

## Columbia Foundation School English Notes - Class – XI

### Laburnum Top

**‘She launches away, towards the infinite’. Explain the given line.**

‘She’ stands for the goldfinch whose arrival on the tree has suddenly transformed it into a noisy place. After having fed her young ones and having made the tree active and full of life, the goldfinch flies away towards the infinitely vast sky.

**Why is the image of the engine evoked by the poet?**

The poet creates the imagery of a machine starting up when the goldfinch arrives in the tree. The sudden noise and movements produced by the young ones are like the starting of a machine. The stoking of the engine is actually the act of feeding the young ones and imparting energy and life into them.

**Describe the laburnum top.**

The leaves of the laburnum top are turning yellow due to the autumn. Its seeds have fallen and there is a silence prevailing over the tree. There is no movement at all.

**What happened when the goldfinch came to the laburnum tree?**

The arrival of the goldfinch brought about a sudden change in the tree. The young ones started twittering and there was a lot of noise, commotion and movement on the tree.

**Why has the poem been named ‘The Laburnum Top’?**

The poem has been named ‘The Laburnum Top’ because the top of the tree has been described in detail by the poet and the second part is a vivid description of the transformation that the tree undergoes. The entire scenario revolves around the tree.

**Explain the first three lines of the poem ‘The Laburnum Top’.**

The laburnum is the tree whose top part is silent due to lack of movement. There is no breeze and hence there is no rustling of leaves. The time of the day is afternoon. The month is September, and the season is autumn season. The leaves of the tree have started decaying and turning yellow as they are about to fall. The seeds of the laburnum fruit have also fallen.

**How is the tree transformed during the bird’s visit? Write the line that shows this transformation.**

The tree suddenly starts trembling and moving as if a machine has started up. This is due to the arrival of the goldfinch in her nest in order to feed her young ones. The young ones start their chitterings. There is a tremor of wings. The line that shows the transformation is ‘a machine starts up, of chitterings, and a tremor of wings, and trillings- the whole tree trembles and thrills.

**To what is the movement of the goldfinch compared? What is the basis for the comparison?**

The goldfinch’s movement is compared to that of a lizard. The basis of the comparison is the sleek, abrupt and alert movements of a lizard. The same kinds of movements are observed when the goldfinch arrives on the laburnum tree.

**What does the phrase ‘her barred face identity mask’ mean?**

This is an example of the poetic device – transferred epithet. The laburnum tree has flowers that fall like bars and when the bird sits behind the flowers the shadow on her face looks like she is wearing a mask that has bars on it. So, barred – is actually an adjective for the flowers and has been transferred from there and applied to the bird.

**‘The whole tree trembles and thrills’. Explain the poetic device used by the poet.**

The poetic device used is ‘alliteration’. Tree trembles and thrills signify that the arrival of the goldfinch on the laburnum top is responsible for the movement and the activities on the tree. The tree has suddenly sprung to life and there is shaking and thrilling movement on it. Personification is also used as a poetic device in ‘Tree trembles’.

**‘It is the engine of her family, she strokes it full.’ Explain the significance of these lines.**

The goldfinch has been called the engine of her family. Just as the engine starts up the machine, her arrival in the nest has suddenly started up the silent machine i.e. the young ones have started chittering and making noise. The expression ‘She stokes it full’ means that she has fed the young ones who now have the energy to become active and make noise.

**Explain the line ‘And the laburnum subsides to empty’.**

This is the last line of the poem depicting the sudden silence which falls over the laburnum tree when the goldfinch flies away after feeding its young ones. It had been on the tree for sometime and the tree had suddenly become lively and noisy but after its departure, the tree becomes silent again.

**‘Then sleek as a lizard and alert and abrupt, she enters the thickness’. Explain the given lines.**

The lizard is a quick moving animal. It is also very alert and its movements are jerky and abrupt. In the same manner, the goldfinch enters in the thickness of the branches of the tree and feeds her young ones.

**What do you notice about the beginning and the ending of the poem?**

The beginning of the poem describes a silent laburnum tree which has no noise, movement or life. The ending is also similar where the goldfinch flies away into the vast sky. But the middle part of the poem shows us a totally transformed tree with noise of the young ones compared to a machine.

**Why did the goldfinch enter the thickness of the laburnum tree? Quote the line or words that support your answer.**

The goldfinch entered the thickness of the laburnum tree because it had to reach its nest where its young ones were waiting to be fed by her. The lines that support the answer are 'a machine starts up', 'of chitterings and a tremor of wings and trillings'.

**Reference to Context**

1. **A few leaves yellowing, all its seeds fallen  
Till the goldfinch comes, with a twitching chirrup  
A suddenness, a startlement, at a branch end.**

**a) What has happened to the tree?**

It is the month of September. The autumn has set in. The leaves of the tree have turned yellow and its seeds have also fallen.

**b) How does the mood change on the arrival of the goldfinch?**

The tree which was earlier silent has become active, noisy and full of life, as the goldfinch has come to feed her young ones.

**c) There is a comparison of the goldfinch with an animal. Which animal is that?**

The goldfinch has been compared to a lizard, sleek and abrupt in its movements.

2. **Then with eerie delicate whistle-chirrup whisperings  
She launches away, towards the infinite  
And the laburnum subsides to empty.**

**a) Who has been described in the first line?**

The goldfinch has been described in the first line.

**b) What impression is created by the description?**

The chirruping of the birds is delicate, soft and gentle like whispering. The reference is to the sounds that the bird makes.

**c) What effect does the last line create?**

The last line shows the contrast between the liveliness of the tree and the silent tree. The tree becomes silent and empty when the bird flies away.

3. **Then sleek as a lizard, and alert and abrupt,  
She enters the thickness, and a machine starts up  
Of chitterings and a tremor of wings, and trilling  
The whole tree trembles and thrills.**

**a) Who is 'she' in the first line? Where does she enter?**

'She' is the goldfinch and she enters the thickness of the trees.

**b) What is the 'machine' referred to in line 2?**

The 'machine' refers to the young ones of the goldfinch. They suddenly start twittering and chirruping as their mother comes to the nest to feed them.

**c) Explain the meaning of the last line.**

The tree was silent earlier but as the mother goldfinch comes to her nest, there is a lot of noise made by her young ones. The movement and the sounds produced are in contrast to the silence. The tree comes to life now.

4. **The laburnum top is silent, quite still  
In the afternoon yellow September sunlight,  
A few leaves yellowing, all its seeds fallen.**

**a) Name the poem and the poet.**

The name of the poem is 'The Laburnum Top' and the poet is Ted Hughes.

**b) Describe the laburnum tree.**

The tree is silent and still. It has leaves that are yellowing and seeds have fallen.

c) **What is the mood in these lines?**

The mood is of peace, calm, quiet and silence. There is absolute stillness and peace.

d) **Pick out the words that create the mood.**

The words that create the mood are 'silent', 'still', 'yellowing leaves' and 'fallenseeds'.

