

# Summary

The story opens with Margie writing in her diary about an old book that Tommy had found. Margie was reminded of her grandfather who had once talked about his grandfather who went to an actual school where the students were taught by human teachers.

However, Margie and Tommy lived in the future world, in the year 2157 where education was completely computerized. They did not go to schools. Instead, they had a special study room where a computer taught them. The computer teacher was programmed and adjusted according to the needs of each child. Now and then the computer teacher developed faults which were fixed by a County Inspector.

Both Tommy and Margie wondered at the book found by Tommy in his attic. They wondered at it as they read books on the screen of their computer teacher. Margie felt that the computer teacher was boring; she disliked the mechanical teaching and learning. She also wondered how much fun it would be studying in a school. Studying in a fun way, with other children and that too from a human teacher.

## Question and Answers

**Answer these questions in a few words or a couple of sentences each.**

1. How old are Margie and Tommy?

A. Margie and Tommy live in the future, in the year 2157. They are neighbours and spend time together. Margie is a girl of eleven years of age while Tommy is a boy of thirteen.

2. What did Margie write in her diary?

A. On 17 May 2157, Margie wrote that that day Tommy had found a real book in the attic of his house. It was an old book with yellow, crinkly pages.

3. Had Margie ever seen a book before?

A. No, Margie had not seen a book before the one found by Tommy in his house. She had only heard from her grandfather that his grandfather went to school as a boy and that they read books that were printed on paper.

4. What things about the book did she find strange?

A. As Margie lived in an era where students studied from a mechanical teacher and all the books appeared on the screen, she found it strange that the words on the printed book did not move. It was strange to see the same words appear on the pages as she flipped them over.

5.What do you think a telebook is?

A. A telebook is an electronic book also known as an e-book. It is stored in a computer and can be read by scrolling up or down the screen.

6. Where was Margie's school? Did she have any classmates?

A.Margie's school was in her house. It was a room next to her bedroom. It was a personal classroom where the computer was adjusted to her level of learning. She studied by herself and had no classmates.

7.What subjects did Margie and Tommy learn?

A.Margie and Tommy learnt a lot of subjects like Geography, History and Mathematics.

**Answer the following with reference to the story.**

1. "I wouldn't throw *it* away."

(i) Who says these words?

A. Tommy says these words.

(ii) What does 'it' refer to?

A. 'It' refers to the Computer screen on which Tommy reads various books.

(iii) What is it being compared with by the speaker?

A. 'It' is being compared to the paper book that Tommy found in his house.

2. "Sure *they* had a teacher, but it wasn't a *regular* teacher. It was a man."

(i) Who does 'they' refer to?

A. 'They' refers to the ancestors of the children who went to school and studied from a human teacher.

(ii) What does 'regular' mean here?

A.'Regular' means the mechanical teacher which teaches Margie and Tommy.

(iii) What is it contrasted with?

A.The mechanical teacher is contrasted with a human teacher.

**Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (about 30 words).**

1. What kind of teachers did Margie and Tommy have?

A. Margie and Tommy had mechanical teachers. They were computers which had preloaded lessons on different subjects according to the learner's level. Whenever they malfunctioned, they were opened and repaired.

2. Why did Margie's mother send for the County Inspector?

A. Margie's mother called the County Inspector to check Margie's teacher. She thought that probably, Margie's teacher had a malfunction. Margie was failing the Geography tests repeatedly which could be due to a fault in the teacher.

3. What did he do?

A. The County Inspector was trained to repair the computer teacher. He opened the machine and checked it. The Geography sector was set on a higher level. He reset it to Margie's level and closed the teacher.

4. Why was Margie doing badly in geography? What did the County Inspector Do to help her

A. Margie was failing in the Geography tests as the teacher had developed a fault. The County Inspector told Margie's mother that Margie was not at fault. Her progress was good. He reset the teacher to Margie's level.

5. What had once happened to Tommy's teacher?

A. Once Tommy's teacher had developed a fault as the entire section on History had been deleted. His teacher had been taken for repairs and it took them a month to set it right.

6. Did Margie have regular days and hours for school? If so, why?

A. Margie studied at the same time everyday, except Saturdays and Sunday. Her mother was very particular and had told Margie that she would learn better if she studied at the same time every day.

7. How does Tommy describe the old kind of school?

A. Tommy said that in the old kind of schools, there was a man teacher who told a few things to the students, gave them home work and then asked them questions. The man teacher was as knowledgeable as the machine teacher.

