

1

The Best Christmas Present in the World

— Michael Morpurgo

Before you read

There are some dates or periods of time in the history of the world that are so significant that everyone knows and remembers them. The story you will read mentions one such date and event: a war between the British and the Germans in 1914. Can you guess which war it was?

Do you know which events the dates below refer to?

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| (a) 4 July 1776 | (b) 17 December 1903 | (c) 6 August 1945 |
| (d) 30 January 1948 | (e) 12 April 1961 | (f) 20 July 1969 |

Answers :

- (a) American Declaration of Independence.
- (b) Wilbur and Orville Wright made the first flight, remaining in the air for 12 seconds and covering 120 feet.
- (c) Hiroshima Day: an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in Japan on this day.
- (d) Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.
- (e) Yuri A. Gagarin became the first human to orbit the Earth.
- (f) Neil Armstrong became the first human to set foot on the Moon.

Passages, Word-Meanings & Questions with Answers

I

I spotted it in a junk shop in Bridport, a roll-top desk. The man said it was early nineteenth century, and oak. I had wanted one, but they were far too expensive. This one was in a bad condition, the roll-top in several pieces, one leg clumsily mended, scorch marks all down one side. It was going for very little money. I thought I could restore it. It would be a risk, a challenge, but I had to have it. I paid the man and brought it back to my workroom at the back of the garage. I began work on it on Christmas Eve.

Word-Meanings : spotted = saw, found; junk shop = a place where old, rejected articles are bought and sold; roll-top desk = a table having upper part revolving; clumsily = in a bad way; mended = repaired; scorch-marks = burn marks; was going = was selling for; restore = (here) repair; began work on it = started repairing it; eve = the day or evening before an event or programme.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) Where did the author find the roll-top desk ?
 (b) What was the condition of the roll-top desk ?
- Q. 2.** (a) Why did the author decide to buy that desk ?
 (b) Write opposite words of the following words from the passage :
 (i) late (ii) cheap

Answers :

Ans. 1.(a) The author found the roll-top desk in a junk-shop in Bridport.



- (b) The condition of the roll-top desk was bad. Its one leg was clumsily mended and it had scorch marks on one side.

Ans.2. (a) The author decided to buy that desk because it was cheap.

- (b) (i) early (ii) expensive

I removed the roll-top completely and pulled out the drawers. The veneer had lifted almost everywhere — it looked like water damage to me. Both fire and water had clearly taken their toll on this desk. The last drawer was stuck fast. I tried all I could to ease it out gently. In the end I used brute force. I struck it sharply with the side of my fist and the drawer flew open to reveal a shallow space underneath, a secret drawer. There was something in there. I reached in and took out a small black tin box. Sello-taped to the top of it was a piece of lined notepaper, and written on it in shaky handwriting: “Jim’s last letter, received January 25, 1915. To be buried with me when the time comes.” I knew as I did it that it was wrong of me to open the box, but curiosity got the better of my scruples. It usually does.



Inside the box there was an envelope. The address read: “Mrs Jim Macpherson, 12 Copper Beeches, Bridport, Dorset.” I took out the letter and unfolded it. It was written in pencil and dated at the top — “December 26, 1914”.

Word-Meanings : pulled out = pull something outward; stuck fast = shut tight; flew = moved suddenly; drawer = sliding boxes in a table or shelf; veneer = a thin layer of plastic or wood to decorate the surface of furniture; taken their toll on = damaged; stuck = got jammed; brute force = strong force; struck = hit; reveal = show; shallow = less deep; underneath = vertically below something; shaky = trembling; buried = (here) put along with dead body; curiosity = strong desire to know about something; scruples = morality or feeling that make you hesitate to do something wrong.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) What had damaged the desk ?
 (b) Where did the author find a small black tin box ?
- Q. 2.** (a) What was there inside the box ?
 (b) Find the word from the passage which means 'less deep'.

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) Fire and water had damaged the desk.
 (b) The author found the small black tin box in the secret drawer of the roll-top desk.
- Ans.2.** (a) Inside the box, there was an envelope containing a letter.
 (b) shallow.

Comprehension Check

1. What did the author find in a junk shop ?
2. What did the author find in a secret drawer ? Who do you think had put it in there ?

Answers

1. The author found an old, 19th century roll-top desk in a junk shop. It was in a bad state with burnt marks, separated veneer and was selling quite cheap.
2. The author found a letter in a small tin box inside the secret drawer. Mrs Macpherson must have put it there for safekeeping, as it bore the address of the receiver and her name as well. The desk too belonged to her.

II

Dearest Connie,

I write to you in a much happier frame of mind because something wonderful has just happened that I must tell you about at once. We were all standing in our trenches yesterday morning, Christmas morning. It was crisp and quiet all about, as beautiful a morning as I've ever seen, as cold and frosty as a Christmas morning should be.

I should like to be able to tell you that we began it. But the truth, I'm ashamed to say, is that Fritz began it. First someone saw a white flag waving from the trenches opposite. Then they were calling out to us from across no man's land, "Happy Christmas, Tommy! Happy Christmas!" When we had got over the surprise, some of us shouted back, "Same to you, Fritz! Same to you!" I thought that would be that. We all did. But then suddenly one of them was up there in his grey greatcoat and waving a white flag. "Don't shoot, lads!" someone shouted. And no one did. Then there was another Fritz up on the parapet, and another. "Keep your heads down," I told the men, "it's a trick." But it wasn't.

Word-Meanings : **frame of mind** = mental state; **trenches** = long deep ditches in the ground where soldiers hide from the enemy; **crisp** = dry and cool but pleasant; **frosty** = covered with fog; **across** = from one end to other; **got over** = overcame; **Fritz** = a common name for a German soldier; **Tommy** = a common name for a British soldier; **no man's land** = the border line between two countries; **lads** = young boys/soldiers; **parapet** = wall beside the trench.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) Who was Connie ? Who wrote this letter ?
 (b) Who were Tommy and Fritz ?
- Q. 2.** (a) Who waved a white flag and from where ?
 (b) Find the word from the passage which means 'dugout pits'.

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) Connie was Jim's wife. Jim wrote this letter to his wife Connie.
 (b) Tommy was the common name of British soldiers while German soldiers were commonly called Fritz.
- Ans.2.** (a) The German soldiers waved a white flag from their trenches across the no man's land.
 (b) trenches.

One of the Germans was waving a bottle above his head. "It is Christmas Day, Tommy. We have schnapps. We have sausage. We meet you? Yes?" By this time there were dozens of them walking towards us across no man's land and not a rifle between them. Little Private Morris was the first up. "Come on, boys. What are we waiting for?" And then there was no stopping them. I was the officer. I should have stopped them there and then, I suppose, but the truth is that it never even occurred to me I should. All along their line and ours I could see men walking slowly towards one another, grey coats, khaki coats meeting in the middle. And I was one of them. I was part of this. In the middle of the war we were making peace.

You cannot imagine, dearest Connie, my feelings as I looked into the eyes of the Fritz officer, who approached me, hand outstretched. "Hans Wolf," he said, gripping my hand warmly and holding it. "I am from Dusseldorf. I play the cello in the orchestra. Happy Christmas."

Word-Meanings : **schnapps** = a German drink made from grain; **sausage** = spicy meat; **occurred** = happened, took place; **approached** = came forward; **outstretched** = moved (the hand) forward; **gripping** = holding; **warmly** = with good feelings; **cello** = a musical instrument like a large violin; **orchestra** = a group of musicians.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) What do you understand by the term 'no man's land'.



(b) Who were the beginners of Christmas celebrations at the war zone.

Q. 2. (a) Who was Hans Wolf ? Where was he from ?

(b) Find the opposite words of the following from the passage :

- (i) last (ii) coldly

Answers :

Ans.1. (a) 'No man's land' means the region between two enemy armies.

(b) German soldiers were the beginners of Christmas celebrations at the war zone.

Ans.2. (a) Hans Wolf was a German army officer. He was from Dusseldorf.

(b) (i) first (ii) warmly

“Captain Jim Macpherson,” I replied. “And a Happy Christmas to you too. I’m a school teacher from Dorset, in the west of England.”

“Ah, Dorset,” he smiled. “I know this place. I know it very well.” We shared my rum ration and his excellent sausage. And we talked, Connie, how we talked. He spoke almost perfect English. But it turned out that he had never set foot in Dorset, never even been to England. He had learned all he knew of England from school, and from reading books in English. His favourite writer was Thomas Hardy, his favourite book Far from the Madding Crowd. So out there in no man’s land we talked of Bathsheba and Gabriel Oak and Sergeant Troy and Dorset. He had a wife and one son, born just six months ago. As I looked about me there were huddles of khaki and grey everywhere, all over no man’s land, smoking, laughing, talking, drinking, eating. Hans Wolf and I shared what was left of your wonderful Christmas cake, Connie. He thought the marzipan was the best he had ever tasted. I agreed. We agreed about everything, and he was my enemy. There never was a Christmas party like it, Connie.