5. **It is the engine of her family**

**She strokes it full, then flirts out to a branch end**

**Showing her barred face identity mask**

a) **Why has the word 'engine' been used to describe her family?**

The word 'engine' has been used to describe her family. The engine of the machine starts up and there is noise, movement and energy signifying the excitement at the arrival of mother.

b) **Who is 'she'? How does she stroke the engine?**

'She' is the goldfinch who has her nest on the top of the laburnum tree. Just as the stoker feeds coal to the engine, the bird feeds her young ones.

c) **What does the bird look like?**

The face which was earlier hidden in the thickness of the tree's branches is now revealed as she comes out at the end of the branch. She seems to be wearing a striped mask

**Voice of the Rain**

**How does the rain justify its claim 'I am the Poem of Earth'?**

The rain calls itself the poem of earth because, the poem rendered by a poet, has the task of bringing joy, happiness, life to its readers. In the manner, the rain drops, and falling over drought stricken earth, brings new life to the land as it also returns to its origin just like the rain drops.

**What does the rain do to the things day and night?**

The rain falls on the earth, and washes away the drought, it also helps the seedsto germinate and bring forth new life on the earth. Without it, all life on earthwould become lifeless.

**What answer did the rain give to the poet about its origin?**

The rain answered that it was the poem of the earth. It rose eternally out of the land and bottomless sea into the sky. There its form changed but essenceremained the same.

**On what does the 'rain descend'? What does it do to the things on which itfalls?**

The rain descends on droughts, atoms and dust particles on the surface of theearth. It also falls on everything that is on the earth. It gives life to the things onwhich it falls. The things that do not get rain remain like seeds latent and unborn.

*And who art thou? Said I to the soft falling shower, This, strange to tell, gave me an answer, as here Translated: I am the poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain)*

**Name the poem and the poet.**

The poem is 'The Voice of the Rain' and the name of the poet is 'WaltWhitman'.

**Who does 'I' refer to in the first and third line of this extract?**

'I' in the first line is referred to the poet asking a question. 'I' in the third line is the rain drop.

**What do you understand by the phrase 'Strange to tell'?**

'Strange to tell' means that it is an unusual and extraordinary answer given by the raindrops to the poet who asked who 'it' was.

**How has the answer been conveyed to us and what is it?**

The poet has personified the rain drop and it is answering the poet's question by saying that it is the 'poem of the Earth'.

**Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land.**

**And the bottomless sea, Upwards to heaven, whence, vaguely form'd altogether Changed, and yet the same**

**From where does the rain originate?**

The rain originates from the land and the bottomless (deep sea) in the form of water vapour.

**How does it originate?**

With the heat of the sun, the water evaporates from the sea or land and forms water-vapour which rises up in the atmosphere.

**What happens to the rain in the sky?**

In the sky, the rain drops form the rain. Their form has changed but the essence has remained the same.

**Name the poem and the poet.**

The poem is 'The Voice of the Rain' and the poet is Walt Whitman.

**I descend to lave the droughts, Atomies, dust- layers of the globe, And all that in them without me were seeds Only, latent, unborn**

**With what purpose does the rain descend from the sky?**

The rain drops fall from the sky in order to give life to the dry areas and wash the famine-stricken lands.

**How does the rain help the seeds?**

The rain helps the seeds to germinate and grow into a new life.

**Give the meanings of the words from the given lines:**

**come down** - descend

**to wash** - lave

**What is latent and unborn and why?**

The seeds are dormant and unborn because of lack of water which is needed for them to germinate and form a new plant.

**And forever, by day and night, I give Back life to my own origin, And make pure and beautify it**

**In what manner does the rain help its own origin?**

The rain helps its own origin by watering the land and quenching the thirst of drought stricken areas.

**Why has the poet given the life cycle of the song?**

The poet has compared the life cycle of the rain drops to that of the song saying that they both return to their origin after fulfilling their tasks.

**What is made 'pure'?**

The earth on which rain falls is made 'pure'.

**Which words in the given lines mean:**

eternal - forever

source - origin

*For song, issuing from its birth-place, after fulfillment, wandering Reck'd or unreck'd, duly with love returns*

**Why are the last lines put within brackets?**

The last lines are put in brackets because they do not form the voice of the rain or the poet. They only contain a general observation by the poet about the course of a song.

**'Reck'd or unreck'd', what does this phrase mean?**

Reck'd or unreck'd means whether cared for or not cared for.

**Where does the song return?**

The song returns to the place of its origin i.e. comes back to the poet

**Which word in the lines means 'originating'?**

Issuing

## Discovering Tut: The Saga Continues

### Question 1:

**Give reasons for the following:**

(i) King Tut's body has been subjected to repeated scrutiny.

**Answer:**

The mummy of King Tutankhamun has earned world wide fame for the riches it was buried with. There is also speculation about the manner of his death and his age at the time of death. Hence King Tut's body has been subjected to repeated scrutiny.

(ii) Howard Carter's investigation was resented.

**Answer:**

Howard Carter's investigation was resented because he used unscientific methods and illegitimate ways. He was focusing more on treasure and less on cultural and historical aspects.

(iii) Carter had to chisel away the solidified resins to raise the king's remains.

**Answer:**

Carter found that the ritual resins had hardened. The result was that Tut's body had been cemented to the bottom of his solid gold coffin. Proper force could not move the resins. Even the scorching sun failed to loosen the resins. So he got the resins chiselled away to raise the king's remains.

(iv) Tut's body was buried along with gilded treasures.

**Answer:**

The people of ancient Egypt believed in resurrection of the dead. Their kings were extremely rich. So Tut's body was buried with gilded treasures. Their eternal brilliance was meant to guarantee resurrection. Things of everyday use were also buried with the king.

(v) The boy king changed his name from Tutankhaten to Tutankhamun.

**Answer:**

Tutankhamun means "living image of Amun". He was a major god in ancient Egypt. King Amenhotep IV who changed his name to Akhenaten smashed the images of Amun and got his temples closed. Tut oversaw a restoration of the old ways. He changed his name to express his belief in Amun.

### Question 2:

(i) List the deeds that led Ray Johnson to describe Akhenaten as 'wacky'.

**Answer:**

Akhenaten means the servant of the Aten i.e. the sun disc. He moved the religious capital from the old city of the Thebes to the new city of Akhetaten, known now as Amarna. He smashed the images of Amun, a major God and closed his temples. These deeds led Ray Johnson to describe Akhenaten as 'Wacky'.

(ii) What were the results of the CT scan?

**Answer:**

The results of the C.T. scan were quite encouraging. 1700 digital X-ray images in cross-section were created. A gray head appeared on screen. Neck vertebrae were quite clear. The images of hand, ribcage and skull were equally bright. These revealed that nothing had gone seriously wrong with Tut's body

(iii) List the advances in technology that have improved forensic analysis.

**Answer:**

The advances in technology have helped in improving forensic analysis. Many scientific tests can be carried out to determine the causes of crime. These include X-ray,

ultrasound, C.T. scan, post mortem, autopsy and biopsy. All these help in diagnosis and provide exact information.

