



**INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

<b>Class: IX</b>	<b>QUESTION BANK (2025-2026)</b> <b>TOPIC: OH, I WISH I'D LOOKED AFTER ME TEETH</b>	<b>SUBJECT: ENGLISH</b>
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**About the Poet**

**Pam Ayres** (1947- ) is a contemporary writer, a great entertainer who writes and performs comic verse. She started writing poems and verses as a hobby and has appeared in every major TV show in the U.K. She has published six books of poems, and cut seven record albums including a collection of 50 best known poems.

**MESSAGE:** The poem conveys the message that time once lost cannot be regained. Therefore, it is important to make hay while the sun shines. Good food habits and a good sense of dental hygiene needs to be inculcated amongst the children by the adults and timely measures should be taken to preserve one's teeth.

**TITLE:** "Oh, I wish I'd Looked After Me Teeth" conveys the poet's regret at having damaged her teeth due to her negligence. Pam Ayres has deliberately used a clause rather than a phrase to explicitly underline her sense of remorse at her irresponsible approach and culpable carelessness. The interjection 'Oh' brings out a sense of helplessness that the narrator feels when there is no use crying over spilt milk. Thus, the title that sounds so casual has been selected with a great care and it is a well-chosen and an apt title.

**Summary**

- The poem is written on a humorous note about the experiences of the narrator with her teeth.
- It expresses the poet's regret in adulthood regarding the damage caused to her teeth due to her carelessness.
- The poet regrets having neglected her teeth during her childhood and youth.
- She had not taken care of her teeth the way she should have.
- As a youngster she chewed toffees, took sweet sticky food, enjoyed gobstoppers (large, hard sweets), liquorice and sherbet dabs without showing any concern for her teeth.
- She now wishes she had resisted the temptation to buy sweets with her money and paid more attention to the damage they could have caused to her teeth.
- Now she is full of remorse for having consumed so many lollies and brittle peanuts.
- She also recalls that though she had brushed her teeth, it had not been done thoroughly as she had felt it was all a waste of time.
- However now as she sits in the dentist's chair staring up at him, she feels remorseful about all the sweets that she has ever eaten.
- She says that if she had known that she was going to suffer cavities and tooth decay and would have to undergo fillings, injections, and drillings at the dentist's office, she would have been more careful and thrown away all the sweets.
- There was a time when she used to ridicule her mother's set of false teeth.
- Unfortunately, she too has reached the stage when she would have to be satisfied with a denture.

### **LITERARY DEVICES:**

**Alliteration:** is “the repetition of usually consonant sounds occurring recurrently at the beginning of a word or of a stressed syllable within a word.”

Examples: ● sweet sticky food (‘s’ sound occurs repeatedly)  
● lollies, I licked (‘l’ sound occurs repeatedly)  
● cavities, caps and decay (‘c’ sound occurs repeatedly)  
● molars of mine (‘m’ sound occurs repeatedly)

**Repetition:** Poets often repeat single words or phrases, lines, and sometimes, even whole stanzas at intervals to create a musical effect; to emphasize a point; to draw the reader’s attention or to lend unity to a piece.

Example: ● Oh, I wish I’d looked after me teeth.

The above line which appears as the title of the poem is repeated thrice in the poem. This repetition highlights the poet’s regret at having neglected her teeth and it also emphasizes their importance.

**RHYME SCHEME:** The rhyme scheme of the poem is **aabba**.

### **SHORT ANSWERS**

**Q1. What are the different kinds of sweets that the poet ate which led to the cavities?**

**Ans.** The poet mentions various sweets in the poem that contributed to the cavities, including toffees, sweet sticky food, gobstoppers (large, hard sweets), lollies, liquorice all sorts (candy made with liquorice root), sherbet dabs (tiny sweets), and hard peanut brittle.

**Q2. Explain: When I had more tooth there than fillin’.**

**Ans.** The poet is referring to her childhood when all her teeth were intact, sound and healthy. She had no cavities and none of her teeth was damaged. Now her carelessness has ruined her teeth so badly that majority of them have been treated with fillings by the dentist and there are hardly any sound teeth left.

**Q3. What idea do you get about the poet from “Oh, I wish I’d Looked After me Teeth”?**

**Ans.** The poet having a very casual approach towards her dental hygiene behaves in a very careless and irresponsible manner. Having neither any far sight and foresight nor any control over her tongue she damaged majority of her sound teeth. However, she is honest enough to own her fault and confesses without trying to shift the blame to someone else.

**Q4. How does the poet feel in the old dentist’s chair?**

**Ans.** The very idea of the dentist’s drill digging and poking her teeth makes the poet shudder in pain. While lying in the dentist’s chair, she feels very helpless and miserable. Owning the responsibility of ruining her own teeth, she is full of remorse and blames herself for her misery but it is too late.

