



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (2024-25)
CLASS – IX
QB – HOW I TAUGHT MY GRANDMOTHER TO READ

SUMMARY

The story talks about the experience of the writer as a little girl, when she was living with her grandmother in the village of Shiggaon, Karnataka. The village was backward in terms of infrastructure and was serviced by a poor transport system, but the residents were educated folks. Thus, the newspaper and other readings materials were eagerly sought after, by them. The author's grandmother was a resident and like others she loved to hear her granddaughter read out to her a serialised portion of the novel 'Kashi Yatre' in a magazine of that time.

The delivery of printed matter to the village arrived by the afternoon bus and every Wednesday afternoon, the writer read out the story from the magazine to her grandmother. There had been no hitch in this arrangement till a time when the writer went to the neighbouring village to attend a marriage ceremony. During this period, the magazine had arrived as usual but grandmother was unable to enjoy the serialized story because she was embarrassed about asking someone else to read it to her.

On her return, the writer was shocked to find her grandmother in tears, after much coaxing, the grandmother had revealed that she was reduced to tears at her plight. The grandmother felt that despite their family being well-off, she felt dependent because of lack of education. Thus, she had taken pains to see that her sons and grandchildren had received a proper education. Thereafter she begged her grand daughter to teach her the Kannada alphabet, promising to be a hardworking pupil. She also set herself a goal of mastering the language by the time of the Dassara festival. The writer found her a most competent pupil who worked hard at her homework.

At the time of Dassara festival, the grandmother called the writer to the pooja room and presented her a folk piece. Thereafter she did a most extraordinary thing by touching the feet of her little granddaughter. When the writer was taken aback by this gesture, she explained that it was written in the scriptures that a teacher was to be respected irrespective of gender or age. She went to add that she could now be fully independent as she was literate.

The granddaughter too realised why her grandmother had been such a fine pupil. She had brought the novel form of the serialised story 'Kashi Yatre', that the two had been reading, as a gift to her grandmother. Her grandmother opened the gift and read the title and name of the author all by herself. The writer knew at that moment that her 'pupil' had passed with flying colours.

THEME

The theme of this story is concerned with the benefits of education, particularly for women. It also brings out the fact that each educated person could become an instrument of change by helping an uneducated person become literate. The story also brings out the fact that the illiterate people realise their plight and are eager to be taught. Thus, they make fine and hardworking

pupils who work over their lessons, as did the old grandmother in the story. The story also stresses that a woman from a well-off family may have no financial constraints but does not feel independent because she is unable to manage her affairs due to lack of education. Hence, education. More than wealth, is the biggest tool for empowerment.

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. Transport system was comparatively slow during the childhood days of the writer. Which of the following options ascertains the above statement?
 - (a) People in those days had to wait for long hours to get a bus
 - (b) Transport facility could not prosper due to bad conditions of village roads
 - (c) Women walked great distances to fetch water and didn't need transport
 - (d) Morning newspapers and weekly magazines would reach people at a much later time in the day or one day late.**
2. What is 'Triveni' as mentioned in the story?
 - (a) Name of a place
 - (b) Name of a popular Hindi writer
 - (c) Name of a popular Kannada women writer**
 - (d) Name of a popular Kannada You Tube series.
3. Which of the following is NOT true about Triveni's writing?
 - (a) The style of writing was very easy and relatable
 - (b) Complex psychological problems amongst human beings would be discussed
 - (c) The satire and indictment of society is an integral part of her writing**
 - (d) Triveni's writings were easily comprehended and interesting too.
4. 'Karmaveera' is
 - (a) A Kannada weekly**
 - (b) A novel by Triveni
 - (c) Saga of great heroes
 - (d) None of the above
5. What is the ardent desire of the protagonist in the novel Kashi Yatre?
 - (a) To get an orphan girl married
 - (b) To visit Kashi and attain ultimate Punya**
 - (c) Worshipping Lord Krishna was her goal in life
 - (d) To overcome obstacles in life by becoming calm and poised
6. Why did the old lady drop the idea of going to Kashi?

- (a) She lost interest in the place
 - (b) She had no money left after arranging the wedding of her niece
 - (c) She preferred the happiness of an orphan girl over her desire to visit Kashi**
 - (d) She had to visit her ailing daughter at Varanasi
7. Why did the grandmother narrate the story of her childhood to her granddaughter?
- (a) To express the reason why she remained illiterate**
 - (b) She wanted to narrate the incidents of her childhood
 - (c) Both (a) and (b)
 - (d) None of the above
8. Why did Krishtakka give special importance to Saraswati Pooja Day?
- (a) On that day Krishtakka would achieve her goal of reading**
 - (b) On that day Krishtakka's granddaughter would become a graduate
 - (c) On that day Krishtakka would marry off the orphan girl
 - (d) On that day Krishtakka would begin her journey to Kashi
9. What message does the writer convey in the novel 'Kashi Yatre'?
- (a) No deed can be more sacred than helping the ones in need**
 - (b) Pilgrimage to Kashi must be done at least once in life
 - (c) Varanasi is the place to attain salvation
 - (d) None of the above
10. Which of the following sets of adjectives best describes the grandmother?
- (a) Beautiful, kind and affectionate
 - (b) Beautiful. Nagging and headstrong
 - (c) Beautiful, determined and dutiful**
 - (d) Beautiful, proud and inquisitive.
11. Which of the following statements is correct about the novel 'Kashi Yatre'?
- (a) Kashi Yatre is written by Triveni
 - (b) Kashi Yatre describes the struggle of an old woman wishing to visit Kashi
 - (c) Kashi Yatre deals with the theme of love for fellow beings
 - (d) All of the above**

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Describe the relationship between Avva and the narrator in the lesson, 'How I Taught My Grandmother to Read'?