(iv) Explain the statement, "King Tut is one of the first mummies to be scanned— in death as in life"

**Answer:**

King Tut's mummy was the first one to be X-rayed by an anatomy Professor in 1968. On 5 January 2005 CT scan created virtual reality and produced life-like images. King Tut is one of the first mummies to be scanned. Thus in death as well as in life Tut moved regally ahead of his countrymen.

## B. Talking About the Text

**Discuss the following in groups of two pairs, each pair in a group taking opposite points of view:**

### Question 1:

**Scientific intervention is necessary to unearth buried mysteries.**

(Students are expected to debate on issue raised in the text related to rediscovering history with the help of technology; respect for traditions, etc. While answering these questions, students are required to reflect on the issues and give their points of view.)

**Answer:**

**For the motion.**

Every nation glorifies its past history, culture and civilization. However, certain mysteries lie buried with them. Rituals and legends are insufficient to clear the wrap of mystery surrounding them. For example, take the case of Tutankhamun's mummy. He was laid to rest laden with gold more than 3,300 years ago. Since the discovery of his tomb in 1922 AD, the modern world has speculated about him. Some people believe that the boy king might have been murdered. There is a mystery around his life as well as death. Scientific intervention is necessary to clear the dust and cloud of mysteries around him. Hence, if we want to study archaeology properly we must take help of scientific techniques.

**Against the motion:**

If present is perfect and future certain, why many about the past? Let the dead past bury its dead and the mysteries surrounding them. In the present world full of competition, we must devote our money, time and energy to build up our resources and sustain the life style. Scientific techniques should be employed to feed the hungry millions and clad the naked ones. Some mysteries of the past have lost their relevance with the passage of time. Won't it be futile and wastage of precious resources of a developing nation in this idle pursuit? Let the thinkers, philosophers and priests worry about mysteries—not the scientists.

**Question 2:**

Advanced technology gives us conclusive evidence of past events.

**Answer:**

**For the motion.**

I fully subscribe to the observation that advanced technology gives us conclusive evidence of past events. Even my opponents will agree that there is no proper written record about many past events. Myths and legends surround even the most celebrated personalities and events of their life or circumstances of death. Facts and fiction are mingled together and sometimes have become inseparable. Various persons have given coloured versions of the past events to suit the demands of their masters or to serve their own ends. The evidence that opposed their point of view has been condemned and rejected. Thus sometimes we get a warped version and subjective account of past events. Only advanced technology can help us understand the past in right perspective.

**Against the motion:**

I disagree with the remarks that advanced technology gives us conclusive evidence of past events. It may hold good in certain cases where evidence can be reconstructed and examined closely with the sophisticated techniques of modern science available now. However, it will be unfair to generalise and hold it true in all cases. Sometimes the processing of available data may yield contradictory accounts and create more confusion than unravelling the knotted issues. Moreover, the available evidence may not be worthy of analysis and examination. The tests may determine the possible time period of the action, but it is quite difficult to assess the causes that prompted it or the results that followed it.

**Question 3:**

Tradition, rituals and funerary practices must be respected.

**Answer:**

**For the motion.**

Different religions, cultures and civilizations follow various traditions, rituals and funerary practices. The dead bodies buried under the earth, are supposed to lie in rest peacefully till the doom's day or the day of resurrection or after life. The ancient Egyptians had mastered the art of mummifying. Certain traditional rituals were performed while treating the dead body with special oils and wrapping it in cloth. Ritual resins held the mummy close to the bottom of the coffin. The burial chamber and grave contained all the important things that the king might need in after life. The funerary practices had a certain sanctity for the followers of that particular religion. We must learn to be more tolerant of the belief of others. Hence I conclude that traditions, rituals and funerary practices must be respected.

**Against the motion:**

The world is on the move. We have to be forward looking. We can't remain content with the achievements of the past or rest on our laurels. If traditions, rituals and certain funerary practices block the flow of information and knowledge, these may be overlooked for the greater benefit of humanity, i.e. clearing the air of mystery, ignorance and superstitions surrounding some of the age-old beliefs. However, in our quest for knowledge, we should not be intolerant or disrespectful. We must conduct our probe objectively and dispassionately. Facts must be given more weightage than the beliefs attached to them. A detached outlook can provide clear understanding of past events.

**Question 4:**

Knowledge about past lives is useful to complete our knowledge of the world we live in.

**Answer:**

**For the motion.**

Modern world has expanded the frontiers of knowledge. In fact the whole world has become a global village. Within a few seconds we become aware of incidents happening thousands of miles away. Information technology has indeed brought a revolution in the field of knowledge. Still our knowledge of the world is incomplete without the knowledge about past lives. We are the direct descendants of our ancestors and we must be aware of the circumstances in which they existed and how they coped with them. The structure of future is rooted in the past. We draw lessons from the past and make improvements. The lives of the people of the past are like beacon lights to guide and inspire us and enlighten us about the world we live in.

**Against the motion:**

We are constantly learning new things about the world we live in. The knowledge of our present circumstances and future prospects is more important than the knowledge about past lives. Their traditions, rituals, tools, ways of conduct and ethos are not going to help us in our struggle for existence in the highly competitive and complex modern world. The knowledge about past lives can at best make us retrograde instead of being progressive. For many of us the world means their sphere of activities and the environment they live in. People aim at specializing in restricted fields instead of being Jack of all trades. As such the knowledge of the world we need is also restricted to our requirements and we need not bother about knowledge about past lives.

**C. Thinking About Language**

**Read the following piece of information from The Encyclopedia of Language by David Crystal.**

“Egyptian is now extinct: its history dates from before the 3rd millennium BC, preserved in many hieroglyphic inscriptions and

papyrus manuscripts. Around the 2nd century AD, it developed into a language known as Coptic. Coptic may still have been used as late as the early 19th century and is still used as a religious language by Monophysite Christians in Egypt.”

**Question 1:**

What do you think are the reasons for the extinction of languages?

**Answer:**

A language becomes extinct when its use is restricted to certain classes or categories of people. Secondly, the harshness of rules and lack of flexibility in usage also contribute to the extinction of languages.

**Question 2:**

Do you think it is important to preserve languages?

**Answer:**

I think it is important to preserve languages. Various languages are the vehicles of thought and medium of interaction between the users of that language and the outside world. A language has intimate connection with the lives, culture and civilization of the people and reflects their thinking.

**Question 3:**

In what ways do you think we could help prevent the extinction of languages and dialects?

**Answer:**

Certain steps must be taken to help prevent the extinction of languages and dialects. The most important is to encourage its use. A language thrives as long as it is used by masses. Measures should be taken to propagate the languages and dialects used in certain areas. The help of interpreters may be provided for interaction between native users of language/dialect and non-users. Certain incentives in the form of stipends, scholarships, preferences in jobs etc. may also prove handy in attracting the youth towards languages and dialects which are on the verge of extinction. State patronage can also help in the preservation of languages.