Word-Meanings : rum = an alcoholic drink; sausage = mince meat patties; turned out = became known; set foot = visit; huddles = crowd or group; marzipan = sweet covering on cake.

Questions :

Q. 1. (a) "Ah Dorset, I know this place. I know it very well." Who said it and to whom ?

(b) Had Hans Wolf ever been to England ?

Q. 2. (a) Who was Thomas Hardy ?

(b) Find the opposite words of the following from the passage :

- (a) ever (b) worst

Answers :

Ans.1. (a) German army officer Hans Wolf said this to British army officer Jim Macpherson.

(b) No, Hans Wolf had never been to England.

Ans.2. (a) Thomas Hardy was a writer, the favourite of Hans Wolf.

(b) (i) never (ii) best

Then someone, I don’t know who, brought out a football. Greatcoats were dumped in piles to make goalposts, and the next thing we knew it was Tommy against Fritz out in the middle of no man’s land. Hans Wolf and I looked on and cheered, clapping our hands and stamping our feet, to keep out the cold as much as anything. There was a moment when I noticed our breaths mingling in the air between us. He saw it too and smiled. “Jim Macpherson,” he said after a while, “I think this is how we should resolve this war. A football match. No one dies in a football match. No children are orphaned. No wives become widows.”

“I’d prefer cricket,” I told him. “Then we Tommies could be sure of winning, probably.” We laughed at that,



and together we watched the game. Sad to say, Connie, Fritz won, two goals to one. But as Hans Wolf generously said, our goal was wider than theirs, so it wasn't quite fair.

Word-Meanings : **dumped** = thrown down; **piles** = heaps; **goalpost** = goal poles; **cheered** = encouraged; **stamp** = strike feet on the ground; **keep out** = avoid; **clapping** = striking palms together; **mingling** = mixing; **after a while** = sometime later; **resolve** = decide; **orphaned** = without parents; **generously** = with open heart; liberally.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) Who played a football match in no man's land ?
 (b) Who won the football match and by what margin ?
- Q. 2.** (a) Who said that the football match could be the best way to resolve the war ?
 (b) Find the word from the passage which means : thrown down

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) German and British soldiers played a football match in no man's land.
 (b) The German soldiers won the football match by two goals to one.
- Ans.2.** (a) German officer Hans Wolf said that the football match could be the best way to resolve the war.
 (b) dumped.

The time came, and all too soon, when the game was finished, the schnapps and the rum and the sausage had long since run out, and we knew it was all over. I wished Hans well and told him I hoped he would see his family again soon, that the fighting would end and we could all go home.

"I think that is what every soldier wants, on both sides," Hans Wolf said. "Take care, Jim Macpherson. I shall never forget this moment, nor you." He saluted and walked away from me slowly, unwillingly, I felt. He turned to wave just once and then became one of the hundreds of grey-coated men drifting back towards their trenches.

That night, back in our dugouts, we heard them singing a carol, and singing it quite beautifully. It was Stille Nacht, Silent Night. Our boys gave them a rousing chorus of While Shepherds Watched. We exchanged carols for a while and then we all fell silent. We had had our time of peace and goodwill, a time I will treasure as long as I live.

Dearest Connie, by Christmas time next year, this war will be nothing but a distant and terrible memory. I know from all that happened today how much both armies long for peace. We shall be together again soon, I'm sure of it. Your loving, Jim.

Word-Meanings : **run out** = finished; **unwillingly** = without will; **drifting** = moving slowly; **well** = in good state; **dugout** = trenches; **carol** = a Christmas song; **chorus** = group song; **treasure** = hold precious, cherish; **distant** = far; **terrible** = dreadful, frightening; **long for** = desire, want very much.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) Who said that every soldier on both sides wanted to end the fighting ?
 (b) "I shall never forget this moment, nor you". Who said it and to whom ?
- Q. 2.** (a) Who sang the carol 'Stille Nacht' ?
 (b) Find the word from the passage which means 'group song'.

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) German officer Hans Wolf said this.
 (b) Hans Wolf said this to Jim Maepherson.



- Ans.2.** (a) German soldiers sang the carol 'Stille Nacht'.
(b) chorus.

Comprehension Check

- Who had written the letter, to whom and when ?
- Why was the letter written— what was the wonderful thing that had happened ?
- What jobs did Hans Wolf and Jim Macpherson have when they were not soldiers ?
- Had Hans Wolf ever been to Dorset ? Why did he say he knew it ?
- Do you think Jim Macpherson came back from the war ? How do you know this ?

Answers

- Captain Jim Macpherson had written the letter to his wife Connie on December 26, 1914.
- Captain Macpherson wrote the letter to his wife to narrate the wonderful incident that happened in the battlefield on Christmas. The two enemy soldiers celebrated Christmas together amidst the war and wished one another well. This also made Jim hope the war would soon end and he would be at home in no time.
- Hans Wolf played the cello in an orchestra in Dusseldorf, while Jim Macpherson was a school teacher before they joined the army as soldiers.
- No, Hans Wolf had never been to Dorset. He said he knew the place because he had read about it in books. His favourite author was Thomas Hardy whose novel 'Far from the Madding Crowd' was set in Dorset and he had read it.
- No, Jim Macpherson never returned from the war and died in the battlefield. We know this because his wife had been living alone all these years waiting for her husband to return, even as the war had ended long ago.

III

I folded the letter again and slipped it carefully back into its envelope. I kept awake all night. By morning I knew what I had to do. I drove into Bridport, just a few miles away. I asked a boy walking his dog where Copper Beeches was. House number 12 turned out to be nothing but a burned-out shell, the roof gaping, the windows boarded-up. I knocked at the house next door and asked if anyone knew the whereabouts of a Mrs Macpherson. Oh yes, said the old man in his slippers, he knew her well. A lovely old lady, he told me, a bit muddle-headed, but at her age she was entitled to be, wasn't she? A hundred and one years old. She had been in the house when it caught fire. No one really knew how the fire had started, but it could well have been candles. She used candles rather than electricity, because she always thought electricity was too expensive. The fireman had got her out just in time. She was in a nursing home now, he told me, Burlington House, on the Dorchester road, on the other side of town.

Word-Meanings : **folded** = wrapped, closed; **turned out** = became known; **gaping** = opened up; **burned out** = destroyed by fire; **shell** = cover; **boarded up** = covered with wooden planks; **whereabouts** = location; **slippers** = formal footwear for home; **muddle-headed** = confused; **entitled** = worthy, had the right; **candles** = waxy stick to burn for light; **get her out** = (here) saved her from fire.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) What did the author do after reading the letter ?
(b) Write the address of Jim Macpherson's home.
- Q. 2.** (a) How old was Mrs Macpherson when the author found this letter ?
(b) Find the opposite words of the following from the passage:
(i) carelessly (ii) ended

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) The author folded the letter again and slipped it carefully back into its envelope.
(b) Jim Macpherson's home address was. House number-12, Copper Beeches, Bridport, Dorset.

- Ans.2.** (a) She (Mrs Macpherson) was a hundred and one years old-then.
 (b) (i) carefully (ii) started

Comprehension Check

- Why did the author go to Bridport ?
- How old was Mrs Macpherson now ? Where was she ?

Answers

- The author went to Bridport to meet Mrs Connie Macpherson and give her back her letter which he had found in the old roll-top desk. The address on the envelope was marked Bridport in Dorset and that is where he went.
- Mrs Macpherson was 101 years old and lived in a nursing home, Burlington House on Dorchester Road at the other end of Bridport.

I found Burlington House Nursing Home easily enough. There were paper chains up in the hallway and a lighted Christmas tree stood in the corner with a lopsided angel on top. I said I was a friend come to visit Mrs Macpherson to bring her a Christmas present. I could see through into the dining room where everyone was wearing a paper hat and singing. The matron had a hat on too and seemed happy enough to see me. She even offered me a mince pie. She walked me along the corridor. "Mrs Macpherson is not in with the others," she told me. "She's rather confused today so we thought it best if she had a good rest. She has no family you know, no one visits. So I'm sure she'll be only too pleased to see you." She took me into a conservatory with wicker chairs and potted plants all around and left me.

Word-Meanings : hallway = verandah; lopsided = tilted; matron = head nurse; offered = gave; mince-pie = patty made of shredded meat; corridor = passage; confused = puzzled; conservatory = glass-walled house, meant for relaxation and rest; wicker chairs = chairs made from dried cane; potted plants = plants growing in pots.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) The author faced difficulty in finding the Nursing Home where Mrs Macpherson was living. Is it a fact?
 (b) Do you think the matron of the Nursing Home was happy to meet with the author ?
- Q. 2.** (a) Where was Mrs Macpherson kept in the Nursing Home ?
 (b) Find the word from the passage which means: passage

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) No, it is not true. The author easily found the Nursing Home where Mrs Macpherson was living.
 (b) Yes, the matron of the Nursing Home was happy to meet with the author.
- Ans.2.** (a) She (Mrs Macpherson) was kept in the conservatory of the Nursing Home.
 (b) corridor

The old lady was sitting in a wheelchair, her hands folded in her lap. She had silver white hair pinned into a wispy bun. She was gazing out at the garden. "Hello," I said. She turned and looked up at me vacantly. "Happy Christmas, Connie," I went on. "I found this. I think it's yours." As I was speaking her eyes never left my face. I opened the tin box and gave it to her. That was the moment her eyes lit up with recognition and her face became suffused with a sudden glow of happiness. I explained about the desk, about how I had found it, but I don't think she was listening. For a while she said nothing, but stroked the letter tenderly with her fingertips.

