

12th English Digest Chapter 2.8 Small Towns and Rivers Textbook Questions and Answers

Question (i)  
Most of the civilizations have flourished on the banks of the rivers. Discuss the reasons in the class.  
Points:  
(a) Availability of water  
(b) Fertile soil for agriculture  
(c) Fishing ground  
(d) Transport

Question (ii)  
Write down the names of the famous cities that are situated on the banks of the rivers given below.  
Answer:

River	City
Ganga	Varanasi
Yamuna	Mathura
Godavari	Rajahmundry
Varada	Sagara
Krishna	Vijayawada
Tapi	Surat

Question (iii)  
Write down the names of the rivers on the banks of which following cities have prospered:  
Answer:

City	River
London	Thames
Cairo	Nile
New York	Hudson
Paris	Siene

Question (iv)  
Divide your class into groups and discuss the changes that might have taken place when the cities grow on the banks of the rivers.  
Points: Dwellings are built – Population grows – Fishing flourishes – Outsiders come to settle – Trading takes place – Prosperity increases – Increased population, trade, traffic and fishing begin to harm the river system – River system shows damage – River starts to decay

Question (v)  
Share your views in the class on the topic ‘Conservation of Rivers and Development of the Cities.’  
(Students may list their own points of views.)

(A1)

Question 1.  
State the importance of Nature in the lives of the people from the North-eastern part of India as expressed in the poem with reference to:  
(a) Flowers  
(b) River  
(c) Bamboo  
(d) East  
Answer:  
(a) Flowers – Tuberoses are woven into wreaths to be placed on the body of a departed as a mark of love and respect.

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Sole: Most of the textual 'Wh' questions are converted to Activity Format.

(b) River: The people believe the river has a soul. They respect their rivers and even revere it as divine as its waters are immortal.

(c) Bamboo: The poet says 'in the cool bamboo'. The colour is a cool green. The place where the bamboo grows is also cool.

(d) East: The direction of sunrise is very important for the people of Arunachal Pradesh. They ensure the dead are placed pointing west so that their soul directly enters the golden house of the sun. They believe that finally souls must attain the sun's abode in the east.

(A2)

Question (i)

The poet has described her small town in Arunachal Pradesh. Pick out from the extract, the lines that describe the poet's town.

Answer:

1. 'My hometown lies calmly amidst the trees',
2. 'it is always the same In summer and winter With the dust flying Or the wind howling down the gorge'

Question (ii)

Make a list of natural elements mentioned in the extract.

Answer:

trees, winter, summer, wind, tuberoses, life, land, river, fish, stars

Question (iii)

'The river has a soul.' Elaborate the concept in your words as the poet has explained in the extract.

Answer:

When the poet says 'The river has a soul' she personifies the river. The river flows with great force – 'like a torrent of grief. The river flowing with great force can be like a person pouring out grief in a storm of emotion. The river also seems to be holding its breath, maybe because it is choking with filth. There are no fishes. It is not clear and sparkling. So the poet says - 'I think it holds its breath seeking a land of fish and stars'.

Question (iv)

The poet is convinced with the thought of immortality of water. Pick out the relevant lines from the extract.

Answer:

'The river has a soul'.

(v) The poet has used some unconventional expressions. Illustrate them in your words.

Question (a)

'Torrent of grief.

Answer:

The poet describes the river flowing in summer with great speed. Just like someone becomes emotional in great sadness, the force of the water seems to be like the outpouring of sorrow of the river.

Question (vi)

The poet has connected the need to preserve Nature with the belief of particular community and her childhood memories. Write down the measures you would take to convince the people regarding the need to conserve the Nature.

Answer:

We have to make people at large realize that we are a part of the nature not apart from the nature. Saving nature is to save ourselves, To bring about this realization I can address my steps to two sections. The first would be the children. Saving water would be the first thing to teach children. Story-telling, poems, songs, games, cartoons and can easily bring the conservation ideas to young minds. I would take my ideas to schools, parks, malls and try to spread this to the young ones.

The other section is of course the adult public across economic and social levels. The well- off people must not be careless if they can afford to pay bills they can waste resources.

I will do everything possible. I will use social media to spread various messages/ mottos.

(A3)

Question (i)

Write down the expressions related to ‘the seasons’ from the extract.

Answer:

- 1. Summer or winter
- 2. ‘in the summer’

Question (ii)

Match column ‘A’ with column ‘B’.

A	B
1. cool	(a) silence
2. happy	(b) earth
3. dreadful	(c) bamboo
4. dry	(d) pictures

Answer:

- 1. cool-bamboo
- 2. happy – pictures
- 3. dreadful – silence
- 4. dry-earth



(A4)

Question (i)

Read the expression ‘a sad wreath of tuberoses’.

