

SHORT STORIES

1. TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA – A. J. CRONIN

As we drove through the foothills of the Alps two small boys stopped us on the outskirts of Verona.

They were selling wild strawberries. "Don't buy," warned Luigi, our cautious driver. "You will get fruit much better in Verona. Besides, these boys....".

He shrugged his shoulders to convey his disapproval of their shabby appearance.

One boy had on a worn jersey and cut-off khaki pants; the other a shortened army tunic gathered in loose folds about his skinny frame. Yet, gazing at the two little figures, with their brown skins, tangled hair and dark earnest eyes, we felt ourselves strangely attracted. My companion spoke to the boys, discovered that they were brothers. Nicola, the elder, was 13; Jacopo, who barely came up to the door handle of the car, was nearly We bought their biggest basket, then set off toward town.

Next morning, coming out of our hotel, we saw our friends bent over shoeshine boxes beside the fountain in the public square, doing a brisk business.

We watched for a few moments; then as trade slackened we went over. They greeted us with friendly faces.

"I thought you picked fruit for a living," I said.

"We do many things, sir," Nicola answered seriously. He glanced at us hopefully. "Often we show visitors through the town ... to Juliet's tomb ... and other places of interest."

"All right," I smiled. "You take us along."

As we made the rounds, my interest was again provoked by their remarkable demeanour. They were childish enough, and in many ways quite artless Jacopo was lively as a squirrel. Nicola's smile was steady and engaging. Yet in both these boyish faces there was a seriousness which was far beyond their years.

In the week which followed we saw them frequently, for they proved extremely useful to us. If we wanted a pack of American cigarettes, or seats for the opera or the name of a good restaurant, Nicola and Jacopo could be relied upon to satisfy our needs.

What struck one most was their willingness to work. During these summer days, under the hot sun, they shined shoes, sold fruit, hawked newspapers, conducted tourists round the town, and ran errands.

One night, we came upon them in the windy and deserted square, resting on the stone pavement beneath the lights.

Nicola sat upright, tired. Bundle of unsold newspapers lay at his feet. Jacopo, his head resting upon his brother's shoulder was asleep. It was nearly midnight.

"Why are you out so late, Nicola?" "Waiting for the last bus from Padua. We shall sell all our papers when it comes in."

"Must you work so hard? You both look rather tired."

"We are not complaining, sir."

But next morning, when I went over to the fountain to have my shoes shined, I said, "Nicola, the way you and Jacopo work, you must earn quite a bit. You spend nothing on clothes. You eat little enough -- when I see you have a meal it's usually black bread and figs. Tell me, what do you do with your money?"

He coloured deeply under his sunburn, then grew pale. He looked to the ground.

"You must be saving up to emigrate to America," I suggested. He looked at me sideways, spoke with an effort.

"We should greatly like to go to the States. But here, at present, we have other plans."

"What plans?"

He smiled uncomfortably. "Just plans, sir," he answered in a low voice.

"Well," I said, "we're leaving on Monday. Is there anything I can do for you before we go?"

Nicola shook his head, but suddenly Jacopo said, "Sir," he burst out, "every Sunday we make a visit to the country, to Poleta, 30 kilometres from here. Usually we hire bicycles. But tomorrow, since you are so kind, you might send us in your car."

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

There was a pause. Nicola was glaring at his young brother in vexation. "We could not think of troubling you, sir."

"It won't be any trouble."

He bit his lip, then, in a rather put out tone, he said, "Very well."

The following afternoon we drove to the tiny village set high upon the hillside. I imagined that our destinations would be some humble dwellings. But, directed by Jacopo, we drew up at a large red-roofed villa, surrounded by a high stone wall. I could scarcely believe my eyes and before I could recover breath my two passengers had leaped from the car.

"We shall not be long, sir. Perhaps only an hour. May be you'd like to go to the cafe in the village for a drink?" They disappeared beyond the corner of the wall.

After a few minutes I followed. I found a grilled side-entrance and, determinedly, rang the bell.

A pleasant-looking woman with steel-rimmed spectacles appeared. I blinked as I saw that she was dressed in the white uniform of a trained nurse.

"I just brought two small boys here." "Ah, yes." Her face lit up; she opened the door to admit me. "Nicola and Jacopo. I will take you up."

She led me through a cool, tiled vestibule into the hospital --- for hospital the villa had become. At the door of a little cubicle the nurse paused, put her finger to her lips, and with a smile bade me look through the glass partition.

The two boys were seated at the bedside of a girl of about twenty who, propped up on pillows, wearing a pretty lace jacket, was listening to their chatter, her eyes soft and tender. One could see at a glance her resemblance to her brothers. A vase of wild flowers stood on her table, beside a dish of fruit and several books.

"Won't you go in?" the nurse murmured. "Lucia will be pleased to see you."

I shook my head and turned away. I felt I could not bear to intrude upon this happy family party. But at the foot of the staircase I drew up and begged her to tell me all she knew about these boys.

She was eager to do so. They were, she explained, quite alone in the world, except for this sister, Lucia. Their father, a widower, a well-known singer, had been killed in the early part of the war. Shortly afterward a bomb had destroyed their home and thrown the three children into the streets. They had always known a comfortable and cultured life --- Lucia had herself been training as a singer --- and they had suffered horribly from near starvation and exposure to the cold winter.

For months they had barely kept themselves alive in a sort of shelter they built with their own hands amidst the rubble. Then for three years the Germans ruled the city. The boys grew to hate the Germans. When the resistance movement began secretly to form they were among the first to join. When the war was over, and we had peace at last, they came back to their beloved sister. And they found hersuffering from tuberculosis of the spine."

She paused, took a quick breath.

"Did they give up? I do not have to answer that question. They brought her here, persuaded us to take her into the hospital. In the twelve months she has been our patient she has made good progress. There is every hope that one day she will walk -and sing - again."

"Of course, everything is so difficult now, food so scarce and dear, we could not keep going unless we charged a fee. But every week, Lucia's brothers have made their payment." She added simply, "I don't know what they do, I do not ask. Work is scarce in Verona. But whatever it is, I know they do it well."

"Yes," I agreed. "They couldn't do it better."

I waited outside until the boys re-joined me, then drove them back to the city. They sat beside me, not speaking. For my part, I did not say a word --- I knew they would prefer to feel that they had safely kept their secret. Yet their devotion had touched me deeply. War had not broken their spirit. Their selfless action brought a new nobility to human life, gave promise of a greater hope for human society.

About the Author:

A.J. Cronin (1896-1974) was a doctor by training. He practised medicine in Wales and in London. It was while recovering from a breakdown in health that he wrote his first novel *Hatter's Castle*. It was a huge success. Cronin gave up practising medicine and took to writing as a career. He wrote a number of novels and short stories. Among his best-known novels are *The Citadel*, *The Key of the Kingdom*, and *The Spanish Gardener*. Some of his novels have been made into successful films. The title of the story is that of one of the early plays of Shakespeare. The story recounts the hard life chosen by two young boys so that they could pay for the treatment of their sister afflicted with tuberculosis. The boys' sacrifice, their sincerity and devotion to the cause and the maturity they display in their actions gives a new hope for humanity.

About the Story:

Two Gentlemen of Verona is the inspirational story of two brothers aged 12 and 13 - the younger one Jacopo's nature is childish and lively while the elder one, Nicola's nature is serious and mature. The author met them in the town of Verona. A.J.Cronin used the title "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" in an ironic manner, as at a very young age they faced the hardships of life, their mother died early in their life, their father was a well-known singer but became a victim of the early war. Their village suffered due to German occupation. They got homeless as their home got destroyed, and suffered starvation and the cold winter. The family struggled for life, they lived in the shelter made of broken building walls and bricks. After the war, they got back to their sister, and found her suffering from tuberculosis of spine, which was another shock to these poor kids. As they were the only family of their sister, they had to work and arrange money for her medical treatment. Despite facing so many problems in their early life, the boys did not lose hope, the brothers' positive approach and determination to get their sister cured had helped the staff treat her well. Despite having a scarcity of jobs in town, they managed to give their sister the best they could. On the contrary they lived a very poor life, their clothing and eating habits portrayed it. To earn their living, they shined shoes, sold fruit, hawked newspapers, and even worked as tourist guides. Going through so much in life, they never tried to take anyone's sympathy, instead they worked hard. These two young boys have every quality of being called gentlemen, their positivity and selflessness inspired the narrator. The narrator felt that such a humble youth gives our society hope for a better tomorrow. In such times of war, weapons and hatred, still, there is hope for humanity.

Glossary

cautious:	careful
shabby:	ill-dressed
disapproval:	criticise
brisk:	good, quick
slackened:	reduced
engaging:	attractive
hawked:	sold
errands:	odd jobs
emigrate:	take up citizenship of another country
vexation:	annoyance
humble:	modest
scarcely:	hardly
intrude:	enter without permission
worn:	old and damaged
tunic:	a loose outer garment that does not have sleeves
demeanour:	appearance and behaviour
artless:	guileless; innocent
put out:	offended; annoyed
vestibule:	lobby
scarce:	not enough

Comprehension:

Choose the Correct Answer:

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

2. The narrator was most impressed by the boys'
 - a) desire to earn money
 - b) willingness to work
 - c) ability to perform many tasks
 - d) sense of fun
3. Nicola was not pleased when Jacopo asked the narrator to drive them to Poleta as he
 - a) did not want a stranger to become involved with their plans
 - b) preferred going to Poleta by train so that he could enjoy the scenery
 - c) did not want to ask anyone for favours
 - d) did not want to take help from someone he did not know well
4. The narrator did not go inside Lucia's room as
 - a) he did not want to intrude into their privacy
 - b) he thought that the boys would object
 - c) Lucia would not welcome a stranger
 - d) the boys would feel he was spying on them
5. The boys were the first to join the resistance movement against the Germans because
 - a) the Germans had hurt their sister
 - b) the Germans ruled the city
 - c) the Germans had ruined their family
 - d) the Germans had destroyed their home
6. The author did not speak to the boys on their return journey because
 - a) he thought the boys would prefer to keep their secret
 - b) he thought the boys were ashamed of their sister's condition
 - c) he thought they wouldn't tell him the truth
 - d) he thought the boys might ask him for money for their sister
7. To which country does the two gentlemen belong?
 - a) USA
 - b) Italy
 - c) India
 - d) Japan
8. Lucia was suffering from which disease?
 - a) cancer
 - b) fever
 - c) tuberculosis
 - d) malaria

Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

1. Why didn't Luigi, the driver, approve of the two boys?
2. Why were the narrator and his companion impressed by the two boys?
3. Why was the author surprised to see Nicola and Jacopo working as shoeshine boys?
4. How were the boys useful to the author?
5. Why were the boys in the deserted square at night? What character traits do they exhibit?

Answer the following questions in about 200 words:

1. Appearances are deceptive. Discuss with reference to the two boys.
2. Do you think the boys looked after Lucia willingly? Give reasons for your answer.
3. How does the story 'Two Gentlemen of Verona' promise hope for society?

2. HOW MUCH LAND DOES A MAN NEED? – LEO TOLSTOY

An elder sister came to visit her younger sister in the country. The elder was married to a tradesman in town, the younger to a peasant in the village. As the sisters sat over their tea talking, the elder began to boast of the advantages of town life: saying how comfortably they lived there, how well they dressed, what fine clothes her children wore, what good things they ate and drank, and how she went to the theatre, promenades, and entertainments.

The younger sister was piqued, and in turn disparaged the life of a tradesman, and stood up for that of a peasant.

“I would not change my way of life for yours,” said she. “We may live roughly, but at least we are free from anxiety. You live in better style than we do, but though you often earn more than you need, you are very likely to lose all you have. You know the proverb, ‘Loss and gain are brothers twain.’ It often happens that people who are wealthy one day are begging their bread the next. Our way is safer. Though a peasant’s life is not a fat one, it is a long one. We shall never grow rich, but we shall always have enough to eat.”

The elder sister said sneeringly:

“Enough? Yes, if you like to share with the pigs and the calves! What do you know of elegance or manners! However much your good man may slave, you will die as you are living-on a dung heap-and your children the same.”

“Well, what of that?” replied the younger. “Of course our work is rough and coarse. But, on the other hand, it is sure; and we need not bow to anyone. But you, in your towns, are surrounded by temptations; today all may be right, but tomorrow the Evil One may tempt your husband with cards, wine, or women, and all will go to ruin. Don’t such things happen often enough?”

Pahom, the master of the house, was lying on the top of the oven, and he listened to the women’s chatter.

“It is perfectly true,” thought he. “Busy as we are from childhood tilling Mother Earth, we peasants have no time to let any nonsense settle in our heads. Our only trouble is that we haven’t land enough. If I had plenty of land, I shouldn’t fear the Devil himself!”

The women finished their tea, chatted a while about dress, and then cleared away the tea-things and lay down to sleep.

But the Devil had been sitting behind the oven, and had heard all that was said. He was pleased that the peasant’s wife had led her husband into boasting, and that he had said that if he had plenty of land he would not fear the Devil himself.

“All right,” thought the Devil. “We will have a tussle. I’ll give you land enough; and by means of that land I will get you into my power.”

Close to the village there lived a lady, a small landowner, who had an estate of about three hundred acres. She had always lived on good terms with the peasants, until she engaged as her steward an old soldier, who took to burdening the people with fines. However careful Pahom tried to be, it happened again and again that now a horse of his got among the lady’s oats, now a cow strayed into her garden, now his calves found their way into her meadows-and he always had to pay a fine.

Pahom paid, but grumbled, and, going home in a temper, was rough with his family. All through that summer Pahom had much trouble because of this steward; and he was even glad when winter came and the cattle had to be stabled. Though he grudged the fodder when they could no longer graze on the pasture-land, at least he was free from anxiety about them.

In the winter the news got about that the lady was going to sell her land, and that the keeper of the inn on the high road was bargaining for it. When the peasants heard this they were very much alarmed.

“Well,” thought they, “if the innkeeper gets the land he will worry us with fines worse than the lady’s steward. We all depend on that estate.”

So the peasants went on behalf of their Commune, and asked the lady not to sell the land to the innkeeper; offering her a better price for it themselves. The lady agreed to let them have it. Then the peasants tried to arrange for the Commune to buy the whole estate, so that it might be held by all in common. They met twice to discuss it, but could not settle the matter; the Evil One sowed discord among them, and they could not agree. So they decided to buy the land individually, each according to his means; and the lady agreed to this plan as she had to the other.

Presently Pahom heard that a neighbour of his was buying fifty acres, and that the lady had consented to accept one half in cash and to wait a year for the other half. Pahom felt envious.

“Look at that,” thought he, “the land is all being sold, and I shall get none of it.” So he spoke to his wife.

“Other people are buying,” said he, “and we must also buy twenty acres or so. Life is becoming impossible. That steward is simply crushing us with his fines.”

So they put their heads together and considered how they could manage to buy it. They had one hundred roubles laid by. They sold a colt, and one half of their bees; hired out one of their sons as a laborer, and took his wages in advance; borrowed the rest from a brother-in-law, and so scraped together half the purchase money.

Having done this, Pahom chose out a farm of forty acres, some of it wooded, and went to the lady to bargain for it. They came to an agreement, and he shook hands with her upon it, and paid her a deposit in advance. Then they went to town and signed the deeds; he paying half the price down, and undertaking to pay the remainder within two years.

So now Pahom had land of his own. He borrowed seed, and sowed it on the land he had bought. The harvest was a good one, and within a year he had managed to pay off his debts both to the lady and to his brother-in-law. So he became a landowner, ploughing and sowing his own land, making hay on his own land, cutting his own trees, and feeding his cattle on his own pasture. When he went out to plough his fields, or to look at his growing corn, or at his grass meadows, his heart would fill with joy. The grass that grew and the flowers that bloomed there, seemed to him unlike any that grew elsewhere. Formerly, when he had passed by that land, it had appeared the same as any other land, but now it seemed quite different.

