NCERT Solutions

Class 10 English

First Flight & Footprints Without Feet

Notes, Solved MCQs and Important Questions

English Language and Literature (Code 184) | CBSE Class 10

Based on the 2026-27 rationalised NCERT syllabus

What this book contains: Short notes, theme and summary for all 28 units of First Flight (9 prose lessons and 10 poems) and Footprints Without Feet (9 stories), with **140 solved MCQs**, **70 short questions** and **28 long questions**, all with answers in our own words.

These are original study notes and practice questions written for revision. They are NOT official NCERT solutions and they do not reproduce any textbook text. Every summary and answer is written in our own words. Chapter titles follow the rationalised 2026-27 NCERT books; please check them against your issued book and follow your teacher's guidance if any title differs.

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Contents

How to Use This Book

Paper Pattern - English Language and Literature (Code 184)

First Flight - Prose

1. A Letter to God - G. L. Fuentes
2. Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom - Nelson Mandela
3. Two Stories about Flying - Liam O'Flaherty and Frederick Forsyth
4. From the Diary of Anne Frank - Anne Frank
5. Glimpses of India - Lucio Rodrigues, Lokesh Abrol and Arup Kumar Dutta
6. Mijbil the Otter - Gavin Maxwell
7. Madam Rides the Bus - Vallikkannan
8. The Sermon at Benares - Betty Renshaw
9. The Proposal - Anton Chekhov

First Flight - Poetry

1. Dust of Snow - Robert Frost
2. Fire and Ice - Robert Frost
3. A Tiger in the Zoo - Leslie Norris
4. How to Tell Wild Animals - Carolyn Wells
5. The Ball Poem - John Berryman
6. Amanda! - Robin Klein
7. The Trees - Adrienne Rich
8. Fog - Carl Sandburg
9. The Tale of Custard the Dragon - Ogden Nash
10. For Anne Gregory - W. B. Yeats

Footprints Without Feet

1. A Triumph of Surgery - James Herriot
2. The Thief's Story - Ruskin Bond
3. The Midnight Visitor - Robert Arthur
4. A Question of Trust - Victor Canning
5. Footprints without Feet - H. G. Wells
6. The Making of a Scientist - Robert W. Peterson
7. The Necklace - Guy de Maupassant
8. Bholi - K. A. Abbas
9. The Book That Saved the Earth - Claire Boiko

How to Use This Book

1. Read the short notes of one unit first, then close the book and recall the summary in your own words.

2. Attempt the 5 MCQs of the unit without looking at the key. Check the key only after you finish.

3. Write the short answers in your own words. In the examination, answers in your own words score better than memorised lines.

4. Practise one long answer per unit in writing, within a time limit, before the examination.

5. Revise the key points of every unit in the last week. Short, regular revision beats one long night of cramming.

Paper Pattern

Theory paper	80 marks
Internal assessment	20 marks
Total	100 marks
Time allowed	3 hours
Passing standard	33% in the theory paper and 33% in internal assessment, separately

Some guidebooks report the 80 theory marks as Reading Skills 20, Writing Skills and Grammar 20, and Language through Literature 40. That split is reported by third-party guides only and has not been confirmed here from the official CBSE curriculum document. Confirm it from the official CBSE curriculum for your session. No exam date is given in this book, because CBSE holds the board examination twice a year and the dates are announced officially.

First Flight - Prose

NCERT Solutions Class 10 English

Unit 1 - A Letter to God

By G. L. Fuentes

Theme: *Faith in God, hope in hardship, and the irony of human goodness.*

Summary

Lencho is a poor farmer whose whole living depends on his field of ripe corn. He needs a good rain for a good harvest, and when the rain comes he is glad at first. But the rain turns into a hailstorm and destroys his crop completely. Lencho has strong faith in God, so he writes a letter to God asking for one hundred pesos to sow his field again and to feed his family until the next crop. The postman laughs at the letter, but the postmaster is moved by Lencho's faith. He collects money from his employees and friends and sends seventy pesos to Lencho in an envelope signed 'God'. When Lencho counts the money, he is angry because it is less than he asked for. He writes a second letter to God, asking for the remaining thirty pesos, and says that God should not send the money through the post office because its employees are a bunch of crooks.

Key Points

- Lencho is a simple, hard-working farmer who trusts God completely.
- The hailstorm destroys the crop and leaves the family with nothing to eat.
- Lencho's letter to God shows his innocent and unshaken faith.
- The postmaster and his staff help Lencho with seventy pesos.
- The ending is ironic: Lencho blames the very people who helped him.

Solved MCQs

Q1. What did Lencho ask God for in his first letter?

A) Seventy pesos
B) One hundred pesos
C) A new field
D) A bag of seeds

Q2. What destroyed Lencho's crop?

A) A flood
B) A drought
C) A hailstorm
D) A fire

Q3. Who collected money to help Lencho?

A) The postman alone
B) The postmaster and his employees
C) Lencho's neighbours
D) The village head

Q4. How much money did Lencho receive in the envelope?

A) One hundred pesos
B) Thirty pesos

C) Seventy pesos

D) Fifty pesos

Q5. In his second letter, what did Lencho call the post office employees?

A) Kind helpers

B) A bunch of crooks

C) Good friends

D) Honest workers

Answer Key: 1-B, 2-C, 3-B, 4-C, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why did Lencho write a letter to God?

Answer: Lencho's crop was destroyed by a hailstorm and he had no money left to sow his field again or to feed his family. He had complete faith that God would help him, so he wrote a letter asking God for one hundred pesos.

Q2. Why did the postmaster decide to help Lencho?

Answer: The postmaster was moved by Lencho's simple and unshaken faith in God. He did not want such faith to be shaken, so he collected money from his employees and friends and sent seventy pesos to Lencho.

Q3. What is ironic about the ending of the story?

Answer: The ending is ironic because Lencho blames the post office employees for stealing thirty pesos, when they were the very people who had collected money out of kindness to help him. His faith in God remains, but he misunderstands human goodness.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Lencho's faith is the central idea of the story. Explain with examples.

Answer: Lencho's faith in God is complete and unquestioning, and it drives the whole story. When the hailstorm destroys his crop, he does not lose hope or blame anyone; he turns at once to God and writes a letter asking for one hundred pesos, as simply as a child asking a father. He is so sure that God will answer that he writes the address as 'To God' and drops the letter in the post box. Even when he receives only seventy pesos, his faith does not shake. He believes God must have sent the full amount and that the post office employees kept the rest. This shows both the strength and the simplicity of his faith: it gives him courage in disaster, but it also makes him unable to see the kindness of the people around him. The story thus presents faith as a source of hope, while gently showing its blind side.

Unit 2 - Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom

By Nelson Mandela

Theme: *Freedom, equality, courage, and the end of apartheid in South Africa.*

Summary

This chapter is taken from the autobiography of Nelson Mandela and describes the day of his inauguration as the first democratic President of South Africa, on 10 May 1994. Mandela speaks of the end of apartheid, the system of racial separation that had ruled South Africa for decades. He remembers the sacrifices of the people who fought for freedom and says that the new South Africa must be built on equality and dignity for all. Mandela explains that freedom is not only the absence of chains; it also means living in a way that respects the freedom of others. He speaks of two kinds of obligations: one towards family and one towards the people and country. He says that a man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred himself. True courage, he says, is not the absence of fear but the victory over fear. The chapter ends with the hope that the new nation will be free and just.

Key Points

- Mandela became the first democratically elected President of South Africa in 1994.
- Apartheid was a system of racial discrimination that denied freedom to black South Africans.
- Freedom means respecting the freedom of others, not only being free oneself.
- Mandela speaks of twin obligations: to family and to people and country.
- Courage is not the absence of fear; it is the victory over fear.

Solved MCQs

Q1. When was Nelson Mandela sworn in as President of South Africa?

A) 10 May 1994
B) 10 May 1990
C) 18 July 1994
D) 10 May 1999

Q2. What was apartheid?

A) A system of free trade
B) A system of racial separation and discrimination
C) A kind of election
D) A freedom movement

Q3. According to Mandela, what are the twin obligations of a man?

A) To work and to rest
B) To family and to people and country
C) To friends and to enemies
D) To rich and to poor

Q4. What does Mandela say about courage?

A) Courage means having no fear

B) Courage is the victory over fear

C) Courage is fighting alone

D) Courage means never crying

Q5. What does Mandela say about a man who takes away another man's freedom?

A) He is a strong leader

B) He is a prisoner of hatred

C) He is a true patriot

D) He is above the law

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. What did Mandela mean by saying that freedom is indivisible?

Answer: Mandela meant that freedom cannot be divided: no one can be truly free while others are oppressed. The oppressor is also not free, because he is a prisoner of hatred and prejudice. Real freedom exists only when everyone is free.

Q2. What were the twin obligations that Mandela talks about?

Answer: Mandela says every man has two obligations: one towards his family, parents, wife and children, and another towards his people, his community and his country. In a civil and humane society, a person should be able to fulfil both.

Q3. Why does Mandela say the oppressor must be liberated too?

Answer: Mandela says the oppressor is a prisoner of hatred and narrow-mindedness, just as the oppressed is a prisoner of chains. Both need freedom: the oppressed from bondage, and the oppressor from hatred and prejudice. Only then can society be truly free.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. What is Mandela's idea of freedom? How does he connect it with courage and the duties of a citizen?

Answer: Mandela's idea of freedom is wide and moral. He says freedom is not only the removal of chains; it is living in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others. A free person cannot take away another person's freedom, because that would make him a prisoner of hatred. This is why he says the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. He connects freedom with duty through the idea of twin obligations: a man owes duties to his family and to his people and country, and a just society must let him fulfil both. He also connects freedom with courage, saying that brave men are not those who feel no fear but those who conquer fear. Mandela's own life shows this: he was afraid many times, but he kept working for freedom. So freedom, for him, is a responsibility as much as a right.

Unit 3 - Two Stories about Flying

By Liam O'Flaherty and Frederick Forsyth

Theme: *Overcoming fear, self-belief, and the mystery of help in danger.*

Summary

This lesson has two stories about flying. In the first story, a young seagull is afraid to fly. His brothers and sister have already learnt, but he is sure his wings will not support him. His parents try to encourage him, then leave him alone on the ledge without food. When he is very hungry, his mother flies towards him with a piece of fish. Maddened by hunger, he dives at the fish, falls through the air, and discovers that his wings work. He learns to fly, to float on the wind, and to land on the sea with his family. In the second story, a pilot is flying a Dakota aeroplane from Paris to England at night. He meets a huge storm and loses all his instruments and radio contact. A mysterious black aeroplane appears and guides him safely to the runway. After landing, the pilot asks the control room about the other pilot, but he is told that no other aeroplane was flying that night. The identity of the helper remains a mystery.

Key Points

- The young seagull is afraid to fly because he doubts his own wings.
- Hunger and his mother's trick push him to take the first leap.
- Once he flies, he learns to soar, dive and land on the sea.
- The pilot of the Dakota faces a violent storm with no working instruments.
- A strange black aeroplane guides him to safety and then disappears.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Why was the young seagull afraid to fly?

A) He had a broken wing
B) He thought his wings would not support him
C) He was too young to leave the nest
D) His parents forbade him

Q2. What made the young seagull finally dive into the air?

A) A strong wind
B) His mother's call
C) Hunger and the sight of food in his mother's beak
D) A push from his brother

Q3. Which aeroplane was the pilot flying in the second story?

