

# Section D

# LITERATURE

The Literature Section Comprises of the following :

**Q 13** will have the following arrangement :

13 A : An extract from poetry with three Multiple Choice Questions based on reference to context. **(Word limit : 20-30 words)**

**3 marks**

13 B : An extract from a short story with three reference to context questions requiring the students to supply the answers.

**(Word limit : 20-30 words)**

**3 marks**

13 C An extract from a play with three reference to context questions requiring the students to supply the answer.

**(Word limit : 20-30 words)**

**3 marks**

**Q 14** **Four** out of **Five short answer** type questions based on prose, poetry and play of **2 marks each**. The questions will not test recall but **inference and evaluate**. **(Word limit : 30-40 words)**

**8 marks**

**Q 15** **One** out of **two** long answer type questions to assess personal response to text (story, poem or play) by going beyond the text/poem/story or extract. Creativity, imagination and extrapolation beyond the text and across two texts will also be assessed.

**(Word limit : 150 words)**

**8 marks.**

# FICTION

1

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

By A.J. Cronin

### SUMMARY

The author and his companion had been driving near the city of Verona when they were stopped by two small boys, shabbily dressed, selling strawberries. The author's driver cautioned the author against purchasing the fruits. The boys were very skinny but their eyes were sincere and attracted attention. The author's companion discovered that the elder one was 13 years old, named Nicola and the younger was about 12 years old, called Jacopo. The author took an instant liking for these boys and ended up buying their biggest basket of strawberries.

Next morning, the author noticed those two boys polishing shoes of people. They appeared to be doing a good job. The boys smiled and told the author that they performed many kinds of other jobs also like escorting tourists around the city and to see Juliet's grave. Impressed, the author hired the boys immediately. Due to close interaction, the author discovered that the boys were very friendly and innocent. Beneath their cheerful smiles, however, he could discern a seriousness, a hint of sadness, that defied their age. The author did not regret his decision because the boys proved to be very resourceful. The author found their eagerness to do work really remarkable. He was surprised when he saw both the boys half asleep on a windy and deserted street, late at night. They had been waiting for the last bus to sell the newspapers. The author was struck by their desperation to do more and more work but he was surprised to note that they still wore torn clothes and hardly ate anything.

The author's trip was coming to an end. Before leaving, he asked both the boys if he could do something for them. Nicola, the elder one, refused but the younger one requested the author to drive them to Poleta, 30 km away, next day. The author was nonplussed. He had already given the day off to his driver. As a last gesture of goodwill, he volunteered to drive the two boys himself.

The following afternoon, they all drove to a tiny village, near a hill. The author was surprised to halt beside a villa. Before he could question, the boys leapt out and asked the author to pick them up from the same place, after an hour. The author couldn't restrain his curiosity. He went in and was greeted by a nurse, who ushered him inside.

Through a glass partition, the author saw that the boys were seated beside a hospital bed, with a girl of about 20 years, who appeared to be their sister. The author refused the offer to be ushered inside, as he did not wish to intrude upon a happy family reunion. On being asked, the nurse told the author that the children's father had been killed in the war and a bomb had destroyed their house and rendered them homeless. These children had kept themselves alive by building a kind of shelter with the rubble of their house. For many years the Germans ruled the city and the children had to undergo lots of suffering. Their sister, Lucia, who wanted to be a singer, could not bear the cold and starvation, so she contracted tuberculosis of the spine. The boys brought Lucia there and every week brought enough money for her treatment. Despite scarcity of work after war, the brothers never faltered in their payment. Now Lucia was showing signs of improvement and the day was not far off when she would be able to walk and sing.

The author was rejoined by the boys and they drove back to the city. The boys remain tight-lipped and the author also decided to remain quiet because he respected their privacy and secret. The author left, filled with admiration at the courage and relentless efforts of two young boys, who remained determined despite the setbacks of the war.

### सारांश

जब लेखक अपने साथी के साथ, वेरोना नगर के समीप गाड़ी में जा रहे थे तब उन्हें दो लड़कों ने रोका। लड़के फटे-पुराने वस्त्र पहने हुए थे और स्ट्रॉबरीज़ बेच रहे थे। लेखक के ड्राइवर ने उन्हें सावधान किया और फल खरीदने से मना किया। दोनों बालक अत्यन्त दुबले-पतले थे, परन्तु उनकी आँखें निष्कपट थीं और अपनी ओर आकर्षित करती थीं। लेखक के साथी ने पता लगाया कि दोनों में से बड़ा लड़का तेरह वर्ष का था और उसका नाम निकोला था; छोटा लड़का केवल बारह वर्ष का था और उसका नाम जकोपो था। लेखक को वह बहुत आकर्षक लगा और उन्होंने स्ट्रॉबरीज़ की सभी टोकरियाँ खरीद लीं।

दूसरे दिन, प्रातःकाल लेखक ने उन दोनों को लोगों के जूते पालिश करते देखा। वे अपना काम बड़ी अच्छी तरह कर रहे थे। लड़कों ने मुस्करा कर लेखक को बताया कि वह और भी अनेक प्रकार के काम

करते हैं, जैसे वह पर्यटकों को जूलियट की कब्र तक ले जाते हैं। लेखक बहुत ही प्रभावित हुए और उन्हें तुरन्त अपने पास काम पर रख लिया। उनके सम्पर्क में रहकर लेखक को यह आभास हुआ कि दोनों लड़के निष्कपट और अत्यन्त स्नेही थे। पर उनके हँसमुख चेहरों के पीछे एक गंभीरता और उदासी छिपी हुई थी। परन्तु लेखक को अपने निर्णय पर कोई खेद नहीं हुआ, क्योंकि वह दोनों बहुत ही चतुर और सूझ-बूझ वाले थे। उनकी कार्यपरायणता अद्भुत थी। लेखक तब आश्चर्यचकित रह गये जब उन्होंने उन दोनों को देर रात एक ठंडी हवा से भरी, सुनसान गली में अर्धनिद्रा में पाया। वह दोनों अखबार बेचने के लिए आखिरी बस का इंतजार कर रहे थे। उनके अधिक से अधिक काम करने के उत्साह से लेखक प्रभावित तो हुए, परन्तु उन्हें आश्चर्य हुआ कि अधिक परिश्रम के पश्चात भी वे फटे-पुराने कपड़े पहने हुए थे और शायद ही कभी कुछ खाते थे। लेखक की यात्रा समाप्त होने वाली थी। जाने से पहले उन्होंने लड़कों से पूछा कि वह उनके लिए कुछ कर सकते हैं। बड़े निकोला ने तो मना कर दिया, परन्तु छोटे ने कहा कि वह कल, तीस मील दूर उन्हें पोलेटा ले जाएँ। लेखक असमंजस में पड़ गये। उन्होंने अपने ड्राइवर को कल की छुट्टी दे दी थी। अन्त में सद्भावना के लिए उन्होंने खुद उन दोनों को ले जाने का निश्चय किया।

दूसरे दिन, दुपहर में वह एक छोटे से गाँव पहुँचे जो एक पहाड़ी के निकट था। लेखक के आश्चर्य का ठिकाना न रहा जब वह एक बड़े भव्य घर के सामने रुके। इससे पहले वह कुछ पूछते, दोनों लड़के कूद कर उतर गये और लेखक से एक घन्टे बाद उसी जगह पर उन्हें लेने आने को कहा।

लेखक अपनी जिज्ञासा को रोक न सके और उनके पीछे चल पड़े। एक नर्स ने उनका स्वागत किया और वह उन्हें अन्दर ले गयी। शीशे के विभाजन से उन्होंने देखा कि लड़के अस्पताल के एक पलंग के

पास बैठे थे जिस पर एक बीस वर्षीय लड़की लेटी हुई थी लड़की उन दोनों की बहिन लग रही थी। लेखक ने स्वयं उनके पास जाने से रोका। वह एक परिवार मिलन में अनामंत्रित प्रवेश नहीं करना चाहते थे।

नर्स ने पूछने पर उन्हें बताया कि बच्चों के पिता युद्ध में मारे गये थे, और एक बम ने उनके घर को नष्ट करके उन्हें गृहहीन कर दिया था। इन बच्चों ने अपने घर के अवशेषों से अपने लिए जीने का आश्रय बनाया था। कई वर्षों तक जर्मनी का आधिपत्य वेरोना में बना रहा और बच्चों को अनेक कष्टों का सामना करना पड़ा। उनकी बहिन, लूशिया, जो एक गायिका बनना चाहती थी, भूख और शीत के कारण रीढ़ की हड्डी के तपेदिक का शिकार हो गई। दोनों लड़के लूशिया को इस अस्पताल में ले आये और उसकी सेवा सुश्रूषा के लिए हर हफ्ते पैसे लेकर आते रहे। युद्ध के कारण काम की कमी थी, फिर भी दोनों पैसे देने में कभी भी नहीं चूके। अब लूशिया पहले से बहुत अच्छी है और शीघ्र ही चलने और गाने लगेगी।

लड़के बाहर आये और लेखक उन्हें शहर वापस ले आये। लड़के रास्ते में एक शब्द नहीं बोले और न लेखक ने ही उनसे कुछ पूछा। वह उनकी गोपनीयता का सम्मान रखना चाहते थे। उन दोनों बालकों के साहस, कड़े परिश्रम, किसी भी रुकावट के आगे न झुकने की हिम्मत ने लेखक के हृदय में उनके प्रति श्रद्धा भर दी और वह यही भावना लिए वहाँ से चले गये।

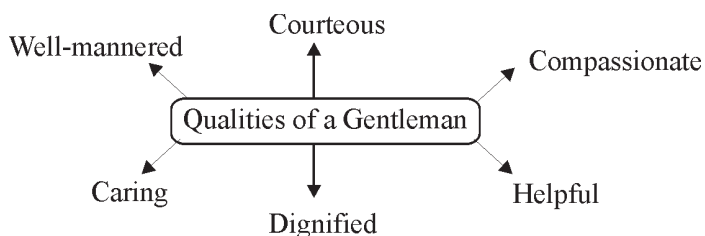
### WORD-MEANINGS

**cautious** : careful • **shabby** : ill-dressed • **disapproval** : criticise • **brisk** : good, quick • **slackened** : reduced • **engaging** : attractive • **hawked** : sold • **errands** : odd jobs • **emigrate** : take up citizenship of another country • **vexation** : annoyance • **humble** : modest • **scarcely** : hardly • **intrude** : enter without permission

## SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

### TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS (SOLVED)

1. What are the qualities of a gentleman? Complete the following web-chart.



2. Based on your discussion above, what do you think the story is about?

**Ans** : This story is about the indomitable courage and perseverance of two young boys whom the destruction and ravages of war has not been able to crush. Their adversity

becomes their strength and they are spurred on to take up extraordinary loads of work to fend for their ailing sister.

4. Based on your reading of the story answer the following questions by ticking the correct options.

- (i) *The driver did not approve of the narrator buying fruit from the two boys because :*
- (a) the boys were untidy and poorly dressed  
 (b) the strawberries were not fresh  
 (c) they were asking for a heavy price  
 (d) the driver did not approve of small boys who worked

- (ii) *The narrator was most impressed by the boys' :*
- (a) desire to earn money
  - (b) willingness to work
  - (c) ability to perform many tasks
  - (d) sense of fun
- (iii) *Nicola was not pleased when Jacopo asked the narrator to drive them to Poleta as he :*
- (a) did not want a stranger to become involved with their plans
  - (b) preferred going to Poleta by train so that he could enjoy the scenery
  - (c) did not want to ask anyone for favours
  - (d) did not want to take help from someone he did not know well
- (iv) *The narrator did not go inside Lucia's room as :*
- (a) he did not want to intrude into their privacy
  - (b) he thought that the boys would object
  - (c) Lucia would not welcome a stranger
  - (d) the boys would feel he was spying on them
- (v) *The boys were the first to join the resistance movement against the Germans because :*
- (a) the Germans had hurt their sister
  - (b) the Germans ruled the city
  - (c) the Germans had ruined their family
  - (d) the Germans had destroyed their home
- (vi) *The author did not speak to the boys on their return journey because*
- (a) he thought the boys would prefer to keep their secret
  - (b) he thought the boys were ashamed of their sister's condition
  - (c) he thought they won't tell him the truth
  - (d) he thought the boys might ask him for money for their sister.

**Answers :** (i)     (a)     (ii)     (c)     (iii)     (a)      
 (iv)     (a)     (v)     (d)     (vi)     (a)    

**5. What do you understand by the following statements —**

- (a) *"We do many things, sir," Nicola answered seriously. He glanced at us hopefully?*

**Ans :** The author was surprised to see Nicola and Jacopo polishing shoes instead of selling wild berries. Nicola told the author that they did many other odd jobs like escorting the tourists around the city. Basically he wanted the author to engage him for sightseeing, so that he could earn some more money.

- (b) *"He coloured deeply under his sun-burn, then grew pale."*

**Ans :** The author is taken aback to see both the boys working so hard, day and night but they still wore torn clothes and ate nothing except black bread and figs. So he asked Nicola, what he did with so much money. Since Nicola didn't wish to reveal that the money was for his ailing sister, his face bore an embarrassed look.

- (c) *He smiled uncomfortably "Just plod, Sir" he answered in a low voice.*

**Ans :** The author is shocked to discover that despite working so hard, both the boys hardly spent any money on themselves. As a joke, the author said that maybe the boys wished to migrate to America. Nicola did not wish to answer that they were saving money for their ailing sister. He just smiled uncomfortably and did not wish to comment any further.

- (d) *Yet in both these boyish faces there was a seriousness which was far beyond their years.*

**Ans :** Both Nicola and Jacopo appeared to be friendly, innocent, and carried out each job with great fun and zest. Yet there was a hint of lingering sadness in their eyes which is generally not seen in boys of their age-group.

**6. Answer the following questions briefly.**

- (a) *Why didn't Luigi, the driver approve of the two boys?*

**Ans :** The author's driver was critical of the torn and dirty clothes of the two boys. Moreover, he felt that since the boys were selling wild berries, there was no need for the author to buy those, since better quality of strawberries could be procured from the market in Verona.

- (b) *Why were the narrator and his companion impressed by the two boys?*

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

**Ans :** The narrator was impressed with their sincerity and a strange kind of attraction drew him to the boys. Moreover, the boys demonstrated lot of zest and willingness for undertaking all kinds of work.

- (c) *Why was the author surprised to see Nicola and Jacopo working as shoeshine boys?*

**Ans :** The author had noticed the two boys selling wild strawberries earlier, so he was surprised to see the same boys polishing shoes, the next day.

- (d) *How were the boys useful to the author?*

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

**Ans :** The boys were very eager and enthusiastic to provide all kinds of comfort to the author. Whether it was a pack of American cigarettes or name of a good restaurant

or opera, they were always at the beck and call of the narrator.

(e) *Why were the boys lying down in the deserted square at night? What character traits do they exhibit?*

**Ans :** The boys were lying down at the deserted square to wait for the last bus from Padua to sell newspapers, which were left unsold. This incident depicts their die-hard spirit, determination, devotion for their sister, their hardwork, and perseverance despite all odds.

(f) *The narrator asks the boys, "Must you work so hard? You both look rather tired." The boys reply, "we are not complaining, sir." What do you learn about the boys from their reply?*

**Ans :** The boys are too mature for their age. Their determination and zest, eagerness to undertake all kinds of work, and yet remain quiet regarding their purpose reflects upon their selfless attitude.

(g) *When the narrator asks the boys about their plans, they are evasive. Why don't they disclose their problems?*

**Ans :** The boys were only focussed upon providing all possible help for their sister Lucia, who was suffering from tuberculosis of the spine. They wished to retain their pride and dignity in keeping this as a secret. They didn't wish their private suffering to be made public.

### 7. Discuss the following questions and write the answers in your notebook.

(a) *'Appearances are deceptive.'* Discuss with reference to the two boys.

**Ans :** At the surface level, the boys appear to be friendly, fun-loving and childish but gradually the author discovers that they were mature enough to keep their private griefs safe. Moreover, they never showed their suffering in any way. Behind their smiles, there was a hint of sadness that could be seen once in a while.

(b) *Do you think the boys looked after Lucia willingly? Give reasons for your answer.*

**Ans :** The ultimate mission of the boys' life was the welfare of their sister Lucia. Day and night they slogged and starved only to provide for medical expenses for Lucia. This couldn't have been done without their will and desire.

(c) *How does the story "Two Gentlemen of Verona" promise hope for society?*

**Ans :** Both Nicola and Jacopo show selflessness and reflect great dignity in their behaviour. They are deeply devoted to their sister. In their earnest endeavour they become role models, epitomes of sacrifice, who can

enlighten the path for rest of the humanity to follow.

### 8. Match the phrases to their meanings.

<b>Ans. Phrases</b>	<b>Meanings</b>
Set up	to start
break down	to lose control over your feelings
set off	to start on a journey
put up with	to tolerate a situation
put off	to postpone
put on	to wear
come in	to enter
come across	to meet or find by chance
come up against	to be faced with or opposed by
turn down	to refuse
turn in	to inform or deliver up
turn to	to try to get help

### Now use the phrases given above to complete the following sentences.

1. The landlord was suspicious of the two men staying in his flat, so he called the police and ..... them .....
2. Early in the morning, we packed our bags and ..... for a hike over the mountain.
3. Janvi ..... some photographs of her grandfather in the old trunk.
4. My father ..... his own business 10 years ago.
5. The Bank ..... Paul's request for a loan.
6. The Corporation's decision to reduce the leave of the employees ..... a lot of opposition.

**Answers :** 1. turned, in 2. set off 3. came across 4. set up 5. turned down 6. came up against

### 11. As a narrator, write an article on the lesson of love, faith and trust that you have learnt from the two young boys of Verona.

**Ans :** Tragedies and adversities either bring out the best or the worst among people. They prove to be great testing times which end up in glory or disaster. The bitter and indomitable struggle of Nicola and Jacopo, amidst the ravages of war, takes on epic proportions. Like the two gentlemen of Shakespeare's play, the two boys depict great maturity, wisdom and faith in the invincibility of human spirit. The die-hard nature of Nicola and Jacopo changes the lives of people around them, with their vibrant spark of humanity.

The two boys not only create a home to survive from the rubble but pitch in their best efforts to sustain their

sister Lucia, who had contracted tuberculosis. Their intrinsic vitality, zest for work encourages them to take up any work that is available—shining shoes, selling newspapers and fruits or escorting the tourists for sightseeing. They don't mind eating black bread or figs, or wearing torn clothes because they are only single-mindedly focussed upon their sister's treatment. The boys never resort to any kind of emotional blackmail or charity to provide for their sister. Their dignity and perseverance shows their extreme faith in their own ability to provide for their sister's medical treatment.

So, the relentless struggle of the two boys offers a kaleidoscopic view of love, tenderness, wisdom and trust, which even a catastrophic war failed to crush.

**12. After her brothers' visit, Lucia writes a page in her diary about her past life and her present situation. As Lucia, write the diary entry in about 150 words.**

**Ans :** Dear Diary,

Today was a sunny day in my otherwise clouded life. Both Nicola and Jacopo paid a visit and ushered in

great cheer and hope. I know I am improving everyday, but the recovery is too slow and less in keeping with my expectations. My heart bleeds when I see the deprived and ragged faces of my younger brothers who are valiantly trying to sustain me. They never tell me what work they do, but I can imagine the burden they are bearing at such a young age.

O God! How my life is so parsimoniously measured out. It was only yesterday when I had such a fulfilled life, a family and warmth of a household. I had a god-gifted asset, my voice and my training as a singer would have set me up in life comfortably. I can never forgive the war. The Germans unleashed such cruelty and terror that crippled the entire city. I was separated from my brothers and when I was reunited, I had already contracted tuberculosis of the spine. Now handicapped, helpless, I have become a painful burden and liability for my brothers. O God! when will I walk? When will I sing? When will my brothers enjoy a childhood, that they missed? When will happiness revisit us? I hope I live to see that day.

Lucia.

## REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – MCQs

**Read the following extracts and choose the correct option.**

1. "Won't you go in?" "Lucia will be pleased to see you."

- (i) Identify the speaker.
  - (a) The author
  - (b) Nicola
  - (c) Jacopo
  - (d) the Nurse
- (ii) Lucia is supposed to be :
  - (a) the sister of the boys
  - (b) aunt of the boys
  - (c) narrator's friend
  - (d) the driver's niece
- (iii) Lucia would have welcomed the author because :
  - (a) she knew him well
  - (b) she was bed-ridden and would have loved stranger's visit
  - (c) he had helped her brothers
  - (d) she was friendly by nature

**Answers :** (i) (d)      (ii) (a)      (iii) (c)

2. "For months they had barely kept themselves alive."

- (i) This means that :
  - (a) they had no desire to live
  - (b) they were weak-willed
  - (c) they had great difficulties during the war
  - (d) they were lazy
- (ii) The boys had kept alive by :
  - (a) eating a lot
  - (b) begging for work
  - (c) building a house out of the rubble
  - (d) taking people for sightseeing
- (iii) The above reflects on the qualities of boys like :
  - (a) diligence
  - (c) compassion
  - (b) perseverance
  - (d) determination

**Answers :** (i) (c)      (ii) (c)      (iii) (b)

3. *They had always known a comfortable and cultured life.*

- (i) Identify 'they' :
  - (a) the narrator and his friend
  - (b) Nicola and Jacopo
  - (c) some tourists
  - (d) the guide at Juliet's tomb

- (ii) By 'comfortable life' means :  
 (a) inherited money  
 (b) lot of salary  
 (c) parents were reasonably well-off  
 (d) parents were musicians
- (iii) The effect of this upbringing was :  
 (a) boys had a tough time  
 (b) they couldn't survive  
 (c) they had to face more struggle  
 (d) their determination increased

Answers : (i) (b) (ii) (c) (iii) (d)

4. "I knew they would prefer to feel that they had safely kept their secret."

- (i) The writer had the above feeling because :  
 (a) the boys behaved strangely  
 (b) they did not take the writer inside to meet their sister  
 (c) they sent him to the village  
 (d) they refused to say anything
- (ii) The above behaviour reflected upon the boys'  
 (a) cleverness (b) reticence  
 (c) maturity (d) introvert nature
- (iii) The writer kept quiet because he wanted to :

- (a) keep their friendship  
 (b) ignore them  
 (c) be indifferent  
 (d) retain their dignity

Answers : (i) (d) (ii) (c) (iii) (d)

5. "May be you'd like to go to the 'cafe' in the village for a drink".

- (i) The boys said this because :  
 (a) they wanted to avoid the writer  
 (b) they wanted to cheat him  
 (c) they were cracking a joke  
 (d) they were not bothered
- (ii) The above reflects upon the boys' character attributes like :  
 (a) ignorant (b) uncivilised  
 (c) tactful (d) rude
- (iii) The writer also listened to the boys because  
 (a) he was not interested  
 (b) he wanted to keep their secret  
 (c) he did not wish to hurt them  
 (d) he had no other option

Answers : (i) (a) (ii) (c) (iii) (c)

## REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – NON-MCQs

Read the following extracts and answer the questions.

1. "Nicola, the way you and Jacopo work, you must earn quite a bit. You spend nothing on clothes. You eat little enough ... ."

(a) Who said the above lines?

Ans : These lines are spoken by the narrator.

(b) Why did the speaker get the feeling that the boys were not spending any money?

Ans : The boys were always seen wearing torn clothes and they seemed to hardly eat anything except black bread and fig.

(c) What do the above lines reflect about the two boys?

Ans : The boys were of sacrificing nature and they cared very deeply for their sister. Her well-being was their sole concern.

2. I had already told Luigi he might take the day off. However I answered, "I'll drive you out myself."

(a) Who was Luigi?

Ans : He was the driver of the narrator.

(b) Why did the speaker offer to drive himself?

Ans : Luigi had been granted a holiday and the narrator did not wish to recall him and as a last gesture of good will he offered to drive himself.

(c) Where did the boys wish to go?

Ans : The boys wished to go to Poleta, 30 km away, to look up their sister.

3. When the war was over and we had peace at last, they come back to their beloved sister. And they found her ....

(a) Identify 'they'.

Ans : 'They' refers to the brothers – Nicola and Jacopo.

(b) Who is the beloved sister?

Ans : Lucia is the boys' sister who had not been keeping well.

(c) **In what condition did they find their sister?**

**Ans :** The brothers found that their sister had contracted tuberculosis of the spine.

4. *“Of course, everything is so difficult now, food so scarce and dear we could not keep going unless we charged a fee.”*

(a) **Who is the speaker and who is the listener?**

**Ans :** The speaker is the nurse, and the listener is the narrator.

(b) **Why was food so expensive?**

**Ans :** Due to war waged by Germany, starvation had resulted.

(c) **For what purpose does the speaker need to charge a fee?**

**Ans :** Luica had contracted TB, so money was needed for her medical expenses.

5. *“They couldn’t do it better,” I agreed.*

(a) **Who is ‘I’ and who are ‘they’?**

**Ans :** ‘I’ is the narrator, and ‘they’ refers to Nicola and Jacopo.

(b) **What great thing had the above mentioned people done?**

**Ans :** The determination of the brothers to do so many

jobs to provide for their sister.

(c) **Do you think the speaker is earnest in his saying?**

**Ans :** The speaker is sincere and full of admiration for the boys.

6. *‘When the resistance movement began secretly to form they were among the first to join. When the war was over and we had peace at last, they came back to their beloved sister.’*

(a) **Who are the “they” referred to here?**

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

**Ans :** Here ‘they’ refers to the two brothers, Nicola and Jacopo.

(b) **Why did they join the resistance movement?**

**Ans :** They joined the resistance movement because the war waged by Germany had killed their father, destroyed their house and had separated them from their sister.

(c) **What had happened to their sister?**

**Ans :** Their sister, Lucia, who wanted to be a singer, had contracted tuberculosis of the spine due to cold and starvation.

## SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. **Nicola said to the narrator, “Waiting for the last bus from Padua. We shall sell all our papers, when it comes in.” Why were the boys waiting for the last bus?**

**Ans.** Both the brothers — Nicola and Jacopo were desperate to make as much money as possible to provide medical care for their sister Lucia, who was undergoing treatment for T.B. They worked late at night and were waiting for the last bus to sell the unsold newspapers.

2. **Why did the two boys survive only on black bread and figs, despite making a decent earning?**

**Ans.** The boys did not wish to spend any money on themselves. They just ate the minimum required for survival. Lucia’s treatment was expensive so they willingly gave away all the money they earned for her recuperation. Their own misery or poverty did not mean anything to the boys.

3. **Why does the narrator make an offer for help to the two boys? What does it entail?**

**Ans.** The narrator is very impressed by the hard work

and zest exhibited by the two brothers. His visit was coming to an end, so the narrator offered help as the last sign of goodwill. Jacopo requested the narrator to take them to Poleta, which was 30 km away. Since the narrator had already given the day off to his driver, he volunteered to drive the boys, himself.

4. **For what reason does Jacopo request for a lift to Poleta?**

**Ans.** Lucia is Jacopo’s and Nicola’s sister who was undergoing medical treatment for tuberculosis of the spine at Poleta. The boys were working very hard to provide for their sister and went frequently to look her up. Jacopo wanted to save the expenses of the trip, so he requested the narrator for a lift to Poleta.

