Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

Answer Key: Inchcape Rock

1. **How was the sea at the start of the poem?**

Ans: The sea was very calm at the start of the poem. There was no movement in the air. The ship was absolutely still as its sail did not receive any motion from heaven.

1. **How was the keel in the ocean? Why?**

Ans: The keel was completely steady in the ocean. It was because the sails of the ship were not filled by the breeze. This led to the ship being almost stationary.

1. **How are the waves described with respect to Inchcape Rock at the start of the poem?**

Ans: The waves were flowing over the Inchcape Rock without either sign or sound of their shock. As they rose and fell only a little, they didn’t move the Inchcape Bell.

1. **Who had placed the Inchcape Bell on the Inchcape Rock? Why?**

Ans: The Abbot of Aberbrothok had placed the Inchcape Bell on the Inchcape Rock. He was aware that many sailors used to lose their lives after their ships dashed against the rock. To prevent the recurrence of these happenings, he did the same.

1. **How was the Bell tied to the Inchcape Rock?**

Ans: The Bell was tied to a buoy, which in turn was tied to the Inchcape Rock. Whenever the buoy used to move, it would ring the Bell. This warned the sailors about the presence of the Inchcape Rock.

1. **How was the Inchcape Rock instrumental in saving the lives of the sailors?**

Ans: When the Inchcape Rock was hidden by the surges’ swell, the mariners could hear the warning bell. This was because the vigorous movement of the buoy made the bell ring so loudly that it was heard even over the big waves. The mariners then realised about the presence of Inchcape Rock and blessed the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

1. **How has the day, when Sir Ralph ventured first into the sea, been described?**

Ans: The day has been described as a pleasant day when the sun was shining brightly in the heaven. All things were seemed to be joyful. The sea-birds were screaming while wheeling around and there was joyance in their sound.

1. **What was the colour of the buoy? How do we know?**

Ans: The colour of the buoy was darker than green. We know it as the buoy was visible as a dark speck on the green ocean.

1. **Where did Sir Ralph station himself? What did he see? What was his reaction?**

Ans: Sir Ralph stationed himself on the deck of his ship. He fixed his eye on the buoy which was a darker speck on the green ocean. He felt the cheering power of spring which made him whistle and sing. His heart was excessively mirthful and his mirth was hidden in his wickedness.

1. **What made Sir Ralph mirthful on seeing the buoy?**

Ans: Sir Ralph was excessively mirthful on seeing the buoy as he had a wicked plan in his mind. The plan was to cut the Inchcape Bell away from the float.

1. **Why did Sir Ralph decide to cut the Inchcape Bell?**

Ans: Sir Ralph decided to cut the Inchcape Bell as it used to earn a lot of blessings and praise for the Abbot of Aberbrothok. As Sir Ralph was jealous of this praise he decided to plague the reputation of the Abbot. If the sailors didn’t survive, they would obviously not bless the Abbot.

1. **What instruction did Sir Ralph give to his sailors? Why?**

Ans: Sir Ralph instructed the sailors to put out a lifeboat and row him towards the Inchcape Rock. He wanted to go near the Inchcape Rock and plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok by cutting away the Inchcape Bell.

1. **What did Sir Ralph do after reaching near the Inchcape Rock?**

Ans: The boatmen rowed Sir Ralph to the Inchcape Rock. He bent over from the boat and cut the Inchcape Bell away from the Inchcape float.

1. **What happened to the Bell after it was cut? What did Sir Ralph say at this juncture?**

Ans: After the Bell was cut, it sank down with a gurgling sound. The bubbles rose to the surface and burst around. Sir Ralph quoted ‘The next who comes to the rock, won’t bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok.’

1. **Where did Sir Ralph go after cutting off the Bell? What did he do there?**

Ans: After cutting off the Bell, Sir Ralph sailed away from the shore of Scotland. He scoured the seas for many days. After growing rich with the plundered store, he started steering his course towards Scotland’s shore.

1. **How did the weather change during the return journey of Sir Ralph? In contrast how was it earlier?**

Ans: Before cutting the Inchcape Rock the weather was beautiful. The sun was shining brightly and all things looked joyful. When he was on his return journey, the weather changed drastically. A thick haze spread over the sky. Even the sun was not visible. Wind had blown as a gale the entire day but in the evening it had died away.

1. **How does Sir Ralph react when he notices haze around his ship?**

Ans: Sir Ralph tries to motivate the sailors when he notices haze around his ship. He tells them that it would be brighter soon as the moon was about to rise.

1. **What did a sailor ask Sir Ralph? What was his response?**

Ans: A sailor asked Sir Ralph if he could hear the breakers roaring. That would mean that they were near the shore. Sir Ralph says that he could not tell where they were currently. He wished that he could hear the Inchcape Bell ringing.

1. **Describe the scenario just before Sir Ralph’s ship dashes against the Inchcape Rock?**

Ans: As Sir Ralph and his crew were sailing, they could not hear any sound even if the swell of the waves was strong. Though the wind had fallen considerably, they still drifted along. They drifted till the vessel struck the Inchcape Rock with a shivering shock.

1. **What did Sir Ralph do when he realised that they had struck the Inchcape Rock?**

Ans: When Sir Ralph realised that they had struck the Inchcape Rock, he tore his hair. He cursed himself in his despair. He knew that he had himself created his own downfall.

1. **What sound could Sir Ralph hear while dying? What did he compare it with?**

Ans: In his dying fear, Sir Ralph could hear the sound of the ringing of a bell. He imagined that the devil was ringing his death knell. For that purpose the devil was using the Inchcape Bell.

1. **Where was the Inchcape Rock? What were its special features?**

Ans: Inchcape Rock was in the sea few miles away from the shore of Scotland. It was called perilous because it was usually hidden under the surface of water. The sailors could not spot the rock during a voyage. Consequently, many ships were destroyed by colliding against the rock.

1. **Abbot of Aberbrothok is the symbol of goodness. Comment.**

Ans: We see two dimensions of people. People who believe in good, are kind in nature while on the other hand people are cruel, reckless and jealous. Abbot was a philanthropist and a holy man. He comes to know about the existence of a dangerous rock known as the Inchcape Rock under the water surface. The sailors couldn’t spot the rock during a voyage. Consequently many ships were destroyed by colliding against the rock. Abbot placed a bell on the Inchcape Rock in such a way that at the time of the storm, the sailors would become cautious about the Rock and would escape the collision. Thus, it is true that Abbot was a good human being and believed in doing good for everyone.

1. **What is a ballad? Give any two elements of the ballad shown in the extract.**

Ans: Ballad is usually a long narrative poem about a legendary tale and it may have a moral. This poem narrates about Sir Ralph, the Rover who cut off the warning bell out of jealousy. There is a moral too. He fell a prey to his own wickedness. One who digs a pit for others himself falls into it.

1. **Compare the character of the Abbot to that of the Rover.**

Ans: The Abbot and the Rover are opposite to each other. The Abbot is a kind-hearted noble man. He placed a bell on the Inchcape Rock to save the ships from disaster. He had no personal gain out of it. But the Rover was a wicked pirate. He removed the bell just to cause sufferings to others out of jealousy.

1. **Give any two examples of visual imagery in the poem.**

Ans: (i) So little they rose, so little they fell

They did not move the Inchcape Bell

(ii) The waves rush in one every side

The ship sinking beneath the tide

1. **Explain: ‘the breakers roar’**

Ans: Breakers are the waves which have the capability of destroying or breaking even the big ships. Here it is a loud noise made by these waves. If the waves make a very loud noise, it indicates that there is some land or rock nearby.