**D. Working With Words**

**Question 1:**

Given below are some interesting combinations of words. Explain why they have been used together:

- (a) **ghostly dust devils**
- (b) **desert sky**
- (c) **stunning artifacts**
- (d) **funerary treasures**
- (e) **scientific detachment**
- (f) **dark-bellied clouds**
- (g) **casket gray**
- (h) **eternal brilliance**
- (i) **ritual resins**
- (j) **virtual body**

**Answer:**

In each combination of words, one word is an adjective and it modifies as well as reinforces the meaning of the noun following/preceding it. Let us try to understand the meaning of each combination of words:

- **ghostly dust devils:** ghost-like wicked evil spirits formed by dust.
- **dark-bellied clouds:** bulging/swelling clouds
- **desert sky:** the sky over the desert
- **casket gray:** the grey sky hiding the stars in it
- **stunning artifacts:** extremely attractive man-made objects if) **eternal brilliance:** everlasting shine
- **funerary treasures:** treasures stored following rituals of funeral
- **ritual resins:** resins applied according to religious rites
- **scientific detachment:** aloofness of a scientist
- **virtual body:** body made to appear to exist by computer software.

**II. Here are some commonly used medical terms. Find out their meanings:**

<b>CT scan</b>	<b>MRI</b>	<b>tomography</b>
<b>autopsy</b>	<b>dialysis</b>	<b>ECG</b>
<b>post mortem</b>	<b>angiography</b>	<b>biopsy</b>

**Answer:**

- **CT scan:** a medical-test in which a machine produces a three dimensional picture of the inside of a person’s body on a computer screen after taking X-rays.
- **MRI:** an abbreviation for magnetic resonance imaging—a technique for producing images of body organs by measuring the properties of atomic nuclei in a strong magnetic field.
- **Tomography:** a technique for displaying a cross section through a human body (or other solid object) using X-rays or ultrasound.
- **Autopsy:** an examination of a dead body to discover the cause of death or the extent of disease.
- **Dialysis:** a technique of clinical purification of blood, as a substitute for the normal functions of the kidney.
- **ECG:** abbreviation for electrocardiogram or electrocardiograph; preparing a graph showing the measurement and recording the activity in the heart using electrodes placed on the skin.

- **Post mortem:** medical examination of the body of a dead person in order to find out how he died.
- **Angiography:** radiography of blood or lymph vessels, carried out after introduction of a substance that is opaque to X-ray.
- **Biopsy:** an examination of tissue taken from the body to discover the presence, cause, or extent of a disease.

III. Notice these expressions in the text. Guess the meaning from the context.

➤ <i>forensic reconstruction</i>	➤ <i>scudded across</i>
➤ <i>casket gray</i>	➤ <i>resurrection</i>
➤ <i>funerary treasures</i>	➤ <i>circumvented</i>
➤ <i>computed tomography</i>	➤ <i>eerie detail</i>

Answer:

- **forensic reconstruction:** activity of building again something damaged or to help scientific test to solve a crime
- **scudded across:** moved quickly across something
- **casket gray:** a small gray box or grey sky
- **resurrection:** a new beginning for something which is old
- **funerary treasures:** collection of valuable things used at a funeral
- **circumvented:** found a way of avoiding a difficulty or a rule
- **eerie detail:** strange and frightening little bits of facts

Ailing Planet

- **What is the significance of Green Movement in the modern world?**  
The Green Movement that was found in New Zealand in the year 1972 brought a great awareness to the humanity. It taught us that we are just partners on the earth having equal rights to inhabit this planet as any other living organism has. Having learnt this, human beings worldwide stopped large amount of destruction that it used cause upon the earth. People realized that the earth's existence was threatened and began to do whatever was possible by each individual and each nation.
- **What was the question raised by the First Brandt Commission? What does it suggest? What is the significance of this question?**  
The first Brandt Report raised the question, "Are we going to leave behind for our successors a scorched planet of advancing deserts, impoverished landscapes and ailing planet?" This question finds an answer in our minds but we quite conveniently forget this answer. It has been proved in the recent years that the earth is becoming hotter planet every year and another ice-age is under way. This question is still significant and will remain significant until the only schooled animal of the earth stops his war against the planet.
- **"What goes under the pot now costs more than what goes inside it." Explain.**  
With a growing population and the pace of the global developments taking wings, the cost of food touched a new height, all time high. Amazingly, the cost of cooking-gas overtook that of food-grains, fish, meat and vegetables, thus the fuel to cook – gas, firewood and electricity – now costs more than the raw-food.
- **Why is it said that forest precedes mankind?**  
No animal on the planet earth ever caused damage to it but humans have been causing serious destruction upon the earth ever since they had evolved. By cutting down trees for their survival and development, humans have established their monopoly over the other species. Thus, with the coming of humans, the existence of forest was threatened and in their places humans constructed cities and megacities, always at the cost of these forests. As a result, forests are forced to surrender to deserts – that is, the green forests gave space for deserts.
- **What did Lester Brown mean when he said that we have not inherited this earth from our forefathers, we have borrowed it from our children?**  
Lester Brown believes that the present population of the earth has no right to think that the earth is its property. Each one has to believe that he is having full responsibility to keep the earth protected from all kinds of misuse. He has to feel that the earth is a place that he has to return to the generations to come. Brown further furnishes that human beings have no right to misuse the earth because we are accountable to the new generations after us.
- **How is population-explosion the biggest threat to the existence of the ailing earth?**  
Human population is the biggest threat to the existence of the earth. Though it reached a billion in a million years, another billion was added to the world-population in just another hundred years. Every four or five days the world population increases by one million. The effects of this dangerous increase in world population are endless yet the most catastrophic one is our present struggle for existence.
- **How is population responsible for the environmental degradation?**  
With rising population, space that nature assigned for forests and animals is occupied by humans for their development and survival. More population means less forests and animals. Unfortunately man's first choice is nature and it is sadly vulnerable and an easy prey. When cities and megacities occupy the major portion of the earth, the ecological balance is said to be lost.

## Albert Einstein at School

### 1. **Why was Einstein's presence in the school a persistent soreness for his teachers and classmates?**

Albert Einstein was not a good student at school when we judge his performance in the class. He was rather a rebel. His intelligent questions left his teachers with no answer. Most teachers entered his class with dread about the questions he would ask. His classmates, who were either jealous of him or disliked him for his questioning behavior, hated him, too. Albert Einstein was too genius for a school like the one that he attended in Munich. He pestered/troubled his teachers with questions that they were not able to answer and made his classmates feel jealous of his genius. Einstein's honesty is mistaken for arrogance. He is punished and told that he is disgrace to the school. Einstein thus, felt miserable at school and longed to escape. Besides, the head teacher told Einstein that all the teachers were vexed with his rebellious attitude and wanted him to leave the school.

### 2. **What was Einstein's theory of education?**

Einstein believed that the then existing education method was incapable of meeting the purpose of education. He wanted the school find out a student's area of interest and empower that side of the students. He believed that learning facts and dates was not education. He was against learning facts and dates by heart. He was really disappointed that there was no research in his school.

### 3. **What were Einstein's views regarding rote learning? Why is mere rote learning useless?**

As a student in Munich, Einstein was different from the other boys of his age. He was unable to cope with conventional system of education which says a lot of emphasis on learning by rote. He believed that there was no point in memorizing facts. Facts, he felt, could easily be looked up in books. Rote learning only helps in scoring but on the other hand, the student stops thinking and exploring. Students take to learning what others have learnt but creativity and inventions are disabled.

