

Comprehension Passages from 'A Letter to God'

Read the following passages carefully.

1. The house — the only one in the entire valley — sat on the crest of a low hill. From this height one could see the river and the field of ripe corn dotted with the flowers that always promised a good harvest. The only thing the earth needed was a downpour or at least a shower. Throughout the morning Lencho — who knew his fields intimately — had done nothing else but see the sky towards the north-east. "Now we're really going to get some water, woman." The woman who was preparing supper, replied, "Yes, God willing". The older boys were working in the field, while the smaller ones were playing near the house until the woman called to them all, "Come for dinner".

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What does 'From this height...' refer to?
2. What does the earth need and why?
3. **How was the cornfield?** ()
 - a) Full of ripe corn
 - b) No sign of life
 - c) Infested with locusts
4. **Which direction was Lencho looking?** ()
 - a) north-west
 - b) south-east
 - c) north-east
5. **What were the smaller boys doing?** ()
 - a) swimming
 - b) playing
 - c) sleeping

ANSWERS

1. 'From this height' refers to the height at which the house is situated, i.e., from the crest of a low hill. 2. The earth needed a downpour because it was essential for the crops to grow well and ensure a good harvest. 3. a 4. c 5. b

2.

It was during the meal that, just as Lencho had predicted, big drops of rain began to fall. In the north-east huge mountains of clouds could be seen approaching. The air was fresh and sweet. The man went out for no other reason than to have the pleasure of feeling the rain on his body, and when he returned he exclaimed, "These aren't raindrops falling from the sky, they are new coins. The big drops are ten cent pieces and the little ones are fives." With a satisfied expression he regarded the field of ripe corn with its flowers, draped in a curtain of rain. But suddenly a strong wind began to blow and along with the rain very large hailstones began to fall.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What did Lencho see in the north-east?
2. Why did Lencho go out in the rain?
3. What did Lencho compare the raindrops to? ()
a) silver coins b) new coins c) gold coins
4. How did the cornfield look in the rain? ()
a) draped in a curtain of rain b) covered in mud c) filled with water
5. What began to fall along with the rain? ()
a) snowflakes b) strong dust c) large hailstones

ANSWERS

1. 1. Lencho saw huge mountains of clouds approaching in the north-east. 2. Lencho went out to enjoy the feeling of rain on his body. 3. b 4. a 5. c

3. These truly did resemble new silver coins. The boys, exposing themselves to the rain, ran out to collect the frozen pearls. "It's really getting bad now," exclaimed the man. "I hope it passes quickly." It did not pass quickly. For an hour the hail rained on the house, the garden, the hillside, the cornfield, on the whole valley. The field was white, as if covered with salt. Not a leaf remained on the trees. The corn was totally destroyed. The flowers were gone from the plants. Lencho's soul was filled with sadness. When the storm had passed, he stood in the middle of the field and said to his sons, "A plague of locusts would have left more than this. The hail has left nothing. This year we will have no corn."

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What did the hailstones resemble? ()
2. What did the boys do when the hail started falling? ()
3. How long did the hailstorm last? ()
 - a) half an hour
 - b) one hour
 - c) two hours
4. What did Lencho say after the storm? ()
 - a) "At least some corn is left."
 - b) "The hail has left nothing."
 - c) "We can still save the crops."
5. How did the valley appear after the storm? ()
 - a) White, as if covered with salt
 - b) Brown, filled with mud
 - c) Green, with fresh leaves

ANSWERS

1. The hailstones resembled new silver coins. 2. The boys ran out to collect the frozen pearls. 3. b 4. b 5. a

That night was a sorrowful one. "All our work, for nothing." "There's no one who can help us." "We'll all go hungry this year." But in the hearts of all who lived in that solitary house in the middle of the valley, there was a single hope: help from God. "Don't be so upset, even though this seems like a total loss. Remember, no one dies of hunger." "That's what they say: no one dies of hunger." All through the night, Lencho thought only of his one hope: the help of God, whose eyes, as he had been instructed, see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience. Lencho was an ox of a man, working like an animal in the fields, but still he knew how to write. The following Sunday, at daybreak, he began to write a letter which he himself would carry to town and place in the mail.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. Why was that night sorrowful?
2. What was the only hope for Lencho and his family?
3. How did Lencho work in the fields? ()
a) lazily b) like an ox c) carelessly
4. What did Lencho do at daybreak on Sunday? ()
a) went to town b) prayed for help c) wrote a letter
5. What was Lencho sure about? ()
a) No one dies of hunger b) It is unbearable c) It has no cure

ANSWERS

1. That night was sorrowful because all efforts of Lencho and his family were wasted, and they feared going hungry. 2. The only hope for Lencho and his family was help from God. 3. b 4. c 5. a

5.

It was nothing less than a letter to God. "God," he wrote, "if you don't help me, my family and I will go hungry this year. I need a hundred pesos in order to sow my field again and to live until the crop comes, because the hailstorm...." He wrote 'To God' on the envelope, put the letter inside and, still troubled, went to town. At the post office, he placed a stamp on the letter and dropped it into the mailbox. One of the employees, who was a postman and also helped at the post office, went to his boss laughing heartily and showed him the letter to God. Never in his career as a postman had he known that address.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. To whom did Lencho write the letter?
2. Why did Lencho ask for a hundred pesos?
3. What did the postman do after finding the letter? ()
 - a) Delivered it to God
 - b) Showed it to his boss
 - c) Threw it away
4. How did Lencho feel while posting the letter? ()
 - a) hopeful
 - b) troubled
 - c) excited
5. What did Lencho write on the envelope? ()
 - a) 'To God'
 - b) 'To the postmaster'
 - c) 'To a friend'

ANSWERS

1. Lencho wrote the letter to God. 2. Lencho needed the money to sow his field again and survive until the next crop. 3. b 4. b 5. a

6. The postmaster — a fat, amiable fellow — also broke out laughing, but almost immediately he turned serious and, tapping the letter on his desk, commented, "What faith! I wish I had the faith of the man who wrote this letter. Starting up a correspondence with God!" So, in order not to shake the writer's faith in God, the postmaster came up with an idea: answer the letter. But when he opened it, it was evident that to answer it he needed something more than goodwill, ink and paper. But he stuck to his resolution: he asked for money from his employees, he himself gave part of his salary, and several friends of his were obliged to give something 'for an act of charity'.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How did the postmaster react after reading the letter?
2. Why did the postmaster decide to answer Lencho's letter?
3. What did the postmaster say about Lencho's faith? ()
 - a) He wished he had such faith
 - b) He found it amusing
 - c) He thought it was foolish
4. How did the postmaster arrange money? ()
 - a) Asked for donations
 - b) Took it from the office
 - c) Borrowed from the bank
5. The postmaster was described as ____ ()
 - a) Stout and tall
 - b) Fat and amiable
 - c) Irritable and moody

ANSWERS

1. The postmaster laughed at first but soon became serious. 2. The postmaster did not want to shake Lencho's faith in God and so he decided to answer Lencho's letter.
3. a 4. a 5. b

7. It was impossible for him to gather together the hundred pesos, so he was able to send the farmer only a little more than half. He put the money in an envelope addressed to Lencho and with it a letter containing only a single word as a signature: God. The following Sunday Lencho came a bit earlier than usual to ask if there was a letter for him. It was the postman himself who handed the letter to him while the postmaster, experiencing the contentment of a man who has performed a good deed, looked on from his office. Lencho showed not the slightest surprise on seeing the money; such was his confidence — but he became angry when he counted the money. God could not have made a mistake, nor could he have denied Lencho what he had requested.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. Why could the postmaster not send the full amount? ()
2. How much money did Lencho receive? ()
3. Who handed the letter to Lencho? ()
a) The postmaster b) A friend c) The postman
4. How did the postmaster feel after helping Lencho? ()
a) guilty b) satisfied c) regretful
5. Why was Lencho not surprised to see the money? ()
a) He was confident God would send it
b) He expected it from the postmaster
c) he found it lying on the ground

ANSWERS

1. The postmaster could not gather the full amount because it was impossible for him to collect all hundred pesos. 2. Lencho received a little more than half of what he had requested. 3. c 4. b 5. a

8. Immediately, Lencho went up to the window to ask for paper and ink. On the public writing-table, he started to write, with much wrinkling of his brow, caused by the effort he had to make to express his ideas. When he finished, he went to the window to buy a stamp which he licked and then affixed to the envelope with a blow of his fist. The moment the letter fell into the mailbox the postmaster went to open it. It said: "God: Of the money that I asked for, only seventy pesos reached me. Send me the rest, since I need it very much. But don't send it to me through the mail because the post office employees are a bunch of crooks. Lencho."