5. **Why did the narrator enter the large red-roofed villa?**

**Ans.** Both the boys looked poor and bedraggled. When they halted before a beautiful villa, the narrator was surprised. Out of curiosity, he couldn’t restrain himself,



and entered the red-roofed villa to know the reason for the trip made by the two boys.

**6. What scene does the narrator see through the glass partition?**

**Ans.** The narrator saw that the two brothers were seated on a hospital bed, with a girl of about 20 years. She appeared to be their sister. There was so much love and affection visible and the scene looked like a happy family reunion.

**7. What did the narrator discover regarding the family background of the two boys? How did the war affect their family?**

**Ans.** The nurse, who was looking after Lucia, told the narrator the entire story of the two boys. All the three children belonged to a prosperous family and Lucia was training to be a singer. The war waged by Germany killed their father, their house was destroyed by a bomb and the boys were separated from their sister. Due to neglect, Lucia contracted T.B.

**8. The nurse said regarding the two boys, “I don’t know what they do, I don’t ask. Work is scarce in Verona.” What does this remark reflect upon the speaker?**

**Ans.** The nurse was very surprised how the boys managed to bring in sufficient money for the treatment of their sister, when work was scarce in the city. The nurse had no idea how hard the boys worked and how they tried to pitch in for all kinds of work that was available. The comment reveals that even the nurse respected the privacy of the boys and wanted to retain their dignity by not prodding them.

**9. Why didn’t the two boys disclose their problems to the author? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans.** The boys were working hard to provide all possible help to their sister, Lucia, who was suffering from

tuberculosis of the spine. They did not disclose their problems to the author as they wished to retain their pride and dignity. They did not want their private suffering to be made public.

**10. What traits of the boys attracted the narrator to them? How were the children helpful to the narrator? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans.** The narrator was attracted towards the boys due to the zest and willingness, demonstrated by them for undertaking all kind of work. The boys were also very eager to provide all kinds of comfort to the author. They were always at beck and call of the author.

**11. What were the hardships faced by Nicola and Jacop?**

**Ans.** The children’s father had died in the war, waged by Germany. A bomb had destroyed their house, their sister had contracted tuberculosis due to cold and starvation. The two boys worked day in and day out, took every possible job, starved themselves to provide for their sister’s treatment and built, from the rubble of their house, a shelter for themselves.

**12. What provoked the author’s interest in the two boys of Verona? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans.** The author found the zest and willingness of the boys for undertaking all kind of work—selling strawberries, polishing shoes, taking tourists round the city — remarkable. The author found the boys to be very innocent and friendly.

**13. How did Luigi show his disapproval on seeing the two boys and why? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans.** When the author and his companion Luigi saw the boys selling strawberries, they were shabbily dressed. Luigi disapproved of them due to their skinny and shabby appearance and cautioned the author against purchasing the fruit since better quality strawberries could be procured from the market.

## LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. Nicola is happy to see the improvement in his sister’s condition. He writes a letter to his friend James, expressing his feelings and satisfaction they were deriving in their valiant efforts to help their sister. Write the letter on his behalf.**

**Ans.** Oxford Street  
ABC City

Date : .....

Dear James,

I just wish to share my happiness with you that Lucia is really showing signs of improvement and maybe the day is not far off, when she will walk and sing again. The hard work and the struggle that Jacopo and I have put in is proving worthwhile and reaping a harvest. Believe

me, Lucia has become our prime focus, day in and day out. We are single-mindedly driven by one sole reason — Lucia’s recuperation from tuberculosis. The wounds inflicted by war would be forgotten if Lucia gets well. Our efforts have received God’s grace. Please pray for me.

Love,  
Nicola

2. **Both the boys have left a deep imprint on the author’s minds. When the author gets back to his city, he writes an article titled, “PROFILES IN COURAGE”, recounting the brave efforts of the two brothers. Respecting their feelings, he uses fictitious names for the two boys. Write the article.**

**Ans. Profiles in Courage**

War can destabilise people, it tends to break human spirit and it is extremely difficult to bounce back and struggle again. This extraordinary feat was performed by two brothers of Verona, who with great grit and perseverance, not only saved themselves but also provided for their sister, who had contracted TB. Both slaved day in and day out, took on every possible job, worked late nights, starved themselves but still remained cheerful. They were too mature for their age and never gave vent to their misery. By saving their sister, building a house out of rubble, they have become role-models for others, by their superhuman efforts.

3. **The nurse is full of admiration for the two brothers and their sister Lucia. She is astonished at the great efforts all are making towards their future. Lucia is bravely fighting her handicap, her brothers are defying all physical barriers to aid their sister. The nurse writes a letter to her sister Mary, praising this family of fighters who are the real survivors in the great battle of life.**

**Ans.** Park Street  
ABC City  
15th October, 20.....

Dear Mary,

Sorry, I couldn’t write earlier. As you know, I am in Poleta, looking after a bedridden girl of 20, who has contracted TB. Her name is Lucia and she is very cheerful and bravely fighting her handicap. Mary, you’d not believe

how extraordinary her two brothers are! Both the brothers are very young. Their parents had died in the war and now they are slaving everyday to provide medical treatment for their sister. I have never asked what they do, but they bring sufficient money for Lucia’s treatment. The brothers face all the hardships, they are sacrificing everything to provide the best care for their sister. Even she is showing great signs of recovery. I hope I live to see that day.

Love,  
Megan

4. **Answer any one of the following in about 150 words.**

“The two boys’ devotion had touched me deeply. War had not broken their spirit. Their selfless action brought a new nobility to human life, gave promise of a greater hope for human society.”

Comment upon this statement made by the narrator of the lesson, “Two Gentlemen of Verona” bringing out the reasons. **[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans.** War, tragedies and adversities shake the people to the core. They prove to be great testing times which end up in glory or in disaster. In the similar circumstances amidst the ravages of war, the two boys, Nicola and Jacopo depicted great maturity, wisdom and faith. Their diehard nature prevented them from succumbing to the cruelty of war, waged by Germany.

The children’s father had been killed in the war and a bomb had destroyed their home and rendered them homeless. They kept themselves alive by building a shelter out of the rubble of their house. Their sister, Lucia, contracted tuberculosis of the spine due to cold and starvation and had been admitted to a hospital. They pitched in their best efforts to sustain their sister, Lucia. Both slaved day in and day out, took on every possible job, worked late nights, starved themselves to earn sufficient money for Lucia’s treatment. Their own misery and poverty did not mean anything to the boys. By their earnest endeavour and selfless attitude they brought a new nobility to human life and promised a greater hope for human society.

5. **Answer the following in about 150 words.**

You are Lucia the ailing sister of the two boys. Write a letter to your friend about your past life and your present situation, as you are on the way to recovery, with the help of your younger brothers.

**[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans. Dear Margret**

I just want to share my happiness with you that I am on my way to recovery with the help of Nicola and Jacopa.

Margret, you must be astonished by what I am talking about, because you do not know what happened to me and my family after Germany waged a war on us. I could not tell you earlier as I lost your address in the rubble of our home which was destroyed by a bomb. My father was killed in the war and we three were rendered homeless. My budding career in the field of singing also came to an end. Worst of all, I contracted tuberculosis of the spine and was admitted to a hospital. It is only

the diehard spirit of two angels — Nicola and Jacopo — which has kept me alive. My heart bleeds when I see the deprived and ragged faces of my younger brothers who are valiantly trying to sustain me. They never tell me what they do, but I can well imagine the burden they are bearing at such a young age.

It was only yesterday when I had such a fulfilled life. I can never forgive war. I am eagerly waiting for the day when I will walk! when I will sing! when my brothers will enjoy a childhood they had missed.

Rest in the next letter.

Yours

Lucia

## FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. Observe both the pictures given below. Who do you think are 'heroes' in the real sense? Who are heroes according to you? Give reasons to justify your answer.



2. Surf the Internet or find the newspaper of 26th January, 2011. Locate names and profiles of two brave children who received the bravery award on the Republic Day.
  - i Write them down.
  - i Read them aloud in the class.
3. Identify a boy of extraordinary resilience and perseverance from your circle of friends. Note his qualities. Write his brief character-sketch.
4. While going to school you see a boy about your age selling flowers. Write his story in the first person.

**5. Read the following story :**

A boy was drowning in a river and he shouted for help. A kind man who was passing by jumped into the river and saved the boy. As the man was about to leave, the boy said, "Thank you." The man asked, "What are you thanking me for?"

The boy replied, "For saving my life, sir." The man looked into the boy's eyes and said, "Son, if you really want to thank me, make sure when you grow up, that your life was worth saving."

"I understand what you said, sir," replied the boy, "I will try to make my life worthwhile."

**Now write down the following.**

**1. Three things I can do to make life worthwhile.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



**SUMMARY**

Mrs Packletide was an English lady who was overcome with a strong desire to shoot a tiger. Basically she was not adventurous or brave but she was smitten with jealousy when her friend, Loona Bimberton, had recently been carried in an aeroplane by an Algerian pilot. Mrs Packletide wanted to outshine her and longed to prove that she was no less. Her ultimate desire was to obtain a tiger-skin and display it on the wall of her house. If she succeeded in killing a tiger, her photograph would appear in the press and she would host a party in Curzon Street in Loona Bimberton's honour, but the talk would be of her hunting expedition. She also planned to present a tiger-claw brooch on Loona's next birthday. All her motives were largely dominated by her dislike of Loona.

Circumstances proved to be favourable. An old and weak tiger was visiting a neighbouring village in search of food. Mrs Packletide offered to pay one thousand rupees to anyone who would help her in shooting a tiger. The villagers got very tempted as one thousand rupees was a lot of money in those days. They made all the efforts to confine the tiger within the village. Children were posted day and night on the outskirts of the local jungle to drive the tiger back to the village. Cheaper kind of goats were scattered here and there, to keep the tiger there. Mothers were told not to sing lullabys to their children loudly, lest the tiger's sleep should be disturbed. The only anxiety was lest the tiger should die of old age before the day of hunting.

On the fateful night, Mrs Packletide came along with a paid companion Miss Mebbin. A platform had already been constructed in a comfortable and conveniently placed tree by the villagers. Both the ladies sat on the platform. A goat with a loud bleat was tied at proper distance from the tiger. Meanwhile the tiger appeared on the scene and slowly walked towards the goat. Mrs Packletide fired a shot with her rifle. The tiger fell down to one side. The excited villagers celebrated by beating drums and singing. Mrs Packletide was also too happy.

Miss Mebbin was very clever and alert. She drew Mrs Packletide's attention to the fact that the bullet had actually hit the goat and the tiger had died due to heart attack, caused by the loud report of the rifle. Miss Mebbin pointed out that the tiger bore no wound. Mrs Packletide was disappointed but she consoled herself with the thought that she possessed the tiger-skin. The villagers agreed to keep the secret for they were happy to receive the money.

Mrs. Packletide wasn't insecure about Miss Mebbin for she was a paid companion.

Mrs Packletide's picture appeared in two weeklies. Loona refused to attend the lunch-party but coldly accepted the tiger-claw brooch. Miss Mebbin was very money-minded and cunning. She thought of exploiting this weak point of Mrs Packletide. She blackmailed Mrs Packletide by saying what would happen if Loona learnt that Mrs Packletide had shot the goat and not the tiger. Shrewd and clever, Miss Mebbin hinted that she wanted money to buy a weekend cottage near Dorking. To keep her mouth shut, Mrs Packletide was forced to pay for that cottage. Miss Mebbin named the cottage, "The Wild Beasts." Since then Mrs Packletide never indulged in big game shooting. She confided to her friends that "incidental expenses were too heavy for such kind of hunting".

**सारांश**

श्रीमती पैकलटाइड एक अंग्रेज़ महिला थीं जिन्हें एक बाघ का शिकार करने की तीव्र इच्छा थी। वह स्वभाव से साहसी और जोखिम उठाने वाली महिला नहीं थीं, पर उन्हें अपनी सहेली लूना बिम्बरटन से अत्यधिक द्वेष था। एक अल्जीरियन हवाईजहाज़ चालक लूना को हवाई सैर करवा लाया था। बस, अब श्रीमती पैकलटाइड अपने को उनसे अधिक साहसी दिखाना चाहती थी। उनकी परम इच्छा थी कि उन्हें एक बाघ की खाल मिले जिसे वह अपनी दीवार पर टाँग कर प्रदर्शित कर सकें। अगर वह एक बाघ का शिकार करने में सफल हो जायें तो उनकी तस्वीर समाचार पत्रों में छपे, और वह एक शानदार भोज लूना बिम्बरटन के सम्मान में देंगी, पर जिसमें सब उन्हीं के शिकार के बारे में बात करेंगे और वह एक बाघ के पंजे का ब्रोच लूना को उपहार स्वरूप देने की योजना भी बना रही थीं। उनकी समस्त योजनाएँ लूना के प्रति उनकी इर्ष्या और द्वेष से प्रेरित थी।

परिस्थितियों ने भी उनका साथ दिया। एक अत्यंत कमजोर और बूढ़ा बाघ पड़ोस के गाँव में, खाने की खोज में घूम रहा था। श्रीमती पैकलटाइड ने गाँववालों को एक हजार रुपयों का पारितोषिक देने की घोषणा की यदि वह बाघ के शिकार में उनकी सहायता करें। एक हजार रुपये उन दिनों बहुत होते थे और ग्रामवासी प्रभावित हो गये। उन्होंने बूढ़े बाघ को गाँव में रखने का पूरा प्रयत्न किया। उन्होंने बच्चों को दिन-रात चौकसी करने को कहा जिससे वह बाघ गाँव के अन्दर ही रहे। सस्ती बकरियों को इधर-उधर घूमने दिया जिससे बाघ को अपना भोजन मिलता रहे। माताओं से रात में बच्चों को जोर से लोरी सुनाने पर प्रतिबंध लगाया, जिससे बाघ की निद्रा न भंग हो जाये। सबसे बड़ी परेशानी का कारण उनका यह डर था कि वह बाघ अपनी उम्र के कारण शिकार के पहले ही न मर जाये।

नियति की चुनी वह रात आई और श्रीमती पैकलटाइड अपनी किराये की साथी, कुमारी मेबिन के साथ आई। गाँव वालों ने एक पेड़ पर उनके लिए आरामदायक व सुविधाजनक मचान बनाई। एक बकरी, जो जोर से 'में-में' कर सकती थी, थोड़ी दूर एक पेड़ से बाँध दी गई थी। इतने में बाघ धीरे-धीरे सामने आया और बकरी की ओर बढ़ा। श्रीमती पैकलटाइड ने अपनी बन्दूक से गोली दागी। बाघ एक ओर गिर पड़ा। गाँव वालों ने जोर-शोर से ढोल पीटने शुरू कर दिये और गाने लगे। श्रीमती पैकलटाइड बहुत ही प्रसन्न थीं।

कुमारी मेबिन एक अत्यन्त चालाक और सतर्क महिला थीं। उन्होंने श्रीमती पैकलटाइड का ध्यान इस ओर आकर्षित किया कि गोली तो बकरी को लगी और बूढ़ा बाघ गोली की आवाज़ सुनकर दिल के दौरों से मर गया। उन्होंने बतलाया कि बाघ के शरीर पर कोई घाव ही न था। श्रीमती पैकलटाइड को धक्का लगा पर उन्होंने यह सोचकर अपने को सांत्वना दी कि बाघ की खाल तो उनकी थी। गाँव वालों ने भी सच को छुपाया क्योंकि उन्हें हजार रुपये मिल गये थे। श्रीमती पैकलटाइड को कुमारी मेबिन से कोई डर नहीं था क्योंकि वह उसे वेतन देती थीं।

श्रीमती पैकलटाइड की तस्वीर दो साप्ताहिक अखबारों में निकली। लूना ने खाने का निमन्त्रण स्वीकार नहीं किया, पर बड़ी रुखाई से बाघ के पन्जों का ब्रोच स्वीकार कर लिया। कुमारी मेबिन पैसों की भूखी और अत्यन्त धूर्त महिला थीं। उसने श्रीमती पैकलटाइड पर दबाव डाल कर धमकी दी कि यदि सच लूना को पता चल गया कि श्रीमती जी ने बकरी को मारा था, बाघ को नहीं, तब क्या होगा? उन्होंने बहुत चालाकी से इशारा किया कि वह इस सप्ताहांत झोपड़ी खरीदनी चाहती हैं, डोइकिंग के पास। उन्हें कुमारी मेबिन का मुँह बँद करने के लिए श्रीमती जी को पैसे देने पड़े। कुमारी मेबिन ने कुटिया का नाम, "जंगली जानवर" रखा। तबसे श्रीमती पैकलटाइड कभी जंगली जानवरों के शिकार पर नहीं गईं। उन्होंने अपने मित्रों को बताया कि शिकार में अचानक बहुत से भारी-भरकम खर्चे हो जाते हैं।

### WORD-MEANINGS

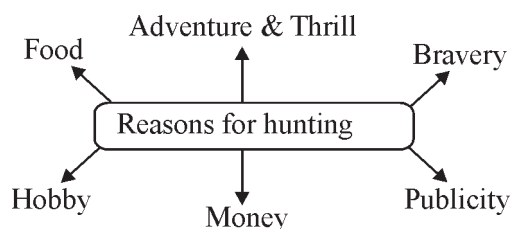
**descended** : came upon • **wholesome** : healthy  
**fraction** : a bit • **compelling motive** : strong desire

• **deviation**: change • **aviator** : pilot • **procured** : obtained • **heavy harvest** : large number • **counter**: oppose arranged in her mind : planned • **swayed** : dominated • **antecedents** : family background : past history • **infirmities** : weakness • **confine** : restrict • **game killing** : killing of other animals for food • **stimulated** : increased, encouraged • **curtail** : disturb, cut short • **venerable** : respectable • **herd-robber** : meant for someone who eats the animals of the herd, i.e. the tiger • **crouched**: a sitting position • **persistent** : continuous • **sighted rifle** : a rifle with a clear aim • **morbid** : unhealthy, unnatural • **an atom** : a bit • **irrespective** : without bothering • **denomination** : face value of currency • **intervention**: disturbance • **dissipating** : destroying, wasting away • **rouble** : Russian money • **francs centimes** : French currency • **speculation** : thoughts • **depreciation** : loss in value • **remnants** : leftover • **tethered** : tied • **thumb-nail** : small sized • **commencing** : starting • **patience** : a game of cards • **ambush**: in hiding or lying in wait hidden • **ambling**: moving slowly • **report** : noise • **tawny** : yellowish brown • **swarmed** : collected in large number • **thumping of tom-toms** : beating of drums • **chorus of triumph** : combined sound of victory • **rejoicing** : celebration • **death throes** : deadly pain, fatal • **succumbed**: given way • **accelerated** : increased • **connived** : silently approved • **repressed** : hidden • **unbecoming** : ugly • **seeming** : pretending • **irrelevance**: indifferent • **christened** : named • **marvel** : wonder • **pictured form** : photos in newspapers due to being famous • **verdict** : judgement • **indulges** : takes interest.

## SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

### TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS (SOLVED)

1. Why do people hunt? Complete the web-chart given below :



2. Read the lines and guess the answers to the questions given below.

(a) Why did Mrs Packletide want to kill a tiger?

**Ans** : It was her desire to outdo her friend that drove her to kill a tiger.

(b) What does it tell you about her?

[C.B.S.E., 2011, T-1]

**Ans** : She was publicity-crazy and jealous of her friend.

(c) *What is the tone of the story-writer?*

**Ans** : It is a tone of mockery, as if Mrs Packletide is an object of ridicule.

(d) *Do you think she was successful in her mission?*

**Ans** : Apparently she succeeded, but in reality she succeeded at a great financial loss.

(e) *What do you think the story is all about?*

**Ans** : The story is all about Mrs. Packletide's jealousy and a desire to outshine Loona Bimberton.

**3. Answer the following questions in your own words :**

(a) *Why did Mrs Packletide wish to shoot a tiger?*  
[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

**Ans:** Mrs Packletide was very jealous of Loona Bimberton and Loona's adventure made her feel belittled. So to outdo her exploits, and get publicity, she decides to shoot a tiger. She was fed up of Loona's talk of flying in an aeroplane, so she wanted to counter that kind of fame.

(b) *What made her decide to give a party in Loona Bimberton's honour? What did she intend to give Loona on her birthday?*

**Ans** : Mrs Packletide was a very vain and jealous lady. She had planned to throw a party in Curzon Street, pretending to honour Loona for her adventure but had decided that most of the talk would revolve around her bravery in killing a tiger. This would make Loona squirm with embarrassment. Moreover, to humiliate her more, she would present a tiger-claw brooch to Loona, on her birthday.

(c) *How was the tiger shooting arranged? What kind of a tiger was chosen for the purpose?*

**Ans:** Mrs Packletide offered a thousand rupees to anyone who would help in hunting a tiger. A tiger who was old and sick was found in the neighbouring village and the villagers promised all kinds of help for the money promised.

(d) *In what way did the villagers help Mrs Packletide to shoot the tiger?* [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

**Ans:** The villagers made all efforts to confine the tiger in their village. Children were posted day and night on the outskirts to drive the tiger back to the village. Cheaper kind of goats were scattered here and there to keep the tiger happy and satisfied. Mothers were not allowed to sing to their children so that it might disturb the tiger. Many leaders of the village hid in the bushes to help Mrs Packletide, while shooting.

(e) *Who was Miss Mebbin? Was she really devoted*

*to Mrs Packletide? How did she behave during the tiger shooting?*

**Ans** : Miss Mebbin was a paid companion of Mrs Packletide. She was mean, selfish and very cunning and all her life centered around money. She was not bothered for the safety or had any concern for her employees. She was more alert and she was the one who pointed out that it was the goat that had been shot by Mrs Packletide and not the tiger.

(f) *Mrs Packletide was a good shot. Discuss.*

**Ans** : Mrs. Packletide had an automatically arranged rifle. But still she could not shoot the tiger and shot the goat instead. She had never held a rifle before and didn't know how to aim.

(g) *What comment did Miss Mebbin make after Mrs Packletide had fired the shot? Why did Miss Mebbin make the comment? How did Mrs Packletide react to this comment?*

**Ans** : Miss Mebbin pointed out that Mrs Packletide had shot the goat who was in death-throes, whereas no trace of the bullet could be found on the tiger. The tiger had succumbed due to heart failure, due to the loud noise of the bullet. Miss Mebbin wished to puncture Mrs Packletide's ego and also remind her that her shooting spree had turned into a mockery. Mrs Packletide was very annoyed at this discovery but consoled herself that at least she had got a tiger skin to show off.

(h) *How did the villagers react to the tiger's death?*  
[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

**Ans** : The villagers felt ecstatic at the tiger's death and started singing and beating drums. When they discovered the truth, they agreed to keep the secret, for they had earned their thousand rupees.

(i) *Do you think Mrs Packletide was able to achieve her heart's desire? Give reasons for your answer?*

**Ans** : Yes, Mrs Packletide had accomplished her mission. She was not adventurous nor did she have any interest in game-shooting. She was able to make Loona jealous, her photograph appeared in weeklies and she was able to gift the tiger-claw brooch to Loona. She was able to outshine Loona and that was her sole intention and purpose in life.

(j) *How did Miss Mebbin manage to get her weekend cottage? Why did she plant so many tiger-lilies in her garden?*

**Ans** : Miss Mebbin is very selfish and money-minded. She threatens to divulge the secret to Loona that the tiger had died of heart failure and not from the shot of Mrs

Packetide. So she blackmailed her employer and got hush money to buy the week-end cottage. She planted tiger lilies to recognise and honour the fact that it had been a tiger who had brought her this fortune of owning a cottage.

(k) *“The incidental expenses are so heavy,” she confides to inquiring friends. Who is the speaker?*

*What is she referring to here?*

**Ans :** The speaker is Mrs Packetide, who says that tiger hunting ends up as a costly affair. So she had decided not to indulge in game-shooting. Mrs Packetide is referring to the blackmail money that she was forced to pay to Miss Mebbin to hide her secret.

**Q.6 Choose extracts from the story that illustrate the character of the people listed in the table given below. There are some words given to help you. You may add words of your own. One has been done as an example:**

vain jealous competitive shrewd manipulative stingy materialistic spiteful

Character	Extract from the story	What this tells us about the character
<b>Mrs Packetide</b>	(i) The compelling motive for the sudden deviation towards the footsteps of Nimrod was the fact that Loona Bimberton had recently been carried eleven miles in an aeroplane by an Algerian aviator, and talked of nothing else; only a personally procured tiger-skin and a heavy harvest of press photographs could successfully counter that sort of thing.	competitive jealous vain publicity-crazy
	(ii) Mrs Packetide had offered a thousand rupees for the opportunity of shooting a tiger without over-much risk or exertion,	unscrupulous pretentious non-adventurous
	(iii) Mrs Packetide faced the cameras with a light heart, and her pictured fame reached from the pages of the Texas Weekly Snapshot to the illustrated Monday supplement of the Novoe Vremya.	vain frivolous unscrupulous
<b>Louisa Mebbin</b>	(i) “If it’s an old tiger I think you ought to get it cheaper. A thousand rupees is a lot of money.”	materialistic
	(ii) Louisa Mebbin adopted a protective elder-sister attitude towards money in general, irrespective of nationality or denomination.	stingy money-minded miserly
	(iii) “How amused every one would be if they knew what really happened,” said Louisa Mebbin a few days after the ball.	shrewd manipulative spiteful
	(iv) Louisa Mebbin’s pretty week-end cottage, christened by her “Les Fauves,” and gay in summer-time with its garden borders of tiger-lilies, is the wonder and admiration of her friends	clever treacherous cheater
<b>Loona Bimberton</b>	(i) As for Loona Bimberton, she refused to look at an illustrated paper for weeks, and her letter of thanks for the gift of a tiger-claw brooch was a model of repressed emotions.	jealous vain
	(ii) there are limits beyond which repressed emotions become dangerous.	suppressed anger



7. There are many amusing lines in the story. Here are a few of them. Rewrite each one in ordinary prose so that the meaning is retained. One has been done for you as an example:

(a) *It was Mrs Packletide's pleasure and intention that she should shoot a tiger.*

**Ans.** Mrs Packletide wanted to shoot a tiger.

(b) *Mrs Packletide had already arranged in her mind the lunch she would give at her house Curzon Street, ostensibly in Loona Bimberton's honour, with a tiger-skin rug occupying most of the foreground and all of the conversation.*

**Ans.** Mrs Packletide had planned to give a luncheon party to outshine Loona.

(c) *Mothers carrying their babies home through the jungle after the day's work in the fields hushed their singing lest they might curtail the restful sleep of the venerable herd-robber.*

**Ans.** The villagers wanted to ensure a restful sleep for the tiger.

(d) *Louisa Mebbin adopted a protective elder-sister attitude towards money in general, irrespective of nationality or denomination*

**Ans.** Louisa hated spending money.

(e) *Evidently the wrong animal had been hit, and the beast of prey had succumbed to heart-failure, caused by the sudden report of the rifle, accelerated by senile decay*

**Ans.** The goat was shot instead of the tiger and the tiger died due to heart attack.

(f) *As for Loona Bimberton, she refused to look at an illustrated paper for weeks, and her letter of thanks for the gift of a tiger-claw brooch was a model of repressed emotions.*

**Ans.** Loona was jealous of Mrs Packletide's fame.

## SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Sometimes writers highlight certain negative aspects in society or human beings by making fun of it. This is called satire. In your groups discuss whether you would classify this story as a satire?

