

STUDY MATERIAL
CLASS XII – ENGLISH CORE
2018 – '19

ENGLISH (CORE) CLASS XII

THE LAST LESSON

BY

ALPHONSE DAUDET

THEME – the right to preserve one’s language as opposed to the conqueror’s efforts to impose their language on the conquered.

The lesson is written in the background of Franco-Prussian war in which France was defeated by Prussia and the French province of Alsace and Lorraine was annexed by Prussia.

Synopsis

Franz is afraid to go to school as he has not learnt the rules of the participles. He is expecting to be punished by his teacher M. Hamel for the same. He wishes to enjoy the beauty of nature - the bright sunshine, the birds chirruping in the woods and the Prussian soldiers drilling. But he resisted the temptation. As he comes closer to the school, Franz is surprised to notice certain changes in the school environment. Instead of the noisy atmosphere everything was as quiet as Sunday morning. The teacher does not scold him for being late and tells him very cordially to go to his seat. Franz is surprised to see the teacher dressed in his Sunday best. Bu the most surprising aspect was the presence of the village elders in the last benches of the classroom.

M. Hamel makes the announcement that orders have come from Berlin that only German would be taught in the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine from the next day onwards. The teacher has been ordered to leave the place with immediate effect. M. Hamel implores the class to be attentive as this would be their last French lesson. Franz realizes that he does not know his own mother tongue and regrets for not taking his lessons seriously. His textbooks suddenly become his prized possessions and the teacher whom he hated for his crankiness becomes the most beloved person to him. Franz realizes the reason why the teacher was dressed in his Sunday best and understands that the villagers are occupying the last bench to pay their tribute to M. Hamel for his 40 years of sincere service and also to express their solidarity with France. They also wished to express their regret for having neglected their language for this long.

M. Hamel realizes that all the three - the children, the parents and he himself - are to be blamed for losing respect and regard for the mother tongue. He advises the children to always keep their mother tongue close to their heart as it is the key to the

prison of slavery. The whole atmosphere in the class is solemn and filled with regret. The teacher teaches his last lesson with patience and sincerity, students learn with utmost diligence. Franz is able to understand everything that is taught by M. Hamel and everything seems to be very easy. Franz wonders sarcastically if Prussians could force pigeons to coo in German. M. Hamel is overcome with emotions and cannot speak. So he writes on the black board "Long Live France" and dismisses the class.

Short Answer Questions (30 – 40 words – 3 marks)

- 1) What was the narrator's greatest fear as he moved towards the school?
- 2) What was more tempting to Franz than going to school?
- 3) What was the news which was put up on the bulletin board?
- 4) What was the most shocking thing that Franz noticed in the class?
- 5) Why didn't M. Hamel punish Franz, even though he was late?
- 6) What was so unusual about school that day?
- 7) Why were the villagers seated on the back benches?
- 8) What did M. Hamel say about French language?
- 9) What happened when the church clock struck 12?
- 10) How does Franz realise that M. Hamel is heartbroken?
- 11) 'Explain the statement – 'Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons?'

Ans. Language is as natural to man as the cooing is to pigeons. It is a means of self expression and unique identity which cannot be forcibly removed or stolen from either man or animals.

Long Answer Questions (120 – 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) What were Franz's feelings about M Hamel and his French lessons? How did they undergo a complete change?
- 2) 'We have all a great deal to reproach ourselves'. Explain.
- 3) Justify the title of the story "The Last Lesson".
 - (a) last French lesson for the people of Alsace
 - (b) last opportunity to learn their mother tongue.
 - (c) last lesson for the teacher
 - (d) last chance to understand the importance of their language and the necessity to preserve it.
- 4) How does Hamel arouse patriotism in the people of Alsace?
 - (a) tells them about the importance of their mother tongue.
 - (b) arouses their patriotic fervour by speaking on the beauty of their language – clearest, most logical and beautiful language.

(c) reminds them of the need to guard it – as long as they hold fast to their language, it is as if they had the key to their prison.

(d) knowledge of their language would help them to preserve their cultural identity.

5) Analyze the character of M. Hamel as a teacher.

(a) a dedicated teacher, has been teaching in the school for 40 years.

(b) Very passionate about his country and his cultural identity.

(c) understands his shortcomings and blames himself for the pathetic condition of his students' negligent attitude towards their language.

(d) does his best to impart patriotic spirit to his students and is successful in the task.

(e) makes up for his negligence towards his job by teaching his last lesson with utmost dedication and patience.

(f) a role model for his students when it comes to his love for his country.

Value Based Questions (120 – 150 words – 6 marks)

1) Franz hardly knew French, his mother tongue even though he had been learning it for quite some time. Many of us find ourselves in similar situations and regret when all is over. What qualities should we inculcate in life so that we are able to achieve our goals?

2) “When a people are enslaved, as long as they hold fast to their language it is as if they had the key to their prison.” But it is a sad fact that mother tongue is losing its significance in the present times. Why is it necessary to revive the status of the mother tongue?

3) “..... his terrible iron ruler under his arm”. It has been said, “spare the rod and spoil the child”. The abolition of corporal punishment from schools in India has drastically changed the school scenario. Do you agree? Why / Why not?

4) The elders of the village were sitting in the classroom. The participation of the community is necessary for a healthy and productive education system. Comment.

5) M. Hamel becomes an honest role model for the students on the day of the last lesson. How does a teacher play a constructive role in the life of the students in the present times?

LOST SPRING, STORIES OF STOLEN CHILDHOOD

BY

ANEES JUNG

THEME

Child labour and its consequences, the callous attitude of the society towards this social evil.

Synopsis

The author examines and analyses the impoverished conditions and traditions that condemn children to a life of exploitation. These children are denied education and are forced to endure hardships early in their lives.

The writer encounters Saheb, a rag picker whose parents have left behind a life of poverty in Dhaka to earn a living in Delhi. His family, like many other families of rag pickers lives in Seemapuri on the outskirts of Delhi. The only identification they have is the ration card. They are not concerned about anything else as a ration card enables them to buy food grains at a cheaper price which is their only prime concern.

