landowner and often gets money from Chuhukov's another landowner. Chubukov has a daughter named Natalya. Lomov comes to Chubukov with a marriage proposal for his daughter Natalya.

Characters

The main character, **Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov**, is a heavy-set man in his mid-thirties, prone to anxiety, stubbornness, and hypochondria. These flaws are further amplified because he becomes a nervous wreck when he tries to propose marriage.

Stepan Stephanovitch Chubukov owns land next to Ivan. A man in his early seventies, he gladly grants permission to Ivan, but soon calls off the engagement when an argument over property ensues. His chief concerns are maintaining his wealth and keeping his daughter happy.

Natalya was 25 years old and the daughter of Chubukov. She is a good housekeeper, not bad to look at and educated

Summary

In the short play "A Marriage Proposal," Anton Chekhov describes the odd courtship of Lomov, who seeks marriage with his neighbor's daughter. Lomov, aged 35, is a long time neighbor of Chubukov. He is a landowner who has inherited property from his aunt. Though he is well fed and healthy, he is hypochondriac. He suffers from palpitations and sleeplessness due to his

nervousness. He has passed a critical stage of marriage. He now knows that if he will search for an ideal woman or true love, he will never marry. So he is now desperate to marry Natalia. He thinks that she is not bad-looking and has some education. He wants to lead a steady and regular life. So, he visits the house of his neighbor

Chubukov early morning dressed in a formal suit. Chubukov is surprised at the unexpected arrival of in his formal dress. Lomov asks him Natalia's hand in marriage. Chubukov is also desperately looking for a suitable man for his 25-year-old daughter, Natalia. As a father of a grown-up daughter, he immediately gives joyful permission to marry Natalia.

She is invited into the room. Lomov becomes nervous and instead of putting his proposal, he begins to beat about the bush. When he says that his Ox Meadows touch her birch woods, she begins to argue with him about the ownership of that piece of land. After her father notices they are arguing, he joins in, and then sends Lomov out of the house. Chubukov then tells his daughter that Lomov was there to propose her.

Natalia repents and asks her father to call him back. Lomov comes and she asks him about his hunting program. He says that he will start hunting after harvest because his best dog has gone lame. At this point, Natalia contradicts him again and claims that her dog Leap is better than his dog Guess. Thus the quarrel begins again till over-excitement makes Lomov faint in a chair. Seeing him quiet and unmoving, Natalia thinks that he is dead and becomes hysterical. At last Lomov comes into senses and Chubukov forces them to kiss each other and accept the marriage proposal. Immediately following the kiss, Natalia and Lomov start quarreling. Chubukov shouts for Champagne because he wants to celebrate their marriage and at the same time he feels free by the burden of his grown-up daughter.

2. Explain the main theme of the play A Marriage Proposal and why it is considered a farce?

'The Proposal' is a one-act play. Actually, it is a farce written by Anton Chekhov in 1888-89. The play is about the tendency of wealthy families to seek matrimonial ties. The real purpose is to increase their estates and landed properties. Ivan Lomov was a wealthy neighbour of another wealthy farmer Stepan Chubukov. Lomov comes to seek the hand of Chubukov's twenty-five-year-old daughter, Natalya. Lomov, Chubukov and Natalya—all three are quarrelsome people. They quarrel over petty or small issues.

Each one of them has a claim over a particular piece of land. They also quarrel over their dogs. Amidst this quarrelling, they completely forget the real issue — the marriage proposal. But good sense prevails in the end. Economic good sense ensures that the proposal is made. Chubukov doesn't want

to miss the opportunity. He puts his daughter's hand into Lomov's hands. He doesn't waste any time and blesses them. However, old habits die hard. The newly married couple starts their married life with a fresh quarrel.

A farce is a comedy which aims to entertain the audience by means of unlikely, extravagant, and improbable situations, disguise and mistaken identity, verbal humour of varying degrees of sophistication, which may include sexual innuendo and word play, and a fast-paced plot whose speed usually increases, culminating in an ending which often involves an elaborate chase scene. Farce is also characterized by physical humour, the use of deliberate absurdity or nonsense, and broadly stylized performances. Farces have been written for the stage and film.

The Proposal explores the process of getting married and could be read as a satire on the upper middle class and courtship. The play points out the struggle to balance the economic necessities of marriage and what the characters themselves actually want. It shows the characters' desperation for marriage as comical.

In Chekhov's Russia, marriage was a mean of economic stability for most people. They married to gain wealth and possessions or to satisfy social pressure. The satire is conveyed successfully by emphasizing the couple's foolish arguments over small things. The main arguments in the play revolve around "The Oxen Meadows" and two dogs called "Guess and Squeezer".



UNIT V

GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION

9

Grammar

TENSES

Tenses play a crucial role in the English language. It denotes the time an action takes place, whether sometime in the past, in the present or will take some time in the future.

Types of Tenses

From a general view of tenses, this module will go on to discuss each tense in detail with examples and also New way to learn Tense with Examples and Exercises. The table below gives a glimpse of the way tenses are used using the verb 'play'.

Present	Plays (verb+s)
Past	Played (verb+ed)
Future	play (shall+verb)
Present Continous	is/am/are playing (is/am/are+verb+ing)
Past Continuous	was/were playing (was/were+verb+ing)
Future Continous	will/shall be playing (will/shall be+verb+ing)
Present perfect	has/have played (has/have+past participle)
Past perfect	had played (had+past participle)
Future Perfect	will/shall have played (will/shall+past participle)

Present Perfect Continuous	had been playing (had been+verb+ing)
Past Perfect Continuous	has/have been playing (has/have been+verb+ing)
Future Perfect Continuous	will/shall have been playing (will/shall have been+verb+ing)

There are 12 types of tenses.

PRESENT TENSE

1. **Simple Present Tense:** Indicates an action that is generally true or habitual. That is, it took place in the past, continue to take place in the present, and will take place in the future. This tense is used to denote

- a habitual action - for instance, "He walk to school."

general truths - for instance, "The sun rises in the east", "Honesty is the best policy."

- a future event that is part of a fixed timetable- for instance, "The match starts at 9 o' clock."

Note:

The form of Simple Present Tense is - verb (infinitive without 'to' and agreeable with the subject)

2. **Present Perfect Tense:** Indicates an action that has been completed sometime before the present moment, with a result that affects the present situation. For example, "He has finished the work."

"He has slept."

Note:

The form of Present Perfect Tense is - has/have + verb (past participle form or 3rd form of the verb)

3. **Present Continuous Tense:** Indicates an action that is taking place at the moment of speaking.

For example, "She is walking." "I am studying."

Note:

The form of Present Continuous Tense is - is/am/are + verb + ing

4. **Present Perfect Continuous Tense:** Indicates an action that started in the past and is continuing at the present time. For example, "He has been sleeping for an hour."

Note:

The form of Present Perfect Continuous Tense is - has/have + been + verb + ing

PAST TENSE

1. **Simple Past Tense:** Indicates an action took place before the present moment and that has no real connection with the present time.

For example, "He danced in the function." (The action took place in the past, is finished and is completely unrelated to the present)

"He flew to London yesterday."

Note:

The verb 'flew' is an irregular.

2. **Past Perfect Tense:** Indicates an action in the past that had been completed before another time or event in the past.

For example, "He had exercised before it started to rain."

"He had slept before I came back from the market."

Note:

The form of Past Perfect Tense is - had + verb (past participle form or the 3rd form of the verb)

3. **Past Continuous Tense:** Indicates an action going on at some time in the past or an action in the past that is longer in duration than another action in the past.

For example, "It was getting darker."

"The light went out while they were reading."

Note:

The form of Past Continuous Tense is - was/were + verb + ing

4. **Past Perfect Continuous Tense:** Indicates an action in the past that took place before another time or event in the past and continued during the second event/time point in the past.

For example, "At that time, he had been writing a novel for two months."

"He had been exercising when I called."

Note:

The form of Past Perfect Continuous Tense is - had + been + verb + ing

FUTURE TENSE

1. **Simple Future Tense:** Indicates an action that will take place after the present time and that has no real connection with the present time.

For example, "She will visit her ailing grandmother soon."

"He will walk home."

Note:

The form of Simple Future Tense is - will/shall + verb

2. **Future Perfect Tense:** Indicates an action in the future that will have been completed before another time or event in the future.

For example, "By the time we arrive, he will have studied."

Note:

The form of Future Perfect Tense is - will/shall have + verb (past participle form or 3rd form of the verb)

3. **Future Continuous Tense:** Indicates an action in the future that is longer in duration than another action in the future.

For example, "He will be walking when it starts to rain."

Note:

The form of Future Continuous Tense is - will/shall be + verb + ing

4. **Future Perfect Continuous Tense:** Indicates an action in the future that will have been continuing until another time or event in the future.

For example, "He will have been exercising an hour at 2:00."