### 4. **What made Einstein unhappy at school?**

Einstein was a misfit at school and was unable to cope with the conventional system of education. As a student at Munich, he was different from other boys of his age. He hated the oppressive atmosphere of the school and was sure he would fail in the examinations. He was always dissatisfied with the absence of creative learning in the school.

### 5. **Why didn't Einstein take interest in learning the dates of wars? OR What was 'Einstein's theory of education?' (2 marks)**

Einstein did not believe that learning facts and dates is education. In the case of the date of the Waterloo War, he said he did not remember the date for the very reason. In his opinion, students should not be made to memorize the dates of wars and events. Rather, he loved to learn why the war was fought. This means that Albert Einstein was in favor of applied knowledge over rote learning.

## **Elsa and Einstein**

### **Questions & Answers**

#### 1. **Why was Elsa amazed at Einstein?**

Elsa, Einstein's cousin, once noticed that he was reading a book on geology. Geology was a subject taught at very higher classes and Einstein was still in the lower school in Munich. When he explained that he read the book because he loved to read, Elsa was amazed.

#### 2. **What was Elsa's advice for Einstein?**

Elsa was Einstein's cousin sister. She believed that Albert didn't try to learn at all. Her concept of learning was opposite to Einstein's. She too believed in rote learning – learning by heart. She was of the opinion that any student can.

## **Yuri and Einstein**

#### 1. **Why couldn't Einstein think of going to Milan without a serious reason?**

Einstein's father was a businessman in Milan. He had asked his son to return to Milan after completing his studies in Munich and was very stubborn about that. To go to Milan, therefore, Einstein needed a very strong reason to leave his school in Munich.

#### 2. **Who was Yuri? How good a friend was he for Einstein?**

Yuri was the only friend Albert had in Munich. Yuri had great concern for Albert. It was Yuri who understood Albert's helplessness in the school and his desire to go to Milan to join his family. Yuri was greatly helpful for Albert, especially in getting a medical certificate.

#### 3. **What made Einstein's life miserable in the slum where he lived?**

Albert Einstein lived in a slum where his landlady made his life a hell. She most often beat her children and then occasionally she was beaten by her husband. She was so rude with Einstein that she didn't allow him to play his violin for a relief from all this stress. Apart from this, he was constantly sad for the thought of having to go back to the school where he had not a friend.

### **Medical Certificate!**

- Yuri, Einstein's only friend had some contacts. Dr. Ernst Weil was one of them. Dr. Weil was a new doctor.
- Through Yuri, Einstein gets an appointment with Dr. Weil. And, lo, he gets the certificate!

### **Questions & Answers**

#### 1. **What for did Einstein require a medical certificate?**

Einstein hated the school at Munich and longed to escape to Milan where his family had settled down. He knew that if he left his studies and went to Milan to join his family, his father would get angry and send him back. By getting a medical certificate that certified that Einstein was mentally unfit, he could escape the school and go to Milan.

#### 2. **Do you think Dr. Ernst Weil had given Einstein a fake medical certificate? Why do you think so?**

Dr. Ernst Weil's certificate stating Albert's mental condition as abnormal was not a fake one because Albert was in a way

mentally not fit to attend the school. He said that Albert would not have come for a fitness certificate if he were fit and believed that by staying in his school, Albert had been really stressed and was close to a breakdown.

### The Head Teacher

#### Questions & Answers

1. **What surprises awaited Einstein in the Principal's/head-teacher's room?**

Einstein got a false medical certificate and was about to go to the head teacher's office to submit it. To his surprise, however, the headmaster himself sent for him and informed that the school had decided to rusticate him for his hostile presence in the school. The head teacher explained that all the teachers were vexed with his rebellious attitude and did not want him in the school any longer. He then suggested the simplest way out for Einstein to cope with the school – leave the school on his own.

2. **Why was Einstein glad that the school management was expelling him?**

3. **Did Einstein succeed in leaving school? How?**

Yes, finally Einstein got rid of his school. With the help of his friend, Yuri, Einstein found a doctor who was kind and understanding. The doctor gave a certificate stating that Einstein needed rest for six months because he was under extreme stress. In a dramatic turn, Einstein was called to the head teacher's room and was told that the school had decided to expel him from the school.

4. **What for was Einstein called to the head teacher's room?**

Einstein expects to be punished for some lapse. But that is not the case. The head teacher tells Einstein that all the teachers are vexed with his rebellious attitude and do not want him in the school any longer. The simplest way out would be for Einstein to leave the school on his own. Otherwise, the head teacher would be forced to expel him formally.

5. **Why was Einstein glad that the school management was expelling him?**

Einstein felt uneasy in a system which lay emphasis on rote learning. He was sure he would fail in the examinations.

### Mr Koch

1. **Who was Mr. Koch? How did he help Einstein in his future life?**

Mr. Koch was Einstein's mathematics teacher. He was a great man, probably who was not jealous of Einstein's knowledge. He admired Einstein's knowledge and regretted his not able to teach what he wanted to learn and sympathized with him for this school's not able to provide his kind of education. Apart from this, Mr. Koch gave him such a certificate that helped Einstein secure a seat in a university.

2. **How did Mr. Koch certify Einstein's caliber?**

Mr. Koch, the benevolent mathematics teacher, declared in a statement that he had taught Einstein all he knew and Einstein was in fact in a position to teach him. This, though a true statement, was a great certificate for Einstein's future life and success.

3. **"I knew you were going to leave before you knew it yourself." What does Mr. Koch, the mathematics teacher, mean by this? What light does this shed on the ideal teacher-student relation?**

Mr. Koch was Einstein's mathematics teacher. His was the only class that Einstein had liked in the school. When Mr. Koch said he knew that Einstein was going to leave the school even before he knew he would one day leave, the great teacher meant what he had thought about Einstein. Mr. Koch had, from the very first day, learnt the student's genius. He had a clear idea that the school would not stand strong in front of Einstein's enormous genius. Like a good mathematician who makes correct calculations, Mr. Koch had calculated and reached the solution – Einstein > School – Einstein was bigger than the school. This made him say that he had foreseen this end

### Mother's Day

#### QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

#### A. Reading With Insight

#### Question 1:

**This play, written in the 1950s, is a humorous and satirical depiction of the status of the mother in the family.**

1. What are the issues it raises?
2. Do you think it caricatures these issues or do you think that the problems it raises are genuine? How does the play resolve the issues? Do you agree with the resolution?

#### Answer:

1. The play raises many serious issues. The first and foremost is proper appreciation of a housewife's role and responsibilities. Those who work eight hours a day and forty hours a week treat the housewife as an unpaid domestic servant, who must carry out their orders. They neither request her nor thank her for her services. The second issue is the reciprocity of love and gratitude towards the mother or wife. The husband, son and daughter leave the lady of the house alone every night and go out to enjoy themselves in their several ways. They do not take any notice of her and have become thoughtless and selfish. The mother's excessive love, care and promptness to serve them also spoil them.
2. The problems the play raises are serious. The treatment is of course, comic. The playwright adopts an unusual method to resolve the issues. He takes the help of magic of the East. Incantation of a magical spell helps in the interchange of the personalities. Now Mrs Pearson, with the strong and sinister personality of Mrs Fitzgerald, gives rough treatment to the daughter, son and husband respectively. Her stern looks and commanding tone suggests to them that she can be really tough. The spoiled members are brought round by the heavy dose of exposure of reality to them. They agree to stay and help

in preparing the supper while the housewife has a talk with her husband.