The children do not go to school and they are expected to add to the family income by rummaging in the garbage. It is their only way of earning a livelihood. They live in impoverished conditions but are resigned to their fate.

The writer is pained to see Saheb, a rag picker whose name means the ruler of earth, lose the spark of childhood and roaming barefoot with his friends to pick rags. One day the author encounters him in a tea stall and comes to know that he has got a job there which pays him Rs. 800 with all his meals. He sadly realizes that he is no longer his own master and this loss of identity weighs heavily on his tender shoulders.

The author then tells about another victim, Mukesh who wants to be a motor mechanic. He hails from Firozabad, the centre of India's bangle making and glass blowing industry and has always worked in the glass making industry. His family like the others there do not know that it is illegal for children to work in such close proximity to furnaces, in such high temperatures. They are exposed to various health hazards like losing their eyesight as they work in dreadful conditions, in dark and dingy cells. Mukesh's father is blind as were his father and grandfather before him. They lead a hand to mouth existence as they are caught in the vicious web of the money lenders, middlemen, police and traditions. They believe that bangle making is their 'karam' or 'God given lineage'. So burdened are the bangle makers of Firozabad that they have lost their ability to dream unlike Mukesh who dreams of driving a car and becoming a motor mechanic. The author is cheered to see this spark of ambition in the child to break free of the tentacles of poverty and to make a better living for himself.

Short Answer Questions (30 – 40 words – 3 marks)

- 1) What does Saheb do for living? Why?
- 2) "Saheb is no longer his own master", says the writer. What does she mean?

She means that whereas earlier as a rag picker, he used to decide his schedule, at present the owner of the owner of the tea stall decides his timings. Thus he has lost control of his life and is accountable to another person for his actions.

- 3) Why do people migrate from the village in Dhaka to Delhi?
4) "Promises made to poor children are never kept." Explain with examples from the lesson.

Normally a lot of promises are made to the poor by people from different sections of the society basically with the aim of manipulating them, but these words are forgotten almost before they are made. For eg. politicians, social workers, etc., the author's promise to Saheb about starting a school.

- 5) What does garbage symbolize for the adults and children?
Ans. For the adults it is a means of survival as for them it is a roof over their head and food in their stomachs. The harsh realities of life have destroyed their sense of adventure. For the children it is wrapped in wonder as each time they scrounge for gold, there is the hope of getting something valuable which would change their destiny.

- 6) Why does the writer feel that it will be difficult for Mukesh to break away from this tradition?
Mukesh would family support as they believed that bangle making was their god given lineage or karam and cannot be broken. With lack of support his initiative and the spark of ambition that the author sees in Mukesh would die a natural death.

- 7) 'His dreams loom like a mirage'. Whose dreams are being referred to and why are they compared to a mirage?
Mukesh's dreams of being a motor mechanic are referred to here. It is compared to a mirage because the author feels that without family support there are hardly any chances of his dream being fulfilled.

- 8) How is Mukesh's attitude to his situation different from that of his family?
Mukesh's family is fatalistic in their attitude and believes that bangle making is a god given lineage which cannot be broken. On the other hand, Mukesh dreams of breaking away from the mould and becoming a motor mechanic.

- 9) 'Together they have imposed the baggage on the child that he cannot put down.' Who do 'they' refer to? What is the 'baggage' and why can the child not get rid of it?
They refer the family, sahuks, middlemen, policemen, the keepers of law, the bureaucrats and politicians who would not allow Mukesh to change his destiny by becoming a motor mechanic and shed his baggage of poverty.

- 10) How has being born in the caste of bangle makers become both a destiny and a curse?

The people of Firozabad believe in fate and are convinced that bangle making is their destiny which they have inherited from their forefathers and they are not supposed to break away from it. It is a curse because in spite of being involved in the trade for generations, they have not been able to break away the shackles of poverty which only seem to tighten around them as time passes.

- 11) How is Mukesh different from Saheb?

Saheb is happy with his lot whereas Mukesh wants to change his destiny by becoming a motor mechanic. He has already made a clear plan on how to realise his dream, while Saheb is happy being a rag picker and feels trapped when he is offered a steady job and income by working in a tea stall.

- 12) Why do the people of Firozabad not organize themselves into cooperatives?

Long Answer Questions (120 – 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) 'Lost Spring', is a sad commentary on the political system of our country that condemns thousands of people to a life of abject poverty. Justify.
- 2) What does the title of the story 'Lost Spring' imply?
Childhood is often compared to spring season, the best part of one's life. But the miserable poverty that these children are born into robs these children of their childhood and destroys the best part of their lives. The spring of their lives are lost to them or is stolen away by the heavy burden of poverty and the harsh reality of child labour.
- 3) Mention the hazards of working in the bangle industry.
a) employs over 20,000 child labourers
b) children work with hot furnaces in poorly ventilated rooms
c) the bright light of the furnace damage their eyes with most of them becoming prematurely blind.
d) exposure to the dust from polishing the glass of bangles gives them respiratory diseases like asthma and bronchitis.
e) direct contact with dyes and chemicals used to colour the glass leads to skin diseases.
- 4) Years of mind numbing toil have killed all initiative and the ability to dream. Explain.

Value Based Questions (120 – 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) Saheb and Mukesh don't have the opportunity for formal education. As a concerned student, what steps can be taken by you to educate the under privileged children of the society?
- 2) Childhood is the best period in a person's life; yet millions of students all over the world are denied the right to enjoy their childhood because of child labour. Discuss a few steps that can be effectively used to eradicate child labour.
- 3) Cottage industry is being exploited by the middlemen and sahlukars. The workers are afraid of organizing themselves into co-operatives. The main reason is that they are not aware and daring. How can this situation be changed?
- 4) "And daring is not a part of his growing up. When I sense a flash of it in Mukesh, I am cheered...." Daring and fearlessness is the only way which can bring about a radical change in life. Do you agree with the statement? Comment.
- 5) Mukesh and Saheb are victims of society's apathy. What should be our attitude towards them.