Note:

The form of Future Perfect Continuous Tense is - will/shall have been + verb + ing

Choose the correct verb from those in brackets

- a. The earth _____ round the sun. (move, moves, moved)
- b. My friends _____ the film yesterday. (see, saw, have seen)
- c. It started to rain while we _____ tennis. (are playing, had played, were playing)
- d. I _____ English for five years. (have been studying, study, am studying)
- e. The train _____ before we reach the station. (arrives, will have arrived, had arrived)

- f. Don't disturb me. I _____ my work. (do, did, am doing)
- g. Fortune _____ the brave. (is favouring, will favour, favours)
- h. I _____ the letter before you arrived. (had written, wrote, will write)
- i. He _____ us next week. (will have met, will have been meeting, will be meeting)
- j. Perhaps we _____ Delhi next month. (visit, will visit, visited)

Complete the dialogue

- Rashid : Rahul! Your friend Manas has sent you a postcard. It's from Kerala. It _____ (look) nice.
- Rahul : I bet it does!
- Rashid : He _____ (write) that it's very hot there. There _____ (be) a lot of tourists. The hotels _____ (be) full. He _____ (say) the restaurants _____ (be) always full!
- Rahul : Yes. I'm sure it is. The papers _____ (say) that the temperature there is 30°C.
- Rashid : Then he _____ (write) that he has learnt a bit of Malayalam, and that he _____ (get on) well with the people there, especially the women!
- Rashid : Look, didn't the newspaper _____ (say) that there's another strike in Kerala.
- Rahul : Yes, it did. Manas won't mind having to stay in Kerala longer!

Correct the following sentences

- i. I lived in Calcutta since 1930.
- ii. She died before her husband came.
- iii. I have written a letter to her last Monday.
- iv. I am reading Kalidasa for the last six days.
- v. The new hotel has been opened last Saturday.
- vi. He had gone to Madras last week.
- vii. The train leaves the station before I reached there.
- viii. I wish my men had been coming quickly and find us.
- ix. At the moment the baby sleeps in the cradle.
- x. He goes out for ten minutes.

VERB

Definition

A verb is a word or a combination of words that indicates action or a state of being or condition. A verb is the part of a sentence that tells us what the subject performs. Verbs are the hearts of English sentences.

Examples:

Jacob walks in the morning. (A usual action)

Mike is going to school. (A condition of action)

Albert does not like to walk. (A negative action)

Anna is a good girl. (A state of being)

Basic Forms of Verbs

There are six basic forms of verbs. These forms are as follows:

Base form: Children play in the field.

Infinitive: Tell them not to play.

Past tense: They played football yesterday.

Past participle: I have eaten a burger.

Present participle: I saw them playing with him today.

Gerund: Swimming is the best exercise.

Different Types of Verbs

Main/Base Verb

Regular/Weak Verb

Irregular/Strong Verb

Transitive Verb

Intransitive Verb

Weak Verb

Strong Verb

Finite Verbs

Non-finite Verbs

Action Verbs

Linking Verb

Auxiliary Verbs

Modal Verbs

Reflexive Verb

Ergative Verb

Phrasal Verb

Lexical Verb

Delexical Verb

Stative/Being Verb

Dynamic Verb

Non-continuous Verb

Participle

Gerund

Infinitive

Base Verb: The base verb is the form of a verb where it has no ending (-ing, -ed, -en) added to it. It is also called the Root Verb since it is the very root form of a verb.

Examples:

I go to school every day.

You run a mile every morning.

Do your homework.

Regular Verb: The Verbs that follow the most usual conjugations are considered Regular Verbs. It is regular since it abides by most if not all of the regular grammar rules there are.

Examples:

Rehan plays cricket.

Tam called out my name.

You really walked all the way back?

Irregular Verb: The Verbs that have irregularities in terms of following grammar rules are Irregular Verbs, in general.

Examples:

Do the dishes.

I hardly ever drink enough water in a day.

She drove all the way back.

Transitive Verb: The Main Verb that takes a direct object sitting right after it would be a Transitive Verb. They usually construct the most straightforward of sentences.

Examples:

She went to the fair.

We do not like being called out loud in crowds.

I love visiting my village home.

Intransitive Verb: The main Verb that does not take a direct object specified right afterward and rather there is an indirect one mentioned somewhere along the line is called an Intransitive Verb. These verbs often make the corresponding sentences incomplete.

Example:

I laughed.

John ran.

A ghaat of cold wind blew.

Weak Verb: Verbs that end with “-d” and “-t” in their Past Indefinite and Past Participle form are Weak Verbs. There is a tendency to associate Weak Verbs with Regular Verbs but not all Weak Verbs are Regular Verbs in the English language.

Examples:

<i>Present Indefinite</i>	<i>Past Indefinite</i>
Spend	Spent
Walk	Walked
Book	Booked
Learn	Learnt
Want	Wanted

Strong Verb: Strong Verbs are those in which the vowels in the verb stem changes from “i” to “a” to “u” in the Present Indefinite to Past Indefinite to Past Participle form of Verbs.

<i>Present Indefinite</i>	<i>Past Indefinite</i>	<i>Past Participle</i>
Ring	Rang	Rung
Drink	Drank	Drunk
Cling	Clang	Clung
Swim	Swam	Swum
Sing	Sang	Sung
Wring	Wrang	Wrung

Finite Verbs: Finite verbs are the actual verbs that are called the roots of sentences. It is a form of a verb that is performed by or refers to a subject and uses one of the twelve forms of tense and changes according to the number/person of the subject.

Example: Alex went to school. (Subject – Alex – performed the action in the past. This information is evident only by the verb ‘went’.)

Robert plays hockey.

He is playing for Australia.

He is one of the best players. (Here, the verb ‘is’ directly refers to the subject itself.)

Non-finite Verbs: Non-finite Verbs are not actual verbs. They do not work as verbs in the sentence rather they work as nouns, adjectives, adverbs, etc. Non-finite verbs do not change according to the number/person of the subject because these verbs, also called verbals, do not have any direct relation to the subject. Sometimes they become the subject themselves. The forms of non-finite verbs are – infinitive, gerund, and participle (participles become finite verbs when they take auxiliary verbs.)

Example:

Alex went abroad to play (Infinitives)

Playing cricket is his only job. (Present participle)

I have a broken bat. (Past participle)

Walking is a good habit. (Gerund)

Action Verbs: Action verbs indicate what the subject of a sentence performs. Action verbs can make the listener/reader feel emotions, see scenes more vividly and accurately.

Action verbs can be transitive or intransitive.

Transitive verbs must have a direct object. A transitive verb demands something/someone to be acted upon.

Example:

I painted the car. (The verb 'paint' demands an object to be painted)

She is reading the newspaper. (The verb 'read' asks the question "what is she reading?" – the answer is the object)

Intransitive verbs do not act upon anything. They may be followed by an adjective, adverb, preposition, or another part of speech.

Example:

She smiled. (The verb 'smile' cannot have any object since the action of 'smiling' does not fall upon anything/anyone)

I wake up at 6 AM. (No object is needed for this verb)

Note: {Subject + Intransitive verb} is sufficient to make a complete sentence but {Subject + Transitive verb} is not sufficient because transitive verbs demand a direct object.

Linking Verb: A linking verb adds details about the subject of a sentence. In its simplest form, it connects the subject and the complement — that is, the words that follow the linking verb. It creates a link between them instead of showing action. Often, what is on each side of a linking verb is equivalent; the complement redefines or restates the subject. Generally, linking verbs are called 'be' verbs which are - am, is, are, was, were. However, there are some other verbs that can work as linking verbs. Those verbs are: Act, feel, remain, appear, become, seem, smell, sound, grow, look, prove, stay, taste, turn. Some verbs in this list can also be action verbs. To figure out if they are linking verbs, you should try replacing them with forms of the be verbs. If the changed sentence makes sense, that verb is a linking verb.

Example:

She appears ready for the game. (She is ready for the game.)

The food seemed delicious. (The food was delicious.)

You look happy. (You are happy.)

Auxiliary Verbs: Auxiliary verbs are also called helping verbs. An auxiliary verb extends the main verb by helping to show time, tense, and possibility. The auxiliary verbs are – be verbs, have, and do. They are used in the continuous (progressive) and perfect tenses. Linking verbs work as main verbs in the sentence, but auxiliary verbs help main verbs. Do is an auxiliary verb that is used to ask questions, to express negation, to provide emphasis, and more.

Example:

Alex is going to school.

They are walking in the park.

I have seen a movie.

Do you drink tea?

Don't waste your time.

Please, do submit your assignments.

Modal Verbs: A modal verb is a kind of auxiliary verb. It assists the main verb to indicate possibility, potentiality, ability, permission, expectation, and obligation. The modal verbs are can, could, must, may, might, ought to, shall, should, will, would.

Example:

I may want to talk to you again.

They must play their best game to win.

She should call him.

I will go there.

Reflexive Verb: When the Subject and the Object are the same and the Verb reflects on the Subject, that is the Reflexive Verb. These Verbs are often used with Reflexive Pronouns like - myself, himself, herself, itself etc.

Examples:

He has done it himself.

I'll watch it myself.

Ergative Verb: Ergative Verbs can be used as Transitive and Intransitive Verb. They are also called Labile Verb in English.

Examples:

Intransitive Verbs

Transitive Verbs

The door opens.

I opened the door.

The bell rang.

She rang the bell.

The light is fused.

They fused the lights.

The whistle blew.

Tom blew the whistle.

Phrasal Verb: An idiomatic phrase consisting of a Verb and another element, most likely an Adverb or a Preposition is called a Phrasal Verb.

Examples:

She broke down in tears.

Don't look down upon the poor.

I'll see to it.

Lexical Verb: Lexical Verb is the main or principal verb of a sentence which typically takes the major responsibility of a Verb that represents the action of the Noun or Pronoun.

Examples:

He ran to his father.

I laughed out loud.

Rina tried her best.

Delexical Verb: Delexical Verbs lack importance when it comes to meaning since these Verbs hardly have meanings of their own when used individually. The meaning is taken out of the Verbs and put into the Noun. Take, have, make, give etc. are Delexical Verbs.

Examples:

He took a shower.

I had a cold drink.

She made some arrangements.

Stative Verb: The Verbs that describe the state of being are called Stative or Being Verbs.

Examples:

I need some boxes.