A) A Dakota
B) A Boeing
C) A helicopter
D) A glider

Q4. What guided the pilot through the storm?

A) A lighthouse

B) A black aeroplane

C) The radio tower

D) The moonlight

Q5. What did the control room say after the pilot landed?

A) Another pilot had helped him

B) No other aeroplane was flying that night

C) The storm had passed

D) His radio was repaired

Answer Key: 1-B, 2-C, 3-A, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. How did the young seagull's mother help him to fly?

Answer: His mother first tried to encourage him, then left him hungry on the ledge. When he was weak with hunger, she flew towards him with a piece of fish in her beak. He dived at the food in desperation and fell through the air, but his wings opened and he found he could fly.

Q2. Why was the pilot unable to turn back to Paris during the storm?

Answer: The pilot was in the middle of a huge storm with no working compass or radio. He had very little fuel left, so he could not return to Paris. His only hope was to fly straight ahead and try to reach England.

Q3. What mystery remains at the end of the second story?

Answer: After landing safely, the pilot asks about the pilot of the black aeroplane that guided him, but the control room says no other aeroplane was flying that night. The reader never learns who the helper was or how he appeared and disappeared.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Fear holds the young seagull back, but need and encouragement set him free. Discuss.

Answer: The young seagull is not weak; he is afraid. He has watched his brothers and sister fly, and he knows in his heart that he can do it, but the fear of falling stops him. His parents try scolding, encouragement and even leaving him alone, but nothing works until hunger becomes stronger than fear. When his mother brings food within reach, his need takes over and he dives. In that moment he discovers what he could not learn by thinking: his wings work, the wind supports him, and flying is natural. The story shows that fear grows when we only imagine failure, and it breaks when we are forced to act. Encouragement matters, but the final step must be taken by the learner himself. Once the first leap is made, confidence follows quickly, and the seagull soon flies, dives and lands with his family. The lesson applies far beyond flying: many abilities appear only after we try.

Unit 4 - From the Diary of Anne Frank

By Anne Frank

Theme: *A young girl's voice in wartime, friendship, and the power of writing.*

Summary

Anne Frank was a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl living in Amsterdam during the Second World War. In June 1942 she received a diary as a birthday gift and began to write in it, treating it as a close friend whom she called Kitty. Her family had to go into hiding to escape the Nazis, and Anne wrote about her life in hiding, her thoughts and her feelings. The chapter includes two entries from her diary. In the first, she writes about her teacher Mr Keesing, who punished her for talking too much in class by giving her an essay on the subject 'A Chatterbox'. Anne wrote the essay in a clever and funny way, and Mr Keesing laughed and gave her more essays. In the end he accepted her humour and stopped punishing her. The chapter shows Anne as a bright, honest and humorous girl who used writing to understand herself and the world around her.

Key Points

- Anne Frank received a diary on her thirteenth birthday in June 1942.
- She treated her diary as a friend and named it Kitty.
- Her family was Jewish and went into hiding during the Nazi occupation.
- Mr Keesing punished her for talking by giving her essays to write.
- Anne answered with wit and humour, and the teacher accepted her spirit.

Solved MCQs

Q1. What did Anne Frank call her diary?

A) Dear Friend
B) Kitty
C) Chatterbox
D) Secret Book

Q2. Why did Anne begin writing a diary?

A) Her teacher asked her to
B) She had no friend to share her feelings with
C) She wanted to become famous
D) Her mother told her to

Q3. Who was Mr Keesing?

A) Anne's father
B) Anne's maths teacher
C) A neighbour
D) A doctor

Q4. What was the subject of the first essay Mr Keesing gave Anne?

A) A Chatterbox
B) My Diary

C) The War

D) Silence

Q5. How did Anne deal with the punishment?

A) She refused to write

B) She wrote with wit and humour

C) She complained to her parents

D) She stopped talking completely

Answer Key: 1-B, 2-B, 3-B, 4-A, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why did Anne feel she needed a diary?

Answer: Anne felt lonely because she had no true friend with whom she could share her deepest feelings. She believed that paper has more patience than people, so she decided to make her diary her friend and write everything in it honestly.

Q2. How did Anne's essays change Mr Keesing's attitude?

Answer: Anne wrote the essays with wit and humour instead of complaining. Mr Keesing laughed at her clever arguments and gave her more topics, but in the end he was won over by her spirit and stopped punishing her for talking.

Q3. What does the chapter show about Anne's character?

Answer: The chapter shows Anne as intelligent, honest, humorous and brave. Even in a frightening time, she observes people sharply, laughs at herself, and uses writing to think clearly about her life.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Anne's diary is more than a record of events; it is the voice of a young girl thinking aloud. Explain.

Answer: Anne's diary matters not because of what happened to her alone, but because of how she thought about it. She writes about small daily things, her teacher, her classmates and her own habit of talking, yet through these small things we see a mind that is honest, curious and unafraid to question itself. When Mr Keesing punishes her, she does not complain or become bitter; she answers with humour and turns the punishment into a piece of writing. Her diary also shows why writing matters: Anne had no friend she trusted fully, so paper became the friend who listened without judging. In hiding, during a war, her diary kept her thoughts alive. That is why the diary has become one of the most read books in the world: it proves that a young girl's private thoughts can speak to everyone about courage, hope and the need to be heard.

Unit 5 - Glimpses of India

By Lucio Rodrigues, Lokesh Abrol and Arup Kumar Dutta

Theme: *The food, land and traditions of Goa, Coorg and Assam.*

Summary

This lesson has three short pieces about three different parts of India. The first, about Goa, describes the traditional bakers of Goa, called paders. The sound of the baker's bamboo announced his arrival in the morning, and children ran to buy bread-bangles. Bread was a part of every Goan occasion: sweet bread for a daughter's engagement, sandwiches for a wedding, and a special bread for Christmas. The second piece, about Coorg, describes the small district of Kodagu in Karnataka. Coorg is famous for coffee, spices and rain. Its people are brave and proud, and many have served in the army. The Brahmagiri hills, the river Kaveri and the evergreen forests make it a beautiful place. The third piece, about Assam, tells how two boys, Rajvir and Pranjol, travel to a tea garden at Dhekiabari. Rajvir has read a lot about tea and tells the old legends of how tea was discovered, while Pranjol was born on a tea estate and takes tea for granted. The piece describes tea gardens, tea plucking and the long history of tea drinking.

Key Points

- Goa's traditional bakers are called paders; their bamboo sound woke the village.
- Bread was part of every Goan celebration, from engagements to Christmas.
- Coorg (Kodagu) is known for coffee, spices, rain and brave people.
- The river Kaveri rises in the Brahmagiri hills of Coorg.
- Assam's tea gardens are described through Rajvir's stories and legends of tea.

Solved MCQs

Q1. What are the traditional bakers of Goa called?

A) Paders
B) Bakers
C) Bakers-wallahs
D) Breadmen

Q2. What announced the baker's arrival in Goa?

A) A bell
B) The sound of his bamboo
C) A horn
D) A drum

Q3. Coorg is the smallest district of which state?

A) Kerala
B) Tamil Nadu
C) Karnataka
D) Andhra Pradesh

Q4. Which river begins in the Brahmagiri hills of Coorg?

A) The Ganga
B) The Kaveri
C) The Brahmaputra
D) The Narmada

Q5. Who tells the legends about the discovery of tea in Assam?

A) Pranjol
B) Rajvir
C) Mr Barua
D) The tea pluckers

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-C, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why was bread so important in Goan life?

Answer: Bread was part of every important occasion in Goa. Sweet bread was made for a daughter's engagement, sandwiches were served at weddings, and a special bread was baked for Christmas. The baker's daily visit was a familiar and loved part of village life.

Q2. What is Coorg famous for?

Answer: Coorg is famous for its coffee plantations, spices and heavy rain. It is also known for its brave people, many of whom have served in the Indian army. Its hills, forests and the river Kaveri make it one of the most beautiful districts of Karnataka.

Q3. Why was Rajvir excited about the tea gardens while Pranjol was not?

Answer: Rajvir had read a lot about tea and its legends, so he was eager to see a real tea garden for the first time. Pranjol had been born and brought up on a tea estate, so tea gardens were an everyday sight for him and he took them for granted.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. 'Glimpses of India' shows three different Indias in one lesson. How do the three pieces differ in what they celebrate?

Answer: The three pieces celebrate three different kinds of Indian life. The Goa piece celebrates food and tradition: the baker's daily round, the bread of festivals and weddings, and a way of life that has survived Portuguese rule and modern change. The Coorg piece celebrates land and people: coffee estates, rain-soaked hills, the river Kaveri, and a community proud of its bravery and army service. The Assam piece celebrates a crop and its history: endless tea gardens, women plucking leaves, and old legends about how tea was discovered in China and India. Together they show that India is not one place but many places, each with its own food, landscape and stories. The lesson teaches the reader to notice these differences with interest and respect.

Unit 6 - Mijbil the Otter

By Gavin Maxwell

Theme: *The bond between a human and a wild animal, and learning to live with nature.*

Summary

Gavin Maxwell, a writer and naturalist, kept an otter as a pet after the death of his dog. He got the otter from the marshes of Iraq, near the river Tigris, and named him Mijbil. At first Mijbil was nervous and shy, but soon he became playful and friendly. He loved water and would play in the bathtub for hours, plunging and rolling and making the water splash. He also played with toys, marbles and ping-pong balls, and he learnt to open taps and follow Maxwell everywhere. When Maxwell had to fly back to London, Mijbil travelled in a box on the aeroplane. He escaped during the flight and caused a panic among the passengers, but Maxwell got him back safely. In London, Mijbil became a familiar sight: people on the street stopped to watch him, and children asked what animal he was. The chapter is a warm and humorous account of how a wild animal can become a companion.

Key Points

- Maxwell got the otter from the marshes of Iraq, near the river Tigris.
- He named the otter Mijbil, short for Maxwell's Mijbil.
- Mijbil loved water and played in the bathtub for hours.
- He learnt to play with marbles, toys and ping-pong balls.
- On the flight to London, Mijbil escaped from his box and caused a panic.

Solved MCQs

Q1. From where did Maxwell get the otter?

A) The river Ganga
B) The marshes of Iraq near the Tigris
C) A zoo in London
D) The forests of Scotland

Q2. What did Maxwell name the otter?

A) Mijbil
B) Max
C) Mij
D) Otter

Q3. What did Mijbil love to do most?

A) Climb trees
B) Play in water
C) Sleep all day
D) Chase birds

Q4. What happened to Mijbil during the flight to London?

A) He slept peacefully
B) He escaped from his box and caused a panic

C) He was lost

D) He refused to eat

Q5. What did Londoners think Mijbil was?

A) A dog

B) A baby seal, a walrus or a beaver

C) A cat

D) A monkey

Answer Key: 1-B, 2-A, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. How did Mijbil behave when he first arrived?

Answer: At first Mijbil was aloof and indifferent. He slept far from Maxwell and showed no interest in his new home. Within a day he began to explore, and soon he became playful and attached to Maxwell.

Q2. Why did Mijbil love the bathtub?

Answer: Mijbil was a water animal by nature. In the bathtub he would plunge, roll and splash for hours, and he would even turn the tap on himself. Water play was his greatest joy and his natural way of life.

Q3. How did people in London react to Mijbil?

Answer: People in London had never seen an otter as a pet. They stopped to stare, guessed wrongly that he was a baby seal or a beaver, and children gathered around him. Mijbil became a familiar and amusing sight on the streets.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Keeping a wild animal as a pet changed Maxwell's daily life. Describe how Mijbil became a companion.