‘Is the wreath sad?’ Explain the figure of speech.

Answer:

The figure of speech is transferred epithet. The sad mourners have placed the wreath of tuberoses on the dead. The emotion of sadness has been transferred to the flowers for effect.

Question (ii)

List and explain the metaphorical expressions from the extract.

Answer:

- 1. ‘torrent of grief’. The river sweeps along with great speed as if it is pouring out sorrow.
- 2. ‘Wind howling down the gorge’. The wind blowing through the narrow gorges creates a sound exactly like howling.
- 3. ‘The river has a soul’. The river is spoken of as a living being, a human.
- 4. ‘It holds its breath’. The river may be choking with debris and filth.

Question (iii)

‘The river has a soul.’

‘Life and death.’

These are the two expressions that are repeated in the poem; but both of them indicate different figures of speech. Find out and discuss.

Answer:

(a) ‘Life and death’

In the first usage it is used as antithesis, to emphasise the beginning and end.

In the second instance it is irony to indicate that neither life nor death is permanent. Ironically the rituals are permanent.

(b) ‘The river has a soul’

In the first instance it is used to personify the river. Several human-like qualities are attributed to the river,

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- = it cuts through the land
- = it is cascading in grief
- = it holds its breath
- = it seeks a land

Question (iv)

Find out the beauty of the free verse reflected in this poem.

Answer:

"Small Towns and Rivers" is written in free- verse. Since there are irregular lengths of lines and no rhyme, the reading of the poem is almost like a story-telling. Each stanza has a different number of lines and there is no order for mixing up the short and long lines.

The poem is not confined by an obvious rhythm so we feel there is a kind of freedom. We are free to imagine the widespread setting of the North-eastern terrain of mountains and rivers, mists, golden sunlight and the town by the river.

(A5)

Question (i)

Prepare the arguments for group discussion on the topic

'A balanced progress never harms the Nature'.

For:

- Growth should be planned to take place in stages
- Planning vital for the growth
- Sustainability must be ensured
- Pros and cons of the damage to environment must be weighed
- Short-term gains in progress must not harm long-term eco-factors

Against:

- Growth must not be halted for issues of environment
- Costs will go up due to delays
- Delays in progress will slow down economy and employment
- Slowdown in economy will cause public to protest
- Sacrifices have to be made – one can't have the cake and eat it too.

Question (ii)

Compose 4 to 6 lines on 'Gift of the Seasons'.

Answer:

Gift of the Seasons

Each season brings a sweetly wrapt gift;

We can gift her back : no water pollution in  
the season of the Sun.

No air pollution when

The rains come down.

And no degradation the rest of the year!

Question (iii)

Write an appreciation of the poem 'Small Towns and Rivers'. Use the points given below:

- About the poem/poet/title
- Theme
- Poetic devices, language, style
- Special features – tone and type
- Values, message

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- Your opinion about the poem

Answer:

The poem 'Small Towns and Rivers' written by Mamang Dai is a beautiful word-picture. It is also a lament of the poet about her beautiful native land of Arunachal Pradesh.

This theme shows in the way she begins the poem that small towns remind her of death. It is shocking. She implies the town is unchanging in all weathers, but development comes along and changes everything. There is irony in that the cycle of life and death shows that life is not permanent, but the rituals are permanent.

She uses metaphor that the rivers are not only alive like us humans, but actually immortal. She personifies the river by way the river 'holds its breath' because it is choking. It is flowing in search of a place where it will flow clean and clear. The poet uses metaphor of the water-cycle to illustrate the river has a soul and its waters are immortal.

The poet builds a climax with 'shrine of happy' childhood memories. This becomes growing up - 'grow with anxiety'. Then she speaks of how the dead are placed pointing west so the soul can ascend directly into the sun's golden home in the east. This tells us about the traditions of her region.

The poem is in free verse and seems to be in easy language, but we can understand the full depth of meaning only after reading it more than once. The poem is a lament about the destruction of nature for development. We all will feel the sorrow of the poet when we read about how nature's beauty is damaged for man's greed called 'progress'.

Question (iv)

Write a dialogue between two friends on 'Importance of the rivers'

Answer:

Priya: Jai, it goes without saying that fresh, clean water is essential for humans and nature to survive. Rivers are precious sources of fresh drinking water for people across the world. And when rivers are so badly polluted by industry or by poor water management practices, it can be a case of life-or-death. This unfortunately happens across the world.

Jai: Yes Priya. Freshwater habitats account for some of the richest biodiversity in the world, and rivers are a vital, vibrant ecosystem for many species. Only those who live by the river know about this wealth of nature. Those who live far away and damaging the system with the poisons are not aware.

