INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
Department of English
(2026-27)
GRADE X
'PATOL BABU, FILM STAR'

SUMMARY

The story Patol Babu, Film Star by Satyajit Ray highlights the importance of dedication, sincerity and artistic satisfaction through the life of Sitalakanto Ray, popularly known as Patol Babu.

Patol Babu, once a talented amateur theatre actor in Kanchrapara, moved to Calcutta in 1934 for a better job. Unfortunately, he lost his employment due to war-related retrenchment in 1943 and struggled financially thereafter.

One Sunday, his neighbour Nishikanto Ghosh informed him about an opportunity to act in a film starring Chanchal Kumar. Excited about returning to acting after twenty years, Patol Babu eagerly reached the shooting location. However, he was deeply disappointed when he discovered that his only dialogue was the monosyllable "Oh!". Feeling humiliated, he considered leaving the set.

Just then, he recalled his mentor Gogon Pakrashi's advice that no role was insignificant and that a true artist should extract the maximum potential from every opportunity.

Inspired, Patol Babu rehearsed his dialogue with different expressions and emotions. He even suggested reading a newspaper during his collision scene with Chanchal Kumar to make it appear natural. His performance was flawless, earning genuine appreciation from director Baren Mullick.

Filled with immense artistic satisfaction, Patol Babu quietly left the shooting location without collecting his payment. For him, the joy of performing his role perfectly was far greater than any financial reward.

The story conveys that true success lies in dedication, self-respect and excellence rather than fame, recognition or monetary gain.

KEY POINTS

Introduction to Patol Babu: Sitalakanto Ray (Patol Babu) is a fifty-year-old, humble, middle-aged man residing in Calcutta, who was once a celebrated amateur stage actor in Kanchrapara.

- **Loss of Employment:** He worked diligently for nine years at Hudson and Kimberley until war retrenchment in 1943 cost him his steady job, forcing him into a series of financial struggles and odd jobs.
- **The Sudden Opportunity:** His neighbour Nishikanto Ghosh informs him that his brother-in-law Naresh Dutt is looking for an actor matching Patol Babu's description (short, bald, middle-aged) for a film directed by Baren Mullick.
- **Arrival at Faraday House:** Excited about his acting comeback after two decades, Patol Babu arrives at the shoot venue at Faraday House at 8:30 a.m.
- **Initial Disappointment:** Patol Babu is disheartened to learn that his role is merely a pedestrian who collides with the lead actor, Chanchal Kumar, and his dialogue consists of just a single word: "Oh!".
- **Remembrance of Guru Gogon Pakrashi:** Feeling humiliated, Patol Babu remembers the golden advice of his theatre mentor, Gogon Pakrashi, who taught him that no role is small and every artist must give 100% to their performance.
- **Meticulous Rehearsal and Innovation:** Patol Babu rehearses "Oh!" with different shades of emotion in a quiet alley and suggests using a newspaper as a prop during the collision scene to enhance realism.
- **Flawless Execution:** The shot is executed perfectly in one take, earning appreciation and praise from director Baren Mullick.
- **Triumph of Dignity Over Money:** Feeling a deep sense of artistic satisfaction and pride, Patol Babu leaves the shooting site without waiting for his monetary payment, proving that true art is driven by passion rather than money.

THEME OF THE STORY "PATOL BABU, FILM STAR"

The story "Patol Babu, Film Star" by Satyajit Ray deals with profound human values and artistic ethics. The key themes explored in the story are:

1. Dignity of Labour and Art: The narrative underscores the principle that no job or artistic role is small or insignificant. Every opportunity, regardless of its scale, deserves complete commitment, sincerity, and professionalism.
2. Work is Worship / Passion Over Material Gain: True job satisfaction comes from inner self-fulfilment rather than monetary compensation or public fame. Patol Babu chooses inner satisfaction over financial payment, establishing that true art is priceless.
3. Professional Integrity and Dedication: Through Patol Babu's meticulous rehearsals for a single monosyllabic word, Ray highlights the quality of professional perfectionism and dedication to one's craft.
4. Resilience and Triumph of the Human Spirit: Despite facing decades of hardship, poverty, and personal failures, Patol Babu maintains his dignity, self-respect, and passion for life.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE TITLE

- The title "Patol Babu, Film Star" is deeply ironical yet profoundly fitting. Superficially, Patol Babu is an obscure, impoverished, middle-aged man who gets a tiny, uncredited walk-on role

with a one-word dialogue ("Oh!") in a feature film. He is nowhere close to being a commercial "film star" in the conventional sense of glamour, fame, or fortune.