Answer: Mijbil entered Maxwell's life after the death of his dog, and at first he seemed a poor substitute: aloof, shy and indifferent. But the otter's nature soon won Maxwell over. Mijbil's love of water filled the house with play: he spent hours in the bathtub, learnt to turn taps, and invented games with marbles and ping-pong balls. He followed Maxwell everywhere and even learnt to lie on his back and juggle small objects. The journey to London tested the bond: Mijbil escaped on the aeroplane and caused alarm among the passengers, yet Maxwell's calm handling brought him back. In London the otter became part of Maxwell's public life, drawing crowds and questions wherever he went. The chapter shows that a bond with a wild animal is not like owning a dog; it needs patience, understanding of the animal's nature, and respect for its freedom. Maxwell gives all three, and Mijbil rewards him with trust and play.

Unit 7 - Madam Rides the Bus

By Vallikkannan

Theme: *A child's curiosity, independence, and first meeting with death.*

Summary

Valli is an eight-year-old girl who lives near a bus stop. She watches the bus pass every day and longs to ride in it. She saves her money carefully until she has sixty paise, the fare for a return journey to the town. One afternoon, when her mother is asleep, Valli takes the bus alone. The conductor calls her 'madam' in fun, and she enjoys the ride very much: she looks out of the window at the fields, the trees and the canal. In the town she does not get down; she only wants the ride itself. On the way back she sees a dead cow on the road, the same cow she had seen alive and happy on her way to town. The sight upsets her deeply, and for the first time she understands that living things die. When she reaches home, her mother and aunt talk about her as if she knows nothing, but Valli smiles to herself, knowing she has had a great adventure all alone.

Key Points

- Valli is eight years old and dreams of riding the bus to the town.
- She saves sixty paise for the return fare, thirty paise each way.
- The conductor jokes and calls her 'madam', and she enjoys the title.
- She refuses to get down in the town; the ride itself is her joy.
- Seeing the dead cow teaches her that death is a part of life.

Solved MCQs

Q1. How old was Valli?

A) Six years
B) Eight years
C) Ten years
D) Twelve years

Q2. How much was the bus fare for a return journey?

A) Thirty paise
B) Sixty paise
C) One rupee
D) Fifty paise

Q3. What did the conductor call Valli?

A) Little girl
B) Madam
C) Child
D) Passenger

Q4. Why did Valli not get down at the town?

A) She was afraid
B) She had no money left

C) She only wanted the bus ride itself

D) The bus did not stop

Q5. What saddened Valli on her way back?

A) The bus broke down

B) She lost her money

C) She saw the dead cow on the road

D) It began to rain

Answer Key: 1-B, 2-B, 3-B, 4-C, 5-C

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. How did Valli save money for the bus ride?

Answer: Valli saved every coin she could. She resisted the temptation to buy peppermints, toys, balloons and rides at the fair, and slowly collected sixty paise, which was exactly the fare for a return journey to the town.

Q2. Why did Valli refuse the conductor's offer of a cold drink?

Answer: Valli was proud and self-respecting. She did not want to accept a favour from a stranger, and she wanted to prove that she could manage her journey on her own. She told the conductor firmly that she had her own money.

Q3. What did the dead cow teach Valli?

Answer: On her way to town Valli had seen the cow alive and happy. On the way back the same cow lay dead on the road. For the first time she felt the sadness of death and understood that living beings die, a thought that stayed with her long after the ride.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Valli's bus ride is a small journey that teaches her a big truth. Explain.

Answer: Valli's ride looks like a child's adventure, but it is really her first step into the wider world. She plans it herself, saves the money herself, and takes the bus alone, showing independence and courage beyond her eight years. The ride gives her joy: new sights, the conductor's jokes, and the pride of being treated like a grown-up. But the return journey brings her first meeting with death. The cow she had seen alive and playful now lies dead on the road, and the sight fills her with sadness she cannot explain. She returns home wiser than she left: she has learnt that life has both joy and sorrow, and that death comes to all living things. When her mother talks about her as a child who knows nothing, Valli smiles, because she knows she has grown up a little in one afternoon.

Unit 8 - The Sermon at Benares

By Betty Renshaw

Theme: *Suffering is universal; wisdom lies in accepting it without grief.*

Summary

Siddhartha Gautama, who later became the Buddha, was born a prince. At the age of twenty-five he left his palace after seeing sickness, old age and death, and he spent years searching for the truth about suffering. After he attained enlightenment, he gave his first sermon at Benares. The chapter tells the story of Kisa Gotami, a young mother whose only son had died. In her grief she went from house to house asking for medicine that would bring her son back to life. People thought she had lost her mind. At last someone sent her to the Buddha, who told her to bring a handful of mustard seed from a house where no one had ever died. Kisa Gotami went from house to house, but in every house someone had died: a son, a daughter, a parent or a grandparent. Slowly she understood that death is common to all, and that no house is free from it. She returned to the Buddha, who taught her that the wise do not grieve for what cannot be avoided. The wise person accepts that all living things must die.

Key Points

- Siddhartha left his palace to seek the truth about suffering.
- He gave his first sermon at Benares after attaining enlightenment.
- Kisa Gotami's only son died, and she could not accept his death.
- The Buddha asked her for mustard seed from a house where no one had died.
- She found no such house, and understood that death is universal.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Where did the Buddha give his first sermon?

A) At Benares
B) At Bodh Gaya
C) At Lumbini
D) At Sarnath

Q2. What did Kisa Gotami ask for in every house?

A) Food
B) Medicine to bring her son back to life
C) Money
D) A place to rest

Q3. What did the Buddha ask Kisa Gotami to bring?

A) A handful of mustard seed
B) A flower
C) A bowl of water
D) A lamp

Q4. From what kind of house was the mustard seed to come?

A) A rich house

B) A house where no one had ever died

C) A house with a garden

D) A house near the river

Q5. What did Kisa Gotami learn in the end?

A) That her son would return

B) That death is common to all and cannot be avoided

C) That medicine can cure death

D) That she should leave the village

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-A, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why did Kisa Gotami go to the Buddha?

Answer: Kisa Gotami's only son had died and she was mad with grief. She went from house to house asking for medicine to bring him back to life. At last someone told her that the Buddha could help her, so she went to him with her dead child in her arms.

Q2. Why could Kisa Gotami not find the mustard seed?

Answer: The Buddha asked for mustard seed from a house where no one had ever died. But in every house she visited, someone had died: a son, a daughter, a husband or a parent. There was no house free from death, so she could not bring the seed.

Q3. What does the Buddha teach about grief?

Answer: The Buddha teaches that death is common to all living beings and cannot be avoided. The wise do not grieve over what cannot be changed. Weeping and grieving cannot bring back the dead; peace comes only from accepting the truth.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. How did the Buddha help Kisa Gotami understand the truth about death?

Answer: The Buddha did not argue with Kisa Gotami or tell her plainly that her son was dead, because grief had made her unable to hear such words. Instead he gave her a task: bring a handful of mustard seed from a house where no one had ever died. The task seemed simple, and it sent her from house to house. At each door she heard the same story: someone had died there too. Slowly, through her own experience, she understood what no lecture could have taught her: death touches every family, and no house is free from it. When she returned empty-handed, she was no longer mad with grief; she was calm and wise. The Buddha then taught her the sermon: the world is afflicted by death, and the wise do not grieve for what is natural and unavoidable. His method shows great compassion: he let her discover the truth herself.

Unit 9 - The Proposal

By Anton Chekhov

Theme: *Love, pride and foolish quarrels in a comedy of manners.*

Summary

This lesson is a one-act play about a proposal of marriage that almost fails because of foolish quarrels. Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov, a landowner, comes to the house of his neighbour Stepan Stepanovitch Chubukov to ask for the hand of his daughter Natalya. Lomov is nervous: he is thirty-five, he has palpitations, and he has decided that he must marry. But before he can propose, he mentions the Oxen Meadows, a piece of land between their properties, and Natalya claims it belongs to her family. The two begin a loud argument about the meadows. Chubukov joins in and the quarrel grows bitter. Lomov leaves in anger, and Natalya is upset when she learns why he had come. Chubukov brings Lomov back, and Lomov proposes, but soon they quarrel again, this time about their dogs: Lomov's Guess and Natalya's Squeezer. The argument becomes so heated that Lomov collapses, and Chubukov declares them engaged while Lomov is still recovering. The play ends with the couple still quarrelling, and Chubukov wishing them happiness with a sigh.

Key Points

- Lomov comes to propose to Natalya, but first mentions the Oxen Meadows.
- The meadows are disputed land between the two families.
- Natalya and Lomov quarrel loudly about who owns the meadows.
- After the proposal, they quarrel again about their dogs, Guess and Squeezer.
- Chubukov declares them engaged even while they are still arguing.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'The Proposal'?

A) Anton Chekhov
B) Leo Tolstoy
C) Maxim Gorky
D) Alexander Pushkin

Q2. What piece of land do Lomov and Natalya quarrel about first?

A) The Oxen Meadows
B) The Birch Woods
C) The Burnt Marsh
D) The Wheat Field

Q3. How old is Lomov?

A) Thirty
B) Thirty-five
C) Forty
D) Twenty-five

Q4. What is the name of Lomov's dog?

A) Squeezer
B) Guess
C) Hunter
D) Dash

Q5. What is the name of Natalya's dog?

A) Guess
B) Squeezer
C) Juno
D) Rex

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-A, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why had Lomov come to Chubukov's house?

Answer: Lomov had come to ask for the hand of Chubukov's daughter Natalya in marriage. He was thirty-five, suffered from palpitations, and had decided that it was time for him to settle down and marry.

Q2. Why do Lomov and Natalya quarrel about the Oxen Meadows?

Answer: Both families claim the Oxen Meadows. Lomov says the land belongs to him because his aunt's grandmother gave it to Natalya's grandfather's peasants for free use, while Natalya insists the meadows have always belonged to her family. Pride turns a small dispute into a bitter quarrel.

Q3. How does the play end?

Answer: The play ends in comedy: Lomov collapses during the quarrel about the dogs, and Chubukov, desperate to finish the matter, declares Lomov and Natalya engaged. The couple accept the engagement but are still quarrelling as the curtain falls.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. 'The Proposal' is a comedy built on foolish quarrels. Explain how pride and temper nearly ruin a marriage.

Answer: The comedy of 'The Proposal' comes from the fact that everyone wants the marriage, yet everyone keeps quarrelling about trifles. Lomov comes with a clear purpose, but his nervousness and his pride in his property make him mention the Oxen Meadows before proposing. Natalya, proud of her family's land, takes offence at once, and a polite visit turns into a shouting match. Chubukov, instead of calming them, joins the quarrel with insults. When Lomov returns and the proposal is finally made, the couple quarrel again, this time about which dog is better, Guess or Squeezer. Each argument is about nothing of real value, yet each is fought as if honour depended on it. Chekhov shows how pride and temper can destroy happiness: the engagement happens only by accident, while Lomov is half-fainting, and even then the quarrel continues. The play laughs at people who let small vanities spoil big joys.