Priya: People depend on rivers for their way of life and their livelihoods. From fishing to agriculture, the way our waterways are managed has a direct impact on people's lives. There are millions of people who follow their ancestors' way of living and earning a livelihood. But modern technology has wrecked the very source of these.

Jai: Rivers are absolutely vital: for fresh drinking water, for people's livelihoods and for nature. Unfortunately, they're still threatened. We must commit to recovering freshwater biodiversity, restoring natural river flows and cleaning up polluted water for people and nature to thrive.

Priya: Yes Jai. I agree. It is the crying need of the day.

(A6)

Question (i)

Collect information about rivers in Maharashtra.

Question (ii)

Further reading:

'The River Poems' – Mamang Dai

'The World Is Too Much With Us' – William Wordsworth

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## **Yuvakbharati English 12th Digest Chapter 2.8 Small Towns and Rivers Additional Important Questions and Answers**

[Read the extract and complete the activities given below:](#)

### [Global Understanding:](#)

Question 1.

Describe the river in the 3rd stanza.

Answer:

The river flows with great force - 'like a torrent'-. The river has life and soul. It breathes. But it seems as if the river is holding its breath. It seems to be in search of fishes which will live in it and stars which will be reflected in its waters.

Question 2.

What is meant by immortality?

Answer:

Immortality means the ability to live forever, without death.

Question 3.

Give reasons-The dead are placed pointing to the west.

Answer:

The people of Arunachal Pradesh believe that it will be possible for the soul of the departed person enter 'the house of the sun'. They hope the soul will be able to 'walk into the golden east'. So they place the dead (with feet) pointing to the west.

Question 4.

The poet has described her small town in Arunachal Pradesh. Pick out from the extract the lines that describe the poet's town.

Answer:

1. The town has 'A shrine of happy pictures' to mark the days of childhood.
2. Small towns grow with anxiety for the future.
3. Like her town, 'small towns' are 'by the river'.
4. Make a list of natural elements mentioned in the extract.

Question 5.

Make a list of natural elements mentioned in the extract.

Answer:

River, Earth, Mountaintops, Sun, Sunlight, Bamboo

Question 6.

The poet is convinced with the thought of immortality of water. Pick out the relevant lines from the extract.

Answer:

1. The river has a soul.
2. from the first drop of rain to dry earth
3. mist on the mountaintops
4. the immortality of water.

### [Interpretation/Inference/Analysis:](#)

Question 1.

The land of fish and stars.

Answer:

The poet says she thinks the river is holding its breath. One has to hold one's breath when he/she is unable to breathe or does not want to breathe. The river may be choking with garbage and is not able to breathe. The river may be stinking and may not be able to breathe.

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As the river is so filthy there are no fish. It is dirty; the water is not sparkling in the day and cannot reflect the stars at night. So the river is in search of a land where there it can flow clean, it will have fish and where its clear water will sparkle in the sun and glitter with stars at night.

Question 2.

The river has a soul.' Elaborate the concept in your words as the poet has explained in the extract.

Answer:

The poet states the river has a soul. The soul is deathless. The water that flows in the river came from the drops of rain. The water evaporated, rose as mist to the mountaintops. Then it formed clouds and poured down as rain to the dry earth and flowed again. Thus the river goes on, immortal, deathless.

Question 3.

The poet has used some unconventional expressions. Illustrate them in your words. Illustrate them in your words. Shrine of happy pictures

Answer:

There is a shrine probably in the town which has pictures inside. The pictures may be those of the happy moments experienced by the people in the town. Those memories are so sacred that it is a shrine to them. They protect and guard it because they have only sad and grim things happening at present.

**Personal Response:**

Question 1.

Rivers are our lifeline. They are an extremely important part of the eco-system and even considered sacred. Many major rivers and smaller ones have been misused and almost destroyed. Write down how we can restore our rivers to their original state.

Answer:

The condition of rivers worldwide is horrific. Everything from industrial chemical-waste to garbage is being thrown into rivers. Melted snow or the rainwater from springs come down from hills and mountains as sweet water for our survival. Polluting this is a crime against humanity.

Strict laws should be made and enforced to stop industrial activity near rivers. Wastes from industry, city, town or village must not reach the river. Only channels of rainwater must be allowed to reach the river. Awareness should be created for maintaining cleanliness along the banks.

In the olden days lakes, water bodies were considered precious and were guarded, Houses had wells. But people have lost the respect for water sources. Rivers are treated as sewage channels. Fines and punishments must be imposed and security put in for safeguarding our beautiful rivers.

**Poetic Creativity:**

Question 1.

Compose 4 to 6 lines on 'River'.

Answer:

The River is our Mother

Like a mother the river soothes us.

When dying of thirst she revives us.

When tired and dirty she cleans us.

When growing our grain she waters the green.

Why! Oh why can't we keep her clean!