**Ans :** This story highlights the vanity of two women who can go to any foolish extremes. The writer pokes fun at socialites like Mrs Packletide and Loona who are largely governed by passions like 'jealousy'. They are far removed from normal human beings and their world comprises of parties, media attention and meaningless adventures. Their ultimate ambition in life is to outdo and outshine others. They are far removed from the basic problems of life that other people face. These women have character-traits that don't, in any way, do them justice. Mrs Packletide has never seen struggle or dearth of money or comfort so she behaves like a social butterfly without any substance. Thousands of rupees are wasted for a tiger hunt. The people who surround them also exploit them like Miss Mebbin and the villagers. The writer clearly states that Mrs Packletide's hands were used to holding generally a game of cards. Mrs Packletide's birthday is celebrated not for fun or enjoyment but to humiliate and demean others. Birthday presents like tiger-claw brooch is to hurt Mrs. Loona. Despite being bitter enemies and having extreme hatred for each other, both Loona and Mrs Packletide pretend to be part of the same friends circle.

The writer satirises the frivolous attitude of these vain women who exploit friendship, throw parties and celebrate birthdays to humiliate others. Their activities are not for the welfare of the society but only to fulfil their

eccentricities and whims. Saki openly laughs at the hollow values of women who become targets of ridicule and mockery. The writer also creates characters like Miss Mebbin who have no sense of loyalty for the employer and resort to blackmail for their optimum benefit. So Saki has a dig at the superficiality of the luxurious section of society who appear to be a drag for the society in general.

2. How does the writer create humour in this story?

**Ans :** The writer uses various techniques to create loads of humour and laughter throughout the story. The plot, situations, characters and versatile use of language has packed bundles of laughs, one after another.

The bare idea of tiger hunting on the part of a rich socialite, just to outshine another, is quite funny. Mrs Packletide's strategy to humiliate Loona, at the luncheon party with the tiger in the background is full of humour. The selection of tiger who has a royal past and the steps taken by the villagers are quite entertaining. The behaviour of the tiger when he sights the goat, or the killing of goat instead of tiger, add to the reader's interest. Miss Mebbin, the paid companion, exploits the entire situation to her credit and proves to be the smartest.

Saki scores in characterisation of Mrs Packletide and Loona who are vain to the extreme and their concept of adventure and media attention is funny. Miss Mebbin's money-mindedness, greed and the way she safeguards money at all costs is very interesting. All the three female characters are epitomes of vanity and pretension. Even the villagers, in their innocence, connive to keep the funny secret.

Mrs Packletide's comparison to a mighty hunter like 'Nimrod', or the tiger being called a venerable 'herd robber', is extremely witty. Miss Mebbin's 'elder sister attitude' towards money, Mrs Packletide facing the cameras 'with a light heart' are other touches of humour. Finally a clever lady like Mrs Packletide is fooled by Miss

Mebbin, who manages to extract a weekened cottage with 'tiger lilies' and ironically calls it 'The Wild Beast'. The climax of humour erupts in the situation when the goat is seen in the death-throes and no evidence of the rifle's work is seen on the tiger. So this is Saki's excellent rendition of a humorous piece of the first order.

## REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – MCQs

Read the following extracts and choose the correct option.

1. "How you shot the goat and frightened the tiger to death," said Miss Mebbin.

- (i) Miss Mebbin wanted to —  
 (a) sympathise  
 (b) point out the blunder  
 (c) make fun of Mrs Packletide  
 (d) wanted to blackmail her
- (ii) Miss Mebbin was by nature —  
 (a) clever (b) miser  
 (c) greedy (d) manipulative

(iii) This proves that Mrs Packletide was in reality —  
 (a) vain (b) not a hunter  
 (c) had a bad aim (d) fearful

Answers : (i) (c) (ii) (d) (iii) (b)

2. "..... and a thumbnail pack of patience cards, the sportswomen awaited the coming of the quarry."

- (i) The tone of the writer in the above statement is —  
 (a) humorous (b) ironical  
 (c) mocking (d) sarcastic
- (ii) Patience refers to —  
 (a) a game of cards  
 (b) waiting patiently  
 (c) to sit still  
 (d) to remain quiet
- (iii) 'quarry' refers to —  
 (a) the villagers (b) Loona  
 (c) Miss Mebbin (d) the tiger

Answers : (i) (b) (ii) (a) (iii) (d)

3. "Only a personally procured tiger-skin and a heavy harvest of press photos could counter that sort of thing".

- (i) "that sort of thing" refers to —  
 (a) the tiger hunt  
 (b) Loona's fame  
 (c) Mrs Packletide's party  
 (d) The help of the villagers
- (ii) A tiger skin was needed to —  
 (a) increase Mrs Packletide's fame  
 (b) to make Loona jealous  
 (c) to get photos  
 (d) to reduce and undermine Loona's fame
- (iii) The above statement reflects upon Mrs Packletide's character that she was —  
 (a) opportunistic (b) publicity-crazy  
 (c) adventurous (d) driven by jealousy

Answers : (i) (b) (ii) (b) (iii) (d)

4. "No one would believe it", said Mrs Packletide, her face changing colour as rapidly as though it were going through a book of patterns before post-time.

- (i) Mrs Packletide was literally \_\_\_\_\_ at this comment of Lousia —  
 (a) surprised (b) shocked  
 (c) irritated (d) confused
- (ii) A book of patterns refers to  
 (a) colours for furnishings  
 (b) colours for painting  
 (c) colours for dresses  
 (d) colour patterns for races
- (iii) Mrs Packletide understood that Miss Mebbin's remark is meant to  
 (a) malign her (b) blackmail her  
 (c) displease her (d) annoy her

Answers : (i) (b) (ii) (d) (iii) (b)

## REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – NON-MCQs

Read the following extracts and answer the questions.

1. *“In a world swayed by hunger and love, Mrs Packletide was an exception, her motives were largely governed by ...”*

(a) **How was Mrs Packletide an ‘exception’?**

**Ans :** Mrs. Packletide was obsessed by hatred of Loona, which was not normal.

(b) **What were Mrs Packletide’s motives?**

**Ans :** Mrs. Packletide’s motives were to hunt a tiger and more fame than loona Bimberton.

(c) **What governed her ‘motives’?**

**Ans :** Her motives were governed by extreme hatred of Loona.

2. *‘Favoured rendezvous of an animal of respectable antecedents’.*

(a) **Explain ‘rendevous’.**

**Ans :** It means ‘meeting place’.

(b) **Point out the humour in the above statement.**

**Ans :** Even the tiger to be shot had to be from the family of famous killers. No other tiger could prove useful.

(c) **What were the qualifications of the animal mentioned?**

**Ans :** The tiger selected for the hunt was old, sick, and was from a background of great killers..

3. *Mothers carrying their babies home through the jungle after the day’s work in the fields hushed their singing lest they might curtail the restful sleep of the venerable herd-robber.*

(a) **What were the steps taken by the mothers for the animal?**

**Ans :** The mothers did not sing lullabies to their children, so as not to disturb the tiger’s sleep.

(b) **Point out the literary device in ‘venerable herd-robber’.**

**Ans :** This is an oxymoron, when contradictory elements are brought together to prove something. On the one hand, the tiger is a robber and, on the other, he is respectable also.

(c) **How did all this care benefit the animal?**

**Ans :** The tiger had his full sleep, was not disturbed so that he is ready for the final day of shooting.

4. *Louisa adopted a protective elder sister attitude towards money in general.*

(a) **Explain ‘protective’ elder sister attitude.**

**Ans :** Louisa was so miserly and never allowed money to leave her as an elder sister would protect a younger sibling.

(b) **What does the above reflect about Louisa’s character?**

**Ans :** She was most greedy, miserly and a stingy person.

(c) **How did she manipulate this quality of hers?**

**Ans :** She derived maximum benefit from her manipulative and greedy nature by saving maximum money from being wasted in tips etc.

5. *The luncheon party she declined, there are limits beyond which repressed emotions become dangerous.*

(a) **Explain ‘repressed emotions.’**

**Ans :** This term refers to the emotions or feelings that have been hidden for a long time.

(b) **Why did Loona decline the invitation?**

**Ans :** Loona couldn’t tolerate Mrs Packletide’s fame after the tiger-hunt. So she declined to be a part of such festivity.

(c) **How do such emotions become dangerous?**

**Ans :** Many times emotions cannot be controlled and they may overflow, causing embarrassments or lead to strifes.

## SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. **What was precisely the motive for Mrs Packletide to shoot a tiger?**

**Ans :** Mrs. Packletide was not compelled by any adventurous feelings and she was least inclined towards any such kind of dangerous activities. Her sole aim was to counter Loona Bimberton’s fame, who had flown in an aircraft. So Mrs. Packletide wanted to hunt a tiger and get her photos in magazines, to make Loona jealous.

2. **What was Loona’s adventure? How did Mrs Packletide react to it?**

**Ans :** Loona had flown in an aircraft 11 miles with an Algerian pilot, so she had graced the cover pages of some magazines. Mrs Packletide had been smitten by

jealousy. So, to outshine Loona, she decided to do something more adventurous like a tiger hunt.

3. **How did circumstances prove favourable?**

**Ans :** Circumstances were favourable because an old and sick tiger was reportedly inhabiting the neighbouring village. He was of a royal background to suit Mrs. Packletides’s style. And the villagers also agreed to cooperate for the lure of a thousand rupees, as their earning.

4. **Why is Mrs Packletide compared to ‘Nimrod’?**

**Ans :** Nimrod was a legendary hunter. Mrs. Packletide was not at all adventurous and had no inclination towards such a sport. The writer has used this comparison to create mockery and lash at such vain females.

**5. How did Mrs Packletide plan to celebrate after hunting the tiger?**

**Ans :** Mrs. Packletide had decided to throw a luncheon party at Curzon Street, with lot of media around. The tiger-skin would be publically displayed and Loona would be the guest of honour. But all the talk would centre around Mrs. Packletide's tiger hunt. This would irritate and humiliate Loona.

**6. What were the two reasons for which the villagers agreed to help Mrs Packletide?**

**Ans :** The villagers were ecstatic to earn a thousand rupees. Moreover, they were happy and excited at the prospect of watching this tiger-hunt. This would provide them with the much needed thrill that was sadly lacking in their lives.

**7. Why was the tiger called 'herd-robber' and 'venerable'?**

**Ans :** The tiger would attack and eat the goats of the villagers. So they hated him and called him a herd robber. The same tiger was old and that is why he is called venerable, in mock respect.

**8. What was the greatest worry for the villagers?**

**Ans :** The tiger selected for the hunt was so old and sick that the villagers were really worried that he should not die before the tiger-hunt. So they took all kinds of precautions to keep him healthy and fresh before the hunt.

**9. "I suppose we are in some danger." Why does Louisa make this remark and what does it reflect about her nature?**

**Ans :** Louisa was very money-minded and she did not wish to perform even a tiny bit of extra work, over she was paid for. When both Louisa and Mrs. Packletide were seated on the platform, waiting for the tiger to arrive, then Louisa made the above remark. Basically she wished to ensure whether there was any danger to her life or not, from the tiger.

**10. Louisa had a 'protective elder-sister attitude' towards money. How?**

**Ans :** Louisa could never part with money, like an elder sister's protective attitude. Whether it was tips, her salary, or her blackmail for money, everything was thoroughly planned and worked out. She loved to cling to money, whatever the denomination or currency.

**11. Why did Loona avoid looking at the newspapers? How did she react to the tiger-claw brooch and**

**the invitation to the luncheon party?**

**Ans :** Loona also suffered a similar reaction at Mrs. Packletide's achievement. She did not wish to see her photos in the newspapers. She was suffering extreme pangs of jealousy. Loona could not refuse the gift of the tiger-claw brooch and she boycotted the luncheon invitation by declining it.

**12. Bring out the similarities in the characters of Mrs Packletide and Loona Bimberton.**

**Ans :** Both the ladies are vain, jealous and dominated by superfluous desires. They are social butterflies who spare no thought to civility or grace. Both of them could go to any limits to humiliate, embarrass or degrade each other. They are publicity-crazy and pretentious females who derive sadistic pleasure in hurting each other.

**13. How much money did Mrs. Packletide pay to the villagers and why?**

**Ans :** Mrs. Packletide was very jealous of her friend, Loona Biberton. Loona's adventure of flying an aeroplane, made her feel belittle. In order to outdo Loona, she decides to shoot a tiger and obtain a tiger skin. She offered a thousand rupees to anyone who would help her in hunting a tiger.

**14. How did Miss Mebbin exploit Mrs. Packletide? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Or**

**How did Miss Mebbin blackmail Mrs. Packletide into gifting her a cottage?[C.B.S.E., 2011, T-1]**

**Ans :** Miss Mebbin was very selfish and money-minded. She knew the fact that Mrs. Packletide had shot a goat and the tiger had succumbed due to heart failure, caused by the loud noise of the bullet. She threaten Mrs. Packletide with revealing the same secret to Loona. Thus she blackmailed her employer and got hush money to buy the weak-end cottage.

**15. Depict the instances of humour in the chapter, Mrs. Packletide's tiger? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans :** The writer uses various instances to create loads of humour throughout the story. The bare idea of tiger hunting on the part of a rich socialite, just to outshine her friend, is quite funny. The selection of tiger with royal past, the behaviour of the tiger at the sight of the goat, killing of the goat instead of the tiger, Miss Mebbin's money mindedness, etc., are instances of the humour created by the writer.

## LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Miss Mebbin, after acquiring the cottage at Dorking, writes to her sister how she managed to get the cottage, taking advantage of the vanity of two women. Draft a letter on her behalf.

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

Ans : Smith Street  
ABC city  
25 July, 20.....  
Dear Molly,

I am floating on Cloud Nine these days. Can you believe that I have fulfilled my lifelong ambition of acquiring a weekend cottage, near Dorking. It is so beautiful and scenic. All my friends were wonderstruck at my fortune and even you would feel that it is a 'marvel' and a great asset. Can you believe that your sister is so smart that she benefitted the most from the tug-of-war between two jealous social butterflies, who could go to any length to hurt each other. One of them tried to hunt a tiger and shot the goat instead. I grabbed this opportunity and got lot of hush-money to keep her secret. These women really deserve this treatment. One of them has already learnt a lesson and decided no more to indulge in game-shooting.

Rest of the details, I'll give later.

Your sister,  
Louisa.

2. What plans did Mrs Packletide make to outshine Loona Bimberton? Was she successful?

Ans : Mrs Packletide had made quite an elaborate plan to outshine Loona, in all respects. She decided to hunt a tiger to counter her fame. Moreover, she had planned a luncheon party, at Curzon Street, to pretend that it was given in Loona's honour. The tiger skin would be in the background, media people were to be called. And she had also decided that a tiger claw brooch would be given to Loona as her birth day gift. Yes, she was, but at a great financial cost.

3. Why was Mrs Packletide's tiger-hunt not thrilling and adventurous? What precautions did Mrs Packletide take to hunt the tiger without risking her life?

Ans : Mrs. Packletide was neither adventurous nor sporting. She had never held a rifle before, nor had she ever shown any inclination for any kind of game or shooting. The sole objective of the tiger-hunt was to make Loona jealous. So the tiger-hunt took on the flavour of some kind of exploit that is undertaken to degrade others.

Mrs. Packletide sat on a high platform which was far from the reach of the tiger, she had an automatic rifle, and a goat with a persistent bleat was selected to attract

the tiger. Moreover, she had taken help from the villagers and had her paid companion with her for any kind of emergency.

4. After reading the lesson, you have come to the conclusion that 'False vanity ends up in loss.' On the basis of your observation and reading of the lesson, write an article.

Ans : FALSE VANITY ENDS UP IN LOSS

Man is a slave to his passions and when it comes to women, whims and fancies rule the roost. Women belonging to the upper rung of society, often end up making a farce of their eccentricities and become subjects of ridicule. It is a fact now known to all, how a top socialist shot a tiger just for making her friend jealous and have her photos splashed all over the newspapers. Heedless killing of animals for one's whims is the greatest cruelty one can inflict on poor helpless creatures. That lady, to satisfy her vanity, resorted to tiger-killing which can never be pardoned in any way. These days we are pledged to 'SAVE TIGERS' campaign, so such kind of wanton acts cannot be forgiven. Strict laws should be made to punish such heedless acts, which resort not only to cruelty but also end in financial losses like expenditure or even blackmail. One never knows.

5. You are Mrs Packletide. You are indebted to the villagers who never let you down at any juncture whereas your companion Miss Mebbin, on whom you relied heavily, stabbed you in the back. Write a letter to a friend regarding the faith and betrayal you faced from the people around you, giving vent to your inner feelings.

Ans : Oxford Street  
ABC City  
10 July, 2011  
Dear Alice,

I could not write to you since there were so many preoccupations that needed to be sorted out in my personal life. If you remember, I had mentioned that I was planning to shoot a tiger. The tiger was shot and all the villagers helped me in every way. Some lay in ambush for my protection, others tried their best to stop the tiger from going to the neighbouring village. They even arranged for a goat and gave all kind of support, when it was discovered that I had shot the goat instead of the tiger. But my paid companion, Louisa who was supposed to be loyal, threatened to divulge this secret to my arch rival Loona. Out of compulsion, I had to honour her by gifting her a very expensive cottage as blackmail. Imagine my state of mind when people on whom you depend stab you in

the back. Now I have lost faith in people I trusted earlier.

Your sister,  
Mrs. Packletide

- 6. Mrs. Packletide develops extreme jealousy for Loona Bimberton. She gives vent to her feelings by writing a diary entry. As Mrs. Packletide, write the diary entry. [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans :**Dear Diary,

Today I am feeling extremely jealous for Loona Bimberton who had recently been carried in an aeroplane by an Algerian pilot. I have been belittled by her adventure. I am no less than her in any way, be it money, life style or fame. I could not bear to see her photographs in the newspapers. So, I have decided to outshine her by hunting a tiger and possessing its skin. I will invite photographers of all the leading magazines to click my photographs with the tiger. I have also planned to throw a party pretending to honour Loona for her adventure but most of the talk would revolve round my bravery of killing a tiger. This would make Loona squirm with embarrassment. To humiliate her more, I would even present a tiger-claw brooch to Loona on her birthday.

What do you say???

Isn't it a brilliant idea?

Packletide.

- 7. Do you think the writer is trying to make fun of the main characters in the story i.e., Mrs Packletide, Miss Mebin and Loona Bimberton? Narrate the instances from the story that point to this fact.**

**Ans :**Through the characters like Mrs. Packletide and Loona Bimberton, the writer wants to highlight the vanity of two women who can go to any foolish extremes. He pokes fun at them who are largely governed by passions like jealousy. They are far removed from normal human beings and their world comprises of parties, media attention and meaningless adventures. They unnecessarily waste thousands of rupees just to outshine each other. Despite being bitter enemies and having extreme hatred for each other, both Loona and Mrs. Packletide pretend to be the part of the same friends circle. Their activities are not for the welfare of the society but only to fulfil their eccentricities and whims.

The writer has created another character like Miss Mebbin who has no sense of loyalty for her employer and resorts to blackmail Mrs. Packletide for her optimum benefit. After threatening Mrs. Packletide that she would tell Loona that she had shot at goat and not the tiger and the latter's death was caused by a heart attack, she was able to procure a week-end cottage from her.

All the three characters are the epitome of vanity and pretensions.

## FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- 1. Selfish and cruel attitude of man has led to the extinction of some animals.**

**Write an article**



- 2. Research the names of other animals who are fast disappearing in great number like the Pandas.**

┆ **List them out.**

┆ **Suggest measures to protect them.**

- 3. You are a member of PETA. Prepare an emotional speech to be delivered in the morning assembly motivating the students to exercise restraint regarding the maltreatment meted out to the poor helpless animals around them.**

- 4. An arrow is being shot towards the bird. The bird, lost in its thoughts, is totally unaware of it.**

**Answer these questions and make a story around this.**

┆ **What do you think will happen?**

┆ **Who has shot this arrow?**

┆ **Why has this arrow been shot?**



By Dhumketu

## SUMMARY

Coachman Ali is very old and sick and has been regularly visiting the post office for the last five years. Unfavourable weather and failing health don't deter him. He religiously visits the post office every day in the hope of receiving a letter from his daughter Miriam, his only child, who had got married to a soldier and left him. Getting a letter from Miriam becomes the most important mission for him and every day Ali is the first one to arrive and the last one to leave, but no letter ever comes for him. Everyday he goes back dejected and empty-handed. Everyone at the post office considers him mad and derives pleasure in tormenting him.

Coachman Ali had been a famous *shikari* and a crackshot in his yester-years. When Miriam left him and did not respond, he realised the pain of suffering and separation. So he gave up hunting altogether.

One day Ali is in very bad physical condition and reaches the post office with great effort. This makes him impatient and an argument takes place with the postmaster. The postmaster has his own preoccupations, he becomes irritated and calls Ali 'a pest'. Ali is humiliated, crestfallen but not bereft of hope. While leaving, Ali gives five guineas to Laxmi Das, the clerk, and extracts a promise from him that he will deliver Miriam's letter to his grave. Ali's prediction proves true and he is not seen for some time.

By a strange quirk of fate, the postmaster finds himself in a similar situation. His daughter is ill in another town and he has no information of her condition. He is eagerly waiting for his daughter's letter, when he chances upon Miriam's letter for her father. Since the postman is also suffering the pain of separation, he understands the value of a child's letter for the father. Next morning he delivers the letter personally to Ali. He is later shocked to discover that Ali has been dead for the past three months. Laxmi Das, the clerk, recounts his last meeting with Ali and their suspicions are further confirmed to see Miriam's letter lying near the door. To compensate for their bad treatment, both the postmaster and Laxmi Das visit Ali's grave and place the letter on it.

This proves to be a very traumatic experience for the postmaster. He realises that letters are not just envelopes and postcards, but they have great human worth. The newly awakened father's heart curses him for

maltreating Ali. His only fate is now to wait for his daughter's letter and spend another night in restless anxiety.

## सारांश

कोचवान अली वृद्ध और रोग-ग्रस्त हैं, परन्तु पिछले पाँच वर्षों से वह लगातार डाकघर जा रहे हैं। बुरे से बुरा मौसम, उनकी गिरती हुई सेहत भी उनको रोक नहीं सकती है। वह प्रतिदिन डाकघर इस आशा से जाते हैं कि एक न एक दिन उन्हें अपनी इकलौती पुत्री, मरियम का पत्र अवश्य मिलेगा। मरियम, एक सैनिक से विवाह करने के बाद, अपने पिता को छोड़ कर चली गई थी।

अली के जीवन का बस एक ही ध्येय था – अपनी पुत्री का पत्र पाना। वह रोज़ सबसे पहले डाकघर पहुँचते हैं और सबसे बाद में जाते हैं, पर अब तक उनके नाम का कोई पत्र नहीं आया। प्रतिदिन वह खाली हाथ, निराश होकर लौटते हैं। डाकघर में सब अली को पागल समझते हैं और उन्हें तड़पाने में खुश होते हैं।

अपने समय में कोचवान अली एक सुप्रसिद्ध शिकारी थे और एक अत्यन्त चतुर बन्दूक चालक। जब मरियम उन्हें छोड़कर चली गयी और कभी भी उसके पत्रों का उत्तर नहीं दिया तब अली को जुदाई और उसकी वेदना का आभास हुआ। तब उन्होंने शिकार करना बिल्कुल छोड़ दिया।

एक दिन, जब अली का स्वास्थ्य बहुत खराब था, वह डाकघर बड़ी मुश्किल से पहुँचे। बुरे स्वास्थ्य के कारण वह अधीर हो गये और पोस्टमास्टर से झगड़ा करने लगे। पोस्टमास्टर की अपनी निजी परेशानियाँ थी और वह झुँझलाकर अली को "चिढ़ पैदा करने वाला" कह बैठे। अली हतोत्साह और अपमानित तो हुए पर फिर भी उन्होंने आशा का साथ न छोड़ा। जाते समय वह सोने के पाँच सिक्के लक्ष्मीदास नामक एक क्लर्क को दे गये और उनसे यह वचन भी ले लिया कि अगर वह मर गये तो मरियम का पत्र उनकी कब्र तक पहुँचा दिया जाये। अली की यह भविष्यवाणी सत्य निकली क्योंकि बहुत दिनों तक अली दिखाई नहीं दिये।

भाग्य की विडम्बना देखिये। पोस्टमास्टर साहब भी अली के ही जैसी समस्या का सामना कर रहे हैं। उनकी पुत्री बीमार है, दूसरे शहर में है पर उसकी कोई खैर-खबर उन्हें मालूम नहीं है। वह भी उत्सुकता से अपनी पुत्री के पत्र का इंतज़ार कर रहे हैं। अचानक एक दिन उनकी नज़र जब मरियम के पत्र पर पड़ी तो उन्हें उस पत्र का महत्त्व समझ में आया। वह स्वयं अपनी बेटी की जुदाई का दुख सह रहे हैं। वह दूसरे दिन खुद अली को पत्र देने गये। वहाँ जाकर वह चकित रह गये जब उन्हें यह ज्ञात हुआ कि अली का निधन हुए तीन मास बीत चुके हैं। उन्होंने जब अपने क्लर्क लक्ष्मीदास को यह बताया, तब उसने अली के

साथ अपनी अन्तिम मुलाकात के बारे में बताया। अपने दुर्व्यवहार से लज्जित होकर वे दोनों अली की कब्र पर गये और वह पत्र उस पर रख दिया।

यह अनुभव पोस्टमास्टर के लिए एक अप्रिय, मानसिक आघात और वेदना देने वाला था। उनको अब यह सत्य स्पष्ट रूप से मालूम हुआ कि पत्र केवल लिफाफे नहीं है बल्कि उनका कुछ मानवीय मूल्य भी होता है। उनका पुत्री-प्रेम की भावना से भरा हुआ हृदय उन्हें अली के प्रति दुर्व्यवहार के लिए धिक्कारता है। अब उन्हें भी अपनी पुत्री के पत्र का इंतजार करना पड़ेगा तथा एक और रात बेचैनी और चिंता में बितानी पड़ेगी।

## WORD-MEANINGS

**Tattered** : torn • **Plodded** : walking with difficulty  
 • **Staff** : stick • **Squatted** : sat down • **Scrub** : bush  
 • **Bereft** : without • **Serenity** : calmness • **Boundless** : limitless  
 • **Glimmer** : shine • **Relic** : object survived in its primitive form  
 • **Brimming** : full of • **Recital** : narration • **Worth** : value • **Reproaching** : blaming  
 • **Remorse** : regret • **Precincts** : space within a boundary  
 • **Lunacy** : madness • **Crackshot** : skilled in shooting.

# SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

## TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS (SOLVED)

### 4. Answer the following questions by ticking the correct options :

- (a) Ali's walking to the post office daily even in biting cold weather shows his \_\_\_\_\_.
- (i) courage (ii) optimism  
 (iii) foolishness (iv) strength of will
- (b) The post office is referred to as Ali's "place of pilgrimage" as he \_\_\_\_\_.
- (i) visited it daily  
 (ii) came there to pray for a letter from his daughter  
 (iii) went there with faith and hope  
 (iv) believed God would bless him if he went there
- (c) The postmaster's rudeness to Ali reveals his \_\_\_\_\_.
- (i) lack of empathy  
 (ii) preoccupation with his work  
 (iii) preconceived notions  
 (iv) insensitivity
- (d) Ali did not come to the post office for several days as \_\_\_\_\_.
- (i) he had given up hope  
 (ii) he was upset by the postmaster's rebuke  
 (iii) he was unwell and not able to walk to the Post Office  
 (iv) he was busy hunting
- (e) "Tortured by doubt and remorse, he sat down in the glow of the charcoal sigri to wait." The postmaster was waiting for \_\_\_\_\_.
- (i) a letter from Miriam

- (ii) a letter from his own daughter  
 (iii) a letter from Ali  
 (iv) Ali to deliver Miriam's letter to him.

**Answers :** (a) (ii) (b) (iii) (c) (ii)  
 (d) (ii) (e) (ii)

### 5. Answer the following questions briefly.

(a) *Who was Ali? Where did he go daily?*

**Ans.** Ali had been a skilled shikari, renowned for his expertise in shooting. He had given up that profession and now he was old and sick. Daily he made his trek to the post office to enquire for a letter, which he was expecting from his daughter Miriam, who had got married and gone away.

(b) *Ali displays qualities of love and patience. "Give evidence from the story to support the statement."*

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

**Ans.** Ali's love for his daughter is unparalleled. He gave up hunting when he became a father and amidst bitter weather and sickness went to post-office daily to enquire about his daughter. He displays great patience for the touching taunts of the employees there, and even when he is on the verge of death, he instructs one clerk to keep Miriam's letter on his grave. His patience is limitless, so is his love for his daughter.

(c) *How do you know Ali was a familiar face at the post office?*

**Ans.** Ali had become a fixture at the post-office. All the clerks and the postmaster got used to him and called him a mad man. For the last five years he had been coming daily to the post office without fail.

(d) *Why did Ali give up hunting?*

**Ans.** His only daughter Miriam got married and left



him. Ali then understood the real meaning of love and separation. So he gave up hunting.

(e) *What impression do you form of the postmaster after reading the story 'The Letter'?*

**Ans.** The postmaster was also emotional and compassionate. He truly needed some situation to bring out his human qualities. When he was worried for his daughter, he realised Ali's misery. Basically he was charitable and kind, he regretted his behaviour and went with Laxmi Das to lay Miriam's letter on Ali's grave. He understood the human worth of letters.

(f) *The postmaster says to Ali, "What a pest you are brother." Do you agree? Give reason.*

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

**Ans.** The postmaster got irritated with Ali's perservance and tenacity. Mindlessly he called Ali a pest. He was unjustified because till then he had not been exposed to any separation of a child from his parents. He appeared to be cruel and inhuman. As he hadn't undergone the emotional pangs of a grieving father so he failed to gauge Ali's misery.

(g) *Ali came out very slowly ... eyes filled with helplessness. Why were Ali's eyes filled with helplessness? What had exhausted was patience but not his worth?*

**Ans.** Ali had waited endlessly for his daughter's letter, he felt helpless. The employees at the post-office made fun of him but he couldn't resist the temptation of seeing Miriam's letter. When he was insulted by the post master, who called him a 'pest', Ali's patience was exhausted but his unflinching hope told him that a letter would surely arrive.

(h) *'Tortured by doubt and remorse, he sat down in the glow of the charcoal sigri to wait.' Who is tortured by doubt and remorse? Why? What is he waiting for?*

**Ans.** The postmaster's heart is beating with anxiety to hear from his own daughter. The newly-awakened father's heart was blaming him for having failed to understand Ali's anxiety. He was tortured by doubt and remorse. For the first time he had understood what a father feels without hearing any news from his daughter. His heart was brimming with sympathy for Ali because his emotional condition was similar to that of Ali.

**7. Complete the table by explaining the following phrases/sentences in your own words :**

Phrases	Meanings
Happy memories light up a life that is nearing its close	Happy memories prove to be life-giving to a person who is on the verge of death.
The sound helped him along his lonely way	The sounds cheered him up as he walked alone.
The cold used sleep to extend its sway over all things even as a false friend lulls his chosen victim with caressing smiles	The bitter cold weather enveloped everyone around just as a false friend hides his intention behind wide smiles.
When the evening of his life was drawing in, he left his old ways and suddenly took a new turn	When his life was ending, surprisingly he left his old habits and changed his way of living.
The whole universe is build up through love and that the grief of separation is inescapable	The foundation of the entire world is love and when there is separation then grief is unavoidable.
The postmaster, a man with a face as sad and as inexpressive as a pumpkin, would be seen sitting on his chair inside	The postmaster looked like a pumpkin with a sad and inexpressive face, sitting on his chair.
And so the clerk, like a worshipper of Vishnu, repeated his customary thousand names	The clerk like a worshipper of Vishnu called out the names of thousand of people to whom the letters are to be distributed.
The haughty temper of the official had quite left him in his sorrow and anxiety, and had laid bare his human heart	The postmaster was no more conceited and rude. His own grief and concern for his daughter had made him aware of the deep bonds between parents and children

## SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

### 1. What is the theme of the lesson 'The letter' written by Dhumaketu?

**Ans :** Love is the foundation of the entire universe and the desire to love and be loved is intrinsic in the nature of Man. The relationship of a parent and child forms the core-centre of the universe and no other relationship can equal it in intensity. Grief and separation from a child becomes very poignant and unbearable for a father and eternal wait for a child's letter can prove to be real torture. Coachman Ali is a symbol of endless patience, perseverance and his unshaken faith in Miriam's letter doesn't end with his death. Moreover, a grieving father can only understand the trauma and suffering of another father. Pain and suffering bring people together even. In the last five years he never received any letter. So the post office people regarded him to be a mad man. Moreover, Ali appeared to be lost in his own world, without being bothered by any sarcastic remark or being deterred by unfavourable weather.

### 2. "Ali's wait for his daughter's letter extends beyond his grave." Bring out the truth of this

### statement by referring to the lesson 'The Letter.'

**Ans :** A parent's entire life revolves around his child. A father is totally oblivious of his discomfort of suffering in looking after his child. A child forms the core-centre of its parents' universe. Pain of separation from a child is intolerable for a father. Coachman Ali's life had changed dramatically after his daughter Miriam left him, after getting married to a soldier. Ali was desperate to know of her welfare but for five long years he never received a reply. Sickness, ridicule, sarcasm, nothing seemed to affect him. Ali relentlessly visited the post office before dawn and came back only after night. His diehard optimism and unshaking faith in Miriam's letter remained steadfast. The death of his physical body couldn't stop this eternal quest. He promptly appears to receive Miriam's letter, at the stroke of five. An unearthly light and tears on his face, made the postmaster shrink back in fear and amazement. Ali ceased to exist in his physical body but the yearnings of his indomitable spirit is satisfied. His infinite patience wins in the end, even though he is dead.

## REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – MCQs

Read the following passages and write the most appropriate option from the ones provided to you.

1. "It's a mad man, sir, who worries by calling every-day for letters that never come."

- (i) Identify the speaker  
(a) the postmaster      (b) The postman  
(c) Ali                      (d) the clerk
- (ii) Who is referred to as the mad man? What is the context?  
(a) The staff because they keep gossiping whole day  
(b) Laxmi Das because he never mentioned Ali  
(c) Ali is mad because he went to post office everyday to collect his daughter's letter  
(d) The postmaster because he imagined that Ali was alive.
- (iii) What does the above remark reflect about the character of that person?  
(a) hardworking  
(b) persevering  
(c) kind and compassionate  
(d) polite and humble

2. "But he is a bit touched, sir. In the old days he committed many sins and maybe he shed some blood within sacred precincts and is paying for it now," the postman added in support of his answer.

- (i) What crime has the above-mentioned person committed?  
(a) He has cheated people of their money  
(b) He has killed many birds and animals  
(c) He had beaten many people in great cruelty  
(d) He was a liar
- (ii) How is the person paying for his crimes?  
(a) He is suffering greatly due to diseases  
(b) He is isolated from his friends  
(c) His wife has died  
(d) No letter has come from his daughter so he is mentally very upset
- (iii) What does the above remark reflect about the character of the speaker?  
(a) fun-loving and jolly  
(b) sadistic  
(c) concerned and caring  
(d) cruel

Answers : (i) (d)                      (ii) (c)                      (iii) (b)

Answers : (i) (b)                      (ii) (d)                      (iii) (d)

3. "Here, look at this!" and Ali produced an old tin box and emptied five golden guineas into the surprised clerk's hands. "Don't look so startled," he continued. "They will be useful to you and they can never be to me. But will you do one thing?"

- (i) The money cannot be of any use to Ali because  
 (a) He is already too old and has no other desires  
 (b) He is a miser  
 (c) He has no near relative  
 (d) He is charitable
- (ii) The purpose for which Ali gave money is  
 (a) to show his kindness  
 (b) to get Miriam's letter to him  
 (c) given as a tip  
 (d) to impress the staff with his compassion
- (iii) The above remark shows that the speaker is  
 (a) indifferent (b) optimistic  
 (c) compassionate (d) reasonable

Answers : (i) (a) (ii) (b) (iii) (b)

4. The postmaster didn't receive his own letter all that day. He worried all night and getting up at three, went to sit in the office. "When Ali comes at 4 o'clock," he mused, "I will give him the letter myself."

- (i) Why is the postmaster waiting for Ali when he had turned him away earlier?  
 (a) He wants to personally deliver Miriam's letter to Ali  
 (b) He has no other work to do  
 (c) He repents his bad behaviour  
 (d) He is ashamed of his behaviour towards Ali
- (ii) Which letter is the postmaster waiting for?  
 (a) Miriam's (b) Laxmi Das's  
 (c) his own daughter's (d) his wife's
- (iii) What is his ultimate realisation?  
 (a) letters must be delivered fast  
 (b) one must not scold anyone  
 (c) separation from a child is unbearable  
 (d) one must control one's anger

Answers : (i) (d) (ii) (c) (iii) (c)

5. Laxmi Das had heard the postmaster's words as he came towards the office from another quarter. "Who was that, sir? Old Ali?" But the postmaster took no notice of him.

- (i) Describe the context of the above statements.  
 (a) Arrival of the letter of postmaster's daughter  
 (b) Arrival of Miriam's letter  
 (c) Postmaster talking to Ali  
 (d) Laxmi Das's presence
- (ii) The postmaster took no notice of Laxmi Das because  
 (a) he was depressed  
 (b) he was lost in the thoughts of his daughter  
 (c) he had seen Ali looking strange and unearthly  
 (d) he was disturbed by Laxmi Das's loud voice
- (iii) What was the strange news that Laxmi Das gave?  
 (a) That a letter had arrived from the postmaster's daughter  
 (b) That the staff at post office was non-cooperative  
 (c) That Ali had died three months ago.  
 (d) That Ali had given him money

Answers : (i) (c) (ii) (c) (iii) (c)

6. "That evening you could have seen Laxmi Das and the postmaster walking with slow steps to Ali's grave. They laid the letter on it and turned back."

- (i) Where were Laxmi Das and the postmaster going?  
 (a) Miriam's house  
 (b) His daughter's residence  
 (c) Ali's grave  
 (d) Laxmi Das' household
- (ii) What was the purpose of their visit?  
 (a) A walk  
 (b) to place Miriam's letter on Ali's grave  
 (c) to pacify the staff  
 (d) to visit the postmaster's daughter
- (iii) What lesson did the postmaster learn that day?  
 (a) Letters have human worth  
 (b) A letter must always be delivered  
 (c) One must always control one's temper  
 (d) One must never mock others

Answers : (i) (c) (ii) (b) (iii) (a)

7. "Ali came out very slowly, turning after every few steps to gaze at the post office. His eyes were filled with tears of helplessness, for his patience was exhausted, even though he still had faith."

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

- (i) Ali eyes were filled with tears because  
 (a) the postmaster had misbehaved with him  
 (b) Miriam had died  
 (c) Ali was unwell  
 (d) Miriam was unwell
- (ii) Ali had faith that  
 (a) the postmaster would understand his feelings  
 (b) he would be well soon  
 (c) he would hear from Miriam  
 (d) None of the above
- (iii) His patience was exhausted because  
 (a) he was very tired  
 (b) he could not convince the postmaster  
 (c) he had not received any letter from Miriam during the last five years.  
 (d) All of the above

Answers : (i) (a) (ii) (c) (iii) (c)

8. "Beholding the wooden arch of this building, the old man was filled with the joy that the pilgrim feels when he first sees the goal of his journey."

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

- (i) Ali's walking to the post office daily even in biting cold weather shows his  
 (a) courage  
 (b) optimism  
 (c) foolishness  
 (d) strength of will
- (ii) The post office is referred to as Ali's "place

of pilgrimage" as he

- (a) visited it daily.  
 (b) came there to pray for a letter from his daughter.  
 (c) went there with faith and hope.  
 (d) believed God would bless him if he went there.

(iii) When did Ali's daughter get married?

- (a) One year ago  
 (b) Two years ago  
 (c) Three years ago  
 (d) Five years ago

Answers : (i) (b) (ii) (c) (iii) (d)

9. "Beholding the wooden arch of this building, the old man was filled with the joy that the pilgrim feels when he first sees the goal of his journey."

(i) Who is the old man?

- (a) Ali  
 (b) Lakshmi Das  
 (c) Divan Sahib  
 (d) Librarian

(ii) Which was the building that filled him with joy?

- (a) the office building  
 (b) mosque  
 (c) post office  
 (d) pilgrimage

(iii) There he expected a letter from

- (a) his son  
 (b) the postmaster's daughter  
 (c) his daughter  
 (d) his wife

Answers : (i) (a) (ii) (c) (iii) (c)

## REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – NON-MCQs

Read the following passages and answer the questions given thereafter.

1. *The old man, shivering at times but fixed of purpose, plodded on till he came out of the town-gate on to a straight road.*

(a) Identify the old man.

Ans. The old man is Miriam's father.

(b) Explain — "fixed of purpose."

Ans. He was focussed and single-mindedly determined.

(c) Where was the old man going & why?

Ans. He used to go to the post office every day to check about Miriam's letter.

2. *"Beholding the wooden arch of this building, the*

old man was filled with the joy that the pilgrim feels when he first sees the goal of his journey.”

(a) **Name the building, with the wooden arch?**

**Ans.** The building was the post office.

(b) **Why was the old man filled with joy at its sight?**

**Ans.** The building gave him hope that Miriam’s letter may have arrived.

(c) **Why is the old man compared to a “pilgrim”?**

**Ans.** The post office had become a holy place for him and he was like a pilgrim on a holy journey.

3. *But when the evening of his life was drawing in, he left his old ways and suddenly took a new turn.*

(a) **Explain — ‘evening of life was drawing in’?**

**Ans.** He was old, sick and on the verge of dying.

(b) **What were the man’s old ways?**

**Ans.** He had been a famous *shikari* and had killed many animals.

(c) **What new turn did his life take? Why?**

**Ans.** He gave up hunting due to separation from his only daughter Miriam.

4. *“I know! I know! But do you think we’ve got your Miriam’s house registered.”*

(a) **Identify the speaker.**

**Ans.** The speaker is the postmaster.

(b) **Discuss the context of the above remark.**

**Ans.** The postmaster is irritated because of Ali’s daily insistence for his daughter’s letter.

(c) **What was the result of the above remark on the listener?**

**Ans.** Ali felt very disheartened, miserable but did not lose hope.

5. *“Allah is there, and in his presence I am giving you this money. When it comes, you must forward my Miriam’s letter to me”.*

(a) **Whom is the speaker addressing?**

**Ans.** The old man is Ali and he is talking to Laxmi Das, a clerk.

(b) **What is the reason for giving the money?**

**Ans.** He wants him to deliver Miriam’s letter even when he is dead.

(c) **What is the speaker expecting from the listeners?**

**Ans.** He expects Laxmi Das to put Miriam’s letter on his grave.

6. *The haughty temper of the official had left him in his sorrow and anxiety and had laid bare his human heart.*

(a) **Who had a haughty temper?**

**Ans.** The postmaster.

(b) **How had this person become more human?**

**Ans.** His own daughter’s separation made him realise Ali’s misery and desperation.

(c) **How did he try to compensate for his misbehaviour?**

**Ans.** He decided to collect Miriam’s letter and went with Laxmi Das to lay it on Ali’s grave.

7. *“For several days Ali had not come to the post office. There was no one with enough sympathy or understanding to guess the reason, but all were curious to know what had stopped the old man.”*

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

(a) **Why did Ali come to the post office?**

**Ans.** Ali came to the post office to enquire about a letter from his daughter.

(b) **Why had Ali stopped coming to the post office?**

**Ans.** He had stopped coming to the post office because he was unwell.

(c) **What was they curious to know?**

**Ans.** They were curious to know why Ali had stopped coming to the post office.

## SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. **What were the qualities that made Ali a good shikari?**

**Ans :** Ali was not only a famous shikari but also a crack-shot. He could smell and locate animals and birds from a great distance and kill them without any reason or compassion.

2. **Ali was a familiar figure at the post office, yet no one noticed his absence. What do you think could have been the reason?**

**Ans :** All the staff at the post office were busy in their routine work and they had never really bothered or cared about Ali. They were indifferent to him and treated him as a mad man. So his absence was not noticed by them.

3. **Do you think the postmaster was justified in calling Ali ‘a pest’? What was Ali’s reaction to this accusation?** [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

**Ans :** The postmaster out of irritation had called Ali ‘a pest’. He had been fed up because of Ali’s persistence

for his daughter's letter. The postmaster was justified since he had never felt the pangs of separation from a child. Ali was totally depressed, crestfallen, humiliated but still optimistic about receiving a letter from his daughter

**4. Why did the postmaster want to deliver the letter personally to Ali?**

**Ans :** The postmaster realised the pangs of separation from one's child, when his own daughter did not respond. He feels guilty maltreating and humiliating Ali. So to compensate for his behaviour, he wished to handover Miriam's letter personally to Ali.

**5. Draw a comparison between Ali and the postmaster as fathers.**

**Ans :** Both the postmaster and Ali were fathers devoted to their daughters. Both of them felt the pangs of separation but the postmaster took lot of time to understand this. Ali's life had taken a turn due to his daughter, so had the postmaster's. Eventually they ended up feeling the same kind of emotions.

**6. How did the postmaster and Laxmi Das compensate for their ill-treatment of Ali?**

**Ans :** Both the postmaster and Laxmi Das went to Ali's grave and laid Miriam's letter on his grave. The postmaster had felt guilty of humiliating and maltreating Ali, so this was his only way of compensation.

**7. "The newly-wakened father's heart in him was reproaching him for having failed to understand Ali's anxiety." What was the reason of this 'awakening'?**

**Ans :** The cause of this "awakening" was his own anxiety about his daughter who was ill. His daughter was ill in another town and he had no information about her health. This made him understand Ali's feelings, his pain and his anguish :

**8. Why did Coachman Ali give up his favourite sport? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans :** Coachman Ali had been a famous Shikari and a crackshot in his yester-years. After his daughter, Miriam, got married and left him, Ali understood the real meaning of love and separation. So he gave up hunting, his favourite sport.

**9. How did post master's attitude towards Ali eventually change? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans :** Ali had become fixture at the post office. All the clerks as well as the Post-master were irritated with Ali's perserverance and tenacity. The post master even insulted him and called him a pest. But now when he himself was worried for his daughter, he realised Ali's misery. He regretted his behaviour and went to lay Miriam's letter on Ali's grave.

## LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. What is the theme of the lesson 'The Letter' written by Dhumaketu?**

**Ans :** Love is the foundation of the entire universe and the desire to love and be loved is intrinsic in the nature of Man. The relationship of a parent and child forms the core-centre of the universe and no other relationship can equal it in intensity. Grief and separation from a child becomes very poignant and unbearable for a father and eternal wait for a child's letter can prove to be real torture. Coachman Ali is a symbol of endless patience, perseverance and his unshaken faith in Miriam's letter doesn't end with his death. Moreover, a grieving father can only understand the trauma and suffering of another father. Pain and suffering bring people together even if they are poles apart. So the author advocates the need for compassion, understanding, brotherhood, and empathy for the needy. Only this can sustain us in life.

**2. Imagine you are Laxmi Das and have returned home after placing Miriam's letter on Ali's grave. You are confused and troubled by the postmaster's remarks. You also feel ashamed of**

**having accepted 5 guineas from Ali to deliver Ali's letter to his grave. Make a dairy entry expressing your feelings. (100 to 125 words)**

**Ans :** Dear Diary,

Today I am expressing my heartfelt sorrow for the kind of treatment we all gave to Ali. I am deeply ashamed of my behaviour, but what has happened cannot be undone. I will never excuse myself for taking money from poor Ali, just to deliver a letter which should have been my duty otherwise also. I do not know how I couldn't feel Ali's misery his feelings, his pain and anguish in those days. Maybe our routine lives make us so inhuman. Nevertheless there is some consolation that Miriam's letter did reach Ali, even if it was on his grave.

Laxmi Das

**3. The postmaster feels guilty when he finds that Ali is no longer alive. He writes a letter to Miriam explaining to her about Ali's wait for her letter and his death. Write the letter in 100-125 words. [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans :** Minto Road,  
ABC City  
10 August, 2010  
Dear Miriam,

This letter is going to surprise you immensely but it was very much needed. Your father, Ali, kept waiting desperately for your letter. Everyday he would come to the post office, in sickness or in bad weather, face the taunts of all the staff, just for your letter. When your letter came, he was dead, so we kept your letter on his grave. We offer you our heartfelt condolences.

Postmaster

- 4. “Ali’s wait for his daughter’s letter extends beyond his grave.” Bring out the truth of this statement by referring to the lesson ‘The Letter’.**

**Ans :** A parent’s entire life revolves around his child. A father is totally oblivious of his discomfort or suffering, in looking after his child. A child forms the core-centre of its parent’s universe. Pain of separation from a child is intolerable for a father. Coachman Ali’s life had changed dramatically after his daughter Miriam left him, after getting married to a soldier. Ali was desperate to know of her welfare but for five long years he never received a reply. Sickness, ridicule, sarcasm, nothing seemed to affect him. Ali relentlessly visited the post office before dawn and came back only after night. His diehard optimism, unshaking faith in Miriam’s letter remained steadfast. The death of his physical body couldn’t stop this eternal guest. He promptly appears to receive Miriam’s letter, at the stroke of five. An unearthly light and tears on his face, made the postmaster shrink back in fear and amazement. Ali ceased to exist in his physical body but the yearnings of his indomitable spirit is satisfied. His infinite patience wins in the end, even though he is dead.

- 5. Miriam visits her father’s grave, after his death, and is full of remorse and guilt to see her ‘unread’ letter lying on his grave. She is speechless to know of her father’s undying and unshaken faith and his endless wait for her letter. On her behalf, write an article, in the memory of her father titled, “Endless wait of a father.”**

**OR**

**Imagine you are Miriam, the coachman’s daughter. Write a diary page, expressing your grief on your father’s demise and sharing your feelings of nostalgia. [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans :** Dear Diary,

I am in a state of utter shock and I chastise myself thoroughly for my own conduct. How could I have been so thoughtless? How could I not have foreseen that a father’s heart will never rest in peace till he hears of the welfare of his child. I became so preoccupied in my own routine life and adjustments to marital life that I forgot that my father is old and sick. I feel so depressed to realise the mental agony that my father underwent. A word from me could have saved him from his daily trek to the post office, the insulting remarks of all others. My father tolerated so much for me. To see the unread letter on his grave is a scene, I will never forget. I don’t know now how to reach him, how to compensate for my behaviour. Oh God! I just pray for his soul to rest in peace.

Miriam

- 6. What is the role of ‘the letter’ in the story by ‘Dhumketu? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans :** Letter plays a very significant role in the story. The writer wants to depict that the letters are not just envelopes and postcards, but they have great human worth. The main protagonist, Ali, visits post office every day in the hope of receiving a letter from his daughter who is married and lives with her husband. The people in the post office ignore him as a mad man. One day he visits the post office in bad health and gives money to one of the clerk to keep his daughter’s letter on his grave. Ali’s prediction proves true and he is not seen for sometime. By a strange turn of fate, the post master, who even called Ali a pest, finds himself in the similar situation as his daughter is not well, in another city, he anxiously waits for her letter. Now he realises the value of a child’s letter for a father. He chances upon Miriam’s letter and thinks of delivering the letter personally to Ali. He is shocked to learn that Ali has been dead for the past three months. The clerk recounts his last meeting with Ali. Both post master and the clerk visit Ali’s grave and place the letter on it. Thus the letter plays a significant role in the story by Dhumketu.

- 7. Imagine Ali writes a letter to one of his friends about what he does before his death. Write that letter on his behalf. [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

**Ans :** Dear Abdul,

Today I am feeling extremely sad, my health is deteriorating day by day and the day is not far when I would leave this material world. But before dying I have taken a harsh decision of bribing the clerk of the post office, against my wishes, to keep Miriam’s letter at my grave.

Dear Abdul, as you know, my whole life revolved round Miriam. After the death of her mother I acted both as father and mother to her. She is the core-centre of my universe. But after her marriage she has gone to live with her husband and I waited for her letter for five long years which I haven't yet received. I continuously visited the post office for all these years everyday, without fail, and bore the ridicule and sarcasm of the post office employees. But my unshaking faith in Miriam's letter remained steadfast.

Today my endless patience and perserverance gave

way. Moreover, my failing health doesn't permit me to go to the post office everyday. So I have given five guineas to a clerk, Lakshmi Das, at the post office and extracted a promise from him that he will deliver Miriam's letter to my grave otherwise I will not find peace in another world also.

Can't write the words 'see you soon' as I may not get a chance to see you.

Request you to take care of Miriam after my death.

Yours very own

Ali

## FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. You happened to read Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography 'My Experiments with Truth' and you are very appreciative of the frank honesty of Gandhiji. Write a letter to your friend Arpita, expressing your views.



M.K. Gandhi

2. Many times in our life our expectations are not fulfilled since the other party is too slow in reciprocation. Think of such a situation and enact it before your class. You can take the help of your friend to write the dialogues.
3. You are in a hostel and missing home too much. You are reminded of all the little things that your family did for you. Write an affectionate letter acknowledging their contribution and the help they had extended to you.



4. Pt. Nehru's letters to his daughter Indira Gandhi are part of history now. Make a Powerpoint Presentation or a project based on it on the topic "LETTERS FOR A DAUGHTER".



## BEFORE YOU READ

**What exactly is a OUIJA BOARD?**

It is pronounced as wee-ja, wee-je. It is known as spirit board or a talking board. It is a **feat** board marked with letters, numbers and other symbols supposedly used to communicate with spirits. It uses a movable indicator to indicate the spirits' message by spelling it out on the board. It is a very popular game among some sections because it gives an imaginary thrill of communicating with spirits.

**SUMMARY**

The writer, Mr Hallock, was told by his employer Mr Jenkins to write a ghost story. He told Mr Hallock to write a very horrifying story with supernatural elements because the public liked these kind of stories. The writer agreed to this proposal for no one else printed his stuff. He was surprised how he could have written the earlier ghost stories for he was not a specialist in this genre. Whenever he had decided to write a ghost story, surprisingly the plot had appeared from nowhere.

