

Gist of the lesson: Deep Water

- William O. Douglas had a desire to learn swimming since childhood.
- At the age of three or four, he was knocked down and buried by a wave at a beach in California.
- He developed a great aversion to water.
- At the age of ten or eleven he decided to learn to swim with water wings at the Y.M.C.A pool since it was safe at the shallow end.
- A misadventure:- while sitting alone and waiting for others to come at the Y.M.C.A pool, a big boy came and threw Douglas into deep end of the pool.
- Douglas swallowed water and went straight down to the bottom of the pool.
- While going down he planned to make a big jump upwards but came up slowly. Tried to shout but could not.
- As he went down the pool second time, he tried to jump upwards but it was a waste of energy.
- Terror held him deeper and deeper.
- During the third trial he sucked water instead of air.
- Light was going out and there was no more panic.
- So he ceased all efforts and he became unconscious.
- He crossed to oblivion.
- When revived he found himself vomiting beside the pool.
- He was in grip of fear of water and it deprived him of the joys of canoeing, boating swimming and fishing.
- Hired an instructor to learn swimming.
- The instructor taught him swimming piece by piece.
- He went to different lakes to swim and found tiny vestiges of fear still gripped him.
- He challenged the fear and swam.
- Swimming up and down the Warm Lake he finally overcame his fear of water.
- He realized that in death there is peace and there is terror only in fear of death.

**Question.1. Which two incidents in Douglas' early life made him scared of water?
(Compartment 2014)**

Answer. When Douglas was three or four years old, his father took him to a beach in California. There he was knocked down by strong waves, was almost buried under water, and got breathless. Though he hung on to his father, he was quite frightened. Secondly, when Douglas was ten or eleven, a big bully of a boy tossed him into the deep end of the YMCA pool. He could not come to the surface, in spite of all his efforts, and became panicky. These two incidents made Douglas scared of water.

**Question.2.Why did Douglas prefer to go to YMCA swimming pool to learn swimming?
(Compartment 2014)**

or

Which factors made Douglas to decide in favour of YMCA pool? (All India 2011)

Answer. According to Douglas, the YMCA pool was safer compared to the Yakima River. The river was quite deep and there were several cases of drowning reported about it. As against the

uncertain depth of the river, the pool was only two or three feet deep at the shallow end. Though its depth was about nine feet at the deeper end, yet the drop was gradual, and Douglas could rely on it.

Question.3.What did Douglas feel and do when he was pushed into the swimming pool? (Compartment 2014)

or

What were the series of emotions and fears that Douglas experienced when he was thrown into the pool? (Foreign 2011)

Answer. When Douglas was thrown into the pool, he did not lose heart and planned to push himself up with all his force. He thought that once he came to the surface, he would paddle to the edge of the pool. Thrice, he tried to come to the surface, but unfortunately his strategy did not work and terror gripped him. His lungs were ready to burst; he was breathless and instead of air, sucked water.

Question.4.How did his swimming instructor 'build a swimmer' out of Douglas? (Compartment 2014)

or

How did the instructor turn Douglas into a swimmer? (Delhi 2013)

Answer. The instructor adopted a systematic method to turn Douglas into a swimmer. He first made Douglas shed his initial fear of water by making him cross a pool suspended by a rope attached to a pulley. The instructor held the other end of the rope and relaxed and tightened it from time to time. Then he taught the narrator to breathe while swimming, and finally the leg movements and other strokes.

Question.5. How did Douglas make sure that he conquered the old terror? (All India 2013)

Answer. After the instructor had trained Douglas in the art of swimming, Douglas was still not sure of himself. He felt tiny vestiges of the fear now and then. So, he went to Lake Wentworth and swam. Once when terror returned, he challenged it and did not let it overcome him. Finally, Douglas went to the Warm Lake. There he swam and the fear didn't return to haunt him again.

Question.6. What efforts did Douglas make to get over his fear of water? (Delhi 2012)

Answer. After several individual attempts to overcome his fear, Douglas finally engaged an instructor. The instructor built a swimmer out of him. But Douglas was not sure. To confirm that the terror would not strike him when he was swimming alone, Douglas decided to go to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire. At last, he made his terror fly away by swimming across the Warm Lake.