The resolution of the issues seems far-fetched and unnatural but extreme means have to be adopted in disaster management.

**Question 2:**

If you were to write these issues today, what are some of the incidents, examples and problems that you would think of as relevant?

**Answer:**

Various responses are possible One such response is given below:

The incidents of unfair treatment to the fair sex at home, at work, in public transport and elsewhere will prove handy. The examples of exploitation of female workers with lower wages, harassment by seniors, indecent remarks, eve-teasing and molestation can highlight the problems of social inequality that women face in practice. Even in the twenty first century women face the same problems in spite of the talk of women empowerment. The poor housewives have to bear the physical torment and mental anguish at the hands of bullish husbands who boast of their masculinity by inflicting physical violence, barbs and taunts on the defenseless women. Examples of rapes and sexual harassment which hug the limelight in daily newspapers can also be included to highlight the problems of insecurity of women in modern society.

**Question 3:**

Is drama a good medium for conveying a social message? Discuss.

**Answer:**

Yes, drama is certainly a good medium for conveying a social message. Direct moralising is often resented and usually ignored. Drama is a presentation of a slice of life through characters placed in various situations. The attention of the spectators centres round their actions and reactions. Most of them feel fully involved with the protagonists. The working out of the theme generally leaves a message—sometimes obvious and explicit but in most of the cases, indirect and implicit. The social message of these plays seems to come out of the interactions of the characters and their traits of character. The victory of evil over good is usually portrayed indirectly. These days we find many plays centred around themes creating social awareness such as evils of drinking and smoking; dangers of pollution, child labour, the decreasing female ratio and need to empower women.

**Question 4:**

Discuss in groups plays or films with a strong message of social reform that you have watched.

**Answer:**

For group discussion at class level. There can be varied responses. One such response is given below: The latest film I have watched recently is 'SWADESH'. It has a strong message of social reform. It tells the story of an Indian scientist at NASA (America) who visits his ancestral home in India. The poor condition of the villagers and lack of basic facilities fills him with deep agony. He resigns his job in America and returns to his native country (Swadesh) to begin his work of rural uplift. He gives the villagers a message that self-help is the best help and we cannot depend for everything on the Government. This remote village is plunged in darkness after sunset as there is no electricity. With the help of a few villagers, the scientist is able to produce hydroelectricity and light the village homes. The water can be used for irrigation purposes also. Thus the economic and social condition of the villagers undergoes a sea change.

**MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED**

**A. Short Answer Type Questions**

**Question 1:**

How are Mrs Pearson and Mrs Fitzgerald contrasted?

**Answer:**

The two ladies are sharply contrasted. Mrs Pearson is a pleasant but worried looking woman in her forties. She speaks in a light, flurried sort of tone with a touch of suburban cockney. Mrs Fitzgerald is older, heavier and has a strong and sinister personality. She smokes. She has a deep voice, rather Irish tone.

**Question 2:**

"I'm much obliged," says Mrs. J Pearson. What for does she feel obliged and to whom?

**Answer:**

Mrs. Pearson feels obliged to Mrs Fitzgerald for telling her fortune. She thinks it quite wonderful having a real fortune teller living next door.

**Question 3:**

What fortune does Mrs Fitzgerald predict for Mrs Pearson?

**Answer:** Mrs Fitzgerald is quite equivocal in her predictions. She says it could be a good fortune or a bad one. All depends on Mrs Pearson herself now. She asks her to decide firmly. Her fortune depends on it.

**Question 4:**

What problem does Mrs Pearson face? Who do you think is responsible for this state of affairs?

**Answer:**

Mrs Pearson devotes all her time and energy to serve her husband, son and daughter. These thoughtless and selfish persons go out every night to enjoy themselves leaving Mrs Pearson alone at home. She is no better than a servant in her own home. Mrs Pearson herself is responsible for the ill-treatment, neglect and lack of concern shown to her.

**Question 5:**

What course of action does Mrs Fitzgerald suggest to Mrs Pearson to tackle the situation?

**Answer:**

Mrs Fitzgerald tells Mrs Pearson to decide firmly and stick to her decision. She must assert her position and become the real mistress of the house. Her own initiative can help her. She must let them wait or look after themselves for once.

**Question 6:**

What difficulties does Mrs Pearson face while dealing with the various members of her family?

**Answer:**

Mrs Pearson loves her husband and children too much. She does not find courage enough to discuss the problem with them. She only keeps dropping hints. She hates any unpleasantness. She does not know where to start. She doesn't know how to begin discussion with the other members of the family.

**Question 7:**

"Then let me do it", suggests Mrs Fitzgerald. How does Mrs Pearson react to it?

**Answer:**

Mrs Fitzgerald offers to deal with the family of Mrs Pearson and teach them to treat her properly Mrs Pearson feels flustered. She thanks her saying that it wouldn't do at all. They would resent being ill-treated by somebody else and wouldn't listen.

**Question 8:**

How does Mrs Fitzgerald plan to deal with the family of Mrs Pearson?

**Answer:**

She tells Mrs Pearson that she will deal with her family not as herself but as Mrs Pearson. They will change places or really bodies. Mrs Pearson would then look like Mrs Fitzgerald and the latter would look like the former.

**Question 9:**

Why does Doris Pearson feel astounded on returning home?

**Answer:**

Doris finds her mother smoking away—lighting another cigarette and laying out the cards for patience on the table. She shoots her query about ironing her yellow silk, but feel astounded on seeing her mother's behaviour.

**Question 10:**

What are the two reasons that annoy Doris Pearson?

**Answer:**

Firstly, Doris is annoyed that her mother has not ironed her yellow silk dress which she has to wear that night. Secondly, she has returned home after working hard all day and mother hasn't even bothered to get her tea ready.

**Question 11:**

How does Mrs Pearson refute Doris's argument about working hard?

**Answer:**

Mrs Pearson tells Doris that she has a good idea how much Doris does. Mrs Pearson claims that she puts in twice the hours that Doris does, and gets no pay or thanks for it.

**Question 12:**

How does Mrs Pearson criticize Doris on going out with Charlie Spence?

**Answer:**

Mrs Pearson asks Doris if she could not find anyone better than Charlie Spence. He has buck-teeth and is half-witted. She wouldn't be seen dead with Charlie Spence. At her age she would either have found somebody better than Charlie Spence or stopped dating boys on seeing no hope of success.

**Question 13:**

Why is Cyril Pearson annoyed with his mother? Give two reasons.

**Answer:**

Cyril feels annoyed when his mother tells him that tea is not ready as she couldn't bother about it. He esquires if she is not feeling well and then asks her to be quick as he has not too much time. His mother has not taken his things out. She has neither mended them nor is she willing to do so.