Suddenly she reached out and took my hand. Her eyes were filled





with tears. "You told me you'd come home by Christmas, dearest," she said. "And here you are, the best Christmas present in the world. Come closer, Jim dear, sit down."

I sat down beside her, and she kissed my cheek. "I read your letter so often Jim, every day. I wanted to hear your voice in my head. It always made me feel you were with me. And now you are. Now you're back you can read it to me yourself. Would you do that for me, Jim dear? I just want to hear your voice again. I'd love that so much. And then perhaps we'll have some tea. I've made you a nice Christmas cake, marzipan all around. I know how much you love marzipan."

Word-Meanings : **folded** = joined together; **wispy-bun** = thin mass of hair tied in coils; **gazing** = staring; **vacantly** = with a blank, unknowing expression; **went on** = continued saying; **lit up** = shone (with happiness); **recognition** = identification; **suffused** = spread all over; **glow** = shine; **stroked** = caressed; **tenderly** = gently; **fingertips** = fore-ends of fingers.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) "Hello, Happy Christmas". Who said it and to whom ?
 (b) What did Mrs Macpherson do with the letter when the author gave it to her ?
- Q. 2.** (a) Who wrote and to whom that he'd come home by Christmas ?
 (b) Find the word from the passage which means— 'loveliest'.

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) The author said this to Mrs Macpherson.
 (b) She stroked the letter tenderly with her fingertips.
- Ans.2.** (a) Mr Jim Macpherson wrote to Mrs Macpherson that he'd come home by Christmas.
 (b) dearest.

Comprehension Check

- Who did Connie Macpherson think her visitor was ?
- Which sentence in the text shows that the visitor did not try to hide his identity ?

Answers

- Connie Macpherson was in a confused and dazed state, due to old age and grief at having waited for her husband's return from war most of her life. She thought her visitor to be her husband, Jim Macpherson.
- "I explained about the desk, about how I found it." This sentence shows that the author did not hide his identity.

Textual Questions

Working with the Text

- For how long do you think Connie had kept Jim's letter ? Give reasons for your answer.
Ans. Captain Jim Macpherson had written the letter on December 26, 1914. He was a young man then, and so was Connie, as she was his wife. Connie had received the letter a month later. She was now 101 years old. Assuming her age then to be in her twenties, the letter was now 70-75 years old and she had kept it safe for such a long period.
- Why do you think the desk had been sold, and when ?
Ans. The desk must have been sold, when Connie's house burnt down. The desk showed damage from the fire and the water, firemen must have poured to put out the flames. Since Connie now lived in the nursing home, she must have sold out all useless and damaged articles in her house before shifting here.
- Why do Jim and Hans think that games and sports are good ways of resolving conflicts ? Do you agree ?
Ans. Jim and Hans are ordinary people with human values of kindness and fellow feelings for all men. They had seen suffering and death every day on the battlefield. Naturally, both hated war and what it did to simple men. Thus, they thought it to be much more desirable that all conflicts be

settled through peaceful means, like games and sports. This would prevent wars and human suffering. I agree with them that wars never resolved conflicts—they only inflamed them and brought nothing but death and destruction.

4. Do you think the soldiers of the two armies are like each other, or different from each other? Find evidence from the story to support your answer.

Ans. The soldiers of both armies are very much alike—simple, ordinary men, who'd been thrust into war against their will in the call of national duty. Both wanted peace and an end to armed strife, that killed thousands every day. The story's main theme is this itself. They hug each other, eat and drink together, play together and bear no ill-will against each other. They have no personal enmity with each other, but are fighting a war they didn't want or like. They want to return home to their families and lead a peaceful, normal life.

5. Mention the various ways in which the British and the German soldiers become friends and find things in common at Christmas.

Ans. The British and German soldiers found many things in common. They had the same enthusiasm for Christmas, sang carols, shared their drinks and food and played football, a game which both loved. Both armies had young, like-minded men who hated war, wanted an ordinary life with their families and wanted to enjoy the simple pleasures of life. Their common hopes and common feelings of brotherhood and respect for human life made them friends who found a little time for peace and laughter amidst the constant horrors of war, death and loss.

6. What is Connie's Christmas present? Why is it "the best Christmas present in the world"?

Ans. Connie's Christmas present was the letter from Jim that the author had recovered from the old desk and brought to her. In her confused state of mind, she however thought the author to be her long-awaited husband, Jim. Since she had waited for his return for so long, his presence beside her made it the best Christmas gift ever, for she had wanted nothing more and so desperately than her husband to be by her side, safe and alive.

7. Do you think the title of this story is suitable for it? Can you think of any other titles?

Ans. The story's title is quite appropriate, for it reflects the story's main theme — a letter written one day after Christmas in 1914, by a husband who writes about an unusual Christmas on the battlefield, to his wife back home. The author's recovery of this long-ago written letter on Christmas eve, and his meeting with the soldier's old widow on Christmas itself. The grief and unending patience of the widow as she waits for the husband all these years, is changed to joy and relief, when she mistakes the author for her dead husband. This, for her, was the most precious Christmas present she could ever have had. Some alternative titles of the story can be; 'The lost letter', 'The soldier's Widow' and 'War and Woes'.

Working with Language

1. Look at these sentences from the story.

I *spotted* it in a junk shop in Bridport..... . The man *said* it was made in the early nineteenth century This one *was* in a bad condition

The *italicised verbs* are in the past tense. They tell us what happened in the past, before now.

- (i) Read the passage below and underline the verbs in the past tense.

A man got on the train and sat down. The compartment was empty except for one lady. She took her gloves off. A few hours later the police arrested the man. They held him for 24 hours and then freed him.

Ans. got, sat, was, took, arrested, held, freed

Now look at these sentences.

The veneer *had lifted* almost everywhere. Both fire and water *had taken* their toll on this desk. Notice the verb forms *had lifted*, *had taken* (their toll).

The author found and bought the desk in the past.

The desk was damaged before the author found it and *bought* it.

Fire and water *had damaged* the desk before the author *found* it and bought it.

- We use verb forms like *had damaged* for an event in the 'earlier past'. If there are two events in the past, we use 'had.....' form for the event that occurred first in the past.



- We also use the past perfect tense to show that something was wished for or expected before a particular time in the past. For example, *I had always wanted one*
- Discuss with your partner the difference in meaning in the sentences below :

When I reached the station, the train left.
 When I reached the station, the train had left.

Ans. The first sentence implies that : the author went to the station at an earlier time from present, and the train left as he reached there.

The second sentence means that : when the author went to the station at an earlier time from the present, the train had already left before he reached there.

(ii) Fill in the blanks using the correct form of the verbs in brackets :

My little sister is very naughty. When she (a)..... (come) back from school yesterday, she had (b)..... (tear) her dress. We (c) (ask) her how it had (d)..... (happen). She (e)..... (say) she (f) (have, quarrel) with a boy. She (g)..... (have, beat) him in a race and he (h) (have, try) to push her. She (i) (have, tell) the teacher and so he (j) (have, chase) her and she (k) (have, fall) down and (l) (have, tear) her dress.

Ans. (a) came (b) torn (c) asked (d) happened (e) said (f) had quarrelled (g) had beaten (h) had tried (i) had told (j) had chased (k) had fallen (l) had torn

(iii) Underline the verbs and arrange them in two columns, Past and Earlier past.

- (a) My friends set out to see the caves in the next town, but I stayed at home, because I had seen them already.
- (b) When they arrived at the station, their train had left. They came back home, but by that time I had gone out to see a movie !
- (c) So they sat outside and ate the lunch I had packed for them.
- (d) By the time I returned, they had fallen asleep.

Past :	Earlier Past :

- Ans.** (a) My friends set out to see the caves in the next town, but I stayed at home, because I had seen them already.
 (b) When they arrived at the station, their train had left. The came back home, but by that time I had gone out to see a movie !
 (c) So they sat outside and ate the lunch I had packed for them.
 (d) By the time I returned, they had fallen asleep.

Past

Earlier Past

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| (a) set, stayed | had seen |
| (b) arrived, came | had left, had gone |
| (c) sat, ate | had packed |
| (d) returned | had fallen |

2. Dictionary Work

By the end of the journey, we had run out of drinking water.