Question.7. Why was Douglas determined to get over his fear of water? (DeM20ii, 2009)

Answer. The misadventure of having a near-drowning experience left a deep mark on Douglas' mind.

The phobia of water hampered all his joys of enjoying different water sports like fishing, canoeing, boating and swimming. He did not want to live with this handicap and so was determined to overcome his fear of water.

Question.8. What did Douglas experience when he went down to the bottom of the pool for the first time? (Delhi 2011,2010)

Answer. When the author was going down to the bottom of the pool for the first time, those nine feet felt almost like ninety feet. His lungs were ready to burst, but somehow he summoned all his strength and sprang upwards, hoping to reach the surface, but he didn't pop up to the surface like a cork, as he had imagined. When he opened his eyes he saw nothing but water, his hands too grabbed only water.

Question.9. Why did Douglas go to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire? (Delhi 2011)

Answer. Douglas was not satisfied with his practice so he decided to go to Lake Wentworth. There when he was swimming in the middle of the lake, only once did the terror return, but he finally overcame it, and it made him feel better.

Question.10. When Douglas realised that he was sinking, how did he plan to save himself? (Delhi 2010)

Answer. When a big boy threw Douglas into the water, he went straight down. He was completely frightened. Still, he did not lose his wits and thought of a strategy to make a big jump when his feet touched the bottom, so that he could reach the surface. He even thought that he would lie flat on the surface and finally paddle to the edge of the pool.

Question.11. What sort of terror seized Douglas as he went down the water with a yellow glow?

How could he feel that he was still alive? (Delhi 2010)

Answer. When Douglas found himself deep down into the water with a yellow glow, stark terror gripped him. The terror ripped him apart and he had no control over it. He felt paralysed, stiff and rigid with fear. Even the screams in his throat were frozen. It was only his throbbing heart that made him realise that he was still alive.

Question.1. "I crossed to oblivion, and the curtain of life fell." What was the incident which nearly killed Douglas and developed in him a strong aversion to water? (Foreign 2014)

Answer. The incident which nearly killed Douglas occurred when he was ten or eleven years old. He had decided to learn swimming at the YMCA pool, and thus get rid of his fear of water. One morning, when he was alone at the pool, waiting for others, a big bully of a boy tossed him into the deep end of the pool. Though he had planned a strategy to save himself as he went down, his plan did not work. He went down to the bottom and became panicky. Thrice he struggled hard to come to the surface, but failed each time. He was almost drowned in the pool. He lost his consciousness and felt that he would die. Though he was ultimately saved, this misadventure developed in him a strong aversion to water.

Question.2. Douglas fully realised the truth of Roosevelt's statement, "All we have to fear is fear

itself." How did this realisation help him brush aside his fear and become an expert swimmer? (Foreign 2014)

Answer. Douglas had experienced both the sensation of dying and the terror that the fear of death can cause. Strong will, hard determination, courage and toil as well as honest labour won over all his terrors and fears. The will to live brushed aside all his fears. In reality all our fears are only psychological, and can be easily won over, if we can control our mind. This realisation makes Douglas resolve to learn swimming by engaging an instructor. This instructor, piece by piece, built Douglas into a swimmer. However, his first step was to drive

away Douglas' fear of water, before training him in swimming techniques. When Douglas tried and swam the length of the pool up and down, small traces of his old terror of water would return. So, he went to Lake Wentworth, dived at Triggs Island and swam two miles across the lake to Stamp Act Island. Finally, he was certain that he had conquered his fear of water.

Question.3. Desire, determination and diligence lead to success. Explain the value of these

qualities in the light of Douglas' experience in 'Deep Water.' (Compartment2014)

Answer. The terror of water followed Douglas wherever he went. To get rid of it, he made a strong determination. He decided to overcome his fear through his "will." He engaged an instructor who would perfect him in swimming. The instructor first helped him drive away his fear, and then gave him many exercises besides teaching him to exhale and inhale in water. The practice went on for months together, during which his fear came back to haunt him, but his desire and firm will made him persist in his- efforts. It was only through sheer determination and diligence that Douglas could not only counter his terror, but also become an expert swimmer. He swam across and back lakes to ensure that his fear of water did not return. He had now completely lost his fear. His desire, determination and diligence succeeded in banishing his fear of water.

