1) **His smiles/ Is like an infant’s…………” – Whose ‘smile’ is referred to here? Why is his smile compared to the smile of an infant? (OR. Explain the comparison in the given line.) How does nature take care of him?** [1+3+2 = 6]

Ans. The smile of the young soldier in Arthur Rimbaud’s poem ‘Asleep in the valley’ is being referred to here.

The smile of the soldier is compared to an infant because the smile was innocent, pure, gentle, and without guile. The soldier was very young. When he was sleeping, the smiling face of him made the poet very affectionate toward him and uttered such words. It shows the poet’s pity for the young soldier.

Nature takes the utmost care of his rest. The pillow made of fern under his head gives him comfort. The green sun-soaked undergrowth serves as a soft bed. Sunrays from mountain tops keep him warm.

2) **“The humming insects don’t disturb his rest” – Who rest and where? Why is his rest not disturbed by the insects?** [1+2+3 = 6]

Ans. A young soldier in Arthur Rimbaud’s poem ‘Asleep in the valley’ rests

He rests peacefully amidst a small green valley surrounded by mountains. He lies on the heavy undergrowth that serves as a soft bed

The rest of the soldier is not disturbed by the humming of insects because he is in his eternal rest. He was shot to death by two bullets. War took away his life.

**3) “A soldier, very young, lies open-mouthed,” – Who is the soldier referred to here? Narrate in your own words how the soldier lies in the valley?** [2+4 = 6]

Ans. The soldier is the victim of the war in Arthur Rimbaud’s poem ‘Asleep in the Valley’. Probably, the soldier was from the Dutch Colonial Army in 1876.

The soldier lied open-mouthed in the valley. His head rested on a pillow made of fern. He was sleeping in the heavy undergrowth that served as a soft bed. His feet were placed among the flowers. His smiling face was compared with the smile of an innocent infant. The humming insects were trying to awake the soldier but he was sleeping peacefully in the open sky under the sunlight keeping one hand on his breast.

**4) “In his side, there are two red holes” – Who is the person referred to here? What do the ‘two red holes’ signify? What attitude of the poet about war is referred to here?** [1+2+3 = 6]

Ans. The person referred to here is a dead soldier in the poem ‘Asleep in the Valley’.

‘The two red holes’ signifies the two bullet wounds which he got on the war front. The apparent peaceful sleep is the sleep forever. He is a victim f war. The anti-war attitude of the poet is reflected here. Arthur Rimbaud expresses his strong protest against the cruelties and atrocities of war. It is meaningless slaughter of the youth. It shatters their dreams and hopes. So, war is not a matter of joy and glory but utter futility.

**5) How does the poet express the futility of war through the poem ‘Asleep in the Valley’? What message does he want to convey? [4+2 = 6]**

Ans. The poet Arthur Rimbaud, through his poem, ‘Asleep in the Valley’ expresses the futility of war. The poem started with beautiful scenery of landscape, a small green valley surrounded by mountains through which a stream flew. The pleasant sun made the valley bright. A soldier was lying in the green valley. It seemed to us that the soldier being fascinated by the charming nature was resting his tired limbs. But the readers got an abrupt shock when they found the soldier was dead. Two bullets had snatched his life. The war had snatched his dreams and hopes. He was the victim of a futile war. War gives nothing but takes a lot.

The poet wants to convey a great massage through the poem that war is not a matter of joy and glory but the utter futility and suffering of mankind. This brutality and meaningless slaughter by the name of war should be stopped.

**6) Justify the title of the poem ‘Asleep in the Valley’** [6]

Ans. The title of the poem ‘Asleep in the Valley’ draws our attention to the two aspects of the poem – the sleeping of the soldier and another is the valley that provides comfortable accommodations for his peaceful sleep. Nature takes great care of him for his peaceful sleep in terms of warm sun rays, a pillow made of fern, and heavy undergrowth as a soft bed. But the last line of the poem changes the whole concept of the theme. The young soldier is not sleeping. He is sleeping forever. The two bullets take away his life. In this sense, the title of the poem is ironic. So the title of the poem is appropriate thematically as well as ironically.