Look at the verb, *run out of* in this sentence. It is a phrasal verb; it has two parts, a verb and a preposition or an adverb. Phrasal verbs often have meanings that are different from the meanings of their parts.

Find these phrasal verbs in the story.

burn out light up look on run out keep out

Write down the sentences in which they occur. Consult a dictionary and write down the meaning that you think matches the meaning of the phrasal verb in the sentences.

Ans. **Burn out** : **Sentence** :— House no. 12 turned out to be nothing but a burnt out shell, the roof gaping.

Meaning : 'completely destroyed by fire'

- **Lit up : Sentence :** That was the moment her eyes **lit up** with recognition and her face suffused with a sudden glow of happiness.
Meaning : 'became bright and shiny with joy'
- **Looked on : Sentence :-** Hans Wolf and I **looked on** and cheered.
Meaning : 'continued to watch' or 'went on seeing' as long as the soldiers played.
- **Run out : Sentence :** The schnapps and the rum and the sausage had long since **run out**.
Meaning : 'Consumed' or 'completely used up and finished'.
- **Keep out : Sentence :** Hans Wolf cheered clapping our hands and stamping our feet to **keep out** the cold as much as anything.
Meaning : 'be away from'.

3. Noun Phrase

Read the following sentence :

I took out a *small black tin box*.

- The phrase in italics is a noun phrase.
- It has the noun— *box* – as the head word, and three adjectives preceding it.
- Notice the order in which the adjectives occur — *size* (small), *colour* (black) and *material* (tin) of which it is made.
- We rarely use more than four adjectives before a noun and there is no rigid order in which they are used, though there is a preferred order of modifiers / adjectives in a noun phrase, as given below.

determiner	modifier 1 (opinion, feeling)	modifier 2 (size, shape, age)	modifier 3 (colour)	modifier 4 (material)	head word
a/an/the	nice/lazy/ beautiful	tall/round/ old/young	red/white/ light/dark	silk/cotton/ woollen	woman/ man/ table/chair

4. The table below contains a list of nouns and some adjectives. Use as many adjectives as you can to describe each noun. You might come up with some funny descriptions !

Nouns	Adjectives
elephants face building water	circular, striped, enormous, multicoloured, round, cheerful, wild, blue, red, chubby, large, medium-sized, cold

- Ans.** (i) a wild, large elephant (ii) a cheerful, round chubby face
(iii) an enormous, circular, multicoloured building (iv) cold, multicoloured water

Speaking

1. In groups, discuss whether wars are a good way to end conflicts between countries. Then present your arguments to the whole class.

Ans. Wars are, in fact, the most hateful and destructive way to resolve conflicts. They result in enormous loss of lives, great suffering for soldiers who are wounded and sometimes impaired for life. Wars bring terrible sorrow to families, fathers, sons, mothers, wives who lose their kin in the battlefield. Moreover, wars fail to settle disputes and cause hatred and anger on both sides. Leaders and politicians may declare war to win votes or support from vested groups, but the losses are unacceptable. Truly, no one wins a war, both sides lose in terms of men, money, effort and property.

2. What kind of presents do you like and why ? What are the things you keep in mind when you buy presents for others ? Discuss with your partner.

(For example, you might buy a book because it can be read and re-read over a period of time.)



Ans. I personally prefer presents that are of continuous use, not very expensive and durable. Books and clothes are the best things that I can think of as presents. When we buy presents for others, we consider the cost, its utility to the receiver, etc. The receiver's liking and need are also kept in mind.

Writing

1. Imagine that you are Jim. You have returned to your town after the war. In your diary, record how you feel about the changes you see and the events that occurred in your town. You could begin like this :

25 December, 1919

It's Christmas today, but the town looks.....

Or

Suppose you are the visitor. You are in a dilemma. You don't know whether to disclose your identity and disappoint the old lady or let her believe that her dear Jim has come back. Write a letter to a friend highlighting your anxiety, fears and feelings.

Ans. 25 December, 1919

10.00 pm

Dear Diary,

It's Christmas today, but the town looks shrouded in a pall of gloom. The long and bitter war had taken a very heavy toll on both-the soldiers who fought it on the battlefield, and the common citizens who bore the miseries of blackouts, rationing, shortage of food and facilities, bombings and the worse of all, loss of dear ones. Christmas looks much paler and joyless. The town and its people are badly scarred by the war. Many buildings and houses have been destroyed in bombings by enemy aircraft. Hundreds died and many others were wounded and impaired.

The nightmare may be over, but its horrors still live on. Christmas will never be same again for those whose lives have been touched by the demons of war.

Jim

Or

20, Dorset

January 5, 1990

My dear Edward

I write to you about something very unusual and touching that happened to me last week. The incident brought back the horrors of a war that was waged almost seventy-five years back, and the way it affected the entire life of who is today a very old lady.

In fact, I bought an old roll-top desk the other day from a junk shop. A drawer in it contained a letter written by one Captain Jim Macpherson, who served the British army in 1914 when World War I broke out. He wrote it to his wife from the battlefield where he was fighting against the German army. It describes Christmas day and the wonderful thing that happened between enemies.

I saw the address on the envelope and went to see Mrs Jim Macpherson. She was now staying at a nursing home, as her house had burnt down in a fire. She mistook me for her husband, called me Jim and kissed me lovingly.

Finally, after having heard her speak on endlessly in excitement, I walked out quietly, shaken by the old woman's plight- a lifetime of hopeful waiting amid all the hopelessness; living alone with none to care for her. I was also happy that I had given her a moment of joy.

Alfred

2. Given below is the outline of a story. Construct the story using the outline.

A young, newly married doctor.....freedom fighter exiled to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands by the British infamous Cellular Jail prisoners tortured revolt by inmates doctor hanged wife waits for his return becomes old continues to wait with hope and faith.

Ans. A young doctor had a good practice going on in a small town. He was quite well known, both professionally and socially. He was married only very recently and the couple were very happy together.

Then, one day, the British police came and arrested him from his clinic. He was charged with helping the revolutionaries against the British and found guilty. As was common in those days, the

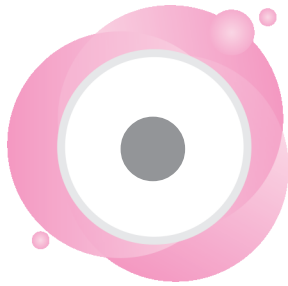
doctor was sentenced to be exiled to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for ten years. He was kept in the islands' infamous Cellular Jail with other prisoners. The British tortured the prisoners and made them work like animals. This angered the young doctor. He organised a revolt in the Jail, which was cruelly crushed by the British. The doctor was caught, tried and hanged to death in the prison. Back home, the doctor's young wife waited for his return. Twenty years have passed since, but she is still waiting for her husband to come home. She is hopeful and has faith, that some day they'll be together.

War is the greatest plague that can afflict humanity; it destroys religion, it destroys states, it destroys families.

— Martin Luther

This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped shells, were destroyed by the war.

— Erich Maria Remarque, author of 'All Quiet on the Western Front'



The Ant and the Cricket

— Adapted from Aesop's Fables

A fable is a story, often with animals as characters, that conveys a moral. This poem about an ant and a cricket contains an idea of far-reaching significance, which is as true of a four-legged cricket as of a 'two-legged one'. Surely, you have seen a cricket that has two legs!

Comprehension Stanzas, Word-Meanings & Questions with Answers

Read the stanzas given below and answer the following questions by choosing the correct option:

1. *A silly young cricket, accustomed to sing
Through the warm, sunny months of gay summer and spring,
Began to complain when he found that, at home,
His cupboard was empty, and winter was come.*

Word-Meanings : *silly* = foolish; *cricket* = a chirping insect; *accustomed to* = used to; *sunny* = warm; *gay* = happy; *spring* = season before summer; *complain* = grumble; *cupboard* = (here) storehouse.

Questions :

- Q. 1. (a) Who was accustomed to singing ?
(b) Who is called foolish in this stanza ?
- Q. 2. (a) When did the cricket become sad ?
(b) Find the word from the stanza which means 'happy'.



Answers :

Ans.1. (a) A cricket was accustomed to singing.
 (b) The cricket is called foolish in this stanza.

Ans.2. (a) The cricket became sad when he found nothing in his cupboard in winter.
 (b) gay.

2. *Not a crumb to be found
 On the snow-covered ground;
 Not a flower could he see,
 Not a leaf on a tree.
 "Oh ! What will become," says the cricket, "of me ?"*

Word-Meanings : **crumb** = bit of food; **found** = got; **see** = look.

Questions :

Q. 1. (a) How was the ground at that time ?
 (b) Where could he find a crumb ?

Q. 2. (a) "Not a leaf on a tree". Why ?
 (b) Find the opposite words of the following from the stanza :
 (i) lost (ii) she

Answers :

Ans.1. (a) The ground was covered with snow at that time.
 (b) He could not find a crumb anywhere.

Ans.2. (a) "Not a leaf on a tree" because everything was snow covered.
 (b) (i) found (ii) he.