Now, answer the following questions.

1. Why did Lencho ask for paper and ink?
2. Where did Lencho begin writing his letter?
3. How did the postmaster react when the letter fell into the mailbox? ()
a) He ignored it b) He immediately opened it c) He laughed at it
4. What did Lencho call the post office employees? ()
a) Helpful men b) Crooks c) Kind-hearted people
5. What did Lencho accuse the post office employees of? ()
a) Stealing his money b) Delaying his letter c) Losing his letter

ANSWERS

1. Lencho asked for paper and ink to write another letter to God.
2. Lencho began writing his letter at the public writing-table.
3. b 4. b 5. a

Comprehension Passages from 'Nelson Mandela : Long Walk to Freedom'

Read the following passages carefully.

1.

On the podium, Mr de Klerk was first sworn in as second deputy president. Then Thabo Mbeki was sworn in as first deputy president. When it was my turn, I pledged to obey and uphold the Constitution and to devote myself to the well being of the Republic and its people. To the assembled guests and the watching world, I said: Today, all of us do, by our presence here... confer glory and hope to newborn liberty. Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long, must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud. We, who were outlaws not so long ago, have today been given the rare privilege to be host to the nations of the world on our own soil.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What oath did the speaker take during his swearing-in?
2. What did the speaker say about the significance of the assembled guests and the watching world?
3. What position did Mr de Klerk hold during the inauguration? ()
 - a) First deputy president
 - b) Second deputy president
 - c) Second deputy speaker
4. What did the speaker say must be born out of the extraordinary human disaster? ()
 - a) A society of technological advancement
 - b) A society of which all humanity will be proud
 - c) A society of economic prosperity
5. How did the speaker describe the presence of former outlaws at the event? ()
 - a) As a moment of reconciliation
 - b) As a rare privilege to host the nations of the world
 - c) As a symbol of political transformation

ANSWERS

1. The speaker pledged to obey and uphold the Constitution and to devote himself to the well-being of the Republic and its people. 2. The speaker said their presence conferred glory and hope to newborn liberty. 3. b 4. b 5. b

2. We thank all of our distinguished international guests for having come to take possession with the people of our country of what is, after all, a common victory for justice, for peace, for human dignity. We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination. Never, never, and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another. The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement. Let freedom reign. God bless Africa! A few moments later we all lifted our eyes in awe as a spectacular array of South African jets, helicopters and troop carriers roared in perfect formation over the Union Buildings.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. Whom did the speaker thank in the opening of the speech?
2. What did the speaker declare as a common victory?
3. What commitment did the speaker make for the future? ()
 - a) To achieve economic prosperity
 - b) To liberate people from poverty and discrimination
 - c) To strengthen international relations
4. What did the speaker vow would never happen again in the country? ()
 - a) Political conflicts
 - b) Economic decline
 - c) Oppression of one by another
5. What event took place moments after the speech? ()
 - a) A parade of cultural performances
 - b) A spectacular display of jets, helicopters, and troop carriers
 - c) A national flag-raising ceremony

ANSWERS

1. The speaker thanked the distinguished international guests. 2. The speaker declared freedom from oppression (political freedom) as a common victory for justice, peace, and human dignity. 3. b 4. c 5. b

3.

It was not only a display of pinpoint precision and military force, but a demonstration of the military's loyalty to democracy, to a new government that had been freely and fairly elected. Only moments before, the highest generals of the South African defence force and police, their chests bedecked with ribbons and medals from days gone by, saluted me and pledged their loyalty. I was not unmindful of the fact that not so many years before they would not have saluted but arrested me. Finally, a chevron of Impala jets left a smoke trail of the black, red, green, blue and gold of the new South African flag. The day was symbolised for me by the playing of our two national anthems, and the vision of whites singing 'Nkosi Sikelel -iAfrika' and blacks singing 'Die Stem', the old anthem of the Republic.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What did the military display symbolise?
2. How did the highest generals of the South African defence force and police show their loyalty?
3. What was the significance of the chevron of Impala jets? ()
 - a) It represented the military's strength
 - b) It left a smoke trail of the new South African flag's colours
 - c) It performed aerial acrobatics
4. What did the playing of the two national anthems symbolise for the speaker? ()
 - a) The unity of the nation
 - b) The military's power
 - c) The country's economic progress
5. What does a chevron mean? ()
 - a) A triangle shape
 - b) A circle
 - c) A V-shaped line

ANSWERS

1. The military display symbolised the military's loyalty to democracy and the new government. 2. The highest generals saluted the speaker and pledged their loyalty.
3. b 4. a 5. c

4. Although that day neither group knew the lyrics of the anthem they once despised, they would soon know the words by heart. On the day of the inauguration, I was overwhelmed with a sense of history. In the first decade of the twentieth century, a few years after the bitter Anglo-Boer war and before my own birth, the white-skinned peoples of South Africa patched up their differences and erected a system of racial domination against the dark-skinned peoples of their own land. The structure they created formed the basis of one of the harshest, most inhumane, societies the world has ever known. Now, in the last decade of the twentieth century, and my own eighth decade as a man, that system had been overturned forever and replaced by one that recognised the rights and freedoms of all peoples, regardless of the colour of their skin.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How did the speaker feel on the day of the inauguration?
2. What historical system was created by the white-skinned peoples of South Africa?
3. What was the system of racial domination eventually replaced by?
 - a) A new economic policy ()
 - b) A democratic system recognizing all rights and freedoms
 - c) A new set of laws
4. In which decade did the speaker witness the system being overturned?
 - a) First decade of the 20th century ()
 - b) Last decade of the 20th century
 - c) First decade of the 21st century
5. What war is mentioned that took place before the speaker's birth? ()
 - a) World War I
 - b) Anglo-Boer War
 - c) Civil War

ANSWERS

1. The speaker felt overwhelmed with a sense of history.
2. A system of racial domination against the dark-skinned peoples of South Africa.
3. b 4. b 5. b

Comprehension Passages from 'Two Stories about Flying'

Read the passages from 'His First Flight'.

1.

He stepped slowly out to the brink of the ledge, and standing on one leg with the other leg hidden under his wing, he closed one eye, then the other, and pretended to be falling asleep. Still they took no notice of him. He saw his two brothers and his sister lying on the plateau dozing with their heads sunk into their necks. His father was preening the feathers on his white back. Only his mother was looking at him. She was standing on a little high hump on the plateau, her white breast thrust forward. Now and again, she tore at a piece of fish that lay at her feet and then scrapped each side of her beak on the rock. The sight of the food maddened him. How he loved to tear food that way, scrapping his beak now and again to whet it. "Ga, ga, ga," he cried begging her to bring him some food. "Gaw-col-ah," she screamed back derisively.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How did the young seagull try to get his family's attention?
2. What was the mother seagull doing while the young seagull watched her?
3. How did the young seagull's siblings spend their time on the plateau?
a) Practising their flight skills ()
b) Dozing with their heads sunk into their necks
c) Playing with each other
4. What effect did the sight of food have on the young seagull? ()
a) It maddened him with hunger
b) It made him lose interest in flying
c) It encouraged him to wait patiently
5. How did the mother respond to the young seagull's cries for food? ()
a) She immediately brought him some food
b) She screamed back at him derisively
c) She ignored him completely

ANSWERS

1. The young seagull pretended to be falling asleep on the brink of the ledge to get his family's attention. 2. The mother seagull was standing on a high hump, tearing a piece of fish and scraping her beak on the rock. 3. b 4. a 5. b

2.

His mother had picked up a piece of the fish and was flying across to him with it. He leaned out eagerly, tapping the rock with his feet, trying to get nearer to her as she flew across. But when she was just opposite to him, she halted, her wings motionless, the piece of fish in her beak almost within reach of his beak. He waited a moment in surprise, wondering why she did not come nearer, and then, maddened by hunger, he dived at the fish. With a loud scream he fell outwards and downwards into space. Then a monstrous terror seized him and heart stood still. He could hear nothing. But it only lasted a minute. The next moment he felt his wings spread outwards. The wind rushed against his breast feathers, then under his stomach, and against his wings. He could feel the tips of his wings cutting through the air. He was not falling headlong now. He was soaring gradually downwards and outwards. He was no longer afraid. He just felt a bit dizzy. Then he flapped his wings once and he soared upwards.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What did the seagull's mother do?
2. What surprised the young seagull?
3. What made the young seagull dive into the sky? ()
a) hunger b) anger c) fear
4. Why did the young seagull's heart stand still? ()
a) The seagull fell into the water.
b) The seagull's mother maddened him.
c) The seagull was terrified to enter the space outwards and downwards.
5. What made the seagull fearless? ()
a) The experience of flight into the sky.
b) The sight of the fish.
c) The encouragement of siblings

ANSWERS

1. Seagull's mother picked up a piece of the fish and flew across to seagull. She just stopped opposite to him. 2. The young seagull was surprised why his mother did not come nearer to him. 3. a 4. c 5. a

3.