DEEP WATER

BY

WILLIAM DOUGLAS

THEME

The effect of fear on a person and its long term consequences, overcoming even the most deep rooted fear through determination and perseverance.

Synopsis

'Deep Water' centres round the author's fear of water as a child. The fear originated when he was three or four years old. He and his father went to the beach in California. A wave knocked him down suddenly though he was holding on to his father. The child was over powered by the might of the water and his heart was filled with the terror of the overpowering force of the waves.

Another incident occurred when he was ten or eleven years old. He was alone at the YMCA pool at Yakima, swimming. A big bruiser of a boy of about eighteen years old picked him up and tossed him into the deep end of the pool. This intensified the dread of water in the author. While he was sinking and emerging / springing upwards in the water, he felt paralyzed – stiff and rigid with fear; his legs were limp.

As he sank down into the depths of the pool the first time, he formulated a plan that as soon as he touched down the bottom of the pool, he would use his feet like a spring to propel him to the surface of the pool. But unfortunately the plan did not work as the force exerted by him was not enough to push him to the top. He rose slowly and he was unable to reach the sides of the pool.

He went down again a couple of times, each time he tried his strategy to escape, he failed. His fear kept mounting. Total terror gripped him and ultimately he gave up fighting altogether. It was like experiencing death... feeling drowsy, fearless, relaxed; being carried away gently, tender arms like mother's around him. "I must go to sleep. I crossed to oblivion."

But he was saved and the villainous boy who had flung him into the pool claimed that he had only been fooling. The terrible fear of that day was haunting him for several days. It had a lasting impact on him which affected his activities even when he became an adult.

Whenever he visited the Cascades, the Tieton or the Bumping River, Warm Lake, Main Lake etc for the pleasures of swimming, canoeing, boating and fishing, the fear followed and gripped like a vice destroying all the joy of water related activities. Then in October, he decided to get rid of his aversion to water by taking lessons from an instructor. The lessons and practice went on for an hour a day, five days a week. Within three month's time, he had mastered the art of swimming, the fear of water had left him and he was confident. But still he wanted to find out whether the fear would return when he left the relative safety of the swimming pool. He swam in Lake Wentworth, Triggs Island using different styles of swimming like crawl, breast stroke, side stroke and back stroke. Though he felt vestiges of his old fear, his confidence as a swimmer helped him to overcome it. The lesson Douglas learnt was if one fear is

conquerable, then any fear can be conquered. Fearlessness is the foundation to a tension free life.

Short Answer Questions (30 – 40 words – 3 marks)

- 1) Mention the two incidents that were responsible for Douglas's fear of water.
- 2) What insecurities did Douglas have to overcome in order to learn swimming at the YMCA?
- 3) What initiated his accident at the pool in the YMCA?
- 4) What was the writer's first reaction on being flung into the pool?
- 5) Why did his escape plan fail when he came up?
- 6) What happened when he made a second attempt to come out of the water?
- 7) How did the instructor teach him to swim?
- 8) The instructor was satisfied, but Douglas. Why?
- 9) What was the biggest lesson that Douglas learnt from his attempt to overcome his fear of water?

Long Answer Questions (120 – 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) Explain in detail the writer's first attempt to come out of the pool.
- 2) What larger meaning does William Douglas draw from his experience of fear of water and conquering it? (courage and optimism to be developed like the characters in 'We're not Afraid to Die...')
- 3) How did the instructor make a swimmer out of Douglas?
- 4) Why did Douglas doubt his ability to swim even though the instructor assured him that his lessons were over? How did he prove to himself that he had indeed learnt swimming?

Value Based Questions (120 – 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) Fear is the stumbling block to success. Douglas proves it by overcoming his fear of water. Grit and courage of Douglas helped him do that. "Braving the odds is the key to success". Comment.
- 2) Douglas was thrown into the pool by a boy more powerful and older than himself. Bullying is a fast growing menace in schools nowadays. How can this issue be tackled?
- 3) Practice makes a man perfect. How does Douglas prove this proverb to be right?
- 4) Strong will power sustains even in the worst circumstances. Strong will power helped Douglas to overcome his fear of water. Write an article on "Role of strong will power in attaining success".

- 5) Even after becoming a swimmer Douglas was not satisfied whether he had overcome his fear of water. He decided to achieve it through self learning. Write an article in 100 words on self learning helps in building the self confidence and a complete personality.
- 6) 'There is terror only in the fear of death, as Roosevelt knew when he said, 'All we have to fear is fear itself.' When faced with a fear, instead of suppressing it, fighting to overcome it would help one to do away with it completely, just like Douglas did in the story *Deep Water*. What qualities should one possess to live a rich and fulfilling life by overcoming fear, which is only present in your mind?
- 7) With reference to the big boy who pushed Douglas into the pool we realize that many a times we fail to understand others fears and weaknesses and make fun of them without realising how much harm we are doing to the psyche of the person. What qualities does a person need to imbibe in order not to undermine others?

THE RATTRAP
BY
SELMA LAGERLÖF

THEME

Essential goodness in a human being can be awakened through understanding and love; material benefits are like traps that are waiting to engulf a person.

Synopsis

The story is set in the mines of Sweden, rich in iron ore. A poor rattrap seller went selling his rat raps to make a living. He took to petty stealing also. For him, riches and joys, shelter and food, heat and clothing are baits for human beings like pork and cheese for rats. These are like temptations waiting to trap a human being and once they get caught, their life is destroyed. The world had never been very kind to him and so he had ill thoughts about it.

Once he had the company of a crofter who offered him porridge and tobacco and played 'mjolis' (a card game) and shared his confidences. The crofter had a cow which gave him 30 kroner worth of milk a month. When the rattrap man looked disbelieving, the crofter showed him the money and where it was hung in a leather pouch on a nail in the window frame. He had the temptation to steal the money and he did steal it. Wandering around with a guilty conscience, he lost his way in the forest which turned into an impenetrable prison for him. He understood that he had been caught in a rattrap of his own making.