The writer sat down to pen the story, though no idea occurred to him. In fact his mind was wandering towards his wife's shopping trips and other unghostly things. The writer loudly said, "This writing business is delightful, isn't it?" and to his surprise a voice at the other end of the room said, "Yes it is." The writer was surprised to see a figure taking shape gradually. It was a woman, tall and angular, with enormous fishy eyes, wearing spectacles. She came and stood before the writer. The writer wished to know why that woman had come. She gave a very surprising answer that the writer had only called her to help him in writing a story. Moreover she said that the ghosts were going on strike so the writer should stop bothering her for another plot. She elaborated that all the other stories that had been a hit had come from her only. The ghost explained that she had been a writer in the earlier birth but now she had collected other ghosts like her and set up a 'Writers' Inspiration Bureau'. Now they extended help to a writer who had no ideas. The writer disagreed with the ghost's views for he had never seen her before so how could she have inspired him. She explained that she had sat on the writer's shoulder and had given him the plots. But now they were all fed up for being pulled out of beds at all times and had decided to go on strike. The ghost wanted the writer to call all his friends and stop using the Ouija board. The conversation of the writer and the ghostly figure was interrupted by the arrival of the writer's wife who is surprised to see her husband

sitting in the dark and talking loudly to himself. However, she was going gaga over a recent purchase she had made. On the writer's query she revealed that she had bought a Ouija board to help the writer to write the stories. She said that she wanted to make story writing easy for the writer from now onwards. The writer tried his best to dissuade his wife from keeping the ouija board but she refused to listen. The writer thought that he would reason with his wife later.

Next day the writer set out for his job. He worked as an accountant for a lumber company and could not give up his job and take to full-time story-writing due to financial problems. On reaching back home he was told by his cook to get ready and come down as his wife had invited some guests. When he came down eventually, he was surprised to see that their parlour was full of women belonging to his wife's book club. They were sitting in two's and between two friends there was a Ouija board. Immediately his wife appeared and she wanted the writer to be a partner of Mrs Hinkle, who was without any other friend.

Miss Hinkle took the writer's fingers and started moving them on the Ouija board. Surprisingly the words spelt on the board were 'TRAITOR.' Mrs. Hinkle wanted the board to clarify as to who was a traitor. The Ouija board spelled out that it was Mr Hallock. On enquiring what was the identity of the speaker, the board revealed that it was someone with the name of Helen.

This fact created a furore in the entire room and the ladies along with the writer's wife gathered around the writer and looked at him accusingly. All the Ouija boards signalled towards the writer. The writer could not answer. He fled the scene and went to sleep. Next morning, he noticed a slip of paper with the message that his wife was leaving him for good and her lawyer would communicate with him. The writer was shocked and surprised at this development. Meanwhile Helen, the ghost, reappeared and told the writer that she had been sent to ensure that his wife was going to get rid of that Ouija board. The writer

was very angry and he retorted that the ghost had made the writer lose his wife, his home and his happiness. The writer's wife Lavinia entered and told the writer that she was moving out. The writer was trying to shield and cover Helen, when his wife remarked that he was behaving very strangely. The Cook barged in and announced that she was not going to serve in a place where there were Ouija boards and activities relating to curses and charms. Lavinia was in no mood to be pacified. She sprang quickly to see who was standing behind her husband. Helen did not disappear this time and boldly announced to Lavinia that she indeed was Helen. Lavinia felt very miserable to create such a ruckus and accuse her husband of infidelity. The writer felt inspired and realised that he had indeed hit upon an excellent plot for a ghost story.

### सारांश

श्री हैलौक को उसके अधिकारी ने एक प्रेतात्मा की कहानी लिखने को कहा। उन्होंने हैलौक को एक बहुत ही डरावनी, अलौकिक घटनाओं से भरपूर कहानी लिखने को कहा क्योंकि जनता को ऐसी ही कहानियाँ अच्छी लगती हैं। लेखक ऐसी कहानी लिखने को तैयार हो गया क्योंकि कोई और पत्रिका उनकी कहानियाँ नहीं छापती थी। लेखक को आश्चर्य हो रहा था कि उस भूतों की कहानियाँ पहले कैसे लिखी क्योंकि उसे इस विषय में कहानी लिखने का अभ्यास नहीं था। जब भी वह भूत या प्रेतात्मा की कहानी लिखने बैठता, कहानी का कथानक अपने आप कहीं से प्रकट हो जाता था।

लेखक जब लिखने बैठा, तो कोई भी योजना उसे समझ में न आई। वास्तव में उसका दिमाग पत्नी की खरीदारी और खर्चों के पीछे घूम रहा था, भूत-प्रेतों के साथ नहीं। लेखक ने स्वयं से जोर से कहा, 'यह लेखन क्रिया प्रसन्नता देने वाली है, है न?' और एक चौंकानेवाली आवाज़ कमरे के दूसरे छोर से उस तक आई, "हाँ, है!" आश्चर्यचकित लेखक ने एक लम्बी, दुबली-पतली बड़ी मछली जैसी आँखों वाली, ऐनक पहने महिला को धीरे-धीरे अपने सामने प्रकट होते देखा। वह महिला, लेखक के सामने आकर खड़ी हो गई। लेखक ने यह जानने की इच्छा प्रकट की कि वह क्यों आई हैं। महिला ने एक अजीब उत्तर दिया कि लेखक के बुलाने पर ही वह आई है, कहानी लिखने में उसकी सहायता करने के लिए। उस महिला ने यह भी कहा कि सारी प्रेतात्माएँ तंग आकर हड़ताल पर जाने वाली हैं, इसलिए कहानी के कथानक के लिए लेखक उनको परेशान न करें। महिला ने यह भी जोर देकर कहा कि अब तक जितनी भूतों की कहानियाँ सफल हुई हैं वह सब उसने लिखाई हैं। इस महिला भूत ने लेखक को बताया कि अपने पूर्व जन्म में वह एक लेखक थीं और अब उन्होंने एक 'लेखकों को प्रेरणा देने वाला' कार्यालय खोला है। अब जिन लेखकों के पास कोई मूल विचार नहीं होते वह उनकी सहायता करती हैं। लेखक ने उसकी बात का खंडन करते हुए कहा कि जब वह उससे कभी पहले नहीं मिला तो वह उसको प्रेरणा कैसे दे सकती हैं। महिला ने कहा कि वह सदैव

लेखक के कंधे पर बैठी रहती थी और उनको नया कथानक देती थी। पर अब सब प्रेतात्माएँ तंग आ चुकी हैं क्योंकि उन्हें समय-असमय जगाया जाता है; इसलिए अब वे सब हड़ताल करने वाली हैं। महिला ने लेखक से कहा कि वह अपने सभी मित्रों को फोन करे और कहे कि उनमें से कोई अब वीजा बोर्ड प्रयोग नहीं करें।

जब लेखक प्रेतात्मा से बात कर रहा था तभी लेखक की पत्नी वहाँ आई और यह देखकर हैरान रह गई कि लेखक अँधेरे में बैठे हुए अपने आप से जोर-जोर से बातें कर रहा है। पर इस समय, पत्नी का ध्यान एक नई खरीदारी पर था और वह उसके ऊपर लट्टू थी। लेखक के पूछने पर उसने बताया कि वह एक वीजा वीजे बोर्ड है जो लेखक को कहानी लिखने में सहायता करेगा। वह अपने पति का कहानी लिखना एक आसान कार्य बनाना चाहती हैं। लेखक के बहुत मना करने पर भी वह बोर्ड ले आती हैं और अपने पति की बात नहीं मानती! पति ने सोचा कि वह बाद में अपनी पत्नी को मना लेगा।

दूसरे दिन लेखक अपने काम के लिए निकल गया। वह एक लकड़ी की कम्पनी में मुनीम था। वह यह काम इसलिए करता था क्योंकि वह कहानी लिख कर अपना खर्चा नहीं चला सकता था। दूसरा काम करना अनिवार्य था। जब वह काम से घर लौटा तो उसे जल्दी से कपड़े बदलकर नीचे आने को कहा गया। उसकी पत्नी ने कुछ मेहमान बुलाये थे। जब वह नीचे आया तो वह हैरान रह गया, उसका घर उसकी पत्नी के "महिला क्लब" की महिलाओं से भरा हुआ था। वहाँ दो-दो महिलाएँ एक वीजा वीजे बोर्ड बीच में रखकर बैठी हुई थीं। उसकी पत्नी ने उसे श्रीमती हिन्कल का पार्टनर बनने को कहा क्योंकि उनके साथ कोई दूसरी महिला नहीं थीं।

श्रीमती हिन्कल ने लेखक की उँगली पकड़ी और उसे वीजा वीजे बोर्ड पर घुमाना शुरू किया। बोर्ड पर "विश्वासघाती" शब्द लिखकर आया। श्रीमती हिन्कल ने पूछा – कौन विश्वासघाती है? वीजा वीजे बोर्ड ने लेखक हैलौक का नाम लिखा। जब यह पूछा गया कि लिखने वाला कौन है तो बोर्ड ने लिखा – हेलेन।

सारे कमरे में शोर मच गया। लेखक की पत्नी सहित सभी महिलाओं ने लेखक को घेर लिया और उसको दोषी व्यक्ति की तरह देखने लगी। इस समय सबके सब वीजा वीजे बोर्ड लेखक को अपराधी बता रहे थे। लेखक को कोई उत्तर नहीं सूझा और वह वहाँ से भाग निकला और जाकर सो गया। जब वह सुबह उठा तो उसे अपनी पत्नी का संदेश मिला कि वह उसे हमेशा के लिए छोड़ रही है और अब वह अपने वकील के द्वारा ही उससे बात करेगी। लेखक इस नई घटना से पूर्णतः अर्चभित रह गया। उसी समय, हेलेन की प्रेतात्मा उसके सामने आयी और उसने लेखक से कहा कि वह यह देखने आई है कि उसकी पत्नी ने वीजा वीजे बोर्ड फेंक दे। लेखक ने क्रोधित होकर कहा कि प्रेतात्मा के कारण उसने अपनी पत्नी, अपना घर, अपनी खुशी सब खो दी है।

उसी समय उसकी पत्नी लवीनिया आई और लेखक से कहा कि वह घर छोड़कर जा रही है। लेखक हेलेन को छुपाने की कोशिश कर

रहा था जब उसकी पत्नी ने कहा कि वह बहुत ही अजीब व्यवहार कर रहे हैं। इतने में, उनकी कुक (खाना बनाने वाली) धड़धड़ाती हुई आई और कहा कि वह कि वह ऐसे घर में काम नहीं करेगी जहाँ वीजा वीजे बोर्ड प्रयोग में लाए जाते हैं और प्रेतात्माओं को बुलाया जाता है। लवीनिया भी मानने को तैयार नहीं थी। उसने लपककर यह देखने की कोशिश की कि कौन उसके पति के पीछे खड़ा है? हेलेन इस बार अन्तर्धान नहीं हुई और उसने निडर होकर लवीनिया को बताया कि वह वास्तव में हेलेन है। लवीनिया बहुत दुखी होती है कि उसने इतना बड़ा हंगामा किया और अपने पति को दाम्पत्य जीवन में विश्वासघाती कहा।

लेखक इस घटना से बहुत ही प्रेरित होता है और उसे यह अनुभूति होती है कि एक अति सुन्दर भूतों की कहानी का कथानक उसे मिल गया।

### WORD-MEANINGS

- **Proposition** : proposal
- **uncanny** : strange
- **pestering** : forcing
- **sarcastically** : in a hurting manner
- **imbecility** : weak intellect
- **plaid** : long

- woollen cloth ● **gaping** : staring
- **purgatory** : a place of spiritual cleansing
- **paradise** : heaven
- **patronisingly** : in a protective manner
- **demobilise** : send away
- **evaporate** : disappear
- **vestige** : remainder
- **affliction** : trouble
- **hysterics** : uncontrollable emotions
- **Napoleon** : Emperor of France, whose military endeavour and sheer personality dominated Europe for a long time
- **Helen of Troy** : She was the daughter of Zeus, wife of Menelaus, her abduction by Paris led to the Trojan war.
- **huffily** : irritably
- **churning** : moving
- **flirtatious** : behave in an enticing manner
- **tugging** : pulling, moving
- **plagued** : troubled
- **twitch** : quiver
- **spasm** : sudden muscle contraction
- **elapsed** : passed
- **semblance** : resemblance, look like
- **gurgled** : made a sound like water
- **prickle** : like thorns
- **gait** : walk
- **protruding** : stick out
- **unaccustomed** : not used to
- **agility** : active movement
- **phantom** : ghost
- **contraptions** : strange machine
- **lithely** : flexibly
- **apparition** : ghost, spirit
- **ferverently** : impassionately

## SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

### TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS (SOLVED)

**Q.1.** Given below is a list of words related to ghost and ghost stories with their jumbled up meanings against them. Match the words/expressions with their correct meanings:

Ans.	<b>Apparition</b>	a supernatural appearance of a person or thing, a ghost, spectre or phantom.
	<b>Poltergeist</b>	German word, meaning “noisy ghost”— a troublesome spirit that announces its presence with unexplainable sounds and the creation of disorder.
	<b>Clairvoyance</b>	the supposed power to see objects or events that cannot be perceived by the senses.
	<b>Crystal Ball</b>	a globe of quartz crystal in which images, believed to portend the future, are supposedly visible to fortune tellers
	<b>Eerie</b>	so mysterious, strange, or unexpected as to send a chill up the spine
	<b>Medium</b>	a person through whom the spirits of the dead are alleged to be able to contact the living
	<b>Transmigration</b>	to pass into another body after death: going from one state of existence or place to another.
	<b>Psychic</b>	capable of extraordinary mental processes, such as extrasensory perception and mental telepathy
	<b>Ouija Board</b>	a spelling board device intended to communicate with and through the spirit world, obtaining answers to questions
	<b>Exorcist</b>	a conjurer who expels evil spirits by conjuration
	<b>Premonition</b>	a feeling of anticipation of or anxiety over a future event
	<b>Paranormal</b>	beyond the range of normal experience or scientific explanation
	<b>Tarot Card</b>	a set of 22 playing cards bearing allegorical representations, used for fortune telling
	<b>Vampire</b>	a reanimated corpse that is believed to rise from the grave at night to suck the blood of sleeping people

**5. Answer the following questions briefly.**

(a) *What genre of stories does Jenkins want the narrator to write? Why?*

**Ans.** The narrator is requested by Jenkins to write ghost stories with supernatural elements. The public demanded such horrors and thrills and these kind of stories were a sure hit with the people.

(b) *Does the narrator like writing ghost stories? Support your answer with evidence from the text.*

**Ans.** The writer did not specialise in ghost stories. In fact he was surprised how the plot and other details occurred to him. The first story he had ever written had been a ghost story and it made him popular. So he starts liking the idea of writing ghost stories and says, "This writing business is delightful."

(c) *What makes Helen, the ghost and other co-ghosts organize, 'The Writers' Inspiration Bureau'?*

**Ans.** Helen had been a writer in her other life. In her present state, she had been working as a reader on a magazine. When she became a ghost, she found others, like her, who had suffered and they formed a Writers' Inspiration Bureau. Now they searched for a writer who was without ideas with a mind susceptible enough to accept these ideas.

(d) *Why had Helen, the ghost been helping the narrator write ghost stories? Why was she going on strike? What condition she places for providing continued help?*

[C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

**Ans.** Helen had helped the narrator because he was keen to write ghost stories but had no ideas and his mind was impressionable. But now the ghosts were fed up of being called too often from their beds. They had given up haunting and had taken up answering questions on the Ouija board but people had started pestering them too often. Helen promised to help the narrator if he would get his friends and acquaintances to stop using the Ouija board.

(e) *How does the ghost undermine the narrator's faith in his ability to write ghost stories?*

**Ans.** The narrator refused to believe that Helen had helped him to write all the earlier stories. He protested and said that he had never summoned her. But Helen said that she had come on her own, sat on his shoulder when he was thinking hard and provided him good plots.

(f) *Why does John want the ghost to disappear before his wife appears on the scene? What impression of his wife's character do you form from his words? [C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]*

**Ans.** Lavinia, John's wife, is a jealous lady. John does not want Helen to be seen by his wife for fear of complications in his married life. His wife is over sensitive and the sight of a ghost in her house will affect her badly. Lavinia is basically a lady, who is a spendthrift and socialite, spending her time in parties and friends.

(g) *Why does the narrator hesitate to be a partner to Laura Hinkle during Ouija Board party?* [C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

**Ans.** Helen, the ghost, had asked the narrator to exert his influence in getting all his friends to stop using the Ouija board. Helen had told the narrator that all the ghosts were fed up of being summoned by the Ouija board players, at all hours and now they were going on strike. Helen had promised to help the narrator in his story, if he did the needful. So he was reluctant to get involved in something which he had been strongly forbidden to do.

(h) *What message does the ghost convey to the group that had assembled in the narrator's house? What is their reaction to the message?*

**Ans.** The ghost conveys to Miss Hinkle that Mr Hallock is a traitor and a woman by the name of Helen was calling for him. Immediately all the women along with the narrator's wife gather around him and start staring at him accusingly. They behave as if he has been very sly, keeping relations with another woman, behind his wife's back.

(i) *Do you agree with narrator calling the assembly of women 'manipulators'. Give reasons.*

**Ans.** The narrator's state of mind, or his problem, was not known to either his wife or the other women. So psychologically he felt that they were trying to trap him or malign him needlessly. What the women were saying had been indicated on the Ouija board, they were just finding the connection so the narrator is not justified in calling them 'manipulators' for they were not doing it deliberately. It is intrinsic to women's nature to see more than what really exists so they cannot be blamed for this.

(j) *Why is John's wife angry? What does she decide to do?* [C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

**Ans.** John's wife blames her husband of infidelity, carrying on with Helen behind her back. She decides to leave him and go to back to her grand mother. Rest of the details will be chalked out by the lawyer.

(k) *Why does John wish he were dead?*

**Ans.** John's marital life had reached a dead end. He hated being accused of deceiving his wife, whereas no such thing had ever happened. His wife had threatened to quit and he hated all the accusations that had been hurled at him.

(l) *When confronted by Lavinia about his flirtations over the Ouija Board, John insists that “The affair was quite over-board, I assure you.” Bring out the pun in this statement.*

**Ans.** John’s answer was quite intelligent and double-edged, the real meaning only he knew. His affair was rightly over-board, since it was over the Ouija Board all the problem had begun. Helen, the ghost had forced him to influence his friends to do away with the boards and she was the one who had maligned him in front of his wife and her friends.

(m) *John’s apprehensions about his wife’s reaction to her encounter with the ghost are unfounded. Justify.*

**Ans.** John believed that his wife was a sensitive little woman who was too scared of even a mouse. A real heart attack would happen to her if she saw a ghost in her living room. But his doubts were unfounded. Lavinia did not tremble for a moment and patiently observed and listened to Helen, the ghost. She never swooned and there was a satisfied smile on her face instead.

**6. Answer the following questions in detail :**

(a) *After her reconciliation with her husband, John Hallock, Lavinia writes a letter to her friend expressing how her relationship with him had almost been on the verge of breaking and what saved it. Write her letter.*

**Ans.** Post Street  
10 September, 20 xx  
Dear Anne,

I am extremely sorry for not responding earlier. My life had taken a strong turn and I was left grappling with some apprehensions. Believe me, you were uppermost in my mind but I wanted to sort out my domestic problems and then write to you with a clear frame of mind.

Last month I underwent a very bad phase of my life. You know how proud I am of John and his creative abilities. I have always appreciated his skill in churning out excellent stories along with being a considerate husband. He has always supported me in my endeavours, but sometimes even honesty is also put to test. Once

during the Book Club game with my friends, the Ouija board hinted that John was having an affair with someone called Helen. I was dumb founded and I threatened to quit. You know, I am impatient I can never tolerate infidelity. I had packed my suitcase and was on the verge of deserting John, when I discovered to my surprise, it was an apparition, a ghost, named Helen who was haunting him. Who would believe that ghosts are found in today’s world? Nevertheless I’m happy that I discovered the truth eventually. Now all is well and there is no reason to worry.

However, I blame myself for all this ruckus. I never gave him chance to explain, nor did I show faith in him. I should have remained unflinching in my trust. So the famous quote proved true in my case “Jealousy, thy name is woman”. I have learnt my lesson now.

Please write to me about yourself also.  
Your friend,  
Lavinia.

(b) *Discuss the significance of the title of the lesson, “A Shady Plot.”*

**Ans.** The title ‘A Shady Plot’ is most appropriate because most of the situations and characters remain unclear and foggy. At first instance the writer is plagued by doubts regarding the plot of the story. He tries really hard and it appears he is chasing the shadows in search of a ghost story. The appearance of the ghost is open to interpretation. Is it there, or is it not there? There is doubt regarding the existence of Helen, she is spooky and gives rise to apprehensions. The existence of Helen is questionable, no one else will believe it, it is beyond the realm of reality. Moreover, doubts are cast over John’s character, his honesty is questioned, his relationship with Helen is hidden, concealed and he alone knows it. The appearance of Helen upsets John’s life. His wife and cook threaten to quit and shadows of divorce looms large over his relationship with his wife. The plot for a new story remained “unclear” for a long time. It is only in the end, that John can visualise an excellent plot in its perfection. Moreover, the ghost and apparitions are always believed to remain concealed, relegated to shady and dark areas. The appearance of Helen from darkness and retreat to darkness highlights the relevance of the title.

**7. The narrator and his wife reveal something about their character in their words and actions. We also learn about them from what other people say. Can you pick out the words that describe them from the box given below? Also, pick out lines and instances from the story to illustrate your choice.**

shy	arrogant	loyal	clever	over-confident	manipulative
protective	self-disparaging	suspicious	sceptical	jealous	fearless
firm	shrewd	strong	gullible	sly	creative
loves novelty and thrills					

Ans.

Person	Extract from story	What it tells us about the character
<b>John Hallock</b>	1. ... in the end things had always come my way ..... somehow I'd always been able to dig one (plot) up for him, so I'd begun to get a bit cocky as to my ability (to write stories).	over-confident
	2. "But my ghosts aren't a bit like you ——".	sceptical
	3. "We scout around until we find a writer without ideas and with a mind soft enough to accept impression."	gullible
	4. "I've got the bulliest plot for a ghost story	creative
	5. Why, that sensitive little woman couldn't bear to have mouse say boo at her and what would she say to a ghost in her own living room	protective
<b>Lavinia Hallock</b>	1. "I bought the loveliest things this afternoon. Everybody's wild over them"	loves novelty and thrills
	2. She had the alarming tendency to take every new fad that came along and work it to death.	Spendthrift
	3. John, you are hiding somebody in here who it is ?	suspicious
	4. "It is bad enough to have you first over the Ouija board with that hussy"	jealous
	5. Buys the Ouija Board but says it is for John's research	manipulative
	6. Does not flinch when she meets the ghost but talks to her casually.	strong

8. Gladolia, the narrator's cook, is an African. The language she speaks is different from that of the others. This is known as Dialect. A dialect consists of words or phrases that reflect the regional variety of a language. An author often uses a regional dialect to make the dialogue more authentic. Initially a dialogue may seem a little difficult to understand. However, as you continue reading, the language will become more comprehensible.

Working in groups, write what Gladolia's words mean as shown.

Ans.

Column A	Column B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Misto Hallock</li> <li>● de Missus</li> <li>● shot'inks you's lost!</li> <li>● she done 'phone you dis mawnin'</li> <li>● fo'de lawd's sake</li> <li>● not to stop to argify now</li> <li>● I's gwinet' quit.</li> <li>● I don't like no hoodoos.</li> <li>● I'se done ef' displace</li> <li>● I is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mister Hallock</li> <li>● The Mrs (Mistress)</li> <li>● She thinks you are lost</li> <li>● She did phone you this morning</li> <li>● For the Lords' sake</li> <li>● Not to stop to argue now</li> <li>● I am going to quit</li> <li>● I don't like hoodoos</li> <li>● I'd have left this place</li> <li>● I am</li> </ul>

**9. Now complete the following story by using the appropriate phrases in the blanks given below:**

**Ans.** I was alone in a place that bore a deserted look like that of a graveyard. I increased the pace of my footsteps as I walked through the dark forest. I felt someone walking behind me. I turned immediately and spotted the contour of a figure in the form of a spirit. It smiled at me wickedly. I started shaking with fear and perspiring profusely when I felt its skeletal hand upon my neck. I woke up with a start, relieved that it was only nightmare.

This was not the first time I had one. It had all started when I watched the horrendous horror film with a eerie ghost character that had a scary ghost of a smile on its face. It had been almost a month. The strange thing was that I saw a similar face at the station the next morning. That was uncanny.

I was to attend a dinner at my friend's at Northanger Abbey that night. I had decided to narrate my experience to the group that would assemble there although I knew there was no proof so that they would be convinced.

After everyone had finished pouring their drinks to themselves, I cleared my throat and started narrating my

spooky experience. However, every one of the group started accusing me of being horrifying and held me responsible for spoiling the spirit of revelry. I gave up the ghost and sat quietly waiting for the party to be over. Back at home, the fears returned. I knew I had to talk about my experience to somebody to feel better. I have now decided to write and publish my experience under pseudonym. Only then can I breathe in peace.

**11. Do you think a story has an atmosphere? Complete the following blanks to make up your ghost story by choosing the correct options.**

**A Ghost Story**

She opened the cemetery-gate (secret door/ spaceship's hatch/ door of the cottage/ cemetery gate/ door of the castle/ cockpit) silently (brashly/ loudly/ silently/ stupidly/ fearfully/ joyously). Standing in front of her was a terrifying (terrifying/ handsome/smelly/ anonymous/ tiny/ huge/ bossy) apparition (policeman/ spy) apparition/ which/ prince/ wizard) with a rod (wand/ rose/ rod/ knife/ scythe/ coded message) in his/ her (its) her ghoulish (ghoulish/ bony/ beautiful/ fair/ manly/ gloved/ magical) hand.

**REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – MCQs**

**Read the following extracts and choose the correct option.**

1. "Curious how that idea for a plot had come to me out of nowhere after I had closed inspiration for months!"
  - (i) The writer believed that he was
    - (a) a good story writer
    - (b) lacked imagination needed for ghost stories
    - (c) was not a good ghost story-writer
    - (d) lacked the ability to write stories
  - (ii) The writer found it 'curious' that
    - (a) his stories were published
    - (b) no one read his stories
    - (c) the plot would suddenly appear out of nowhere
    - (d) why he was not writing stories full time.
  - (iii) The writer kept choosing plots because
    - (a) he was not given any encouragement

- (b) he was paid less so he lost the desire
- (c) writing ghost stories was not instinctive
- (d) he had no interest in such stories

**Answers :** (i) (b)                      (ii) (c)                      (iii) (c)

2. "I just come to tell you to stop bothering us for assistance, we're going on strike."
  - (i) Identify 'I'.
    - (a) The writer                      (b) Miss Hinkle
    - (c) His wife                      (d) The ghost, Helen
  - (ii) The speaker is fed up because
    - (a) people mocked them
    - (b) people called them at all times for help
    - (c) people maltreated them
    - (d) people screamed at seeing them
  - (iii) The speaker threatened to go on strike because now they had decided
    - (a) to sit at one place and answer questions
    - (b) to haunt

- (c) to frighten more people
- (d) to appear at all times

Answers : (i) (d)           (ii) (b)           (iii) (a)

3. “You’re to exert your influence ..... then we’ll start helping you to write.”