So Pahom was well contented, and everything would have been right if the neighboring peasants would only not have trespassed on his corn-fields and meadows. He appealed to them most civilly, but they still went on: now the Communal herdsmen would let the village cows stray into his meadows; then horses from the night pasture would get among his corn. Pahom turned them out again and again, and forgave their owners, and for a long time he forbore from prosecuting any one. But at last he lost

patience and complained to the District Court. He knew it was the peasants' want of land, and no evil intent on their part, that caused the trouble; but he thought:

"I cannot go on overlooking it, or they will destroy all I have. They must be taught a lesson."

So he had them up, gave them one lesson, and then another, and two or three of the peasants were fined. After a time Pahom's neighbours began to bear him a grudge for this, and would now and then let their cattle on his land on purpose. One peasant even got into Pahom's wood at night and cut down five young lime trees for their bark. Pahom passing through the wood one day noticed something white. He came nearer, and saw the stripped trunks lying on the ground, and close by stood the stumps, where the tree had been. Pahom was furious.

"If he had only cut one here and there it would have been bad enough," thought Pahom, "but the rascal has actually cut down a whole clump. If I could only find out who did this, I would pay him out."

He racked his brains as to who it could be. Finally, he decided: "It must be Simon-no one else could have done it." So he went to Simon's homestead to have a look around, but he found nothing, and only had an angry scene. However, he now felt more certain than ever that Simon had done it, and he lodged a complaint. Simon was summoned. The case was tried, and re-tried, and at the end of it all Simon was acquitted, there being no evidence against him. Pahom felt still more aggrieved, and let his anger loose upon the Elder and the Judges.

"You let thieves grease your palms," said he. "If you were honest folk yourselves, you would not let a thief go free."

So Pahom quarrelled with the Judges and with his neighbors. Threats to burn his building began to be uttered. So though Pahom had more land, his place in the Commune was much worse than before.

About this time a rumor got about that many people were moving to new parts.

"There's no need for me to leave my land," thought Pahom. "But some of the others might leave our village, and then there would be more room for us. I would take over their land myself, and make my estate a bit bigger. I could then live more at ease. As it is, I am still too cramped to be comfortable."

One day Pahom was sitting at home, when a peasant passing through the village, happened to call in. He was allowed to stay the night, and supper was given him. Pahom had a talk with this peasant and asked him where he came from. The stranger answered that he came from beyond the Volga, where he had been working. One word led to another, and the man went on to say that many people were settling in those parts. He told how some people from his village had settled there. They had joined the Commune, and had had twenty-five acres per man granted them. The land was so good, he said, that the rye sown on it grew as high as a horse, and so thick that five cuts of a sickle made a sheaf. One peasant, he said, had brought nothing with him but his bare hands, and now he had six horses and two cows of his own.

Pahom's heart kindled with desire. He thought:

"Why should I suffer in this narrow hole, if one can live so well elsewhere? I will sell my land and my homestead here, and with the money I will start afresh over there and get everything new. In this crowded place one is always having trouble. But I must first go and find out all about it myself."

Towards summer he got ready and started. He went down the Volga on a steamer to Samara, then walked another three hundred miles on foot, and at last reached the place. It was just as the stranger had said. The peasants had plenty of land: every man had twenty-five acres of Communal land given him for his use, and any one who had money could buy, besides, at fifty-cents an acre as much good freehold land as he wanted.

Having found out all he wished to know, Pahom returned home as autumn came on, and began selling off his belongings. He sold his land at a profit, sold his homestead and all his cattle, and withdrew from membership of the Commune. He only waited till the spring, and then started with his family for the new settlement.

As soon as Pahom and his family arrived at their new abode, he applied for admission into the Commune of a large village. He stood treat to the Elders, and obtained the necessary documents. Five shares of Communal land were given him for his own and his sons' use: that is to say—125 acres (not altogether, but in different fields) besides the use of the Communal pasture. Pahom put up the buildings he needed, and bought cattle. Of the Communal land alone he had three times as much as at his former home, and the land was good corn-land. He was ten times better off than he had been. He had plenty of arable land and pasturage, and could keep as many head of cattle as he liked.

At first, in the bustle of building and settling down, Pahom was pleased with it all, but when he got used to it he began to think that even here he had not enough land. The first year, he sowed wheat on his share of the Communal land, and had a good crop. He wanted to go on sowing wheat, but had not enough Communal land for the purpose, and what he had already used was not available; for in those parts wheat is only sown on virgin soil or on fallow land. It is sown for one or two years, and then the land lies fallow till it is again overgrown with prairie grass. There were many who wanted such land, and there was not enough for all; so that people quarrelled about it. Those who were better off, wanted it for growing wheat, and those who were poor, wanted it to let to dealers, so that they might raise money to pay their taxes. Pahom wanted to sow more wheat; so he rented land from a dealer for a year. He sowed much wheat and had a fine crop, but the land was too far from the village—the wheat had to be carted more than ten miles. After a time Pahom noticed that some peasant-dealers were living on separate farms, and were growing wealthy; and he thought:

“If I were to buy some freehold land, and have a homestead on it, it would be a different thing, altogether. Then it would all be nice and compact.”

The question of buying freehold land recurred to him again and again.

He went on in the same way for three years; renting land and sowing wheat. The seasons turned out well and the crops were good, so that he began to lay money by. He might have gone on living contentedly, but he grew tired of having to rent other people's land every year, and having to scramble for it. Wherever there was good land to be had, the peasants would rush for it and it was taken up at once, so that unless you were sharp about it you got none. It happened in the third year that he and a dealer together rented a piece of pasture land from some peasants; and they had already ploughed it up, when there was some dispute, and the peasants went to law about it, and things fell out so that the labor was all lost. “If it were my own land,” thought Pahom, “I should be independent, and there would not be all this unpleasantness.”

So Pahom began looking out for land which he could buy; and he came across a peasant who had bought thirteen hundred acres, but having got into difficulties was willing to sell again cheap. Pahom bargained and haggled with him, and at last they settled the price at 1,500 roubles, part in cash and part to be paid

later. They had all but clinched the matter, when a passing dealer happened to stop at Pahom's one day to get a feed for his horse. He drank tea with Pahom, and they had a talk. The dealer said that he was just returning from the land of the Bashkirs, far away, where he had bought thirteen thousand acres of land all for 1,000 roubles. Pahom questioned him further, and the tradesman said:

"All one need do is to make friends with the chiefs. I gave away about one hundred roubles' worth of dressing-gowns and carpets, besides a case of tea, and I gave wine to those who would drink it; and I got the land for less than two cents an acre. And he showed Pahom the title-deeds, saying:

"The land lies near a river, and the whole prairie is virgin soil."

Pahom plied him with questions, and the tradesman said:

"There is more land there than you could cover if you walked a year, and it all belongs to the Bashkirs. They are as simple as sheep, and land can be got almost for nothing."

"There now," thought Pahom, "with my one thousand roubles, why should I get only thirteen hundred acres, and saddle myself with a debt besides. If I take it out there, I can get more than ten times as much for the money."

Pahom inquired how to get to the place, and as soon as the tradesman had left him, he prepared to go there himself. He left his wife to look after the homestead, and started on his journey taking his man with him. They stopped at a town on their way, and bought a case of tea, some wine, and other presents, as the tradesman had advised. On and on they went until they had gone more than three hundred miles, and on the seventh day they came to a place where the Bashkirs had pitched their tents. It was all just as the tradesman had said. The people lived on the steppes, by a river, in felt-covered tents. They neither tilled the ground, nor ate bread. Their cattle and horses grazed in herds on the steppe. The colts were tethered behind the tents, and the mares were driven to them twice a day. The mares were milked, and from the milk kumiss was made. It was the women who prepared kumiss, and they also made cheese. As far as the men were concerned, drinking kumiss and tea, eating mutton, and playing on their pipes, was all they cared about. They were all stout and merry, and all the summer long they never thought of doing any work. They were quite ignorant, and knew no Russian, but were good-natured enough.

As soon as they saw Pahom, they came out of their tents and gathered round their visitor. An interpreter was found, and Pahom told them he had come about some land. The Bashkirs seemed very glad; they took Pahom and led him into one of the best tents, where they made him sit on some down cushions placed on a carpet, while they sat round him. They gave him tea and kumiss, and had a sheep killed, and gave him mutton to eat. Pahom took presents out of his cart and distributed them among the Bashkirs, and divided amongst them the tea. The Bashkirs were delighted. They talked a great deal among themselves, and then told the interpreter to translate.

"They wish to tell you," said the interpreter, "that they like you, and that it is our custom to do all we can to please a guest and to repay him for his gifts. You have given us presents, now tell us which of the things we possess please you best, that we may present them to you."

"What pleases me best here," answered Pahom, "is your land. Our land is crowded, and the soil is exhausted; but you have plenty of land and it is good land. I never saw the like of it."

The interpreter translated. The Bashkirs talked among themselves for a while. Pahom could not understand what they were saying, but saw that they were much amused, and that they shouted and laughed. Then they were silent and looked at Pahom while the interpreter said:

“They wish me to tell you that in return for your presents they will gladly give you as much land as you want. You have only to point it out with your hand and it is yours.”

The Bashkirs talked again for a while and began to dispute. Pahom asked what they were disputing about, and the interpreter told him that some of them thought they ought to ask their Chief about the land and not act in his absence, while others thought there was no need to wait for his return.

While the Bashkirs were disputing, a man in a large fox-fur cap appeared on the scene. They all became silent and rose to their feet. The interpreter said, “This is our Chief himself.”

Pahom immediately fetched the best dressing-gown and five pounds of tea, and offered these to the Chief. The Chief accepted them, and seated himself in the place of honour. The Bashkirs at once began telling him something. The Chief listened for a while, then made a sign with his head for them to be silent, and addressing himself to Pahom, said in Russian:

“Well, let it be so. Choose whatever piece of land you like; we have plenty of it.”

“How can I take as much as I like?” thought Pahom. “I must get a deed to make it secure, or else they may say, ‘It is yours,’ and afterwards may take it away again.”

“Thank you for your kind words,” he said aloud. “You have much land, and I only want a little. But I should like to be sure which bit is mine. Could it not be measured and made over to me? Life and death are in God’s hands. You good people give it to me, but your children might wish to take it away again.”

“You are quite right,” said the Chief. “We will make it over to you.”

“I heard that a dealer had been here,” continued Pahom, “and that you gave him a little land, too, and signed title-deeds to that effect. I should like to have it done in the same way.”

The Chief understood.

“Yes,” replied he, “that can be done quite easily. We have a scribe, and we will go to town with you and have the deed properly sealed.”

“And what will be the price?” asked Pahom.

“Our price is always the same: one thousand roubles a day.”

Pahom did not understand.

“A day? What measure is that? How many acres would that be?”

“We do not know how to reckon it out,” said the Chief. “We sell it by the day. As much as you can go round on your feet in a day is yours, and the price is one thousand roubles a day.”

Pahom was surprised.

“But in a day you can get round a large tract of land,” he said.

The Chief laughed.

“It will all be yours!” said he. “But there is one condition: If you don’t return on the same day to the spot whence you started, your money is lost.”

“But how am I to mark the way that I have gone?”

“Why, we shall go to any spot you like, and stay there. You must start from that spot and make your round, taking a spade with you. Wherever you think necessary, make a mark. At every turning, dig a hole and pile up the turf; then afterwards we will go round with a plough from hole to hole. You may make as large a circuit as you please, but before the sun sets you must return to the place you started from. All the land you cover will be yours.”

Pahom was delighted. It was decided to start early next morning. They talked a while, and after drinking some more kumiss and eating some more mutton, they had tea again, and then the night came on. They gave Pahom a feather-bed to sleep on, and the Bashkirs dispersed for the night, promising to assemble the next morning at daybreak and ride out before sunrise to the appointed spot.

Pahom lay on the feather-bed, but could not sleep. He kept thinking about the land.

“What a large tract I will mark off!” thought he. “I can easily go thirty-five miles in a day. The days are long now, and within a circuit of thirty-five miles what a lot of land there will be! I will sell the poorer land, or let it to peasants, but I’ll pick out the best and farm it. I will buy two ox-teams, and hire two more laborers. About a hundred and fifty acres shall be plough-land, and I will pasture cattle on the rest.”

Pahom lay awake all night, and dozed off only just before dawn. Hardly were his eyes closed when he had a dream. He thought he was lying in that same tent, and heard somebody chuckling outside. He wondered who it could be, and rose and went out, and he saw the Bashkir Chief sitting in front of the tent holding his side and rolling about with laughter. Going nearer to the Chief, Pahom asked: “What are you laughing at?” But he saw that it was no longer the Chief, but the dealer who had recently stopped at his house and had told him about the land. Just as Pahom was going to ask, “Have you been here long?” he saw that it was not the dealer, but the peasant who had come up from the Volga, long ago, to Pahom’s old home. Then he saw that it was not the peasant either, but the Devil himself with hoofs and horns, sitting there and chuckling, and before him lay a man barefoot, prostrate on the ground, with only trousers and a shirt on. And Pahom dreamt that he looked more attentively to see what sort of a man it was lying there, and he saw that the man was dead, and that it was himself! He awoke horror-struck.

“What things one does dream,” thought he.

Looking round he saw through the open door that the dawn was breaking.

“It’s time to wake them up,” thought he. “We ought to be starting.”

He got up, roused his man (who was sleeping in his cart), bade him harness; and went to call the Bashkirs.

“It’s time to go to the steppe to measure the land,” he said.

The Bashkirs rose and assembled, and the Chief came, too. Then they began drinking kumiss again, and offered Pahom some tea, but he would not wait.

“If we are to go, let us go. It is high time,” said he.

The Bashkirs got ready and they all started: some mounted on horses, and some in carts. Pahom drove in his own small cart with his servant, and took a spade with him. When they reached the steppe, the

morning red was beginning to kindle. They ascended a hillock (called by the Bashkirs a shikhan) and dismounting from their carts and their horses, gathered in one spot. The Chief came up to Pahom and stretched out his arm towards the plain:

“See,” said he, “all this, as far as your eye can reach, is ours. You may have any part of it you like.”

Pahom’s eyes glistened: it was all virgin soil, as flat as the palm of your hand, as black as the seed of a poppy, and in the hollows different kinds of grasses grew breast high.

The Chief took off his fox-fur cap, placed it on the ground and said:

“This will be the mark. Start from here, and return here again. All the land you go round shall be yours.”

Pahom took out his money and put it on the cap. Then he took off his outer coat, remaining in his sleeveless under coat. He unfastened his girdle and tied it tight below his stomach, put a little bag of bread into the breast of his coat, and tying a flask of water to his girdle, he drew up the tops of his boots, took the spade from his man, and stood ready to start. He considered for some moments which way he had better go—it was tempting everywhere.

“No matter,” he concluded, “I will go towards the rising sun.”

He turned his face to the east, stretched himself, and waited for the sun to appear above the rim.

“I must lose no time,” he thought, “and it is easier walking while it is still cool.”

The sun’s rays had hardly flashed above the horizon, before Pahom, carrying the spade over his shoulder, went down into the steppe.

Pahom started walking neither slowly nor quickly. After having gone a thousand yards he stopped, dug a hole and placed pieces of turf one on another to make it more visible. Then he went on; and now that he had walked off his stiffness he quickened his pace. After a while he dug another hole.

Pahom looked back. The hillock could be distinctly seen in the sunlight, with the people on it, and the glittering tires of the cartwheels. At a rough guess Pahom concluded that he had walked three miles. It was growing warmer; he took off his under-coat, flung it across his shoulder, and went on again. It had grown quite warm now; he looked at the sun, it was time to think of breakfast.

“The first shift is done, but there are four in a day, and it is too soon yet to turn. But I will just take off my boots,” said he to himself.

He sat down, took off his boots, stuck them into his girdle, and went on. It was easy walking now.