First Flight - Poetry

NCERT Solutions Class 10 English

Unit 1 - Dust of Snow

By Robert Frost

Theme: *A small incident can change a sad day and save it from ruin.*

Summary

The poet is having a sad and gloomy day. He is standing under a hemlock tree, a tree often linked with sadness, when a crow shakes off a small dusting of snow from the tree. The snow falls on the poet. This tiny, unexpected incident changes his mood completely: his sadness lifts, and he feels that the day, which he had thought was wasted, has been saved. The poem teaches that even a small and ordinary event can bring a change of heart, and that nature has the power to heal a troubled mind. The crow and the hemlock tree, both usually seen as signs of bad luck or sorrow, become the means of the poet's happiness.

Key Points

- The poet is sad and thinks his day is wasted.
- A crow shakes snow from a hemlock tree onto the poet.
- The small incident changes the poet's mood for the better.
- Both the crow and the hemlock are usually linked with sorrow, yet they bring joy here.
- The poem's message is that small things can save a day.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote the poem 'Dust of Snow'?

A) Robert Frost
B) W. B. Yeats
C) John Berryman
D) Carl Sandburg

Q2. Which tree is mentioned in the poem?

A) An oak tree
B) A hemlock tree
C) A pine tree
D) A mango tree

Q3. Which bird shakes the snow down on the poet?

A) A sparrow
B) A crow
C) A robin
D) An owl

Q4. What effect does the dust of snow have on the poet?

A) It makes him angry
B) It makes him cold and ill
C) It changes his mood for the better
D) It makes him leave the place

Q5. What is the central idea of the poem?

A) Nature is always cruel
B) Small incidents can change a sad day
C) Snow is dangerous
D) Crows bring bad luck

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-C, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. How did the crow change the poet's mood?

Answer: The crow shook a little snow from the hemlock tree, and the snow fell on the poet. This small and sudden event broke his gloom and changed his mood, so that a day he had thought wasted was saved.

Q2. Why are the crow and the hemlock tree surprising symbols in this poem?

Answer: Both the crow and the hemlock tree are usually linked with sadness and bad luck. The poet uses them in a surprising way: instead of bringing sorrow, they become the means of his happiness and show that good can come from unexpected places.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Explain how 'Dust of Snow' shows that nature can heal a troubled mind.

Answer: The poem shows nature healing the mind through a very small event. The poet is sad and believes his day is ruined. He is not cured by a grand or dramatic change, but by a crow shaking a little snow from a hemlock tree onto him. The touch of the snow is enough to shift his mood and make him see the day differently. Frost chooses two symbols that are usually linked with gloom, the crow and the hemlock, to show that healing can come from anywhere, even from things we think are unlucky. The poem's message is gentle and hopeful: when we are sad, a small moment in nature can lift our spirits and save the day. It teaches us to notice small joys instead of waiting for big ones.

Unit 2 - Fire and Ice

By Robert Frost

Theme: *Human desire and hatred can destroy the world.*

Summary

The poet thinks about how the world might end. Some people say it will end in fire, and others say it will end in ice. The poet has tasted desire in his own life, and he agrees with those who say fire will end the world, because fire stands for desire and greed. But he also knows hatred, and he says that ice, which stands for hatred and coldness, would be equally able to destroy the world. The poem is short, but it carries a deep message: human emotions, if they grow without control, are strong enough to end everything. Desire burns and hatred freezes, and both are equally destructive.

Key Points

- The poem discusses two possible ends of the world: fire and ice.
- Fire stands for desire, greed and lust.
- Ice stands for hatred, coldness and indifference.
- The poet first agrees with fire, because he has known desire.
- He then says ice would also be enough to destroy the world.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'Fire and Ice'?

A) Robert Frost
B) W. B. Yeats
C) Ogden Nash
D) Leslie Norris

Q2. What does fire stand for in the poem?

A) Hatred
B) Desire and greed
C) Coldness
D) Ignorance

Q3. What does ice stand for in the poem?

A) Love
B) Hatred and coldness
C) Desire
D) Warmth

Q4. Which end does the poet first favour?

A) Ice
B) Fire
C) Flood
D) Earthquake

Q5. What is the message of the poem?

A) The world will never end

B) Uncontrolled human emotions can destroy the world

C) Fire is stronger than ice

D) Ice is stronger than fire

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why does the poet favour fire as the end of the world?

Answer: The poet has experienced desire in his own life, so he understands its burning power. He agrees with those who say fire will end the world, because desire and greed are strong enough to consume everything.

Q2. Why does the poet say ice is also enough to destroy the world?

Answer: The poet has also known hatred, and he understands that coldness and indifference can be just as destructive as desire. Ice would freeze the world slowly, but it would destroy it completely.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. How does Frost use fire and ice as symbols of human emotions?

Answer: Frost uses fire and ice as symbols for the two most destructive human emotions. Fire stands for desire, greed and lust: emotions that burn, spread and consume everything in their path. Ice stands for hatred, coldness and indifference: emotions that freeze the heart and kill warmth and love. The poet says he has tasted both desire and hatred, so he speaks from experience. He first favours fire, but then admits that ice would be equally enough to end the world. The poem's power lies in its brevity: in a few lines it warns that the world need not be destroyed by war or natural disaster. Human feelings, left without control, are enough. The message is that we must master desire and hatred before they master us.

Unit 3 - A Tiger in the Zoo

By Leslie Norris

Theme: *Freedom versus captivity; the suffering of a wild animal in a cage.*

Summary

The poem contrasts the life of a tiger in the wild with its life in a zoo. In the jungle, the tiger is free and powerful: it moves quietly through the long grass near a water hole, terrorises the village, and shows its strength and beauty. But in the zoo the same tiger is locked in a small concrete cell behind bars. It walks up and down in anger and frustration, ignoring visitors, and its bright eyes look out at the stars at night, dreaming of freedom. The poem is a quiet protest against keeping wild animals in cages. It shows that a tiger belongs in the forest, not in a cell, and that captivity destroys the spirit of a creature born to be free.

Key Points

- In the wild, the tiger is free, strong and feared by the village.
- In the zoo, the tiger is locked in a small concrete cell.
- The caged tiger walks up and down in anger and frustration.
- It ignores visitors and looks at the stars, longing for freedom.
- The poem protests against keeping wild animals in captivity.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'A Tiger in the Zoo'?

A) Leslie Norris
B) Robert Frost
C) Robin Klein
D) Carl Sandburg

Q2. Where does the tiger live in the poem's second part?

A) In the jungle
B) In a concrete cell in the zoo
C) In a forest
D) In a village

Q3. How does the tiger behave in its cage?

A) It sleeps all day
B) It walks up and down in anger
C) It plays with visitors
D) It eats happily

Q4. What does the tiger do at night in the cage?

A) It roars loudly
B) It looks at the stars
C) It escapes
D) It hunts

Q5. What is the poem's main message?

A) Zoos are the best places for tigers
B) Wild animals should be free in their natural home
C) Tigers are dangerous
D) Visitors should not feed tigers

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. How is the tiger different in the jungle and in the zoo?

Answer: In the jungle the tiger is free, powerful and feared: it moves quietly through the grass and shows its strength. In the zoo it is locked in a small cell, walks up and down in anger, and has lost its freedom and spirit.

Q2. Why does the poet describe the tiger looking at the stars?

Answer: The caged tiger looks at the stars at night because it longs for the freedom of the open sky and the forest. The stars remind it of the world outside the cage, and the poet uses this image to show its silent suffering and hope.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Contrast the life of the tiger in the wild and in the zoo, and explain the poet's message.

Answer: The poet draws a sharp contrast between two lives of the same tiger. In the wild, the tiger is a symbol of strength and freedom: it slides through the long grass, waits near the water hole, and terrifies the village with its power. Its orange and black stripes shine in the sun, and it moves as nature meant it to move. In the zoo, the same animal is locked behind bars in a concrete cell. It has no forest, no prey and no freedom. It walks endlessly up and down, ignoring the visitors who stare at it, and at night it looks at the stars, dreaming of the world it has lost. The contrast shows that captivity does not only take away movement; it takes away the animal's spirit. The poet's message is clear: wild animals belong in their natural home, and keeping them in cages for our entertainment is cruel.

Unit 4 - How to Tell Wild Animals

By Carolyn Wells

Theme: *Humour in identifying wild animals by their dangerous habits.*

Summary

This is a humorous poem that tells the reader how to recognise wild animals, not by their appearance but by what they do to you. The Asian lion will roar at you, the Bengal tiger will eat you, and the leopard will leap on you and keep biting you. The bear will hug you very hard, the hyena will laugh at you, and the crocodile will weep while it eats you. The chameleon is the hardest to see because it changes colour and looks like a tree. The poem is written in a light and funny tone, and its joke is that you will know the animal only when it is too late. It teaches the reader to enjoy the humour while learning the habits of each animal.

Key Points

- The poem identifies animals by their dangerous behaviour, not by looks.
- The lion roars, the tiger eats, and the leopard leaps and bites.
- The bear hugs tightly and the hyena laughs.
- The crocodile weeps while it eats its prey.
- The chameleon is hard to spot because it changes colour like a tree.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'How to Tell Wild Animals'?

A) Carolyn Wells
B) Ogden Nash
C) Leslie Norris
D) Robert Frost

Q2. How can you tell a Bengal tiger, according to the poem?

A) It roars at you
B) It eats you
C) It hugs you
D) It laughs at you

Q3. What does the bear do, according to the poem?

A) It roars
B) It hugs you very hard
C) It weeps
D) It leaps on you

Q4. Which animal is hard to see because it looks like a tree?

A) The leopard
B) The hyena
C) The chameleon
D) The crocodile

Q5. What is the tone of the poem?

A) Sad and serious
B) Humorous and light
C) Angry and bitter
D) Frightening

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-C, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. How does the poet make the poem humorous?

Answer: The poet gives funny and dangerous tests for recognising animals: you will know the tiger when it eats you and the bear when it hugs you too hard. The humour lies in the fact that the reader learns the animal's identity only when it is too late to escape.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. What does the poem teach about wild animals, and why is it funny?

Answer: The poem teaches the habits of seven wild animals: the Asian lion, the Bengal tiger, the leopard, the bear, the hyena, the crocodile and the chameleon. But it teaches them in a humorous way, by describing what each animal does to a person rather than what it looks like. The lion roars, the tiger eats, the leopard leaps and bites, the bear hugs, the hyena laughs, and the crocodile weeps as it eats. The joke is that these signs are useless in real life, because by the time you recognise the animal, you are already its victim. The chameleon adds another joke: it is so hard to see that you may mistake it for a tree. The poem is funny because it treats danger lightly, and it is memorable because the humour fixes each animal's habit in the reader's mind.

Unit 5 - The Ball Poem

By John Berryman

Theme: *Loss, growing up, and learning to take responsibility.*

Summary

A young boy loses his ball. It bounces down the street and falls into the water, and he stands still, staring after it with grief. The ball was not costly, and another ball could be bought easily, but the boy is not upset about money. He is upset because the ball was his, and it held his memories and his childhood. The poet says that no one should offer him another ball or money, because the boy must learn the lesson of loss himself. He must understand that things are lost, that the world takes things away, and that a person must learn to stand up and bear loss. This is the boy's first step towards growing up: he learns responsibility and the hard truth that possessions can be lost forever.

Key Points

- The boy loses his ball in the water and stands still with grief.
- The ball was not expensive, but it was precious to him.
- No one should offer him money or another ball.
- The boy must learn that loss is a part of life.
- The poem shows the first step of growing up.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'The Ball Poem'?

A) John Berryman
B) Robert Frost
C) W. B. Yeats
D) Adrienne Rich

Q2. Where does the boy lose his ball?