Question.4. How did Douglas develop an aversion to water? (Ddhi20i2)

or

".....there was terror in my heart at the overpowering force of the waves." When did Douglas start fearing water? Which experience had further strengthened its hold on his mind and personality? (All India 2010)

Answer. Douglas developed an aversion to water in his early childhood, When he was three or four

years old, his father took him to a beach in California. The waves knocked him down and swept over him. He was buried in water. He was frightened but his father was laughing. Perhaps this was the moment his fear of water took root inside his mind.

Further, when Douglas was ten or eleven years old, he decided to learn to swim and went to the YMCA pool. Here an incident took place that finally established his aversion to water as a big fear. One day when Douglas was alone at the pool sitting on the edge and waiting for others to come, a big boy of 18 years of age threw him into the deep end of the pool.

What followed was a nightmarish experience for him. Douglas tried very, hard and applied all his knowledge to come to the surface of the water but to no avail. Somehow, he was saved.

Thus after this fearful incident, his fear of water got implanted in his heart and mind permanently.

Question.5. How did the instructor make Douglas a good swimmer? (All India 2012)

Answer. To overcome his fear of water, Douglas finally decided to get an instructor to learn swimming. The instructor started working with him five days a week, an hour each day. The instructor put a belt around Douglas. A rope was attached to the belt that went through a pulley that ran on an overhead cable. The instructor held on to the end of the rope and , along with Douglas went back and forth, across the pool, hour after hour, day after day, week after week. On each trip across the pool a bit of panic seized Douglas. It took almost three months before the tension reduced.

Then the instructor taught him to put his face under the water and exhale and to raise his nose and inhale. For weeks, his instructor made him kick with his legs. Until, he was able to command his legs at his will.

In this way, piece by piece, his instructor made Douglas a swimmer. When Douglas perfected

each piece, his instructor put them together into an integrated one. As a result, in nearly six months Douglas was able to swim, dive, crawl and so on.

Keeping Quiet

Extract Based Questions (4 Marks)

Question.1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

**“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(Compartment 2014 Modified)**

- (a) Whom does ‘we’ refer to in the above lines?**
- (b) Why does the poet want us to ‘do nothing’ for once?**
- (c) What is the ‘sadness’ that the poet refers to in the poem?**
- (d) How can a huge silence do good to us?**

Answer.

- (a) ‘We’ refers to the human beings, who are always thinking about their own progress and advancement.
- (b) The poet wants us to ‘do nothing’ for once so that our mind can be at peace and we are able to introspect and analyse our own actions.
- (c) The poet refers to the ‘sadness’ which arises due to the fact that people fail to understand themselves. They have no time to introspect about their actions and their consequences.
- (d) A huge silence can do good to us because we are able to achieve peace in this silence. It helps us in analysing ourselves and our actions, interrupting the sadness of threatening ourselves with death.

Question.2. Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

**Perhaps the Earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead
and later proves to be alive
Now I’ll count upto twelve
and you keep quiet and I will go.**

- (a) What does the Earth teach us?**
- (b) What does the poet mean to achieve by counting upto twelve?**
- (c) What is the significance of ‘keeping quiet’? (All India 2013; Modified)**
- (d) What is always alive, even when everything seems to be dead?**

or

- (a) What does the Earth teach us?**
- (b) Why does the poet count upto twelve?**
- (c) What will keeping quiet help us achieve?(Delhi 2008 Modified)**
- (d) How does the Earth teach us that there is activity even in apparent stillness?**

Answer.

- (a) The Earth teaches us how new life springs from dead remains, and how there is life under apparent stillness.
- (b) The poet wants to achieve peace by counting upto twelve. He wants us to introspect in a moment of silence.
- (c) Keeping quiet doesn't mean just not speaking. It means that we should avoid all activities which hurt nature and, in turn, hurt us.
- (d) The Earth is always alive, even when everything else seems to be dead. There is always some activity going on in nature beneath its apparent stillness.

or

Answer.

- (a) The Earth teaches us how new life springs from dead remains. It gives us lessons about sustaining and resurrecting life.
- (b) The poet is initiating an exercise in meditation. When he counts upto twelve, the meditator puts away all digressions and experiences bliss. He wants all meditators to experience that bliss.
- (c) Keeping quiet will help us introspect, reflect and experience silence and peace. This will in turn help us find solutions to our problems.
- (d) Though the Earth appears still, there are so many changes that keep occurring beneath its surface. A seed that seems dead germinates under the Earth and a new life springs from it.