However, in a deeper, artistic sense, Patol Babu emerges as a true "star". His absolute dedication, rigorous rehearsal, creative innovation, and willingness to perform a minor role with total perfection reflect the true spirit of an actor. By putting his soul into his performance and walking away without accepting payment, he rises above commercial materialism. He proves that stardom lies not in the length of a role or billing on a poster, but in the nobility of commitment and artistic excellence. Thus, the title is both a gentle irony and a sincere tribute to an unsung hero of art.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

i. What was Patol Babu's full name?

a) **Sitalakanto Ray**

b) Nishikanto Ghosh

c) Naresh Dutt

d) Baren Mullick

ii. Why did Patol Babu lose his job at Hudson and Kimberley in 1943?

a) The company went bankrupt

b) He was habitually late to work

c) He left the job to pursue acting

d) **Due to war-related retrenchment**

iii. Who brought the film offer to Patol Babu?

a) Chanchal Kumar

b) Gogon Pakrashi

c) Nishikanto Ghosh

d) Baren Mullick

iv. Where was the film shooting scheduled to take place?

a) Kanchrapara Railway Factory

b) Nepal Bhattacharjee Lane

c) Faraday House

d) Opera House

v. Who was the lead actor (hero) in the film directed by Baren Mullick?

a) Naresh Dutt

b) Chanchal Kumar

c) Jyoti

d) Sosanko

vi. What was Patol Babu's dialogue in the film?

a) "Ah!"

b) "Oh!"

c) "Ouch!"

d) "Hey!"

vii. Who was Patol Babu's theatre mentor and guru?

a) Nishikanto Ghosh

b) Naresh Dutt

c) Gogon Pakrashi

d) Sitalakanto Ray

viii. What creative suggestion did Patol Babu make to director Baren Mullick before the shot?

a) To wear a moustache

b) To hold a newspaper while walking

c) To speak a longer line

d) To postpone the shot

ix. What word of appreciation did director Baren Mullick utter after Patol Babu's shot?

a) "Jolly good!"

b) "Wonderful!"

c) "Excellent performance!"

d) "Mind-blowing!"

x. Why did Patol Babu leave the shooting set without taking his payment?

a) He forgot to ask for the money

b) He was angry with Naresh Dutt

c) He felt that money could not measure his immense artistic satisfaction

d) The director refused to pay him

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS:

i. Why was Patol Babu so excited upon receiving the film offer?

Ans. Patol Babu was thrilled because acting had been his passion during his youth in Kanchrapara. Having been away from the stage for over twenty years due to financial struggles, the film-offer felt like a dream revived, giving him a chance to display his acting talent once again.

ii. Mention the various occupations Patol Babu tried after losing his job at Hudson and Kimberley.

Ans. After losing his clerical job due to wartime retrenchment in 1943, Patol Babu tried opening a variety store, worked in a Bengali firm, worked as an insurance agent, and later assisted his cousin in a scrap iron business to earn a living.

iii. Why did Patol Babu feel disappointed when he received his dialogue?

Ans. Patol Babu felt disappointed and humiliated because his dialogue consisted of just a single monosyllabic word, "Oh!". Having been a well-known stage actor in his youth, he felt that such a trivial line was an insult to his artistic capability.

iv. What advice of his guru, Gogon Pakrashi, did Patol Babu recall during his moment of distress?

Ans. Patol Babu recalled his guru Gogon Pakrashi's advice: *"Remember, Patol, however small a part you're offered, never consider it beneath your dignity to accept it. As an artist, your aim should be to make the most of your opportunity, and squeeze the last drop of meaning out of your lines."*

v. How did Patol Babu prepare himself to deliver the single word "Oh!" effectively?

Ans. Patol Babu went to a quiet alley and practised saying "Oh!" with different emotional inflections—pain, surprise, irritation, and shock. He analysed how a person's pitch and facial expressions change depending on the context of the collision.

vi. What special touch did Patol Babu add to make his scene look more realistic?