A) In the garden
B) In the water
C) On the roof
D) In the school

Q3. Why is the boy so upset about losing the ball?

A) The ball was very costly
B) The ball held his memories and was dear to him
C) He had no other toy
D) His friends laughed at him

Q4. What should no one offer the boy, according to the poet?

A) Money or another ball
B) A new game
C) A story
D) A sweet

Q5. What does the boy learn from losing the ball?

A) That balls are cheap
B) That loss is a part of life and must be borne
C) That water is dangerous
D) That he should not play

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-A, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why does the poet say that another ball should not be given to the boy?

Answer: The poet says the boy must learn the lesson of loss himself. If he is given another ball at once, he will not understand that things can be lost forever. The pain of loss is his first lesson in growing up.

Q2. What is the deeper meaning of the lost ball?

Answer: The ball stands for childhood, memories and possessions. Losing it teaches the boy that the world takes things away and that a person must learn to bear loss with courage. It is his first experience of responsibility.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Explain how 'The Ball Poem' is about growing up, not just about a lost ball.

Answer: On the surface the poem is about a boy who loses a ball in the water, but its real subject is growing up. The ball is not valuable in money, yet the boy grieves deeply because it was his own and it carried his childhood memories. The poet refuses the easy comfort of buying another ball, because the loss itself is the lesson. The boy must learn that the world is a place where things are lost, and that no one can bring them back. This is the moment when childhood ends and maturity begins: the boy learns to accept loss, to stand firm, and to take responsibility for his feelings. The poem teaches that grief over small losses prepares us for the bigger losses of life, and that learning to bear loss is part of becoming an adult.

Unit 6 - Amanda!

By Robin Klein

Theme: *A child's longing for freedom from constant nagging and control.*

Summary

Amanda is a young girl who is constantly scolded by her parents. They tell her not to bite her nails, not to hunch her shoulders, not to eat chocolate, and to do her homework, clean her room, and tidy her shoes. Amanda hardly answers; instead she escapes into her imagination. She dreams of being a mermaid, drifting alone in a calm green sea. She dreams of being Rapunzel in a high tower, free from everyone. She dreams of being an orphan, wandering the streets in silence with soft feet and no one to scold her. Each dream is broken by another instruction from her parents. The poem shows the gap between the world of adults, full of rules and nagging, and the world of a child, full of dreams of freedom and peace.

Key Points

- Amanda is scolded all the time for small habits and unfinished tasks.
- She escapes into imagination instead of answering back.
- She dreams of being a mermaid in a calm sea.
- She dreams of being Rapunzel, alone in her tower.
- She dreams of being an orphan, free to wander in silence.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote the poem 'Amanda!'?

A) Robin Klein
B) Adrienne Rich
C) Carolyn Wells
D) Ogden Nash

Q2. What is Amanda told not to bite?

A) Her nails
B) Her pencil
C) Her lips
D) Her fingers

Q3. In her first dream, Amanda imagines herself as what?

A) A mermaid
B) A princess
C) A bird
D) A fairy

Q4. Whose life does Amanda imagine in her second dream?

A) Cinderella
B) Rapunzel
C) Snow White

D) Sleeping Beauty

Q5. What does the poem show about Amanda's life?

A) She is happy and free

B) She is controlled and scolded, so she dreams of freedom

C) She loves her homework

D) She has no imagination

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-A, 3-A, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why does Amanda dream of being a mermaid, Rapunzel and an orphan?

Answer: Amanda is scolded constantly and feels controlled. Each dream is a wish for freedom: the mermaid is alone in a calm sea, Rapunzel is alone in her tower, and the orphan has no one to scold her. Her dreams are escapes from nagging.

Q2. What does the poem say about the way adults treat children?

Answer: The poem shows that constant nagging and orders can crush a child's spirit. Amanda's parents only give instructions and never listen to her. The poem asks adults to give children space, freedom and understanding.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Amanda's dreams are the heart of the poem. Explain what each dream means.

Answer: Amanda's three dreams each express a different wish for freedom. As a mermaid, she drifts alone in a calm green sea: this is the wish for peace and for a life without noise and orders. As Rapunzel, she lives alone in a high tower and lets down her long hair: this is the wish for privacy, a place of her own where no one can reach her. As an orphan, she wanders the streets in silence with soft feet: this is the wish to be free of all control, even of parents. The three dreams grow stronger as the poem goes on, and each is broken by a fresh scolding, which makes the contrast sharper. The poem's message is that children need freedom and respect, not only rules. When adults only nag, children stop listening and escape into dreams instead.

Unit 7 - The Trees

By Adrienne Rich

Theme: *Freedom, growth, and the conflict between nature and human control.*

Summary

The poem describes trees that have been kept inside a house moving out into the forest at night. The speaker watches the trees leave: their roots work free from the cracks in the floor, their leaves press against the glass, and their branches move towards the open sky. The moonlight shines on the forest, and the smell of leaves and lichen rises in the air. The house is empty and quiet, but the forest is full of life. The trees stand in the forest all night, and by morning they will be rooted in their true home. The poem is a symbol of freedom: just as trees cannot live happily inside a house, living things cannot be kept away from their natural place. It also speaks of change and of breaking free from what confines us.

Key Points

- Trees kept inside a house move out into the forest at night.
- Their roots break free from the cracks in the floor.
- The moon shines on the forest and the night is full of the smell of leaves.
- The house becomes empty, while the forest comes alive.
- The poem is a symbol of freedom and of returning to one's true home.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote the poem 'The Trees'?

A) Adrienne Rich
B) Robin Klein
C) Robert Frost
D) Carl Sandburg

Q2. Where do the trees move to at night?

A) Into the garden
B) Into the forest
C) Into the river
D) Into the field

Q3. What breaks free from the cracks in the floor?

A) The leaves
B) The roots of the trees
C) The branches
D) The seeds

Q4. What shines on the forest in the poem?

A) The sun
B) The moon
C) The stars

D) A lamp

Q5. What does the movement of the trees symbolise?

A) The end of the forest

B) Freedom and returning to one's true home

C) The coming of winter

D) The building of houses

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why do the trees leave the house?

Answer: The trees have been kept inside the house, away from their natural home. At night they break free and move out into the forest, because living things cannot grow happily in a place that confines them.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Explain the symbolism in 'The Trees'.

Answer: The trees in the poem are more than trees; they are a symbol of all living things that long for freedom. A tree kept inside a house is like a person kept in a life that does not suit them: it survives, but it does not grow as it should. When the trees move out at night, their roots breaking free from the floor and their branches reaching for the sky, the poem shows the natural desire to return to one's true place. The forest, lit by moonlight and full of the smell of leaves, stands for freedom and natural life, while the empty house stands for a life of confinement. The poem can also be read as a symbol of change in society: old ways break open, and what was held inside moves out into the open. The trees do not hurry, but their movement is certain, and by morning they are home.

Unit 8 - Fog

By Carl Sandburg

Theme: *The quiet, cat-like arrival and departure of fog.*

Summary

This is a very short poem in which the poet compares fog to a cat. The fog comes quietly on little cat feet and sits looking over the harbour and the city, silent and watchful. Then, just as quietly, it moves on. The comparison is exact: a cat comes silently, sits and watches, and leaves without a sound, and so does fog. The poem captures the mystery and the gentle power of nature in a few lines. It shows that nature does not always arrive with storms and noise; sometimes it comes softly, stays a while, and goes away unnoticed.

Key Points

- The poet compares fog to a cat.
- Fog comes silently on little cat feet.
- It sits and looks over the harbour and the city.
- Then it moves on, as quietly as it came.
- The poem shows nature's quiet and mysterious power.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote the poem 'Fog'?

A) Carl Sandburg
B) Robert Frost
C) Ogden Nash
D) John Berryman

Q2. What is fog compared to in the poem?

A) A dog
B) A cat
C) A bird
D) A snake

Q3. How does the fog arrive?

A) With a storm
B) Silently, on little cat feet
C) With thunder
D) With heavy rain

Q4. What does the fog sit and look over?

A) The forest
B) The harbour and the city
C) The mountains
D) The fields

Q5. What does the poem show about nature?

A) Nature is always violent

B) Nature can be quiet, gentle and mysterious

C) Nature is frightening

D) Nature never changes

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why is the comparison between fog and a cat suitable?

Answer: The comparison is suitable because both fog and a cat arrive silently, sit and watch without being noticed, and leave quietly. The cat's soft feet, its stillness and its sudden departure match the fog's behaviour exactly.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. 'Fog' is a short poem, but it paints a complete picture. Explain how.

Answer: The poem is only a few lines long, yet it gives the reader a complete picture of fog. The poet begins with a comparison: fog comes on little cat feet. At once the reader imagines silent, soft movement. Then the fog sits looking over the harbour and the city, and we see it as a watchful animal, still and patient. Finally the fog moves on, and the picture is finished. Nothing more is needed: the arrival, the stay and the departure are all there. The poem's power lies in its choice of image. A cat is familiar to everyone, so the comparison makes the fog easy to see and feel. The poem also shows a truth about nature: it does not always come with noise and force. Sometimes it comes quietly, touches the world for a while, and leaves without a sound.

Unit 9 - The Tale of Custard the Dragon

By Ogden Nash

Theme: *True bravery is revealed in danger; do not judge by appearances.*

Summary

Belinda lives in a little white house with her four pets: a black kitten called Ink, a grey mouse called Blink, a yellow dog called Mustard, and a cowardly dragon called Custard. The other pets are brave and bold and they laugh at Custard because he is always asking for a safe cage and crying for a nice cup of tea. One day a pirate with pistols and a cutlass breaks into the house. Ink, Blink and Mustard all run away and hide, but Custard stands and fights. He eats the pirate and saves everyone. After the danger is over, the other pets pretend they were braver than Custard, and Custard humbly agrees that he is a coward. The poem is a funny ballad with a serious message: real courage shows itself only in danger, and those who boast the loudest are often the first to run away.

Key Points

- Belinda lives with four pets: Ink, Blink, Mustard and Custard.
- The other pets laugh at Custard because he seems cowardly.
- A pirate attacks the house with pistols and a cutlass.
- Ink, Blink and Mustard hide, but Custard fights and eats the pirate.
- Afterwards the others boast again, and Custard humbly agrees he is a coward.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'The Tale of Custard the Dragon'?

A) Ogden Nash
B) Carolyn Wells
C) Leslie Norris
D) Robin Klein

Q2. What is the name of Belinda's dragon?

A) Mustard
B) Custard
C) Ink
D) Blink

Q3. Why did the other pets laugh at Custard?

A) He was very small
B) He seemed cowardly and always asked for a safe cage
C) He could not fly
D) He ate too much

Q4. Who attacked Belinda's house?

A) A thief
B) A pirate
C) A wolf

D) A giant

Q5. Who saved Belinda and the pets from the pirate?

A) Ink
B) Blink
C) Mustard
D) Custard

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-D

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. How did Custard prove himself brave?

Answer: When the pirate attacked, Ink, Blink and Mustard all ran away and hid. Custard alone stood his ground, fought the pirate fiercely and ate him up, saving Belinda and the others.

Q2. What is the message of the poem?

Answer: The poem teaches that true bravery is shown in danger, not in boasting. Those who talk the loudest about their courage may run away when danger comes, while the quiet and humble one may prove to be the bravest of all.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. The poem laughs at boasting and praises quiet courage. Explain.