“I will go on for another three miles,” thought he, “and then turn to the left. The spot is so fine, that it would be a pity to lose it. The further one goes, the better the land seems.”

He went straight on a for a while, and when he looked round, the hillock was scarcely visible and the people on it looked like black ants, and he could just see something glistening there in the sun.

“Ah,” thought Pahom, “I have gone far enough in this direction, it is time to turn. Besides I am in a regular sweat, and very thirsty.”

He stopped, dug a large hole, and heaped up pieces of turf. Next he untied his flask, had a drink, and then turned sharply to the left. He went on and on; the grass was high, and it was very hot.

Pahom began to grow tired: he looked at the sun and saw that it was noon.

“Well,” he thought, “I must have a rest.”

He sat down, and ate some bread and drank some water; but he did not lie down, thinking that if he did he might fall asleep. After sitting a little while, he went on again. At first he walked easily: the food had strengthened him; but it had become terribly hot, and he felt sleepy; still he went on, thinking: “An hour to suffer, a life-time to live.”

He went a long way in this direction also, and was about to turn to the left again, when he perceived a damp hollow: “It would be a pity to leave that out,” he thought. “Flax would do well there.” So he went on past the hollow, and dug a hole on the other side of it before he turned the corner. Pahom looked towards the hillock. The heat made the air hazy: it seemed to be quivering, and through the haze the people on the hillock could scarcely be seen.

“Ah!” thought Pahom, “I have made the sides too long; I must make this one shorter.” And he went along the third side, stepping faster. He looked at the sun: it was nearly half way to the horizon, and he had not yet done two miles of the third side of the square. He was still ten miles from the goal.

“No,” he thought, “though it will make my land lopsided, I must hurry back in a straight line now. I might go too far, and as it is I have a great deal of land.”

So Pahom hurriedly dug a hole, and turned straight towards the hillock.

Pahom went straight towards the hillock, but he now walked with difficulty. He was done up with the heat, his bare feet were cut and bruised, and his legs began to fail. He longed to rest, but it was impossible if he meant to get back before sunset. The sun waits for no man, and it was sinking lower and lower.

“Oh dear,” he thought, “if only I have not blundered trying for too much! What if I am too late?”

He looked towards the hillock and at the sun. He was still far from his goal, and the sun was already near the rim. Pahom walked on and on; it was very hard walking, but he went quicker and quicker. He pressed on, but was still far from the place. He began running, threw away his coat, his boots, his flask, and his cap, and kept only the spade which he used as a support.

“What shall I do,” he thought again, “I have grasped too much, and ruined the whole affair. I can’t get there before the sun sets.”

And this fear made him still more breathless. Pahom went on running, his soaking shirt and trousers stuck to him, and his mouth was parched. His breast was working like a blacksmith’s bellows, his heart was beating like a hammer, and his legs were giving way as if they did not belong to him. Pahom was seized with terror lest he should die of the strain.

Though afraid of death, he could not stop. “After having run all that way they will call me a fool if I stop now,” thought he. And he ran on and on, and drew near and heard the Bashkirs yelling and shouting to him, and their cries inflamed his heart still more. He gathered his last strength and ran on.

The sun was close to the rim, and cloaked in mist looked large, and red as blood. Now, yes now, it was about to set! The sun was quite low, but he was also quite near his aim. Pahom could already see the people on the hillock waving their arms to hurry him up. He could see the fox-fur cap on the ground,

and the money on it, and the Chief sitting on the ground holding his sides. And Pahom remembered his dream.

“There is plenty of land,” thought he, “but will God let me live on it? I have lost my life, I have lost my life! I shall never reach that spot!”

Pahom looked at the sun, which had reached the earth: one side of it had already disappeared. With all his remaining strength he rushed on, bending his body forward so that his legs could hardly follow fast enough to keep him from falling. Just as he reached the hillock it suddenly grew dark. He looked up—the sun had already set. He gave a cry: “All my labor has been in vain,” thought he, and was about to stop, but he heard the Bashkirs still shouting, and remembered that though to him, from below, the sun seemed to have set, they on the hillock could still see it. He took a long breath and ran up the hillock. It was still light there. He reached the top and saw the cap. Before it sat the Chief laughing and holding his sides. Again Pahom remembered his dream, and he uttered a cry: his legs gave way beneath him, he fell forward and reached the cap with his hands.

“Ah, what a fine fellow!” exclaimed the Chief. “He has gained much land!”

Pahom’s servant came running up and tried to raise him, but he saw that blood was flowing from his mouth. Pahom was dead! The Bashkirs clicked their tongues to show their pity.

His servant picked up the spade and dug a grave long enough for Pahom to lie in, and buried him in it. Six feet from his head to his heels was all he needed.

About the Author:

Leo Tolstoy, was a Russian writer who is regarded as one of the greatest authors of all time. Born to an aristocratic Russian family in 1828, he is best known for the novels *War and Peace* (1869) and *Anna Karenina* (1877), often cited as pinnacles of realist fiction. He first achieved literary acclaim in his twenties with his semi-autobiographical trilogy, *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth* (1852–1856), and *Sevastopol Sketches* (1855), based upon his experiences in the Crimean War. Tolstoy's fiction includes dozens of short stories and several novellas such as *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1886), *Family Happiness* (1859), and *Hadji Murad* (1912). He also wrote plays and numerous philosophical essays. In the 1870s Tolstoy experienced a profound moral crisis, followed by what he regarded as an equally profound spiritual awakening, as outlined in his non-fiction work *A Confession* (1882). His literal interpretation of the ethical teachings of Jesus, centring on the Sermon on the Mount, caused him to become a fervent Christian anarchist and pacifist. Tolstoy's ideas on nonviolent resistance, expressed in such works as *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (1894), were to have a profound impact on such pivotal 20th-century figures as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Tolstoy also became a dedicated advocate of Georgism, the economic philosophy of Henry George, which he incorporated into his writing, particularly *Resurrection* (1899).

About the Story:

"How Much Land Does a Man Need?" tells the story of a peasant named Pahom, who boasts that if he had enough land, he wouldn't fear the Devil. After a series of moves, however, it's clear that no matter how much land Pahom has, he will never truly be happy. Pahom overheard a debate between his wife and her sister. He states that if he had enough land, he wouldn't fear the Devil. The Devil overhears this and decides to test him. An opportunity for Pahom to acquire land arrives when a lady decides to sell her land. He buys some, but quickly falls out of favour with his neighbours, necessitating a move. In his quest to attain more and more land, Pahom visits the Bakshirs, whose chief agrees to sell

him as much land as he can walk around in one day. The caveat: he must return to the exact point he started, or the sale is off. Pahom dies in the attempt.

Glossary

proverb:	a popular saying that is meant to express something wise or true
sneer:	to look down on with scorn; to mock or insult by words or manner
tussle:	a struggle; a fight
rubles:	a form of russian currency
sheaf:	a bundle of wheat, rye, etc.
fallow:	inactive, to plow but not seed, unproductive, inert, dormant
freehold:	an estate in land in which ownership continues for an indefinite period of time.
contentedly:	a happy, satisfied, pleased way
hillock:	a small hill or mound
piqued:	to irritate, to arouse, to provoke; offended
disparaged:	to belittle; to put down, to say uncomplimentary things
aggrieved:	distressed, wronged, injured
arable:	(of farmland) capable of being farmed productively
haggled:	bargained; argued over terms
prostrate:	lying face downward

Comprehension

Choose the correct Answer:

- Who is the main character
a. elder sister b. younger sister c. Pahom d. Bashkirs
- What is Pahom's main flaw
a. he cares too much b. he lost his wife and went nuts
c. he doesn't care about his family d. he is greedy and wants land
- What does the devil decide to do after Pahom's boasting?
a. kill him b. leave him alone
c. give him land and get him to his power d. give him new wife
- Originally how many acres does he gain?
a. 40 b. 1344 c. 121 d. 12
- How does Pahom Change when he becomes a land owner?
a. happier right away but greedier b. hates it and gives it away
c. so happy he leaves his family d. angry
- What sinful characteristic emerges in Pahom?
a. sloth b. greed c. envy d. pride
- How much land in one day does Pahom get from the Bashkirs?
a. 1200 acres b. 14000 acres c. 131 acres d. as much as he can walk
- What does Pahom's greed earn him in the end
a. money b. land c. family d. death
- How much land does it take to bury Pahom?
a. 12 feet b. 124 feet c. 10 feet d. 6 feet
- What is the theme of the story?
a. don't buy land b. don't move around
c. money can't buy happiness d. it is fine to be greedy

Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

1. What is the chief trait of the character of Pahom?
2. What did Pahom decide to do to gain more land?
3. What did the landowner direct Pahom to do in order acquire land?
4. How was Pahom overcome by his greed for more and more land?
5. Did Pahom get all the land he wanted?

Answer the following questions in about 200 words:

1. Write an essay on the element of greed and ambition in Pahom
2. Write note on the central idea of the story.

3. RANSOM OF THE RED CHIEF – O. HENRY

It looked like a good thing: but wait till I tell you. We were down South, in Alabama - Bill Driscoll and myself-when this kidnaping idea struck us. It was, as Bill afterward expressed it, "during a moment of temporary mental apparition"; but we didn't find that out till later.

There was a town down there, as flat as a flannel-cake, and called Summit, of course. It contained inhabitants of as undeleterious and self-satisfied a class of peasantry as ever clustered around a Maypole.

Bill and me had a joint capital of about six hundred dollars, and we needed just two thousand dollars more to pull off a fraudulent town-lot scheme in Western Illinois with. We talked it over on the front steps of the hotel. Philoprogenitiveness, says we, is strong in semi-rural communities therefore, and for other reasons, a kidnaping project ought to do better there than in the radius of newspapers that send reporters out in plain clothes to stir up talk about such things. We knew that Summit couldn't get after us with anything stronger than constables and, maybe, some lackadaisical bloodhounds and a diatribe or two in the *Weekly Farmers' Budget*. So, it looked good.

We selected for our victim the only child of a prominent citizen named Ebenezer Dorset. The father was respectable and tight, a mortgage fancier and a stern, upright collection-plate passer and forecloser. The kid was a boy of ten, with bas-relief freckles, and hair the colour of the cover of the magazine you buy at the news-stand when you want to catch a train. Bill and me figured that Ebenezer would melt down for a ransom of two thousand dollars to a cent. But wait till I tell you.

About two miles from Summit was a little mountain, covered with a dense cedar brake. On the rear elevation of this mountain was a cave. There we stored provisions.

One evening after sundown, we drove in a buggy past old Dorset's house. The kid was in the street, throwing rocks at a kitten on the opposite fence.

"Hey, little boy!" says Bill, "would you like to have a bag of candy and a nice ride?"

The boy catches Bill neatly in the eye with a piece of brick.

"That will cost the old man an extra five hundred dollars," says Bill, climbing over the wheel.

That boy put up a fight like a welter-weight cinnamon bear; but, at last, we got him down in the bottom of the buggy and drove away. We took him up to the cave, and I hitched the horse in the cedar brake. After dark I drove the buggy to the little village, three miles away, where we had hired it, and walked back to the mountain.

Bill was pasting court-plaster over the scratches and bruises on his features. There was a fire burning behind the big rock at the entrance of the cave, and the boy was watching a pot of boiling coffee, with two buzzard tail feathers stuck in his red hair. He points a stick at me when I come up, and says:

"Ha! cursed paleface, do you dare to enter the camp of Red Chief, the terror of the plains?"

"He's all right now," says Bill, rolling up his trousers and examining some bruises on his shins. "We're playing Indian. We're making Buffalo Bill's show look like magic-lantern views of Palestine in the town hall. I'm Old Hank, the Trapper, Red Chief's captive, and I'm to be scalped at daybreak. By Geronimo! that kid can kick hard."

Yes, sir, that boy seemed to be having the time of his life. The fun of camping out in a cave had made him forget that he was a captive himself. He immediately christened me Snake-eye, the Spy, and announced that, when his braves returned from the warpath, I was to be broiled at the stake at the rising of the sun.

Then we had supper; and he filled his mouth full of bacon and bread and gravy, and began to talk. He made a during-dinner speech something like this:

"I like this fine. I never camped out before; but I had a pet 'possum once, and I was nine last birthday. I hate to go to school. Rats ate up sixteen of Jimmy Talbot's aunt's speckled hen's eggs. Are there any real Indians in these woods? I want some more gravy. Does the trees moving make the wind blow? We had five puppies. What makes your nose so red, Hank? My father has lots of money. Are the stars hot? I whipped Ed Walker twice, Saturday. I don't like girls. You dassent catch toads unless with a string. Do oxen make any noise? Why are oranges round? Have you got beds to sleep on in this cave? Amos Murray has got six toes. A parrot can talk, but a monkey or a fish can't. How many does it take to make twelve?"

Every few minutes he would remember that he was a pesky redskin, and pick up his stick rifle and tiptoe to the mouth of the cave to rubber for the scouts of the hated paleface. Now and then he would let out a warwhoop that made Old Hank the Trapper, shiver. That boy had Bill terrorised from the start.

"Red Chief," says I to the kid, "would you like to go home?"

"Aw, what for?" says he. "I don't have any fun at home. I hate to go to school. I like to camp out. You won't take me back home again, Snake-eye, will you?"

"Not right away," says I. "We'll stay here in the cave a while."

"All right!" says he. "That'll be fine. I never had such fun in all my life."

We went to bed about eleven o'clock. We spread down some wide blankets and quilts and put Red Chief between us. We weren't afraid he'd run away. He kept us awake for three hours, jumping up and reaching for his rifle and screeching: "Hist! pard," in mine and Bill's ears, as the fancied crackle of a twig or the rustle of a leaf revealed to his young imagination the stealthy approach of the outlaw band. At last, I fell into a troubled sleep, and dreamed that I had been kidnapped and chained to a tree by a ferocious pirate with red hair.

Just at daybreak, I was awakened by a series of awful screams from Bill. They weren't yells, or howls, or shouts, or whoops, or yawps, such as you'd expect from a manly set of vocal organs - they were simply indecent, terrifying, humiliating screams, such as women emit when they see ghosts or caterpillars. It's an awful thing to hear a strong, desperate, fat man scream incontinently in a cave at daybreak.

I jumped up to see what the matter was. Red Chief was sitting on Bill's chest, with one hand twined in Bill's hair. In the other he had the sharp case-knife we used for slicing bacon; and he was industriously and realistically trying to take Bill's scalp, according to the sentence that had been pronounced upon him the evening before.

I got the knife away from the kid and made him lie down again. But, from that moment, Bill's spirit was broken. He laid down on his side of the bed, but he never closed an eye again in sleep as long as that boy was with us. I dozed off for a while, but along toward sun-up I remembered that Red Chief had

said I was to be burned at the stake at the rising of the sun. I wasn't nervous or afraid; but I sat up and lit my pipe and leaned against a rock.

"What you getting up so soon for, Sam?" asked Bill.

"Me?" says I. "Oh, I got a kind of a pain in my shoulder. I thought sitting up would rest it."

"You're a liar!" says Bill. "You're afraid. You was to be burned at sunrise, and you was afraid he'd do it. And he would, too, if he could find a match. Ain't it awful, Sam? Do you think anybody will pay out money to get a little imp like that back home?"

"Sure," said I. "A rowdy kid like that is just the kind that parents dote on. Now, you and the Chief get up and cook breakfast, while I go up on the top of this mountain and reconnoitre."

I went up on the peak of the little mountain and ran my eye over the contiguous vicinity. Over toward Summit I expected to see the sturdy yeomanry of the village armed with scythes and pitchforks beating the countryside for the dastardly kidnappers. But what I saw was a peaceful landscape dotted with one man ploughing with a dun mule. Nobody was dragging the creek; no couriers dashed hither and yon, bringing tidings of no news to the distracted parents. There was a sylvan attitude of somnolent sleepiness pervading that section of the external outward surface of Alabama that lay exposed to my view. "Perhaps," says I to myself, "it has not yet been discovered that the wolves have borne away the tender lambkin from the fold. Heaven help the wolves!" says I, and I went down the mountain to breakfast.