He sought shelter in the Ramsjo Iron Works to survive the winter cold. The ironmaster on his rounds found him. Mistaking him for an old regimental comrade, the Ironmaster invited him for Christmas dinner; but the rattrap man refused it thinking it was a trap to hand him over to the police. But the ironmaster did want him for Christmas, so he sent his daughter Edla Willmanson hoping that she had better powers of persuasion.

Reluctantly he obliged her. While he was given a bath and proper dress, the ironmaster realised his mistake and ordered him to go. But, his daughter insisted that he was their guest whom they had invited to their home and should be treated like a guest. The man spent his time in the house sleeping and eating when woken up. Later in the church, the incident at the crofter's house was revealed to the ironmaster and his daughter. Before they reached home after the night service of Christmas, the peddler had already left. The message he had left disclosed the transformation in his character and the retribution – requesting Edla to return the crofter's 30 kroner. He had signed himself as Captain von Stahle, the mistaken identity that had been attributed to him by the iron master.

In conclusion, what we see is not the reality in its absolute form or judging a person without examining the circumstances should be avoided.

Short Answer Questions (30 – 40 words – 3 marks)

- 1) Explain the peddler's rattrap theory.
- 2) Why does the peddler consider the world a big rattrap and a human predicament?
- 3) Describe the peddler's encounter with the crofter.
- 4) Why do you think the crofter entertained the peddler in spite of him being a stranger?
- 5) How was the crofter's kindness abused by the peddler?
- 6) What was the blacksmith's reaction on seeing the peddler enter the forge?
- 7) Why did the peddler refuse the ironmaster's invitation?
- 8) Why was the peddler reluctant to reveal his identity to the ironmaster?
He felt that the ironmaster might give him a couple of kroners if he believed the peddler to be his old comrade.

- 9) What made the peddler accept Edla's invitation?
- 10) What conclusions do Edla come to when she saw the peddler? What does this reveal about her character?
That he has either stolen something or he has escaped from jail. Show that she is a keen observer and is better at judging people than her father.

- 11) How does the ironmaster respond to the well groomed peddler?
- 12) How does the peddler justify himself when the ironmaster turned against him?
- 13) How did Edla manage to convince her father that they should not throw the peddler out of their home?
She argued that the peddler probably didn't have a single place in the whole country where he would be welcome. He is chased away wherever he goes. He constantly lives in the fear of being arrested and cross-examined. He should be allowed to enjoy at least day's peace in their home, besides they had invited him to their home and they were duty bound to fulfil their promise of giving him Christmas cheer.

- 14) What was Edla's Christmas gift for the peddler?
She informed him that he could keep the suit that had been given to him by the ironmaster and if he wanted to spend the next Christmas Eve in a place where he could rest in peace, and where no evil would befall him, he would be welcomed in their home.

- 15) Why did the peddler sign himself as Captain von Stahle?
Edla had treated him as a captain despite knowing his true identity. She was the first person to give him the respect and dignity that is to be given to another human being. Her kindness towards him had helped him to break free from the rattrap in which he had been caught when he stole from the crofter. He wanted to convey the message that he had redeemed himself and reformed his ways.

Long Answer Questions (120 – 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) Give instances from the story that proves that Edla was a better human being than her father.
- 2) How does Edla's decision to let the peddler stay become a turning point in the story as well as in his life?
- 3) How does the story support the view that kindness and mercy can bring about positive changes even in hardened thieves?
- 4) What changed the character of the Rattrap peddler into that of a noble man (Captain Van Stahle)?

Value Based Questions (120 – 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) The peddler betrayed the trust of the crofter and was caught in the rattrap of the world. Temptations should be resisted at any cost. How can this be done?
- 2) Edla with her love and compassion is a true living example of humanity and brings out the best in the rattrap peddler. Confidence, optimism and kindness may reform weak personalities. Comment.
- 3) Selfless love, empathy, sympathy and compassion provide a healing touch to the distracted souls. This is evident from the story The Rattrap. Comment on the role of human values in bringing about change in one's behaviour.
- 4) The ironmaster sees the peddler in the forge and immediately comes to the wrong conclusion about his identity and acts on it without verifying the facts. Why is it necessary to be rational and logical and not rash in your thoughts and actions?

INDIGO
BY
LOUIS FISCHER

THEME

Mahatma Gandhi's leadership skills and his mode of working to secure India's freedom.

Synopsis

The lesson highlights an important event in the history of India's freedom struggle, namely the Champaran episode. Share croppers of indigo in Champaran were victims of injustice and exploitation by the British landlords. They demanded the whole of indigo harvest as rent and 15% of the land had indigo cultivation. The resoluteness, patience, loyalty and sacrifice of an illiterate peasant named Rajkumar Shukla were outstanding in redeeming the miserable indigo farmers with the help of Gandhi whom he took to Champaran after Gandhi's engagements were over up to Calcutta. The lawyers were charging heavy fees from the peasants to plead for them in cases against the British landlords.

When Gandhi asked them what they would do if he was arrested, they said honestly that they would go home. Gandhi then made the thought provoking and conscience-striking question, "What about the injustice to the sharecroppers?" After consultation among themselves, the lawyers said that they were ready to be arrested, and Gandhi prepared a list of pairs to court arrest.

In Champaran, Gandhi gathered more information about the sharecroppers' issue. He met the Secretary of the British Landlord's Association who refused to give any information citing the reason that Gandhi was an outsider. His visit to the British Official Commissioner of the Tirhut division also proved futile as he bullied Gandhi and ordered him to leave Tirhut forthwith. When he heard about the maltreatment of a peasant in a nearby village, Gandhi went there on elephant back. The messenger of the police superintendent ordered him to return to town, Gandhi complied, but when served an official notice to quit Champaran, he disobeyed.