- (i) Identify the speaker.
  - (a) Helen the ghost           (b) the writer
  - (c) the wife                   (d) the cook
- (ii) The listener was expected to persuade people not to
  - (a) call the ghosts
  - (b) use the Ouija board
  - (c) trouble the ghosts
  - (d) chant magic spells
- (iii) The promise made by the speakers is
  - (a) not to haunt
  - (b) not to frighten his wife
  - (c) not to appear in the writer’s house
  - (d) help him write the stories

Answers : (i) (a)           (ii) (b)           (iii) (d)

4. “Lavinia dear, do you know anyone with the name of Helen?”

- (i) Who is Lavinia?
  - (a) writer’s friend   (b) his wife
  - (c) cook               (d) a neighbour
- (ii) The above incident takes place at the writer’s
  - (a) wife’s kitty parties
  - (b) in his garden
  - (c) wife’s card parties
  - (d) wife’s Book Club meetings
- (iii) The above reveals \_\_\_\_\_ of the speaker
  - (a) mockery           (b) appreciation
  - (c) suspicion         (d) dislike

Answers : (i) (b)           (ii) (d)           (iii) (c)

5. “So I went home and sat down before my desk and sucked at the end of my pencil and waited, but nothing happened. Pretty soon my mind began to wander off on other things.”

[C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

- (i) The author was coming back

- (a) from office
- (b) from an official meet
- (c) from a party
- (d) after a meeting with Jenkins

- (ii) What was the author waiting for to happen?
  - (a) for an encounter with God
  - (b) for the result of his magic mantra
  - (c) for the result of invocation to ghosts
  - (d) for an idea of a plot to write a ghost story
- (iii) Where did the author’s mind began to wander?
  - (a) to think about his new job
  - (b) to think about his last story
  - (c) about the new house he had bought
  - (d) on the material things like his wife’s shopping and how he was going to cure her alarming tendency to take every new fad that came along.

Answers : (i) (d)           (ii) (d)           (iii) (d)

6. “But what have I got to do with this?” She gave me a pitying look and rose. “You’re to exert your influence. Get all your friends and acquaintances to stop using the Ouija board, and then we’ll start helping you to write.” [C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

- (i) Who is ‘she’ in the above passage?
  - (a) Helen
  - (b) Lavinia
  - (c) Gladolia
  - (d) Mrs William Augustus
- (ii) ‘You are to exert your influence for
  - (a) co-operating with her
  - (b) providing all help to her
  - (c) helping the ghosts to fight their problem
  - (d) stopping the use of Ouija board
- (iii) Before disintegrating, the narrator was told
  - (a) not to forget the strike
  - (b) to help them
  - (c) to stop talking to a ghost
  - (d) to exert his influence to help them

Answers : (i) (a)           (ii) (d)           (iii) (d)



## REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – NON-MCQs

Read the following extracts and answer the questions.

1. *“It was like watching one of these moving picture cartoons being put together.”*

(a) Explain ‘It’.

Ans. The apparition taking shape is referred to as ‘It’.

(b) What is like watching a cartoon movie?

Ans. The figure of the ghost taking full shape.

(c) What effect does it have on the ‘narrator’?

Ans. The narrator is shocked and surprised.

2. *“We’re been called out of beds a little too often in recent years and now we’re through.”*

(a) Who have been called constantly?

Ans. The ghosts like Helen.

(b) What is unnatural about their being called?

Ans. People generally do not summon ghosts, so it is unnatural.

(c) What is the person’s complaint?

Ans. The ghost is fed up of being troubled at all odd hours.

3. *“It’s .... so cheap! I got it at a bargain sale.”*

(a) What has been bought cheap?

Ans. The Ouija board.

(b) Do you think the narrator would be happy with this news? Why/Why not?

Ans. He was shocked and got worried at the news.

(c) Who had asked the narrator to avoid its use?

Ans. The ghost Helen had threatened the narrator not to use the Ouija board.

4. *“Someone has been trying to communicate with John through ..... Ouija ..... someone with the name of Helen.”*

(a) Who is Helen? What was her relation with

John?

Ans. Helen is the ghost and she had helped John with good plots for his stories.

(b) What is Ouija Board? What is its purpose?

Ans. A Ouija Board is a talking board in which the ghosts answer the questions asked by people.

(c) How can one communicate through the Ouija?

Ans. The people ask questions and the ghosts answer them.

5. *“John, there is not a bit of use trying to deceive me. What is it you are trying to conceal from me?”*

(a) Why was John trying to deceive the speaker?

Ans. John did not wish to frighten his wife by letting her see the ghost.

(b) Whom was he trying to conceal?

Ans. He was trying to hide Helen, the ghost.

(c) What was John afraid of?

Ans. John thought that his wife would faint at the sight of the ghost.

6. *“I sat staring at it and presently noticed something just taking shape. It was exactly like watching one of these moving picture cartoons being put together.”*

[C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

(a) What was the narrator staring at?

Ans. The narrator was staring at the woman standing before him.

(b) How was the figure taking shape?

Ans. The figure was taking shape gradually.

(c) Who was gradually taking a definite shape part by part?

Ans. A ghost, called Helen, was gradually taking a definite shape.

## SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Why was the writer getting over confident about his ability of writing ghost stories?

Ans : Mr Hallock, the writer had always managed to write good ghost stories, though he was not a specialist in these kind of stories. Such stories were greatly in public demand. He was confident that somehow or the other, a good plot always appeared from somewhere and he was able to write a good story.

2. Watching the ghost taking shape was ‘Like watching of the moving picture cartoons put together.’ how?

Ans : Helen, the ghost, appeared in parts. First, a hand took shape, then some other body part, so on and so forth. The process in which the final apparition appeared in the end, was a matter of surprise. The ghost always took shape in bits and pieces like a cartoon in a moving picture.

**3. What surprising revelation is made by the ghost? Why did the writer not believe her?**

**Ans :** The writer was greatly surprised to discover that all the good plots of ghost stories had been supplied to him by the ghost Helen. The writer disbelieved her because he had never really seen her before. But the ghost said that she had sat on his shoulders and suggested the plots for his stories.

**4. Why is the ghost fed up of the Ouija Board fanatics?**

**Ans :** The ghosts are now fed up of being called again and again for answers and queries. They were pulled out of beds at odd times, so they were very tired. The Ouija Board crazy fans would keep asking questions, so this irritated the ghosts and proved to be tiresome and troublesome.

**5. What reasons are given by Lavinia for not getting rid of the Ouija Board?**

**Ans :** Lavinia felt that the Ouija board was procured at bargain price. Moreover, she felt that it would help her husband in writing ghost stories. It would also provide an interesting activity for her book-club meetings.

**6. Why was the narrator shocked to see the activities of his wife's Book Club?**

**Ans :** The narrator was in for a great shock to see that all the ladies of his wife's book-club were sitting near a Ouija Board. Helen, the ghost, had threatened the narrator that he must exert all his force to dissuade people from using the Ouija Board and keep calling ghosts now and then for their problems. So to see so many ladies using the board was a painful sight for him.

**7. What controversy or furore was caused in the parlour by the name of 'Helen'?**

**Ans :** The narrator was forced to be a partner in the Ouija board game and to his horror he discovered that he was called a 'traitor' by the ghost. When Miss Hinkle wished to know the details, it was revealed on the Ouija Board that the person, who had called the narrator, a traitor, was someone with the name 'Helen.' This name created controversy since the narrator's wife did not know anyone with that name.

**8. Helen the ghost says, "I'm too tired to materialise." What does she imply by the above statement?**

**Ans :** Helen was too tired because she had to work overtime the earlier night answering all the questions of Lavinia's friends. She took longer than before to appear in

her full shape because she couldn't be expected to retain all her faculties after answering all the Ouija Board fanatics of Lavinia's book-club, all the night.

**9. Why did Helen pay a visit to the narrator again?**

**Ans :** Helen paid a visit to the narrator because she had been sent to ensure that the narrator's wife should get rid of the Ouija Board. She had come to threaten the writer and if he did not pay any heed then she would not help the narrator and suggest new plots for his stories.

**10. Lavinia entered the narrator's room with a solid finality. What was her purpose?**

**Ans :** Lavinia had become suspicious of the narrator that he was involved with some woman called 'Helen'. So she had come to tell her husband that she was leaving him and moving out. She could not tolerate the infidelity of her husband.

**11. Why was the narrator unable to conceal Helen behind his back before his wife?**

**Ans :** Lavinia refused to stand on one side, she jumped quickly to see who was standing behind her husband. She was already suspicious and noticed that her husband was trying to conceal someone behind his back. Even Helen did not disappear so both the women confronted each other for first time.

**12. How did Lavinia react after facing Helen?**

**Ans :** The writer had always thought that Lavinia was weak-hearted and she might faint at the sight of the ghost. But nothing like this happened. The interaction proved positive and Lavinia stood boldly and confidently before the ghost.

**13. Why did the narrator have a strong urge to pen down his new story?**

**Ans :** The narrator had undergone a great experience. It was scary, interesting, revealing and an excellent plot for any ghost story. A ghost story based on this kind of story was going to be a sure hit.

**14. How did narrator react to the appearance of the ghost? [C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]**

**Ans :** One day the narrator was asked by his employer to write a horrifying ghost story with supernatural elements because the public liked such stories. As he sat down to pen down the story, he started muttering questions to himself and surprisingly someone in the room answered them. The writer was greatly surprised to see a figure taking shape gradually. It was a woman, tall and angular, with

fishy eyes, wearing spectacles. The writer was dumbstruck on seeing a ghost standing before his eyes.

**15. Why did Lavinia decide to leave her husband and what made her change her mind?**

[C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

**Ans :** The narrator had become suspicious of her

husband, and believed he was involved with some woman, called Helen. Unable to tolerate the infidelity of her husband, she decided to leave him. But when she confronted Helen and came to know that she was only a ghost, Lavinia felt miserable to have created such a ruckus accusing her husband of infidelity. All this made Lavinia change her mind.

## LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. John had become a nervous wreck. It had been a hard journey back to normalcy and marital bliss. He writes a diary entry expressing these feelings. Write this for him.**

**Ans :** Dear Diary,

What a harrowing and emotional nightmare I have gone through! On God! These days will always remain permanently etched in my memory. Imagine a ghost helping you with the stories and thus causing your marriage to break. How I was saved at the last minute, is a marvel. Those days, when Helen had threatened me and then Lavinia refused to give up the Ouija board; I was accused of infidelity, I could neither sleep nor walk out. I wish I had confided in my wife before. Thank God! Everything is now as normal as before. But this traumatic period of time, I will never forget. All is well that ends well.

John Hallock.

**2. John's new ghost story is a hit and proves to be a best seller. Jenkins throws a party in his honour and John is asked to give a speech regarding the success of his work and the inspiration behind it. Prepare the speech of him.**

**Ans :** Dear friends,

I am deeply obliged for your best wishes and support for my success. Believe me friends, I am not an expert in ghost stories but somehow a good plot occurs out of the blue and becomes the solid ground of my stories. I know, you find my stories very fascinating and thrilling as most ghost stories are. Well, stories can only work if there is someone to inspire or guide you. Even I have an angel sitting on my shoulders to steer the course of my stories. I hope it continues this way.

Thanks.

**3. Helen, the ghost had close encounters with human beings like John. She goes back to her world and mulls over this experience she had on earth. She writes a diary entry regarding the behaviour of human beings and the fickleness of their relationships. Write this diary entry for her.**

**Ans :** Dear Diary,

This was my first opportunity to have close encounters with human beings for a long stretch of time. Basically we stay out of bounds but now I was forced to materialise in person and threaten John, as there was no other option. I know John is basically a good guy, vulnerable and kind but his wife is too dominating. He is so scared of her and she started doubting her husband at the mention of a mere word 'Helen'. John was trying to hide me, not to distress her but, look how she behaved. These human beings have fickle relationships, despite all. I think we are better off for we keep our relationships intact

Helen

**4. Do you believe 'A Shady Plot' qualifies as a good ghost story?**

**Ans :** Yes, this is a very good story with the most interesting storyline and plot. The plot has been inspired from a real life experience which makes it authentic. It has suspense, it is scary with ghosts walking in and out, but the best part is the humour. The story is not the stereotype one, it is funny and hilarious. It is very interesting to know that even ghosts get fed up of haunting and they are dragged out of their beds at all hours. This story is full of surprises and that is the best quality of a ghost story.

# FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. Discuss the qualities of a ghost with your friends.

- | Write them down.
- | Read aloud in the class.



2. Imagine that an alien has landed near your house from Mars. It was little frightened in the beginning but you try your best to relax him. Conduct an interview with this alien asking atleast 10 questions that would be of interest to you. Imagine the answers and write down the complete question-answer session.



3. Answer the following questions briefly.

- (a) Do you believe in ghosts?
- (b) Do you think all ‘newly dead’ people become ghosts?
- (c) Are all ghosts scary?
- (d) Have you actually seen a ghost?
- (e) Do you think ghosts appear only at night?
- (f) Does your family believe in ghosts?



4. Compose a poem on the activities of a “Friendly Ghost.”

5. Find some words or expressions that would express our reactions to the world of ghosts?

Clue – haunted

By Satyajit Ray

**SUMMARY**

This story depicts the dreams and aspirations of smalltimers and the apathy of film people for whom making films is a business. Patol Babu was a middle aged man of about fifty years with a bald head. His neighbour Nishikanta Ghosh informed him that his brother-in-law Naresh Dutt, a film producer, was looking around for an actor for a scene in a film, with looks like that of Patol Babu. Patol Babu was so excited to hear this news that in his excitement, he made the wrong purchases in the vegetable market. Patol Babu remembered fondly that he always had a great passion for the stage and in his youth he had acted in many 'Jatras'. Indeed there was a time when people bought tickets especially to see him.

It was in the year 1934, when he lived in Kanchrapara and worked as a clerk with Hudson and Kimberley. He had thought of floating his own theatrical club but he lost his job. Ever since Patol Babu had to struggle a lot to make a living. He worked in a Bengali film, worked as an insurance salesman but nothing lasted. He paid regular visits to various offices for jobs but nothing worked. He still remembered some of the dialogues of the plays he had acted in.

A new offer to work in films sparked his interest. Naresh Dutt duly arrived and told Patol Babu to report at Faraday House, next morning. On enquiry, Naresh Dutt told Patol Babu that it was a speaking role and he had to play an absent-minded pedestrian. Patol Babu was extremely happy and confided to his wife that he was aware that it wasn't a big role, but one rose from small roles only and this might prove to be the beginning of a great career. His wife expressed her reservation but Patol Babu was in no mood to listen.

Next morning, Patol Babu reported on time at Faraday Building. He saw a big crowd with instruments and cameras being shifted here and there. He was instructed by Naresh Dutt to wait for his turn. Patol Babu was quite nervous since he had no idea about his dialogues and he didn't want to make a spectacle of him self in front of the lead actors. In the meantime, the shooting of the movie started and one scene was shot. Patol Babu couldn't wait any longer. He went to Naresh Dutt and asked for his dialogues. On glancing at the paper, Patol Babu was really depressed, since he was required to speak just one word 'Oh!' Patol Babu was supposed to act like an absent-minded pedestrian and collide with the lead actor,

Chanchal Kumar, utter 'Oh' and resume walking. He was instructed to go and wait on one side. Patol Babu felt humiliated and let down. He felt the entire Sunday was lost in false anticipation of a good role. A faint memory stirred his mind. He remembered his mentor, Gagon Pakrashi's advice that as an artist one must make the most of one's opportunity, whatever it might be. This thought drove away his depression and he started rehearsing all kinds of exclamations 'Oh's' that could be given at different occasions.

Finally Patol Babu was called after an hour. Patol Babu suggested to the director that the scene would look more realistic, if the collision took place, while he had his eyes on the newspaper. A newspaper was immediately arranged. The director suggested that a moustache on Patol Babu would really look more interesting. A moustache was stuck on his face. During the shot, Patol Babu packed in his best effort mixing 25 parts of anguish and 25 parts of surprise, in a single "Oh!" Everyone around praised Patol Babu's acting skills and he went back satisfied near the paan shop. Patol Babu was tremendously pleased and felt that his acting skills were not blurred even after so many years. But now he felt dejected because there was no one who had appreciated his dedication. For the film-people it was a moment's work and next minute they had promptly forgotten about that. He knew he would be paid, it would be a very small amount and he did need money very badly. But could twenty rupees measure against the intense satisfaction of doing a job perfectly. Ten minutes later Naresh Dutt was surprised to find Patol Babu missing, without collecting his remuneration. Next minute, all that was forgotten and the camera started rolling for another shot.

**सारांश**

यह कहानी छोटे-छोटे कलाकारों की आकांक्षाओं और सपनों की है; और उनकी है जो चलचित्र बनाते हैं, और इन लोगों की ओर से उदासीन रहते हैं। पटोल बाबू एक पचास वर्षीय प्रौढ़ व्यक्ति थे। उनके सिर पर एक भी बाल नहीं था। उनके पड़ोसी, निशिकान्त घोष ने उन्हें बताया कि उनके बहनोई नरेश दत्त एक फ़िल्म निर्माता हैं और उन्हें पटोल बाबू से मिलते-जुलते अभिनेता की आवश्यकता है। पटोल बाबू यह सुनकर इतने उत्तेजित हो गये कि उन्होंने सब्जी मंडी में सब गलत खरीदारी कर ली। पटोल बाबू को याद आ गया कि उन्हें अपनी जवानी में स्टेज (रंगमंच) पर अभिनय करने का बेहद शौक था और उन्होंने

बहुत सी जात्राओं में भाग लिया था। एक समय था जब लोग उनका अभिनय देखने के लिए टिकट खरीदते थे।

सन् 1934 में वह कंचापाड़ा में रहते थे, हडसन और किम्बरली नामक कंपनी में क्लर्क का काम करते थे। तब उन्होंने अपनी नाटक कंपनी खोलने की सोची थी, परन्तु तब उनकी नौकरी छूट गई। उसके बाद से उन्हें जीविका कमाने के लिए बहुत संघर्ष करना पड़ा। उन्होंने एक बंगला फ़िल्म में काम किया, बीमा कम्पनी में बीमा बेचने वाले का काम किया, पर कुछ भी ज्यादा दिन नहीं चला। वह अनेक दफ़्तरों में जाते रहे पर कहीं भी सफलता नहीं मिली। उनको अभी भी अपने कई पात्रों के संवाद याद हैं।

उनकी उत्सुकता नये काम के लिए जागृत हुई और नरेश दत्त ने उन्हें दूसरे दिन सुबह फ़ैराडे हाउस में उपस्थित होने को कहा। पूछने पर नरेश दत्त ने पटोल बाबू को बताया कि उन्हें एक भुलक्कड़ आदमी की भूमिका करनी है, जिसमें उन्हें संवाद भी बोलना होगा। पटोल बाबू बहुत खुश हुए। उन्होंने अपनी पत्नी से कहा कि उन्हें पता है वह भूमिका छोटी है, परन्तु छोटी-छोटी भूमिकाओं के बाद ही एक बड़ा काम मिलता है। पटोल बाबू की पत्नी को उनकी बातों पर विश्वास नहीं हुआ पर पटोल बाबू कुछ भी सुनने को तैयार नहीं थे।

दूसरे दिन, प्रातःकाल, पटोल बाबू ठीक समय पर फ़ैराडे हाउस पहुँच गये। वहाँ लोगों का समूह कैमरे और दूसरे यन्त्रों को इधर से उधर ले जा रहा था। नरेश दत्त ने उन्हें अपनी बारी की प्रतीक्षा करने को कहा। पटोल बाबू काफ़ी चिंतित थे क्योंकि उन्हें यह नहीं मालूम था कि उन्हें क्या बोलना है। वह बड़े अभिनेताओं के सामने अपना मजाक नहीं बनवाना चाहते थे।

इतने में शूटिंग शुरू हो गई और एक सीन को तैयार भी कर लिया गया। अब पटोल बाबू से न रहा गया। वह नरेश दत्त के पास गये और अपना संवाद माँगा। वह बहुत ही निराश हुए जब उन्होंने देखा कि संवाद केवल एक शब्द “ओह” था। पटोल बाबू को भुलक्कड़ आदमी की तरह नाटक करना था जो सड़क पर चलते हुए एक मशहूर अभिनेता, चंचल कुमार से टकराता है और “ओह” कहकर चला जाता है। पटोल बाबू को एक ओर जाकर इंतज़ार करने को कहा गया।

पटोल बाबू को धक्का लगा और वह अपमानित भी हुए। उन्हें लगा कि पूरा रविवार एक अच्छे पात्र के धोखे में व्यर्थ हो गया। पर तब उन्हें अपने गुरु, गोगेन पकराशी का परामर्श स्मरण हो आया। एक कलाकार को हाथ में आए किसी भी सुअवसर को छोटा नहीं समझना

चाहिए, चाहे वह कुछ भी हो। इस विचार ने उनकी खिन्नता को दूर कर दिया और वह अनेक प्रकार से ‘ओह’ बोलने का अभ्यास करने में जुट गए।

आखिरकार, एक घन्टे बाद पटोल बाबू को बुलावा आया। पटोल बाबू ने निर्देशक को सलाह दी कि अगर टक्कर उस समय हो जब उनकी समाचार पत्र पर नजरें टिकी हों, तो सीन बहुत वास्तविक लगेगा। एक समाचार पत्र उसी समय लाया गया। निर्देशक को लगा कि पटोल बाबू के मुँह पर मुँछ अच्छी लगेगी और एक मुँछ उनके मुख पर चिपका दी गई। शाट के दौरान पटोल बाबू ने अपने सर्वोच्च अभिनय की क्षमता का प्रदर्शन, 25% वेदना और 25% आश्चर्य का मिश्रण करके, एक “ओह” में कर दिया। सब लोगों ने पटोल बाबू की अभिनय की निपुणता की सराहना की और वह संतुष्ट होकर पान की दुकान के पास चले गये। वह अति प्रसन्न थे कि इतने वर्षों पश्चात् भी उनकी अभिनय की योग्यता धुँधली नहीं हुई। पर अब उन्हें निराशा का आभास होने लगा क्योंकि किसी ने भी उनके अभिनय के प्रति समर्पण को नहीं पहचाना। फ़िल्मी लोगों के लिए यह केवल एक मिनट का काम था और दूसरे मिनट वह उसे भूल भी गये थे। उन्हें मालूम था कि इस काम के लिए उन्हें पैसे मिलेंगे जो कि बहुत थोड़े से होंगे, और उन्हें पैसे की बहुत आवश्यकता है। पर क्या बीस रुपयों की उनके असीम संतोष से तुलना की जा सकती है? दस मिनट बाद, नरेश दत्त हैरान रह गये कि पटोल बाबू अपने पैसे लिए बिना ही चले गये। दूसरे ही मिनट, सब उनको भूल गये, और कैमरा दूसरे सीन की तैयारी में लग गया।

#### WORD-MEANINGS

- **genial** : sociable, kind ● **pedestrian** : traveller on foot
- **crucial** : important ● **suspended** : hanging ● **oblong** : rectangular with unequal sides ● **tremor** : quiver
- **perspiration** : sweat ● **hubbub** : noise ● **resumed** : begin again ● **scribble** : to write quickly ● **gigantic** : great ● **hoax** : fraud ● **meek** : timid ● **embezzlement** : cheating of money ● **mellow** : to soften by age
- **edification** : improve morally ● **obeisance** : gesture expressing respect ● **inflection** : modulation of voice
- **monosyllabic** : word of one syllable ● **collision** : to collide with someone ● **apathy** : indifference
- **anticipation** : expecting something before due time
- **commended** : praised ● **excruciating** : acutely painful

## SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

### TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS (SOLVED)

#### 3. Answer the following questions briefly.

- (a) What was the news that Nishikanto Ghosh gave Patol Babu ?

**Ans.** Nishikanto Ghosh informed Patol Babu that his brother-in-law Naresh Dutt was in film business and he was looking for someone like Patol Babu, to play a role in his film.

(b) *How did Patol Babu react ? Why ?*

[C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

**Ans.** Patol Babu had always nurtured a passion for acting and theatre. So he was extremely thrilled at the prospect of playing a role in a film, after 52 years of deep longing.

(c) *Why had Patol Babu lost his first job in Calcutta ?*

**Ans.** Patol Babu was doing well in his job and he was also in the good books of his boss. But due to sudden retrenchment in his office because of war, he lost his nine-year-old job.

(d) *How does Patol Babu reconcile to the dialogue given to him ?* [C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

**Ans.** Initially Patol Babu was very dejected to know that he was required to speak just one word 'Oh!', but later he accepted it because the director told him that he was the only one who had the speaking part that day. Even the lead actor had no dialogues to speak that day.

(e) *Who was Prakashi ? How do his words help Patol Babu in enacting his role ?*

[C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

**Or**

*What was the advice of Patol Babu's mentor, Gagon Pakrashi?*

**Ans.** Mr. Prakashi had been Patol Babu's mentor. He had advised him that each word spoken in a play is like a fruit in a tree, so full justice must be done to each part. So Patol Babu not only got over his disappointment but also practised speaking "Oh!" in many different ways.

(f) *How do we know that Patol Babu was a meticulous man ?*

**Ans.** Patol Babu, practiced each step of his tiny role thoroughly. He enunciated "Oh!" in various ways, he practiced how his features would be twisted in pain after collision and how he would fling his arms, how would he crouch his body to express pain and surprise. He requested the director for a rehearsal also, which was declined.

(g) *Why did Mr Mullick turn down Patol Babu's request for a rehearsal ?*

**Ans.** Mr Mullick was a very busy and preoccupied director. He had no patience to grant rehearsal for an insignificant role. Moreover, the scene had to be shot in sunlight and as the clouds were seen approaching, he had to take the shot quickly. So he declined Patol Babu's request for a rehearsal.

(h) *What were the special touches that Patol Babu*

*gave to his role to make it more authentic ?*

**Ans.** Patol Babu suggested that he should be reading a newspaper when he collided with the lead actor. Later the director added a butterfly kind of moustache to make his character look more authentic.

**4. Discuss the following questions in detail and write the answers in you notebooks :**

(a) *"I hope the part calls for some dialogue." Who says this? Why does he/she ask this question?*

**Ans.** The above query is made by Patol Babu to Naresh Dutt, the director of the movie. Patol Babu only wished to act out a speaking part and so out of curiosity he asks this question.

(b) *'Were these people pulling his legs? Was the whole thing a gigantic hoax? A meek, harmless man like him and they had to drag him into the middle of the city to make a laughing stock out of him. How could anyone be so cruel?' Why does Patol Babu have these thoughts?*

**Ans.** Patol Babu had gone to the Faraday House with lot of aspirations and desires. After 52 years of waiting, a role had come his way and he had already confirmed from Naresh Dutt, the director that he had a speaking role. He had not come all the way to be a part of the crowd scene. When he told that he just has to speak one syllable 'Oh!', his hopes are shattered and he feels humiliated and insulted. He was modest, ordinary, but why did the film people chose to make a fool of him. He is disappointed and frustrated and wishes to go back home.