When I got to the cave I found Bill backed up against the side of it, breathing hard, and the boy threatening to smash him with a rock half as big as a cocoanut.

"He put a red-hot boiled potato down my back," explained Bill, "and then mashed it with his foot; and I boxed his ears. Have you got a gun about you, Sam?"

I took the rock away from the boy and kind of patched up the argument. "I'll fix you," says the kid to Bill. "No man ever yet struck the Red Chief but what he got paid for it. You better beware!"

After breakfast the kid takes a piece of leather with strings wrapped around it out of his pocket and goes outside the cave unwinding it.

"What's he up to now?" says Bill, anxiously. "You don't think he'll run away, do you, Sam?"

"No fear of it," says I. "He don't seem to be much of a home body. But we've got to fix up some plan about the ransom. There don't seem to be much excitement around Summit on account of his disappearance; but maybe they haven't realised yet that he's gone. His folks may think he's spending the night with Aunt Jane or one of the neighbours. Anyhow, he'll be missed to-day. To-night we must get a message to his father demanding the two thousand dollars for his return."

Just then we heard a kind of war-whoop, such as David might have emitted when he knocked out the champion Goliath. It was a sling that Red Chief had pulled out of his pocket, and he was whirling it around his head.

I dodged, and heard a heavy thud and a kind of a sigh from Bill, like a horse gives out when you take his saddle off. A niggerhead rock the size of an egg had caught Bill just behind his left ear. He loosened himself all over and fell in the fire across the frying pan of hot water for washing the dishes. I dragged him out and poured cold water on his head for half an hour.

By and by, Bill sits up and feels behind his ear and says: "Sam, do you know who my favourite Biblical character is?"

"Take it easy," says I. "You'll come to your senses presently."

"King Herod," says he. "You won't go away and leave me here alone, will you, Sam?"

I went out and caught that boy and shook him until his freckles rattled.

"If you don't behave," says I, "I'll take you straight home. Now, are you going to be good, or not?"

"I was only funning," says he sullenly. "I didn't mean to hurt Old Hank. But what did he hit me for? I'll behave, Snake-eye, if you won't send me home, and if you'll let me play the Black Scout to-day."

"I don't know the game," says I. "That's for you and Mr. Bill to decide. He's your playmate for the day. I'm going away for a while, on business. Now, you come in and make friends with him and say you are sorry for hurting him, or home you go, at once."

I made him and Bill shake hands, and then I took Bill aside and told him I was going to Poplar Cove, a little village three miles from the cave, and find out what I could about how the kidnapping had been regarded in Summit. Also, I thought it best to send a peremptory letter to old man Dorset that day, demanding the ransom and dictating how it should be paid.

"You know, Sam," says Bill, "I've stood by you without batting an eye in earthquakes, fire and flood - in poker games, dynamite outrages, police raids, train robberies and cyclones. I never lost my nerve yet till we kidnapped that two-legged skyrocket of a kid. He's got me going. You won't leave me long with him, will you, Sam?"

"I'll be back some time this afternoon," says I. "You must keep the boy amused and quiet till I return. And now we'll write the letter to old Dorset."

Bill and I got paper and pencil and worked on the letter while Red Chief, with a blanket wrapped around him, strutted up and down, guarding the mouth of the cave. Bill begged me tearfully to make the ransom fifteen hundred dollars instead of two thousand. "I ain't attempting," says he, "to decry the celebrated moral aspect of parental affection, but we're dealing with humans, and it ain't human for anybody to give up two thousand dollars for that forty-pound chunk of freckled wildcat. I'm willing to take a chance at fifteen hundred dollars. You can charge the difference up to me."

So, to relieve Bill, I acceded, and we collaborated a letter that ran this way:

Ebenezer Dorset, Esq.:

We have your boy concealed in a place far from Summit. It is useless for you or the most skilful detectives to attempt to find him. Absolutely, the only terms on which you can have him restored to you are these: We demand fifteen hundred dollars in large bills for his return; the money to be left at midnight to-night at the same spot and in the same box as your reply - as hereinafter described. If you agree to these terms, send your answer in writing by a solitary messenger to-night at half-past eight o'clock. After crossing Owl Creek, on the road to Poplar Cove, there are three large trees about a hundred yards apart, close to the fence of the wheat field on the right-hand side. At the bottom of the fence-post, opposite the third tree, will be found a small pasteboard box.

The messenger will place the answer in this box and return immediately to Summit.

If you attempt any treachery or fail to comply with our demand as stated, you will never see your boy again.

If you pay the money as demanded, he will be returned to you safe and well within three hours. These terms are final, and if you do not accede to them no further communication will be attempted.

TWO DESPERATE MEN.

I addressed this letter to Dorset, and put it in my pocket. As I was about to start, the kid comes up to me and says:

"Aw, Snake-eye, you said I could play the Black Scout while you was gone."

"Play it, of course," says I. "Mr. Bill will play with you. What kind of a game is it?"

"I'm the Black Scout," says Red Chief, "and I have to ride to the stockade to warn the settlers that the Indians are coming. I'm tired of playing Indian myself. I want to be the Black Scout."

"All right," says I. "It sounds harmless to me. I guess Mr. Bill will help you foil the pesky savages."

"What am I to do?" asks Bill, looking at the kid suspiciously.

"You are the hoss," says Black Scout. "Get down on your hands and knees. How can I ride to the stockade without a hoss?"

"You'd better keep him interested," said I, "till we get the scheme going. Loosen up."

Bill gets down on his all fours, and a look comes in his eye like a rabbit's when you catch it in a trap.

"How far is it to the stockade, kid?" he asks, in a husky manner of voice.

"Ninety miles," says the Black Scout. "And you have to hump yourself to get there on time. Whoa, now!"

The Black Scout jumps on Bill's back and digs his heels in his side.

"For Heaven's sake," says Bill, "hurry back, Sam, as soon as you can. I wish we hadn't made the ransom more than a thousand. Say, you quit kicking me or I'll get up and warm you good."

I walked over to Poplar Cove and sat around the post office and store, talking with the chawbacons that came in to trade. One whiskerand says that he hears Summit is all upset on account of Elder Ebenezer Dorset's boy having been lost or stolen. That was all I wanted to know. I bought some smoking tobacco, referred casually to the price of black-eyed peas, posted my letter surreptitiously and came away. The postmaster said the mail-carrier would come by in an hour to take the mail on to Summit.

When I got back to the cave Bill and the boy were not to be found. I explored the vicinity of the cave, and risked a yodel or two, but there was no response.

So I lighted my pipe and sat down on a mossy bank to await developments.

In about half an hour I heard the bushes rustle, and Bill wobbled out into the little glade in front of the cave. Behind him was the kid, stepping softly like a scout, with a broad grin on his face. Bill stopped, took off his hat and wiped his face with a red handkerchief. The kid stopped about eight feet behind him.

"Sam," says Bill, "I suppose you'll think I'm a renegade, but I couldn't help it. I'm a grown person with masculine proclivities and habits of self-defence, but there is a time when all systems of egotism and predominance fail. The boy is gone. I have sent him home. All is off. There was martyrs in old times," goes on Bill, "that suffered death rather than give up the particular graft they enjoyed. None of 'em ever was subjugated to such supernatural tortures as I have been. I tried to be faithful to our articles of depredation; but there came a limit."

"What's the trouble, Bill?" I asks him.

"I was rode," says Bill, "the ninety miles to the stockade, not barring an inch. Then, when the settlers was rescued, I was given oats. Sand ain't a palatable substitute. And then, for an hour I had to try to explain to him why there was nothin' in holes, how a road can run both ways and what makes the grass green. I tell you, Sam, a human can only stand so much. I takes him by the neck of his clothes and drags him down the mountain. On the way he kicks my legs black-and-blue from the knees down; and I've got two or three bites on my thumb and hand cauterised.

"But he's gone" - continues Bill - "gone home. I showed him the road to Summit and kicked him about eight feet nearer there at one kick. I'm sorry we lose the ransom; but it was either that or Bill Driscoll to the madhouse."

Bill is puffing and blowing, but there is a look of ineffable peace and growing content on his rose-pink features.

"Bill," says I, "there isn't any heart disease in your family, is there?"

"No," says Bill, "nothing chronic except malaria and accidents. Why?"

"Then you might turn around," says I, "and have a look behind you."

Bill turns and sees the boy, and loses his complexion and sits down plump on the ground and begins to pluck aimlessly at grass and little sticks. For an hour I was afraid for his mind. And then I told him that my scheme was to put the whole job through immediately and that we would get the ransom and be off with it by midnight if old Dorset fell in with our proposition. So Bill braced up enough to give the kid a weak sort of a smile and a promise to play the Russian in a Japanese war with him as soon as he felt a little better.

I had a scheme for collecting that ransom without danger of being caught by counterplots that ought to commend itself to professional kidnapers. The tree under which the answer was to be left - and the money later on - was close to the road fence with big, bare fields on all sides. If a gang of constables should be watching for any one to come for the note they could see him a long way off crossing the fields or in the road. But no, sirree! At half-past eight I was up in that tree as well hidden as a tree toad, waiting for the messenger to arrive.

Exactly on time, a half-grown boy rides up the road on a bicycle, locates the pasteboard box at the foot of the fencepost, slips a folded piece of paper into it and pedals away again back toward Summit.

I waited an hour and then concluded the thing was square. I slid down the tree, got the note, slipped along the fence till I struck the woods, and was back at the cave in another half an hour. I opened the note, got near the lantern and read it to Bill. It was written with a pen in a crabbed hand, and the sum and substance of it was this:

Two Desperate Men.

Gentlemen: I received your letter to-day by post, in regard to the ransom you ask for the return of my son. I think you are a little high in your demands, and I hereby make you a counter-proposition, which I am inclined to believe you will accept. You bring Johnny home and pay me two hundred and fifty dollars in cash, and I agree to take him off your hands. You had better come at night, for the neighbours believe he is lost, and I couldn't be responsible for what they would do to anybody they saw bringing him back.

Very respectfully,

Ebenezer Dorset.

"Great pirates of Penzance!" says I; "of all the impudent - "

But I glanced at Bill, and hesitated. He had the most appealing look in his eyes I ever saw on the face of a dumb or a talking brute.

"Sam," says he, "what's two hundred and fifty dollars, after all? We've got the money. One more night of this kid will send me to a bed in Bedlam. Besides being a thorough gentleman, I think Mr. Dorset is a spendthrift for making us such a liberal offer. You ain't going to let the chance go, are you?"

"Tell you the truth, Bill," says I, "this little he ewe lamb has somewhat got on my nerves too. We'll take him home, pay the ransom and make our get-away."

We took him home that night. We got him to go by telling him that his father had bought a silver-mounted rifle and a pair of moccasins for him, and we were going to hunt bears the next day.

It was just twelve o'clock when we knocked at Ebenezer's front door. Just at the moment when I should have been abstracting the fifteen hundred dollars from the box under the tree, according to the original proposition, Bill was counting out two hundred and fifty dollars into Dorset's hand.

When the kid found out we were going to leave him at home he started up a howl like a calliope and fastened himself as tight as a leech to Bill's leg. His father peeled him away gradually, like a porous plaster.

"How long can you hold him?" asks Bill.

"I'm not as strong as I used to be," says old Dorset, "but I think I can promise you ten minutes."

"Enough," says Bill. "In ten minutes I shall cross the Central, Southern and Middle Western States, and be legging it trippingly for the Canadian border."

And, as dark as it was, and as fat as Bill was, and as good a runner as I am, he was a good mile and a half out of Summit before I could catch up with him.

About the Author:

Born in the American South during the Civil War, William Sydney Porter better known by his pen name O. Henry worked variously on a ranch, in a land office, and as a bank teller. He married in 1887, began writing stories, and in 1894 he started a short-lived humorous weekly, *The Rolling Stone*. Porter joined the *Houston Post* as reporter, columnist, and cartoonist. In 1896 he was indicted in court for misappropriation of bank funds. Many believed he was innocent, and he fled to Honduras to mount

a defence. Unfortunately, his wife fell gravely ill, and he returned to Austin before arranging a full accounting. He was convicted and sentenced shortly after his wife passed away. He served three years and three months in prison and wrote stories of adventure based on his experiences in Texas and Honduras under the nom de plume O. Henry. Upon his release, he went to New York City and continued writing for magazines and newspapers. Despite his popularity as a writer, he suffered from financial struggles and alcoholism. He married a second time in 1907 and died in 1910. His posthumous stories, translations, and adaptations for film and television attest to the enduring appeal of his work.

About the Story:

Bill and Sam, two petty criminals looking for an easy two thousand dollars, hatch a plot to kidnap and hold for ransom Johnny, the 10-year-old son of Ebenezer Dorset, a wealthy pillar of the community. They pick up the boy and take him to a cave hideout, but there the tables are turned. Calling himself "Red Chief" in a fantasy game of cowboys and Indians, the boy drives both men crazy—but particularly Bill. With nonsensical prattle, childish demands and mild physical abuse, the boy demands they entertain him, refusing to return to his home even when they release him from his captivity out of desperation to be rid of his antics. Nonplussed by this unexpected reaction to their crime, the outlaws write a ransom letter to the boy's father, lowering the requested ransom from two thousand dollars to fifteen hundred. Unfortunately, old man Dorset, who knows that his boy is a terror, rejects their demand and instead offers to take the boy off their hands if they pay him \$250. Bruised, disheartened, and their hopes reduced by the trials of parenting, Bill and Sam hand over the cash and trick the unhappy boy into returning to his wealthy father. The elder Dorset restrains his son long enough for the chastened duo to flee town, never to return.

Glossary

apparition:	act of becoming visible; a supernatural appearance
undeleterious:	not harmful
philoprogenitiveness:	the state of loving one's own offspring
diatribe:	speech or writing which bitterly denounces something
court-plaster:	a fabric bandage used for dressing wounds
magic-lantern views:	slideshows using an early slide projector
incontinently:	without due restraint; uncontrollably
reconnoitre:	to perform a reconnaissance; to scout
contiguous:	adjacent; neighbouring
somnolent:	drowsy or sleepy
peremptory:	not admitting of question or appeal; absolute; final
accede:	to agree or assent to a proposal or a view; to give way
chawbacons:	one who is not intelligent or interested in culture
whiskerando:	a person with whiskers or a beard
surreptitiously:	stealthily, furtively, secretly

Comprehension

Choose the correct answer:

1. Which statement best describes the narrator and his partner?
 - a. They are ordinary guys who stumble upon an unusual way to make money.
 - b. They are criminal masterminds who devise a fool proof plan.
 - c. They are honest businessmen who got tangled up in a mess.
 - d. They are bumbling crooks who bit off more than they can chew.