Answer: The humour of the poem comes from the contrast between what the pets say and what they do. Ink, Blink and Mustard boast about their bravery and laugh at Custard, who asks for a safe cage and cries for his tea. They call themselves brave and call him a coward. But when the pirate breaks in with pistols and a cutlass, the boasters disappear: the mouse hides, the kitten hides, and the dog hides. Only Custard, the supposed coward, stands and fights, and he eats the pirate and saves them all. The comedy grows sharper after the danger passes, because the three pets at once start boasting again, pretending they were braver than Custard, and Custard humbly agrees that he is a coward. The poem teaches a serious lesson through laughter: do not judge people by their talk, and do not mistake quietness for weakness. Real courage appears only when it is tested.

Unit 10 - For Anne Gregory

By W. B. Yeats

Theme: *True love values the person within, not outward beauty.*

Summary

A young man tells Anne Gregory that he loves her for her beautiful yellow hair, and that he would not love her if her hair were of another colour. Anne answers that her hair can be dyed or changed, and that a lover who loves only her hair does not love her truly. The speaker then says that only God loves us for ourselves alone, not for our looks or our wealth. The poem asks a simple question: do we love people for who they are, or for what they look like? Its answer is that outward beauty fades and can be changed, but true love must rest on the person within. The poem is a gentle lesson in the difference between loving beauty and loving a person.

Key Points

- A young man says he loves Anne Gregory for her yellow hair.
- Anne says her hair can be changed, so such love is not true love.
- Only God loves a person for themselves alone.
- Outward beauty can fade or be changed.
- True love must value the person within, not the appearance.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'For Anne Gregory'?

A) W. B. Yeats
B) Robert Frost
C) John Berryman
D) Ogden Nash

Q2. What does the young man love Anne Gregory for?

A) Her voice
B) Her yellow hair
C) Her kindness
D) Her wealth

Q3. What does Anne say about her hair?

A) It can never change
B) It can be dyed or changed
C) It is the most beautiful hair
D) It is short

Q4. According to the poem, who alone loves us for ourselves?

A) Our friends
B) Our parents
C) God
D) Our teachers

Q5. What is the central idea of the poem?

A) Beauty is everything

B) True love values the person within, not outward beauty

C) Hair colour matters most

D) Young men are foolish

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-C, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why does Anne Gregory say the young man's love is not true love?

Answer: The young man says he loves Anne for her yellow hair. Anne replies that her hair can be dyed or changed, so if his love depends on her hair, it does not depend on her. True love must love the person, not the appearance.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Explain the difference the poem draws between loving beauty and loving a person.

Answer: The poem draws a clear line between two kinds of love. The young man loves Anne Gregory for her yellow hair: his love is fixed on something outward, something that can be dyed, cut or lost with time. Anne points out that such love is not love for her at all; it is love for a feature that could belong to anyone. The speaker then lifts the thought higher: only God loves us for ourselves alone, without regard to looks, wealth or youth. Human beings often love what is beautiful or useful, but true love must go deeper and value the person within. The poem's lesson is that beauty is a poor foundation for love, because beauty changes. A love that rests on the inner person lasts, while a love that rests on appearance fades with the appearance itself.

Footprints Without Feet

NCERT Solutions Class 10 English

Unit 1 - A Triumph of Surgery

By James Herriot

Theme: *Over-pampering harms health; discipline and care restore it.*

Summary

Mrs Pumphrey is a rich lady who loves her small dog Tricki more than anything. She feeds him cream cakes, chocolates and malt, and gives him no exercise, so Tricki becomes hugely fat and falls seriously ill. He refuses food, vomits, and lies all day without moving. Mrs Pumphrey calls the veterinary surgeon, Mr Herriot, who knows at once that the trouble is overfeeding. He takes Tricki to his surgery and puts him on a strict diet of water and simple food, with plenty of exercise in the company of the other dogs. At first Mrs Pumphrey sends rich food for Tricki every day, but the surgeon and his staff enjoy it themselves. Within a fortnight Tricki is fit and lively again, running and playing with the other dogs. When Mrs Pumphrey comes to take him home, she is overjoyed to see her dog healthy and calls it a triumph of surgery, though in truth it was a triumph of discipline and simple living.

Key Points

- Mrs Pumphrey overfed Tricki with rich food and gave him no exercise.
- Tricki became fat, dull and seriously ill.
- Mr Herriot took him to the surgery and gave him a strict diet.
- With simple food and play with other dogs, Tricki recovered in a fortnight.
- Mrs Pumphrey called it a triumph of surgery, but it was really a triumph of discipline.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'A Triumph of Surgery'?

A) James Herriot
B) Ruskin Bond
C) Robert Arthur
D) H. G. Wells

Q2. What was the name of Mrs Pumphrey's dog?

A) Tricki
B) Jock
C) Ben
D) Spot

Q3. Why did Tricki fall ill?

A) He was bitten by a snake
B) He was overfed with rich food and had no exercise
C) He caught a cold
D) He was very old

Q4. What treatment did Mr Herriot give Tricki?

A) Strong medicines

B) A strict diet of simple food and plenty of exercise

C) An operation

D) Complete rest in a dark room

Q5. How long did it take Tricki to recover?

A) One day

B) A fortnight

C) A month

D) Six months

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-A, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why was Tricki seriously ill?

Answer: Tricki was seriously ill because Mrs Pumphrey overfed him with cream cakes, chocolates and malt, and never gave him exercise. He became hugely fat, refused food, and lay dull and listless all day.

Q2. How did Mr Herriot cure Tricki without medicine?

Answer: Mr Herriot took Tricki to his surgery, gave him only water for two days and then simple food, and let him run and play with the other dogs. The strict diet and exercise made Tricki fit and lively again within a fortnight.

Q3. Why does Mrs Pumphrey call it a triumph of surgery?

Answer: Mrs Pumphrey believes the veterinary surgeon cured Tricki with a medical operation. In fact no operation was done: Tricki recovered because of a strict diet and exercise. Her words are funny because she misunderstands the treatment completely.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Over-pampering can be as harmful as neglect. Show this from the story of Tricki.

Answer: Mrs Pumphrey loved Tricki dearly, but her love took the form of overfeeding. She gave him cream cakes, chocolates and malt, and she never let him exercise, because she thought rest and rich food were kindness. The result was the opposite of health: Tricki grew hugely fat, refused food, vomited and lay all day without moving. His illness was caused not by disease but by too much love in the wrong form. Mr Herriot's cure was simple and strict: plain food, fresh water and plenty of play with other dogs. Within a fortnight Tricki was running, playing and enjoying life again. The story teaches that love must be guided by wisdom. Pampering that ignores health harms the very one we love, while discipline, simple food and exercise restore health. Mrs Pumphrey's joy at the end is real, but her words are ironic: she calls it a triumph of surgery, when it was really a triumph of common sense.

Unit 2 - The Thief's Story

By Ruskin Bond

Theme: *Trust and education can change a thief into an honest person.*

Summary

Hari Singh is a fifteen-year-old thief who is clever with his hands. One day at a wrestling match he meets Anil, a young writer of twenty-five, and asks him for work. Anil agrees to keep him, though he cannot pay him regularly. Hari Singh learns to cook, to buy vegetables and to read and write. Anil teaches him patiently, and Hari Singh begins to dream of a better life. One night Anil brings home a bundle of notes, six hundred rupees earned from a magazine. Hari Singh steals the money and runs to the railway station to catch a train to Lucknow. But as the train leaves, he thinks about Anil's trust and about the education he would lose. He feels guilty and returns, quietly puts the money back under the mattress, and goes to sleep. Next morning Anil gives him fifty rupees and a wet note, smiling as if he knows everything. Hari Singh understands that Anil has forgiven him and that education is worth more than stolen money.

Key Points

- Hari Singh is a young thief who becomes Anil's servant.
- Anil teaches him to cook, read and write, and treats him with trust.
- Hari Singh steals six hundred rupees and runs to the station.
- Guilt and the thought of losing his education make him return.
- Anil forgives him silently, and Hari Singh chooses an honest life.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'The Thief's Story'?

A) Ruskin Bond
B) James Herriot
C) Victor Canning
D) Robert W. Peterson

Q2. How old was Hari Singh?

A) Ten years
B) Fifteen years
C) Twenty years
D) Twelve years

Q3. What was Anil's profession?

A) A teacher
B) A writer
C) A shopkeeper
D) A policeman

Q4. How much money did Hari Singh steal?

A) Fifty rupees

B) Six hundred rupees

C) One thousand rupees

D) One hundred rupees

Q5. Why did Hari Singh return the money?

A) He was caught by the police

B) He felt guilty and wanted Anil's trust and education

C) The money was fake

D) He missed the train only by chance

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why did Anil keep Hari Singh even though he could not pay him?

Answer: Anil was a kind and trusting man. He needed help with cooking and shopping, and he liked Hari Singh's cheerful manner. He kept him on the promise of food and later began teaching him to read and write.

Q2. What changed Hari Singh's mind at the railway station?

Answer: As the train left, Hari Singh thought of Anil's trust and of the education he was learning. He realised that stealing six hundred rupees would cost him the chance of a better life. Guilt and hope together made him turn back.

Q3. How do we know Anil had forgiven Hari Singh?

Answer: Next morning Anil gave Hari Singh fifty rupees and smiled at the wet note, knowing it had been out in the rain. He said nothing about the theft, and his quiet smile showed that he understood and forgave.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Trust is more powerful than punishment in changing a thief. Explain with reference to the story.

Answer: Hari Singh had lived by stealing since childhood, and punishment had never changed him. What changed him was Anil's trust. Anil took him in without knowing his past, taught him to cook, read and write, and never treated him as a thief. When Hari Singh stole six hundred rupees, he expected nothing but escape, but as the train left the station he felt the weight of what he was losing: not only Anil's trust, but the education that could make him a respected man. He returned the money of his own free will, and Anil's silent forgiveness completed the change. Anil did not scold or report him; he simply gave him fifty rupees and smiled, showing that he understood. The story proves that trust and kindness can reform a person where fear and punishment fail, because they make the wrongdoer want to be worthy of the trust placed in him.

Unit 3 - The Midnight Visitor

By Robert Arthur

Theme: *Wit beats force; a clever mind can defeat an armed enemy.*

Summary

Ausable is a secret agent, but he looks nothing like one: he is fat, slow and speaks with an accent. Fowler, a young writer, has come to spend the night with him and is disappointed to find such an ordinary man. Suddenly there is a knock, and a man called Max enters with a pistol. Max has come to steal an important report about missiles that Ausable is expecting. Ausable stays calm. He tells Max that the balcony below his window is used by the police, and that he will have to hide soon. He also says he is expecting the police. When there is a knock at the door, Max believes it is the police and jumps out of the window onto the balcony to hide. But there is no balcony at all: Ausable invented it. Max falls to his death. The knock was only a waiter bringing drinks. Ausable's quick thinking and calm manner saved his life and the report, and Fowler learns that real secret agents work with their minds, not with guns.

Key Points

- Ausable is a secret agent who looks fat, slow and ordinary.
- Fowler, a writer, is disappointed by Ausable's appearance.
- Max enters with a pistol to steal an important report.
- Ausable invents a story about a balcony and the police.
- Max jumps from the window, believing the balcony is there, and falls to his death.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'The Midnight Visitor'?

A) Robert Arthur
B) Ruskin Bond
C) Victor Canning
D) H. G. Wells

Q2. What was Ausable's profession?