3. *At last by starvation and famine made bold,
 All dripping with wet, and all trembling with cold,
 Away he set off to a miserly ant,
 To see if ; to keep him alive, he would grant
 Him shelter from rain,
 And a mouthful of grain.*

Word-Meanings : **starvation** = death by hunger, **famine** = great scarcity of food, **bold** = courageous, **dripping** = thoroughly wet, **trembling** = shivering, **set off** = went, **miserly** = **grant** = give, offer; **mouthful** =

Questions :

Q. 1. (a) What made the cricket bold ?
 (b) Where did the cricket go ?

Q. 2. (a) How was the nature of the ant ?
 (b) Find the word from the stanza which means : went

Answers :

Ans.1. (a) Starvation and famine made him bold.
 (b) The cricket went to an ant.

Ans.2. (a) The ant was miserly.
 (b) set off

4. *He wished only to borrow;
 He'd repay it tomorrow ;
 If not, he must die of starvation and sorrow.
 Says the ant to the cricket, "I'm your servant and friend,*

*But we ants never borrow; we ants never lend.
But tell me, dear cricket, did you lay nothing by
When the weather was warm ?"*

Word-Meanings : borrow = take loan, repay = pay back, sorrow = grief, lend = give a loan, lay-by = save, keep for future use.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) What is the principle of ants ?
(b) What did the ant ask the cricket ?
- Q. 2.** (a) Who is the friend of the cricket ?
(b) Find the opposite words of the following from the stanza :
(i) lend (ii) always

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) The principle of ants is neither to borrow nor to lend.
(b) The ant asked the cricket if he had saved nothing when the weather was warm.
- Ans.2.** (a) The ant is the friend of the cricket.
(b) (i) borrow (ii) never

5. *Quoth the cricket, "Not I ! My heart was so light
That I sang day and night,
For all nature looked gay."
"You sang, Sir, you say ?
Go then," says the ant, "and dance the winter away."*

Word-Meanings : quoth = said, light = happy, carefree; gay = dance the winter away = spend the winter dancing gaily.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) What did the cricket reply to the ant ?
(b) Who sang day and night ?
- Q. 2.** (a) What did the ant tell the cricket ?
(b) Find the word from the stanza which means : 'said'.

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) The cricket replied to the ant that he had saved nothing.
(b) The cricket sang day and night.
- Ans.2.** (a) The ant told the cricket to go away and to dance throughout the winter.
(b) quoth.

6. *Thus ending, he hastily lifted the wicket,
And out of the door turned the poor little cricket.
Folks call this a fable. I'll warrant it true :
Some crickets have four legs, and some have two.*

Word-Meanings : hastily = hurriedly, lifted = (here) closed, wicket = small door, folks = people, fable = short story with a moral, having animals as its characters; warrant = assure/maintain/insist.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) What does the word 'wicket' refer here ?
(b) Did the ant help the cricket ?



- Q. 2.** (a) Whom does the poet call a cricket having two legs.
(b) Find the word from the stanza which means : assure

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) Here, the word 'wicket' refers a door.
(b) No, the ant didn't help the cricket.
Ans.2. (a) The poet calls human a cricket having two legs.
(b) warrant.

Textual Questions

Working with the Poem

1. The cricket says, "Oh ! What will become of me ?" When does he say it, and why ?
Ans. The cricket says this at winter's arrival, when he finds no food anywhere and finds he has not saved and stored anything for the winter ahead. He says this because he is now worried about his survival in the long, harsh winter months without food.
2. (i) Find in the poem the lines that mean the same as "Neither a borrower nor a lender be" (Shakespeare):
(ii) What is your opinion of the ant's principles ?
Ans. (i) "But we ants never borrow; we ants never lend."
(ii) In my opinion, the ant's principles are very good and practical. When we borrow, we spend more than we earn. This leads to disgrace and misery. When we lend, we help the borrower lose respect and dignity. We also risk losing a friend, for money is friendship's greatest enemy.
3. The ant tells the cricket to "dance the winter away". Do you think the word 'dance' is appropriate here ? If so, why ?
Ans. The word 'dance' is quite appropriate here because the cricket had earlier revealed he had sung all the time to while away the summer. 'Sing and dance' are words used to express merriment and a carefree attitude and are suitable for the cricket.
4. (i) Which lines in the poem express the poet's comment ? Read them aloud.
(ii) Write the comment in your own words.
Ans. (i) The lines are : "Folks call this a fable; I'll warrant it true.
Some crickets have four legs, and some have two."
(ii) People take this to be a mere tale with a moral message. However, it is the truth about many people, who spend wastefully and they waste their precious time in useless pursuits, not saving and preparing for future eventualities. In time of adversity, such people have to beg from others and earn disgrace.
- * If you know a fable in your own language, narrate it to your classmates.
A fable I know goes like this :
Two bear cubs were quarrelling among themselves over a fish they had caught. They did not know how to divide it equally. A clever fox came along and offered to solve their problem. It cut off the fish's head and gave it to one cub. Then it cut off the fish's tail and gave it to the other cub. When the cubs asked the fox to divide the middle, meaty part, he said he would claim it as his fee to settle the dispute. Thus, the cubs were left hungry while the fox ran away with the best part of the fish. This fable conveys the moral that we must always settle our quarrels ourselves and never allow others to interfere. Others take advantage of our disputes to serve their own purposes.

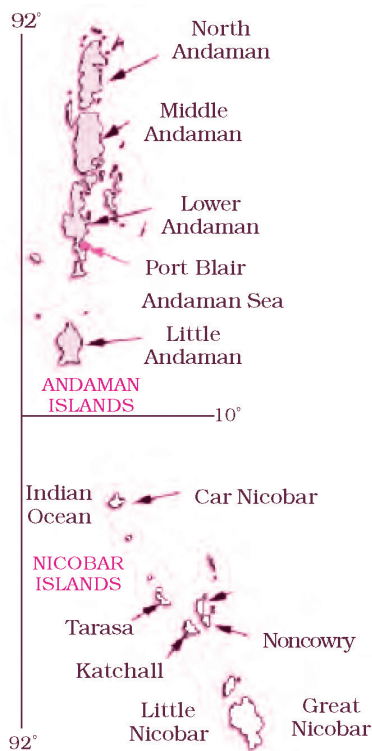


2

The Tsunami

Before you read

Look at the map of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands given here.
ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS



Now read the sentences below. Rewrite the incorrect ones after correcting the mistakes.

1. Katchall is an island.
2. It is part of the Andaman group of islands.
3. Noncowry is an island in the Nicobar group.
4. Katchall and Nancowry are more than a hundred miles apart. (Hint: the scale of the map is given.)
5. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are to the west of India.
6. The Nicobar Islands are to the north of the Andaman Islands.

Answers :

1. It is a correct sentence.
2. It is a part of Nicobar group of islands.
3. It is a correct sentence.
4. Katchall and Nancowry islands are less than a hundred miles apart.
5. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are to the south-east of India.
6. The Nicobar Islands are to the south of the Andaman Islands.

A tsunami is a very large and powerful wave caused by earthquakes under the sea. On 26 December 2004, a tsunami hit Thailand and parts of India such as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the Tamil Nadu coast. Here are some stories of courage and survival.

Did animals sense that a tsunami was coming? Some stories suggest that they did.

Passages, Word-Meanings & Questions with Answers

I

These stories are all from the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago.

Ignesium was the manager of a cooperative society in Katchall. His wife woke him up at 6 a.m. because she felt an earthquake. Ignesium carefully took his television set off its table and put it down on the ground so that it would not fall and break. Then the family rushed out of the house.



When the tremors stopped, they saw the sea rising. In the chaos and confusion, two of his children caught hold of the hands of their mother's father and mother's brother, and rushed in the opposite direction. He never saw them again. His wife was also swept away. Only the three other children who came with him were saved.



Word-Meanings : **archipelago** = a group of many islands and the surrounding sea; **manager** = one who oversees the functions of a company or an institute; **cooperative society** = an enterprise run by public for public upliftment; **earthquake** = violent shaking movements of earth's surface; **tremors** = a slight shake; **Earth tremors** = earth's shake during an earthquake; **rushed out** = ran away from (house); **rising** = going up; **chaos** = complete disorder or confusion; **swept away** = taken away by water waves.

Questions :

- Q. 1. (a) Who was Ignesium and where did he work ?
(b) Why did his wife wake him up at 6 a.m. ?
- Q. 2. (a) What happened with Ignesium's wife and children ?
(b) Find the word from the passage which means : 'complete disorder'.

Answers :

- Ans.1. (a) Ignesium was the manager in a cooperative society and he worked in Katchall (Nicobar Islands).
(b) His wife woke him up at 6 a.m. because she felt an earthquake.
- Ans.2. (a) Ignesium's wife and children were swept away by the seawater waves.
(b) chaos.

Sanjeev was a policeman, serving in the Katchall island of the Nicobar group of islands. He somehow managed to save himself, his wife and his baby daughter from the waves. But then he heard cries for help from the wife of John, the guesthouse cook. Sanjeev jumped into the water to rescue her, but they were both swept away.

