

Chapter 1 - A Letter to God

Oral Comprehension Check Pg-5

Q.1 What did Lencho hope for?

Ans.: Lencho hoped for rain because his crop of corn has ripened and needed rain.

Q.2 Why did Lencho say the raindrops were like ‘new coins’?

Ans.: Lencho addressed the raindrops as coins because of the following two reasons:

1. The brightness of the raindrops resembled that of new coins.
2. Being a farmer, his livelihood dependent on the rain.

Q.3 How did the rain change? What happened to Lencho’s field?

Ans.: The pleasant rain eventually changed to hailstorm. Lencho’s whole crop was destroyed because of the hailstones.

Q.4 What were Lencho’s feelings when the hail stopped?

Ans.: Lencho became very sad because all his crops were destroyed. He was very upset and worried thinking about what will he eat now. He could sense his dark future where he won't be able to feed his family in the year ahead.

Oral Comprehension Check Pg-6

Q.1 Who or what did Lencho have faith in? What did he do?

Ans.: Lencho had a deep faith in God. So, he wrote a letter to God asking for 100 pesos so that he can sustain his family till the next harvest.

Q.2 Who reads the letter?

Ans.: The postman saw the letter and could not understand where to deliver the letter. So, he took it to the postmaster. The postmaster read the letter and started laughing at once but was impressed to see Lencho's faith in God.

Q.3 What did the postmaster do then?

Ans.: The postmaster collected money from his employees, gave a part of his salary and sent the money to Lencho. He also asked for help from his friends who contributed as a gesture of charity.

Oral Comprehension Check Pg-7

Q.1 Was Lencho surprised to find a letter for him with money in it?

Ans.: No, Lencho was not surprised to get a letter from God as he had great faith in God.

Q.2 What made him angry?

Ans.: The less number of pesos than what he had requested made him angry. He thought that the post office employees have cheated him and took out some of his money.

Thinking about the Text

Q.1 Who does Lencho have complete faith in? Which sentence in the story tells you this?

Ans.: Lencho has complete faith in God. The following sentences in the story tell us about this:

1. Lencho thought only one hope-the help of God.
2. He wrote, “God”, if you don’t help, my family and I will go hungry this year.”
3. Lencho showed not the slightest surprise on seeing the money.

Q.2 Why does the postmaster send money to Lencho? Why does he sign the letter ‘God’?

Ans.: The postmaster in the story is a kind man. He is very impressed by Lencho’s faith in God. He doesn’t want to shake his faith. So, he collects money from various sources and sends it to Lencho. He signs the letter “God” because he wants to keep Lencho's faith in God intact.

Q.3 Did Lencho try to find out who had sent the money to him?
Why/why not?

Ans.: Lencho did not try to find out who had sent him money. The reason for this was his firm faith in God. He had no doubt about God granting his request and sending the money he requested.

Q.4 Who does Lencho think has taken the rest of the money? What is the irony in the situation? (Remember that the irony of a situation is an unexpected aspect of it. An irony situation is strange or amusing because it is the opposite of what is expected)

Ans.: Lencho thinks that the post office employees have taken the rest of the money. According to him, God cannot send him less money than he had requested. The irony in this situation is that the post office employees collected the money and sent it to him and even then, were called “bunch of crooks” by Lencho.

Q.5 Are there people like Lencho in the real world? What kind of a person would you say he is? You may select appropriate words from the box to answer the question.

greedy, naïve, stupid, ungrateful, selfish, comical, unquestioning

Ans.: Yes, we may find persons like Lencho in the real world.

He had an deep and unquestioning faith in God. He was not greedy or selfish but very naïve.

Q.6 There are two kinds of conflicts in the story: between humans and nature, and between humans themselves. How are these conflicts illustrated?

Ans.: After reading the story, we can easily say that there are two kinds of conflict in the story.

1. Between humans and nature-When Hailstorm destroyed Lencho’s crops completely.

2. Between humans themselves-When post office employees send money to Lencho and he called them “bunch of crooks” as he felt deceived for receiving less money than requested.

Thinking about language

Q.1 Look at the following sentence from the story:

Suddenly a strong wind began to blow and along with the rain very large hailstones began to fall.

‘Hailstones’ are small balls of ice that fall like rain. A storm in which hailstones fall is a ‘hailstorm’. You know that a storm is bad weather with strong winds, rains, thunder and lightning.

There are different names in different parts of the world for storms, depending on their nature. Can you match the names in the box with their description below, and fill in the blanks? You may use a dictionary for help.

gale, whirlwind, cyclone, hurricane, tornado, typhoon

1. A violent tropical storm in which strong winds move in a circle: __c__
__.
2. An extremely strong wind: __a__.
3. A violent tropical storm with very strong winds: __p__.
4. A violent storm whose center is a cloud in the shape of a funnel: __
__n__.
5. A violent storm with very strong winds, especially in the western Atlantic Ocean: __r__.
6. A very strong wind that moves very fast in a spinning movement and causes a lot of damage: __t__l__.