8. How does he describe the old kind of teachers?

A. He says that the old teachers were not the regular kind they had. They were human beings and not machines.

**Answer each of these questions in two or three paragraphs (100 –150 words).**

1. What are the main features of the mechanical teachers and the schoolrooms that Margie and Tommy have in the story?

A. Margie and Tommy were taught by mechanical teachers. They had large black screens on which the lessons appeared. The lessons were followed by questions. The students had to insert homework and test papers in the slots provided. They had to write down the work in a punch code which was a computing language. The mechanical teacher checked the papers and gave them marks within a few seconds. These classrooms were in the student's home itself. Every student studied from his respective mechanical teacher. Each teacher was adjusted according to the level of the learner. They did not have classmates. They studied various subjects like Geography, History and Mathematics. Margie studied everyday at the same time except Saturdays and Sundays. Her mother said that she would learn better if she studied that way. The learning process was mechanical, dull and boring for them.

2. Why did Margie hate school? Why did she think the old kind of school must have been fun

A. Margie hated school because it was not fun. There was a mechanical teacher and the learning process lacked life. It was like a machine carrying out the usual working, there was nothing new, no fun or laughter. Margie's mechanical teacher was giving her tests in Geography and she was performing bad at them. Later it was discovered that the teacher had developed a fault due to which it was giving her tests of a higher level. Margie's mother called the County Inspector. He opened the teacher, found the fault and rectified it. Margie disliked the teacher and hoped that he would not be able to repair it. She hated inserting the homework and test papers into the slot provided.

She thought that the children in the past must have had a lot of fun when they went to school with fellow children. She found it amazing that all the children studied together, the same things and could discuss studies and help each other with the homework too. As the teachers were people, they would not behave like machines. The human aspect of education in the past made her feel that the school of the past were fun.

## Grammar Exercises

**1. Find the sentences in the lesson which have the adverbs given in the box below.**

Awfully	Sorrowfully	Completely	Loftily
Carefully	Differently	Quickly	nonchalantly

1. They turned the pages, which were yellow and crinkly, and it was awfully funny to read words that stood still instead of moving the way they were supposed to — on a screen, you know.
2. The mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography and she had been doing worse and worse until her mother had shaken her head sorrowfully and sent for the County Inspector.
3. They had once taken Tommy's teacher away for nearly a month because the history sector had blanked out completely.
4. He added loftily, pronouncing the word carefully, "Centuries ago."
5. He added loftily, pronouncing the word carefully, "Centuries ago."
6. "But my mother says a teacher has to be adjusted to fit the mind of each boy and girl it teaches and that each kid has to be taught differently."
7. "I didn't say I didn't like it," Margie said quickly.
8. "May be," he said nonchalantly.

**2. Now use these adverbs to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.**

- (i) The report must be read \_\_\_\_\_ so that performance can be improved.
- (ii) At the interview, Sameer answered our questions \_\_\_\_\_, shrugging his shoulders.
- (iii) We all behave \_\_\_\_\_ when we are tired or hungry.
- (iv) The teacher shook her head \_\_\_\_\_ when Ravi lied to her.
- (v) I \_\_\_\_\_ forgot about it.
- (vi) When I complimented Revathi on her success, she just smiled \_\_\_\_\_ and turned away.
- (vii) The President of the Company is \_\_\_\_\_ busy and will not be able to meet you.
- (viii) I finished my work \_\_\_\_\_ so that I could go out to play.

A.

- (i) The report must be read carefully so that performance can be improved.
- (ii) At the interview, Sameer answered our questions loftily, shrugging his shoulders.
- (iii) We all behave differently when we are tired or hungry.
- (iv) The teacher shook her head sorrowfully when Ravi lied to her.
- (v) I completely forgot about it.
- (vi) When I complimented Revathi on her success, she just smiled nonchalantly and turned away.
- (vii) The President of the Company is awfully busy and will not be able to meet you.
- (viii) I finished my work quickly so that I could go out to play.

**3. Make adverbs from these adjectives.**

- (i) angry \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) happy \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) merry \_\_\_\_\_
- (iv) sleepy \_\_\_\_\_
- (v) easy \_\_\_\_\_
- (vi) noisy \_\_\_\_\_
- (vii) tidy \_\_\_\_\_
- (viii) gloomy \_\_\_\_\_

A.

- (i) angry angrily
- (ii) happy happily
- (iii) merry merrily
- (iv) sleepy sleepily
- (v) easy easily
- (vi) noisy noisily
- (vii) tidy tidily
- (viii) gloomy gloomily

**4. Complete the following conditional sentences. Use the correct form of the verb.**

- 1. If I don't go to Anu's party tonight, \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. If you don't telephone the hotel to order food, \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Unless you promise to write back, I \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. If she doesn't play any games, \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Unless that little bird flies away quickly, the cat \_\_\_\_\_

A.

- 1. If I don't go to Anu's party tonight, she will be angry.
- 2. If you don't telephone the hotel to order food, you will miss your meal.
- 3. Unless you promise to write back, I will not write to you.
- 4. If she doesn't play any games, she will not become strong.
- 5. Unless that little bird flies away quickly, the cat will eat it.