The wind rushed against his breast feathers, then under his stomach, and against his wings. He could feel the tips of his wings cutting through the air. He was not falling headlong now. He was soaring gradually downwards and outwards. He was no longer afraid. He just felt a bit dizzy. Then he flapped his wings once and he soared upwards. "Ga, ga, ga, Ga, ga, ga, Gaw-col-ah," his mother swooped past him, her wings making a loud noise. He answered her with another scream. Then his father flew over him screaming. He saw his two brothers and his sister flying around him curveting and banking and soaring and diving. Then he completely forgot that he had not always been able to fly, and commended himself to dive and soar and curve, shrieking shrilly.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How did the young seagull's feelings change after he started flying?
2. What did the young seagull's family do when he finally took flight?
3. **How did the young seagull realise he was no longer falling?** ()
 - a) He felt the wind rushing against his wings
 - b) He heard his mother calling him
 - c) He saw the ground beneath him
4. **What action showed that the young seagull had gained confidence?**
 - a) He hesitated before flapping his wings ()
 - b) He started diving and soaring joyfully
 - c) He called out for help
5. **How did the young seagull's siblings react to his flight?** ()
 - a) They ignored him
 - b) They scolded him for being afraid earlier
 - c) They flew around him, curveting and soaring

ANSWERS

1. The young seagull was no longer afraid but felt a bit dizzy at first.
2. The young seagull's family flew around him, shrieking and celebrating his success.
3. a 4. b 5. c

4. He was near the sea now, flying straight over it, facing straight out over the ocean. He saw a vast green sea beneath him, with little ridges moving over it and he turned his beak sideways and cawed amusedly. His parents and his brothers and sister had landed on this green flooring ahead of him. They were beckoning to him, calling shrilly. He dropped his legs to stand on the green sea. His legs sank into it. He screamed with fright and attempted to rise again flapping his wings. But he was tired and weak with hunger and he could not rise, exhausted by the strange exercise. His feet sank into the green sea, and then his belly touched it and he sank no farther. He was floating on it, and around him his family was screaming, praising him and their beaks were offering him scraps of dog-fish. He had made his first flight.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How did the young seagull react when he saw the sea beneath him?
2. What did the young seagull's family do when he landed on the sea?
3. **What frightened the young seagull when he tried to stand on the sea?** ()
 - a) The sight of deep water
 - b) His legs sinking into the water
 - c) The strong waves crashing around him
4. **Why was the young seagull unable to rise again after landing on the sea?** ()
 - a) He was too tired and weak with hunger
 - b) The waves were too strong
 - c) His wings were too small to lift him
5. **How did the young seagull's family express their joy at his successful flight?** ()
 - a) They scolded him for hesitating earlier
 - b) They ignored him and flew away
 - c) They praised him and offered him food

ANSWERS

1. The young seagull, when he saw the sea beneath him, turned his beak sideways and cawed amusedly. 2. The young seagull's family screamed in praise and offered him scraps of dog-fish when he landed on the sea. 3. b 4. a 5. c

5.

The voice from the radio answered me immediately: "DS 088, I can hear you. You ought to turn twelve degrees west now, DS 088. Over." I checked the map and the compass, switched over to my second and last fuel tank, and turned the Dakota twelve degrees west towards England. 'I'll be in time for breakfast,' I thought. A good big English breakfast! Everything was going well — it was an easy flight. Paris was about 150 kilometres behind me when I saw the clouds. Storm clouds. They were huge. They looked like black mountains standing in front of me across the sky. I knew I could not fly up and over them, and I did not have enough fuel to fly around them to the north or south. "I ought to go back to Paris," I thought, but I wanted to get home.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What instruction did the voice from the radio give to the narrator?
2. Why did the narrator think of going back to Paris?
3. What did the storm clouds look like to the narrator? ()
 - a) White mist covering the sky
 - b) Black mountains in front of him
 - c) Thick layers of fog over the sea
4. Why couldn't the narrator fly over the storm clouds? ()
 - a) His aeroplane was too slow
 - b) The clouds were too high as his petrol was limited
 - c) His compass was not working accurately
5. Why did the narrator continue flying instead of returning to Paris? ()
 - a) He wanted to reach home in time for breakfast
 - b) He had enough fuel to take another route
 - c) The storm clouds started clearing up

ANSWERS

1. The voice instructed the narrator to turn twelve degrees west. 2. The narrator saw huge storm clouds ahead and had limited fuel and hence thought of going back to Paris. 3. b 4. b 5. a

6. An airport! I was safe! I turned to look for my friend in the black aeroplane, but the sky was empty. There was nothing there. The black aeroplane was gone. I could not see it anywhere. I landed and was not sorry to walk away from the old Dakota near the control tower. I went and asked a woman in the control centre where I was and who the other pilot was. I wanted to say 'Thank you'. She looked at me very strangely, and then laughed. "Another aeroplane? Up there in this storm? No other aeroplanes were flying tonight. Yours was the only one I could see on the radar." So who helped me to arrive there safely without a compass or a radio, and without any more fuel in my tanks? Who was the pilot on the strange black aeroplane, flying in the storm, without lights?

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What was the narrator's reaction when he discovered he was safe?
2. Why did the woman at the control centre laugh when the narrator asked about the other pilot?
3. What made the narrator believe the black aeroplane had helped him?
 - a) The black aeroplane had lights ()
 - b) The strange pilot waved at him
 - c) The pilot gave clear instructions
4. What was unusual about the black aeroplane according to the woman?
 - a) It was not on the radar
 - b) It had no lights
 - c) It had a broken compass()
5. What did the narrator want to do after landing?
 - a) Thank the other pilot
 - b) Repair his aeroplane
 - c) Report the storm conditions()

ANSWERS

1. The narrator felt relieved and safe when he discovered he was safe. 2. The woman at the control centre laughed when the narrator asked about the other pilot because there were no other planes were flying. 3. b 4. a 5. a

Comprehension Passages from 'From the Diary of Anne Frank'

Read the following passages carefully.

1.

To enhance the image of this long-awaited friend in my imagination, I don't want to jot down the facts in this diary the way most people would do, but I want the diary to be my friend, and I'm going to call this friend 'Kitty'. Since no one would understand a word of my stories to Kitty if I were to plunge right in, I'd better provide a brief sketch of my life, much as I dislike doing so. My father, the most adorable father I've ever seen, didn't marry my mother until he was thirty-six and she was twenty-five. My sister, Margot, was born in Frankfurt in Germany in 1926. I was born on 12 June 1929. I lived in Frankfurt until I was four. My father emigrated to Holland in 1933. My mother, Edith Hollander Frank, went with him to Holland in September, while Margot and I were sent to Aachen to stay with our grandmother.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. Why does the narrator name the diary 'Kitty'?
2. Who is the narrator?
3. Where was the Margot? ()
a) Amsterdam b) Frankfurt c) Aachen
4. When did the narrator's father emigrate to Holland? ()
a) 1926 b) 1929 c) 1933
5. With whom did the narrator and her sister stay when their parents moved to Holland? ()
a) Their aunt b) Their grandmother c) Their teacher

ANSWERS

1. The narrator names the diary 'Kitty' because she wants to treat it as a friend rather than just a collection of facts. 2. Anne Frank is the narrator. 3. b 4. c 5. b

2. Margot went to Holland in December, and I followed in February, when I was plunked down on the table as a birthday present for Margot. I started right away at the Montessori nursery school. I stayed there until I was six, at which time I started in the first form. In the sixth form my

teacher was Mrs Kuperus, the headmistress. At the end of the year we were both in tears as we said a heartbreaking farewell. In the summer of 1941 Grandma fell ill and had to have an operation, so my birthday passed with little celebration. Grandma died in January 1942. No one knows how often I think of her and still love her. This birthday celebration in 1942 was intended to make up for the other, and Grandma's candle was lit along with the rest. The four of us are still doing well, and that brings me to the present date of 20 June 1942, and the solemn dedication of my diary.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How did the narrator arrive in Holland?
2. Where did the narrator begin her schooling?
3. Who was the narrator's teacher in the sixth form? ()
a) Mrs Kuperus b) Edith Frank c) Margot Frank
4. Why was the narrator's birthday in 1941 not celebrated much? ()
a) The family was away on holiday
b) Her grandmother was ill and had an operation
c) The family had financial difficulties
5. What was special about the narrator's birthday celebration in 1942?
a) It was a grand party with many guests
b) It was dedicated to her parents
c) The celebration was intended to commemorate the grandmother