2. Which best describes how the author introduces the boy?
 - a. The author introduces the boy as a tough but loving character.
 - b. The author introduces the boy as a sweet and kind character.
 - c. The author introduces the boy as a tough and mean character.
 - d. The author introduces the boy as a sweet but sassy character.
3. What is most ironic about the boy's captivity?
 - a. The boy is playing games the whole time.
 - b. The boy seems to be holding the men captive.
 - c. The boy could sneak off anytime that he wants.
 - d. The boy doesn't seem to miss his parents.
4. Which statement about the boy is false?
 - a. He seems unaware that he has been kidnapped.
 - b. He is imaginative and troublesome.
 - c. He is quiet and likes to keep to himself.
 - d. He enjoys hurting Bill.
5. Why does the narrator make the following statement? "I remembered that Red Chief had said I was to be burned at the stake at the rising of the sun. I wasn't nervous or afraid; but I sat up and lit my pipe and leaned against a rock."
 - a. He is pretending to be unafraid to act tough.
 - b. He is at peace and ready to face whatever may come.
 - c. He is unafraid because he has a trick up his sleeve.
 - d. He would rather prepare than worry for no reason.
6. How do the townspeople react to the disappearance of the boy?
 - a. His disappearance rouses up a search party.
 - b. His absence is unnoted or appreciated.
 - c. His loss is mourned by candlelight vigil.
 - d. His abduction becomes a major news story.
7. Which statement about Bill is false?
 - a. Bill has been through many dangerous adventures with the narrator.
 - b. Bill's role in the scheme is more trying than the narrator's.
 - c. Bill grows to appreciate the boy after spending time alone with him.
 - d. Bill is afraid of Red Chief.
8. Which figurative language technique is used in the following? "I went out and caught that boy and shook him until his freckles rattled."
 - a. Simile
 - b. Understatement
 - c. Personification
 - d. Hyperbole
9. What is the underlying reason why the narrator's scheme fails?
 - a. He assumes that the father has money just because he looks rich.
 - b. He believes that the father is willing to pay to get back his son.
 - c. He is identified by the men from the local store whom he calls "chawbacons."
 - d. He didn't anticipate that Bill would become attached to the kid.
10. Based on how the story concludes, which would be most likely to occur next if the story were to continue?
 - a. Bill would correspond with the boy occasionally to see how he is doing.
 - b. Ebenezer Dorset would chase after the men and press charges against them.
 - c. The men would go on to perform some other dishonest scheme.
 - d. The narrator and Bill would become teachers to help other children.

Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

1. Why did the Bill and the narrator of the story need more money?
2. Who did they kidnap?
3. How did they manage to bring him to the cave?
4. How did Bill suffer at the hands of the 'Red Chief'?
5. What ransom note did bill and his friend sent to Ebenezer Dorset? What reply did they get from him?

Answer the following question in about 200 words:

1. Things do not always happen the way we want them to happen illustrate the statement from the story 'The Ransom of Red Chief'

4. A HERO – R. K. NARAYAN

For Swami events took an unexpected turn. Father looked over the newspaper he was reading under the hall lamp and said, "Swami, listen to this: 'News is about the bravery of a village lad who while returning home by the jungle path came face to face with a tiger...' The paragraph described the fight the boy had with the tiger and his flight up a tree, where he stayed half a day till some people came that way and killed the tiger. After reading it through, father looked at Swami fixedly and asked, "what do you say to that?"

Swami said, "I think he must have been a very strong and grown – up person, not at all a boy. How could a boy fight a tiger?"

"You think you are wiser than the newspaper?" Father sneered. "A man may have the strength of an elephant and yet be a coward: whereas another may have the strength of a straw, but if he has courage he can do anything. Courage is everything, strength and age are not important,"

Swami disputed the theory. "How can it be, Father? Suppose I have all the courage, what can I do if a tiger should attack me?"

"Leave alone strength, can you prove you have courage? Let me see if you can sleep alone tonight in my office room."

A frightful proposition, Swami thought. He has always slept beside his granny in the passage, and any change in this arrangement kept him trembling and awake all night. He hoped at first that his father was only joking. He mumbled weakly, "yes," and tried to change the subject; said very loudly and with a great deal of enthusiasm, "We are going to admit even elders

in our cricket club here after. We are buying brand - new bats and balls. Our captain has asked me to tell you..."

"We'll see about it later," Father cut in. "You must sleep alone hereafter." Swami realized that the matter had gone beyond his control: from a challenge it has become a plain command, he knew his father's tenacity at such moments.

"From the first of next month I'll sleep alone, father."

"No, you must do it now. It is disgraceful sleeping beside granny or mother like a baby. You are in the second form and I don't at all like the way you are being brought up," he said, and looked at his wife, who was rocking the cradle.

"Why do you look at me while you say it?" she asked. "I hardly know anything about the boy."

"No, no, I don't, mean you," Father said.

"If you mean that your mother is spoiling him, tell her so; and don't look at me," she said, and turned away.

Swami's father sat gloomily gazing the newspaper on his lap. Swami rose silently and tiptoed away to his bed in the passage. Granny was sitting up in her bed, and remarked, "Boy, are you already feeling sleepy? Don't you want a story?" Swami made wild gesticulations to silence his granny, but that good lady saw nothing. So Swami threw himself on his bed and pulled the blanket over his face.

Granny said, "Don't cover your face. Are you really very sleepy?" Swami leant over and whispered, "please, please, please, shut up, Granny. Don't talk to me, and don't let anyone call me even if the house is on fire. If I don't sleep at once I shall perhaps die" He turned over, curled, and snored under the blanket till he found his blanket pulled away.

Presently father came and stood over him. "Swami, get up," he said. He looked like an apparition in the semi-darkness of the passage, which was lit by a cone of light from the hall. Swami stirred and groaned as if in sleep. Father said, "Get up, Swami," Granny pleaded, "Why do you disturb him?"

"Get up Swami, he said for the fourth time, and Swami got up. Father rolled up his bed, took it under his arm, and said, "Come with me." Swami looked at his granny, hesitated for a moment, and followed his father into the office room. On the way he threw a look of appeal at his mother and she said, "Why do you take him to the office room? He can sleep in the hall, I think."

"I don't think so," Father said, and Swami slunk behind him with bowed head

"Let me sleep in the hall, father," Swami pleaded. "Your office room is very dusty and there may be scorpions behind your law books."

"There are no scorpions, little fellow. Sleep on the bench if you like." "Can I have a lamp burning in the room?"

"No. You must learn not to be afraid of darkness. It is only a question of habit. You must cultivate good habits."

"Will you at least leave the door open?"

"All right. But promise you will not roll up your bed and go to your granny's side at night: If you do it, mind you, I will make you the laughing - stock of your school."

Swami felt cut off from humanity. He was pained and angry. He didn't like the strain of cruelty he saw in his father's nature. He hated the newspaper for printing the tiger's story. He wished that the tiger hadn't spared the boy, who didn't appear like a boy after all, but a monster...

As the night advanced and the silence in the house deepened, his heart beat faster. He remembered all the stories of devils and ghosts he has heard in his life, How often had his chum Mani seen the devil in the banyan tree at his street end. And what about poor Munisami's father, who spat out blood because the devil near the river's edge slapped his cheek when he was returning home late one night. A ray of light from the street lamp strayed in and cast shadows on the wall. Through the stillness all kinds of noises reached his ears — the ticking of the clock, rustle of trees, snoring sounds, and some vague night insects humming. He covered himself so completely that he could hardly breathe. Every moment he expected the devils to

come up to carry him away; there was the instance of his old friend in the fourth class who suddenly disappeared and was said to have been carried off by a ghost to Siamor Nepal...

Swami hurriedly got up, spread his bed under the bench and crouched there. It seemed to be a much safer place, more compact and reassuring. He shut his eyes tight and encased himself in his blanket once again and unknown to himself fell asleep, and in sleep was racked with nightmares. A tiger was chasing him. His feet stuck to the ground. He desperately tried to escape but his feet would not move, the tiger was at his back, and he could hear its claws scratch the ground. Scratch, scratch, and then a light thud..... Swami tried to open his eyes, but his eyelids would not open and the nightmare continued. It threatened to continue forever. Swami groaned in despair.

With a desperate effort he opened his eyes. He put his hand out to feel his granny's presence at his side, as was his habit, but he only touched the wooden leg of the bench, And his lonely state came back to him. He sweated with fright. And now what was this rustling? He moved to the edge of the bench and stared into the darkness. Something was moving down. He lay gazing at it in horror. His end had come. He realised that the devil would presently pull him out and tear him, and so why should he wait? As it came nearer he crawled out from under the bench, hugged it with all his might, and used his teeth on it like a mortal weapon.....

"Aiyo! Something has bitten me," came an agonized, thundering cry and was followed by a heavy tumbling and falling amidst furniture. In a moment Father, cook, and a servant came in, carrying light.

And all three of them fell on the burglar who lay amidst the furniture with a bleeding ankle.....

Congratulations were showered on Swami next day. His classmates looked at him with respect, and his teacher patted his back. The headmaster said that he was a true scout. Swami had bitten into the flesh of one of the most notorious house-breakers of the district and the police were grateful to him for it.

The Inspector said, "Why don't you join the police when you are old enough?"

Swami said for the sake of politeness, "Certainly, Yes," though he had made up his mind to be an engine driver, a railway guard, or a bus conductor but not a Policeman.

When he returned home from the club that night, Father asked, "where is the boy?"

"He is asleep."

"Already!"

"He didn't have a wink of sleep the whole of last night," said his mother. "Where is he sleeping?"

"In his usual place," Mother said casually. "He went to bed at seven thirty."

"Sleeping beside his granny again!" Father said. "No wonder he wanted to sleep before I could return home, clever boy!"

Mother lost her temper. "You let him sleep where he likes. You needn't force him again..." Father mumbled as he went in to change: "All right molly — coddle him as much as you like. Only don't blame me afterwards...."

Swami, following the whole conversation from under the blanket, felt much relieved to hear that his father was giving him up.

About the Author:

R. K. Narayan (10 October 1906 – 13 May 2001), full name Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami, was an Indian writer, novelist and short story writer, best known for his works set in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi. He is one of three leading figures of early Indian literature in English (alongside Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao), and is credited with bringing the genre to the rest of the world. The setting for most of Narayan's stories is the fictional town of Malgudi, first introduced in *Swami and Friends*. His narratives highlight social context and provide a feel for his characters through everyday life. He has been compared to William Faulkner, who also created a fictional town that stood for reality, brought out the humour and energy of ordinary life, and displayed compassionate humanism in his writing. Narayan's short story writing style has been compared to that of Guy de Maupassant, as they both have an ability to compress the narrative without losing out on elements of the story. Narayan's simple, direct and restrained prose style belies his cognitive profundity, his humour

and his emotional depth. Narayan's wide ranging and prolific accomplishment has made a complete estimation of his achievement challenging, and he is widely admired as being amongst the most eminent Indian English language novelists and short story writers.

About the Story:

Swami is a young child living in Malgudi with his parents and grandmother. Swami portrays the growing up pangs of a boy who despises school, as he makes excuses and roams around Malgudi with his friends. Swami's father works in a government office and his mother is a housewife. At home, Swami shares his adventures with his aged granny, who lovingly addresses him as "Chamy." Swami also has two close friends: Mani and Rajam. Once while reading the newspaper, his father reads an article about the bravery shown by an 8-year old boy and feels that Swami should do something similar. Swami has the habit of sleeping with his grandmother after listening to a story told by her. This irritates Swami's father. Swami's father then challenges, or rather forces, him to sleep in his office. When Swami tells his friends of the ordeal, his friends warn him about a ghost living near the office. Swami ask his friends for advice on how to escape from his father's challenge. They tell him to go to bed before his father comes home from work. However, his father does not let him sleep at home, wakes him and takes him there. Swami tries to negotiate with his father to let him sleep in the house in a separate room. But his father refuses. However, he lets Swami sleep with the door and windows open. When Swami sleeps in his father's office he has nightmares about the ghost and wakes up with a start. At the same time, Swami spots an intruder breaking into the office. Mistaking him for the ghost, Swami grabs the intruder's leg and yells for help. The family members catch the thief and hand him over to the police. The police appreciate him and want him to join the police force but Swami wants to work as an Engine driver or Bus conductor.

Glossary

sneered:	smiling or speaking in a scornful or mocking way
disputed:	an argument or disagreement
tenacity:	firmly holding on something
mumbled:	say something in a quiet voice
trembling:	shake in a way that you cannot control fear
tiptoed:	to walk quietly and carefully with your heels raised
gesticulations:	to make gestures instead of speaking
apparition:	remarkable thing making a sudden appearance especially ghost

Comprehension

Choose the correct answer:

1. R. K, Narayan is the most popular and successful Indian writer in
a. Hindi b. Tamil c. English d. French
2. Swami's father was reading a _____ in the hall lamp
a. newspaper b. magazine c. story book d. letter
3. Swami slept with his
a. grandfather b. grandmother c. brother d. friend
4. His father asked Swami to sleep alone in
a. bedroom b. office c. hall d. kitchen
5. Swami told his father that he will sleep alone from the _____ of the next month.
a. second b. first c. last d. third
6. Swami was in the _____ form of his school
a. second b. third c. fourth d. first
7. Swami's granny was sitting in the bed and reading _____
a. a story b. a secret c. a message d. a poem

8. Swami's father's office room had ____ books
a. medicine b. law c. accounts d. story
9. Swami was asked to sleep on the ____ in the office room
a. table b. bench c. chair d. desk
10. Swami's friend was carried away by the ghost to
a. Nepal b. Assam c. Delhi d. China

Answer the following questions in about 100 words:

1. What story did Swami's father read in the newspaper?
2. How did Swami change the subject when his father asked him to sleep alone?
3. Why did Swami's father get angry?
4. How did Swami's father react when he went and slept with his grandfather?
5. What was Swami's reaction when his father left him to sleep alone in the office?

Answer the following questions in about 200 words:

1. Justify the appropriateness of the title of the story 'A Hero' by R.K.Narayan
2. Narrate the story 'A Hero' in your own words.

VOCABULARY

1. INDIAN ECONOMY IN WORLD ARENA

The economy of India is a developing mixed economy. It is the world's sixth-largest economy by nominal GDP and the third-largest by purchasing power parity (PPP). The country ranks 139th in per capita GDP (nominal) with \$2,134 and 122nd in per capita GDP (PPP) with \$7,783 as of 2018. After the 1991 economic liberalisation, India achieved 6-7% average GDP growth annually. Since 2014 with the exception of 2017, India's economy has been the world's fastest growing major economy, surpassing China.

The long-term growth prospective of the Indian economy is positive due to its young population, corresponding low dependency ratio, healthy savings and investment rates, and increasing integration into the global economy. India topped the World Bank's growth outlook for the first time in fiscal year 2015–16, during which the economy grew 7.6%. Despite previous reforms, economic growth is still significantly slowed by bureaucracy, poor infrastructure, and inflexible labor laws (especially the inability to lay off workers in a business slowdown).

The Indian economy has shown a remarkable growth after the adoption of liberalization policy. The opening up of the Indian economy in the early 1990s led to increase in industrial output and simultaneously raised the inflation Rate in India. There was an immense pressure on the inflation rate due to the stupendous growth rate of employment and industrial output. The main concern of the Reserve Bank of India (the central bank) and the Ministry of Finance, Government of India was the prevalent and intermittent rise of the inflation rate. Increasing inflation rate could be detrimental to the projected growth of Indian economy.

Thus, the Reserve Bank of India was putting checks and measures in various policies so as to put a stop to the rising inflation. The Indian business community and the general public were assured by the central bank that the inflationary rise was harmless but still certain apprehensions existed among them. The pricing disparity of agricultural products between the producer and end-consumer was contributing to the increasing Inflation Rate. Apart from this the steep rise of prices of food products, manufacturing products, and necessities had also catapulted the Inflation Rate. Rationalizing the pricing disparity between the producer and the consumer is the only solution to this problem. Only this will ensure inflation stabilization and thus sustainable economic growth of India.

Since the beginning of 2008 combination of various internal and external factors led to steep domestic inflation and the resultant steps taken to control it in were slowing the pace of expansion. These factors included the marked rise in the international prices of oil, food, and metals, moderating the rate of capital inflows, worsening current and fiscal account deficits, increasing cost of funds, minor depreciation of the Indian rupee against the dollar, and slow growth in industrial economies. The Indian economy was at a critical juncture where policies to contain inflation and ensure macroeconomic stabilization have taken center stage.

Majority of India's population lies close to the poverty line and inflation acts as a Poor Man's Tax'. More than half of the income of this group is spent on food and this effect is amplified when food prices rise. The dramatic increase in inflation will have economic as well as political implications for

the Congress Government, with an election due within a year. Economic growth rate in the emerging markets have slowed down but is far from over. The BRIC countries i.e. Brazil, Russia, India and China alone account for more than 3 billion people and with consumption rate increasing every year. It is expected that the high inflation rates will be there for a long period of time which is worrying news for the Indian Government. Direct regulatory measures such as the reduction in import tariffs were adopted in order to relax the supply-side pressures on various agricultural commodities. While adopting the direct measures, the Government realized that the relaxation of supply-side pressures would dampen inflationary expectations by increasing supplies in the commodities market.

