



B. Long Answer Type Questions

Question 1. Relate in your own words what transpired between the history teacher, Mr Braun and young Einstein.

Answer: Mr Braun, the history teacher laid stress on learning dates and facts. He repeated them often enough for his students to learn them. Young Albert Einstein was found wanting. He didn't know in what year the Prussians defeated the French at Waterloo. Albert frankly admitted that he didn't know. He said that he didn't ever try to learn dates. He claimed that he couldn't see any point in learning dates. One can always look them up in a book. The teacher felt angry as well as amazed at Albert's stubbornness. The boy insisted that learning facts is not education.

Mr. Braun then sarcastically asked Albert to tell the class the Einstein theory of education. Albert said that ideas are more important than facts. Instead of learning the dates of battles or which of the armies killed more men, he would be more interested in learning why those soldiers were trying to kill each other.

Mr Braun felt exasperated. His eyes were cold and cruel. He punished Albert by making him stay in for an extra period that day. He had a low opinion of Einstein and called him 'a disgrace'. He wondered why he continued to come to school. Albert politely replied that it was not his wish. Mr Braun angrily called him 'an ungrateful boy who ought to be ashamed of himself. He suggested that the boy, should ask his father to take him away.

Question 2. Where the teacher interested in understanding Albert and bringing out his potential?

Answer: This extract mentions only two of the teachers of young Einstein. They are: Mr. Braun—the history teacher and Mr Koch—the mathematics teacher. The former was not at all interested in understanding Albert and bringing out his potential. He followed the traditional methods and philosophy of education which laid more stress on acquisition of knowledge. Dates and facts were more important to him than the causes which led to the events. Secondly, he had a sarcastic attitude and mocking tone towards Einstein. Instead of helping the development of a talented boy, he complained to the head teacher and got him expelled. Mr Koch appreciated Einstein's genius, and had a good opinion of him. But he too was confined to his subject and didn't take interest in the real person. All this was because of the curriculum centred approach.

Question 3. What factors made Einstein's life in Munich miserable? What did he realise after six months?

Answer: Two factors made Einstein's life in Munich miserable. These were his school and residential environment. The school was a hateful place. He had many bad days when he got punishment. He hated going back to school, but he had no option. He wishes that his father would take him away. However, he was forced to stay there and obtain diploma. Einstein found the system of education uninspiring and the teachers, unsympathetic.

He had his lodging in the poorest quarters of Munich, the food was bad. Lack of comfort, dirt and squalor made his life miserable. The atmosphere of slum violence was oppressive. The landlady would beat her children. Her husband would come home on Saturdays. He

would get drunk and beat his wife. Albert found young students fighting duels and killing others. The scars on the face were badges of honour for the victors.

Question 4. Comment on the role of Yuri as described in the extract.

Answer: Yuri performs an important function in young Albert's life. He is the friend, philosopher and guide for Albert. He is in fact Albert's confidant. He has won the love and trust of Albert to such an extent that he confides his miseries, problems and plans with him. Yuri is the only person in Munich that Albert likes. Yuri lives among poor students who frequently indulge in fighting duels. Yuri helps Albert in his plans to obtain a medical certificate of nervous breakdown advising rest for six months. He introduces Albert to Dr Ernest Weil and asks Albert to be frank with him. Dr Weil turns out to be a sympathetic soul and issues him the much needed certificate.

Yuri again guides the course of Albert's ship of life. He advises Albert to obtain a written reference from the mathematics teacher before seeing the head teacher. Albert follows his advice faithfully. The certificate, however, proves useless because the head teacher has already decided to expel Albert for his undesirable activities. This, however, does not diminish Yuri's role in Albert's life. He is like a pillar of strength to the miserable young Albert in a foreign land.

Question 5. What stratagem (plan) did Einstein devise to stay away from school for six months? How far did he succeed?

Answer: Albert had told his father to take him away from the school. However, his father insisted that he should obtain a diploma first. Hence, he was unwilling to take Albert away from school. For Albert, staying at that school meant wastage of time and money.

One day, he had a bright idea. He asked Yuri if he knew some friendly doctor. He could say that Albert suffered from nervous breakdown. The doctor would certify that the disease was 'bad for him to go to school'. They had to find a specialist in nerves. Albert began to look nervous and lost his high spirits.

Yuri fixed appointment with Dr Ernest Weil and asked Albert to tell him the truth. Albert was frank and truthful. He could enter some Italian college or institution at Milan without diploma. The doctor issued a certificate advising him rest for six months. The certificate proved useless as the head teacher was bent on expelling Albert.

Question 6. I knew you were going to leave before you knew yourself. Who said it and how did he know it? Substantiate with example from the text.

Answer: Mr Koch was Albert's Maths teacher. He was genuinely interested in Albert. Yuri told Albert to get a written reference from him. He willingly gave Albert the reference he wanted. He made it clear that Albert was ready to enter a college or institute for the study of higher mathematics. Mr Koch regretted that Albert was leaving the school. His logic was correct. A reference is usually asked when one leaves. Albert is puzzled. There are more surprises in store for Albert. He is summoned by the head teacher before Albert's request for interview. The head teacher does not want Albert to stay there any longer. Perhaps the issue might have figured in the staff council. The Maths teacher was discreet. He did not reveal the confidential discussion. He gave plausible reasons for his observation.

Question 7. Describe how the head teacher made it easy for Albert to leave school.

Answer: Albert wanted to remain away from the school. He got a medical certificate from Dr Ernest Weil. It was certified that he had a nervous breakdown. So he must stay away from school. He wanted to see the head teacher. Next day the head teacher called Albert to his office. He told Albert that his work was terrible. So he was not prepared to have him in the school. Albert asked if he

should think he was to be expelled. The head teacher told him that if he left the school of his own accord, the question wouldn't arise. Albert asked what crime he had committed. The head teacher told him that the teacher couldn't teach the class when he was in it. In his presence, the pupils couldn't learn. Albert wanted to tell the head teacher what he thought of him and the school, but he didn't say anything. The head teacher asked him to close the door behind him. But Albert didn't do so. Nor did he have the last look at his school. He met only Yuri.

Question 8. Suppose you were the Principal of young Albert's School. What changes in education system would you like to introduce to make it more effective, meaningful and purposeful?

Answer: If I were the Principal of Albert's school, I would bring in drastic changes. I have a clear concept of education. For me, education means drawing out the best in the student. I'll help to develop an individual's personality by encouraging the budding talent. I know that all are not cast in the same mould. Our old system talks of uniformity and average student level. These are abstract principles. Education will focus on individual's aptitude and talent. There will be no cramming of facts, dates or multiplication tables. The audio visual devices will be used as aids to learning. Computer will supplement knowledge. I will provide more facilities for self-expression. The atmosphere of the school will be relaxed. I'll act as a father figure— a friend, philosopher and guide rather than a tormentor. I hope to inculcate values through examples of personal conduct.

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