You belong to the pomp and power.

He smells danger.

They remember what happened that day.

Dynamic Verb: The Verbs that entail continuous or progressive action of the Subject are called Dynamic or Fientive Verbs. They express the Subject's state of being on the move.

Examples:

He's running fast.

Keep hitting the ball hard.

The dog goes for a walk every afternoon.

Non-continuous Verb: The Verbs that are usually never used in their continuous forms are called Non-continuous Verbs.

Examples:

I like to swim.

I'm liking to swim.

I love to do the chords.

I'm loving to do the chords.

He does not hate you.

He's hating you.

Intensive Verb: The Verbs that focus intensely on just the Subject are called Intensive Verbs. Intensive Verbs are also called Linking or Copular Verbs.

Examples:

You seem happy.

It appears to be just perfect.

She looks stunning.

He's become rather irritable.

Extensive Verb: All the Verbs that do not focus intensively on just the Subject (as the Intensive Verbs) of the sentence are Extensive Verbs.

Examples:

He loves her

She runs too fast.

Ron sells fish.

PARTICIPLE

A participle is a Verb form where they retain some of the characteristics and functions of both Verbs and adopt those of the Adjectives.

Examples:

Present Participle (Verb + -ing)

Have I become a laughing stock?

Cycling is a well-rounded exercise.

Past Participle

I have taken a hint.

Have you given it enough thought?

Perfect Participle (Having + Past Participle)

Having said that, I was quite worried.

Having stepped out of my comfort zone, I saw a whole new world.

GERUND

The Verbs having -ing endings that function like Nouns in sentences are called Gerunds.

Examples:

Smoking is injurious to health.

Walking is good for health.

I love swimming.

Infinitive

The 'to + Verb' forms where the Verbs are at their base or stem forms while they function as Nouns, Adjectives or Adverbs instead of Verbs.

Examples:

I wanted to help you out.

Are you trying to go there?

I just love to flaunt my new Ferarri.

SUBJECT VERB CONCORD

‘Subject’ is a noun or pronoun that tells us what the sentence talks about and ‘verb’ represents the action in the sentence. Then what is ‘subject verb concord/agreement’? It means that the subject and verb in a sentence should agree or match, otherwise the sentence will not sound right. Let’s understand the basic rules of subject-verb agreement.

Rule 1

The verb and subject must agree in number (singular or plural) This means that if the subject is singular, the verb should be singular and if the subject is plural, the verb should also be plural.

Examples:

He plays football. (SINGULAR)

They play football. (PLURAL)

Rule 2

The number of the subject (singular or plural) will not change due to words/phrases in between the subject and the verb.

Examples:

One of the glasses is empty. (Here, since the subject is ‘one’, the verb should be ‘is’).

The bouquet of red roses smells so sweet. (Here, since ‘bouquet’ is the subject and not ‘roses’, the verb should be ‘smells’ and not ‘smell’)

Rule 3

Subjects that are joined by ‘and’ in a sentence, use a plural verb. Subjects that are joined by ‘either/or’, ‘neither/nor’ use a singular verb.

Examples:

Radha and Meera are coming home.

Neither Akshay nor Rohit is coming home.

My dad or my mom is arriving today.

Rule 4

The verb in a sentence containing 'or', 'either/or', 'neither/nor' agrees with the noun or pronoun closest to it.

Examples:

Neither the shoes nor the bag matches the dress. (Here, 'bag' is closest to the verb, hence 'matches')

Neither the bag nor the shoes match the dress. (Here, 'shoes' is closest to the verb, hence 'match')

Rule 5

When the subject is followed by words such as 'as well as', 'along with', 'besides', 'not' etc. ignore them and use a singular verb if the subject is singular.

Examples:

Matt, as well as his dog, is expected shortly.

Pratik, along with his brother, is going to school.

Rule 6

In sentences that begin with 'here', 'there', the true subject usually follows the verb.

Examples:

Here are the chocolates.

There is a big puddle on the road.

Rule 7

In sentences that include sums of money, periods of time or distances etc. (as a unit), use singular verbs.

Examples:

500 rupees is a high price to pay.

62 years is the minimum age of retirement.

10 kilometers is too far to walk.

Rule 8

In the case of words such as 'a lot of', 'all', 'some' etc. in a sentence, pay attention to the noun after 'of'. If the noun after 'of' is singular then use a singular verb, if plural, use a plural verb.

Examples:

All of the cake is gone.

All of the cakes are gone.

A lot of the cake is gone.

A lot of the cakes are gone.

Some of the cake is gone.

Some of the cakes are gone.

Rule 9

In the case of collective nouns such as 'group', 'population', 'family', in a sentence, the verb can be singular or plural depending on their use in the sentence.

Examples:

Most of my family is here OR are here.

Half of the population was against the bill OR were against the bill.

Rule 10

Nouns such as 'mathematics', 'civics', 'news' etc. while plural in form, are singular in meaning and use singular verbs.

Examples:

Mathematics is very difficult for some people.

The news is very saddening.

Rule 11

In sentences that express a wish, request or contrary to fact, the word 'were' is used instead of 'was'.

Examples:

I wish my sister were here.

Aditya requested that she raise her glass.

Choose the correct subject verb combinations in the sentences below

1. The lady in the car (look/looks) like your mother.
2. Most of the milk (is/are) gone.
3. One of the flowers (has/have) wilted.
4. Either Ram or Shyam (is/are) coming today.
5. Here (is/are) the newspaper.
6. The group of dancers (is/are) here.
7. Civics (is/are) my favorite subject.

TYPES OF ADVERBS

Adverbs dress up verbs, adjectives or other adverbs. Since verbs are such integral parts of our everyday language, their modifiers are also multi-faceted. To start, there are five types of adverbs you should familiarize yourself with: adverbs of degree, frequency, manner, place, and time. With these categories under your belt, you'll be well-positioned to identify all the different types of adverbs.

Adverbs of Manner

Adverbs of manner tell us how, or in what manner, something was carried out. They mostly modify verbs and can often be found at the end of a clause or right before the word they modify. This category comprises the most common adverbs — the ones that end in -ly.

Here are some examples of adverbs of manner:

beautifully
generously
happily
neatly
patiently
softly
quickly
well

Example sentences that include these types of adverbs include:

He trimmed the white roses neatly. (How did he trim them?)

I combed my dog's fur carefully because it had lots of tangles. (How did you comb it?)

Please discuss the topic calmly. (How should I discuss it?)

An anonymous donor generously gave us enough money for the new stage. (How did they give the money?)

The little girl skipped happily down the road. (How did she skip?)

ADVERBS OF DEGREE

Adverbs of degree tell us more about the intensity of the verb in the sentence. They describe how much, or to what degree, something happened. Adverbs of degree are often placed before the word they modify, although in some cases, they follow the word (such as the adverb “enough”).

Popular adverbs of degree include:

almost

enough

hardly

just

nearly

quite

simply

so

too

Read these sample sentences to see how adverbs of degree provide more information about the words they modify.

This short essay is hardly sufficient. (How sufficient is it?)

The dress is simply gorgeous. (How gorgeous is it?)

I'm so excited to move to Ireland. (How excited are you?)

Tori lost almost all her savings. (How much of her savings did she lose?)

The book was interesting enough to keep my attention. (How interesting was it?)

Adverbs of Frequency

Adverbs of frequency let us know how often something occurs. These adverbs tend to appear right before the main verb in the sentence or at the end of the clause. Popular adverbs in this category include:

again
 always
 every (hour, day, week, year, and so on)
 never
 normally
 rarely
 seldom
 sometimes
 usually

Sentences with these types of adverbs include:

I always read a book before bed. (How often do you read a book before bed?)

He normally walks his dog at this time. (How often does he walk his dog at this time?)

She usually shops at the Korean market in town. (How often does she shop there?)

We never stay up past ten o'clock. (How often do you stay up that late?)

I'd love to visit Denmark again. (How often would you like to visit?)

Adverbs of Place

Adverbs of place tell us more about where the verb took place. Many writers confuse them with prepositions, which describe the location of nouns. While some of these words can function as prepositions, they are considered adverbs when they modify verbs. Also, prepositions are followed by objects, while adverbs of place are not.

Common adverbs of place include:

above
 anywhere
 back

below
 everywhere
 here
 inside
 nowhere
 out
 outside
 there

Let's take a look at them in action:

In Ireland, there are thatched-roof cottages everywhere. (Where are the cottages?)

There are more boxes over there. (Where are there more boxes?)

It's time for lunch, so go inside. (Where should I go?)

You can park anywhere. (Where can I park?)

Let's go back before we get lost. (Where should we go?)

Adverbs of Time

Adverbs of time detail when the verb took place. We usually see these kinds of adverbs placed at the beginning or end of a sentence. Although many prepositions can also indicate when something happened, they are always followed by objects, so you can easily tell when a word is an adverb.

Adverbs of time include:

already
 earlier
 immediately
 lately
 later
 now
 recently
 soon
 tomorrow
 yesterday

You can use adverbs of time in the following sentences:

Lately, you've been rude to everyone around. (When were you rude?)

They recently relocated to Santa Fe. (When did they relocate?)

The morning newspaper arrives earlier. (When does it arrive?)

We'll take a trip to Yosemite later. (When will we take a trip?)

I'll finish my project tomorrow. (When will you finish it?)

Reading Comprehension

WHAT IS READING COMPREHENSION?

Reading comprehension is the ability to process what is being read, understand the meaning the author is trying to convey — both textually and subtextually — and make inferences based on prior knowledge. This skill deals about the reader's cognitive skills, such as visual processing, processing speed, and logic and reasoning skills, can all have an impact on their ability to comprehend text.