**Q5. How does the poem successfully ‘awaken the reader to his dental hygiene and care’?**

**Ans.** The poem by Pam Ayres successfully raises awareness about dental hygiene by humorously portraying the consequences of neglect. Through vivid descriptions of sweets, regrets, and dental procedures, it engages the reader, prompting reflection on the importance of proper dental care.

**Q6. Why does the poet say she should have bought ‘something else’ with her shilling?**

**Ans.** As a child the poet was given to eating lots of toffees, gobstoppers, liquorice and other sweet and sticky food articles that proved detrimental to her teeth, causing in them cavities and decay. This forced her to undergo dental treatment which was a very painful experience. The sight of her mother’s false teeth makes her dread what is set to happen to her. Now she regrets having spent her money on the harmful sweets and sticky food and wishes she should have bought something healthier with it.

**Q7. Why did the narrator make fun of her mother's false teeth?**

**Ans.** As a child, the narrator had all her teeth intact sound and healthy; hence her mother's 'teeth' in a bowl amused her. Little did she realize at that time, that her carelessness would damage her teeth and a stage might come in her life when she too would have to depend on dentures.

**LONG ANSWERS**

**Q1. What message does the poet want to convey to children in his poem 'Oh, I Wish I'd Looked After Me Teeth' ?**

**Answer:**

The poet regrets that she had not taken care of her teeth during her childhood. She conveys a message to the children that they should inculcate in themselves a good sense of dental hygiene. She regrets that she harmed her teeth by neglecting their care. Due to the neglect of her teeth, she developed many cavities beneath her teeth. It happened because she had been eating a lot of toffees and sweet, sticky food. Now, she realizes that she should not have eaten sweets and hard candies. She feels guilty that she had been eating lollies, candies and tiny sweets. Her conscience pricks her because she had been eating wrong food. The poet regrets that she did not brush her teeth properly. She did not brush her teeth by moving the brush up and down. She did not consider it worthwhile to spend some time in cleaning her teeth. Consequently, the poet had to go to the dentist for treatment.

**Q2. What is the role of parents and teachers in teaching dental care to children ? Discuss it with reference to the poet's experience in the poem 'Oh ! I Wish I'd Looked After Me Teeth'.**

**Answer:**

There is no denying the fact that parents and teachers can play an active role in teaching dental hygiene to children. Mothers at home must ensure that her children do not eat too many sweets. She should ensure that they brush their teeth at least twice a day. She should also tell them the proper use of toothbrush. If the children pay no or little attention to their teeth, they should be taken to the dentist and show the horrible scene of treating the teeth.

In the poem 'Oh ! I Wish I'd Looked After Me Teeth', it seems as if her parents were quite negligent. They did not persuade or force her to avoid sweets and brush her teeth carefully. Had they played their role well the poet would not have to suffer a lot of pain at the dentist in filling her cavities.

**Q3. How does the poem address the universal theme of regret and the passage of time in the context of oral hygiene?**

**Answer.**

"Oh, I Wish I'd Looked After Me Teeth" addresses the universal theme of regret and the passage of time within the context of oral hygiene. The poem reflects on the poet's regretful realization regarding her neglect of dental care over the years. The mention of sweets, lack of proper care, and the consequences of these choices becomes a metaphor for life's fleeting moments and the irreversible effects of neglect.

The universal theme of regret is woven into the narrative, as the poet humorously laments missed opportunities to preserve her oral health. The passage of time is evident in the progression from indulging in sweets to facing the repercussions, highlighting the inevitability of consequences over the years. This universal narrative resonates with readers, prompting reflection on their own lives and choices. In connecting the theme of regret with oral hygiene, the poem offers a relatable perspective on the broader human experience of time's passage and the consequences of neglect.

**Read the given extracts and answer the questions that follow :**

**Question.1.**

*If I'd known, I was paving the way  
To cavities, caps and decay,  
The murder of fillin's*

*Injections and drillin's,  
I'd have thrown all me sherbet away.*

- (a) Why did the poet develop cavities in her teeth ?
- (b) Which poetic device does the poet use in the second line ?
- (c) Give the meaning of 'sherbet'.

**Answers:**

- (a) The poet developed cavities in her teeth because she had been eating too much sweets, lollies and toffees, etc.
- (b) It is alliteration.
- (c) 'A sweet candy'.

**Question.2.**

*How I laughed at my mother's false teeth.  
As they foamed in the waters beneath.  
But now comes the reckonin'  
It's me they are beckonin'.  
Oh, I wish I'd looked after me teeth.*

- (a) What did the poet make fun of ?
- (b) What do you mean by 'they' in fourth line ?
- (c) Give the meaning of the word 'beckonin'.

**Answers :**

- (a) The poet made fun of the false teeth of her mother.
- (b) 'They' refers to false teeth.
- (c) 'beckoning' (calling)

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