ANSWERS

1. The narrator arrived in Holland in February as a birthday present for her sister Margot.
2. The narrator began her schooling at the Montessori nursery school. 3. a 4. b 5. c

3. Dearest Kitty, Saturday, 20 June 1942 Our entire class is quaking in its boots. The reason, of course, is the forthcoming meeting in which the teachers decide who'll move up to the next form and who'll be kept back. Half the class is making bets. G.N. and I laugh ourselves silly at the two boys behind us, C.N. and Jacques, who have staked their entire holiday savings on their bet. From morning to night, it's "You're going to pass", "No, I'm not", "Yes, you are", "No, I'm not". Even G.'s pleading glances and my angry outbursts can't calm them down. If you ask me, there are so many dummies that about a quarter of the class should be kept back, but teachers are the most unpredictable creatures on earth.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. Why is the entire class feeling nervous?
2. What are some students doing regarding the promotion results?
3. What does the author think about the students in her class? ()
 - a) Most are brilliant students
 - b) Many are not very bright
 - c) Everyone is sure to pass
4. How do C.N. and Jacques react to the upcoming results? ()
 - a) They stay calm and wait patiently
 - b) They make bets using their holiday savings
 - c) They ask the teachers for special consideration
5. What does the author say about teachers? ()
 - a) They are unpredictable creatures
 - b) They are always fair in promotions
 - c) They favour only the best students

ANSWERS

1. The entire class is nervous because the teachers are about to decide who will move up to the next form and who will be kept back. 2. Some students are making bets about who will pass and who will be kept back. 3. b 4. b 5. a

4.

This time it was supposed to be on 'An Incurable Chatterbox'. I handed it in, and Mr Keesing had nothing to complain about for two whole lessons. However, during the third lesson he'd finally had enough. "Anne Frank, as punishment for talking in class, write an essay entitled — 'Quack, Quack, Quack, Said Mistress Chatterbox'." The class roared. I had to laugh too, though I'd nearly exhausted my ingenuity on the topic of chatterboxes. It was time to come up with something else, something original. My friend, Sanne, who's good at poetry, offered to help me write the essay from beginning to end in verse and I jumped for joy. Mr Keesing was trying to play a joke on me with this ridiculous subject, but I'd make sure the joke was on him.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What was the title of the third essay assigned to Anne?
2. Why did the class roar with laughter?
3. **How did Anne plan to make the essay different?** ()
 - a) By writing it in a humorous tone
 - b) By composing it in verse
 - c) By making it extremely detailed
4. **Who helped Anne with the essay?** ()
 - a) Margot
 - b) Sanne
 - c) Mrs Kuperus
5. **Why did Anne feel excited about writing the third assignment?** ()
 - a) She loved writing essays
 - b) She wanted to impress her classmates
 - c) She wanted to turn Mr Keesing's joke back on him

ANSWERS

1. The title of the third essay was 'Quack, Quack, Quack, Said Mistress Chatterbox'.
2. The class laughed because the topic given by Mr Keesing was amusing and ridiculous.
3. b 4. b 5. c

Comprehension Passages from 'Glimpses of India'

Read the following passages carefully.

1.

During our childhood in Goa, the baker used to be our friend, companion and guide. He used to come at least twice a day. Once, when he set out in the morning on his selling round, and then again, when he returned after emptying his huge basket. The jingling thud of his bamboo woke us up from sleep and we ran to meet and greet him. Why was it so? Was it for the love of the loaf? Not at all. The loaves were bought by some Paskine or Bastine, the maid-servant of the house! What we longed for were those bread bangles which we chose carefully. Sometimes it was sweet bread of special make.

Now, answer the following questions.

- How often did the baker visit during the speaker's childhood in Goa?
- What did the children look forward to when the baker arrived?
- Who usually bought the loaves of bread? ()
 - The children themselves
 - The housemaid
 - The baker's assistant
- What woke the children up from their sleep when the baker arrived? ()
 - The smell of fresh bread
 - The jingling thud of his bamboo
 - The sound of his voice
- The baker was like ____ to the narrator when he was a child. ()
 - a friend
 - a master
 - a servant

ANSWERS

1. The baker visited at least twice a day. 2. The children looked forward to the bread bangles and sometimes the sweet bread. 3. b 4. b 5. a

2.

The baker made his musical entry on the scene with the 'jhang, jhang' sound of his specially made bamboo staff. One hand supported the basket on his head and the other banged the bamboo on the ground. He would greet the lady of the house with "Good morning" and then place his basket on the vertical bamboo. We kids would be pushed aside with a mild rebuke and the loaves would be delivered to the servant. But we would not give up. We would climb a bench or the parapet and peep into the basket, somehow. I can still recall the typical fragrance of those loaves. Loaves for the elders and the bangles for the children. Then we did not even care to brush our teeth or wash our mouths properly. And why should we? Who would take the trouble of plucking the mango-leaf for the toothbrush? And why was it necessary at all? The tiger never brushed his teeth. Hot tea could wash and clean up everything so nicely, after all!

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What sound signalled the baker's arrival?
2. How did the baker carry his basket?
3. What would happen to the loaves after the baker arrived? ()
 - a) They were given to the children
 - b) They were delivered to the servant
 - c) They were left on the ground
4. What did the children do to see into the basket? ()
 - a) Climb a tree
 - b) Climb a bench or the parapet
 - c) Ask the baker directly
5. What did the children consider a suitable alternative to brushing their teeth? ()
 - a) Water
 - b) Hot tea
 - c) Sugar

ANSWERS

1. The sound that signalled the baker's arrival was the 'jhang, jhang' sound of his specially made bamboo staff. 2. The baker carried his basket on his head with one hand while banging the bamboo on the ground with the other hand.

3. b 4. b 5. b

The fiercely independent people of Coorg are possibly of Greek or Arabic descent. As one story goes, a part of Alexander's army moved south along the coast and settled here when return became impractical. These people married amongst the locals and their culture is apparent in the martial traditions, marriage and religious rites, which are distinct from the Hindu mainstream. The theory of Arab origin draws support from the long, black coat with an embroidered waist-belt worn by the Kodavus. Known as kuppia, it resembles the kuffia worn by the Arabs and the Kurds.

Coorgi homes have a tradition of hospitality, and they are more than willing to recount numerous tales of valour related to their sons and fathers. The Coorg Regiment is one of the most decorated in the Indian Army, and the first Chief of the Indian Army, General Cariappa, was a Coorgi. Even now, Kodavus are the only people in India permitted to carry firearms without a licence.

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Now, answer the following questions.

1. How were the people of Coorg described ?
2. Why were the people of Coorg descendants from Greek or Arabic culture?
3. **How were Coorgis distinct from Hindus ?** ()
 - a) Coorgis are apparently taller than Hindus.
 - b) The traditions and rites of Coorgis resemble martial origin unlike Hindu mainstream.
 - c) Coorgis followed Hindu mainstream.
4. **How are Coorgis rich in the tradition ?** ()
 - a) They are rich in hospitality holding many stories of courage of their forefathers.
 - b) Coorgi homes are beautifully decorated.
 - c) Coorgi Army carries rich robes.
5. **What is the privilege given to Kodavus ?** ()
 - a) Kodavus can take part in war.
 - b) Kodavus were the only people allowed in the army.
 - c) Kodavus were permitted to carry firearms without licence.

ANSWERS

1. The people of Coorg are fiercely independent people and possibly of Greek or Arabic descent. 2. A part of Alexander's army married the locals and their culture is apparent in all traditional activities. Their black coat with an embroidered waist-belt, called kuppia, is similar to the kuffia of Arabs. 3. b 4. a 5. c

4.

Coorgi homes have a tradition of hospitality, and they are more than willing to recount numerous tales of valour related to their sons and fathers. The Coorg Regiment is one of the most decorated in the Indian Army and the first chief of the Indian Army, General Cariappa, was a Coorgi. Even now Kodavus are the only people in India permitted to carry firearms without a licence.