He sought the help of Rajendra Prasad and other influential people before appearing in court the next day by a summons. When Gandhi reached Motihari, the capital of Champaran, the place was crowded with peasants. The officials realized that their might, hitherto dreaded and unquestioned was being challenged for the first time. Gandhi was polite, friendly and cooperative in regulating the crowd. Gandhi declared that he was being faced with a "conflict of duties" – on the one hand by disobeying the law he was setting a bad example and on the other he was compelled to listen to the "voice of conscience". The judge was forced to delay the proceedings and finally the Lieutenant-General of the province dropped the case. He had four interviews with the Lieutenant-General, the landlords and government officials. When the planters

saw the mountain of evidence of injustice gathered by Gandhi against them, they agreed to pay compensation to the peasants.

Some wanted 100% repayment, others 50% and finally Gandhi accepted a 25% refund because of the fact that the landlords were obliged to surrender part of their money and with it their prestige. The peasants realized that they had courage, rights and defenders. And Gandhi's decision proved to be correct as within a couple of years, sharecropping disappeared in Champaran and the land was returned to the farmers. The invention of synthetic indigo in Germany had made the landlords do this and they had earlier wanted compensation from the sharecroppers for releasing them from the sharecropping agreement.

Kasturba Gandhi and Devdas Gandhi, Gandhi's youngest son arrived in Champaran to teach ashram rules on personal cleanliness and community sanitation. Three medicines were available – castor oil, quinine and sulphur ointment. Latrine trenches were filled and new ones dug, as part of sanitation. Finally Gandhi turned down C.F. Andrews' offer of mediation with the British reassuring that 'our cause is just and we must rely upon ourselves to win the battle and should not seek a prop in an Englishman. Thus he taught the valuable lesson of self- reliance to his followers.

Short Answer Questions (30 – 40 words – 3 marks)

- 1) Give a character sketch of Rajkumar Shukla. / Why is Rajkumar Shukla called as resolute?
 - a) a poor illiterate peasant from Champaran
 - b) determined to find a solution to the sharecropper's issue.
 - c) found a saviour in Gandhi
 - d) followed Gandhi wherever he went to ensure that Gandhi would go to Champaran with him – hence resolute

- 2) How did Rajkumar Shukla decide to meet Gandhi?

He had gone to the Indian National Congress in Lucknow hoping to find a solution to the sharecropper's issue. Someone had told him that talking to Gandhi may be of help to him. Hence he decided to talk to Gandhi.

- 3) It was not an easy task for Shukla to get Gandhi to visit Champaran. Justify.

Gandhi was not free to accompany Shukla to Champaran. He informed Shukla that he had an appointment in Cawnpore and had also other commitments to visit other parts of India. But Shukla followed him wherever he went and begged Gandhi to fix a date to visit Champaran.

- 4) What happened in Patna that showed Gandhi a rigid caste system existed in India?

Rajendra Prasad's servants would not allow him to get inside the house to wait for their master as he had accompanied Shukla who was a poor farmer and

hence from a lower caste. They also did not allow Gandhi to draw water from the well as they feared that the entire well would get polluted if a few drops would fall into it while Gandhi was drawing water.

- 5) Why did Gandhi say that his staying in Professor Malkani's house was an extraordinary experience?

Gandhi stayed in Professor Malkani's house for two days on his way to Champaran. Professor Malkani being a government servant was doing a gross violation of rule by harbouring a supporter of home rule in his house. In smaller localities, Indians were afraid to show sympathy for advocates of home rule.

- 6) Why did Gandhi feel say that they should stop going to law courts?

Gandhi felt that taking the cases to law courts would not do any good as the peasants would not get justice there. When the peasants are terror-stricken and crushed, the law courts were useless. The real solution would be to free them from fear.

- 7) Explain the sharecropper's issue in Champaran.

- 8) How did the invention of artificial indigo affect the lives of the sharecroppers of Champaran?

- 9) How did the government officials react to Gandhi's efforts to collect more information on the sharecropper's issue?

- 10) How did the gathering of peasants in Motihari influence Gandhi's cause?

The peasants who had gathered in Motihari did not know of Gandhi's achievements in South Africa. They only knew that a Mahatma had come to Motihari to help them and he had some trouble with the authorities. Their unplanned demonstration was the first of its kind and announced the beginning of their liberation from the fear of the British. This showed that Gandhi was moving in the right direction.

- 11) How did Gandhi manage to get unconditional support of the lawyers for the peasants?

- 12) Explain 'The battle of Champaran is won'.

- 13) Explain Gandhi's "conflict of duties".

- 14) How did Gandhi justify his decision to settle for 25% compensation for the peasants?

- 15) How did Gandhi's family help in his struggle for social upliftment?

Long Answer Questions (125 – 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) Give a brief narration of Gandhi's various interactions with the lawyers and its outcome.

- 2) Civil disobedience had triumphed for the first time in modern India. Explain.
- 3) Events justified Gandhi's position. Explain in detail.
- 4) How did Gandhi teach the lesson of self-reliance to his followers?
- 5) Gandhi was also concerned with the social and cultural backwardness of Champaran. Justify this statement.
- 6) Why did Gandhi consider the Champaran episode a turning point his life?
- 7) Lessons from the Champaran episode
 - a. Self-reliance
 - b. Success of mass civil-disobedience
 - c. Resoluteness succeeds in a noble cause.
 - d. Injustice and exploitation cannot last for long.
 - e. In dire needs, a redeemer is found / appears.

Value Based Questions (125 – 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) "The officials felt powerless without Gandhi's Co-operation. He helped them regulate the crowd". This shows Gandhi was a great leader. Can good leadership quality help a student in becoming a good citizen in a democracy?
- 2) "He saw the cultural and social backwardness in the Champaran villages and wanted to do something about it immediately". Do you think social service can provide solution to many of the problems faced by Indians like illiteracy, cleanliness, health, environment etc. Comment.
- 3) "Gandhi in this way taught us a lesson in self-reliance". Write an article on value of self reliance.
- 4) 'It was an extraordinary thing 'in those days', Gandhi commented for a government professor to harbour a man like me.' Many ordinary people did extraordinary things to render our freedom struggle successful. What do you think urged them to act in a way that most others did not?
- 5) Gandhi was not allowed to draw water from the well lest some drops from his bucket pollute the entire source. Such discrimination would prove to be detrimental to the society. Discuss how equality can be established in the Indian society.