Question.3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

**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.**

- (a) Why does the poet want us to keep quiet?**
- (b) What does he want us to do for one second?**
- (c) What does he mean by "not move our arms"? (Delhi 2012; Modified)**
- (d) How can this moment of stillness help us?**

Answer.

- (a) The poet wants us to keep quiet in the hope that the moment of tranquillity might help us in finding the answers to our problems.
- (b) The poet wants us to be silent and motionless for one second.
- (c) The poet means that we should be in a state of total stillness with no physical activity at all.
- (d) This moment of stillness can provide us physical and mental rest, during which our mind will be at peace. We can analyse our actions and their consequences and avoid rash or thoughtless behaviour.

Question.4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

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

- (a) What will happen if there is no rush or running of engines?
- (b) Why would it be called an exotic moment?
- (c) How would we feel at that moment? (Foreign 2011; Modified)
- (d) Name the poem and the poet.

Answer.

- (a) It will be an ecstatic moment of tranquillity without rush or running of engines.
- (b) It would be called an exotic moment because it will be an instance of universal peace and brotherhood. In that moment, all of us would initiate introspection through meditation and the whole world will be enveloped in quietness.
- (c) We would feel very strange at that moment, because at that time everyone will have a feeling of oneness with their fellow human beings. It will be a new feeling altogether.
- (d) The poem is 'Keeping Quiet', and the poet is Pablo Neruda.

Question.5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

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

- (a) How long does the poet want to stay still?
- (b) What does he hope to achieve by keeping quiet?
- (c) What does the poet mean by "not move our arms so much"? (All India 2009; Modified)
- (d) Why does the poet suggest us not to speak in any language?

Answer.

- (a) The poet exhorts each one of us to count to twelve and then be quiet, silent and motionless for a brief moment.
- (b) He hopes to achieve and realise the value of quiet introspection. In this silence, we shall feel that all are together and will experience a strange feeling of togetherness.
- (c) By this, he means that we should not make any physical movement, as physical activity will stop or interrupt our introspection.
- (d) The poet wants us to simply be silent for a moment and utilise that time to understand ourselves as well as others. Besides, language differences often lead to conflict, which the poet, perhaps, wants to avoid.

Question.6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

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

- (a) What does the poet expect of the fishermen and why?
- (b) While gathering salt, what will the man do?
- (c) What do the hurt hands imply? (All India 2008; Modified)
- (d) How would man and nature benefit in this moment of silence?

Answer.

- (a) In the exotic moment of silence and introspection, fishermen will become conscious of the fact that they are causing harm to the whales. The poet expects this because he feels that at this opportune moment all evil will come to an end.
- (b) The man gathering salt will stop for a while at that quiet moment and look at his hurt hands.
- (c) 'Hurt hands' means that human beings are oblivious of the pain they are causing to themselves in the pursuit of amassing more and more comforts. They have no time for themselves.
- (d) In this moment of silence, man will not harm nature, and both human beings and nature will get some time to attend to and recover from their wounds.

Question.1. Which is the exotic moment that the poet refers to in 'Keeping Quiet'? (Delhi 2014)

Answer. The poet refers to the moment of stillness and quietness as an exotic moment. It would be an exotic moment, as such a tranquillity will initiate peace and brotherhood. There would be no movement, no talk, no activity and consequently, no violence.

Question.2. What is the sadness that the poet refers to in the poem 'Keeping Quiet'? (All India 2014)
or

What is the sadness that the poet refers to in the poem? (All India 2011)

Answer. The poet refers to the sadness which surrounds man due to not having any time for himself, the pain of not understanding what he or his fellow human beings want. He has no time for introspection; as a result, he is unable to analyse his own actions and understand its consequences.

Question.3. Which images in the poem 'Keeping Quiet' show that the poet condemns violence? (Compartment 2014)

Answer. The images of fishermen not harming the whales in the sea and wars leaving behind no survivors to celebrate the victory show that the poet condemns violence. The poet wants the warmongers to change their blood-stained clothes to clean ones. The poet's refusal to have any association or dealing with death also shows that he is not in favour of any form of violence.