Thirteen year-old Meghna was swept away along with her parents and seventy-seven other people. She spent two days floating in the sea, holding on to a wooden door. Eleven times she saw relief helicopters overhead, but they did not see her. She was brought to the shore by a wave, and was found walking on the seashore in a daze.

Word-Meanings : **managed** = became able to, do something; **rescue** = to save; **spent** = passed; **floating** = remaining on the surface of water; **holding** = gripping tightly with hands; **relief-helicopters** = helicopters bringing help to people; **overhead** = just above; **seashore** = edge of sea; **daze** = in a shocked state.

Questions :

- Q. 1. (a) Who was Sanjeev and where did he work ?
(b) Why did he jump into the water ?
- Q. 2. (a) How long did Meghna remain floating in the sea ?
(b) Find the words from the passage which are the opposite to 'carried away'.

Answers :

- Ans.1. (a) Sanjeev was a policeman. He worked in the Katchall island (Nicobar).
(b) He jumped into the water to rescue the wife of John, the guest house cook.
- Ans.2. (a) Meghna remained floating in the sea for two days.
(c) 'brought to'

Almas Javed was ten years old. She was a student of Carmel Convent in Port Blair where her father had a petrol pump. Her mother Rahila's home was in Nancowry island. The family had gone there to celebrate Christmas.

When the tremors came early in the morning, the family was sleeping. Almas's father saw the sea water recede. He understood that the water would come rushing back with great force. He woke everyone up and tried to rush them to a safer place.

As they ran, her grandfather was hit on the head by something and he fell down. Her father rushed to help him. Then came the first giant wave that swept both of them away.

Word-Meanings : **celebrate** = to enjoy a festival or function; **tremors** = shaking movements of earthquake; **recede** = go back; **rushing back** = coming back or returning with fast speed; **force** = impact, pressure; **rush** = run fast; **giant** = (here) very large; **swept away** = took away with sea waves.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) Who was Almas Javed ?
 (b) Why did her family go to Noncowry island ?
- Q. 2.** (a) What did Almas' father see when the tremors came ?
 (b) Find the opposite words of the following from the passage :
 (i) nothing (ii) late

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) Almas Javed was a ten-year-old girl living in Port Blair.
 (b) Her family went to Noncowry island to celebrate Christmas.
- Ans.2.** (a) When the tremors came, Almas' father saw the sea water recede.
 (b) (i) something (ii) early.

Almas's mother and aunts stood clinging to the leaves of a coconut tree, calling out to her. A wave uprooted the tree, and they too were washed away.

Almas saw a log of wood floating. She climbed on to it. Then she fainted. When she woke up, she was in a hospital in Kamorta. From there she was brought to Port Blair.

The little girl does not want to talk about the incident with anyone. She is still traumatised.



Word-Meanings : **clinging** = holding fast and closely to something; **calling out** = shouting loudly; **uprooted** = removed, took out from the ground; **washed away** = taken away with water; **log** = thick wooden piece or tree trunk; **floating** = moving on water surface; **climbed** = (here) got on, moved towards; **fainted** = became-unconscious; **incident** = a fact of something happening, occurrence; **traumatised** = deeply shocked and distressed.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) What happened to Almas' mother and aunts ?
 (b) What did Almas see floating in water ?
- Q. 2.** (a) Where was Almas when she woke up ?
 (b) Find the word from the passage which means 'shocked and distressed'.

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) Almas' mother and aunts were washed away by the sea waves.
 (b) Almas saw a log of wood floating in the sea water.
- Ans.2.** (a) Almas was in a hospital in Kamorta when she woke up.
 (b) traumatised.



Comprehension Check

Say whether the following are true or false :

1. Ignacious lost his wife, two children, his father-in-law and his brother-in-law in the tsunami.
2. Sanjeev made it to safety after the tsunami.
3. Meghna was saved by a relief helicopter.
4. Almas's father realised that a tsunami was going to hit the island.
5. Her mother and aunts were washed away with the tree that they were holding on to.

Ans. 1. True 2. False 3. False 4. True 5. True

II

Tilly Smith (a British schoolgirl) was able to save many lives when the tsunami struck Phuket beach in Thailand. Though she has won a number of awards, her parents have not allowed their daughter to be interviewed on television and made into a heroine. Why do you think they took that decision?

Now here is a story from Thailand.

The Smith family from South-East England were celebrating Christmas at a beach resort in southern Thailand. Tilly Smith was a ten-year-old schoolgirl; her sister was seven years old. Their parents were Penny and Colin Smith.

It was 26 December 2004. Deadly tsunami waves were already on their way. They had been triggered by a massive earthquake off northern Sumatra earlier that morning.



Word-Meanings : beach = large sandy area on seashore; resort = a place where people go to enjoy holidays; deadly = very dangerous, triggered = (here) caused, started; massive = very big/strong; off = in the sea near the coast.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) Where was the Smith family from ?
 (b) Why did the Smith family come to Thailand ?
- Q. 2.** (a) Who was Tilly Smith ?
 (b) Find the word from the passage which means : 'very big'.

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) The Smith family was from South East-England.
 (b) The Smith family came to Thailand to celebrate christmas.
- Ans.2.** (a) Tilly Smity was a ten-year-old schoolgirl.
 (b) massive.

“The water was swelling and kept coming in,” Penny Smith remembered. “The beach was getting smaller and smaller. I didn’t know what was happening.”

But Tilly Smith sensed that something was wrong. Her mind kept going back to a geography lesson she had taken in England just two weeks before she flew out to Thailand with her family.

Tilly saw the sea slowly rise, and start to foam, bubble and form whirlpools. She remembered that she had seen this in class in a video of a tsunami that had hit the Hawaiian islands in 1946. Her geography teacher had shown her class the video, and told them that tsunamis can be caused by earthquakes, volcanoes and landslides.

Word-Meanings : swelling = (here) getting bigger in size; happening = occurring; sensed = felt, supposed; foam = bubbles formed in liquid; whirlpools = quick circular motions in water; hit = struck;

volcano = fire, steam and hot melted rock (lava) coming out from a hole on the top of a mountain;
landslides = sliding and falling of soil and rocks on steep slopes.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) What did Penny Smith observe on the beach ?
 (b) What is the thing that helped Tilly Smith to guess about the tsunami ?
- Q. 2.** (a) What had Tilly Smith seen in her class two weeks earlier ?
 (b) Find the opposite words of the following from the passage :
 (i) forgot (ii) finish

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) Penny Smith observed the sea water swelling and the beach getting smaller and smaller.
 (b) A geography lesson helped Tilly Smith to guess about the tsunami.
- Ans.2.** (a) Tilly Smith had seen a video of a tsunami in her class two weeks earlier.
 (b) (i) remembered (ii) start.

Tilly started to scream at her family to get off the beach. "She talked about an earthquake under the sea. She got more and more hysterical," said her mother Penny. "I didn't know what a tsunami was. But seeing my daughter so frightened, I thought something serious must be going on."

Tilly's parents took her and her sister away from the beach, to the swimming pool at the hotel. A number of other tourists also left the beach with them. "Then it was as if the entire sea had come out after them. I was screaming, 'Run!'"

The family took refuge in the third floor of the hotel. The building withstood the surge of three tsunami waves. If they had stayed on the beach, they would not have been alive.

The Smiths later met other tourists who had lost entire families. Thanks to Tilly and her geography lesson, they had been forewarned. Tilly went back to her school in England and told her classmates her terrifying tale.

Word-Meanings : **scream** = cry out loudly; **get off** = move away; **beach** = large area at seashore; **hysterical** = a state of mind when someone shouts, laughs or cries in a wild excited way without any control over oneself; **frightened** = very afraid; **serious** = grave, not ordinary but dangerous; **tourists** = visitors; **refuge** = shelter or protection from danger; **withstood** = endured without collapsing; **surge** = force, momentum; **entire** = all, whole; **forewarned** = alerted beforehand; **terrifying tale** = a frightening or fearful story.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) What did Tilly begin to do when she observed the tsunami ?
 (b) "I didn't know what a tsunami was ?" Who said this ?
- Q. 2.** (a) What was the thing that saved Smiths from the tsunami ?
 (b) Find the words from the passage which mean : 'fearful story'.

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) Tilly started to scream at her family to get off the beach when she observed the tsunami.
 (b) Tilly's mother said this.
- Ans.2.** (a) Tilly's geography lesson saved the Smith family from the tsunami.
 (b) a terrifying tale.

Comprehension Check

Answer the following in a phrase or sentence :

- Why did Tilly's family come to Thailand ?
- What were the warning signs that both Tilly and her mother saw ?
- Do you think Tilly's mother was alarmed by them ?



4. Where had Tilly seen the sea behaving in the same strange fashion ?
5. Where did the Smith family and the others on the beach go to escape from the tsunami?
6. How do you think her geography teacher felt when he heard about what Tilly had done in Phuket?