(c) *Patol Babu is an amateur actor for whom walk-on part in a movie turns into an ultimate challenge. Discuss.*

**Ans.** Patol Babu was blessed with an artistic temperament and meticulous nature. In his walk-on role, he was just required to speak 'Oh!'. After initial disappointment, Patol Babu remembered the words of his mentor, "However small a part you're offered, never consider it beneath your dignity to accept it .... make the most of your opportunity." He geared up for a superlative performance. He uttered "Oh!" with different inflections, tried to say it differently in different situations. He believed that a true actor could make a mark with one single syllable and set out to achieve this aim. Patol Babu went near a side-street and practised all the steps – how he would react physically, how his features would twist in pain, how he would fling his arms and how he would crouch his body and resume his walk.

When the time for the shoot arrived, Patol Babu suggested a rehearsal. This suggestion was declined but he was allowed to walk with a newspaper, during the collision with the lead actor. He was extremely pleased to support a big moustache which made his character more interesting. He gave an excellent performance, which earned him compliments like “Jolly good! why you’re quite an actor” from an indifferent director. Even the lead actor, Chanchal Kumar commented “My God! you timed it so well that I nearly passed out.”

So Patol Babu’s unfulfilled aspirations were ignited when he was already 52 years old. Who knows maybe a fire would follow. Truly, a true artist believed in perfection and not in remuneration.

(d) *Do you agree with the statement that Patol Babu is a practical man who comes to terms with whatever life has to offer ?*

**Ans.** Patol Babu had an artist’s mind and heart. He was very emotional and the moment he realised that he was supposed to utter just one syllable ‘Oh!’, he wanted to quit. He felt he had been taken for a ride and didn’t wish to look like a fool. But then the advise of his mentor makes him stay and do the job perfectly. Patol Babu does complete the assignment but he cannot be called practical. He labours and sweats too much for fraction of a scene and then walks away without taking the money. He felt his perfection and dedication couldn’t be measured by twenty or fifteen rupees.

(e) *Why does Patol Babu walk away before he can be paid for his role ? What does this reveal about his character ?*

**Ans.** Patol Babu is very pleased with his performance and felt that he had made his mentor, Prakash, proud. But he felt that the film people could never appreciate how hard he had laboured for that one shot. The film people were mechanical and even if they paid him fifteen or twenty rupees, could that money ever compensate for the great effort he had put in. That was not the befitting remuneration for such a perfect and dedicated work.

(f) *Do you think making a movie is an easy job? Discuss with reference to the story ?*

**Ans.** Movie-making is extremely tiring, painful and a long process. Locations have to be fixed and hired, proper characters who fit the roles have to be scouted, called. Moreover there is heavy equipment that is needed and has to be carted along. During shooting minute details like a moustache for Patol Babu, has to be looked into. The crowds become uncontrollable during shootings and that also has to be seen. The director and other spot boys like Baren Mallik have to sweat it out in the open. Moreover, the director is always on tenterhooks to finish the shooting. When Patol Babu wanted a rehearsal, the director declined it because that particular shot had to be caned in broad daylight.

5. Use the words given below to tell about Patol Babu’s character.

passionate actor	diligent	unassuming
talented	genial	mercenary
short-tempered	introvert	meticulous
modest	humble	arrogant

- (a) That an offer to act in a film - - - - - beyond wild dreams – unassuming, modest
- (b) Indeed - - - - - him.  
– talented / passionate actor.
- (c) I was with Hudson - - - - - single day.  
– diligent / meticulous
- (d) It didn’t matter - - - - - so many people.  
– modest / humble
- (e) Patol Babu - - - - - glass window.  
– meticulous / diligent
- (f) It is true - - - - - dedication ?  
– passionate actor / humble

### REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – MCQs

1. Read the following extracts and choose the correct option.

1. *At one time Patol Babu had a real passion for the stage, in fact, it verged on obsession.*

- (i) Patol Babu during his earlier years had been  
(a) a singer (c) in street plays  
(b) a theatre artist (d) in movies
- (ii) He was obsessed because :



- (a) he always talked about it
- (b) he kept trying to get more and more roles
- (c) he worked without money
- (d) he kept repeating many dialogues

(iii) Patol Babu was by nature :

- (a) an artist
- (b) a lyric writer
- (c) a perfectionist
- (d) temperamental

**Answers :** (i) (b)      (ii) (d)      (iii) (c)

2. "Fine, I wouldn't have come to you for just a walk-on part".

(i) The speaker is

- (a) Patol Babu
- (b) Patol's wife
- (c) Naresh Dutt
- (d) Baren Mullick

(ii) The speaker proves to be \_\_\_\_\_ what he says.

- (a) a cheater
- (b) a crook
- (c) untrue
- (d) exaggerating

(iii) The result of this on Patol Babu was:

- (a) encouraging
- (b) very demoralising
- (c) lukewarm
- (d) bad

**Answers :** (i) (c)      (ii) (d)      (iii) (a)

3. The heat was stifling. The Jacket weighed a ton. Patol Babu couldn't keep standing in one spot any more, his legs felt heavy.

(i) Patol Babu's condition became bad because :

- (a) it was very hot
- (b) he had no place to stand
- (c) there was so much crowd
- (d) he felt depressed

(ii) The reason for the Patol Babu's condition was :

- (a) he was made to wait for a long time
- (b) he was treated badly
- (c) he had to speak just one word
- (d) he wasn't paid

(iii) Patol Babu had not expected this to happen because of :

- (a) his expectations
- (b) Naresh Dutt's assurances
- (c) his wife's jibes
- (d) the director's orders

**Answers :** (i) (d)      (ii) (c)      (iii) (b)

4. Patol Babu felt that he could write a whole thesis on that one monosyllabic exclamation.

(i) Patol Babu rehearsed

- (a) his actions
- (b) the hero's dialogues
- (c) the exclamation 'Oh!'

(d) his songs

(ii) By writing a thesis, it is meant that :

- (a) Patol Babu was a scholar
- (b) he was going to the library
- (c) he could guide others
- (d) he became an expert

(iii) Patol Babu did this because he believed :

- (a) one must practice hard for whatever one does
- (b) one must discuss with others
- (c) one must ask for money
- (d) one must never make any commitment

**Answers :** (i) (c)      (ii) (d)      (iii) (a)

5. What was twenty rupees when measured against the intense satisfaction of a small job done with perfection and dedication.

(i) Twenty rupees was the amount meant for :

- (a) refreshments
- (b) payment for his role
- (c) transportation
- (d) hiring him

(ii) The above sentence reveals that Patol Babu was

- (a) an accountant
- (b) very emotional and passionate about his work
- (c) money-minded
- (d) not foresighted

(iii) Patol Babu didn't collect the money because he felt :

- (a) he felt the money was too less
- (b) no money could compensate for his commitment
- (c) no one was giving him any attention
- (d) they should deliver the money home.

**Answers :** (i) (b)      (ii) (b)      (iii) (b)

6. Counting your chickens again before they are hatched, are you? No wonder you could never make a go of it. [C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

(i) Who is the speaker?

- (a) Patol Babu
- (b) Patol Babu's wife
- (c) Naresh Dutt
- (d) Chanchal Kumar

(ii) What topic was being discussed?

- (a) a role in the shoot
- (b) money
- (c) writing books
- (d) none of the above

(iii) “make a go of it” means

- (a) to act hard
- (b) to fail
- (c) become successful
- (d) to cheat

Answers : (i) (b)           (ii) (a)           (iii) (c)

7. Ten minutes later Naresh Dutt went looking for Patol Babu near the pan shop and found that he was not there. “That’s odd- the man hadn’t been paid yet. What a strange fellow!”

- (i) Where had Patol Babu gone?
  - (a) to his guru Mr. Pakrashi’s place
  - (b) to Karali Babu’s house for Kali puja
  - (c) back to his home.

(d) for the shooting of his TV serial

(ii) Why was Naresh Dutt looking for Patol Babu?

- (a) He wanted him to know that everybody liked his performance.
- (b) He wanted to give him his payment.
- (c) He wanted him to meet the director of the movie.
- (d) He wanted him to reshoot.

(iii) What does the incident tell us about Patol Babu ?

- (a) that he was an eccentric man
- (b) that he was a busy man
- (c) that satisfaction mattered more to him than money
- (d) that he was a good actor

Answers : (i) (c)           (ii) (b)           (iii) (c)

## REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – NON-MCQs

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow :

1. “I hope the part calls for some dialogue ?” “Certainly. It’s a speaking part. You have acted before, haven’t you?”

(a) Identify the two people exchanging the above dialogue.

Ans : This dialogue is between Naresh Dutt and Patol Babu.

(b) What reservations are expressed by the first person? Why?

Ans : Patol Babu wishes to confirm if he has a speaking part.

(c) Do you believe the information given by the second speaker is truthful? Why/Why not?

Ans : No, Patol Babu did not have any dialogue to speak. He just has to utter one monosyllable ‘Oh!’

2. Patol Babu hadn’t expected such news at the start of the day. That an offer to act in film would come to a 52 years old nonentity like him was beyond his wildest dreams.

(a) Why didn’t Patol Babu expect such news?

Ans : He hadn’t got any acting offers for the last 52 years for a film.

(b) Why did he consider himself a nonentity after acting in theatre?

Ans : He was extremely modest and there was a large gap of years between his theatre days and this offer.

(c) What was his reaction?

Ans : He was thrilled and very pleasantly surprised.

3. “Counting your chickens again before they’re hatched, are you ? No wonder you could never make a go of it.”

(a) Describe the context of the above statement.

Ans : Patol’s wife believes that Patol Babu was too happy prematurely.

(b) Why does the speaker use the expression, “never make a go of it”?

Ans : His wife believes that Patol Babu could not be successful after so many years.

(c) Do you think that the prediction made above proved to be true ? Why/ Why not?

Ans : No, Patol Babu did perfectly the part he was given to play, even if it was a tiny role.

4. “Is that so ? Well, I suggest you go and wait in the shade there. We have a few things to attend to before we get going ?”

(a) **Who is the speaker and the listener?**

**Ans :** The speaker is Naresh Dutt and the listener is Patol Babu.

(b) **What is the context of the above statement?**

**Ans :** This is said when Patol Babu reports for shooting at the set.

(c) **What does the above statement reflect about the speaker's attitude?**

**Ans :** The speaker is not much bothered about Patol Babu's arrival.

5. *"As an artist your aim should be to make the most of your opportunity and squeeze the last drop of meaning out*

*of your lines."*

(a) **Who was supposed to have said these lines and to whom?**

**Ans :** These lines were spoken by Gagon Pakrashi to Patol Babu.

(b) **Discuss the relevance of the above statement in the given context?**

**Ans :** Patol Babu is trying to derive inspiration from his mentor's advice.

(c) **Do you think, the listener followed these instructions? How? To what extent?**

**Ans :** Yes, Patol Babu perfected the little role he was given after remembering his mentor's words.

## SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. **Who was Nishikanto Babu and what proposal did he bring for Patol Babu?**

**Ans :** Nishikanto Babu was Patol Babu's neighbour and he brought a film offer for Patol Babu. Nishikanto's relative, Naresh Dutt was looking for someone like Patol Babu for his film and Nishikanto had suggested Patol's name.

2. **This kind of offer was "beyond his wildest dreams". Why?**

**Ans :** Patol Babu was already 52 years old and virtually unknown, in the field of acting. So he was pleasantly surprised that a nonentity like him had received a film offer. Moreover, he was very modest in his bearing and for quite sometime had nurtured such kind of dreams.

3. **What kind of fame had Patol Babu achieved in 'Jatras'?**

**Ans :** At some time in his life, Patol Babu had a real passion for the stage. He had been simply obsessed. In the 'Jatras' he was very well-known and always in demand. His name appeared in handbills many times and people bought tickets specially to see him perform.

4. **What desperate efforts were made by Patol Babu to earn a decent living?**

[C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

**Ans :** Initially Patol Babu had a job in a railway factory. In 1934, he was offered higher salary as a clerk in a famous company. Later he shifted to Calcutta and soon lost his job due to war. He tried his hard at a variety store which only lasted for 5 years. He worked in a Bengali firm, then as an insurance agent but nothing lasted.

5. **What details of the role were furnished by Naresh Dutt, the film's director, to Patol Babu?**

**Ans :** Patol Babu was supposed to enact the role of a

pedestrian who is absent-minded and short-tempered. There were some dialogues also according to Naresh Dutt and it was supposed to be a proper speaking part.

6. **Describe the scene outside the Faraday House briefly.**

**Ans :** A big crowd had already gathered outside the building. A bus was carrying the equipment, There were cameras, stands, crowds of people everywhere. Most of the people were busy carrying the equipment, carting it here and there.

7. **Why was Patol Babu particular about getting his dialogues in advance?**

**Ans :** Patol Babu was a perfectionist. He wished to practice his dialogues beforehand so that he did not make a spectacle of himself in front of the lead actors. He was too enthusiastic and didn't wish to make any mistake in his performance.

8. **"Patol Babu glanced at the paper... and found a sudden throbbing in his head. The heat was unbearable." Why did this happen?**

[C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

Or

**What were Patol Babu's 'dialogues' and what was his reaction on seeing them?**

**Ans :** Patol Babu found that he had to speak just one word, that too a monosyllable 'Oh!' He had been promised a proper speaking part and after a long wait and great expectation, he felt too depressed to see his small role. He felt cheated and quite demoralised.

9. **What kind of practice did Patol Babu do?**

**Ans :** Patol Babu practised speaking 'Oh!' a thousand times. He tried to give it a different inflection, add all

kinds of emotions and styles to this word. He practiced his body language, how he would act during collision with the hero, how he would fling his arms, how his body would crouch in pain and surprise.

**10. What justification is rendered by Sasanko regarding Patol Babu's speaking role?**

**Ans :** Sasanko was a very clever and tactful person. He told Patol Babu that he had a regular speaking part and he was indeed very lucky to get such a part in Baren Mullick's film. Most of the people had only crowd scenes and even the lead actor had no lines to speak that day.

**11. Why did Patol Babu disappear before collecting his payment? [C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]**

**Ans :** Patol Babu was happy at his performance because he felt that he had done his best. But he was crestfallen at the indifferent behaviour of the film people. So he felt that no money could compensate for his great efforts and the

hard work he had put in. He had been simply exhausted after the long wait and hard work he had put in. Now the reward of twenty rupees looked too meagre and insufficient.

**12. Which message is the author trying to convey through the lesson 'Patol Babu'?**

[C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

**Ans :** Through the lesson, Patol Babu, the writer depicts the dreams and aspirations of the small timers and the apathy of film makers for whom making films is a business. Patol Babu, a talented and emotional artist, who is artist at heart and full of dramatic skills, was asked to perform a role after 52 years. Quite excited, he rehearsed the single word (oh) he was asked to speak. Everybody praised his performance but he did not wait there to collect his remuneration. Naresh Dutt asked for him but next minute all that was forgotten and the camera started rolling for another shot

## LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. Patol Babu reached home and was overcome with mixed feelings of happiness for a good performance but disappointment for being sidelined with such a speaking role. He writes a diary entry in this state of mind. Write the diary for him.**

**Ans :** Dear Diary,

It was a day of mixed emotions, happiness and disappointment packed together. I had gone to Faraday House with great expectations and imagine I was asked to utter just 'oh'! How I died an instant death? All my hopes and aspirations were dashed to pieces. But still I kept my cool. I remembered the advice of my mentor and perfected every bit of my role. Almost everyone, even the hero Chanchal Kumar praised my good work. But the mechanical, inhuman nature of the film-folk hurt me when the time came to collect my twenty rupees, I could not remain there. No money could measure my hard-work and dedication. I know even twenty rupees are needed at home but I felt they were not a worthy remuneration. I hope I am right! God alone knows!

Patol Babu

**2. Naresh Dutt, the director, was surprised to find Patol Babu missing. He had seen Patol Babu's meticulous nature and eye for minute details. No one ever went away without taking the money. Despite his busy schedule, Naresh Dutt couldn't forget Patol Babu. He found out the**

**details of Patol Babu's hard work from other people around. He writes a letter to his friend regarding the hardwork some insignificant people put in and yet their contribution goes unacknowledged. Write the letter for him.**

**Ans :** Service Lane,  
ABC City  
5 Sept. 2010

Dear Mohan,

In our busy lives we seldom notice exceptional people who look quite ordinary. I wish to recount such an incident to you when I had hired a man, who was 52 years old named Patol Babu for a minuscule role. He just had to utter one word 'oh'! I was told later by my staff and other people that Patol Babu, after the initial disappointment, had practiced that word in all different kind of ways. He gave a superb performance but we were too busy in other technicalities and looking after lead actors to notice it. I was amazed to discover that he did not want to collect his money. Maybe we have erred in some way. I am sure we did not value his capability. Nevertheless I will go to his home personally and try to make amends and talk to him. That will really ease my guilt.

Will share the rest with you later.

Your friend,  
Naresh Dutt

**3. Give a character sketch of Patol Babu giving evidence from the text.**

**Ans :** Patol Babu was a modest, talented and timid man. He was an artist at heart — emotional, talented but too prone to being hurt. He was full of dramatic skills and could deliver powerful dialogues. He had been a great hit, doing theatre for ‘jatras’ and people specially flocked to

see him. He was a perfectionist and packed in a very powerful performance for his minuscule role. His ‘Oh!’ had modulation of voice, body language and great dramatic skills. He was most emotional and felt really hurt to see the neglect in the eyes of the director. Patol babu is an ideal artist who is not wordly wise and a dreamer who is not practical.

## FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. Write a diary entry of an unsuccessful singer, who couldn't make it to the top.
2. Meenu practised a lot for days altogether for entry into a T.V. dance show. But she was eliminated in the very first round. Suppose you are Meenu, what course of action would you take? Write a short paragraph relating to your future course of action.



3. Identify a film/TV actor/actress, who could not make to the top due to some unfortunate incident or unfavourable circumstances. Write his/her brief character-sketch.

## BEFORE YOU READ

What is Virtual Reality?

‘Virtual reality’ is a term that applies to computer simulated environments that can simulate physical presence in places in the real world as well as in imaginary worlds. Users can interact with a virtual environment either through the use of standard devices like keyboard and mouse or through wired gloves, as is seen in this story. Virtual reality can be for two purposes :

- ◆ The simulation of a real environment for training and education.
- ◆ The development of an imagined environment for a game or interactive activity.

In this lesson, two boys remote from each other, interact in strange manner, without actually meeting and manage to create miracles.

## कहानी पढ़ने से पहले

“लगभग सच ही” क्या है?

यह पदबंध, कम्प्यूटर से किसी व्यक्ति-वस्तु की शकल या आकार लेने के लिए प्रयोग किया जाता है। यह वास्तविक और काल्पनिक दोनों जगत में प्रयोग किया जा सकता है। इस सेवा के उपभोक्ता, एक दूसरे से मेल-जोल, एक लगभग सत्य से सम्पर्क, की बोर्ड और माउस द्वारा अथवा तार के दस्तानों से कर सकते हैं। ‘लगभग सत्य ही’ शब्द के प्रयोग करने के दो कारण हैं।

- प्रशिक्षण और शिक्षा के लिए एक वास्तविक वातावरण बनाने के लिए।
- एक काल्पनिक वातावरण का रूप धारण करना, किसी खेल अथवा आपसी सम्पर्क के विकास के लिए।

## SUMMARY

The narrator is a young boy, who is travelling by train. His attention is attracted by a big woman, sitting opposite, reading a newspaper. The headline and the cover-story was regarding a 14-year-old school boy named Sebastian Shultz, who awoke from a coma that the doctors feared would last forever. The story further elaborated that Sebastian had been injured in a motorway accident and did not regain consciousness. The mother of Sebastian hoped that their son would get out of coma, but only a miracle could save him. The narrator sees the boy’s photograph also and he is shocked to discover, it is the same Sebastian whom he had got to know. But the newspaper story stated that the boy had been in coma throughout. The narrator felt nervous and confused. He couldn’t figure out how could this have happened.

It all started a month back, when the narrator along with his Dad had brought the latest psycho-drive games with a virtual reality, visor and glove. Some of these games didn’t appear new but the narrator was not bothered. He was thrilled with the latest technology and was getting impatient to start playing.

The first game that he started was called Wild West.

The game made him feel that he was also one of the characters and he had a Sheriff’s badge pinned on his shirt. As he burst into the swing doors of the saloon, everyone glared at him. He drank a glass of some fizzy red stuff and on hearing a loud crash, he spun around. There in the doorway was Black-Eyed Jed, with the fastest gun in the west. He called the narrator who was Sheriff Dawson out. The narrator slammed the glass down and went out. Surprisingly the game took a strange and unexpected turn. A second Sheriff appeared through the back door, shouting and waving. The narrator wondered what way the game was shaping. The second Sheriff forbade the narrator from going out. The narrator noticed that he was very different from other computer images. He was young, like the narrator and he did not move like other images. The second Sheriff told the narrator to follow him. They raced down a corridor, through another door, then another and ended back in the saloon itself. The second sheriff dived through the window and the narrator followed him. He was sitting on a horse and the narrator sat behind him. There were other men on horse back chasing them. The sound of a gunshot shocked the narrator and he realised that the second Sheriff had collapsed. Immediately bright neon lights appeared and score ‘GAME OVER’. As the

narrator took out his visor, he noticed a piece of paper on the tray.

It carried a picture of the second Sheriff with the message.” I’m stuck. Please help to retrieve me. Try Dragon Quest”. — Sebastian Shultz.

Next morning, the narrator started playing the game of DRAGON QUEST. The aim of the game was to rescue a golden haired princess Aurora from the wicked dragon and also to collect the dragon’s treasure on the way. The narrator was on the verge of saving the princess, when he is stalled by Sebastian’s voice in the background, asking to be saved first. Sebastian was the second knight this time and he cut off the golden plaits of the princess, made them into a rope and jumped out. The narrator also jumped out. They tried to run through a secret passage with the dragon pursuing them. They take to the dungeons later and then the dragon suddenly appeared and jumped on them. The narrator tries to strike him but is not successful. The dragon only charged towards Sebastian, who was his prime target. Before the narrator could do anything to save Sebastian, the game got over. This time the message in the printer was ‘BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME. OTHERWISE I’LL HAVE TO STAY HERE FOREVER. TRY JAILBREAK. I THINK IT MIGHT WORK”.

The narrator had no need to study the rules of the game JAILBREAK. He knew his sole objective to save Sebastian. His cellmate in the games was prisoner: 02478 : Shultz. With the help of a skeleton swipe-card, they both were out of the cell, with dogs chasing and sirens wailing. They manage to evade the guards and reach the roof. Sebastian is waiting for a helicopter to rescue them. But by that time the guards and dogs were hurtling towards them and before the narrator could do anything, Sebastian had taken a step backwards and landed on the concrete below. The game ended there and then, much to the shock of the narrator. This time, the narrator was shocked to discover that there was no message from Sebastian. The narrator ran through all the three games over and over again, but he couldn’t find Sebastian again. Then one day a message was there, “CAN WE HAVE LAST ONE TRY ... HELICOPTER WAS NOT A GOOD IDEA... THERE’S GOT TO BE SOME ACCIDENT TRY WARZONE. IF THIS DOES NOT WORK I WON’T BOTHER YOU AGAIN”. CHEERS. SEB.

The narrator tried WARZONE. He was facing a city with tall buildings. Machine guns were firing, bombs were exploding but the narrator was clear that Sebastian and he had to reach the helicopter in one piece. They ran to a no man’s land, got into a waiting jeep started the engine. A tank was speeding towards them. Sebastian slammed the brakes all of a sudden, the jeep went into a spin and the

narrator jumped into the helicopter. But Sebastian was not there, he could not get out of the jeep and the jeep had crashed with the tank. Sebastian was thrown out and landed near the helicopter with a great thud. The narrator could not see anything because of the dust and the game got over. When he removed the visor, he had scored 40,000,000 points and realised that he had cracked the game.

The narrator wanted now to cross-check the facts. He got out of the train and surfed the net for some details. He found out what he was looking for. Apparently at the time of the accident, Sebastian was using his lap-top to play one of the psycho-drive games that the narrator had bought. The narrator realised that Sebastian’s memory had been stored on disk because the computer had saved Sebastian’s memory as its run, when Sebastian had banged his head in the accident. But how did it end up in the narrator’s computer. This was also solved later because the narrator came to know that when Sebastian had been in the hospital, someone had stolen the games and sold them. And the narrator had ended up buying them. There was a message from Sebastian that said, “DEAR MICHAEL, THANK YOU. I’M NOT SURE HOW IT HAPPENED. BUT YOU SAVED MY LIFE. LET’S MEET UP SOON, CHEERS. SEB. PL. KEEP THE GAMES. YOU’VE EARNED THEM”.

This was a real and direct message from Sebastian. It was clear that by reliving the accident, something wonderful had happened. But then again, what can someone say about miracles. And what is true or what is virtually true—no one can say with finality. The narrator had undergone an experience that had proved to be virtually true.

