



### IMPORTANT STANZAS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the stanzas given below and answer the questions that follow each:

1. Now we will count to twelve and we will all keep still.

Questions

- (a) Name the poem and the poet of these lines.
- (b) Why does the poet ask us to count to twelve?
- (c) Why does the poet ask us to keep still?
- (d) Find words from the passage which mean.  
(i) say number (ii) quiet and motionless.

Answers:

- (a) The name of the poem is Keeping Quiet. The name of the poet is Pablo Neruda.
- (b) There are only twelve signs on the clock to measure hours. Therefore, the poet asks us to count till the clock measures these hours.
- (c) Too much activity and rush has only brought misfortunes to mankind. Hence, it is better to be quiet and still.
- (d) (i) count (ii) still

2. For once on the face of the Earth let's not speak in any language, let's stop for one second, and not move our arms so much.

Questions

- (a) Name the poem and the poet of these lines.
- (b) 'Let's not speak in any language', says the poet. Why?
- (c) What should we not do for a second?
- (d) What do you understand by 'the face of the Earth'?

Answers:

- (a) The name of the poem is Keeping Quiet. The poet is Pablo Neruda.
- (b) The people of the world have been indulging in wars and bloodsheds on minor excuses. If they keep quiet, they may not indulge in reasoning, disputes and quarrels. So, let them keep quiet and not speak in any language. This will ensure peace and prosperity.
- (c) We should cease all activities for a second. Man has used his arms only to kill and destroy others. Therefore, let them not move their arms so much as to harm others.
- (d) The expression "the face of the Earth" refers to the various countries on the surface of the earth.

3. It would be an exotic moment without rush, without engines, we would all be together in a sudden strangeness.

Questions

- (a) Name the poem and the poet of these lines.
- (b) What will happen if there is no rush or running of engines?
- (c) What sort of moment will it be?
- (d) How would all of us feel at that moment?

Answers:

- (a) The name of the poem is Keeping Quiet. The poet is Pablo Neruda.
- (b) There will be peace all around if there is no rush or the sound of the running of engines and machines.
- (c) It will be a very enticing and beautiful moment.
- (d) All of us will enjoy the unusualness and sudden strangeness of

that moment.

4. Fishermen in the cold sea would not harm whales and the man gathering salt would look at his hurt hands.

Questions

- (a) What do fishermen usually do in the cold sea?
- (b) What does the poet ask fishermen not to do?
- (c) What has happened to the man gathering salt?
- (d) What should the man gathering salt do?

Answers:

- (a) Fishermen usually catch fish, particularly whales, in the cold seas.
- (b) The poet asks fishermen not to hurt or injure the whales in the seas.
- (c) The man gathering salt has injured his hands.
- (d) He must take care of his hurt hands.

5. Those who prepare green wars,  
wars with gas, wars with fire,  
victory with no survivors,  
would put on clean clothes  
and walk about with their brothers  
in the shade, doing nothing.

Questions

- (a) Name the poem and the poet of these lines.
- (b) What sort of wars are mentioned in the above lines?
- (c) What kind of victory will it be?
- (d) How should the lovers of war behave?

Answers:

- (a) The name of the poem is Keeping Quiet. The poet is Pablo Neruda.
- (b) Green wars, wars with poisonous gases and wars with the fire are the different kinds of wars.
- (c) It will be a victory where no survivors will be left to celebrate it. Such a victory will be meaningless.
- (d) They should put on clean clothes and walk with their brothers under the trees leisurely doing nothing.

6. What I want should not be confused  
with total inactivity, i Life is what it is about;  
I want no truck with death.  
If we were not so single-minded  
about keeping our lives moving,  
and for once could do nothing,  
perhaps a huge silence  
might interrupt this sadness of never understanding ourselves and  
of threatening ourselves with death.

Questions

- (a) What does the poet want? What should it not be confused with?
- (b) Explain: 'I want no truck with death'.
- (c) What do people pursue single-mindedly? Which is the better course the poet suggests?
- (d) When can a huge silence do us good?

Answers:

- (a) The poet is advocating for silence or stillness. Stillness should not be confused with total inactivity.
- (b) Total inactivity brings death. The poet refuses to associate (or deal) with death. Thus, he is not advocating for death.
- (c) People pursue single-mindedly on keeping their lives moving. ..The poet suggests that it would be better if they give themselves rest for sometime. For once they may do nothing.
- (d) A huge silence can do us a lot of good when we are disappointed at not understanding ourselves or threatening ourselves with death.

7. Perhaps the Earth can teach us as when everything seems dead

and later proves to be alive.  
Now I'll count up to twelve  
and you keep quiet and I will go.

Questions

- (a) What can the Earth teach us?
- (b) What remains alive when everything seems dead?
- (c) Who is the poet? What does he want to do?
- (d) What does the poet ask us to do?

Answers:

- (a) The earth can teach us a lesson how to live on it.
- (b) Only the earth remains alive when everything seems dead.
- (c) The poet is Pablo Neruda. He wants to count upto twelve.
- (d) He asks us to keep quiet while he is counting upto twelve.

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