GOING PLACES
BY
A R BURTON

THEME

Adolescent hero-worship and fantasizing

Synopsis

A R Burton explores the theme of adolescent hero fantasizing and worship in this chapter. Sophie and Jansie are two school mates. Sophie has many ambitions and aspirations like owning a boutique, becoming a manager, an actress, a fashion designer. Jansie was practical and sensible because she knew they were earmarked for the biscuit factory.

Geoff, Sophie's brother, accommodated her and he never ridiculed her. He always listened patiently to her fantasies and stories though he was never sure that they were true. To Sophie, Geoff was the embodiment of manhood and he was a part of all her dreams and aspirations for herself. She envied him his freedom and wished to be part of the life that he led outside their home. Their father would mock her with sarcastic comments and Derek her younger brother made her feel silly saying she thought money grew on trees. Jansie had a negative or unacceptable quality or character trait - she could not keep a secret.

Sophie was fond of the football celebrity Danny Casey from Ireland. She went to the extent of fantasizing a close association with him, getting an autograph and a personal meeting scheduled on the banks of the canal. But the only time she and her middle class family saw him was during the Saturday football matches in the stadium - that too from the stadium as one among the spectators. Her fantasies became so real to her that she even went to the extent of going to the canal to meet Danny Casey who had promised to meet her there in her fantasies. Her disappointment is great when he fails to show up. Her mind kept vacillating between the fantasies of meeting Casey there and the reality of his not showing up, in which case she would have to face a lot of ridicule and embarrassment.

Short Answer Questions (30 – 40 words – 3 marks)

- 1) What are some of Sophie's aspirations that are unlikely to materialize?
- 2) Give evidences for the amiable nature of Geoff unlike the other members of Sophie's family.
- 3) Sophie's ambitions were divorced from reality, explain.
- 4) Sophie idolized her brother Geoff. Justify.
- 5) What did Sophie visualize Geoff's life to be like?
- 6) How did her father react to her claim of having met Danny Casey?
- 7) How did Sophie convince Jansie to keep her meeting with Danny a secret?

Long Answer Questions (125– 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) Differentiate between the characters of Sophie and Jansie.
- 2) Describe Sophie's family members and their economic status.

Sophie's father – middle class labourer, has to work really hard to make both ends meet, is aware of Sophie's habit of fantasizing, has no time for her foolishness, warns her of dire consequences if does not break out of her habit, feared by Sophie.

Sophie's mother – a hardworking housewife, lives in a small room with her family, a place which uses even for cooking and laundry, constantly worried about the financial constraints of her family, continuous household work has left her with a crooked back

Geoff – an apprentice mechanic, has a life of his won in which none of his family members have any say, an introvert, his silence makes Sophie jealous, dresses shoddily and has no sense of fashion, a man of few words, hence reserved.

They belonged to the middle class since

1. her father used a bicycle
 2. went to the pub (public drinking place)
 3. watched matches from the balcony
 4. Geoff was a school dropout, an apprentice mechanic and owned an old bike
- 3) Sophie was a middle class girl who, like a typical teenager, wanted to reach out to new horizons. Justify.
 - 4) How are dreams useful or otherwise?
 - Useful – relief from drudgery / dull daily routine
 - Motivation to become somebody / driving force to realize an ideal / aspiration, Delightful and free of cost
 - Useless – wasting of time
 - Leading to frustration and despair.

Value based Questions (125– 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) Sophie always dreamt of becoming a manager, fashion designer, an actress and owner of a boutique. Though she was earmarked / destined for biscuit factory, dreams are required for growth but day dreams hamper it. Write an article on "Unrealistic dreams – bane to growth".
- 2) Like all other teenagers, Sophie lived in world of fantasy and worshipped her soul's hero Danny Casey. She goes to the extent of imagining a date with him and feels disappointed – when this realization dawns upon her that it was a waking dream. Write an article on "Self deception leads to depression".
- 3) "The small room was steamy from the stove and cluttered with the heavy-breathing man in his vest at the table and the dirty washing piled up in the corner". This shows that Sophie's family belonged to the lower middle class of the society. This has played a role in Sophie's fantasizing. How does socio – economic background influence a child's development?

- 4) Sophie like many children today, aspires for things beyond her means and is always looking for material comforts. What values need to be instilled in children so that they learn to be better human beings and not purely materialistic?
- 5) To accomplish great things, we must dream as well as act.
To reach great heights dreams must manifest into actions. Mere dreams without action remain an illusion. Sophie dreamed of owning a boutique. What do you think should be the plan of action to fulfil such a dream?

MY MOTHER AT SIXTY-SIX
BY
KAMALA DAS

Synopsis

Kamala Das (Madhavikutty- pseudonym)) deals with ageing in this poem. Her own mother, a famous poet in Malayalam, named Nalapattu Balamaniamma, was aged and looked old, weak and wrinkled. The poet is leaving her mother and going abroad. As they are travelling together to the airport, she looks at her ageing mother who is dozing open-mouthed beside her. She makes a contrast between her ageing mother with the young trees and merry children. She fears of mother's impending death which is her familiar ache and childhood's fear.

Poetic devices

Simile:- (a) ashen like that of a corpse
(b) as old as
(c) as a late winter's moon.

Metaphor / Personification:- Sprinting trees

Imagery:- trees sprinting, merry children spilling out of their homes.