Answers

1. To celebrate Christmas.
2. Rising and foaming sea, formation of whirlpools and the beach getting smaller.
3. No, she was not alarmed by the signs.
4. Tilly had seen the same strange behaviour of the sea in a video at school.
5. The Smith family and the others went to the third floor of the hotel to escape from the tsunami.
6. The teacher must have felt quite satisfied and pleased.

III

Look carefully at the picture of the boy and his dog, and try to describe the things that you see, using just words and phrases. Either the teacher or one of the students can write down the words and phrases on the blackboard.

This is how you can start —
calm, blue sea ruined huts.....

Before the giant waves slammed into the coast in India and Sri Lanka, wild and domestic animals seemed to know what was about to happen. They fled to safety. According to eyewitness accounts, elephants screamed and ran for higher ground; dogs refused to go outdoors; flamingoes abandoned their low-lying breeding areas; and zoo animals rushed into their shelters and could not be enticed to come back out.



Word-Meanings : **giant** = very large; **slammed** = hit forcefully; **wild** = living as undomesticated; **fled** = ran away; **eyewitness** = onlooker; **accounts** = (here) reports, narrations; **screamed** = cried out loudly; **refused** = denied; **outdoors** = (here) out of home, in the open; **flamingoes** = pink and red-coloured large birds living near water bodies; **abandoned** = left, gave up; **low-lying** = at less height from seashore; **breeding areas** = places where animals/birds lay eggs; **enticed** = tempted or attracted towards lovely things like food, toys, etc.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) Who came to know about tsunami before it struck the coast in India and Sri Lanka ?
(b) What did elephants do when they sensed the tsunami ?
- Q. 2.** (a) What was the behaviour of dogs when they sensed the tsunami ?
(b) Find the word from the passage which means : 'tempted'.

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) Wild and domestic animals came to know about the tsunami before it struck the coast in India and Sri Lanka.
(b) The elephants screamed and ran for higher ground when they sensed the tsunami.
- Ans.2.** (a) The dogs refused to go outdoors when they sensed the tsunami.
(b) enticed.

Many people believe that animals possess a sixth sense and know when the earth is going to shake. Some experts believe that animals' more acute hearing helps them to hear or feel the earth's vibration. They can sense an approaching disaster long before humans realise what's going on.

We cannot be sure whether animals have a sixth sense or not. But the fact is that the giant waves

that rolled through the Indian Ocean killed more than 150,000 people in a dozen countries; but not many animals have been reported dead.

Word-Meanings : *possess* = have, keep; *sixth sense* = an exceptional ability to feel other than ordinary; *acute* = sharp or heightened; *vibration* = trembling or shaking; *approaching* = coming nearer; *disaster* = a natural calamity that causes great loss of living and non-living things; *realise* = come to know; *rolled through* = moved along by turning over and over; *reported* = recorded as fact.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) What do many people believe about animals ?
 (b) According to experts, what is that thing which helps animals to feel earth's vibration ?
- Q. 2.** (a) Can animals sense an approaching disaster long before humans ?
 (b) Find the word from the passage which means : 'coming nearer'.

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) Many people believe that animals possess a sixth sense and know when the earth is going to shake.
 (b) According to the experts, the acute hearing ability of animals helps them to feel earth's vibration.
- Ans.2.** (a) Yes, animals can sense an approaching disaster long before humans.
 (b) approaching.

Along India's Cuddalore coast, where thousands of people perished, buffaloes, goats and dogs were found unharmed. The Yala National Park in Sri Lanka is home to a variety of animals including elephants, leopards, and 130 species of birds. Sixty visitors were washed away from the Patanangala beach inside the park; but no animal carcasses were found, except for two water buffaloes. About an hour before the tsunami hit, people at Yala National Park had observed three elephants running away from the Patanangala beach.

A Sri Lankan gentleman who lives on the coast near Galle said his two dogs would not go for their daily run on the beach. "They are usually excited to go on this outing," he said. But on that day they refused to go, and most probably saved his life.

Word-Meanings : *coast* = area of land near seashore; *perished* = died; *unharmed* = safe; *washed away* = taken away with large water waves; *carcasses* = dead bodies of animals; *observed* = seen; *usually* = normally; *excited* = very enthusiastic and eager; *outing* = outdoor activity; *refused* = denied; *probably* = to some extent a fact, perhaps; *saved* = made safe from death or danger.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) What happened along India's Cuddalore coast during the tsunami ?
 (b) What kinds of animals are present in Yala National Park in Sri Lanka ?
- Q. 2.** (a) Why did the dogs refuse to go for their daily run on the day of the tsunami ?
 (b) Find the word from the passage which means : 'eager'.

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) Along India's cuddalore coast, thousands of people perished during the tsunami.
 (b) Many kinds of animals including elephants, leopards and 130 species of birds are present in Yala National Park in Sri Lanka.
- Ans.2.** (a) On the day of the tsunami, the dogs refused to go for their daily run on beach because they seemed to know what was about to happen.
 (c) excited.

Comprehension Check

Answer using a phrase or a sentence :

1. In the tsunami 1,50,000 people died. How many animals died ?



2. How many people and animals died in Yala National Park ?
3. What do people say about the elephants of Yala National Park ?
4. What did the dogs in Galle do ?

Answers :

1. Very few animals died.
2. Sixty people and two animals died in Yala National Park.
3. Three elephants ran away from the beach an hour before the tsunami hit the coast.
4. The dogs refused to go out for their usual walk with their master.

Textual Questions

Working with the Text

Discuss the following questions in class. Then write your own answers.

1. When he felt the earthquake, do you think Ignesium immediately worried about a tsunami ? Give reasons for your answer. Which sentence in the text tells you that the Ignesium family did not have any time to discuss and plan their course of action after the tsunami struck ?

Ans. Ignesium was not immediately worried about the tsunami as he felt that it was just an earthquake. Moreover, ordinary earthquakes were common occurrences in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and did not alarm the residents much. The fact that he put the television down on the ground to save it from falling and breaking shows this.

The following sentence tells us that the Ignesium family had no time to discuss and plan their course of action when the tsunami struck :

'In the chaos and confusion, two of his children caught hold of the hands of their mother's father and mother's brother, and rushed in the opposite direction.'

2. Which words in the list below describe Sanjeev, in your opinion?

(Look up the dictionary for words that you are not sure of.)

cheerful	ambitious	brash	brave	careless
heroic	selfless	heartless	humorous	

Use words from the list to complete the three sentences below :

- (i) I don't know if Sanjeev was cheerful, or
- (ii) I think that he was very brave, and
- (iii) Sanjeev was not heartless, or

Ans. The words 'brave', 'heroic', and 'selfless' describe Sanjeev is the best.

- (i) I don't know if Sanjeev was cheerful, ambitious or brash.
- (ii) I think that he was very brave, heroic and selfless.
- (iii) Sanjeev was not heartless, careless or humorous.

3. How are Meghna' and Almas's stories similar ?

Ans. Meghna's and Almas's stories are quite similar since both were fortunate survivors in a terrible disaster. Meghna was swept away with her parents and other people. She was washed ashore by a wave. Almas climbed on to a log of wood. When she woke up, she found herself in a hospital in Kamorta.

4. What are the different ways in which Tilly's parents could have reacted to her behaviour ? What would you have done if you were in their place ?

Ans. Tilly's parents could have ignored her altogether, and told her not to act in such away to scare the other people unnecessarily. They could also have thought that Tilly was frightened much and taken her a little away from the shore. Anyway, they took the right decision in heeding her warning and going to a safer place. I would have probably done the same because children mostly have more heightened senses than adults.

5. If Tilly's award was to be shared, who do you think she should share it with—her parents or her geography teacher ?

Ans. It is very clear that Tilly's award should be shared with her geography teacher because it was due to his/her efforts that she could know about the early signs of a coming tsunami.

6. What are the two different ideas about why so few animals were killed in the tsunami ? Which idea do you find more believable ?

Ans. One line of thought says that animals have a sixth sense which enables them to sense an impending

natural disaster like an earthquake or a tsunami. The other thought says animals have an acute sense of hearing that allows them to hear the vibrations that precede an earthquake or tsunami, and thus they run away to a safer place. In my opinion, the idea that animals have a more acute sense of hearing is more believable and this had been proved scientifically.

Working with Language

- Go through Part-I carefully, and make a list of as many words as you can find that indicate movement of different kinds. (There is one word that occurs repeatedly— count how many times !) Put them into three categories.

fast movement slow movement neither slow nor fast

Can you explain why there are many words in one column and not in the others ?

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
(fast movement) washed away (once) swept away (3 times) jumped into rush (4 times) rush them fall (once) fall (once)	(slow movement) rising recede	(neither slow nor fast) floating climbing

The word 'rush' comes in the text (I part) the most number of times, i.e. four. There are many words in the column of 'fast movement' because the movements of water in a tsunami are very fast. So are people's movements to escape the fury of the tsunami.