Prior knowledge, language fluency, and the ability to make inferences will also play a role in a reader's comprehension. Reading comprehension involves both text comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. You need to know what each word means individually and as part of the whole in addition to what the text is trying to convey.

WHY ARE READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS IMPORTANT?

Reading comprehension demonstrates your ability to understand, interpret, analyze, and infer written information. Your reading comprehension level is indicative of many other important, and sought-after, skills in the workplace. Your overall communication skills, your critical thinking skills, your attention to detail, your decision-making ability, even your ability to concentrate can all be assumed from your ability to understand what you read.

Considerable jobs also examines the comprehension abilities to determine if a candidate will be a good fit for the role and the company. Comprehension plays a role in your ability to communicate with and understand your co-workers, supervisors, managers, and your clients. It can help you make decisions and formulate a plan. Your ability to interpret the written word empowers you.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Reading comprehension is a skill. And, like any skill, it can be improved with practice. It should be noted, though, that this is an extremely difficult skill to build. You will need time and patience to improve your comprehension abilities to any degree. Improve your vocabulary. Your understanding of the words being used will have a direct effect on your ability to comprehend the text. Fluency in the language you are reading is important, but may not always be possible.

Do your best to build your vocabulary regularly to improve your comprehension.

Every exchange has its language. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the common language used in your exchange or organization. Without knowledge of the common terms and phrases, you will not be able to fully comprehend what you're reading.

Skim first: This is more useful for longer or more complex texts. Although, you may skim your emails and memos to gather important information quickly. Be sure to skim through the text first to glean any important information before reading through more thoroughly. By skimming first, you allow yourself to gather the main points before diving in deeper. This can help you to focus on the information you need more clearly.

Ask questions: Before you begin reading, while you are reading, and after you are finished, you should be asking questions about the text. This can help you to determine the main points and find the deeper meaning. Asking questions can help you become more invested in the text as you search for answers. The more specific the questions you ask, the more insight you'll gain.

Use context clues: If you're unable to understand exactly what a word, sentence or phrase means, use clues from the surrounding text to help you gain clarity. Using context clues can help you to build your vocabulary, which we already know is an important part of reading comprehension.

Summarize: You can practice this throughout the text, or once you've finished reading. By restating the main ideas in your own words, you will see the text in a language that makes the most sense to you. Not only will this help you to better understand the information being conveyed, but you will also be better able to relay this information. You want to make sure that you are clear in your meaning when you explain the text to co-workers or clients.

Make inferences: You need to read between the lines. Reading comprehension is about understanding what is being said both textually and subtextually. Try to see the subtext and understand what is being implied. By drawing inferences, you can make connections and conclusions based on what you've read.

Visualize: If you're working with a complex concept or struggling to understand it, visualization can be the difference. Create a mental image or draw a graphic organizer to help extract meaning from the text. Visualization is an immensely helpful skill that can have a significant impact on your ability to recall information. Visualization is strongly linked to short-term and long-term memory.

Pointers to make Effective Reading Comprehension Practice

It is not easy to improve your reading comprehension skills. Time and practice are the only way to build this skill, meaning it's important to practice regularly. In other words: read, read, read, and read some more. You can do both guided reading practice and relaxed reading practice. Both will help you build your comprehension skills. There are ways to help you make the most of your reading comprehension practice. If you're trying to improve your comprehension skills:

- **Read aloud:** When you hear the text instead of just seeing the words on the page, it can help you to decipher meaning. It can help you to better concentrate on the text, sharpening your focus and allowing you to dedicate your attention to what is being said. Studies have found that reading aloud can also help you to commit the text to memory and recall it later.
- **Reread to build fluency:** If a text is complex or you're having trouble understanding it, reading through it at least twice can help immensely. The first read-through allows you to focus on the vocabulary knowledge involved in incomprehension. Subsequent read-throughs will allow you to focus on text comprehension. To truly benefit from this strategy, you should follow the steps outlined above in the first, and perhaps second, time reading the text to ensure that you're absorbing all the necessary information.
- **Do both guided reading and relaxed reading:** Typically, guided reading refers to reading with an instructor in a small group setting. Here, guided reading simply means reading passages or chapters and checking that knowledge. There are plenty of reading comprehension worksheets and passages available. If you find these to be too simple, you can find free versions of standardized exams available online. There are also inexpensive books dedicated to the reading comprehension sections of many exams. These will provide you with exactly what you need: complex passages that are followed by questions to check your comprehension.
- **Don't focus solely on guided reading, though:** You should also practice relaxed reading. This is reading books, magazines, graphic novels, anything you enjoy reading in a relaxed setting. With relaxed reading, you don't want to focus on getting everything you can out of the text. You simply want to practice your skills through reading.

- **Keep notes:** Keep a notebook or set of Post-it notes with you while you're reading. Make notes of main points, important facts, or anything you feel you need to remember. If there is a challenging passage that you're able to decipher, make a note of it.
- **Mark anything you don't understand:** If you come across a word or phrase that you don't understand, make a note. You can mark it in the notes you're keeping thanks to the previous point, or highlight/underline it in the text.
- **Don't just make a note, though:** Look up the meaning and mark that in your notes as well. This will help you to recall the information better when you read through it again.
- **Avoid distractions:** If you can't concentrate on what you're reading, your comprehension will suffer. If you've ever been in a distracting environment and found yourself rereading the same sentence over and over without the information ever sinking in, you know what I mean. If you're reading a complex text or one that is overflowing with important information, remove the distractions. If it's loud, consider using headphones to block out the noise. If you're in a visually distracting environment, relocate.
- **Summarize:** This point was made in the previous section, but it felt necessary to mention it again. Summarizing what you have read is one of the easiest ways to build your reading comprehension skills. This means more than summarizing everything you've read. If you come across a particularly dense or confusing passage, summarize. If there is a sentence you're not quite decoding, try to summarize. And, one more time with feeling: summarize.
- **Read a variety of texts and subjects:** Not all texts are created equal. And, even if they were, it would get boring to read the same type of content over and over. Add some variation to your practice.
- **Keep it simple or find something more complex:** Expose yourself to a variety of subjects. The variation will help you build out your vocabulary even further and add to your knowledge bank. Inferring will become easier and comprehension will come faster.
- **Underline main points:** This is pretty straightforward. Underlining the main points and important pieces of information as you read will allow you to go back to them. This is information you want to commit to memory and recall later. If you can skim through and easily locate it, it will simplify the process for you.

READING COMPREHENSION PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Passage 1

Caffeine, the stimulant in coffee, has been called “the most widely used psychoactive substance on Earth.” Snyder, Daly and Bruns have recently proposed that caffeine affects behavior by countering the activity in the human brain of a naturally occurring chemical called adenosine. Adenosine normally depresses neuron firing in many areas of the brain. It apparently does this by inhibiting the release of neurotransmitters, chemicals that carry nerve impulses from one neuron to the next. Like many other agents that affect neuron firing, adenosine must first bind to specific receptors on neuronal membranes. There are at least two classes of these receptors, which have been designated A1 and A2.

Snyder et al propose that caffeine, which is structurally similar to adenosine, is able to bind to both types of receptors, which prevents adenosine from attaching there and allows the neurons to fire more readily than they otherwise would.

For many years, caffeine’s effects have been attributed to its inhibition of the production of phosphodiesterase, an enzyme that breaks down the chemical called cyclic AMP. A number of neurotransmitters exert their effects by first increasing cyclic AMP concentrations in target neurons. Therefore, prolonged periods at the elevated concentrations, as might be brought about by a phosphodiesterase inhibitor, could lead to a greater amount of neuron firing and, consequently, to behavioral stimulation. But Snyder et al point out that the caffeine concentrations needed to inhibit the production of phosphodiesterase in the brain are much higher than those that produce stimulation. Moreover, other compounds that block phosphodiesterase’s activity are not stimulants.

To buttress their case that caffeine acts instead by preventing adenosine binding, Snyder et al compared the stimulatory effects of a series of caffeine derivatives with their ability to dislodge adenosine from its receptors in the brains of mice. “In general,” they reported, “the ability of the compounds to compete at the receptors correlates with their ability to stimulate locomotion in the mouse; i.e., the higher their capacity to bind at the receptors, the higher their ability to stimulate locomotion.” Theophylline, a close structural relative of caffeine and the major stimulant in tea, was one of the most effective compounds in both regards. There were some apparent exceptions to the general correlation observed between adenosine-receptor binding and stimulation. One of these was a compound called 3-isobutyl-1-methylxanthine (IBMX), which bound very well but actually depressed mouse locomotion. Snyder et al suggest that this is not a major stumbling block to their hypothesis. The problem is that the compound has mixed effects in the brain, a not unusual occurrence with psychoactive drugs. Even caffeine, which is generally known only for its stimulatory effects, displays this property, depressing mouse locomotion at very low concentrations and stimulating it at higher ones.