The RBI's attempt to control excess liquidity in the market by raising the interest rates pushed up real-estate prices as well as the commodity prices, thus fuelling inflation. A closer look at certain commodities would reveal that the prices of sugar and wheat were managed by the Government through various market intervention mechanisms. As a result the physical market's role in effective price discovery was affected. Trade in the commodities market operated in an asymmetrical information situation from both the supply and demand sides.

Hence, market operations could only benefit segments that were privy to the available information. The existing agricultural market ecosystem revolves around the traders and to some extent the producers with no say from side of consumers. Hence, at the end both consumers and producers are often at a loss. Generally, traders keep a heavy margin to compensate for the physical and financial risk involved in carrying the commodity for short as well as long term.

1. Economy /ikənəmi/	-	Control and management of money, resources, etc of a community, society, household, etc.
2. mixed economy /mikstikənmi/	-	composed of different qualities or elements of economy
3. prospective /prə'spektiv/	-	possible or future; expected to be or to occur
4. dependency /dipendənsi/	-	country governed or controlled by another; the state of being controlled by someone

5. investment /in'vestmənt/ -	investing of money
6. bureaucracy /bjuə'rɒkrəsi / -	system of government through departments managed by state officials, not by elected representatives
7. infrastructure /in'fra:stɹʌktʃə(r)/ -	subordinate parts, installations, etc that form the basis of a system, an organization or an enterprise.
8. liberalization /libərəlaizeɪʃn/ -	an act of freeing (sb/sth) from political or moral restrictions.
9. inflation /ɪn'fleɪʃn / -	rise in prices resulting from an increase in the supply of money, credit, etc.
10. stupendous /stju:'pendəs/ -	amazingly large, impressive, good, etc.
11. prevalent /'prevələnt/ -	existing or happening generally, widespread
12. intermittent /ɪntə'mɪtənt/ -	continually stopping and then starting again
13. disparity /di'spærəti/ -	difference or inequality
14. stabilization /,steɪbəl'aɪ'zeɪʃn/-	the act of stabilizing something
15. sustainable /sə'steɪnəbl/ -	capable of being sustained
16. depreciation /dɪ'pri:ʃieɪʃn/ -	a decrease in price or value
17. macro economic /mækrəuekənəmɪk/ -	of or relating to macro economics
18. poverty /pɒvəti/ -	state of being poor
19. consumption /kən'sʌmpʃn / -	using up of food, energy, resources, etc
20. regulatory /regju'leɪtəri/ -	restricting according to rules or principles

21. commodities /kə'mɒdətɪz/	-	articles, products or materials that are exchanged in trade
22. liquidity /likwidəti/	-	state of having assets that can easily be changed in to cash
23. intervention /,ɪntə'veɪʃn/	-	interfering or becoming involved
24. asymmetrical /eɪsɪ'metrɪkl/	-	not having parts that correspond to each other in size, shape, etc
25. consumer /kən'sju:mə/	-	person who buys goods or uses services
26. producer /prə'dju:sə/	-	person, company, country, etc that produces goods or materials.

1. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words given in brackets.

- (a). The statute is solely _____ (prospective / perspective) in operation.
- (b). In _____ (deflation / inflation) everything gets more valuable except money.
- (c). Stopping and starting at irregular intervals is called _____ (intermittent / continual)
- (d). The _____ (depreciation / consumption) of energy has increased steadily.
- (e). The shops advertise their goods to attract _____ (consumers / producers) to buy.

2. Write the verb forms of the following

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| (a) investment | (b) dependency |
| (c) sustainable | (d) consumption |
| | (e) intervention |

3. Write the parts of speech of the following words:

- (a) economy (b) stupendous
(c) liquidity (d) poverty (e) regulatory

4. Write the words of the following transcriptions:

- (a) /bjue'rkresi/
(b) /'prevələnt/
(c) /steibilaizeifn/
(d) /kəmədətɪ:z/
(e) /prə'dju:sə/

2. MODERN LIFESTYLE BOON OR BANE

We are all living in the 21st century. It is an era of science and technology. Modern technology has its effect on every field of life. With the help of technology, the things that seemed impossible in the past are now easily done. Now days we cannot imagine life without technology thus, we can that it makes life more convenient and simpler than past. Information technology brings revolution in our daily life. It increases our standard of living. It has great effect on business, science, education, medical sector, transportation and so on.

However, may be there are some aspects of technology that have negative on our lives, but they are very minor against the benefits of technology. To prove the importance of technology we can say that we cannot live with it but we cannot live without it. I think that everybody is experienced in using technology. The most important and positive affect of technology on our lives which shows that our life is better than past, is a medical field. Computer is a great invention of a man. It is capable to handle precisely and lot of information at much a speed than unaided human. As we know that every organization has computerized its tasks, it reduced the use of papers for official work. In earlier days all records are kept in the form of files, which required a lot of paper where as now we can protect a great amount of data in a small hard-disk. The less use of paper also helps to keep the environment clean.

Moreover, the use of internet changed our life totally. Looking back 6-7decades we easily realised that how our life changed due to the technology. Internet makes our life more and more convenient. It provides us freedom and less consumption of time and resources. Economic growth of any nation can be measured according to the level of technology. This is because more number and factors are responsible for affecting an individual life style, the most important factor of deciding the working of a particular technology.

Another most effective and great impact of technology is on our communication. The IT sector has completely changed the outlook of human communication with e-mails, video-conferencing and instant messaging. The wide range of increasing chat-rooms, discussion-rooms, on-line data base and web pages are proving modern technology. The modern technology also helps to spread the culture of one country around the world, which makes it a global village. We can see lot of films and dramas of every culture and country on internet.

The other great impact of technology is on transportation system, which makes our life too easier. Since people has invented automobile and improved it, we can easily reach on the other places of earth quickly through aircraft. After seeing all these benefits of technology we can say that it helps to make our life comfortable. In other words, it improves our standard of living. We can use many machines in our daily routine from kitchen to business sector.

First, the evolution of technology is beneficial to humans for several reasons. At the medical level, technology can help treat more sick people and consequently save many lives and combat very harmful viruses and bacteria. The invention of the computer was a very important point. Communication is thus enhanced, and companies can communicate more easily with foreign countries. Research is also simplified.

When observed more closely, new things are discovered every day. Let's take for instance when radio waves were discovered, radio broadcasts followed suit almost immediately. The same applies to the television and electricity. If no one had discovered that electricity could be generated, then the

entertainment industry wouldn't be at its current stage of development. Technology improves daily lives; allowing to move physical storage units to virtual storage banks and more. Scientists of the time are also able to send astronauts to the moon thanks to technology. In the modern industrial world, machines carry out most of the agricultural and industrial work and as a result, workers produce much more goods than a century ago and work less. They have more time to exercise and work in safer environments.

On the other hand, the evolution of modern technology has disadvantages, for example, dependence on new technology. Man no longer needs to think. Even if the calculator is a good invention, man no longer makes mental calculation and no longer works his memory. The decline of human capital implies an increase in unemployment. In some areas, devices can replace the human mind.

Finally, as most technological discoveries aim to reduce human effort, it would imply that more work is done by machines. This equates to less work for people: the human is becoming ever so obsolete by the day, as processes become automated and jobs are made redundant.

1. science /saiəns/	-	organised knowledge, esp. when obtained by observation and testing of facts, about the physical world, natural laws and society
2. technology /tek'nɔ:lədʒi/	-	scientific study and use of mechanical arts and applied sciences, eg engineering
3. convenient /kən'vi:njənt/	-	fitting in well with people's needs or plans
4. information technology /in'fəmeɪʃn tek'nɔ:lədʒi/	-	study or use of processes (esp computers, telecommunications, etc) for storing, retrieving and sending information of all kinds (eg. words, numbers, pictures)

5. Invention /in'venʃn /	-	action of, making or designing (sth that did not exist before)
6. computerize(d) /kəm'pjʊ:təraɪz/	-	store information in a computer
7. Environment /in'vaɪərənmənt/	-	conditions, circumstances, etc affecting people's lives
8. Internet /intənət/	-	a computer network consisting of worldwide network of computer networks that used the TCP / IP network protocols to facilitate data transmission and exchange
9. Communication /kə'mju:ni'keɪʃn/	-	the activity of conveying information; a connection allowing access between persons or places
10. messaging /'mesɪdʒɪŋ/	-	the sending and processing of e-mail by computer; electronic messaging
11. global village /gləʊbl vɪlɪdʒ/	-	involving the entire earth
12. transportation /træns'pɔ:teɪʃn /	-	take sth / sb from one place to another in a vehicle
13. aircraft /'eəkra:ft/	-	any machine or structure that can fly in the air and is regarded as a vehicle
14. routine /ru:'ti:n/	-	fixed and regular way of doing things

15. beneficial /benɪfɪʃl/	-	having a helpful or useful effect
16. consequently /'kɔːnsɪkwəntli/	-	as a result; therefore
17. computer /kəm'pjʊ:tə(r)/	-	electronic device for storing and analysing information fed into it, making calculations, or controlling machinery automatically.
18. broadcast /'brɔːdkɑːst/	-	message that is transmitted by radio or television
19. entertainment /ɪntə'teɪnmənt/	-	an activity that is diverting and that holds the attention; amusement
20. astronaut /'æstrənɔːt/	-	person who travels in a spacecraft
21. evolution /iːvə'lʊʃn/	-	process of gradually developing
22. dependence /dɪ'pendəns/	-	trust in sb/sth; reliance on sb/sth; state of having to be supported by others
23. Calculator /'kælkjuleɪtə(r)/	-	a small electronic device for making mathematical calculations
24. unemployment /ˌʌnɪm'plɔɪmənt/	-	State of being (temporarily without a paid job) unemployed

25. machine /mə'ʃi:n/ - any mechanical or electrical device that transmits or modifies energy to perform or assist in the performance of human tasks
26. automate(v) /'ɔ:təmeɪt/ - causes sth to operate by automation
27. redundant /ri'dʌndənt/ - superfluous; unnecessary; repetition of same sense in different words

1. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words given in brackets.

- (a). Make it _____ (convenient / convenience) to everyone at the earliest possible.
- (b). He longed for the comfortable _____ (environment / transportation) of his living room.
- (c). We like the _____ (beneficient / beneficial) effects of a temperate climate.
- (d). At the risk of being _____ (automate / redundant), I return to my original proposition.
- (e). A person who travels in a spacecraft is called _____ (astronaut / astronomer).

2. Write the verb forms of the following:

- (a) information (b) transportation
(c) Calculator (d) evolution (e) entertainment

3. Write the parts of speech of the following:

- (a) computerize (b) internet
(c) routine (d) redundant (e) broadcast

4. Write the words of the following transcription:

- (a) /saiəns/
(b) /in'venʃn/
(c) /'eəkrɑ:ft/
(d) /mə'ʃi:n/
(e) /'ɔ:təmeɪt/

COMPOSITION

1. PICTURE DESCRIPTION

A picture description is an ideal way of practising your English vocabulary in all sorts of fields. And there's also a benefit for everyday life – imagine you want to show pictures of your family or home to your foreign friends.

Describing paintings or other art pictures (e. g. caricatures) is something for the advanced learner of English as you also have to talk about the artist's intention and the impression on the viewer.

Preparation

Have a close look at the picture and decide on how to structure your picture description. What is important or special? What should the viewer pay attention to?

Structure and Content

It's not easy to follow a picture description if the writer jumps randomly from one point to another. Therefore, make sure that your picture description is logically structured, for example:

- from left to right (or from right to left)
- from the background to the foreground (or from the foreground to the background)
- from the middle to the sides (or from the sides to the middle)
- from details to general impressions (or from general impressions to details)

Which structure you finally choose depends on your taste and the picture you want to describe.

Pictures in General

- short description of the scene (e. g. place, event)
- details (who / what can you see)
- background information (if necessary) on place, important persons or event

Paintings

- name of artist and picture, year of origin (if known)
- short description of the scene (e. g. place, event)
- details (who / what can you see)
- impression on the viewer
- artist's intention
- perspective, colours, forms, proportions etc.

Important Tenses

- Simple Present
- Present Progressive
- both tenses also in Passive Voice

Procedure for writing a picture description

1. Introduction

- The photo/picture shows ...
- It was taken by/in ...
- It's a black-and-white/coloured photo.

2. What is where?

- In the foreground/background you can see ...
- In the foreground/background there is ...
- In the middle/centre there are ...
- At the top/At the bottom there is ...
- On the left/right there are ...
- Behind/In front of ... you can see ...
- Between ... there is ...

3. Who is doing what?

Here you describe the persons in the picture or you say what is happening just now. Use the Present Progressive.

4. What I think about the picture

- It seems as if ...
- The lady seems to ...
- Maybe ...
- I think ...
- ... might be a symbol of ...
- The atmosphere is peaceful/depressing ...
- I (don't) like the picture because ...
- It makes me think of ...

Example:

Picture – 1:



This is a nice photo of a family, a mother, a father, a little girl and a baby. They're painting eggs, they're preparing for Easter. The girls are quite funny in their bunny headbands. The table is full of nicely painted colourful Easter eggs. There are beautiful spring flowers in colourful pots on a shelf behind the family. The walls are decorated with paper bunnies and little flags. We celebrate Easter in spring, in March or in April. It's a holiday, when people don't have to work and they can be together

with their family. The children get a lot of chocolate. The Easter Bunny hides chocolate figures and small presents in the garden and children can go for an Easter egg hunt. The weather is usually mild at Easter and you can wear light clothes. Families meet and have a meal together, usually something special and delicious. Some families go to church to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Easter is a happy holiday, people like celebrating it.

Picture – 2:



The Taj Mahal is best known for its white marble mausoleum, a symbol of eternal love, but this mausoleum represents only part of the site of the Taj Mahal. The latter is in fact a vast rectangular set, exactly 580m by 305 oriented North-South. In this it is very similar to the forbidden city of Beijing, although historically there is no connection. The Taj Mahal is located to the east of Agra, a city 175km from the capital of India New Delhi, in an area that was once the palaces and gardens of the lords, during the construction of the monument, in times from the apogee of the Mughal Empire in the seventeenth century. The Taj Mahal is adjacent to the north of the Yamunâ River, the main river passing through Agra. The opposite side, to the south, is adjoining the town, which extends to the rampart of the monument. From the outside one sees only the top of the domes, but one of the most beautiful views is about 500m south of the site, at the top of the first buildings. From there the mausoleum is perfectly detached from the surrounding vegetation, as is the great gate, called Darwaza-i rauza.