**Question 14:**

"That's a nice way to talk What would happen if we all talked like that?" says Cyril. In what context does he say so? What argument does he get in return?

**Answer:**

When Mrs Pearson tells her son, Cyril that she has decided now that she doesn't like mending, Cyril objects to her words. Mrs Pearson gives him a taste of his own medicine by saying that all of them do talk like that. If there's something at home they don't want to do, they don't do it. If it is something at their work, they get the union to bar it. She has now joined the movement.

**Question 15:**

How do Doris and Cyril react to Mrs Pearson's query about stout?

**Answer:**

Cyril is the first to react. He hints that she doesn't want stout then i.e., at tea time. Her remark that she wants to drink surprises both Doris and Cyril and they exchange notes regarding her behaviour towards them since they returned home that evening.

**Question 16:**

What changes in the behaviour of Mrs Pearson startle Doris and Cyril? What possible reasons do they suggest?

**Answer:** Doris couldn't believe her eyes when she saw her mother smoking and playing cards. Cyril too noted the change and

asked her if she was feeling ill. She looks just the same but her behaviour is suddenly different. Cyril asks if she has gone slightly mad. Doris thinks that she has a concussion as a result of her head hitting something.

**Question 17:**

How does Mrs Pearson teach her children to be responsible adults?

**Answer:**

First she scolds them for their guffawing and giggling. Then she has a dig at their lifestyle. They just-come in, ask for something, go out again and then return as there's nowhere else to go. When Doris and Cyril boast of doing their work all day, Mrs Pearson tells them that she has also done her eight hours. She threatens to have two days off at the weekend.

**Question 18:**

"But any of you forty-hour-a weekers who expect to be waited on hand and foot on Saturday and Sunday with no thanks for it, are in for a nasty disappointment," says Mrs Pearson. How has she planned to spend the weekends?

**Answer:**

She might do cooking or make a bed or two as a favour: only if she is asked very nicely and thanked for it. They'll have to pay attention to her and show care and concern. Perhaps she might go off for the weekend. It will provide her a change. She is bored of remaining at home all the time.

**Question 19:**

"I'll hit you with something, girl, if you don't stop, asking silly questions." says Mrs Pearson to Doris. Which 'silly' questions does she object to?

**Answer:**

Doris at first asks with disbelief if she would go off for the weekend and then enquires where she would go and with whom. Mrs Pearson tells her that it is her business. Doris then asks her if she had fallen or hit herself with something. Mrs Pearson objects to this silly question.

**Question 20:**

"Well that ought to be nice change for you" says Mrs Pearson. What 'change' does she refer to and how does George react to it?

**Answer:**

George finds his wife Annie (Mrs Pearson) drinking stout at the wrong time of the day. Moreover, he has never seen her doing it before. Naturally, he is confused and surprised. When he remarks that he doesn't like her drinking and it doesn't look right. Mrs Pearson remarks about the 'change' in her style.

**Question 21:**

"Annoyed because I don't get a tea for him that he doesn't even want", says Mrs Pearson. What forces her to make this remark?

**Answer:**

At first, George Pearson tells his wife that he wouldn't want any tea as there is supper at the club that night. He feels hurt to know that she hasn't prepared any tea. When he asks "suppose I'd wanted some," Mrs. Pearson makes this biting remark.

**Question 22:**

How, do you think, is George Pearson treated at the club?

**Answer:**

The members of the club laugh at George Pearson. He is, in fact, one of their standing jokes. They call him Pompy-Ompy Pearson because they think he is quite slow and pompous. Although this joke is quite famous, George is unaware of it.

**Question 23:**

What objection does Mrs Pearson have against George's going to club so frequently?

**Answer:**

Mrs Pearson fails to understand why her husband George wants to spend so much time at the club where people are always laughing at him behind his back and calling him names. He leaves his wife alone every night. She wouldn't make him look a fool if he went out with her.

**Question 24:**

"Sometimes it does people good to have their feelings hurt." Do you agree with Mrs Pearson's observation?

**Answer:**

Mrs Pearson has hurt the feelings of her husband, George by telling him the truth. She thinks that truth should not hurt anybody for long. I think she is right. It's no good living in fool's paradise.

**Question 25:**

Why does Mrs Pearson doubt the value of Cyril's opinion?

**Answer:**

She tells Cyril frankly that he knows nothing about worldly affairs. He spends too much time and good money at amusement shows like greyhound races, dirt tracks and ice shows.

**Question 26:**

Why is George Pearson incensed at Mrs Fitzgerald's utterances?

**Answer:**

George reacts with horror and surprise when his neighbour, Mrs Fitzgerald addresses him by his first name, George, instead of the formal Mr George Pearson. Her second remark "Oh-dear-I ought to have known" further incenses him as he thinks she has no business to poke "her nose into their family affairs.

**Question 27:**

“Perhaps you’ll excuse us...” What lessons of civility does Mrs Pearson teach George Pearson?

**Answer:**

Mrs Pearson tells George that she will not excuse him for his behaviour. She asks him to be polite to her friend or neighbour in future. He should greet her politely instead of coming in and sitting down silently.

**Question 28:**

Why does Mrs Pearson threaten to slap her husband?

**Answer:**

George feels angry at being humiliated in the presence of his neighbour. He loses his temper and asks his wife if she has gone mad. This is too much for Mrs Pearson to bear. She jumps up and threatens to slap George if he shouts at her again.

**Question 29:**

“Either Pm off my chump or you two are”. Why do you think George arrives at this conclusion?

**Answer:**

Mrs Pearson threatens to slap George if he shouts at her again. Then Mrs Fitzgerald begins to moan and addressing Mrs Pearson as Mrs Fitzgerald, requests her not to do so. George is bewildered and exclaims that either he is mad or both of them are mad.

**Question 30:**

How is Doris taught a lesson in behaviour?

**Answer:**

When Mrs Fitzgerald remarks that Doris was going out with Charlie Spence that night, Doris feels annoyed and retorts that she has got nothing to do with it. Mrs Pearson rebukes Doris harshly and tells her to answer Mrs Fitzgerald properly. She adds that she won’t have her daughter behaving rudely with anyone.

**Question 31:**

How does the real Mrs Pearson learn about her daughter’s miserable state?

**Answer:**

The real Mrs Pearson has the body of Mrs Fitzgerald. At her insistence Doris tells her that her mother has been criticizing her and making her feel miserable. According to her Charlie Spence has buck-teeth and is half-witted. All this has made her miserable.

**Question 32:**

What forces the real Mrs Pearson to come to the conclusion: “That’s enough quite enough”?

**Answer:**

Mrs Fitzgerald who has the body of Mrs Pearson, has been quite harsh to George Pearson, Doris and Cyril. The real Mrs Pearson objects to her comments about Charlie Spence. Later when she is a bit rude to George, the real Mrs Pearson feels offended.

**Question 33:**

What is Mrs Fitzgerald’s final advice to Mrs Pearson after reversion to their original personalities?