Based on the Passage, answer the following questions:

1. The primary purpose of the passage is to
 - a) discuss a plan for investigation of a phenomenon that is not yet fully understood
 - b) present two explanations of a phenomenon and reconcile the differences between them
 - c) summarize two theories and suggest a third theory that overcomes the problems encountered in the first two
 - d) describe an alternative hypothesis and provide evidence and arguments that support it
 - e) challenge the validity of a theory by exposing the inconsistencies and contradictions in it
2. According to Snyder et al, caffeine differs from adenosine in that caffeine
 - a) stimulates behavior in the mouse and in humans, whereas adenosine stimulates behavior in humans only
 - b) has mixed effects in the brain, whereas adenosine has only a stimulatory effect
 - c) increases cyclic AMP concentrations in target neurons, whereas adenosine decreases such concentrations
 - d) permits release of neurotransmitters when it is bound to adenosine receptors, whereas adenosine inhibits such release
 - e) inhibits both neuron firing and the production of phosphodiesterase when there is a sufficient concentration in the brain, whereas adenosine inhibits only neuron firing
3. In response to experimental results concerning IBMX, Snyder et al contended that it is not uncommon for psychoactive drugs to have
 - a) mixed effects in the brain
 - b) inhibitory effects on enzymes in the brain
 - c) close structural relationships with caffeine
 - d) depressive effects on mouse locomotion
 - e) the ability to dislodge caffeine from receptors in the brain

4. According to Snyder et al, all of the following compounds can bind to specific receptors in the brain EXCEPT
 - a) IBMX
 - b) caffeine
 - c) adenosine
 - d) theophylline
 - e) phosphodiesterase
5. Snyder et al suggest that caffeine's ability to bind to A1 and A2 receptors can be at least partially attributed to which of the following?
 - a) The chemical relationship between caffeine and phosphodiesterase
 - b) The structural relationship between caffeine and adenosine
 - c) The structural similarity between caffeine and neurotransmitters
 - d) The ability of caffeine to stimulate behavior
 - e) The natural occurrence of caffeine and adenosine in the brain

Passage 2

Archaeology as a profession faces two major problems. First, it is the poorest of the poor. Only paltry sums are available for excavating and even less is available for publishing the results and preserving the sites once excavated. Yet archaeologists deal with priceless objects every day.

Second, there is the problem of illegal excavation, resulting in museum-quality pieces being sold to the highest bidder. I would like to make an outrageous suggestion that would at one stroke provide funds for archaeology and reduce the amount of illegal digging. I would propose that scientific archaeological expeditions and governmental authorities sell excavated artifacts on the open market. Such sales would provide substantial funds for the excavation and preservation of archaeological sites and the publication of results. At the same time, they would break the illegal excavator's grip on the market, thereby decreasing the inducement to engage in illegal activities.

You might object that professionals excavate to acquire knowledge, not money. Moreover, ancient artifacts are part of our global cultural heritage, which should be available for all to appreciate, not sold to the highest bidder. I agree. Sell nothing that has unique artistic merit or scientific value. But, you might reply, everything that comes out of the ground has scientific value. Here we part company. Theoretically, you may be correct in claiming that every artifact has potential scientific value. Practically, you are wrong.

I refer to the thousands of pottery vessels and ancient lamps that are essentially duplicates of one another. In one small excavation in Cyprus, archaeologists recently uncovered 2,000 virtually indistinguishable small jugs in a single courtyard, even precious royal seal impressions known as *melekh* handles have been found in abundance — more than 4,000 examples so far.

The basement of museums is simply not large enough to store the artifacts that are likely to be discovered in the future. There is not enough money even to catalogue the finds; as a result, they cannot be found again and become as inaccessible as if they had never been discovered. Indeed, with the help of a computer, sold artifacts could be more accessible than are the pieces stored in bulging museum basements. Prior to sale, each could be photographed and the list of the purchasers could be maintained on the computer. A purchaser could even be required to agree to return the piece if it should become needed for scientific purposes. It would be unrealistic to suggest that illegal digging would stop if artifacts were sold in the open market. But the demand for the clandestine product would be substantially reduced. Who would want an unmarked pot when another was available whose provenance was known, and that was dated stratigraphically by the professional archaeologist who excavated it?

Based on the Passage, answer the following questions:

1. The primary purpose of the passage is to propose
 - a) an alternative to museum display of artifacts
 - b) a way to curb illegal digging while benefiting the archaeological profession
 - c) a way to distinguish artifacts with scientific value from those that have no such value
 - d) the governmental regulation of archaeological sites
 - e) a new system for cataloging duplicate artifacts
2. The author implies that all of the following statements about duplicate artifacts are true EXCEPT:
 - a) A market for such artifacts already exists.
 - b) Such artifacts seldom have scientific value.
 - c) There is likely to be a continuing supply of such artifacts.
 - d) Museums are well supplied with examples of such artifacts.
 - e) Such artifacts frequently exceed in quality in comparison to those already cataloged in museum collections

3. Which of the following is mentioned in the passage as a disadvantage of storing artifacts in museum basements?
 - a) Museum officials rarely allow scholars access to such artifacts.
 - b) Space that could be better used for display is taken up for storage.
 - c) Artifacts discovered in one excavation often become separated from each other.
 - d) Such artifacts are often damaged by variations in temperature and humidity.
 - e) Such artifacts' often remain uncatalogued and thus cannot be located once they are put in storage
4. The author's argument concerning the effect of the official sale of duplicate artifacts on illegal excavation is based on which of the following assumptions?
 - a) Prospective purchasers would prefer to buy authenticated artifacts.
 - b) The price of illegally excavated artifacts would rise.
 - c) Computers could be used to trace sold artifacts.
 - d) Illegal excavators would be forced to sell only duplicate artifacts.
 - e) Money gained from selling authenticated artifacts could be used to investigate and prosecute illegal excavators
5. The author anticipates which of the following initial objections to the adoption of his proposal?
 - a) Museum officials will become unwilling to store artifacts.
 - b) An oversupply of salable artifacts will result and the demand for them will fall.
 - c) Artifacts that would have been displayed in public places will be sold to private collectors.
 - d) Illegal excavators will have an even larger supply of artifacts for resale.
 - e) Counterfeiting of artifacts will become more commonplace

Passage 3

In the two decades between 1910 and 1930, over ten percent of the Black population of the United States left the South, where the preponderance of the Black population had been located, and migrated to northern states, with the largest number moving, it is claimed, between 1916 and 1918. It has been frequently assumed, but not proved, that the majority of the migrants in what has

come to be called the Great Migration came from rural areas and were motivated by two concurrent factors: the collapse of the cotton industry following the boll weevil infestation, which began in 1898, and increased demand in the North for labor following the cessation of European immigration caused by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. This assumption has led to the conclusion that the migrants' subsequent lack of economic mobility in the North is tied to rural background, a background that implies unfamiliarity with urban living and a lack of industrial skills.

But the question of who actually left the South has never been rigorously investigated. Although numerous investigations document an exodus from rural southern areas to southern cities prior to the Great Migration, no one has considered whether the same migrants then moved on to northern cities. In 1910, over 600,000 Black workers, or ten percent of the Black workforce, reported themselves to be engaged in "manufacturing and mechanical pursuits," the federal census category roughly encompassing the entire industrial sector. The Great Migration could easily have been made up entirely of this group and their families. It is perhaps surprising to argue that an employed population could be enticed to move, but an explanation lies in the labor conditions prevalent in the South.

About thirty-five percent of the urban Black population in the South was engaged in skilled trades. Some were from the old artisan class of slavery-blacksmiths, masons, carpenters—which had had a monopoly of certain trades, but they were gradually being pushed out by competition, mechanization, and obsolescence. The remaining sixty-five percent, more recently urbanized, worked in newly developed industries—tobacco, lumber, coal and iron manufacture and railroads. Wages in the South, however, were low, and Black workers were aware, through labor recruiters and the Black press, that they could earn more even as unskilled workers in the North than they could as artisans in the South. After the boll weevil infestation, urban Black workers faced competition from the continuing influx of both Black and White rural workers, who were driven to undercut the wages formerly paid for industrial jobs.

Thus, a move towards the North would be seen as advantageous to a group that was already urbanized and steadily employed, and the easy conclusion tying their subsequent economic problems in the North to their rural background comes into question.

Based on the Passage, answer the following questions:

1. The author indicates explicitly that which of the following records has been a source of information in her investigation?
 - a) United States Immigration Service reports from 1914 to 1930
 - b) Payrolls of southern manufacturing firms between 1910 and 1930

- c) The volume of cotton exports between 1898 and 1910
 - d) The federal census of 1910
 - e) Advertisements of labor recruiters appearing in southern newspapers after 1910
2. In the passage, the author anticipates which of the following as a possible objection to her argument?
- a) It is uncertain how many people actually migrated during the Great Migration.
 - b) The eventual economic status of the Great Migration migrants has not been adequately traced.
 - c) It is not likely that people with steady jobs would have reason to move to another area of the country.
 - d) It is not true that the term “manufacturing and mechanical pursuits” actually encompasses the entire industrial sector.
 - e) Of the Black workers living in southern cities, only those in a small number of trades were threatened by obsolescence.
3. According to the passage, which of the following is true about the wages in southern cities in 1910?
- a) They were being pushed lower as a result of increased competition.
 - b) They had begun to rise so that southern industry could attract rural workers.
 - c) They had increased for skilled workers but decreased for unskilled workers.
 - d) They had increased in large southern cities but decreased in small southern cities.
 - e) They had increased in newly developed industries but decreased in the older trades.
4. The author cites each of the following as possible influences in a Black worker’s decision to migrate north in the Great Migration EXCEPT
- a) wage levels in northern cities
 - b) labor recruiters
 - c) competition from rural workers
 - d) voting rights in northern states
 - e) the Black press

5. The primary purpose of the passage is to
- a) support an alternative to an accepted methodology
 - b) present evidence that resolves a contradiction
 - c) introduce a recently discovered source of information
 - d) challenge a widely accepted explanation
 - e) argue that a discarded theory deserves new attention

Passage 4

Let us go then, you and I, When the evening is spread out against the sky like a patient etherized upon a table; Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets, The muttering retreats Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells: Streets that follow like a tedious argument Of insidious intent To lead you to an overwhelming question. . . Oh, do not ask, "What is it?" Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes

The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains, Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys, Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap, And seeing that it was a soft October night Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time For the yellow smoke that slides along the street, Rubbing its back upon the window-panes; There will be time, there will be time To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet; There will be time to murder and create, And time for all the works and days of hands That lift and drop a question on your plate; Time for you and time for me, And time yet for a hundred indecisions And for a hundred visions and revisions Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room, the women come and go Talking of Michelangelo. And indeed there will be time

To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"

Time to turn back and descend the stair, with a bald spot in the middle of my hair— [They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!"] My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin, my necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin— [They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!"] Do I dare Disturb the universe? In a minute there is time for decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all; Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons, I have measured out my life with coffee spoons; I know the voices dying with a dying fall Beneath the music from a farther room. So how should I presume?