The river, Kaveri obtains its water from the hills and forests of Coorg. Mahaseer—a large freshwater fish - abound in these waters. Kingfishers dive for their catch, while squirrels and langurs drop partially eaten fruit for the mischief of enjoying the splash and the ripple effect in the clear water. Elephants enjoy being bathed and scrubbed in the river by their mahouts.

Now, answer the following questions.

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1. What unique tradition do Coorgi homes have ?
2. Who was the first Chief of the Indian Army, and what was his connection with Coorg ?
3. What type of fish is mentioned as being abundant in the waters of river Kaveri ? ()
a) Gold fish b) Mahaseer c) Kingfish
4. What is the primary source of water for the river, Kaveri ? ()
a) The Himalayas b) The hills and forests of Coorg c) Nilgiri mountains
5. What activity do elephants enjoy in the river ? ()
a) Swimming b) Bathing and scrubbing c) Sunbathing

ANSWERS

1. Coorgi homes have a tradition of hospitality. 2. The first chief of Indian Army was General Cariappa. He was a Coorgi. 3. b 4. b 5. b

5.

“Hey, a tea garden!” Rajvir cried excitedly. Pranjol, who had been born and brought up on a plantation, didn’t share Rajvir’s excitement. “Oh, this is tea country now,” he said. “Assam has the largest concentration of plantations in the world. You will see enough gardens to last you a lifetime!” “I have been reading as much as I could about tea,” Rajvir said. “No one really knows who discovered tea but there are many legends.” “What legends?” “Well, there’s the one about the Chinese emperor who always boiled water before drinking it. One day a few leaves of the twigs burning under the pot fell into the water giving it a delicious flavour. It is said they were tea leaves.”

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How did Rajvir react when he saw the tea garden?
2. What did Pranjol say about Assam?
3. What has Rajvir been doing in relation to tea? ()
a) Drinking it b) Reading about it c) Growing it
4. What legend does Rajvir mention regarding the discovery of tea? ()
a) A merchant finding tea leaves
b) A Chinese emperor boiling water
c) A farmer growing tea plants
5. What happened when the leaves of the twigs fell into the emperor’s boiling water? ()
a) The water overflowed
b) It gave the water a delicious flavour
c) The leaves burnt

ANSWERS

1. Rajvir reacted excitedly when he saw the tea garden. 2. Pranjol said that Assam has the largest concentration of plantations in the world. 3. b 4. b 5. b

6.

"We have an Indian legend too. Bodhidharma, an ancient Buddhist ascetic, cut off his eyelids because he felt sleepy during meditations. Ten tea plants grew out of the eyelids. The leaves of these plants when put in hot water and drunk banished sleep. "Tea was first drunk in China," Rajvir added, "as far back as 2700 B.C.! In fact words such as tea, 'chai' and 'chini' are from Chinese. Tea came to Europe only in the sixteenth century and was drunk more as medicine than as beverage." The train clattered into Mariani junction. The boys collected their luggage and pushed their way to the crowded platform. Pranjol's parents were waiting for them. Soon they were driving towards Dhekiabari, the tea-garden managed by Pranjol's father.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What Indian legend did Rajvir mention regarding the origin of tea?
2. What is the affect of leaves of tea plants?
3. When was tea first drunk in China, according to Rajvir? ()
a) 2500 B.C. b) 2700 B.C. c) 2800 B.C.
4. How was tea regarded when it first came to Europe? ()
a) As a delicious beverage b) As a dessert c) More as a medicine
5. Where were Pranjol's parents waiting for him and Rajvir? ()
a) At the hotel b) At the crowded platform c) At home

ANSWERS

1. The Indian legend mentioned is about Bodhidharma cutting off his eyelids, from which ten tea plants grew. 2. When the leaves of tea plants put in water and drunk, they banished sleep. 3. b 4. c 5. b

Comprehension Passages from "Mijbil the Otter"

Read the following passages carefully.

1.

With the opening of that sack began a phase of my life that has not yet ended, and may, for all I know, not end before I do. It is, in effect, a thralldom to otters, an otter fixation, that I have since found to be shared by most other people, who have ever owned one. The creature that emerged from this sack on to the spacious tiled floor of the Consulate bedroom resembled most of all a very small, mediievally-conceived, dragon. From the head to the tip of the tail he was coated with symmetrical pointed scales of mud armour, between whose tips was visible a soft velvet fur like that of a chocolate-brown mole. He shook himself, and I half expected a cloud of dust, but in fact it was not for another month that I managed to remove the last of the mud and see the otter, as it were, in his true colours.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What does the narrator describe as beginning with the opening of the sack?
2. How does the narrator describe the otter when it first emerges from the sack?
3. What term does the narrator use to describe his relationship with otters?
a) A fascination b) A fixation c) An obsession ()
4. Apart from dragon, what other animal is mentioned in the extract?()
a) A mole b) A seal c) A cat
5. How long did it take for the narrator to remove the mud from the otter?
a) A few days b) Over a month c) Over a week

ANSWERS

1. The opening of the sack begins a phase of the narrator's life that may not end before he does. 2. The narrator describes the otter as resembling a very small, mediievally-conceived dragon. 3. b 4. a 5. b

2.

Mijbil, as I called the otter, was, in fact, of a race previously unknown to science, and was at length christened by zoologists *Lutrogale perspicillata maxwelli*, or Maxwell's otter. For the first twenty-four hours Mijbil was neither hostile nor friendly; he was simply aloof and indifferent, choosing to sleep on the floor as far from my bed as possible. The second night Mijbil came on to my bed in the small hours and remained asleep in the crook of my knees until the servant brought tea in the morning, and during the day he began to lose his apathy and take a keen, much too keen, interest in his surroundings. I made a body-belt for him and took him on a lead to the bathroom, where for half an hour he went wild with joy in the water, plunging and rolling in it, shooting up and down the length of the bathtub underwater, and making enough slosh and splash for a hippo.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What name did zoologists give the otter?
2. What was unique about Mijbil according to the narrator?
3. How did Mijbil behave during the first twenty-four hours after arriving?
 - a) Hostile and aggressive ()
 - b) Aloof and indifferent
 - c) Friendly and playful
4. What activity did Mijbil enjoy in the bathtub? ()
 - a) Sleeping
 - b) Playing with toys
 - c) Plunging and rolling in the water
5. What did the narrator create for Mijbil to use during their outings? ()
 - a) A collar
 - b) A body-belt
 - c) A leash

ANSWERS

1. The zoologists named the otter Maxwell as *Lutrogale perspicillata maxwelli*, or Maxwell's otter. 2. According to the narrator, Mij's uniqueness lay in his boundless curiosity and playful spirit. 3. b 4. c 5. b

3. This, I was to learn, is a characteristic of otters; every drop of water must be, so to speak, extended and spread about the place; a bowl must at once be overturned, or, if it will not be overturned, be sat in and splashed in until it overflows. Water must be kept on the move and made to do things; when static it is wasted and provoking. Two days later, Mijbil escaped from my bedroom as I entered it, and I turned to see his tail disappearing round the bend of the corridor that led to the bathroom. By the time I got there he was up on the end of the bathtub and fumbling at the chromium taps with his paws. I watched, amazed; in less than a minute he had turned the tap far enough to produce a trickle of water, and after a moment or two achieved the full flow. (He had been lucky to turn the tap the right way; on later occasions he would sometimes screw it up still tighter, chittering with irritation and disappointment at the tap's failure to cooperate.)

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What do you understand about the relationship between otters and water from the extract?
2. What will Mij do if a bowl water will not be overturned?
3. What did Mijbil do when he escaped from the bedroom? ()
 - a) He ran outside
 - b) He went to the bathroom
 - c) He hid under the bed
4. What did Mijbil manage to do with the bathtub tap? ()
 - a) He broke it
 - b) He turned it to produce a trickle of water
 - c) He ignored it
5. What happened when Mijbil turned the tap too tightly? ()
 - a) He chittered with irritation
 - b) He got scared
 - c) He fell into the bathtub

ANSWERS

1. It can be understood from the extract that otters love to play with water. 2. Mij will sit in the bowl and splash until it overflows. 3. b 4. b 5. a

4. I had a box made, and an hour before we started, I put Mij into the box so that he would become accustomed to it, and left for a hurried meal. When I returned, there was an appalling spectacle. There was complete silence from the box, but from its airholes and chinks around the lid, blood had trickled and dried. I whipped off the lock and tore open the lid, and Mij, exhausted and blood spattered, whimpered and caught at my leg. He had torn the lining of the box to shreds; when I removed the last of it so that there were no cutting edges left, it was just ten minutes until the time of the flight, and the airport was five miles distant. I put the miserable Mij back into the box, holding down the lid with my hand.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What did the narrator do an hour before starting the journey?
2. What was the condition of Mij when the narrator opened the box?
3. What had Mij done to the lining of the box? ()
 - a) He chewed it
 - b) He tore it to shreds
 - c) He pushed it out
4. How much time was left before the flight when the narrator checked on Mij? ()
 - a) Ten minutes
 - b) Fifteen minutes
 - c) Five minutes
5. What did the narrator do to ensure Mij wouldn't escape during the journey?
 - a) He locked the box ()
 - b) He sat on the box so that Mij could not escape
 - c) He held down the lid with his hand

ANSWERS

1. The narrator had a box made and put Mij into it an hour before starting the journey.
2. Mij was exhausted and blood spattered when the narrator opened the box.
3. b 4. a 5. c

5.