Question.4. What symbol from nature does the poet use to prove that keeping quiet is not total inactivity? (Foreign 2014)

Answer. The poet uses nature as a symbol to explain his idea that there can be life under apparent stillness. According to him, keeping quiet is not total inactivity. A seed may appear to be dead and inactive, but one day, the same seed may turn into a fruitful tree.

Question.5. How, according to Neruda, can keeping quiet change our attitude to life?

(Compartment 2014)

Answer. Keeping quiet and suspending all our activities for a brief moment will give us time to introspect and analyse our own actions. We will develop a new understanding of our surroundings and thus change our attitude to life. We will check our destructive ways and try to be more positive and constructive.

Question.6.What are the different kinds of wars mentioned in the poem? What is Neruda's attitude towards these wars? (Delhi 2013)

Answer. The poet has written about wars against humanity and nature. Green wars, wars with poisonous gases and wars with fire are the different kinds of wars mentioned in the poem. Wars do good to no one. Pablo Neruda feels that such wars may bring victory, but there are no survivors. It means that there is heavy loss on both sides.

Question.7. How can suspension of activities help? (All India 2012)

Answer. The poet believes that suspension of activities will allow man to introspect, which can help them in analysing their own actions, and in solving many of their problems based on caste, religion or nationality. It will help them develop a new understanding of their surroundings, and thus make them mend their destructive ways.

Question.8. Do you think the poet advocates total inactivity and death? (Delhi 2011)

Answer. No, the poet clearly states that his asking for stillness should not be confused with total inactivity or death. He perceives life to be a continuous process, where man's activities should not lead to destruction of fellow human beings or nature, but should be channelised in a resourceful way.

Question.9. According to the poet, what is it that human beings can learn from nature? (All India 2010)

Answer. Life under apparent stillness in attitude is the thing which man can learn from nature. The Earth is never in a state of total inactivity. Nature carries on its work even where there is stillness all around. Winter is associated with inactivity, but this is not actually true.

Question.10.What will counting upto twelve and keeping quiet help us to achieve? (Foreign 2009)

Answer. The poet asks each one of us to count to twelve and then be quiet, silent and motionless. This quietness will create a moment of togetherness among all; a condition which is foremost for the survival of humanity, which is indeed an achievement. It will also give us One to analyse our actions and their consequences.

An Elementary School Classroom in a Slum

Theme

In this poem, Stephen Spender deals with the theme of social injustice and class inequalities. He presents the theme by talking of two different and incompatible worlds. The world of the rich and the civilized has nothing to do with the world of narrow lanes and cramped holes. The gap between these two worlds highlights social disparities and class inequalities.

Central Idea

Stephen Spender has presented a true picture of the life of the school children living in the slum of Tyrolean Valley of Austrian Alpine Province. The children are in a very miserable condition due to their poverty and illiteracy. They are depressed. Their pale faces express sadness. They look lean, skinny and bony. They are like rootless weeds which can't resist anything for their existence. They are physically very weak and undernourished. Spender voices his concern for these children who live all their life in slums and have no opportunity to enjoy the real blessings of life. He makes a frantic appeal to the educated and affluent sections of the society to better the lot of the slum children through education. It will remove social injustice and class inequality.

Detailed Analysis of the Poem

Stanza – 1

The poem describes an elementary school class room in a slum. These slum children look very pathetic. Their faces are pale and reflect sadness. They are 'like rootless weeds' as they lack proper nutrition. Moreover, they are unwanted plants which grow on their own without being cared for, totally neglected. The tall girl has a 'weighed – down head' as she is burdened with the load of poverty. In fact she is so subdued and suppressed that her head had bowed down with the burden of her misfortunes. The 'paper thin' – extremely thin boy has 'rat's eyes' because the poor undernourished boy is deprived of all the basic amenities of life. He is timid like a rat and full of anxiety, he searches for food and security. This unfortunate boy suffers from malnutrition and his growth is also 'stunted' not properly developed. He has also inherited from his father 'twisted bones' – bent and distorted bones. He has inherited the poverty, disease and despair from his parents. His body is also deformed because of the twisted bones which he has inherited. He appears to be as sick as his parents. There is a sweet tender looking student who sits at the back of the class. This boy is different from the others as 'his eyes live' in a dream – he is dreaming and probably thinking about a better future. He is lost in his own world, therefore, not sad like the others. This boy thinks of the 'squirrel's game' (metaphor). He wants to enjoy and play freely like the squirrel in the garden outside. The squirrel climbs trees and hides in their holes. The boy also dreams

to be free but he cannot as he must sit in the dull and dreary classroom. In the boys imagination 'tree room' – the hollow in a tree, is full of fun, curiosity and mystery. This is in contrast to the gloomy classroom.

