



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

CLASS: VIII	Department: ENGLISH	Date of Submission: MAY 2025
Worksheet No. 6	Topic: Children at Work QUESTION BANK	Note: To be done in the notebook

Summary of the Chapter

The story follows Velu, an eleven-year-old boy who runs away from his village to escape his abusive father. Arriving in Chennai, he meets a girl named Jaya, who earns a living as a ragpicker, collecting recyclable items from garbage bins. Hungry and directionless, Velu reluctantly joins Jaya in her work, scavenging through trash for items like paper, plastic, and glass. Jaya explains that they sell these items to a man named Jam Bazaar Jaggu, who in turn sells them to factories. Despite his initial reluctance, Velu realises that scavenging is his only option for survival in the city. He helps Jaya collect items, learning about the intricacies of their trade along the way. Through their interactions, Velu gains insight into the harsh realities of urban life and the struggles faced by children like himself who are forced to work to make ends meet.



As they navigate the city streets, Velu and Jaya encounter various challenges, including navigating traffic and finding suitable places to collect recyclables. Despite the grimness of their situation, Velu finds solace in the companionship of Jaya and the sense of purpose that their work provides.

Ultimately, the story sheds light on the plight of marginalised children who are forced into labour due to circumstances beyond their control. It highlights the resilience and resourcefulness of children like Velu and Jaya, who persevere in adversity. Through their story, the reader gains a deeper understanding of the struggles faced by ragpicker children and the importance of addressing issues related to child labour and poverty.

I. Answer the following questions:

Comprehension Check:(Page No.9)

1. Velu stood on the platform but he felt “as if he was still on a moving train.” Why?

Answer. Velu had run away from home. Being a small boy, he was naturally tired, hungry and afraid of the ticket examiner. He lay down near the compartment door. As he got off the train and stood on the platform, he felt his legs were shaky and wobbly. He could not get over the feeling that his train journey was over.

2. What made him feel miserable?

Answer. Velu was fed up with his drunkard father and hence chose to run away from home. He ran away from home around two days ago and had not eaten anything except some peanuts and a piece of jaggery. He didn't know anything about the new city which made him anxious.

3. What made him feel miserable?

Answer. Velu was fed up with his drunkard father and hence chose to run away from home. He ran away from home around two days ago and had not eaten anything except some peanuts and a piece of jaggery. He didn't know anything about the new city which made him anxious.

4. (i) Velu travelled without a ticket. Why?

(ii) How did he escape the ticket collector's attention?

Answer.

(i) Velu's drunkard father used to take away all his earnings. With no money left, he was forced to travel without a ticket.

(ii) Velu escaped the ticket collector's attention because the ticket collector did not come to that unreserved compartment.



5. Why had Velu run away from home?

Answer. Velu and his sisters had to work to fill their stomachs since they were poor. But their father was a drunkard and would beat the kids up in the evening. He used to snatch away all their money. Velu got irritated by his life and decided to run away from the home to Chennai.

6. Why did he decide to follow the strange' girl?

Answer. Velu came to Chennai after running away from his home but he had no idea about the place. He had no idea about where to go, what to do and was hungry after two days of the journey. He felt it was better and safer to follow the 'strange girl' since she had an idea about the place.

Comprehension Check (Page No.13)

1. Can Velu read Tamil and English? How do you know?

Answer. Velu could not read sign boards in English. But he read the Tamil sign on the Central jail.

2. "If you are not careful, you will soon be counting bars there," the girl said.

(i) What is she referring to?

(ii) What does she mean when she says "If you are not careful."?

(She says something a little later which means the same. Find that sentence.)

Answer.

She is referring to the Central jail.

(i) The girl asked Velu not to indulge in something stupid or else he would get caught by the police officers and will be thrown into jail.

The sentence is: 'You don't have to do anything. Just don't get caught, that's all'



3. (i) Where did the girl lead Velu to?
(ii) What did they get to eat?

Answer.

- (i) The girl led Velu to a marriage hall.
(ii) They got some food from the garbage bin. It was leftover food.

4. What work did she do? (Think of a one-word answer).

Answer. The girl worked as a rag-picker.

Comprehension Check (Page No.15)

Questions:

1. (i) What material are the 'strange' huts made out of?
(ii) Why does Velu find them strange?
2. What sort of things did Jaya and children like her collect and what did they do with those things?
3. Is Velu happy or unhappy to find work? Give a reason for your answer.



Answers:

1. (i) The 'strange' huts are made out of tin sheets, bricks, wood and plastic.
(ii) Velu finds those huts strange because in his own village the huts were made of mud and palm leaves.
2. Jaya and other children like her collected paper, plastic, and glass etc. They sold all that to a kabaddi or junk-dealer.
3. Velu is not at all happy. He had never done such a dirty job in his village.

EXERCISE

Discuss the following questions in small groups. Write their answers afterwards.

Question 1:

Is Velu a smart boy? Which instances in the text show that he is or isn't?

Answer:

No, Velu is not a smart boy. He runs away from his home to escape his father's beatings. He felt miserable at the railway station. He found himself alone and hungry. He accepted rag picking because he wasn't fit for any other job.

Question 2:

Do you think Jaya is a brave and sensitive child with a sense of humour? Find instances of her courage, kind nature and humour in the text.

Answer:

Yes, Jaya is a brave and sensitive girl. She takes pity on Velu and gets food for him. She herself earns her

livelihood bravely by collecting discarded material and selling them. She had a good sense of humour also. When she dragged him to help him cross the road she said, “What do you think you're doing? Grazing cows? If you stand around in the middle of the road like that, you'll be chutney.”

Question 3:

What one throws away as waste may be valuable to others. Do you find this sentence meaningful in the context of this story? How?

Answer:

Yes, the plastic, the paper and rusty metal sheets thrown away by the people, become valuable to ragpickers. They eat leftover food for survival. They sell junk food to some dealer to earn their livelihood.

