

Chapter-3-Headache

A)

1. R K Naryan begins his essay 'Headache' by saying, "Of all the blessings conferred on mankind by a benign providence, the most useful is the headache." Does he make this statement with all seriousness?

Answer: No, he's being sarcastic.

2. What, according to the writer, is the reason for teachers choosing headache even in the specimen letter taught in schools?

Answer: Convenience and acceptability.

3. There are various types of headaches. Which one does the writer mention in the first paragraph?

Answer: Splitting headache.

4. What does the author mean by "Factual explanations are not always either palatable or feasible"?

Answer: Truth can be uncomfortable or unacceptable.

5. Why did the drill instructor ask those students suffering from headache to hold up their arms?

Answer: To catch students lying.

6. According to the writer, the only expression which is superior to headache is indisposition. What does the writer mean by the word indisposition?

Answer: Vague, unspecified illness.

7. Why does the writer claim that he would shock mankind if he were to suddenly say, "There is no such thing as headache or indisposition... "?

Answer: Headache is often used as an excuse.

8. Why does the writer think that a clerk would lose his job if he writes to his master, "I am not attending office today because I am not inclined to look at any paper today"?

Answer: Honesty about not wanting to work is unacceptable.

9. What is the sign of cultured existence when someone claims headache?

Answer: Accepting the excuse without prying.

B)

1. Why does R. K. Narayan claim that headache was a boon when he was in school?

Answer: R. K. Narayan considers headache a boon because it provided an acceptable excuse to escape unpleasant situations like drill, allowing him to avoid discomfort without repercussions. This highlights headache's utility as a convenient justification.

2. How did the drill instructor tackle the problem of headache?

Answer: The drill instructor attempted to catch students lying about having a headache by asking them to hold up their arms. However, he ultimately declared that those students would receive special exercises to "cure" their headache, effectively maintaining order.

3. Why do you think headache, stomach-ache and sister's wedding are some of the common reasons in the leave letters taught in school?

Answer: These reasons are commonly used because they are vague, acceptable, and difficult to verify. Headache and stomach-ache are ambiguous ailments, while a sister's wedding is a family obligation, making them convenient excuses for students.

4. Why does the writer claim that headache is an elegant falsehood?

Answer: The writer labels headache an "elegant falsehood" because it serves as a polite or acceptable lie, allowing individuals to avoid uncomfortable situations without offending others. This phrase highlights headache's dual role as both a legitimate condition and a convenient excuse.

5. Analyze the element of humour in the statement.

Answer: The statement "Of all the blessings conferred on mankind... the most useful is the headache" is humorous due to its irony and unexpected praise of headache. Narayan's sarcasm pokes fun at headache's utility as an excuse.

6. Mention any two Indian elements in this essay.

Answer: Two Indian elements present in the essay are:

- School drill: Reflecting the structured education system in India.
- Indian family dynamics: The essay mentions mother-in-law, husband, and sister's wedding, showcasing traditional Indian family relationships.

7. Why does the writer claim that headache gives the sufferer a touch of importance?

Answer: Headache provides an acceptable reason for avoiding commitments or obligations, granting the sufferer importance and attention.

8. How does a headache help the following people?

- a) Mother-in-law: Avoids conflict or unwanted interactions.
- b) Husband: Evades commitments or responsibilities.
- c) School-going child: Escapes homework or unwanted activities.

9. State an example to substantiate the writer's claim.

Answer: When a family member claims headache to avoid attending an unwanted gathering, it maintains relationships by avoiding conflict.

10. Why does the writer consider headache a myth?

Answer: The writer views headache as a myth because it's often used as an excuse rather than a genuine condition. This highlights the blurred line between legitimate ailments and convenient justifications.

1. Discuss the various incidents narrated by R. K. Narayan in which people use headache as an excuse.

R. K. Narayan's essay "The Headache" showcases headache's versatility as an excuse, highlighting its widespread acceptance. In school, students claimed headache to avoid drill, a physically demanding activity. Clerks used headache to dodge work responsibilities, fearing repercussions if they admitted to not wanting to work. Social gatherings, family obligations, and unwanted commitments were also avoided using headache. Mothers-in-law avoided conflict, husbands evaded responsibilities, and school-going children escaped homework. Even specimen letters in school taught students to use headache as an excuse. These incidents demonstrate headache's utility in maintaining social harmony and avoiding conflict. By providing a convenient justification, headache helps individuals navigate complex social situations, prioritize their well-being, and maintain relationships.

2. Discuss the element of humour in R. K. Narayan's 'The Headache'.

R. K. Narayan's "The Headache" employs humour through irony, understatement, and wit, critiquing societal norms. The essay begins with the ironic statement, "Of all the blessings... the most useful is the headache," poking fun at headache's utility as an excuse. The drill instructor's response, offering "special exercises" to cure headache, adds comedy. Narayan's self-deprecation and satirical exaggeration of headache's importance enhance the humour. By using humour, Narayan engages readers, underscores the essay's themes, and encourages reflection on convenient excuses. Irony and wit playfully critique societal norms, making the essay relatable and thought-provoking. Narayan's humour highlights the absurdity of relying on headache as an excuse, inviting readers to reevaluate their own relationships with excuses.

3. Discuss: "Indisposition could be used only at a particular level, not by all and sundry."

R. K. Narayan notes that indisposition requires formality and gravity, making it suitable for official statements or press releases. In contrast, headache is more accessible and commonly used. Indisposition's formal tone makes it unsuitable for everyday conversations or lower-level interactions. A schoolboy claiming indisposition would be seen as pretentious, whereas headache is acceptable in informal contexts. This distinction highlights language nuances and social hierarchy. Recognizing these differences helps individuals navigate complex social situations effectively, avoiding unintended consequences. Understanding language nuances maintains social harmony, ensuring clear and respectful communication.

4. How is headache essential for maintaining human relationships in working order?

Headache is essential for maintaining human relationships as it tackles unpalatable situations. Providing an acceptable reason for absence or non-participation, headache helps individuals avoid conflict and uncomfortable situations. Mothers-in-law avoid conflict, husbands evade responsibilities, school-going children escape homework, and clerks avoid work commitments. Accepting headache at face value demonstrates cultured existence, recognizing its role in maintaining relationships and social order. This acceptance prioritizes well-being without offending others. Headache's utility as an excuse ensures social harmony, avoids unnecessary conflict, and facilitates smooth interpersonal interactions.