Exercises:

Describe the following pictures in 100 words:

Picture – 1:



Picture – 2:



Picture – 3:



Picture – 5:



Picture – 6:

Picture – 4:



2. ADVERTISEMENT WRITING

Advertising is a type of communication whereby people promote or persuade customers to utilize their services. There are two types of advertisements:

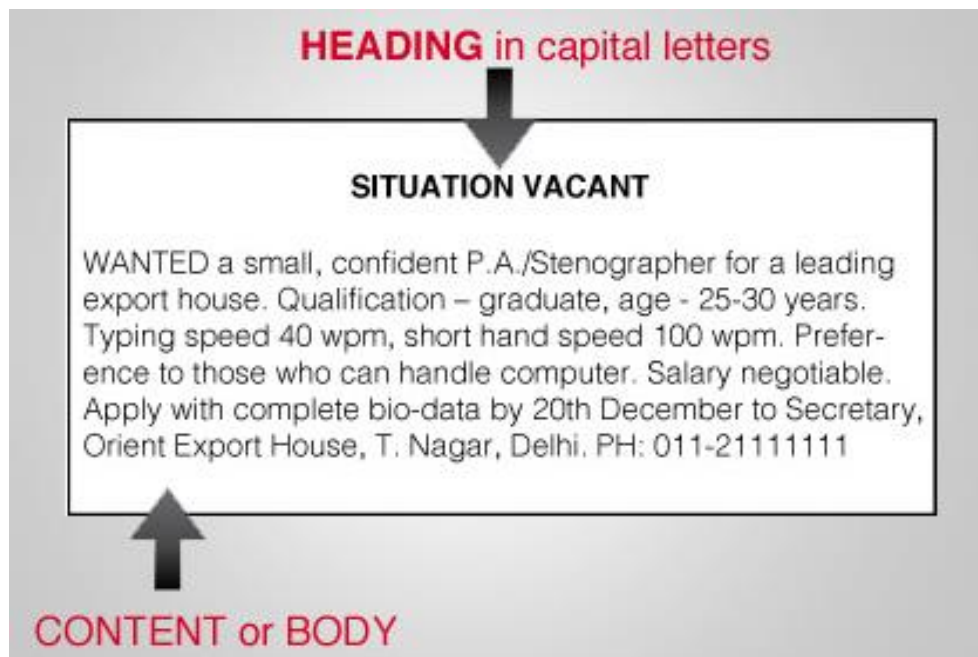
1. Classified advertisements
2. Display advertisements

Classified ads are called **CLASSIFIED ADS** because they are CLASSIFIED into different type of categories depending on their functions.

Classified advertisements

Classified advertisements are advertisements used by the general masses to promote or use services. They are generally **text-based ads** where newspaper agencies generally charge on the number of words used. So, you can very well imagine that there is **no place for precise English sentences here** and the only concern is to get things noticed with as minimum words as possible.

Format and marking scheme



Format of Classified Ads

- Heading (Should be in CAPITAL letters only)
- Content
- Expression with certain grammatical factors

NOTE: Classified Advertisements should be enclosed in a box.

Word Limit

Classified ads should be very well covered in a range of around **50 words**.

There are several type of classified ads, which are as follows:

1. Situation vacant
2. To-let
3. Sale and Purchase of Property/Vehicles/Goods
4. Education institutions promotion
5. Missing persons
6. Tour and Travels

1. Situation Vacant types

1. Always begin with **WANTED** or **REQUIRED**
2. Name of the organization must be always present
3. Number of vacancies and the post for which advertised should be clearly stated.
4. The age and gender of the candidate required.
5. Qualification and requisite experience needed for the post.
6. Pay scale, perks and also the mode of applying (E-mail, postal, etc)
7. Contact address and phone number for correspondence

Example

SITUATION VACANT

WANTED a small, confident P.A./Stenographer for a leading export house. Qualification – graduate, age – 25-30 years. Typing speed 40 wpm, short hand speed 100 wpm. Preference to those who can handle computer. Salary negotiable. Apply with complete bio-data by 20th December to Secretary, Orient Export House, T. Nagar, Chennai. PH: 044-23456789

2. To-Let ads

1. Begin with **WANTED** or **AVAILABLE**
2. Type of accommodation should be mentioned.
3. Rent expected
4. Give proximity to markets and also indicate whether it's sun facing, etc.
5. Contact address and phone number

Example

ACCOMMODATION WANTED

Metals & Minerals Corp. of India needs suitable accommodation on rent to be used as a guesthouse. Should be located in a posh area with excellent facilities. Uninterrupted water & electricity. Nearby market must. Owners please contact R. Laxman, Executive Manager, PH: 044-23333333.

3. Sale/Purchase of Property/Assets

1. Begin with **FOR SALE/PURCHASE/WANTED**
2. Brief physical description
- 3.a. **Property** – Number of floors, size, number of rooms, location and surroundings.
- b. **Vehicles** – Colour, model, accessories, year, modifications (if any), price, mileage and condition.
- c. **Household goods** – Condition, price offered or expected

Examples

FOR SALE

Besant Nagar, DDA flat, ground floor, two bedrooms, car parking available, park facing, best location, reasonable price, contact A. B. Singh #9250556655

FOR SALE

Available Maruti 800, LX, year 1999, self-driven, sparingly used, scratch less, a stereo, air-conditioned, beautiful upholstery, no expenses, contact C. D. Kumar #9350556655

4. Educational institutions

1. Name of the institution
2. Past record
3. Courses offered and their durations
4. Eligibility criteria and details of admission test (if any)
5. Facilities and fee structure
6. Scholarship information
7. Last date for registration, etc
8. Contact address and phone number.

Example

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

IIFL announces the commencement of its courses in Japanese, French and German. Duration – 3months. Eligibility – senior secondary. Excellent faculty. Computerized training. Incentives for early birds. Send in your applications by 1st June, 2012 or contact secretary #9350556655

5. Missing person

1. Brief physical description of the missing like height, complexion and built.
2. Name, age and any health related issues about the missing person
3. Clothes, accessories or any other identifying features.
4. Tell about the place last seen

5. Details of reward if any
6. Contact address and Phone number

Example

MISSING

GIRL MISSING, Priyanka Khanna, 12 years, 4'3" tall, fair, slim built, wearing black t-shirt and blue jeans since 2.2.2012 from M. G. Road, Gurgaon. Speaks Hindi and English. Informers will be suitable rewarded. Inform M. G. Road Police station #98765432

6. Tours and travels

1. Begin with **PACKAGE AVAILABLE**
2. Name of the travel agency
3. Destination and duration
4. Price and special discounts, if any
5. Contact address and phone number

EXAMPLE

TRAVEL AND TOURS

Attractive package available for Mauritius. Three nights, four days. Breakfast and dinner, stay at 3-star hotel, sight-seeing included. Rs. 9999 per person. Special discount for early bookings. Contact Star Travels, 9350556655

Examples

Question 1:

You are Personnel Manager of Green Bio-Products Ltd., Race Course, Coimbatore-18. You need an efficient PA. / stenographer for your office. Write an advertisement for the 'Situation Vacant' column of a local daily.

Answer:

SITUATION VACANT

Wanted a smart, efficient P.A./stenographer for a leading manufacturing company. Qualifications Graduate, age 25-30 years. Typing speed 60 w.p.m., shorthand 120 w.p.m. Preference to those who can handle computers. Salary negotiable. Apply with complete bio-data within 10 days to Personnel Manager, Green Bio-Products Ltd., Race Course, Coimbatore-18.

Question 2:

You want to sell your flat in Ashok Nagar. Write out an advertisement giving necessary details in about 50 words.

Answer:

FOR SALE

For Sale Ashok Nagar, Shakthi flat, first floor, two bed-rooms. Drawing/Dining with full interiors, Car parking available. North / park facing, located near main market. Reasonable price. Contact: M.L. Gopal, 27263412

Question 3:

You want to purchase a flat. Draft an advertisement in about 50 words for a newspaper, detailing your requirements and your capacity to pay.

Answer:

FOR PURCHASE

For purchase DLF Flat in South City / DLF Colony with three bed-rooms, D/D with family lounge. Comer flat preferred. Price around 20 to 25 lacs. Bonafide owners or dealers to contact. M.K. Bhaskar, 12, Bharathiar Road, Coimabtoe-641044. Phone 0422-2456789.

Question 5:

You want to let out a flat. Prepare an advertisement to this effect for publication in a newspaper, giving location of the building, nature of accommodation, rent expected etc.

Answer:

TO LET

Available on rent Sular, Amman flats, II floor, two B/Rs, lobby, balcony, fully furnished, well ventilated. Walking distance from main market & taxi stand. Rent expected 5000 (fixed). Company lease preferred. Contact Subash 2B/31, Sular, Ph. 2752101

Question 6:

You are the Director of Coaching academy. Write an advertisement for publication in newspaper, for admission to the various courses being provided in your institute.

Answer:

EDUCATIONAL

Apex Business Management Institute offers one-year diploma courses in computer programming and business management. Eligibility – Senior Secondary. Batches of 20, subdivided into 4 groups for practical training/field work. Excellent faculty. Fee – ₹ 2500 payable quarterly. Last date for submitting applications – 25 June. Contact, Director ABMI or Phone 26259801.

Question 7:

Your nephew, a kid of 5, has got lost. Giving full details of the missing kid draft an advertisement for a newspaper.

Answer:

MISSING KID

Missing since Monday afternoon, my nephew Shubham, aged 5, 86 cms, whitish complexion, curly hair, birth mark below right ear, wearing white shirt, grey trousers and brown shoes. Any one giving his whereabouts will be suitably rewarded. Contact: Priyanka 427 Vadavalli, Ph. 2539002.

Exercises

1. An old man aged 68, poor vision, mentally upset has been missing for a week. Draft a suitable advertisement for the “Missing Persons” column of a newspaper in about 50 words.
2. While going for a walk in the local park, you lost your little puppy. Draft an advertisement in about 50 words giving the details of your puppy.
3. You have lost your wrist watch in a public park. Write a suitable advertisement for the ‘Lost and Found’ column of a local daily.
4. Manoj Mishra has lost his mark sheet and certificates of HSC. while travelling by Cheran Express from Chennai to Coimbatore. Write an advertisement for the “Lost and Found” columns of a national daily.
5. Travel professionals G-14 Nehru Place, offers a 13 day tour to Far East (Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, at wholesale price t 29,999 including air-ticket, accommodation, breakfast & sight-seeing. Draft an advertisement for ‘Travels & Tours’ column of The Hindustan Times.
6. Venus Travels, 99 Thomas park Race course, Coimbatore, offers attractive holiday package at Andaman for 2 nights/3 days in Rashi Resorts at concessional rates. Draft an advertisement for ‘Travels & Tours’ column of The Times of India, Coimbatore.
7. As the Director of New Star Orientations, a leading name in postal coaching for IIT-JEE and CBSE-NEET in India, write an advertisement for publication in a newspaper for the benefit of students aspiring for admission in prestigious engineering and medical colleges.
8. You are the Secretary of Bright Vision Acting and Modelling Institute, Central Market, Kolkata. Write out a suitable advertisement giving details of the Diploma/Certificate courses offered by you.
9. You want to let out a portion of your newly constructed independent house. Write an advertisement to be published in the ‘to let’ classified column of the Indian Express Coimbatore. (Word limit: 50 words)

10. You are running a real estate agency in South Delhi. Write an advertisement for Saturday 'Prime Estate' column of The Times of India, New Delhi, giving details of flats/bungalows available for rent.
11. You want to sell your car as you are going abroad. Draft an advertisement, suitable to be published in The Hindustan Times under the classified columns. (Word limit: 50 words)
12. You propose to sell your shop on main road of Kailash Colony, Ramanathapuram. Draft an advertisement to be published in The Indian Express under the classified columns

3. DEVELOPING HINTS

Developing Hints is developing the phrases into full sentences and not merely filling up dashes.

Points to remember:

1. Read the passage twice or thrice carefully.
2. Understand the passage well.
3. Jot down the points.
4. If the events in the passage are in present tense, write the story in the past tense.
5. Arrange the matter in two or three paragraphs.
6. Give a suitable title.

Examples:

Example 1:

A rich farmer - lot of land - cattle and servants - two sons - happy life - After some years younger son unhappy - asked for his share of the property - wouldn't listen to father's advice - got his share – sold them all - went away to another country - fell into bad ways - soon all money gone - poor - no one to help him - understood his mistake.

Answer:

The Disobedient Son

Once there was a rich farmer in a Village. He had a lot of land, cattle and many servants. He had two sons. He led a happy life with them. After some years the younger son became unhappy. He asked his father for his share of the property. His father advised him not to demand like that. But he would not listen to his father's advice. He got his share and sold them. He had a huge amount with him. With this amount he travelled to a distant country. He had bad company there and fell into evil ways. All the money was gone. He became poor and no one helped him. Then he understood his mistake and returned to his country. His father and brother took him into their fold and supported him forever. We should obey our parents.

Example 2:

Dick – actor – brilliant - strange character - insists on realism - headache to the manager - a new drama - first drinking scene - water provided in a cup as usual - Dick insists on liquor - manager has to buy a bottle of liquor - second scene – fight - insists on real swords - refuses to handle wooden swords – steel swords brought - third scene - hero drinks poison - manager has real poison - actor in a fix - promises to be sensible in future

Answer:

Dick an Actor

Dick was an actor. He was brilliant. He had a strange character. He insisted on realism. He was a headache to the manager. A drama was played. The first was a drinking scene. Water was provided in a cup. Dick insisted on liquor. The manager had bought a bottle of liquor. The second scene was a fighting scene. He insisted on real swords. Steel swords were brought. The third scene was the hero drinking poison. The manager had real poison. The actor was in a fix. He promised to be sensible in future.

Example 3:

Devan - clever thief - robs the rich - gives all to the sick and the needy - other thieves jealous - plan to get rid of him - challenge Devan to steal the King's pyjamas - Devan accepts challenge - finds king sleeping - opens a bottle of red ants on the bed - King badly bitten - cries for help - servants rush in - pretends to look for ants - Devan removes King's pyjamas - escapes - other thieves dumbfounded - accept Devan their leader

Answer:

Clever Thief

Devan was a clever thief. He robbed the rich and gave all to the sick and the needy. The other thieves were jealous of him. They planned to get rid of him. They challenged to steal the king's Pyjamas. Devan accepted the challenge. He found the king sleeping. He opened a bottle of red ants on the bed. The king was badly bitten. He cried for help. The servants rushed in. They pretended to look for ants. Devan removed king's pyjamas and escaped. Other thieves were dumbfounded. They accepted Devan their leader.

Example 4:

Manager of a firm advertised - night watchman - applicants presented - manager not satisfied - found something wrong with each man - there was Raju - an applicant - sat in a corner - patiently waiting - his turn came - manager found nothing wrong in his appearance - questioned about his health - got the reply - I suffering from sleeplessness - manager happy - appointed him

Answer:

Night Watchman

The manager of a firm advertised for a night watchman. All the applicants were present. But the manager was not satisfied. He found something wrong with each man. There was Raju, an applicant. He was sitting in a corner, waiting for his turn. Manager found nothing wrong in his appearance. He questioned about his health. He got the reply that he was suffering from sleeplessness. Manager was happy and appointed him.

Exercises:

Develop the following hints in about 100 words into a story:

1. A farmer had a goose - it laid a golden egg every day - greedy farmer - wanted to more golden eggs at once - thought of a plan - killed the goose - opened its stomach - no golden egg - Moral.
2. A slave escaped from bondage to the forest - soldiers came after him to catch - entered a cave - a lion was roaring with pain - its paw was swollen - the slave approached it and removed the thorn - they became friends - later the soldiers arrested the slave - took him to the king - the king ordered the soldiers to throw the slave to the hungry lion - the lion rushed at the slave - recognised the slave - remembered the kindness shown by the slave - then licked the feet of the slave - the spectators amazed - the slave explained the situation to them - the king set him free.
3. Cap seller - going to market - felt tired - slept under a tree - a basket - caps for sale - monkeys on the tree - came down - opened the basket - took the caps - wore them - started making noise - Cap seller woke up - no cap in the basket - looked up in wonder - monkeys wearing caps - tried several methods to collect the caps - failed - out of frustration threw his cap - monkeys also threw the caps - Cap seller collected the caps and went away happily.