A) A policeman
B) A secret agent
C) A writer
D) A waiter

Q3. Who came to Ausable's room with a pistol?

A) Fowler
B) Max
C) The waiter
D) The police chief

Q4. What did Ausable invent to fool Max?

A) A secret door

B) A balcony below the window

C) A hidden safe

D) A second gun

Q5. Who knocked at the door at the end?

A) The police

B) A waiter with drinks

C) Another agent

D) The hotel manager

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why was Fowler disappointed when he met Ausable?

Answer: Fowler expected a secret agent to be tall, handsome and romantic, like the heroes of spy stories. Instead he found a fat, slow man who spoke with an accent and lived in a small French hotel room.

Q2. How did Ausable outwit Max?

Answer: Ausable stayed calm and invented a story: he said there was a balcony below his window and that the police used it, and that the police were about to arrive. When the waiter knocked, Max believed it was the police and jumped out of the window to the balcony, but there was no balcony.

Q3. What is the lesson of the story?

Answer: The story teaches that wit and presence of mind are stronger than weapons. Ausable had no gun, yet he defeated an armed man by staying calm, thinking quickly and using Max's own fear against him.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Ausable wins without a weapon. Show how his calmness and wit defeat Max.

Answer: Ausable's victory is a victory of the mind. When Max enters with a pistol, Ausable does not panic, plead or fight. He treats the situation as ordinary and begins to talk, inventing a story about a balcony below his window that the police use. The story is clever because it fits the room: the window is on the sixth floor, yet Ausable speaks of the balcony so casually that Max believes him. Then, when the waiter knocks, Ausable announces that it must be the police, and Max, already frightened, jumps out of the window to hide on the balcony that does not exist. Ausable never raises his voice and never touches a weapon. His calmness makes his lies believable, and his quick thinking turns Max's gun into a useless thing. Fowler learns that real danger is met not with romance and shooting, but with intelligence, patience and a cool head.

Unit 4 - A Question of Trust

By Victor Canning

Theme: *A thief can be tricked by his own greed and trust in a stranger.*

Summary

Horace Danby is a good and honest locksmith who makes locks for a living, but once a year he steals from a rich house to buy rare and expensive books, which are his great love. He plans a robbery at Shotover Grange very carefully: he studies the house, the servants and the safe, and he learns that the safe holds fifteen thousand pounds worth of jewels. On the day of the robbery he enters the house and is met by a young lady who says she is the wife of the owner. She speaks to him politely, claims she has forgotten the combination of the safe, and asks him to open it for her. Horace, trusting her and flattered by her manner, opens the safe with his tools and hands her the jewels. He leaves without taking anything. Two days later he is arrested, because the real owner of the house says the jewels were stolen. The young lady was herself a thief, and she used Horace's trust to get the jewels without any risk. Horace learns that a thief who trusts a stranger can be robbed himself.

Key Points

- Horace Danby is an honest locksmith who steals once a year to buy rare books.
- He plans the robbery at Shotover Grange with great care.
- A young lady claims to be the owner's wife and asks him to open the safe.
- Horace opens the safe and gives her the jewels, taking nothing himself.
- The lady was a thief too, and Horace is arrested for a crime he did not profit from.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'A Question of Trust'?

A) Victor Canning
B) Robert Arthur
C) Ruskin Bond
D) James Herriot

Q2. What was Horace Danby's profession?

A) A locksmith
B) A policeman
C) A bookseller
D) A gardener

Q3. Why did Horace steal once a year?

A) To buy food
B) To buy rare and expensive books
C) To pay his debts
D) To help the poor

Q4. Who tricked Horace at Shotover Grange?

A) The owner's wife

B) A young lady who was herself a thief

C) A servant

D) A policeman

Q5. What happened to Horace in the end?

A) He escaped

B) He was arrested for the robbery

C) He became rich

D) He returned the jewels

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-A, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why did Horace Danby steal only once a year?

Answer: Horace was otherwise honest and earned his living as a locksmith. He stole once a year to buy rare and expensive books, which were his great love and which he could not afford from his wages.

Q2. How did the young lady trick Horace?

Answer: She pretended to be the wife of the house owner and said she had forgotten the safe's combination. She spoke politely and flattered Horace, so he opened the safe with his tools and handed her the jewels. She was herself a thief.

Q3. What is ironic about Horace's arrest?

Answer: Horace is arrested for stealing jewels that he never took. He opened the safe and gave the jewels to the lady, taking nothing for himself, yet he is punished for the robbery while the real thief escapes with the jewels.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Horace Danby was a thief, yet the story makes the reader feel sorry for him. Why?

Answer: Horace is not an ordinary thief. He is a skilled and honest locksmith who works hard all year, and his only crime is a strange one: once a year he steals to buy rare books. He loves books so much that he risks prison for them, and the reader feels that his crime, though wrong, comes from a love of learning rather than greed. His careful planning and his politeness make him almost likeable. The irony that wins our sympathy is that he is tricked by another thief who is cleverer and less honest than he is. The young lady uses his trust and his good manners against him, and he loses his freedom for jewels he never kept. The story makes us feel sorry for Horace because he is punished for a crime he did not complete, and because his one weakness, his trust in a stranger's word, destroys him. The title itself is a question: can a thief trust anyone? Horace learns that he cannot.

Unit 5 - Footprints without Feet

By H. G. Wells

Theme: *Science without humanity brings crime and ruin.*

Summary

Griffin is a brilliant scientist who discovers how to make a human body invisible. He experiments with drugs and succeeds, but he uses his discovery for crime instead of good. He steals money, sets fire to his landlord's house, and walks the streets of London unseen. One winter morning two boys see fresh footprints in the mud with no feet making them, and they follow the prints until they fade. Griffin goes into a shop to steal clothes and is discovered when the shopkeeper sees money floating in the air. He escapes, but he is cold and naked, so he steals clothes and food from a clergyman's house. Later he goes to the village of Iping, where he stays at an inn and behaves rudely. The innkeeper and the villagers grow suspicious, and when the clergyman's money is stolen, they suspect the stranger. A policeman tries to arrest Griffin, but Griffin takes off his clothes and becomes invisible, and he escapes after knocking the policeman down. The story warns that a great discovery in the hands of a selfish man becomes a curse.

Key Points

- Griffin discovers a drug that makes the human body invisible.
- He uses his invisibility to steal and to set fire to a house.
- Two boys notice footprints in the mud with no feet making them.
- At Iping, the villagers and the police suspect the strange guest.
- Griffin escapes arrest by removing his clothes and becoming invisible.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'Footprints without Feet'?

A) H. G. Wells
B) Robert W. Peterson
C) Victor Canning
D) K. A. Abbas

Q2. What did Griffin discover?

A) A cure for blindness
B) How to make a human body invisible
C) A new medicine
D) A flying machine

Q3. What did the two boys see in the mud?

A) A dog's footprints
B) Fresh footprints with no feet making them
C) A broken bicycle
D) A lost shoe

Q4. Where did Griffin stay as a guest?

A) In London

B) At an inn in the village of Iping

C) In a hospital

D) At a school

Q5. How did Griffin escape the policeman?

A) He ran away

B) He removed his clothes and became invisible

C) He hid in a cupboard

D) He bribed the policeman

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. How did Griffin become invisible?

Answer: Griffin was a scientist who experimented with rare drugs. After long research he found a way to make the human body transparent, so that light passed through it and the body could not be seen.

Q2. Why did the boys follow the footprints?

Answer: Two boys saw fresh footprints appearing in the mud of a London street, but there was no one making them. Curious and amazed, they followed the footprints until the prints faded and Griffin had moved on.

Q3. Why were the people of Iping suspicious of Griffin?

Answer: Griffin was a strange guest: he kept his face covered, refused to talk, paid in advance, and behaved rudely. When money was stolen from the clergyman's house, the villagers suspected the stranger at the inn.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Griffin's discovery was great, but it made him a criminal. Discuss.

Answer: Griffin's discovery of invisibility was a triumph of science, but his character made it a curse. A good man might have used invisibility to help others or to learn, but Griffin was selfish and greedy. He stole money from his own father, set fire to his landlord's house to hide his experiments, and then wandered London robbing shops and houses. His invisibility gave him power without responsibility, and he used it to hurt others. Even his needs became crimes: because he was invisible and naked, he had to steal clothes and food. At Iping his rudeness and his thefts turned the whole village against him, and he escaped only by knocking down the policeman who tried to arrest him. The story warns that science alone is not enough. A discovery is good or bad according to the hands that hold it, and Griffin's hands made a great discovery into a weapon.

Unit 6 - The Making of a Scientist

By Robert W. Peterson

Theme: *Curiosity, hard work and a mother's support make a great scientist.*

Summary

Richard Ebright was a curious child who collected butterflies, rocks and fossils, and who asked questions about everything. His mother supported him: she bought him books, took him on trips, and bought him a microscope and a telescope. When he was in the seventh grade, he lost a county science fair, and a doctor advised him to do a real experiment instead of only showing a display. Richard began to work on monarch butterflies. He discovered that the viceroy butterfly copies the monarch to escape birds, and later he studied how the cells of a monarch read their DNA. His work on the gold spots of a monarch pupa and on the hormone that controls them won him prizes at science fairs and a place at Harvard. He also played as a champion debater and photographer. The chapter shows that a scientist is made by curiosity, by hard work, and by a family that encourages questions.

Key Points

- Richard Ebright was curious from childhood and collected butterflies and fossils.
- His mother encouraged him with books, trips and scientific instruments.
- Losing a science fair taught him to do real experiments, not only displays.
- He studied monarch butterflies and discovered how their cells work.
- His work won prizes and a place at Harvard University.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'The Making of a Scientist'?

A) Robert W. Peterson
B) James Herriot
C) Claire Boiko
D) H. G. Wells

Q2. What did Richard Ebright collect as a child?

A) Stamps
B) Butterflies, rocks and fossils
C) Coins
D) Postcards

Q3. Who encouraged Richard's curiosity most?

A) His teacher
B) His mother
C) His friend
D) His father

Q4. Which butterfly did Richard study in his experiments?

A) The monarch butterfly

B) The blue morpho

C) The cabbage white

D) The swallowtail

Q5. What did losing a science fair teach Richard?

A) To give up science

B) To do a real experiment instead of only showing a display

C) To copy others

D) To choose easier topics

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-A, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. How did Richard's mother help him become a scientist?

Answer: His mother bought him books, took him on trips, and gave him a microscope, a telescope and other instruments. She answered his questions and encouraged his curiosity, which made science a joyful part of his life.

Q2. What was Richard's important discovery about monarch butterflies?

Answer: Richard discovered that the gold spots on a monarch pupa produce a hormone needed for the butterfly's growth. He also studied how the cells of the monarch read their DNA, which was new and important work in cell biology.

Q3. What qualities made Richard a good scientist?

Answer: Richard was curious, hard-working and patient. He asked questions, observed carefully, and kept experimenting even after failures. He was also a good debater and photographer, showing that a scientist needs many skills.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. How did curiosity and hard work make Richard Ebright a scientist?

Answer: Richard Ebright became a scientist not by chance but by habit. As a child he was curious about everything: he collected butterflies, rocks and fossils and asked why things were as they were. His mother fed this curiosity with books, trips and instruments, so that learning felt like play. When he lost a county science fair, he did not give up; he listened to the doctor who told him to do a real experiment, and he began serious work on monarch butterflies. His experiments were patient and careful: he raised butterflies, watched their growth, and tested his ideas step by step. His discovery about the gold spots of the pupa and his later work on how cells read DNA came from years of such patient work. The chapter shows that a scientist is made by three things: curiosity that asks questions, hard work that tests answers, and support that keeps the questions alive.