Ans. Patol Babu suggested to director Baren Mullick that he should be reading an open newspaper while walking. This made the collision with the hero, Chanchal Kumar, appear sudden, natural, and authentic on camera.

vii. How did the director and the lead actor react to Patol Babu's performance?

Ans. Director Baren Mullick was impressed with Patol Babu's precise timing and natural expressions, praising him with "Jolly good!". The hero, Chanchal Kumar, also acknowledged that Patol Babu took the impact of the collision very smoothly.

viii. Why did Patol Babu leave the venue without collecting his remuneration?

Ans. Patol Babu felt that twenty or fifty rupees was a petty amount compared to the supreme creative joy and self-satisfaction he experienced. He left quietly to preserve his self-respect and the purity of his artistic triumph.

EXTRACT-BASED QUESTIONS

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

(1)"In 1934, he was offered higher pay in a clerical post with Hudson and Kimberley, in Calcutta, and was also lucky to find a flat in Nepal Bhattacharjee Lane. He gave up his factory job and came to Calcutta with his wife. It was quite smooth sailing for some years, and Patol Babu was in his boss's good books."

(a) Who is 'he' referred to in the above lines?

Ans. 'He' refers to Sitalakanto Ray, popularly known as Patol Babu.

(b) Why did 'he' shift to Calcutta in 1934?

Ans. He shifted to Calcutta because he was offered a higher-paying clerical job at Hudson and Kimberley.

(c) What character trait of 'he' is highlighted in this extract?

Ans. The extract highlights his punctuality, dedication, and disciplined nature ("wasn't late for a single day").

(2)"Remember, Patol, however small a role you're offered, never consider it beneath your dignity to accept it. As an artist, your aim should be to extract the full juice out of your part, and drain it dry."

(a) Who was the speaker of these words? What was his relation to Patol Babu?

Ans. The speaker was Gogon Pakrashi, who was Patol Babu's theatre mentor and guru in Kanchrapara.

(b) Why did Patol Babu recall these words at the film shooting site?

Ans. Patol Babu recalled these words when he felt humiliated and disheartened upon receiving a one-word dialogue ("Oh!").

(c) How did these words transform Patol Babu's attitude towards his work?

Ans. These words inspired him to cast away his disappointment, take his minor role seriously, and rehearse meticulously to give a flawless performance.

(3)"Patol Babu cleared his throat and tried the word 'Oh' with various inflections. Somewhere he detected a trace of pain, somewhere surprise, somewhere irritation... He was amazed to discover how much meaning could be packed into a single word."

(a) Where was Patol Babu when he was trying these inflections?

Ans. a) Patol Babu was standing in a quiet side alley near Faraday House, away from the noisy crowd.

(b) What does this exercise reveal about Patol Babu as an actor?

Ans. It reveals his deep professionalism, artistic integrity, and passion for perfection in acting.

(c) What realization did Patol Babu arrive at after practicing the word?

Ans. He realized that even a single monosyllabic word could convey a spectrum of deep emotions if spoken with the right inflection and feeling.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

i. As Patol Babu, write an article for a local journal on the topic: "Dignity of Labour and the True Spirit of an Artist".

Ans.

Dignity of Labour and the True Spirit of an Artist

By Sitalakanto Ray (Patol Babu)

Art is not a business of measuring roles by their length or financial remuneration; it is a sacred devotion of the soul. In today's commercialized world, people often measure success by money, fame, and spotlight.

However, a true artist understands that no role, however small, is beneath one's dignity. Each character in a play or film contributes to the overarching harmony of the narrative, just as every instrument plays a crucial role in a musical symphony.

When an actor steps onto the stage or before the camera, their sole purpose must be to extract the full essence of the character and present it with absolute sincerity. Personal satisfaction derived from doing a job flawlessly is the greatest reward an individual can achieve. Material wealth fades, but the pride of artistic integrity remains eternal. Let us remember that true dignity lies in dedicated effort, and every small job performed with passion elevates human nobility.

ii. Imagine you are Patol Babu. After returning home from the film shoot, write a page in your diary recording your journey from disappointment to supreme inner satisfaction.