- Fill in the blanks in the sentences below (the verbs given in brackets will give you a clue.)

- The earth trembled, but not many people felt the (tremble)
- When the zoo was flooded, there was a lot of and many animals escaped into the countryside. (confuse)
- We heard with that the lion had been recaptured. (relieve)
- The zookeeper was stuck in a tree and his was filmed by the TV crew. (rescue)
- There was much in the village when the snake charmer came visiting. (excite)

Ans. (i) tremors (ii) confusion (iii) relief (iv) rescue (v) excitement

- Study the sentences in the columns A and B.

A	B
Meghna was swept away. Almas's grandfather was hit on the head. Sixty visitors were washed away. No animal carcasses were found.	The waves swept Meghna away. Something hit Almas's grandfather on the head. The waves washed away sixty visitors. People did not find any animal carcasses.

Compare the sentence in A to the ones in B. Who is the 'doer' of the action in every case ? Is the 'doer' mentioned in A, or in B ?

Notice the verbs in A : 'was swept away', 'was hit', 'were washed away' and 'were found'. They are in the passive form. The sentences are in the *Passive Voice*. In these sentences, the focus is not on the person who does the action.

In B, the 'doer' of the action is named. The verbs are in the active form. The sentences are in the *Active Voice*.

Say whether the following sentences are in the Active or in the Passive Voice.

Write A or P after each sentence as shown in the first sentence.

- Someone stole my bicycle.
- The tyres were deflated by the traffic police.
- I found it last night in a ditch near my house.
- It had been thrown there.
- My father gave it to the mechanic.



(vi) The mechanic repaired it for me.

Ans. (i) A (Active Voice) (ii) P (Passive Voice) (iii) A (Active Voice) (iv) P (Passive Voice) (v) A (Active Voice) (vi) A (Active Voice)

Speaking and Writing

1. Suppose you are one of the volunteers who went to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for relief work after the tsunami. You work in the relief camps, distributing food, water and medicine among the victims. You listen to the various stories of bravery of ordinary people even as they fight against odds to bring about some semblance of normalcy in their lives. You admire their grit and determination. Write a diary entry.

You may start in this way.

31 December, 2004

The killer tsunami struck these islands five days ago. But the victims are being brought in even now. Everyone has a story to tell.

December 31, 2004

Ans. The killer tsunami struck these islands five days ago. But the victims are being brought in even now. Everyone has a story to tell. As I move from camp to camp, I hear tales of courage and unbearable grief. Those who were swept away by the killer waves were unfortunate enough. A lady in her early thirties cannot stop tears, as she recollects how her husband and two children were taken away by the waves. Another old gentleman survived with his only grandson while the rest of the family perished. There were numerous such people who had lost almost everything but were determined to start a new life. I was touched by the courage and determination of these people, who still fought on with their grief and loss to dream of a sunny tomorrow.

Shubhra

2 The story shows how a little girl saved the lives of many tourists when a tsunami struck the beach, thanks to the geography lesson that she had learnt at school. She remembered the visuals of a tsunami and warned her parents.

Do you remember any incident when something that you learnt in the classroom helped you in some way outside the classroom ?

Write your experiences in a paragraph of about 90-100 words or narrate it to the whole class like an anecdote.

Ans. Once, our biology teacher explained the features of a mad dog infected with rabies virus. He told us that such dog's tongue remains rather outward and tail remains downward. It continuously secretes poisonous saliva that falls on ground. One day I saw a dog in my locality which was exhibiting the same features. I saved myself from its attack and warned the residents of my locality against it. It was caught with precautions and handed over to the team of veterinary doctors who thanked me for making them aware of such a dog. In this way my biology lesson helped us very much.

Katchall is one of the largest islands in the central group. It is about 61 sq miles in area. It is slightly hilly at the centre, but otherwise remarkably flat.

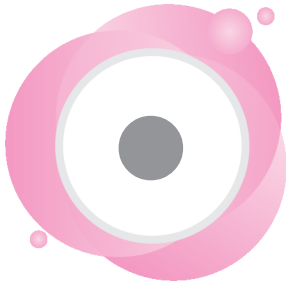
Betty at the Party

'When I was at the party',
Said Betty, aged just four,
'A little girl fell off her chair
Right down upon the floor;
And all the other title girls
Began to laugh, but me-
I didn't laugh a single bit',
Said Betty seriously
'Why not ?'- her mother asked her,

Full of delight to find
That Betty-bless her little heart!-
Had been so sweetly kind.
'Why didn't you laugh, my darling ?
Or don't you like to tell ?'
'I didn't laugh,' said Betty,
'Because it was I that fell',

— Unknown





Geography Lesson

— Zulfikar Ghose

Can you imagine what your city would look like if you saw it from ten thousand feet above the ground? Neatly planned and perfect in proportion like a geometric design, it would strike you as something very different from what it actually is while you are in the thick of it.

Here is a poet's description of just such a view of the city, and some questions that come to his mind.

Comprehension Stanzas, Word-Meanings & Questions with Answers

Read the stanzas given below and answer the following questions :

1. *When the jet sprang into the sky, There seemed an inevitability
it was clear why the city about what on ground had looked haphazard,
had developed the way it had, unplanned and without style
seeing it scaled six inches to the mile. When the jet sprang into the sky.*

Words-Meanings : jet = a type of aircraft; sprang = leapt; scaled = measured on a scale; six inches to the mile = one mile shown on map/as seen by poet from that height as six inches; inevitability = fact that it was unavoidable; haphazard = random, unorganised; unplanned = not planned; style = pattern.

Questions :

- Q. 1. (a) What was clear when the jet sprang into the sky ?
(b) How long did a mile appear to the poet ?
- Q. 2. (a) What thing looked haphazard to the poet, from where ?
(b) Find the word from the stanza which means : 'random'.

Answers :

- Ans.1. (a) The reason behind the way of development of city was clear.
(b) A mile appeared six inches to the poet.
- Ans.2. (a) The city looked haphazard from the ground to the poet.
(b) haphazard.

2. *When the jet reached ten thousand feet, The logic of geography—
it was clear why the country that land and water attracted man—
had cities where the rivers ran was clearly delineated
and why the valleys were populated. When the jet reached ten thousand feet.*

Words-Meanings : ran = (here) flowed; valleys = low-lying land between mountains; populated = inhabited by people; logic = reasoning; geography = one of the subjects to study; attracted = enticed, looked good, lured; delineated = shown clearly.

Questions :

- Q. 1. (a) Upto what height had the jet reached ?
(b) What was clear to the poet at the height of ten thousand feet ?



- Q. 2.** (a) What is the logic of geography ?
(b) Find the opposite words of the following from the stanza :
(i) repulse (ii) dirty

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) The jet had reached a height of ten thousand feet.
(b) It was clear at the height of ten thousand feet why the country had cities near rivers and why the valleys were populated.
- Ans.2.** (a) The logic of geography is that land and water attract humans.
(b) (i) attract (ii) clear

- 3.** *When the jet rose six miles high,
it was clear the earth was round
and that it had more sea than land.
But it was difficult to understand*
- that the men on the earth found
causes to hate each other, to build
walls across cities and to kill.
From that height, it was not clear why.*

Words-Meanings : **causes** = reasons; **hate** = dislike, abhor; **rose** = went up to a height; **across** = through.

Questions :

- Q. 1.** (a) At what height was it clear that the earth is round ?
(b) What facts were clear at the height of six miles ?
- Q. 2.** (a) What was difficult for the poet to understand even at the height of six miles ?
(b) Find the word from the stanza which means : 'reasons'.

Answers :

- Ans.1.** (a) At the height of six miles it was clear that the earth is round.
(b) Two facts were clear at the height of six miles—
(i) The earth is round (ii) There is more water on the earth than land.
- Ans.2.** (a) Even at the height of six miles, it was difficult for the poet to understand why people hate each other, build walls across cities and kill one another.
(b) causes.

Textual Questions

Working with the Poem

1. Find three or four phrases in stanzas one and two which are likely to occur in a geography lesson.
Ans. Scaled six inches to the mile; rivers ran; land and water attracted man; valleys were populated.
2. Seen from the window of an aeroplane, the city appears :
(i) as haphazard as on ground (ii) as neat as a map (iii) as developed as necessary
Mark the right answer.
Ans. (iii) as developed as necessary
3. Which of the following statements are examples of "the logic of geography" ?
(i) There are cities where there are rivers.
(ii) Cities appear as they are not from six miles above the ground.
(iii) It is easy to understand why valleys are populated.
(iv) It is difficult to understand why humans hate and kill one another.
(v) The earth is round, and it has more sea than land.
Ans. (i), (iii) and (v) are statements which are examples of "the logic of geography".
4. Mention two things that are :
(i) clear from the height (ii) not clear from the height
Ans. (i) the earth is round in shape; there is more water than land on the earth.
(ii) reason why men hated one another; reason why men built walls across the cities.