Ans: The narrator loved Avva(mother) and could fathom Avva's feelings of sadness without Avva expressing it. Avva, too confident in the granddaughter and approached her for lessons in Kannada. Later she treated her with the respect bestowed by a pupil on a teacher.

2. What was the gripping part of the story 'Kashi Yatre'?

Ans: 'Kashi Yatre' narrated an old lady's ardent desire to visit Kashi. Though she had saved enough for the trip, the gripping sequence was that she gave away all her savings to a young orphan girl to facilitate her marriage with her lover.

3. What routine did Krishtakka follow on Wednesdays?

Ans: On Wednesdays, when the magazine arrived, Krishtakka forgot her work and listened to the serialised version of 'Kashi Yatre' read to her by her granddaughter, followed by a visit to the temple where she would engage in a discussion on the latest episode of the story.

4. What was the cause of the grandmother's tears?

Ans: Grandmother was in tears because she had been unable to read the serialised story of Kashi Yatre in the absence of her granddaughter. This inadequacy had brought back a sense of helplessness and dependence despite being well-off people in the community.

5. "I saw the determination on her face". Why did the writer make this remark?

Ans: The writer learned that her grandmother, then an old lady of sixty-two, wanted to learn the Kannada alphabet, to assert her independence. Though at first comical, the writer realised the seriousness of the situation on seeing the determination on grandmother's face.

6. what made the writer realise that Avva was a wonderful student?

Ans: The writer realised that Avva was a wonderful student because she started on her lessons the very next day. She would do a great deal of homework by reading, repeating, writing and reciting her lessons regularly.

7. what happened on the day of the Dassara festival?

Ans: On the day of the Dassara festival, the writer bought a copy of the just published novel 'Kashi Yatre' for her grandmother. Her grandmother called her to the Pooja room and presented her with a frock material and then bend down and touched her feet.

8. What great tradition had been reversed in the Pooja room?

Ans: In the Pooja room, unlike the traditional custom of children touching the feet of God, elders and teachers, the writer's grandmother had touched the granddaughter's feet. This was a reverse of the customary tradition.

9. What reason did grandmother give for touching the feet of her granddaughter?

Ans: Since the granddaughter had tutored grandmother in learning the Kannada alphabet, by touching the child's feet grandmother acknowledged her as her(grandmother's) teacher and for making her independent. Hence, she was deserving of respect, irrespective of her gender or age.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. 'It is very difficult to cop with the present world and its challenges without the tool of education'. Justify with reference to 'How I Taught My Grandmother to Read'.

Ans: The story hinges around the importance of education and its link with women's true emancipation. The story narrates the plight of an old lady, the narrator's grandmother, who is otherwise well-off, but feels dependent, being illiterate. Though she engages in lively debates about the choices before women, she finds herself stumped when her granddaughter goes away for a wedding and she has no one to read to her. The unease of asking a stranger to substitute for the granddaughter as a reader, makes her plight so acute that she is reduced to tears. She corrects the situation by emancipating her children and grandchildren by giving them education and by mastering Kannada script herself thereby banishing dependence.

2. Money is no sufficient to become an independent individual. Discuss with reference to the story.

Ans: In the story, the grandmother is illiterate. She is from a well-off family in the village and has no physical wants, as she is surrounded by loving family members, particularly a caring granddaughter. She is constantly faced with the problem of dependence because when her granddaughter is not around, she can not turn to anyone else to read to her the serialised story 'Kashi Yatre'.

This inadequacy makes her prioritise education above monetary independence, in the case of her children and grandchildren. She realises her full personality when she overcomes her drawback and can read the title of the novel for herself, symbolically showing her break away from dependency.

3. In the story 'How I Taught My Grandmother to Read' we realise many advantages of education. Discuss with reference to the story.

Ans: In the story. The protagonist gets true independence when she works towards getting education. It makes her realise the value of hard work as she diligently does her homework of reading, repeating, reciting and writing her tasks. It makes the grandmother realise that without education life is incomplete and handicapped.

It makes grandmother understand that teachers can be of any gender and even much younger in age. It makes grandmother understand that there is no age bar to learning and education.

4. Bring out incidents to show the high regard in which a teacher is held by the principal character.

Ans: As grandmother had longed for education all her life, the teacher as the conduit towards education and independence, was uppermost in her mind.

When she had mastered the Kannada alphabet and conquered illiteracy, she had touched the feet of her teacher, her granddaughter, feeling no inhibition in doing so, because a teacher was to be respected irrespective of gender or age. She had performed the act of feet touching in the presence of God in the Pooja room, thereby showing her true reverence towards the teacher. She had respected the profession by being a hardworking pupil and setting herself goals to achieve, making her teacher proud.