Important questions

- 1) What's the familiar ache and childhood's fear? Why is it called familiar?
The familiar ache is the fear of separation from her mother and her mother's impending death. It is familiar because she had been experiencing this fear since her childhood whenever she had been separated from her mother.
- 2) How does the poet hide her feelings?
She hides her feelings by smiling at her mother and giving her the reassurance that they would meet again. The smile is a facade behind which she hides her fears and insecurities about her separation from her mother.
- 3) Why does she compare her mother to late winter's moon?
The mother has reached the last stages of her life just as the winter moon is waning and would disappear any day. Winter is the last season of the year is often compared to old age, the stage in which the mother is.
- 4) Why has the poet brought in the images of 'young trees sprinting' and 'merry children spilling out of their homes'?
Both the trees and the children offer a contrast to the mother. The trees are young while the mother is aged. The children are just beginning their lives while the mother has reached the last stages of her life. They are spilling out of their

homes showing an abundance of energy; whereas the mother is lethargic and dozing open-mouthed.

Value based Questions (125– 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) Kamala Das is shattered to see her mother ageing & nearing her death. On the other hand she feels agonized on her inability to take care of her. You feel that youth should take care of the aged. Write an article on Taking care of the aged, our duty.
- 2) In the wake of old age home mushrooming in India as well, and many of the elderly people abandoned or thrown out of their homes, how do you think youngsters can help the elderly to overcome loneliness and grief in the sunset of their lives?

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM IN A SLUM

BY

STEPHEN SPENDER

Synopsis

The poet highlights the social injustice and class inequalities prevalent at all times and all places. The children mentioned in the poem are facing deprivation of all kinds – food, lighting, furniture, text books / study materials, parental care etc.

The poet describes the physical condition of the students in the first stanza. He compares them to rootless weeds as they have no strong foundation or lack stability. Since they belong to the slum, they are neglected by the society and are treated as social outcasts. Hence they are called weeds. They are far removed from the beauty of nature (gusty waves) and lacks energy. They look unkempt or ugly with uncombed hair and no grooming. The tall girl sits with bowed head which suggests exhaustion, lack of proper nourishment or even lack of confidence and self-esteem. Another boy is pale as paper and has sunken eyes or rat's eyes due to malnourishment. Another student suffers from a disease of twisted bones which he has inherited from his father. A sweet young boy seated in the back of the classroom seems to be living in a dream world where he imagines himself to be a squirrel to escape from his harsh reality. It could also be that he is suffering from some mental illness. The first stanza thus paints a picture of misery, illness and despair.

In the second stanza the poet spotlights on the pathetic condition of the classroom. The walls of the classroom are faded to the colour of sour cream or dull yellow which reflects the dullness and lack of hope and brightness in the lives of the slum children. Generous donations like pictures and maps are stuck on the walls of the classroom but are totally irrelevant in their lives as they are more worried about their survival than enjoying these beautiful things. Each picture is symbolic of some positive aspect of life as Shakespeare suggests knowledge and learning, the image of the city with a cloudless dawn sky in the background represents civilization and development and the beautiful picture of the Tyrolean valley depicts nature at her best. Education as is represented by these pictures is supposed to open a window of opportunities for these children. But to them these pictures are totally meaningless as their world revolves around the miserable world that they see through the windows of the classrooms. Their future is as dull and colourless as the fog that surrounds the slum. The narrow roads with their dull grey skies ensure that they are far removed from the enlightened world of rivers, capes and the beauty of words.

In the third stanza, the poet seems to wonder, isn't Shakespeare wicked? He promises them a land of prosperity and richness that is totally alien to these children. They create unwanted desires and aspirations in these children which for them are unattainable. Hence it would tempt them to steal and would lead them astray, thereby destroying their lives. The same is the case with the map which again gives them ideas of escape into a world of beauty and wealth which would be impossible for them to achieve. These children are literally chained to this slum where their lives are restricted to the 'cramped holes' with hopelessness and despair their only

companions. They live on slag heaps – industrial waste – with skinny bodies and poor eyesight, a condition that's so pathetic that they wear glasses that are held together with wires. The poet is so filled with despair that he wants these pictures to be removed from the walls and be replaced with images of slums itself to create a world that is much more familiar to these children.

This pathetic plight can be changed by responsible intervention from the government, the authorities in charge and social organisations. He wants the slums which enclose these children like tombs or catacombs – almost a near death situation - to be literally broken down to give free access to the children to the beauty of nature and real life experiences. Exposing these children to normal situations is yet another way to eliminate the inequalities. Education can empower them to fend for themselves by finding productive employment. Then they would be empowered to enjoy nature and literature to its fullest. They would be truly liberated. The poet concludes with the hope that these changes would enable the children to imbibe the life giving force of the sun as positive social transformations can be brought about by only those who can inspire and energise like the sun. Thus the poem concludes on a positive and hopeful note.

Poetic Devices

Simile:- (a) like rootless weeds

(b) as big as doom

(c) lives like catacombs

Metaphor:- fog / lead – hopelessness with no chance for improving their present, miserable situation.

Important questions

- 1) How does the classroom situation contrast with the donations / world outside?
- 2) Why is Shakespeare wicked and the map a bad example?
- 3) How can the situation of the children be changed?
- 4) How does the poet create a scene of despair and dejection in the first stanza?
- 5) Quote from the poem words that denote the dismal poverty of the slum children.

Value based Questions (125– 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) Stephen Spender is pained at the indifferent attitude of the society and the authorities towards the poor, who are cursed to lead a life of deprivation and misery. You empathize with those children & want to do something for them. Comment on how education and exposure can change the plight of the poor children.
- 2) How can education be made more meaningful for the slum children?

KEEPING QUIET

BY

PABLO NERUDA (pseudonym)

Synopsis

The poet emphasizes the necessity for quiet introspection, developing mutual understanding and universal brotherhood. The poet urges people to be quiet, stop work and speak no languages. This would be a strange moment on earth, as human beings are unaccustomed to such a situation. Wars of all kinds should be stopped and destructive activities harming nature / environment should be ended. Instead people should wear new clothes, hold one another's hands and relax in the shade of trees. Here he upholds the concept of universal brotherhood.