Stanza – 2

The classroom is not well maintained. The pale cream walls which were painted long ago with the help of donations, make the place look more miserable and sad. Probably there is a portrait of Shakespeare on the wall. This is ironical as it is put up in a place where there is no serious teaching. 'Cloudless dawn' and 'civilized dome' suggest the monotonous life in the slum. These slums are surrounded by the civilized city and the children cannot experience the beauty of the sky at dawn and are unaware of it. All around them are concrete structures of the cities. The life in the slum contrasts with the cloudless sky at dawn and concrete structures which override the cities. There is also a picture of a beautiful valley full of sweet fragrant flowers and these children of the slum will never be able to experience this beauty. They are deprived of this beauty as they are condemned to live in the slums amidst garbage. The 'open-handed map' in the classroom contrasts with their world. The world given to us by god is full of all the bounties whereas the world of these slum children is full of poverty and hunger. The world which they see is not the real world. Their world is confined to the narrow, dusty streets of the slum. The map in the classroom gives them hopes and aspirations and motivates them to explore the world but they will never be able to see that world. These children can get the glimpse of the outside world from the windows and it is far beyond their reach. They are far away from nature. These slum children have a bleak and foggy future in store for them. 'Their future is painted with a fog' – it is blurred by hopelessness. There is no hope for the slum children. Instead of the normal blue sky they live under the 'lead sky' – dark and dull, polluted – shows there is no hope for them. The atmosphere hints at their monotonous life and the slum children remain confined throughout their lives confined to the filth and dirt of the narrow slum streets. They are away from the glory of natural beauty of the rivers, mountains, stars etc.

Stanza 3

The children of the slum are fighting the battle of life unarmed. They are troubled by disease and despair. For them Shakespeare is 'wicked' and 'map' a bad example'. The literary excellence of Shakespeare and the scenic beauty portrayed in the map cannot relieve them from their despair. For these slum children, literary excellence is a far-fetched thing and hence seems wicked. The map on the wall gives them false aspirations as it makes them aware of the beautiful world given by god. The world of these children is confined to the narrow streets of the slums. Therefore, map is 'a bad example'. They feel cheated in being deprived of the thrilling sensations of the sun, the ships, and the emotions of love. The 'ship', 'sun' and 'love' symbolize joy and happiness which these children are deprived of. Their only experience is that of hunger and poverty. To reach out to the world beyond, these children are sometimes tempted to adopt wrong means even stealing to fulfill their dreams. These slum children live in cramped holes, striving and struggling for survival in the small, dirty rooms from 'fog to endless night' – from foggy mornings till long endless nights, trying to meet both ends. The slum children live on 'slag heaps' – piles of waste material. Their world is full of dirt

and garbage. These children are very weak and undernourished. They look like skeletons as their bones peep through their thin skin.

They wear 'spectacles of steel with mended glass' – discarded spectacles by the rich, mended (repaired) and worn. Their life is like 'bottle bits on stones – shattered and broken like bits of bottle on a stone. They are deprived of even the basic amenities of life. Their world is comprised of the foggy slums where they live nightmares. Slums are the reality for these children, their home, where they spend their life. The maps displayed in their classroom are no reality for them. They cannot locate their slum in that map. It is urgently required to give these slum inhabitants means and opportunities to lead a dignified and civilized life.