**Answer:**

Mrs Fitzgerald advises Mrs Pearson not to go soft on the members of her family again. She should not start explaining or apologizing. She should give them a look or a rough tone of voice now and then to suggest that she might be tough with them if she wanted to be so.

**Question 34:**

What would Mrs Pearson like the members of her family to do?

**Answer:**

She wants them to stop at home in the evening and give her a hand with supper. She would also like to play a nice game of rummy, which she fails to have except at Christmas.

**Question 35:**

How does the stern treatment reform the spoilt children?

**Answer:**

The children look apprehensively at Mrs Pearson. However, they smile back at her, as she smile. Since they are not going out, she suggests having a nice family game of rummy. She tells the children to get the supper ready while she has a talk with their father. The spoilt children meekly obey her.

**Question 1:**

What do you think is the theme of the play? How has it been worked out?

**Answer:**

The theme of the play is the status of women in their own household. The housewife serves the members of her family with complete devotion, sincerity and love. However, she is never given the regard, attention or thanks due to her. Her leniency and eagerness to please everyone reduces her to the rank of an unpaid domestic servant in her own house. Instead of being politely requested for a favour, she is ordered to do it. She gets no thanks in return. The theme is worked out by portrayal of the Pearson family. Mrs Pearson is the harassed mother. Her daughter Doris, son Cyril and husband George take her services for granted and have become thoughtless and selfish. The interchange of personalities and the harsh treatment meted out to them by the personality of Mrs Fitzgerald (in the body of Mrs Pearson) reforms them and they obey the mother willingly.

**Question 2:**

What impression do you form of Mrs Annie Pearson?

**Answer:**

Mrs Pearson is the main character in the play 'Mother's Day'. She is a pleasant but worried-looking woman in her forties. She speaks in a light, flurried sort of tone, with a touch of suburban cockney. She loves her husband and children very much and runs after them all the time. Her excessive love and care have spoilt them and they have become thoughtless and selfish. She feels neglected and lonely but lacks courage to discuss things with them. Perhaps she hates any unpleasantness as well. She is not willing to act as a tough mom as she is nervous and fluttering by nature. She is so tender-hearted that she is shocked to see the rough treatment meted out to her children. She decides to change back to her original personality to deal with her family herself. She is indeed a loving and affectionate mother and a devoted wife.

**Question 3:**

"The shock treatment makes the thoughtless and selfish persons realise the real position of the lady of the house." How far do you agree with the statement? Give reasons for your answer.

**Answer:**

I fully agree with the aforesaid statement. Drastic situations need drastic remedies. The thoughtless, selfish and spoilt members of the Pearson family do not understand the language of love and affection. Mrs Pearson with Mrs Fitzgerald's bold and dominating personality and her toughness makes them realise their own state. Doris is the first to learn her lesson in civility and politeness. The criticism of her boy friend seems quite unexpected to her—perhaps more than the non-compliance of her orders of ironing the yellow silk dress. Doris has tearful eyes. Cyril is also told to help himself. The mother's declaration that she too will henceforth work forty hours a week, have the weekends off and go somewhere to enjoy herself come as a shock treatment. The balloon of her husband's ego is punctured by disclosing to him how people at the club make fun of him. In the end all the three members come round and show their willingness to obey the mother's command.

**Question 4:**

Write a note on the role of Mrs Fitzgerald in the play.

**Answer:**

Mrs Fitzgerald plays a very important role in the play. She is introduced as a fortune teller and the next-door neighbour of the Pearsons. It is through the initial conversation between her and Mrs Pearson that we come to know the problems that Mrs Pearson faces. Mrs Fitzgerald analyses the situation quite objectively and becomes the playwright's mouthpiece. She also suggests the ways and methods of tackling the situation. Since Mrs Pearson does not have the guts to stand for her right, Mrs Fitzgerald suggests a novel approach—exchange of personalities. Now as Mrs Pearson, with the personality Mrs Fitzgerald, she puts the plan of reformation in action. She smokes, drinks and plays cards. All this is unusual for the family. She further shocks them by being tough with them in word and action. She asks them to look after themselves. She clearly tells them that she has already worked for more than eight hours that day. She tells them plainly how they behave at home and workplace. She is equally blunt with Mr George Pearson, who goes away every evening to club, leaving his wife alone at home. She reveals to him how the people at club make a fun of him. In short, she makes them realise their responsibility towards the mother. In the end, she performs the exchange of personalities once again. Thus she is the main spring of initial action, climax and denouement.

**Question 5:**

The play 'Mother's Day' is a humorous and satirical depiction of the status of the woman in a family. Bring out briefly the elements of humour and satire.

**Answer:**

The play 'Mother's Day' treats a serious theme in a light-hearted manner. The humour in the play springs from an unusual situation where the personalities of two ladies change bodies. Their subsequent behaviour, which is in total contrast to their previous one, is a very powerful source of laughter. The ignorance of the characters about the personality they are facing also creates humour. Suggestive dialogues also provide a lot of fun. For example, consider the following:

- "Mrs Pearson if you had to live my life it wouldn't be so bad. You'd have more fun as me than you've had as you."
- "It's that silly old bag from next door—Mrs Fitzgerald."
- "Ticking her off now, are you, Annie?"
- "They call you Pompy-Ompy Pearson because they think you're so slow and pompous."

The actions, gestures and reactions of the characters also provide humour. The housewife being given orders, treated like dirt and forced to stay home every night while other members go out to amuse themselves is sharply contrasted with the position at the end of the play where she is the mistress of the house. Then play also satirises the eight hour work culture and threats to go on strike. Even the housewife adopts this weapon.

**Question 6:**

Comment on the ending of the play 'Mother's Day'.

**Answer:**

The play has a happy ending with a complete reversal of the initial situation. Mrs Pearson is now cheerful while the family looks anxiously at her. When she smiles, they feel much relieved and smile back at her. None of them is going out. For the first time, perhaps she tells the members of the family what they should do. Instead of behaving timidly, she looks sharply at the family and asks if they have any objections. George is the first to yield. He agrees to do whatever she says. Still smiling, she suggests that they should have a nice family game of rummy and then the children could get the supper ready

while she has a talk with their father. George supports her and looks enquiringly at the children. Cyril hastily approves the proposal while Doris agrees hesitatingly. A sharp command: "What Speak up!" does the trick and Doris agrees. Mrs Pearson bids good bye to Mrs Fitzgerald and smilingly asks her to come again soon. The ending seems quite natural. It also leaves a message for the mothers. They should assert themselves.

**Question 7:**

Write a note on the title of the play 'Mother's Day'.

**Answer:**

The title of the play is quite appropriate. It sums up the theme of the play. It suggests that the action of the play revolves round a mother. The playwright confronts us at the outset with the problems the mother faces from her grown up children and their father. The novel technique employed to tackle the spoilt children and the grown up man is quite amusing and thought provoking. The bold and dominating mother acts tough with the children and makes them realise the need of proper attention towards their mother. They are made to learn lesson in courtesy and polite behaviour not only towards the mother but also towards the visiting neighbour. The mother certainly has her day as the children learn to treat her properly. The supper being prepared by the children, their stay at home and the family game of rummy is a rare gift that the mother receives on this important day.