I sat in the back of the car with the box beside me as the driver tore through the streets of Basra like a ricocheting bullet. The aircraft was waiting to take off; I was rushed through to it by infuriated officials. Luckily, the seat booked for me was at the extreme front. I covered the floor around my feet with newspapers, rang for the air hostess, and gave her a parcel of fish (for Mij) to keep in a cool place. I took her into my confidence about the events of the last half hour. I have retained the most profound admiration for that air hostess; she was the very queen of her kind. She suggested that I might prefer to have my pet on my knee, and I could have kissed her hand in the depth of my gratitude. But, not knowing others, I was quite unprepared for what followed.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. Where did the narrator sit during the car ride to the airport?
2. What was the driver's navigation through the streets of Basra compared to?
3. **What did the narrator give to the air hostess?** ()
a) A box of chocolates b) A parcel of fish c) A drink
4. **What was the narrator's initial feeling towards the air hostess?** ()
a) Anger b) Admiration c) Indifference
5. **What suggestion did the air hostess make regarding Mij?** ()
a) To put Mij in the overhead compartment.
b) To keep Mij in the box
c) To have Mij on the narrator's knee

ANSWERS

1. The narrator sat in the back of the car with the box beside him.
2. The driver's navigation through the streets of Basra was compared to a ricocheting bullet. 3. b 4. b 5. c

6. Outside the house I exercised him on a lead, precisely as if he had been a dog. Mij quickly developed certain compulsive habits on these walks in the London streets, like the rituals of children who on their way to and from school must place their feet squarely on the centre of each paving block; must touch every seventh upright of the iron railings, or pass to the outside of every second lamp post. Opposite to my flat was a single-storied primary school, along whose frontage ran a low wall some two feet high. On his way home, but never on his way out, Mij would tug me to this wall, jump on to it, and gallop the full length of its thirty yards, to the hopeless distraction both of pupils and of staff within. It is not, I suppose, in any way strange that the average Londoner should not recognise an otter, but the variety of guesses as to what kind of animal this might be came as a surprise to me.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How did the narrator exercise Mij?
2. What kind of habits did Mij develop during walks?
3. Where did Mij like to gallop during his walks? ()
 - a) On the pavement near the primary school
 - b) On a low wall of a primary school
 - c) In the park near the narrator's flat
4. What was the reaction of the school pupils and staff when Mij galloped along the wall? ()
 - a) They were distracted
 - b) They ignored him
 - c) They cheered him on
5. What surprised the narrator about the Londoners? ()
 - a) Their love for animals
 - b) Their lack of recognition of otters
 - c) Their knowledge of wildlife

ANSWERS

1. The narrator exercised Mij on a lead, as if he were a dog.
2. Mij developed certain compulsive habits, similar to rituals children have on their way to school. 3. b 4. a 5. b

Comprehension Passages from "Madam Rides the Bus"

Read the following passages carefully.

1. Their faces would kindle in her longings, dreams, and hopes. If one of her friends happened to ride the bus and tried to describe the sights of the town to her, Valli would be too jealous to listen and would shout, in English: "Proud! proud!" Neither she nor her friends really understood the meaning of the word, but they used it often as a slang expression of disapproval. Over many days and months Valli listened carefully to conversations between her neighbours and people who regularly used the bus, and she also asked a few discreet questions here and there. This way she picked up various small details about the bus journey.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How did Valli react when her friends described the sights of the town?
2. What was the slang word Valli and her friends often used?
3. **How did Valli gather information about the bus journey?** ()
 - a) By listening to bus drivers
 - b) By secretly riding the bus
 - c) By listening to conversations and asking discreet questions
4. **What did 'proud' mean to Valli and her friends?** ()
 - a) It was a slang expression of disapproval
 - b) It was an expression of social status
 - c) It was an expression of pity
5. **What kind of feelings did the faces of the bus passengers evoke in Valli?** ()
 - a) Boredom and frustration
 - b) Longings, dreams, and hopes
 - c) Hatred and enmity

ANSWERS

1. Valli was too jealous to listen and would shout, "Proud! proud!" when her friends described the sights of the town. 2. The slang word Valli and her friends often used was "Proud!" 3. c 4. a 5. b

2. "Never mind," she said, "I can get on by myself. You don't have to help me." The conductor was a jolly sort, fond of joking. "Oh, please don't be angry with me, my fine madam," he said. "Here, have a seat right up there in front. Everybody move aside please — make way for madam." It was the slack time of day, and there were only six or seven passengers on the bus. They were all looking at Valli and laughing with the conductor. Valli was overcome with shyness. Avoiding everyone's eyes, she walked quickly to an empty seat and sat down. "May we start now, madam?" the conductor asked, smiling. Then he blew his whistle twice, and the bus moved forward with a roar. It was a new bus, its outside painted a gleaming white with some green stripes along the sides. Inside, the overhead bars shone like silver. Directly in front of Valli, above the windshield, there was a beautiful clock. The seats were soft and luxurious. Valli devoured everything with her eyes. But when she started to look outside, she found her view cut off by a canvas blind that covered the lower part of her window.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How did the conductor treat Valli when she boarded the bus?
2. Why did Valli feel shy upon boarding the bus?
3. How was the appearance of the bus described? ()
 - a) Old, creaky and rusty
 - b) New, white with green stripes, and luxurious inside
 - c) Small and crowded
4. What did Valli find directly in front of her above the windshield? ()
 - a) A mirror
 - b) A map
 - c) A clock
5. Why was Valli's view outside partially blocked? ()
 - a) The bus was too high
 - b) The windows were tinted
 - c) A canvas blind covered the lower part of her window

ANSWERS

1. The conductor treated Valli in a joking and friendly manner, calling her "madam" and making way for her. 2. Valli felt shy because everyone was looking at her and laughing along with the conductor. 3. b 4. c 5. c

3.

"And where have you been?" said her aunt when Valli came in. She spoke very casually, not expecting a reply. So Valli just smiled, and her mother and aunt went on with their conversation. "Yes, you're right," her mother said. "So many things in our midst and in the world outside. How can we possibly know about everything? And even when we do know about something, we often can't understand it completely, can we?" "Oh, yes!" breathed Valli. "What?" asked her mother. "What's that you say?" "Oh," said Valli, "I was just agreeing with what you said about things happening without our knowledge." "Just a chit of a girl, she is," said her aunt, "and yet look how she pokes her nose into our conversation, just as though she were a grown lady." Valli smiled to herself. She didn't want them to understand her smile. But, then, there wasn't much chance of that, was there?

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How did Valli's aunt react when she came in?
2. What did Valli's mother say about knowledge of things in the world?
3. **How did Valli's aunt describe her behaviour?** ()
 - a) She thought Valli was too shy
 - b) She said Valli acted like a grown up
 - c) She found Valli uninterested
4. **Why did Valli smile to herself?** ()
 - a) She found the conversation amusing
 - b) Her mother was happy chatting with her aunt
 - c) Her mother did not know the truth about her bus ride
5. **How did Valli's mother and aunt react to her involvement in the conversation?** ()
 - a) They scolded her
 - b) They ignored her
 - c) They dismissed her, calling her a child

ANSWERS

1. Valli's aunt enquired where she had been, but spoke casually and did not expect a reply when Valli came in. 2. Valli's mother said that there are many things in the world that we cannot possibly know or fully understand. 3. b 4. c 5. c

4.