Based on the Passage, answer the following questions:

1. Which of the following meanings can be inferred from the lines “o I dare Disturb the universe?”
 - a) The author is referring to his bright future.
 - b) The author fears that he will cause some major upheaval in world.
 - c) The author refers to the ‘status quo’ in which he is in.
 - d) The author expresses his feeling of being pinned against a wall.
 - e) The author is apprehensive about his last days.
2. What, according to the passage, is the reason for the author’s optimism?
 - a) That the women are talking of Michelangelo.
 - b) That the yellow fog rubs upon the window-panes.
 - c) That it was an October night.
 - d) That there will be moments for everything.
 - e) That the falling soot made a sudden leap.
3. In the first ten lines of the passage, the author embodies which of the following with human attributes?
 - a) toast
 - b) restaurants
 - c) intent
 - d) retreats
 - e) arguments
4. In the passage, the evening is compared to:
 - a) The spreading sky
 - b) The anesthetized patient
 - c) Wicked people
 - d) The deserted streets
 - e) A walk in the streets

Passage 5

Opera refers to a dramatic art form, originating in Europe, in which the emotional content is conveyed to the audience as much through music, both vocal and instrumental, as it is through the lyrics. By contrast, in musical theater an actor's dramatic performance is primary, and the music plays a lesser role. The drama in opera is presented using the primary elements of theater such as scenery, costumes, and acting. However, the words of the opera, or libretto, are sung rather than spoken. The singers are accompanied by a musical ensemble ranging from a small instrumental ensemble to a full symphonic orchestra.

Based on the Passage, answer the following questions:

1. It is pointed out in the reading that opera _____
 - a) has developed under the influence of musical theater
 - b) is a drama sung with the accompaniment of an orchestra
 - c) is not a high-budget production
 - d) is often performed in Europe
 - e) is the most complex of all the performing arts
2. We can understand from the reading that _____
 - a) people are captivated more by opera than musical theater
 - b) drama in opera is more important than the music
 - c) orchestras in operas can vary considerably in size
 - d) musical theater relies above all on music
 - e) there is argument over whether the music is important or the words in opera
3. It is stated in the reading that _____
 - a) acting and costumes are secondary to music in musical theater
 - b) many people find musical theater more captivating than opera
 - c) music in musical theater is not as important as it is in opera
 - d) an opera requires a huge orchestra as well as a large choir
 - e) opera doesn't have any properties in common with musical theater

Report Writing

WHAT IS REPORT WRITING?

A report is a logical presentation of facts and information. It is self-explanatory statement which provides information to management for decision making and follows up actions. Report is a systematic presentation of established facts about a specific event/subject and is a summary of findings and recommendations about a particular matter/problem.

TYPES OF REPORT

Reports may be

1. Weekly Reports
2. Annual Reports
3. Academic Reports
4. Routine Reports
5. Special Reports
6. Formal Reports
7. Informal Reports

1. Weekly Reports

A weekly report may be a one-pager or a longer report with particular changes. It is the type of report generated based on the data of the entire week. It is the type of report based on your progress on various initiatives and goals, that is beneficial to offer to your team. They constitute the main part of business reports.

2. Annual Reports

An annual report will be the second type of report that is generated based on the data of the entire year. This would generally summarise a company's development and performance during the previous year to inform managers and team members of the company's success. Depending on who the report is for, it might cover everything from website statistics to sales earnings.

3. Academic Reports

An academic report is written for a class, usually at a graduate or undergraduate level. This is written formally and explores a topic linked to the student's academic pursuits. Such types of reports are mostly used for educational purposes.

4. Routine Reports

Routine reports are prepared periodically by filling the printed forms, to convey information about the progress or status of work. They are submitted at regular intervals or soon after the completion of the task. Following are routine reports.

a. Progress Report

This report gives information about the progress of a project or a task which is in the process of being completed, such as construction of a building or manufacture of products.

b. Inspection Report

It is submitted as soon as inspection is carried out. It is necessary for finding out any irregularities or changes from standard practice, in day-to-day work. Example, internal audit report submitted by an internal auditor.

c. Performance Appraisal

It is meant for measuring and recording the performance of an employee. Every supervisor has to fill an assessment report for each of the subordinates annually to evaluate the performance of individual employees. It also gives feedback to the employees on their performance.

d. Periodical Report

This is prepared by departmental heads at regular intervals on the working of a section or a department to measure the efficient functioning of each department.

5. Special Reports

Special reports are prepared when a special situation or problem arises. An individual or a committee of persons, who have knowledge and understanding in the field, is appointed to investigate and study a specific problem, collect relevant information, and make suggestions to help the management for decision making. Following are some of the special reports prepared in the organisation.

a. First information Report (F.I.R.)

This report is required when there are sudden accidents occurs like fire accident, building collapse, robbery etc. It is prepared by the person in charge on the spot, and submitted to higher authorities for their deliberation. For example report prepared by the branch manager about fire accident occurs in branch office to Regional Office or Head Office for immediate action. The report has to give all the information which is available immediately after the incident occurs such as nature of loss, extent of destruction, time of accident etc.,

b. Investigation Report

It is prepared after making a thorough inquiry on some specific situations. An investigation is made when there is a problem and the management needs to find out the causes of the problem, and also the suggestions for solving it. Example, reports on falling sales, declining deposits in a bank, many customer complaints, losses in a branch, etc.,

c. Feasibility or Survey Report

This report is prepared when an organisation intends to launch a new product in the market, introduce a new service, or make any major changes that may affect the company's customers.

d. Project Report

This is written after the initial survey has been completed on the research project. It describes the proposal as project to be completed in future by showing the cash flow and expected results. It is used for planning and also for convincing others, especially sanctioning and funding authorities like government departments and banks.

6. Formal Reports

A formal report is prepared in the prescribed or standard form and is presented according to the established procedure and through the proper channel. Reports submitted by officials or committees of organised bodies (e.g., Companies, Co-operative Societies, Local Bodies, etc.) are usually formal reports. It may be Statutory Report or Non-statutory Report.

a. Statutory Report

Statutory report is one which is prepared by secretary or director or auditor under the provisions of specific law. E.g., Auditors Report, Directors Report, Inspection committee Report Etc.,

b. Non-Statutory Report

Non-statutory reports are those which are not required under the provisions of any law, but have to be prepared to help top managers for the efficient control and organisations of the business.

7. Informal Reports

Informal reports, on the other hand, do not follow any prescribed form or procedure. It usually takes the form of a person-to person communication and may even be set up in the letter form.

LAYOUT OF REPORT

Layout of the report deals with arrangement and presentation of information in the report. The main purpose of report is to help the receiver to identify the facts relating to the subject under study, draw his own conclusions and take suitable action based on the conclusions and recommendations. In order to achieve its purpose the report must not only be clear, concise and logical but must also be drafted according to a recognised form and arrangement.

It is however, difficult to lay down a specific set of rules for preparation of reports. Except statutory report, the nature, length and style of a report must vary with the circumstances of the case. Following are the general arrangements of content in case of formal and special reports.

a. The Heading or Title

A report must always have a title indicating the subject of the study, the period and the location of the study. A long report has a full title page which gives the title, the name of the person who assigned the report and the name of the person or group who prepared the report, with month and year of submission. In a short report the title appears at the top of the first page, before the text of the report.

b. Table of Contents

Table of contents is a list of chapters or topics contained in the report. The serial number, title and page mark of each topic is given.

c. Body of the Report

It is a main part of the report and is made up of the following sub-section, sub-headings or sub-titles. The body is divided into the following parts:

i. Introduction

It contains the terms of reference and the subject of study. Here the writer analyses the problem chosen by him in the light of the terms of reference and the relevant circumstances.

ii. Development or Findings

In this part the writer presents the facts and data collected with reference to his study along with the outcome of his study. The data collected may include charts, graphs and statistical tables from other published reports and presented in an organised form with heading and sub-heading for better understanding of the reader.

iii. Conclusions or Recommendations

In this portion the writer draws up some definite conclusions on the basis of the facts and data presented after considering all aspects of the problem in hand. He then puts forward some strong suggestions or recommendations of his own.

iv. Appendix

It is supplementary material given at the end of the report. This may be a copy of a questionnaire used, or plans of buildings, maps or other materials which is referred to in the body of the report.

v. References and Bibliography

In case of long reports, the reporter had to conduct an extensive research for the preparation of the report. Under such studies, it is practice to add a list of references and bibliography just after the appendix to indicate the sources from which the writer has drawn his materials for the report.

vi. Index

Index comprises of contents of the report and usually added after the bibliography. It is generally found in long reports.

vii. Summary

It contains the essence of findings and recommendations of the report and usually appended to facilitate its consideration by the person or superior body to whom it is submitted.

viii. Signature

All reports should be dated and signed. If it is prepared by a committee or sub-committee and the report is common, it should be signed by the chairman. If it is prepared by an individual, it has to be signed by the reporter.