Unit 7 - The Necklace

By Guy de Maupassant

Theme: *Vanity and the desire to seem rich can destroy a life.*

Summary

Matilda Loisel is a pretty young woman who is unhappy because she is not rich. She dreams of fine clothes, jewels and a grand house, but her husband is only a clerk. One day her husband brings home an invitation to a grand ball. Matilda is upset because she has no fine dress or jewel to wear. Her husband gives her money for a dress, and she borrows a diamond necklace from her rich friend Madame Forestier. At the ball Matilda is a great success and dances all night. But when she leaves, she finds that the necklace is lost. The Loisels search everywhere and cannot find it. They decide to replace it, and they buy a necklace that looks the same for thirty-six thousand francs, borrowing money from everyone they know. For ten years they live in poverty, working hard to repay the debt. At last the debt is paid, and Matilda meets Madame Forestier again. She tells her the whole story, and her friend answers that the lost necklace was false: it was worth only five hundred francs. Matilda's ten years of suffering were caused by vanity and by a necklace that was not real.

Key Points

- Matilda Loisel is unhappy because she is poor and dreams of luxury.
- She borrows a diamond necklace from Madame Forestier for a ball.
- The necklace is lost on the way home from the ball.
- The Loisels buy a replacement for thirty-six thousand francs and fall into debt.
- After ten years of poverty, Matilda learns the necklace was false, worth only five hundred francs.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'The Necklace'?

A) Guy de Maupassant
B) K. A. Abbas
C) Claire Boiko
D) Robert W. Peterson

Q2. From whom did Matilda borrow the necklace?

A) Her sister
B) Madame Forestier
C) Her mother
D) A jeweller

Q3. How much did the replacement necklace cost?

A) Five hundred francs
B) Thirty-six thousand francs
C) Ten thousand francs
D) Eighteen thousand francs

Q4. How many years did the Loisels take to repay the debt?

A) Five years
B) Ten years
C) One year
D) Twenty years

Q5. What was the real value of the lost necklace?

A) Five hundred francs
B) Thirty-six thousand francs
C) Five thousand francs
D) Nothing

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-A

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why was Matilda unhappy with her life?

Answer: Matilda was pretty and dreamed of luxury, fine clothes, jewels and grand houses. But she was married to a clerk and lived a simple life, so she felt that fate had been unfair to her.

Q2. Why did the Loisels decide to replace the necklace instead of telling the truth?

Answer: They were afraid to admit the loss to Madame Forestier. They thought she would be angry and would demand a necklace of the same value, so they decided to buy a replacement secretly and return it without a word.

Q3. What is the irony of the story's ending?

Answer: The irony is that the Loisels spent ten years in poverty to repay thirty-six thousand francs for a necklace that was false and worth only five hundred francs. Their suffering was caused by a jewel that had no real value.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Matilda's vanity destroys ten years of her life. Explain.

Answer: Matilda's ruin begins with vanity: she is not content with her simple life and dreams of wealth, jewels and admiration. When the invitation to the ball arrives, she is not glad; she is upset because she has nothing fine to wear. Her husband sacrifices his savings for a dress, and she borrows a necklace to complete her appearance. At the ball she is the centre of attention, and for one night her dream comes true. But the dream costs her ten years: the necklace is lost, and instead of telling the truth, the Loisels borrow a huge sum to replace it. They move to a poor flat, dismiss the servant, and work day and night to repay the debt. Matilda grows old, plain and hard-working, and loses the very beauty she prized. When she learns at last that the necklace was false, the irony is complete: her suffering was for nothing real. The story warns that the desire to seem rich can cost more than poverty itself.

Unit 8 - Bholi

By K. A. Abbas

Theme: *Education gives a girl courage, dignity and the power to choose.*

Summary

Sulekha, called Bholi because she is a simple child, is the youngest daughter of Ramlal, a village headman. As a baby she fell from her cot and hurt her head, and smallpox left her face covered with pockmarks. She stammers when she speaks, so other children laugh at her and her family thinks she is dull. When a new primary school opens in the village, her father sends her to school only because the teacher asks for a girl from his family. At school the teacher is kind to Bholi: she speaks to her softly, gives her a book, and tells her that she will learn to read and speak without fear. Bholi grows into a confident and educated young woman. When her father arranges her marriage to Bishamber, a rich man of fifty who is lame, Bishamber demands a dowry of five thousand rupees at the wedding. Bholi refuses to marry a greedy man who insults her father, and she throws away the garland. She tells her parents that she will serve them and teach in the village school. Education has given her the courage to choose her own life.

Key Points

- Bholi is a simple girl with pockmarks and a stammer, laughed at by others.
- Her father sends her to school only to please the teacher.
- The kind teacher gives Bholi confidence and the love of learning.
- Bishamber, her bridegroom, demands five thousand rupees as dowry.
- Bholi refuses the marriage and chooses to teach and serve her parents.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'Bholi'?

A) K. A. Abbas
B) Guy de Maupassant
C) Claire Boiko
D) Ruskin Bond

Q2. What was Bholi's real name?

A) Sulekha
B) Kamla
C) Radha
D) Sita

Q3. Why did other children laugh at Bholi?

A) She was poor
B) She had pockmarks and a stammer
C) She was lazy
D) She wore old clothes

Q4. Who gave Bholi confidence and education?

A) Her father

B) Her school teacher

C) Her sister

D) Bishamber

Q5. Why did Bholi refuse to marry Bishamber?

A) He was poor

B) He demanded five thousand rupees as dowry and insulted her father

C) He lived far away

D) He was too young

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-A, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why was Bholi sent to school?

Answer: Bholi's father did not send her to school because he valued her education. He sent her only because the teacher asked for a girl from his family when the new primary school opened, and he did not want to refuse.

Q2. How did the teacher change Bholi's life?

Answer: The teacher spoke to Bholi kindly, gave her a book, and told her she would learn to read and write and speak without fear. Her kindness gave Bholi confidence, and Bholi grew into an educated and self-respecting young woman.

Q3. Why did Bholi throw away the garland?

Answer: At the wedding Bishamber demanded five thousand rupees as dowry and insulted Bholi's father. Bholi refused to marry a greedy and disrespectful man, so she threw the garland away and rejected the marriage.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. Education transforms Bholi from a timid girl into a confident woman. Show how.

Answer: Bholi begins life with every disadvantage: a fall in childhood hurt her mind, smallpox marked her face, and she stammers when she speaks. Her family thinks she is dull and nobody expects anything of her. She is sent to school almost by accident, yet school changes everything. Her teacher treats her with kindness instead of mockery, gives her a book, and promises that she will learn. In that kindness Bholi finds her voice: she learns to read and write, and her stammer fades as her confidence grows. The change is proved at her wedding. When Bishamber demands dowry and insults her father, the old Bholi would have accepted silently, but the educated Bholi refuses. She throws away the garland, tells her parents she will look after them, and chooses to teach in the village school. Education has given her what no dowry could: dignity, courage and the power to decide her own life.

Unit 9 - The Book That Saved the Earth

By Claire Boiko

Theme: *Books and stories are more powerful than weapons.*

Summary

The play is set in the twenty-fifth century, when a historian tells how the Earth was saved from an invasion by Martians in the year 2048. The Martians are led by Think-Tank, a mighty ruler who believes he is the most intelligent creature in the universe. His team, Noodle, Omega, Iota and Oop, lands on Earth and enters a library. They find a book of nursery rhymes and take it back to Mars. Think-Tank orders his team to read it, believing it is a book of Earthling secrets. The rhymes frighten him: he thinks the Earthlings can sing, that they keep cats and cows in their houses, and that they have taught their animals to sing and dance. He believes the Earthlings are so powerful that they will soon invade Mars. In panic he orders his fleet to leave Earth at once and never return. The book of nursery rhymes, meant for children, saves the Earth from invasion. The play is a comedy with a serious message: books hold great power, and a civilisation that reads is stronger than one that only fights.

Key Points

- The play is set in the twenty-fifth century and looks back to the year 2048.
- Think-Tank, the Martian ruler, plans to invade the Earth.
- His team finds a book of nursery rhymes in a library on Earth.
- Think-Tank mistakes the rhymes for secrets of Earthling power.
- Frightened, he orders his fleet to leave Earth and never return.

Solved MCQs

Q1. Who wrote 'The Book That Saved the Earth'?

A) Claire Boiko
B) K. A. Abbas
C) H. G. Wells
D) Robert W. Peterson

Q2. Who was the ruler of Mars?

A) Noodle
B) Think-Tank
C) Omega
D) Oop

Q3. In which year did the Martians plan to invade the Earth?

A) 2048
B) 2025
C) 1999
D) 2100

Q4. What book did the Martians find on Earth?

A) A book of science
B) A book of nursery rhymes
C) A book of history
D) A book of maps

Q5. Why did Think-Tank order his fleet to leave Earth?

A) He ran out of fuel
B) He believed the Earthlings were too powerful to fight
C) He was called back to Mars
D) His team refused to fight

Answer Key: 1-A, 2-B, 3-A, 4-B, 5-B

Short Questions and Answers

Q1. Why did Think-Tank think the nursery rhymes were dangerous?

Answer: Think-Tank believed the book held the secrets of the Earthlings. When he heard rhymes about cats, cows and singing, he thought the Earthlings could make animals sing and dance, and that such a powerful people would soon invade Mars.

Q2. How did a children's book save the Earth?

Answer: The Martians misunderstood the nursery rhymes completely. They thought the rhymes proved that Earthlings were powerful and dangerous, so Think-Tank ordered his fleet to leave Earth at once. A simple book of rhymes stopped an invasion without a single weapon.

Q3. What is the message of the play?

Answer: The play teaches that books and knowledge are more powerful than weapons. A civilisation that reads and thinks can defend itself with ideas, while a ruler who acts out of ignorance and fear can be defeated by a children's book.

Long Question and Answer

Q1. How does misunderstanding save the Earth in this play?

Answer: The whole play turns on a misunderstanding. Think-Tank is the mightiest ruler of Mars, but he is also the most ignorant: he has never seen a book before, and he orders his team to read the nursery rhymes as if they were military secrets. Because he knows nothing about children or songs, every rhyme frightens him. He thinks the Earthlings keep cats that play the fiddle and cows that jump over the moon, and he concludes that a people who can teach animals to sing must be able to conquer Mars. His fear grows with every rhyme until he orders his fleet to flee. The comedy lies in the gap between what the book is, a simple book for children, and what Think-Tank thinks it is, a book of terrible power. The play's message is that ignorance makes even the mighty foolish, and that books, even children's books, carry a power that weapons cannot match.

Revision Checklist

- ■ I can summarise every one of the 28 units in my own words.
- ■ I have attempted all 140 MCQs and checked the answer keys.
- ■ I have written at least one long answer from each part without looking at the book.
- ■ I can explain the theme of every poem without quoting its lines.
- ■ I know the paper pattern: 80 theory + 20 internal, 3 hours, 33% pass in each part.
- ■ I have revised the key points of all 28 units in the last week.

Good luck! Read the textbooks themselves along with these notes. These notes are a guide for revision; the textbooks are the real source. For the official books and the CBSE curriculum, visit ncert.nic.in and cbseacademic.nic.in.

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