4. A fox fell into a well - a thirsty goat came to the well - fox invited the goat to have a drink of fresh water - the foolish goat jumped into the well - fox tried to step on the goat's back and jumped off - promised to draw out goat afterwards - the goat agreed - the fox went away - foolish goat stayed there.
5. A hungry fox - saw a crow with a piece of meat in its beak. Fox thought of a plan - praised the crow - the crow listened - felt very happy - fox requested the crow to sing a song - foolish crow very pleased - began to sing - the piece of meat fell down - Fox picked up - ran away.
6. A wood cutter - cutting wood - dropped his axe in the pond - started weeping - god appeared - asked what the matter was - brought a golden axe from the pond - wood cutter did not accept - brought a silver axe - not accepted - brought an iron axe - accepted - pleased with the honesty of the poor wood cutter - offered all the axes to him.
7. Two friends - travelling in a forest - a bear appeared - afraid - one hastily climbed up a tree - the other lied down motionless - the bear came near and sniffed the boy - went away - the friend on the tree climbed down - inquired - what did the bear tell him - replied - " Don't trust a false friend."
8. Robert Bruce - King - lying on the ground in a dejected mood - failed to defeat his enemies - was thinking of giving up the attempt - saw a spider falling down from the ceiling - the ceiling far away - wondered how it would get there - the spider fell back again - again it tried - again it fell - it made nine such attempts - no success - climbed up once more - at last succeeded in reaching the roof - Bruce imitated its example - he too tried once again - was successful.
9. A dog with a piece of bone in its mouth - crossing a river - saw its reflection - mistaken it for another dog with another piece of bone - dropped its bone to snatch the other bone - Moral.
10. Tenali Raman – offends King – King gets angry sentences Raman to death – but allows Raman to choose type of death – wise Raman – promptly says – want natural death – of old age – King amazed – pardons Raman.

4. COMPREHENSION

Reading is in itself a good habit to inculcate. It is that skill which enables all other skills involved in acquiring a language. Reading in a particular language improves your vocabulary, writing skills, pronunciation, spellings, grammar, as well as, imagination. Besides increasing awareness and knowledge, a good reading habit will enhance your English knowledge.

1. Read quickly

Reading the passages quickly is the foremost requirement for attempting the Reading Comprehension. You need to train yourself to skim through the passage, keeping an eye on the key words used in the passage, as well as, pointing out the essence of the passage. Doing this while keeping in mind the questions that have been asked, will help you reduce the time considerably.

2. Build your vocabulary

A decent vocabulary is a prerequisite for attempting the reading section as swiftly as possible. Difficult words can obstruct the speed of your reading and understanding of the passage, hence, knowing their meanings will aid your comprehension.

3. Focus

Maintaining your focus through the passage is crucial. The pressures of writing an MBA entrance is huge, so to shut out all anxieties and focus only on the task at hand is a skill that you need to master. Also, reading comprehension is complex and can be confusing at times. In such situations, keeping your focus intact and knowing which part or words of the passage to particularly focus on will help.

4. Time Management

How you manage your time will decide if you finish the paper to your satisfaction or end up leaving a few questions. The reading section, for its unpredictability and complexity, can consume a lot of your time. So, the trick is to not spend too much time thinking about a single question and instead finish the other questions.

5. Develop a method

Develop a method of solving a comprehension. This method will vary from person to person. Some people tend to mark the answers or important points in the passage with a pencil while reading, some remember them in their minds while some make brief notes. Do whatever work for you best.

6. Practice

Practicing reading comprehension regularly before the final exam will prepare your mind to focus on important areas and attempt the section in as little time as possible. There is no one strategy to attempt the Reading Comprehension. Whichever strategy saves time and makes you feel comfortable is the best.

Guidelines:

1. Give a quick reading of the passage to understand the general sense of it
2. Go through the questions given below
3. Bearing the question in mind, read the passage selectively noting down the areas for answers to the questions.

4. Having located the areas for answers to each question and form the answer
5. Write down the answer for each question
6. Check the questions and answers to verify that you have answered for each question correctly.

Methods of Reading Comprehension:

Method 1:

In this method the passage and the questions are given. The answers are written in form of full sentences from one's reading of the text. It requires good writing skill.

Example:

Our days were spent in the servant's quarters in the south east corner of the outer apartments. One of our servant's was Rajan, dark chubby boy with curly hair, hailing from the district of Erode. He would put me into a selected spot and tracing a chalk line all around, warn me with solemn face and uplifted finger, of the perils of transgressing this ring.

Whether the threatened danger was material or spiritual I never fully understood, but a great fear used to possess me and I had read in the Ramayana of the sufferings of Sita for having left the ring drawn by Lakshman. So it was not possible for me to be sceptical of its potency.

Questions:

1. Where did the writer spend his daytime?
2. Was Rajan the only servant?
3. Where did the servant come from?
4. Why was the author afraid of transgressing the circle drawn by the servant?
5. What made Sita undergo suffering?

Answers:

1. The writer spent his daytime in the servant's quarters in the south east corner of the outer apartments.
2. No, there were many servants. Rajan was one of the servants.
3. He was hailing from the district of Erode.
4. The author was afraid of transgression because he had read in the Ramayana of the sufferings of Sita.
5. Sita suffered because she had left the ring drawn by Lakshman.

Method – 2:

Another method would be to give multiple choice answers. And should choose the best answer. This method of questioning is followed in many competitive examinations.

Example:

The most important reason for this state of affairs, perhaps, is that India was the only country in the world to truly recognise the achievements of the Soviet Union-rather than merely focus on the debilitating faults that Communism brought to its people. The people of India realised that the achievement of one hundred per cent literacy in a country much, much larger than its own and with similarly complicated ethnic and religious groupings, the rapid industrialization of a nation that was a primarily agrarian society when the Bolshevik revolution took place in 1917, the attendant revolutionary steps in science and technology, the accessibility of health care (primeval according to Western

standards, perhaps, but not according to Indian ones) to the general population, and despite prohibition of the government of the time the vast outpourings in literature, music, art, etc. are momentous and remarkable feats in any country. In contrast, all that the West focused on were the massive human rights violations by the Soviet State on its people, the deliberate uprooting and mass migrations of ethnic peoples from one part of the country to another in the name of industrialization, the end of religion. In short, all the tools of information were employed to condemn the ideology of Communism, so much at variance with capitalist thinking. The difference with the Indian perception, I think here is, that while the Indians reacted as negatively to what the Soviet governments did to its people in the name of good governance (witness the imprisonment of Boris Pasternak and the formation of an international committee to put pressure for his release with Jawaharlal Nehru at its head), they took the pain not to condemn the people of that broad country in black and white terms; they understood that mingled in the shades of grey were grains of uniqueness (The Russians have never failed that characteristic in themselves; they have twice experimented with completely different ideologies, Communism and Capitalism both in the space of a century).

Questions:

1. Which of the following statements according to the passage is correct?
 - a. India took heed on the weak faults of Russian policies and system
 - b. India seriously commended the achievement of Russia, i.e. cent per cent literacy and rapid industrialization
 - c. The process of industrialization had already started when Russian revolution took place in 1917
 - d. The literature, art and music received a setback during the communist regime in Russia
2. The West did not focus on:
 - a. rapid growth of nuclear weapons in Russia
 - b. Massive human rights violation by the Soviet state on its people
 - c. deliberate uprooting and mass migration of ethnic people in the name of industrialization.
 - d. Both B & C
3. The India perception of the USSR was always
 - a. negative
 - b. neutral
 - c. counter-reactionary
 - d. applauding
4. The passage is
 - a. descriptive
 - b. paradoxical
 - c. analytical
 - d. thought provoking
5. The Passage talks about which country
 - a. USSR
 - b. USA
 - c. UK
 - d. UAE

Answers:

1	2	3	4	5
b	a	d	c	a

Method – 3:

The modern trend is to give a one-line passage or a very short passage comprising only two or three sentences because it is more convenient to recollect and remember. The question will be based on central idea.

Example:

Modern agriculture demands increasing quantities of energy to achieve the desired level of productivity. In a country like India, solar power can be utilized as great source of energy. There is a great scope for utilization of solar energy in agricultural practices such as drying of agricultural produce, pumping of water for irrigation and preservation of fruits and vegetables.

Question:

The paragraph best supports the statement that

1. modern agriculture demands more energy.
2. It is possible to achieve the desired level of productivity.
3. There is great scope for using solar energy in agricultural work in India
4. Solar power is a great source of energy.
5. Solar power can be utilized in India

Answer:

3. There is great scope for using solar energy in agricultural work in India

Exercise:

Read the following passages and answer the questions that follow:

Passage – 1:

In the sixteenth century, an age of great marine and land exploration, Ferdinand Magellan led the first expedition to sail around the world. As a young Portuguese noble, he served the king of Portugal, but he became involved in the quagmire of political intrigue at court and lost the king's favour. After he was dismissed from service to the king of Portugal, he offered to serve the future Emperor Charles V of Spain.

A papal decree of 1493 had assigned all land in the New World west of 50 degrees W longitude to Spain and all the land east of that line to Portugal. Magellan offered to prove that the East Indies fell under Spanish authority. On September 20, 1519, Magellan set sail from Spain with five ships. More than a year later, one of these ships was exploring the topography of South America in search of a water route across the continent. This ship sank, but the remaining four ships searched along the southern peninsula of South America. Finally they found the passage they sought near a latitude of 50 degrees S. Magellan named this passage the Strait of All Saints, but today we know it as the Strait of Magellan.

One ship deserted while in this passage and returned to Spain, so fewer sailors were privileged to gaze at that first panorama of the Pacific Ocean. Those who remained crossed the meridian we now call the International Date Line in the early spring of 1521 after ninety-eight days on the Pacific Ocean. During those long days at sea, many of Magellan's men died of starvation and disease.

Later Magellan became involved in an insular conflict in the Philippines and was killed in a tribal battle. Only one ship and seventeen sailors under the command of the Basque navigator Elcano survived to complete the westward journey to Spain and thus prove once and for all that the world is round, with no precipice at the edge.

Questions:

1. The sixteenth century was an age of great ___ exploration.
a. cosmic b. land c. mental d. common man
2. Magellan lost the favour of the king of Portugal when he became involved in a political _____.
a. entanglement b. discussion c. negotiation d. problems
3. One of Magellan's ships explored the ___ of South America for a passage across the continent.
a. coastline b. mountain range c. physical features d. islands
4. Four of the ships sought a passage along a southern _____.
a. coast b. Inland c. body of land with water on three sides d. border
5. The passage was found near 50 degrees S of _____.
a. Greenwich b. The equator c. Spain d. Portugal

Passage – 2:

India's role on the international stage was moulded by history rather than by the pomp and circumstances of war. As a separate entity of the British empire, India became a founder member of the League of Nations in the same way as Australia and Canada, and thus acquired a somewhat unique international status long before independence. During the days of the League when India's interests were affected, such as in matters of trade or the position of Indians overseas, the Indian delegation did not hesitate to make known its independent position, for what it was worth. Some Indian delegates were in demand for chairing meetings riddled with contention and controversy, because of their reputation for impartiality and talent for mediation. These were the small beginnings of India's later entry into the United Nations in 1945, again as a founder member before independence. The drafting of Chapter IX and X of the UN Charter, which deal with international social and economic cooperation, was entrusted to a group that was presided over by an Indian. It is important, however, to bear in mind that fact that the Government of independent India had no part in the drafting of the UN Charter, although it accepted the obligations contained therein. The UN was primarily the creation of three powers-The USA, UK and Russia. The size, population, resources and potential of India lent it the weight of a medium power in the functioning of the United Nations. The fact that India was among the first nations to liberate itself from the imperialist domination through non-violent means. Endowed it with a moral obligation to work in and outside the UN for the independence of nations still under colonial rule. India has served on the Security Council for 10 years or 5 terms, on the Trusteeship Council for 12 years or 4 terms and on the Economic and Social Council for 21 years or 7 terms.

Questions:

1. The title below that best expresses the ideas of the passage is:
 - a. India's role at the United Nations
 - b. India and Her Neighbours
 - c. India's International Prestige
 - d. British Colonial Expansion
2. Consider the following statements:
 - (I) Indian delegates were well known. For their impartiality
 - (II). Indian delegates had talent for mediation
 - (III). India was considered a power to reckon with. Find the correct statements
 - a. I and III are correct
 - b. I and II are correct
 - c. I and III are correct
 - d. only I is correct
3. Which articles of the UN Charter deal with International, Social and Economic Co-operation?
 - a. Articles IX and X
 - b. Articles I and XII
 - c. Articles VIII and XIII
 - d. Articles VI and VII
4. Which of the following countries does not find any coverage in the passage?
 - a. USA
 - b. Britain
 - c. Russia
 - d. Sri Lanka
5. In which year did India enter United Nations
 - a. 1938
 - b. 1954
 - c. 1947
 - d. 1945

Passage – 3:

Some religious teachers have taught that Man is made up of a body and a soul: But they have been silent about the Intellect. Their followers try to feed the body on earth and to save soul from perdition after death: But they neglected the claims of the mind. Bread for the body and Virtue for the soul: These are regarded as the indispensable requisites of human welfare here and hereafter. Nothing is said about knowledge and education. Thus Jesus Christ spoke much of feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and converting the sinners: But he never taught the duty of teaching the ignorant and increasing scientific knowledge. He himself was not a well-educated man, and intellectual pursuits were beyond his horizon. Gautama Buddha also laid stress on morality, meditation and asceticism, but he did not

attach great importance to history, science, art or literature. St. Ambrose deprecated scientific studies and wrote, 'Let us discuss the nature and position of the earth does not help us in our hope for life to come. St. Basil said very frankly and foolishly, 'It is not a matter of interest for us whether the earth is a sphere or a cylinder or disc. Thomas Carlyle also followed the Christian traditions when he declared that he honoured only two men and no third: The manual labourer and the religious teacher. He forgot the scientist, the scholar and the artist. The cynics of Greece despised education at last?

Questions:

1. What did the religious teachers teach in the past?
2. What is the food for the soul?
3. What did Gautama Buddha laid stress upon?
4. What Jesus did not teach?
5. Who are the two men according to Thomas Carlyle?

Passage – 4:

India is not, as you may imagine, a distant, strange, or at the very utmost, a curious country, India for the future belongs to Europe, it has its place in the Indo-European world, it has its place in our own history and in what is the very life of history, the history of the human mind, You know how some of the best talents and the noblest genius of our age has been devoted to the study of the development of the outward or material world, the growth of the earth, the first appearance of the living cells, their combination and differentiation leading up to the beginning of organic life, and its steady progress from the lowest to the highest stages, Is there not inward intellectual world also which has to be studied in its historical development, from the first appearance of predicative administrative roots, their combination and differentiation, leading up to the beginning of rational thought in its steady progress from the lowest to the highest stages? And in that study of the history of the human mind, in that study of ourselves, of our true selves, India occupies a place second to no other country, Whatever sphere of the human mind you may select for your special study, whether it be language, or religion, or mythology, or philosophy, whether it be laws or customs, primitive art or primitive science, everywhere you have to go to India, whether you like it or not, because some of the most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of, man are treasured up in India, and in India. only.

Questions:

1. In what field of human endeavour has India surpassed the rest of mankind?
2. What position does India occupy in the study of the history of the human mind?
3. What is the meaning of Philosophy?
4. What does historical development of intellectual world leads up to?
5. Which country does the passage deal with?

Passage – 5:

It is all very well to blame traffic congestion and the ways of modern life. But the behaviour on the roads is becoming more and more dangerous. Every-one knows that nicest men become monsters behind the wheel. Perhaps the situation calls for a "be kind to the other drivers" campaign. Otherwise it may get completely out of hand. Road courtesy is not only good manners, but good sense too.

Question:

The central idea of the paragraph is

1. Blame traffic congestion and ways of modern life.

2. Behaviour on the roads.
3. Road courtesy is good sense.
4. Drivers have become monsters.

Passage – 6:

The fact that electronic computers are now used for data processing has led the general public to believe that it is a mysterious, complicated science and that the computers are giant brains. Both of these ideas are false. A computer is basically just a high-speed adding machine that performs the functions it is told to. If the input data are varied even a little, the computer is unable to operate until it is programmed to accept the variations. The business operations it performs are impressive only because of the extremely high speed of manipulation, but most of these operations have been used for decades. Unlike man, the computer performs repetitive calculations without getting tired or bored.

Questions

The central idea of the paragraph is

1. A computer is a high-speed adding machine.
2. A computer is a mysterious giant brain.
3. A computer is impressive because of its high speed.
4. A computer is superior to man in many ways.