The conductor nodded, and she was overcome with sadness. What had been a lovable, beautiful creature just a little while ago had now suddenly lost its charm and its life and looked so horrible, so frightening as it lay there, legs spreadeagled, a fixed stare in its lifeless eyes, blood all over... The bus moved on. The memory of the dead cow haunted her, dampening her enthusiasm. She no longer wanted to look out the window. She sat thus, glued to her seat, until the bus reached her village at three forty. She stood up and stretched herself. Then she turned to the conductor and said, "Well, sir, I hope to see you again." "Okay, madam," he answered her, smiling. "Whenever you feel like a bus ride, come and join us. And don't forget to bring your fare."

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What event caused Valli to feel sad during the bus journey?
2. How did the memory of the dead cow affect Valli?
3. What did Valli say to the conductor as the bus reached her village? ()
 - a) She asked him to stop at her house
 - b) She hoped to see him again
 - c) She thanked him for the ride
4. How did the conductor respond to Valli's farewell? ()
 - a) He jokingly reminded her to bring her fare next time
 - b) He told her to hurry
 - c) He gave her some chocolates as a token of love
5. What did Valli notice about the cow that made her feel sad? ()
 - a) The cow looked peaceful
 - b) The cow looked frightening and lifeless, with blood all over
 - c) The cow was simply lying in the field

ANSWERS

1. Valli felt sad when she saw the dead cow that had been a lovable creature earlier.
2. The memory of the dead cow haunted her and dampened her enthusiasm, making her lose interest in looking out of the window.
3. b
4. a
5. b

Comprehension Passages from "The Sermon at Benares"

Read the following passages carefully.

1.

Gautama Buddha (563 B.C. – 483 B.C.) began life as a prince named Siddhartha Gautama, in northern India. At twelve, he was sent away for schooling in the Hindu sacred scriptures and four years later he returned home to marry a princess. They had a son and lived for ten years as befitted royalty. At about the age of twenty-five, the Prince, heretofore shielded from the sufferings of the world, while out hunting chanced upon a sick man, then an aged man, then a funeral procession, and finally a monk begging for alms. These sights so moved him that he at once went out into the world to seek enlightenment concerning the sorrows he had witnessed.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. Who was Gautama Buddha before he became a spiritual leader?
2. At what age did Siddhartha Gautama begin his schooling in the Hindu scriptures?
3. How long did Siddhartha live as a prince before seeking enlightenment? ()
a) Ten years b) Fifteen years c) Twenty years
4. What were the four sights that profoundly affected Siddhartha? ()
a) A king, a warrior, a sick man, and a princess
b) A sick man, an aged man, a funeral procession, and a monk
c) A princess, a child, a merchant, and a farmer
5. What was Siddhartha seeking after being moved by the sights he witnessed? ()
a) Wealth b) Power c) Enlightenment

ANSWERS

1. Gautama Buddha was originally a prince named Siddhartha Gautama.
 2. Siddhartha began his schooling at the age of twelve.
 3. a
 4. b
 5. c
-

2.

Kisa Gotami had an only son, and he died. In her grief she carried the dead child to all her neighbours, asking them for medicine, and the people said, "She has lost her senses. The boy is dead." At length, Kisa Gotami met a man who replied to her request, "I cannot give thee medicine for thy child, but I know a physician who can." And the girl said, "Pray tell me, sir; who is it?" And the man replied, "Go to Sakyamuni, the Buddha." Kisa Gotami repaired to the Buddha and cried, "Lord and Master, give me the medicine that will cure my boy." The Buddha answered, "I want a handful of mustard-seed." And when the girl in her joy promised to procure it, the Buddha added, "The mustard-seed must be taken from a house where no one has lost a child, husband, parent or friend." Poor Kisa Gotami now went from house to house, and the people pitied her and said, "Here is mustard-seed; take it!"

Now, answer the following questions.

1. Why was Gotami grieving?
2. What did Kisa Gotami do after her son's death?
3. Who did the man tell Kisa Gotami to seek for help? ()
a) A doctor b) The Buddha c) A herbalist
4. What did the Buddha ask Kisa Gotami to bring him? ()
a) A handful of rice
b) A handful of mustard-seed
c) A handful of herbs
5. What condition did the Buddha set for the mustard-seed? ()
a) It must come from a rich family
b) It must come from a house with no loss
c) It must be from the village elder.

ANSWERS

1. Gotami was grieving because her only son was dead.
2. After her son's death, Kisa Gotami carried the dead child to her neighbours, asking for medicine. 3. b 4. b 5. b

3. But when she asked, "Did a son or daughter, a father or mother, die in your family?" they answered her, "Alas! the living are few, but the dead are many. Do not remind us of our deepest grief." And there was no house but some beloved one had died in it. Kisa Gotami became weary and hopeless, and sat down at the wayside watching the lights of the city, as they flickered up and were extinguished again. At last the darkness of the night reigned everywhere. And she considered the fate of men, that their lives flicker up and are extinguished again. And she thought to herself, "How selfish am I in my grief! Death is common to all; yet in this valley of desolation there is a path that leads him to immortality who has surrendered all selfishness."

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What question did Kisa Gotami ask the people she encountered?
2. What was the reply that Kisa Gotami got from the people?
3. What did Kisa Gotami observe while sitting by the wayside ? ()
 - a) The bustling city
 - b) The flickering lights of the city
 - c) A funeral procession
4. What realization did Kisa Gotami come to about death ? ()
 - a) Death is common to everyone
 - b) It is uncommon for people to die
 - c) Only the elderly die
5. What did Kisa Gotami believe was necessary for achieving immortality?
 - a) Accumulating wealth ()
 - b) Seeking eternal life through magic
 - c) Surrendering all selfishness

ANSWERS

1. Kisa Gotami asked if a son or daughter, a father or mother, had died in their family.
2. The people told Kisa that the living are few, but the dead are many, and asked her not to remind them of their grief. 3.b 4.a 5.c

The Buddha said, "The life of mortals in this world is troubled and brief and combined with pain. For there is not any means by which those that have been born can avoid dying; after reaching old age there is death; of such a nature are living beings. As ripe fruits are early in danger of falling, so mortals when born are always in danger of death. As all earthen vessels made by the potter end in being broken, so is the life of mortals. Both young and adult, both those who are fools and those who are wise, all fall into the power of death; all are subject to death. "Of those who, overcome by death, depart from life, a father cannot save his son, nor kinsmen their relations. Mark! while relatives are looking on and lamenting deeply, one by one mortals are carried off, like an ox that is led to the slaughter.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What does the Buddha say about the nature of mortal life?
2. According to the Buddha, what cannot be avoided by those who have been born?
3. What analogy does the Buddha use to describe the danger of death for mortals?
a) Ripe fruits falling
b) Vessels made by the potter
c) Both a and b
4. All mortals are subject to
a) being broken
b) overcome by death
c) danger of death
5. How does the Buddha describe the way mortals are taken by death?
a) Like a leaf carried by the wind
b) Like an ox led to the slaughter
c) Like a ship lost at sea

ANSWERS

1. The Buddha says that the life of mortals is troubled, brief, and filled with pain.
2. The Buddha states that those who have been born cannot avoid dying.
3. c 4. c 5. b

5.

So the world is afflicted with death and decay, therefore the wise do not grieve, knowing the terms of the world. "Not from weeping nor from grieving will anyone obtain peace of mind; on the contrary, his pain will be the greater and his body will suffer. He will make himself sick and pale, yet the dead are not saved by his lamentation. He who seeks peace should draw out the arrow of lamentation, and complaint, and grief. He who has drawn out the arrow and has become composed will obtain peace of mind; he who has overcome all sorrow will become free from sorrow, and be blessed."

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What do the wise understand about the nature of the world?
2. According to the Buddha, what will not bring peace of mind?
3. What happens to a person who continues to grieve, according to the Buddha? ()
 - a) They will find comfort
 - b) Their pain will increase
 - c) They will become stronger
4. What should a person do to seek peace, as per the Buddha's teachings? ()
 - a) Weep openly
 - b) Draw out the arrow of lamentation
 - c) Avoid talking about their grief
5. What is the result for someone who has overcome all sorrow? ()
 - a) They will be forgotten
 - b) They will become free from sorrow and be blessed
 - c) They will feel lonely

ANSWERS

1. The wise understand that the world is afflicted with death and decay.
2. The Buddha states that no one will obtain peace of mind from weeping or grieving.
3. b 4. b 5. b

Comprehension Passages from 'The Proposal'

Read the following passages carefully.

1.

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

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

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

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

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

LOMOV : I have the honour to ask...