Ans.:

1. Cyclone
2. Gale

3. Typhoon
4. Tornado
5. Hurricane
6. Whirlwind

Speaking

Q.1 Have you ever been in great difficulty, and felt that only a miracle could help you? How was your problem solved? Speak about this in class with your teacher.

Ans.: Earlier this year, I was travelling from my aunt's place to my city by train. As I did not know the roads and the traffic schemes of the new city, I got stuck in the jams and could not reach the station before five minutes have passed from the train's scheduled time of departure. The station was a lot weird as well, with platforms arranged in a non conventional manner. Knowing that the train must have left, I cursed my luck and subconsciously reached the designation platform. I was surprised to see that the train was still there, it left as soon as I got in my compartment. The miracle here is that the train was originating from that station and had a reputation of never starting late.

Listening

Listen to the letter (given under in this lesson) read out by your teacher/on the audio tape. As you listen fill in the table given below:

The write apologizes (says sorry) because	
The writer has sent this to the reader	
The writer sent it in the month of	
The reason for not writing earlier	

Sarah goes to	
who is writing to whom	
Where and when were they last together?	

Ans.:

The write apologizes (says sorry) because	She has not been writing to her for a long time
The writer has sent this to the reader	As a birthday card
The writer sent it in the month of	January 2006
The reason for not writing earlier	Because she was busy shifting her house
Sarah goes to	‘Little Feet’ school
who is writing to whom	Jaya to Arti
Where and when were they last together?	They went together to Bangalore in 2005

Dust of Snow - Thinking about the Poem

Q.1 What is a ‘dust of snow’? What does the poet say has changed his mood? How has the poet’s mood changed?

Ans.: ‘Dust of Snow’ means the small particles of snow that can be felt in the air after or during snowfall. The poet is very sad and is sitting under the hemlock tree. Suddenly a crow shakes the tree and the dust of snow falls on the poet. This incident changes the poet’s mood as he starts to think about nature and beauty.

Q.2 How does Frost present nature in this poem? The following questions may help you to think of an answer.

(i) What are the birds that are usually named in poems? Do you think a crow is often mentioned in poems? What images come to your mind when you think of a crow?

(ii) Again, what is 'a hemlock tree? Why doesn't the poet write about a more 'beautiful' tree such as a maple or an oak, or a pine?

(iii) What do the 'crow' and 'hemlock' represent-joy or sorrow? What does the dust of snow that the crow shakes off a hemlock tree stands for?

Ans.: In this poem, Robert Frost praises and describes different sights of nature. Here he touches different aspects of natural sights. There are many things in nature that are not considered auspicious like-crow and hemlock. Generally, birds like cuckoo, sparrow and peacock which have some pleasing qualities about them are mentioned in the poems. The images of loud and unpleasant cawing come when one thinks about crows.

Crow is not considered a good bird. Similarly, hemlock tree is a poisonous tree and that is why it is the symbol of sadness. When the crow shakes off the dust of snow from the hemlock tree, it falls on the poet. Thus, the poet's mood changes due to this incident.

The poet uses these symbols to express that natural beauty can improve the human mood. Also, by using these symbols the poet hopes to steer clear of the stereotypes.

Q.3 Have there been times when you felt depressed or hopeless? Have you experienced a similar moment that changed your mood that day?

Ans.: Yes, there had been times when I felt depressed and hopeless and eventually felt relieved when the situation got sorted.

My results for twelfth standard boards were really unexpected. I had prepared well but could not perform commensurately in the examinations. I felt very depressed and did not know what to do further. A few weeks later, the results of my college entrance tests arrived and I got picked for a good college. This lifted up my mood and made me believe that no trouble is permanent.

Fire and Ice - Thinking about the Poem

Q.1 There are many ideas about how the world will 'end'. Do you think the world will end some day? Have you ever thought what would happen if the sun got so hot that it 'burst', or grew colder and colder?

Ans.: According to some people, this world will end in fire, and some opine that it will end in ice. Both are destructive powers. According to me, nothing is permanent in this universe. So, someday this world will also perish. But no one can tell the exact time and the way it is going to happen.

If the sun gets too hot then it will burst. Everything will either burn or grow colder. The change in the state of sun will lead to great disasters as life is directly dependent on sun.

Q.2 For Frost, what do 'Fire' and 'ice' stand for? Here are some ideas:

Ans.: For Frost, 'fire' and 'ice' stands for- destructive powers.

The other words – that stand for these are as follows-

Fire: greed, conflict, avarice, fury, lust, intolerance, rigidity.

Ice: insensitivity, coldness, cruelty, indifference, hatred.

Q.3 What is the rhyme schemes of the poem? How does it help in bringing out the contrasting ideas in the poem?

Ans.: The rhyme scheme of the poem is – ab, aa, bc, bcb.

This rhyme scheme brings out the contrasting ideas very beautifully: as first line's word- 'fire' rhymes with third and fourth line's word-desire, fire.

Third line's word – 'ice' rhymes with fifth line's – twice.

Sixth line's word – 'hate' rhymes with eighth line's – great.

Ice- rhymes with suffice.

Both 'fire' and 'ice' are different ideas. In the poem, these words are used beautifully.