The poet further clarifies that when he advocates inactivity he does not mean death. Rather he wants man to temporarily put aside his obsession with all activities that are done in the guise of progress. He feels that it is this single-minded obsession that would spell the doom for man. He hopes that the silence that he wants man to observe would put an end to the sadness that seem to engulf man which he feels is the result of not understanding ourselves and threatening ourselves with death. Neruda wants man to learn from nature. While the earth looks dead in winter, it is very much alive and active once summer sets in. It is only an apparent stillness or inactivity where life exists beneath the cloak of inactivity. For a start, he would count up to twelve and people can observe silence, which should be continued even in his absence.

Green wars – wars against nature or environmental degradation

Wars with gas – chemical warfare, pollution

Wars with fire – conventional warfare

Poetic Devices

Pun:- arms representing arms (hands) and weapons

Important questions

- 1) What kind of world does the poet visualize through the poem?
- 2) Explain the symbol of nature in the poem.
- 3) How is the silence that the poet envisions different from total inactivity?
- 4) What is the sadness that the poet is referring to? How can it be overcome?
- 5) What is the result of activities of violence? How can we stop such activities?

Value based Questions (125– 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) In today's world war, violence, crime and a disregard for others has become the trend. What can be done to make the world a better place?
- 2) Do you agree with the poet that keeping quiet and self introspection would pave the way to a peaceful world? Why / why not?

**A THING OF BEAUTY
BY
JOHN KEATS**

Synopsis

John Keats discusses the effect of beauty on the soul. He comments that things of beauty are sources of everlasting joy for human beings. Its importance for man only increases with the passage of time and it would never fade from memory nor would its effect ever decrease.

By things of beauty Keats means anything that would help man to attain happiness. It can be a material thing, a well-loved book, a cherished memory, or even a beautiful piece of music. No matter what, they would help us to calm us down and would give peace and happiness to us enabling us to have a peaceful night's sleep. They are like flowery bands that tie us to the earth and help us to endure and overcome the different problems in life. He urges us to appreciate things of beauty to overcome sadness in life like despair, gloomy days, lack of noble natures, ill-health etc.

Things of natural beauty like the sun, the moon, trees, daffodils, rills and forest brake remove the pall of suffering from human spirits. Apart from things of beauty from nature, the poet also feels that the heroic tales and brave deeds of men of courage as well as great works of literature are also things of beauty as they keep inspiring and motivating us to lead better lives. These are an endless fountain of immortal drink showered on humanity from the Heavens. Thus Keats reiterates the fact that effect of beauty is not ephemeral or temporary, but eternal and timeless.

Poetic Devices

Metaphor:- Endless fountain of immortal drink.

Important Questions

- 1) Explain: 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever'.
- 2) How does Keats bring out the positive impact of nature on human beings?
- 3) Why is 'grandeur' associated with the 'mighty dead'?

Value based Questions (125– 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) In the present times man is stressed & you feel that values / beautiful things will lead him to everlasting happiness. Comment.
- 2) Nature promises man comforts against all odds. But it is for man to recognize them. Explain.
- 3) How can one draw inspiration from great men?

AUNT JENNIFER'S TIGERS

BY

ADRIENNE RICH

Synopsis

The poet is a feminist and she addresses the difficulties of a married woman through the persona of her Aunt Jennifer. The Aunt spends a good deal of time in embroidering a panel of tigers prancing across the screen. The tigers are fearless creatures pacing elegantly and majestically. They are not afraid of the men standing under the tree, unlike Aunt Jennifer whose every movement is governed by the fear of her husband. The words 'bright topaz denizens' evoke an image of toughness and majesty where they are the masters of their destiny. They represent the spirit of freedom and confidence that is yearned for by Aunt Jennifer but is unable to attain due to the constraints of her marriage and her overpowering fear of her husband.

Aunt is a victim of male chauvinism and domination. In the second stanza she is pictured as doing needlepoint. But Aunt Jennifer is so oppressed and terrified that she finds it hard to pull the needle. The "massive weight of Uncle's wedding band" expresses how victimized and oppressed she is. Her inability to do something that she is supposed to enjoy reflects her powerlessness to express herself in a male dominated society. She is denied even the chance to do freely even a task which she is supposed to enjoy. Stitching the tigers is a means of self expression for her where she creates creatures which are a representation of her inner self. She spends her life in fear but she embroiders on the panel the fearless tigers to express her secret longing for a life of freedom and confidence.

In the last stanza, the poet comments that the fear of her husband will haunt Aunt Jennifer even in her death. Even her death does not end the problem and torture which a married woman experiences. She has lost her identity through her marriage. But the tigers she created would outlive her and would go on prancing, proud and unafraid. The deliberate use of only the title in the last stanza reiterates the poet's lack of respect for her Aunt and seems to be a warning to women in general to never surrender your identity to anyone.

Poetic Devices

Contrast :- topaz – green

Art – artist

Aunt Jennifer and tiger

Prancing – fluttering

Alliteration :- fingers fluttering, prancing proud

Hyperbole :- 1) massive weight of Uncle's wedding band

2) Aunt Jennifer's fingers fluttering through her wool

Find even the ivory needle hard to pull.

Transferred Epithet :- her terrified hands

Paradox :- meek and submissive Aunt Jennifer creating the confident and sleek tigers

Metaphor :- the yellow strips of the tiger compared to a precious stone like topaz

Metonymy:- wedding band symbolic of married life

Important Questions

- 1) Why do Aunt Jennifer's fingers flutter through her wool?
- 2) Explain: 'massive weight of Uncle's wedding band'.
- 3) How is Aunt Jennifer affected by the 'weight of matrimony'?
- 4) How do Aunt Jennifer's tiger look like?
- 5) What do the tigers made by the Aunt symbolize?
- 6) What impression do you form about the Uncle in the poem?
- 7) Describe the tigers created by Aunt Jennifer.

Value based Questions (125– 150 words – 6 marks)

- 1) Aunt Jennifer is the representative of exploited women. She succumbs to the tortures and ordeals. Even in twenty first century women are being exploited and tortured. Write an article on woman empowerment.
- 2) Aunt Jennifer felt oppressed and troubled in her married life. What positive traits were missing in Uncle that led to this unhappy state?