QUALITY OF THE GOOD REPORT

A lot of reports are written daily. Some of them are intended to document the progress of some activities i.e., feasibility reports, investigation reports, some of the reports are for monitoring purposes, some are evaluation reports but it is clear that all the reports have some objective and purpose behind it. That objective and purpose can only be achieved if a report has following features or characteristics:

1. **Precise:** The purpose of the report should be clearly defined. Precision of a report provides the unity to the report and makes it a valuable document for best usage.
2. **Accuracy of Facts:** Information contained in a report must be based on accurate fact. Since decisions are taken on the basis of reported information, any inaccurate information or statistics will lead to wrong decision. It will cause delay in achieving the organizational goal.
3. **Relevancy:** The facts presented in a report should be relevant. Irrelevant facts make a report confusing and likely to mislead decision making.
4. **Reader-Oriented:** A report is read by various stake holders. A good report is always reader oriented. Reader's knowledge and level of understanding should be considered while writing the report. If the report is reader-friendly, it is easy to read, remember and act on it.
5. **Simple Language:** A report should be written in a simple language, avoiding jargons and technical words for easy and clear understanding. The message of a good report should be self-explanatory.
6. **Conciseness:** A report should be brief and not be very long. Lengthy reports affect the reader's interest. Rather it means that a good report is one that transmits maximum information with minimum words and completes in all respects.
7. **Grammatically Accurate:** A good report should be free from grammatical errors. Any faulty construction of a sentence may make its meaning different to the reader's mind and sometimes it may become confusing or ambiguous.

8. **Unbiased:** Recommendations made at the end of a report should be impartial and objective. It shall not be biased with the personal feelings of the reporter. They should come as logical conclusion for investigation and analysis.
9. **Clarity:** Clarity depends on proper arrangement of facts. A good report is absolutely clear. Reporter should make its purpose clear, define its sources, state its findings and finally make necessary recommendation. Clarity of facts enhances the quality of the report.
10. **Attractive:** A good report needs an attractive presentation. Structure, content, language, typing and presentation style should be well designed to make a good impression in the mind of its reader.

NEWSPAPER REPORT AND MAGAZINE REPORT

A newspaper report is one which is published in a newspaper and a magazine report is generally written for magazine.

MAGAZINE REPORT	NEWSPAPER REPORT
Heading	Heading
By line	By line
Opening paragraph	Date and Place
Account of the event	Opening paragraph
Conclusion	Account of the event and witness remarks
	Conclusion

REPORT WRITING SAMPLES

1. **Your college has organized a science symposium on the topic: ‘Effects of pollution on quality of life’. Write a report on the event for your college magazine.**

Report on Science Symposium held at (College name, Place)

- By (Name)

A symposium was organized on 1 January 2021 in the college on the topic “Effect of Pollution on Quality of Life”. All the science students were a part of the elucidative program.

The event started with the felicitation of the guest speakers. Thereafter, the participants were espoused by Sh. Suraj Prakash. He acquainted them with the objectives and goals of the workshop. The resource person Dr. Hari Om Gupta reflected his profound knowledge on the topic and highlighted how important it is to curb the menace of pollution.

An exalting demonstration of the effects of pollution on our lives galvanized the engrossed participants. After the lunch break Dr. K.K. Arora, Resource Person, exhibited the possible steps that can be undertaken at the personal level to reduce pollution. It was followed by another session on the basic concept behind pollution reduction which triggered the young minds into thinking innovative ways.

An interactive concourse ignited the inquisitiveness of participants. They have committed themselves completely to bring about a change in the situation. The informative workshop culminated with a vote of thanks proposed by the head of the science department.

2. Report for the press about traffic congestion in which you and many others were stranded for several hours.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION: A DAILY OBSTRUCTION

- Payal Sharma,

30th October 2021

Yesterday, on 29th October 2021, the main highway connecting our city's two major suburbs had huge traffic congestion that stranded thousands of commuters for many hours.

Around 5 p.m., office workers, school buses from various schools, and shopkeepers, among others, were returning from the congested road. The traffic was moving nicely when all of a sudden, the cars came to a complete stop. All of them were completely perplexed. There was no movement in the traffic at all. Many people were quickly enraged. Patience started wearing off, and there was squabbling, loud discussions, and even a few angry people exiting their automobiles. Everyone was fuming because they couldn't figure out what had caused the traffic congestion. People were rushing to get where they needed to go, yet there was not a single traffic cop in sight.

Then a group of ecstatic kids rushed in and began cleaning the area. They arrived at the starting point of the stop. In a wrecked automobile, a severely injured individual was discovered unconscious. Onlookers quickly recognized the situation and dispatched an ambulance. The ambulance arrived shortly after, followed by the cops. The traffic was cleared in two hours. But, eventually, the injured individual was transported to the hospital in an ambulance, the police picked up the wrecked automobile, and the traffic flowed again.

Practice Questions

Correct the spelling of the following words.

1. erstwhile _____
2. homeopathi _____
3. homograf _____
4. indelibal _____
5. ardinel number _____
6. ostentashion _____
7. sychology _____
8. rebdezvoo _____
9. rythem _____
10. ufimisam _____

Fill in the blanks with suitable compound words from the list given below.

[supersonic, bookworm, backpack, bookshelves, super power, fore father, fortnight, life long, forehead, backbite, eyesight, whitewash, blackout, rainbow, deadline]

1. _____ are easy to carry.
2. _____ are arranged neatly.
3. _____ jets are fast flying and quick.

4. Due to sudden _____ he fell unconscious.
5. She is a _____.
6. Some heroes have _____.
7. Our _____ lived a healthier life.
8. Once in a _____ he visits his parents.
9. Some problems persist _____.
10. _____ is very harmful.
11. The house needs a thorough _____.
12. The _____ for the project is 25th September.
13. His _____ is good even at the age of ninety.
14. After rain _____ looks beautiful.
15. He has a deep cut in his _____.

Fill in the blanks with the correct plural form with 's' and 'ies'.

1. Children are fond of _____ (berry).
2. _____ (Monkey) are seen in plenty.
3. I see a host of _____ (daisy) by the lake.
4. We could not see those _____ (injustice).
5. Kids love to ride _____ (pony).
6. There are no _____ (bully) in my college.
7. The _____ (lady) were wearing funny hats.
8. Our _____ (family) are important.
9. The girls look like _____ (fairy).
10. They are aware of _____ (spy).
11. _____ (Lorry) cannot ply in the peak hours.
12. They are called _____ (terrorist).
13. We still see _____ (conflict) among them.
14. _____ (Soliloquy) help us to analyse characters.
15. Food is one of the _____ (necessity).

Rewrite the following using exclamatory words.

1. It was a pleasant sight.

2. She sings beautifully.

3. It is an enjoyable day.

4. I never liked him any way.

5. I didn't hear what you said.

6. This is hopeless.

7. I have my own doubts.

8. I can appreciate it.

9. That is a great news.

10. The dessert is delicious.

11. I am done.

12. I liked the book.

13. She is hurt.

14. She missed gold medal narrowly.

15. My father didn't notice my mistake.

Fill in the blanks with adverbs by choosing the options given below.

[sometimes, always, often, rarely, usually, never, seldom, ever, annually, daily]

1. They _____ go to movies.
2. He _____ reads newspaper.
3. Some people _____ enjoy fun.
4. She _____ complains about sanitation.
5. We _____ take tea instead of coffee.
6. He _____ helps his mother.
7. They _____ watch TV in the morning.
8. The weather is _____ cold in December.
9. Some people _____ eat dinner late.
10. He is _____ in touch with his sister.
11. I _____ clean my house at the weekend.
12. I meet him _____ at the park.
13. Have you _____ been to Sydney?
14. We take vacation once _____.
15. I brush my teeth _____.

Fill in the blanks with suffix 'y' or 'ed'.

1. She is called an _____ (absent mind) professor.
2. The teacher shouted _____ (angry).
3. It was a _____ (pet) quarrel.
4. They belong to the _____ (cream) layer.
5. The path is very _____ (slip).
6. The girl looks _____ (fun).
7. They are _____ (kind-heart) people.
8. We are _____ (oblige) to carry out the task.
9. The teacher _____ (shout) angrily.
10. It is a _____ (gloom) atmosphere.

Fill in the blanks with the options given in the list below.

[defiantly, hatred, comfortably, invaded, neighbourly, probably, muttered]

It is already _____ filled with people. One type of traveller never fails to rouse _____. I can pass for a quiet _____ fellow. He is _____ an inoffensive passenger. Some will glare _____. The compartment is _____ by smokers. Simmering _____ and _____ threats prevailed.

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words.

1. He _____ (read / study) newspaper daily.
2. The company will _____ (issue / provide) food for the workers.
3. My grandfather _____ (told / informed) a story with a moral.
4. She behaves like a _____ (child / childish).
5. We have to observe _____ (safe / safety) measures.
6. We look forward to _____ (meet / meeting) you soon.
7. The _____ (power / capacity) of the tank is 10,000 litres.
8. Many people were killed in the _____ (mishap / escape).
9. My uncle _____ (congratulated / praised) me on my success.
10. He is under the _____ (delusion / illusion) that someone is attempting to murder him.

Correct the following sentences by replacing the underlined word with an appropriate word.