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

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What does Chubukov initially suspect about Lomov's visit?
2. How does Lomov feel as he begins to speak to Chubukov?
3. What does Lomov finally reveal as the purpose of his visit? ()
 - a) To borrow money
 - b) To ask for Chubukov's advice
 - c) To ask for Natalya's hand in marriage
4. How does Chubukov react to Lomov's proposal? ()
 - a) He is shocked and upset
 - b) He is delighted and emotional
 - c) He is indifferent and uninterested
5. What does Chubukov promise to do after hearing Lomov's request? ()
 - a) Give Lomov some financial help
 - b) Call Natalya to share the news
 - c) Invite neighbours to celebrate

ANSWERS

1. Chubukov initially suspects that Lomov has come to borrow money. 2. Lomov feels nervous and excited as he begins to speak to Chubukov. 3. c 4. b 5. b

2.

- LOMOV** : I shall try to be brief. You must know, honoured Natalya Stepanovna, that I have long, since my childhood, in fact, had the privilege of knowing your family. My late aunt and her husband, from whom, as you know, I inherited my land, always had the greatest respect for your father and your late mother. The Lomovs and the Chubukovs have always had the most friendly, and I might almost say the most affectionate, regard for each other. And, as you know, my land is a near neighbour of yours. You will remember that my Oxen Meadows touch your birchwoods.
- NATALYA** : Excuse my interrupting you. You say, "my Oxen Meadows". But are they yours?
- LOMOV** : Yes, mine.
- NATALYA** : What are you talking about? Oxen Meadows are ours, not yours!
- LOMOV** : No, mine, honoured Natalya Stepanovna.
- NATALYA** : Well, I never knew that before. How do you make that out?
- LOMOV** : How? I'm speaking of those Oxen Meadows which are wedged in between your birchwoods and the Burnt Marsh.

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How does Lomov describe the relationship between his family and Natalya's?
2. What land does Lomov mention during his conversation with Natalya?
3. What disagreement arises between Lomov and Natalya? ()
 - a) Ownership of Oxen Meadows
 - b) The boundary of their properties
 - c) The condition of the land
4. Where are the Oxen Meadows located according to Lomov? ()
 - a) Near the Chubukovs' barn
 - b) Between the birchwoods and Burnt Marsh
 - c) Beside the river
5. How does Natalya respond when Lomov claims ownership of Oxen Meadows? ()
 - a) She accepts it politely
 - b) She questions his claim
 - c) She expresses indifference

ANSWERS

1. Lomov describes the relationship between his family and Natalya's as friendly and affectionate. 2. Lomov mentions the Oxen Meadows during his conversation with Natalya. 3. a 4. b 5. b

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

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

LOMOV : I'll show you the documents, Natalya Stepanovna!

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How does Lomov attempt to prove his ownership of Oxen Meadows?
2. What arrangement does Lomov describe regarding the Oxen Meadows?
3. How long did Natalya's family have free use of the Oxen Meadows, according to Lomov? ()
a) Twenty years b) Forty years c) Fifty years
4. What is Natalya's response to Lomov's claim about Oxen Meadows? ()
a) She dismisses his claim as incorrect
b) She agrees after some consideration
c) She asks for more proof
5. What did Natalya's grandfather and great-grandfather reckon? ()
a) They gave away the land in charity to the Lomovs
b) They bought the land from a peasant
c) Their land extended to Burnt Marsh

ANSWERS

1. Lomov attempts to prove his ownership of Oxen Meadows by referring to historical documents. 2. Lomov describes an arrangement in which the Oxen Meadows were given for free use to the peasants of Natalya's father's grandfather in return for brick-making. 3. b 4. a 5. c

4. NATALYA : I can make you a present of them myself, because they're mine! Your behaviour, Ivan Vassilevitch, is strange, to say the least! Up to this we have always thought of you as a good neighbour, a friend; last year we lent you our threshing-machine, although on that account we had to put off our own threshing till November, but you behave to us as if we were gypsies. Giving me my own land, indeed! No, really, that's not at all neighbourly! In my opinion, it's even impudent, if you want to know.
- LOMOV : Then you make out that I'm a landgrabber? Madam, never in my life have I grabbed anybody else's land and I shan't allow anybody to accuse me of having done so. [Quickly steps to the carafe and drinks more water] Oxen Meadows are mine!
- NATALYA : It's not true, they're ours!
- LOMOV : Mine!
- NATALYA : It's not true! I'll prove it! I'll send my mowers out to the Meadows this very day!
- LOMOV : What?
- NATALYA : My mowers will be there this very day!

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What does Natalya offer to do with the Oxen Meadows? ()
2. How does Natalya describe Lomov's behaviour regarding the land? ()
3. What example does Natalya give to show her family's helpfulness? ()
 - a) Lending a threshing-machine
 - b) Assisting with the harvest
 - c) Giving food to Lomov's family
4. What action does Natalya threaten to take to assert her claim? ()
 - a) Show legal documents
 - b) Send her mowers to the Meadows
 - c) Consult a lawyer
5. How does Lomov react when Natalya accuses him of land grabbing? ()
 - a) He agrees to discuss it calmly
 - b) He firmly denies the accusation
 - c) He leaves immediately

ANSWERS

1. Natalya offers to make a present of the Oxen Meadows, claiming they belong to her.
2. Natalya describes Lomov's behaviour as strange and impudent.
3. a 4. b 5. b

5. LOMOV : I'm thinking of having a go at the blackcock, honoured Natalya Stepanovna, after the harvest. Oh, have you heard? Just think, what a misfortune I've had! My dog Guess, who you know, has gone lame.
- NATALYA : What a pity! Why?
- LOMOV : I don't know. Must have got his leg twisted or bitten by some other dog. [sighs] My very best dog, to say nothing of the expense. I gave Mironov 125 roubles for him.
- NATALYA : It was too much, Ivan Vassilevitch.
- LOMOV : I think it was very cheap. He's a first-rate dog.
- NATALYA : Papa gave 85 roubles for his Squeezer, and Squeezer is heaps better than Guess!
- LOMOV : Squeezer better than Guess? What an idea! [laughs] Squeezer better than Guess!
- NATALYA : Of course he's better! Of course, Squeezer is young, he may develop a bit, but on points and pedigree he's better than anything that even Volchanetsky has got.
- LOMOV : Excuse me, Natalya Stepanovna, but you forget that he is overshot, and an overshot always means the dog is a bad hunter!
- NATALYA : Overshot, is he? The first time I hear it!

Now, answer the following questions.

1. What misfortune does Lomov mention about his dog?
2. How much did Lomov pay for his dog, Guess?
3. What comparison does Natalya make between Guess and Squeezer?
 - a) Squeezer is older ()
 - b) Squeezer is cheaper ()
 - c) Squeezer is better ()
4. What is Lomov's opinion on Squeezer's hunting ability? ()
 - a) Squeezer is a great hunter
 - b) Squeezer is a bad hunter due to being overshot
 - c) Squeezer is an average hunter
5. How does Natalya respond to Lomov's claim about Squeezer being overshot? ()
 - a) She agrees with him
 - b) She expresses disbelief, stating she never heard that term before
 - c) She says it doesn't matter because her dog is strong

ANSWERS

1. Lomov mentions that his dog, Guess, has gone lame.
2. Lomov paid 125 roubles for his dog, Guess.
3. c
4. b
5. b

6.

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

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

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

LOMOV : [getting up] Eh? What? To whom?

CHUBUKOV : She's willing! Well? Kiss and be damned to you!

NATALYA : [wails] He's alive... Yes, yes, I'm willing.

CHUBUKOV : Kiss each other!

LOMOV : **NATALYA** 9. The Proposal : Eh? Kiss whom? [They kiss] Very nice, too. Excuse me, what's it all about? Oh, now I understand ... my heart... stars... I'm happy. Natalya Stepanovna... [Kisses her hand] My foot's gone to sleep. I... I'm happy too...

Now, answer the following questions.

1. How does Chubukov initially react when he thinks Lomov is dead?
2. What extreme actions does Chubukov contemplate?
3. How does Lomov respond when he starts to regain consciousness? ()
 - a) He expresses confusion
 - b) He immediately asks for water
 - c) He demands to know what happened
4. What does Chubukov do to encourage Lomov and Natalya? ()
 - a) He scolds them
 - b) He gives them his blessing
 - c) He leaves the room
5. How does Natalya react upon realising Lomov is alive? ()
 - a) She screams in fear
 - b) She cries and expresses her willingness
 - c) She ignores him

ANSWERS

1. Chubukov is shocked and feels desperate when he thinks Lomov is dead 2. Chubukov considers to commit suicide using a knife or a pistol. 3. a 4. b 5. b