Stanza – 4

The elementary school in the slum exists for name sake. The infrastructure is poor with hardly any serious teaching. The school springs in activity only when a governor, a school inspector or a visitor comes on a round of the school. The administrative machinery of the school also gears up at that time. Then the map becomes their window from where they can see the world beyond their slums. Since they are confined to the slums, these sights and glimpses are shut upon them as they are deprived of all opportunities and means. Their lives are shut up in the cemeteries of these slums where they slither and slog to make both ends meet. The poet hopes that these children will break free from their morbid life, from the chains of the slums. He appeals to those in power to liberate these children from the miserable slums and enable them to breathe in the fresh, beautiful and healthy environment away from the foggy slums. They should be able to bask in the open green fields and let them run free on the golden sands. Their world should not be confined to the horrendous and gory slums. The poet visualizes freedom for these children. He wants a carefree life where they get economic and social justice, where they have the right to be happy. These slum children should be able to enjoy the fundamental right of education otherwise their lives will be miserable. They should be able to learn not from the books alone but also from the world, the nature around them.

The poet ends on a note of positivity and wants opportunities to be available to these children. The people who strive for knowledge are the ones who create history. The ones who are let free are the ones who will create history. People who outshine others, who glow like the sun, who break free from the constraints of their restricted life are the ones who create history and that of diseases are 'twisted bones,

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Q1. What is the condition of children studying in slum?

Ans. The condition of children studying and living in slum is very miserable. Most of them are underdeveloped and suffering from malnutrition. There is a tall girl who is unable to raise her head due to poverty whereas there is a boy who is too lean to lift his weight. He has hunger in his eyes which has been well compared to rat's eyes.

Q2. What does the poet want for the slum children?

Ans. The poet wants proper education for the children of the slums as he thinks education is the only weapon that can change the course of anyone's life. He wants neither money nor cash but a perfect environment for children to study.

Q3. How does the poet describe the classroom walls?

Ans. According to the poet, the walls of the school are not properly painted. Even they have a fading look which resembles sour cream walls. The poet compares the walls to the pale faces of children who are undernourished and underdeveloped.

Q4. Explain "From fog to endless nights".

Ans. Here the poet wants to convey that these children live under pathetic conditions. Their whole day is spent in foggy slums and nights are tiresome and full of darkness. They make many futile efforts to survive in those slums. Their life is full of misery, helplessness and suffering.

Q5. Why does the poet call Shakespeare wicked?

Ans. The poet has no grudges with Shakespeare but he only want latter's portrait from there as it has no significance in children's lives who are studying over there. According to him, children of slum don't get to learn anything from him.

Q6. What can inspector; governor and visitor do for the children according to poet?

Ans. The inspector, governor and visitor can bring positive changes in the lives of these children if they want, according to the poet. If they hold their responsibilities seriously, they can take these children out of their miserable condition. They can help in breaking the slums and building a new world for them.

Q7. Why the map on the wall is a bad example for children of slum?

Ans. According to the poet, the map which is big enough to speak for itself, is useless for the kids studying over there. It allures them to be thieves for running their miserable life wherein they have not seen such things that are present on the map such as ship, sun and love.

Q8. Explain "History theirs whose language Is the sun."

Ans. Here the poet wants to convey that if these slum children are provided with the education in the free environment, they can also create the history as others do. The poet wants only them to be freed from congestion of the slum; thereupon they can also make wonders.

Q9. What is the theme of the poem 'An elementary classroom in a slum'?

Ans. The theme of this poem is 'Alienation' wherein the poet criticizes the dual attitude of the people towards the slum children. Besides, it sheds light on the pathetic condition of children who are left uncared by the general public. No one is there to look after them.

Q10. Explain “So blot their maps and slums as big as doom”.

Ans. Here the poet seems to be requesting the inspector, governor and visitor to break the slums in the same way as the death and destruction does. He wants such slums to be dashed to the ground as soon as possible for the betterment of the society and children.

Report Writing Format

Unlike an essay, which sets out and defends a writer's view about a topic and does not have to feature headings, a report discusses a topic in a structured, easy-to-follow format. Reports are divided into sections with headings and subheadings. Reports can be academic, technical or business related, and feature recommendations for specific actions. Reports are written to present facts about a situation, project or process and will define and analyze the issue at hand. Reports relay observations to a specific audience in a clear and concise style.

- Write your introduction. Your intro is where you introduce your topic and state your thesis. ...
- Write your body paragraphs. The body paragraphs are where you state your evidence that supports your thesis. ...
- Support your topic sentence. ...
- Write your conclusion. ...
- Cite your sources. ...