1. I was startled to see my friend turning against me.
2. We should see people's real taste not artificial.
3. Her novels were not read by reflective spinsters.
4. The court sentenced the humdrum to imprisonment.
5. Smoking is strictly promoted.
6. Please allow me to go.
7. He chased into the hotel.
8. The police genuinely resorted to a lathi-charge.
9. His loss in business gave him a happiness.
10. The boatman leaned upon the over of his boat.

Give one word substitute for the following.

1. Study of statistics _____
2. A lover of mankind _____
3. A group of worshippers _____
4. Arrangement of flowers _____
5. A person who compiles dictionaries _____
6. Garden cultivation and management _____
7. A custodian of museum _____
8. A person who presents a television program _____
9. A strong and fast moving stream of water _____
10. Having imaginary symptoms and ailments _____
11. Series of stars _____
12. Recovery of health after illness _____
13. Conferred as an honour _____
14. Living for pleasure of eating and drinking _____
15. Sweet smell _____

Transform sentences starting with 'It'.

1. The night was dark and stormy.

2. Smoking is injurious to health.

3. He should stop talking nonsense.

4. You have a nice car in your drive way.

5. To take dangerous risks must be avoided.

Change the following simple sentences into complex using 'Though'.

1. In spite of being smart he lacks courage.

2. In spite of having wealth he has no peace of mind.

3. Despite being healthy he is unhappy.

4. Despite the lawyer's clever argument the case failed.

5. In spite of all his riches he is not content.

Change the following complex sentences into simple using 'In spite of'.

1. Though he tries hard he is seldom successful.

2. Eventhough she was capricious, she was never out of temper.

3. Although they fought valiantly they were defeated.

4. Eventhough we are few, we are of the right sort.

5. Though the sea is rough, he decided to attempt a venture.

Change the following sentences using 'so, that and not' instead of 'too and to'.

1. The boy is too young to do a hard labour.

2. The mangoes are too cheap to be good.

3. She weeps too bitterly to answer.

4. The puzzle is too difficult to be solved.

5. The weather is too cold to venture out.

Change the following sentences using 'too and to' instead of 'so, that and not'.

1. The bridge is so narrow that we cannot cross it.

2. My mother is so old that she cannot climb the stairs.

3. His salary is so meagre that he cannot pay off his debts.

4. The news is so good that it cannot be true.

5. He is so arrogant that he cannot ask for help.

Combine sentences using 'too and to' or 'so, that and not'.

1. He is very good. He cannot offend anyone.

2. Her behaviour was very rude. I could not tolerate it.

3. The students are many in number. One teacher cannot control them all.

4. The food is very bad. I cannot eat even one spoon.

5. He was very nervous. He could not perform on the stage.

Change the following sentences to Indirect speech.

1. The little girl said, "Are you coming from China?"

2. He said, "What a stupid fellow you are!"

3. "Ah me!" exclaimed the king, "What a bloody deed you have done!"

4. He said to him, "I don't have trust in you as you are inconstant."

5. Ulysses said, "Have you anything to tell me little bird?"

Change the following sentences to Direct speech.

1. The man said that he had come to pay homage to the departed soul.

2. He wanted to know if he should lock the door.

3. She asked me if she could use my laptop.

4. The judge asked the witness to tell the truth.

5. He assured them that he would definitely wait for them.

Change the following sentences from active to passive voice.

1. She read a novel in one day.

2. I envy the mighty sleepers.

3. Tagore founded the finest Bengali periodical.

4. What did you buy from the shop?

5. People do not appreciate our efforts sometimes.

Change the following sentences from passive to active voice.

1. Their sweet oblivion was envied by me.

2. I am called as the annoying bossy sister by my brothers.

3. Peace is wanted in every corner of the world.

4. Let a short advertisement manual be written on your survey.

5. Are the cries of our heart heard by us?

Use appropriate conjunction in the following sentences.

1. Her two favourite sweets are Halwa _____ Laddu. (and / or)

2. She wants to go to beach _____ (but / and) her friend does not want.

3. He is a teetotalter _____ (for / so) he never touches wine.

4. He cannot attend the function _____ (for / and) he has important assignment.

5. Is this your gift _____ me _____ (and / for / or) someone else?
6. The boy likes to have cookies _____ (and / but) he likes to drink coffee.
7. The chief guest inaugurated _____ (for / and) gave the inaugural address.
8. My friend neither returned my call _____ (or / nor) did he respond to my text messages.
9. Neither the medicine _____ (or / nor) the balm gave relief to my knee pain.
10. The movie is different _____ (but / and) interesting.
11. She does not want to cook _____ (but / for) she does it any way.
12. He could not avail leave _____ (or / and) resign.
13. Do you like strawberry _____ (or / and) vanilla better?
14. The child had been crying all day _____ (yet / or) the mother tried to pacify him.
15. The sauce was sweet _____ (yet / or) had a flavour to it.
16. The lady was feeling sick _____ (and / so) she went home early.
17. All the shops were closed _____ (so / and) he had to come back home.
18. I have to find a new job _____ (for / and) I am unemployed now.
19. He speaks truth _____ (yet / so) no one trusts him.
20. My sister is very clever _____ (so / yet) all like her.

Combine the sentences using conjunctions.

1. He owns a house. He doesn't own a car.

2. Jennifer was absent for school. Her friend did not attend school.

3. We can have soup for dinner. We can eat the leftovers.

4. He is very sincere. He is short tempered.

5. Endurance is the very essence of courage. Courage is a long term virtue.

6. Watching TV is a good entertainment. It interferes in our work.

7. You may be bad and brave. You cannot be good without being brave.

8. Courage is a mental state. It gets its strength from spiritual and intellectual sources.

9. She lost the game. She wanted to take part again.

10. He does not like blue colour. He does not like red colour.

Match the following.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. He is as cunning | (a) as bees |
| 2. The students are as busy | (b) as a fox |
| 3. The Maths paper was | (c) as a cloud |
| 4. I wandered lonely | (d) as mice |
| 5. They listened as quietly | (e) as tricky as a labyrinth |

Complete the following sentences with suitable comparisons.

1. He looked as blind _____.
2. He is as hungry _____.
3. The glow of the tubelight was _____.
4. After the examination the candidates felt _____.
5. A life without ambition is _____.
6. She looks as beautiful _____.

7. Her eyes are like the _____.
8. She is as agile _____.
9. A room without books is _____.
10. The babies are cute as _____.

Change the following statements into questions.

1. Courage is like having money in the bank.

2. We live in an age of science and technology.

3. Man is a social animal.

4. One of the biggest evils in our country is dowry.

5. Editors carry the great responsibility of moulding a healthy public opinion.

Change the following sentences into commands or requests.

1. Let the scissors be put away carefully.

2. You have to listen to what Antony is going to say.

3. You are my friend.

4. The things have to be arranged in order.

5. He advised her not to waste time.

Change the following questions into statements.

1. Has he worked anywhere before?

2. Will she win a prize?

3. Do the students greet the teacher?

4. When are you leaving for London?

5. Is that your father?

Change the following exclamatory sentences to statements.

1. Alas! "I lost the game."

2. She said, "How cruel of her to have done such a grievous crime!"

3. "How clever I am!" he said.

4. He said, "My God! I am ruined".

5. She said, "What a bloody deed you have done!"

6. He angrily remarked, "What a stupid mistake you have committed!"

7. The mother said, "How clumsily you have done your work!"

8. The captain said, "Bravo you have done great!"

9. The chief said, "Alas! our foes are too strong."

10. She said, "What a pity you have missed the opportunity!"

Use the following comparative forms in sentences of your own.

1. the sooner the better

2. the more the merrier

3. the slower the longer

4. the more the sweeter

5. the fewer the better

6. the faster the clumsier

7. the more the more

8. the less the less

9. the bigger the more expensive

10. the cheaper the worse

11. the more the better

12. the warmer the better

13. the less the better

14. the fewer the lesser noise

15. the cleaner the better

Fill in the blanks with 'the...the...' with comparative adjectives.

1. _____ he reads _____ understands.

2. _____ we grow _____ we become.

3. _____ we climb _____ it gets.

4. _____ we grow _____ our worries.

5. _____ we spend _____ we save.

6. _____ they go _____ it is.

7. _____ coffee _____ the taste.

8. _____ we start _____ reach.

9. _____ I work _____ I earn.

10. _____ chocolate he eats _____ sweets he will ask for.

11. _____ you walk the _____ you will be.

12. _____ he grows _____ he becomes.

13. _____ you think about it _____ you will take action.

14. _____ the business _____ the problems will be.

15. _____ the place _____ it will be.

Fill in the blanks with suitable present, present continuous and present perfect tense forms.

1. He _____ (own) a factory.

2. She usually _____ (finish) her dinner early.

3. Courage _____ (see) us through crisis of war.

4. Many children in Africa _____ (have) access to education.
5. If you _____ (start) early you _____ (reach) early.
6. The teacher _____ (dictate) the notes.
7. I _____ (know) him for a long time.
8. I shall inform you when he _____ (come).
9. The earth _____ (move) round the sun.
10. Complete cowards _____ (be) almost non-existent.

Fill in the blanks with suitable past, past continuous and past perfect tense forms.

1. He _____ (leave) an empty place.
2. I _____ (ask) him why he _____ (walk) like that.
3. The world _____ (focus) on only primary education and progress _____ (reach) everyone.
4. The bridge _____ (pack) with people.
5. He said he _____ (hit) at thirty yards.
6. He always _____ (fuss) about dangers that _____ (exist).
7. The work of mission schools _____ (begin) to arouse a desire for education.
8. We _____ (decide) to raise our voice.
9. A rough hand _____ (grab) the gold chain around her neck and _____ (yank) it off.
10. His work _____ (bring) him worldwide fame.