### सारांश

कथावाचक एक किशोर है, जो एक ट्रेन में सफ़र कर रहा है। उसका ध्यान एक लम्बी-चौड़ी महिला की ओर आकर्षित होता है, जो उसके सामने बैठी समाचारपत्र पढ़ रही है। अखबार की सुर्खियाँ एक चौदह वर्षीय लड़के, स्वैसचियन शुल्ट्ज के बारे में हैं। यह लड़का कोमा से बाहर आ गया जबकि उसके डॉक्टरों को इसकी कोई आशा नहीं थी। समाचारपत्र ने यह भी बताया था कि स्वैसचियन एक मोटर दुर्घटना का शिकार था और होश में अभी तक नहीं आया था। उसकी माँ को आशा थी कि वह होश में आ जायेगा पर एक चमत्कार ही उसे बचा सकता था। कथावाचक स्वैसचियन की तस्वीर देखकर स्तम्भित रह जाता है, क्योंकि वह उसको जानने लग गया था। पर, अखबार का कहना था कि वह तो लगातार कोमा (प्रगाढ़ बेहोशी) में था। कथावाचक अत्यन्त उत्तेजित और चक्कर में था। उसको समझ ही नहीं आ रहा था कि ऐसा कैसे हो सकता है।

यह सब एक मास पहले शुरू हुआ जब उसने अपने पिता के साथ जाकर सबसे आधुनिक एक मनोवैज्ञानिक कम्प्यूटर गेम, लगभग

सच ही वाली, मुँह की हेलमेट और दस्तानों के साथ खरीदी। इसमें कुछ खेल तो पुराने थे, पर कथावाचक को कोई अफसोस नहीं हुआ। वह सबसे आधुनिक तकनीक वाला खेल खेलने के लिए अति उत्सुक था।

पहला खेल जो उसने शुरू किया उसका नाम 'वाइल्ड वेस्ट' था। यह खेल खेलते हुए उसे लगा कि वह भी खेल का एक पात्र है और शेरिफ का बैज उसकी कमीज़ पर लगा हुआ है। जैसे ही वह सैलून के घूमते हुए द्वार से अन्दर घुसा उसने सबको उसे क्रोधित दृष्टि से देखते हुए पाया। उसने एक गिलास में लाल रंग का पेय पिया और एक ज़ोर की धमाके की आवाज़ सुनकर तुरंत पलटा। द्वार पर काली आँखों वाला जेड खड़ा था और उसके हाथ में सबसे शीघ्र चलने वाली बन्दूक थी। उसने कथावाचक, जो शेरिफ डोब्सन था, से बाहर आने को कहा। कथावाचक ने गिलास पटक़ा और बाहर गया। इस समय खेल ने एक आश्चर्यजनक अप्रत्याशित मोड़ ले लिया।

एक दूसरा शेरिफ, पिछले द्वार से चिल्लाता हुआ और हाथ हिलाते हुए निकला। कथावाचक को समझ नहीं आया कि खेल किस ओर जा रहा है। दूसरे शेरिफ ने कथावाचक को बाहर जाने से मना किया। कथावाचक ने ध्यान से देखा कि दूसरा शेरिफ दूसरी कम्प्यूटर छवियों से भिन्न था। वह कथावाचक के समान एक किशोर बालक था और दूसरी छवियों के समान नहीं चल रहा था। उसने कथावाचक को अपने पीछे आने को कहा। वह एक गलियारे से तेज़ी से भागते हुए एक दूसरे द्वार द्वारा, और फिर एक द्वार से निकल कर वापस सैलून में जा पहुँचे। दूसरा शेरिफ एक खिड़की से कूद गया और कथावाचक भी उसके पीछे कूदा। शेरिफ एक घोड़े पर सवार था और कथावाचक उसके पीछे बैठ गया। वहाँ और दूसरे घुड़सवार भी थे जो उनका पीछा कर रहे थे। एक बन्दूक की आवाज़ ने कथावाचक को चौंका दिया और उसे पता चला कि दूसरा शेरिफ गिर पड़ा है। उसी वक्त चमकती हुई रोशनी हुई और "खेल खतम" लिखा हुआ आया। जैसे ही कथावाचक ने अपना हेलमेट उतारा, उसने ट्रे में एक कागज़ का पन्ना देखा।

उसमें दूसरे शेरिफ की तसवीर के साथ एक संदेश था "मैं फँस गया हूँ, मुझे निकालने में सहायता करो, ड्रैगन क्वैल्ट खेल खेलो।" – स्वैसचियन शुल्टज़। दूसरे दिन सुबह, कथावाचक ने "Dragon Quest" खेल शुरू किया। उस खेल का लक्ष्य, एक सुनहरे बालों वाली राजकुमारी औरोरा को एक दुष्ट ड्रैगन से बचाना था, और उस ड्रैगन का खजाना भी लूटना था। कथावाचक राजकुमारी को बचाने ही वाला था, तभी स्वैसचियन की आवाज़ ने उसे पीछे से रोका, और पहले उसे बचाने को कहा। स्वैसचियन इस समय दूसरा नाईट था, उसने राजकुमारी की सुनहरी चोटी को काटकर एक रस्सी बनाई और कूद गया। कथावाचक भी कूद गया। वे दोनों एक खुफिया मार्ग से भागने लगे और ड्रैगन उनका पीछा करने लगा। वे एक तहखाने में घुस गये और तभी ड्रैगन अचानक उनके सामने आ गया और उन पर कूदा। ड्रैगन केवल स्वैसचियन की ओर लपका क्योंकि वही उसका निशाना था। इससे पहले कि कथावाचक उसकी सहायता के लिए कुछ करता, खेल समाप्त हो गया।

इस बार संदेश में लिखा था। – "दूसरी बार ज़्यादा सफलता नहीं मिली तो मुझे हमेशा के लिए यहाँ रहना पड़ेगा। 'जेलब्रेक' खेल खेलो। शायद वह काम आये!"

कथावाचक को जेलब्रेक खेल के नियम पढ़ने की आवश्यकता नहीं थी। उसे मालूम था कि उसका लक्ष्य स्वैसचियन को बचाना है। उसके जेल का साथी कैदी नम्बर 02478 – शुल्टज़ था। एक कंकाल रूपी कार्ड की सहायता से, दोनों जेल की कोठरी से बाहर निकल आये परन्तु जेल के सायरन और कुत्ते उनका पीछा करने लगे। वे पहरेदारों से बचते हुए छत पर जा पहुँचे। जब स्वैसचियन हेलीकॉप्टर का इंतज़ार कर रहा था, तब पहरेदार और कुत्ते उनकी ओर लपकते हुए आ पहुँचे। इससे पहले कथावाचक कुछ करता, स्वैसचियन ने एक कदम पीछे की ओर लिया और वह छत से गिर कर नीचे सीमेंट पर जा गिरा। खेल वहीं खत्म हो गया और कथावाचक को बड़ा धक्का लगा जब उसने देखा कि इस बार स्वैसचियन का कोई संदेश नहीं था। कथावाचक ने सब खेलों को बार-बार खेला पर उसे फिर स्वैसचियन नहीं मिला। तब, एक दिन, एक संदेश उसने देखा—

"क्या हम एक आखिरी कोशिश करें? हेलिकॉप्टर की अच्छी योजना नहीं थी। एक दुर्घटना होनी आवश्यक है। वॉरज़ोन गेम खेलो। अगर यह असफल हो जाती है तो मैं तुम्हें फिर परेशान नहीं करूँगा। जय हो – सेब

कथावाचक ने वॉरज़ोन खेला। वह एक शहर में ऊँची इमारतों के सामने खड़ा था। सब तरफ़ मशीनगनों चल रही थीं, बम फूट रहे थे पर कथावाचक को यह मालूम था कि स्वैसचियन और स्वयं उसे हेलिकॉप्टर के पास सही सलामत पहुँचना था। वह दौड़कर अनधिकृत भूमि पर पहुँचे और एक इंतज़ार करती हुई जीप को चलाने लगे। स्वैसचियन ने एक दम ब्रेक दबाई और जीप पूरी घूम गई। कथावाचक कूद कर हेलीकॉप्टर में बैठ गया परन्तु स्वैसचियन जीप से नहीं निकल पाया और जीप जाकर एक टैंक से टकराई। स्वैसचियन जीप से उछलकर हेलिकॉप्टर के सामने धमाके के साथ गिर पड़ा। धूल उड़ने के कारण कथावाचक कुछ भी देख न पाया और खेल खत्म हो गया। जब उसने अपना हेलमेट हटया तो कथावाचक ने देखा कि उसने गेम जीत ली, और 40,000,000 अंक बनाये। कथावाचक सत्य की तह तक पहुँचना चाहता था। ट्रेन से उतर कर उसने नेट पर खोज की। उसे जो वह ढूँढ़ रहा था मिल गया। वास्तव में स्वैसचियन दुर्घटना के समय अपने कम्प्यूटर पर एक मनोवैज्ञानिक गेम खेल रहा था। जिस समय दुर्घटना घटी, कम्प्यूटर ने स्वैसचियन की स्मरणशक्ति को डिस्क में जमा कर लिया था। पर वह कथावाचक के कम्प्यूटर में कैसे आयी? यह समस्या भी तब हल हो गई, जब कथावाचक को पता चला कि अस्पताल से किसी ने स्वैसचियन के खेल चुरा लिये और उन्हें बेच दिया और कथावाचक ने चोरी की हुई गेम खरीदी। एक और संदेश स्वैसचियन को मिला –

"प्रिय माइकल, धन्यवाद! मुझे नहीं मालूम यह कैसे हुआ, परन्तु तुमने मेरी जान बचाई। हमें शीघ्र ही मिलना चाहिए, जय हो! सेब, तुम यह खेल अपने पास ही रखो, तुमने उन्हें मेहनत से कमाया है।"



यह एक सच्चा और सीधा संदेश स्वैसचियन से था। यह स्पष्ट है कि दुर्घटना को दुबारा से जीना एक अनोखा अद्भुत अनुभव था। कोई चमत्कारों के विषय में क्या कह सकता है? पर क्या सत्य है और लगभग सच क्या है कोई भी पूरे विश्वास से नहीं बता सकता है। कथावाचक एक ऐसे अनुभव से गुज़रा जो लगभग सच ही निकला।

### WORD-MEANINGS

**coma** : prolonged deep unconsciousness • **miracle** : remarkable supernatural event • **fantastic** : imaginary, fanciful • **interactive** : act with each

other • **futuristic**: relating to future • **Sheriff** : chief law-enforcing officer • **slammed** : applied • **slumped** : to fall backwards • **massive** : huge • **knight** : honourable military rank • **battlements** : parapets with gaps at the top of the wall • **dungeons** : underground places • **wailed** : noisy sound • **howled**: barked • **tramping** : sound made by first steps • **dodging** : evaded • **pounded** : ran upwards • **vicious** : frightening • **furiously** : nervously • **raked** : filled

## SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

### TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS (SOLVED)

Answer the following questions briefly.

1. (a) *According to the newspaper, what had happened to Sebastian Shultz?*

**Ans** : Sebastian Shultz, a 14-year-old boy, was badly injured in a motorway accident. He had gone into coma and he was taking a lot of time to regain consciousness.

(b) *'Dad's nutty about computers.' What evidence is there to support this statement?*

**Ans** : The narrator's father was most crazy for computer for he bought a lot of such things at the Computer Fair. He bought a Pentium Processor, a Ram, 1.2 GB hard disk and 16 speed CD ROMs, with speakers, printer, modem and a scanner.

(c) *In what way did the second game seem very real?*

**Ans** : The second game was more thrilling called DRAGON QUEST. The narrator felt that he was really walking in the Dragon's castle where they were being pursued by the dragon, the narrator felt it was like a real chase and even felt the dragon's hot breath on his face.

(d) *What was Michael's theory about how Sebastian had entered the games?*

**Ans** : Michael believed that Sebastian had been plugged into the computer when he banged his head in the accident, the computer had saved his memory in its own. These games were stolen from the hospital and Michael had purchased them in the Computer Fair.

(e) *Why did the news of the 'miracle recovery' shock Michael?*

**Ans** : Michael was surprised to read in the newspaper that Sebastian Shultz had awakened from a coma that the doctors had feared might last forever. He was shocked to

see Sebastian's photo also. If Sebastian had been in coma throughout, then how was it possible for him to play computer games with Michael?

(f) *Michael's meeting with Sebastian had been a chance meeting. Where had it taken place and how?*

**Ans** : Michael was playing a game called Wildwest, and he was playing the Sheriff. There was an altercation with Black-eyed Jed and he was going to meet him out of the saloon. Before he could go, he saw another Sheriff, very different from the other computer images. Later he discovered it had been Sebastian Shultz.

(g) *What kind of computers fascinated Michael and his dad? Why?*

**Ans** : Both Michael and his father were obsessed about the latest type of computers, complete with speakers and everything. They liked the latest gizmos that came in the market, specially the latest interactive psycho-drive games.

(h) *Describe the first place where Michael was virtually transported?*

**Ans** : While playing Wildwest, Michael felt that he was not standing in the powerbase but was transported down the dusty track to the centre of town. A Sheriff's badge was pinned to his shirt and he entered a saloon where everyone glared at the narrator. There he had a fizzy drink and he was challenged by Black-Eyed Jed, the fastest gun in the world.

(i) *What help did Sebastian Shultz ask Michael for? How did he convey the message?*

**Ans** : Sebastian Shultz had sent a message through

the printer saying that he is stuck and Michael should try to retrieve him. And that could be done through the game DRAGON QUEST.

(j) *Why did Michael fail in rescuing Sebastian Shultz for the first time?*

**Ans :** Michael had followed Sebastian through the chase and they ended up in the saloon. Then Sebastian dived out and both were sitting on the horseback, chased by men on horseback. Sebastian told Michael to keep his head down but he himself was shot by a bullet and slumped back near him. Before Michael could do anything the game got over.

(k) *The second attempt to rescue Sebastian Shultz too was disastrous. Why?*

**Ans :** The second time Michael was playing DRAGON QUEST and both he and Sebastian were knights trying to save a princess from the dragon's castle. They both had barely got away when they were chased by the dragon himself. They passed secret passages, dungeons but

the dragon obstructed their path and attacked Sebastian. Michael swung his sword but Sebastian was the target of the dragon's fury, so before he could mediate further, the game was over.

(l) *Narrate the incident that injured Sebastian.*

**Ans :** It happened in WARZONE, where both Sebastian and Michael were trying to escape a city which was exploding with machine-guns and bombs. They jumped into a jeep and Michael managed to get into a helicopter but Sebastian couldn't get out of the jeep. The jeep had clashed with a tank and Sebastian landed on the ground injured.

(m) *How was Sebastian Shultz's memory stored on Michael's disk? How did Michael discover it?*

**Ans :** When Sebastian had met with an accident, the computer had saved his memory as its own. Michael discovered later that the games disk had got stolen in the hospital and he had ended up buying those computer games.

## OTHER IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

**1. Michael cannot get over this miracle and his involvement in saving Sebastian's life. The playing of games and effort to help Sebastian has taken a toll on his health and emotions. After a gap of time, Michael writes a letter to his friend, reliving this experience.**

**Ans :** 42, Chelmsford Street  
Chennai  
10, July, 20 XX  
Dear Peter,

I wanted to write earlier but was not in a state of mind to relate a miracle that took place in my life. We have read often of imaginary experiences that obliterate or penetrate reality but you will be surprised to know that I had also got involved in it. Get ready for some shockers! You are also a wizkid at computer games, so brother get ready for some explosive action! Put-on your visor!

One day, while travelling in the train, I read about a 14-year-old boy, Sebastian Shultz, who had been injured in an accident and gone into coma. After looking at the picture, the earth beneath me started shaking. Now hear it out. Sometime back I was playing WILDWEST, donning a Sheriff's badge and getting ready for some gala action with Black-Eyed Jed when another Sheriff entered, looking strangely different and changed the course of the game. He was shot down during a chase in the end. Then the game got over and I was surprised to see a message by

Sebastian that he's stuck and to retrieve him, I must try Dragonquest. In this game also he became the second knight with me and was again attacked by the Dragon. Again a personal message by Sebastian was a frantic call for help, telling me not to give up and try JAILBREAK. I tried again but Sebastian again fell down. I had constantly failed him again and again and felt very depressed. The last call again gave me hope. This time Sebastian suggested that I must try WARZONE and there had to be some kind of accident. A similar thing happened in the game and Sebastian met with an accident. The game had got over and I had scored 40,000,000. Lo! Can you believe it! I had cracked the game. Later I discovered that Sebastian had recovered.

I vowed to solve this mystery. Peter you'd never believe that such things can happen. When Sebastian had an accident he had been plugged into the computer and the computer saved his memory as its own. These games were stored on the disk and got stolen. I bought those games at the Computer Fair. Imagine two boys, so far, came so near, in an unspeakable bond. And to your friend goes the credit of saving Sebastian, though not consciously. Is it reality? Was that a miracle, a fantasy? I don't know but it happened to me.

Do write your reaction.  
Your friend  
Michael

## REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – MCQs

Read the following extract and write the correct option.

1. *“It couldn’t be Sebastian Shultz I’d met. I leant forward to read the rest of the article.”*

- (i) Michel said the because
- (a) the Michael had met a different Sebastian.
  - (b) it was a case of mistaken identity.
  - (c) it was the same Sebastian who had played games with him.
  - (d) the author could not believe that it was the same Sebastian, since the real one had been in coma.

2. *“The second Sheriff groaned and slumped back against me”.*

- (ii) The narrator was shocked because
- (a) The second Sheriff died
  - (b) The second Sheriff fainted
  - (c) The second Sheriff fell down from the horse
  - (d) The game got over so it could not be ascertained what had happened to him

3. *“The aim of the game was simple. I had to rescue the fair princess Aurora from the wicked dragon.”*

- (iii) The game was simple because
- (a) Michael had played it before
  - (b) Michael already had read the instructions
  - (c) Sebastian was the one who had given him all the clues
  - (d) Michael was well prepared for he knew the real objective of the game

4. *BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME. PLEASE DON'T GIVE UP, MICHAEL, OTHERWISE I'LL HAVE TO STAY IN HERE FOREVER.*

(iv) This means that

- (a) Sebastian would have to remain in hospital
- (b) Sebastian will only remain a computer image
- (c) Sebastian would remain in a coma only
- (d) Sebastian will never learn to play computer games

5. *“I felt really bad. I’d failed Sebastian, I’d failed the game.”*

- (v) Michael felt bad because
- (a) Michael had blundered in forgetting some key factors while playing the game
  - (b) Michael had failed Sebastian as he had made half hearted efforts
  - (c) The game used to get over before Michael could help Sebastian
  - (d) Michael didn’t know that Sebastian was a real boy, that time

6. *“I found what I was looking for quickly enough. Apparently, at the time of the accident, Sebastian was using his lap-top to one of the psycho-drive games that I’ve got.”*

- (vi) Michael could help Sebastian because
- (a) Sebastian had stolen Michael’s games
  - (b) Sebastian could play any psycho-drive game from far with remote control.
  - (c) Sebastian was playing those games and later they were bought by Michael at a Computer Fair.
  - (d) Sebastian was only a computer image so he could play games any time.

Answers : (i) (d)            (ii) (c)            (iii) (d)  
(iv) (c)            (v) (c)            (vi) (c)

## PARAGRAPH BASED NON-MCQs

Read the following extracts and answer the questions given thereafter.

1. *“The doctors were doing all they could, but in our hearts we knew we needed a miracle”.*

[C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

(a) **Who made the above remark?**

Ans : Mrs. Shultz, Sebastian’s mother, made the above remark.

(b) **Discuss the context of the remark?**

Ans : Sebastian had gone into a coma and he was not recovering.

(c) **What kind of miracle was required and for whom?**

Ans : Sebastian could only be cured by a miracle.

(d) **What was surprising about the miracle to Michael?**

Ans : Michael was surprised to see the photo because he knew Sebastian and was surprised to know about the accident.

2. *“With the help of the skeleton swipe-card we were soon out of the cell and racing down corridors.”*

(a) **Who are the participants and what is the game?**

**Ans :** This game was called JAILBREAK and it was played by Michael and Sebastian.

(b) **Why is Michael playing this game?**

**Ans :** Michael is playing this to rescue Sebastian.

(c) **Why had Sebastian urged Michael to play this game?**

**Ans :** In the earlier game Michael had not been successful in rescuing Sebastian so he had asked him to play this game.

(d) **Did Michael succeed in his efforts? Why/Why not?**

**Ans :** No, in this game also he had fallen down on the concrete, when dogs had charged towards them.

3. *“There’s got to be some kind of accident... go into WARZONE. If this doesn’t work I won’t bother you again.”*

(a) **Who has sent the above message and to whom?**

**Ans :** This frantic message was sent by Sebastian to Michael.

(b) **What is the objective behind this message?**

**Ans :** In every game Michael had failed to save Sebastian. So this was to be the last game.

(c) **What are the fears and apprehensions faced by the sender?**

**Ans :** If WARZONE does not work, then Sebastian would never trouble Michael again.

(d) **What kind of help does the sender seek? Why?**

**Ans :** There had to be some kind of accident only then he would be saved.

4. *“At least, that was what I thought then. Now I knew that Sebastian Shultz, the boy in the game, really did exist.”*

(a) **How did the speaker know that Sebastian Shultz existed?**

**Ans :** Michael had seen the proof in the newspaper by seeing Sebastian’s photo that he did exist.

(b) **What had been the source of his information?**

**Ans :** The article and Sebastian’s photo in the newspaper.

(c) **How did this information help the narrator in solving the mystery?**

**Ans :** Michael also checked the net and discovered that real Sebastian did exist.

(d) **Sebastian exists in the game and in real life?**

**Ans :** At the time of his accident, Sebastian was playing those psycho-drive games and the computer saved his memory as its own. When Michael played those games, Sebastian was at the other end.

## SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. **How did Michael notice the story of Sebastian Shultz?**

**Ans :** Sitting in the train, Michael saw a big lady, reading a newspaper. There was a story with a title ‘Miracle Recovery’. It was written that Sebastian Shultz, a 14-year-old boy from London, had been badly injured in a motor accident and had gone into a coma. His mother hoped that one day her son would be well and only a miracle could save him.

2. **While playing Wildwest, Michael found himself in a particular role. What was it and how did he behave in the game?**

**Ans :** To his surprise, Michael was playing the role of a Sheriff and he burst into a saloon. Everyone was surprised by his entry. He had some fizzy kind of drink when a black-eyed Jed, the fastest gun, called him out of the saloon. As he was going, a second Sheriff appeared and he did not look like other characters. His movement was also not like a computer image. His entry made the game more complicated.

3. **Who was Black-Eyed Jed and what did he convey to the Sheriff?**

**Ans :** Michael was the Sheriff in the game ‘WILDWEST’. When he was enjoying a drink in the saloon, he was challenged by a Black-eyed Jed the fastest gun in the west. He wanted to confront the Sheriff. So he was called out of the saloon.

4. **What was the objective of the second game called Dragon quest? In what role did Sebastian appear in it?**

**Ans :** The aim of the game DRAGON QUEST was simple. It was to rescue fair princess Aurora from the wicked dragon and to collect the wicked dragon’s treasure. Sebastian appeared in the form of a knight and even Michael was also supposed to be a knight.

5. **How did the two knights try to escape from the castle of the dragon? Were they successful?**

**Ans :** Both the knights were chased by the wicked dragon. They ran across the battlements down a spiral

staircase and through a secret passage on the other side of the tapestry. The dragon was near them and they could feel his fiery breath. Both of them, then decided to try going through the dungeons which was their only hope.

**6. Point out the desperation in Sebastian's message to Michael. What did he tell Michael to do?**

**Ans :** When Michael was unable to save Sebastian in the earlier two games, Sebastian's message becomes desperate. He earnestly requests Michael not to give up, otherwise he would remain stuck up wherever he was. So he wishes him luck and tells him to try the game 'JAILBREAK'.

**7. How did Michael and Sebastian escape from Jail in Jailbreak? Why was Sebastian injured in this escape?**

**Ans :** Sebastian was Michael's cell-mate in the game 'JAILBREAK'. They use a skeleton swipe card to open the cell-door and run away. Sirens wail, guards run after them, fiery dogs howl and chase them. Both of them run upstairs but they are chased. Before Michael can do something, Sebastian falls down on the concrete below.

**8. How did Michael connect Sebastian's recovery from coma with the result of his last game?**

**Ans :** Apparently, at the time of an accident, Sebastian was using his laptop to play one of the psycho-drive games. He had been plugged into the computer and when he banged his head, the computer saved his memory as its own. Those

games were stolen when Sebastian was in the hospital. These games were sold in the market and Michael bought them from a Computer Fair.

**9. What were the contents of Sebastian's last message? Why did Sebastian thank Michael?**

**Ans :** The last message was full of heart felt emotions. Sebastian thanked Michael for saving his life and working so hard in every game to rescue him. Sebastian extends an invitation to meet him and wishes him well. He also tells Michael to keep these psycho-drive games as he deserves to keep them.

**10. Who was Sebastian Shultz? How did he meet with an accident? [C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]**

**Ans :** Sebastian Shultz was a fourteen years old from London. He met with an accident in a motorway and had gone into a coma. At the time of accident Sebastian was playing psycho-drive games.

**11. In the second game 'Dragon Quest' Michael came to rescue Princess Aurora? Who cried out that he needed rescuing first and why?**

**Ans :** In the second game, Dragon Quest, Michael was supposed to rescue Princess Aurora from the wicked dragon and also to collect dragon's treasure on the way. He was on the verge of saving the princess, when he heard a voice asking to be saved first. It was Sebastian who was in the form of second knight.

## LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. Sebastian Shultz writes his diary on his miraculous escape from going into oblivion—as doctors call it coma. Write this for him.**

**Ans :** Dear Diary,

Sometimes life takes a strange turn and things that you had heard or read about become true. Virtual lives and realities take concrete shape. I just remember that I was crazy for those psycho-drive games and loved playing WARZONE, DRAGON QUEST etc. My last memory is when my head banged in the accident. After that I have no memory but a very distinct feeling of playing some games. I have read my report in the newspaper, how I had gone into a coma. It can only be called a miracle that I was playing games with another boy called Michael, which I discovered later strange! So very strange.

Sebastian.

**2. Write a brief character sketch of Michael, giving his outstanding qualities that led him to save Sebastian's life.**

**Ans :** Michael was of Sebastian's age and he loved adventure, war, pursuits, fights, confrontation and violent

games. Like other children of his age he was a computer freak and was really fascinated by psycho-drive games that make one forget the reality and one plays character like a Sheriff, a prisoner, knight etc. Michael is also very kind-hearted and tried his best to rescue Sebastian. He was intelligent enough to understand the objective of each game. By strange luck he got connected to Sebastian, whom he had never seen but proved his perseverance and determination in rescuing him from his coma. Michael is a young child but mature beyond his years.

**3. Sebastian sends an e-mail to Michael on his recovery thanking him for all that he had done. Complete it for him.**

**Ans :** Date : 15 Sept, 2010

From : sebastian@hotmail.com

To : michael@gmail.com

Subject : Thank you note

Dear Michael,

I cannot thank you enough for being the miracle

to save my life. Your perseverance, tenacity and determination prove that you are extraordinary. No wonder you saved my life and now I have fully recovered from my coma. I hope to meet you soon.

Lots of love.  
Sebastian

**4. How did Sebastian’s memory stored on disk end up on Michael’s Computer? How had Sebastian Shultz enter the game? [C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]**

**Ans :** Sebastian Sultz, a 14 years old boy from London, met with an accident and went into a coma and the doctors feared that his coma would last forever. Apparently, at the

time of accident, Sebastian was using his laptop to play one of the psycho drive games. He had been plugged into the computer, and when he banged his head, the computer saved his memory as its own. Those games were stolen when Sebastian was in the hospital.

After these games were sold in the market, Michael, who was a computer freak and was really fascinated by psycho-drive games, bought them from a computer fair.

Michael was intelligent enough to understand the objective of each game. By strange luck he got connected to Sebastian, whom he had never seen but proved his perservance and determination in rescuing him from his coma.

## FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

### Generation Netsters

#### Virtual lives is their real world

Children are often happier with their online lives than they are with reality, a survey has revealed. They say they can be exactly who they want to be – and as soon as something is no longer fun they can simply hit the quit button. Researchers for children’s charity Kidscape assessed the online activities of 2,300 11- to 18-years-olds from across the UK and found that 45 per cent said they were sometimes happier online than in their real lives.

The report – Virtual Lives : It is more than a game, it is your life – lays bare the attitudes of children today to the internet and includes revealing insights into how they feel when they are on the web.

One researcher told “It’s easier to be who you want to be, because nobody knows you and if you don’t like the situation you can just exit and it is over.”

Another said : “You can say anything online. You can talk to people that you don’t normally speak to and you can edit your pictures so you look better. It is as if you are a completely different person.” Psychotherapist Peter Bradley, who is also deputy director of Kidscape, said that the desire for so many to adopt a different identity online was a cause for concern because the children were being divorced from reality. He added : ‘These findings suggest that children see cyberspace as detachable from the real world and a place where they explore parts of their behaviour and personality that they possibly would not show in real life. We can’t allow cyberworlds to be happier places than our real communities, otherwise we are creating a generation of young people not functioning adequately in our society.’

**SURVEY REPORT :** *One in eight young people is in contact with strangers when on the web and often lies about their appearance, age and background.*

*Around 47 per cent of children said they behaved differently online than they did in their normal lives.*

*Around 10 per cent said they changed aspects of their appearance and their personality for their online activity.*



*(Source : Times of India)*

**1. Read the article given above and answer the questions that follow.**

- (a) Why are children happier working online?
- (b) What freedom does Internet offer to children?
- (c) How can children appear to be completely different on Internet?

**(d) How can Internet lead to malfunctioning in youngsters?**

**(e) List out the disadvantages of leading virtual lives.**

**2. Describe your favourite computer game in detail.**

- ı Compare it with the choice of your friends.
- ı Discuss.