Ans.

Monday, 20 October 2026
9:00 p.m.

Dear Diary,

Today has been one of the most unforgettable days of my life. When Nishikanto Babu brought me the film offer, my heart leaped with joy after twenty long years of silence. However, standing outside Faraday House with a paper slip reading just "Oh!", I felt crushed and humiliated. I felt like walking away from the set, believing I was being made fun of.

But then, the saintly face of my guru, Gogon Pakrashi, flashed before my eyes. I remembered his timeless words—that no role is small for a true actor. That thought transformed my entire perspective. I walked into the alley and practiced "Oh!" in twenty different ways. I even

suggested using a newspaper to make the collision scene look authentic, and director Baren Mullick agreed!

When the shot was completed, the director shouted "Jolly good!". At that moment, I felt a surge of creative triumph that no money in the world could buy. I walked away without collecting my pay, holding my head high. Today, I did not just act; I reclaimed my self-respect as a true artist.

Patol

iii. How does Satyajit Ray's story "Patol Babu, Film Star" convey a message of hope and inner self-satisfaction over material gain?

Ans. Satyajit Ray's story "Patol Babu, Film Star" is a profound celebration of artistic integrity and self-worth. In a world driven by material greed and public recognition, Patol Babu stands out as a symbol of pure passion. Despite enduring poverty, retrenchment, and decades of forgotten dreams, he does not allow commercial bitterness to corrupt his soul.

When offered a minor walk-on role with a single word dialogue, Patol Babu initially experiences heartbreak. However, he overcomes his personal grievance by rising above ego and embracing the advice of his mentor, Gogon Pakrashi. He pours his heart into rehearsing a single word, demonstrating that true satisfaction comes from giving 100% effort to one's duty. By leaving the venue without taking his payment, Patol Babu proves that spiritual and emotional fulfilment far outweighs monetary compensation. The story reassures us that when an individual performs their work with dedication, they achieve a quiet nobility that lifts them above life's adversities.

iv. Patol Babu displayed immense grit, passion, and non-compromise on quality for a minor role. Elaborate how his character inspires modern society to pursue excellence in every task.

Ans. In modern society, people frequently measure the value of work by its high pay, visibility, or social status, often neglecting quality in smaller responsibilities. Patol Babu's character serves as an inspiring counter-example to this mindset. When presented with a tiny role of a pedestrian colliding with the hero, Patol Babu did not treat it casually or carelessly.

Instead, he analysed the emotional nuances of a single word, practiced his timing in a secluded alley, and introduced creative props to elevate the scene's realism. He proved that excellence is a habit, not an act tied to external rewards. His refusal to accept payment further highlights his conviction that genuine work brings its own reward. Patol Babu inspires modern professionals and students alike to take pride in whatever task they undertake, demonstrating that sincerity, attention to detail, and passion turn ordinary labour into extraordinary art.

v. Imagine that Patol Babu had been offered a substantial payment but was instructed to perform his role without rehearsal. Would he have accepted the condition? Analyse his likely response in the light of his mentor's teachings and his personal values.

Ans. Patol Babu would most likely have refused to perform without proper rehearsal, even if he had been offered a substantial payment. He was a dedicated artist who valued perfection and sincerity more than monetary rewards. His mentor, Gogon Pakrashi, had taught him that no role was insignificant and that an artist must extract the maximum potential from every opportunity. This advice deeply influenced Patol Babu's attitude towards acting. Despite receiving only the monosyllable "Oh!", he practised it repeatedly with different expressions and emotions to deliver a convincing performance. He even suggested improvements to make the scene appear natural. His decision to leave the shooting location without collecting his payment further proves that artistic satisfaction mattered more to him than money. Thus, he would never willingly compromise the quality of his performance for financial gain.

vi. Suppose Patol Babu had quietly walked away from the shooting location immediately after discovering that his only dialogue was "Oh!". How would this decision have altered the central message of the story?

Ans. If Patol Babu had walked away after discovering that his only dialogue was "Oh!", the story would have conveyed a completely different message. His departure would have reflected disappointment, wounded pride and an inability to recognise the value of small opportunities. He would have missed the chance to rediscover his passion for acting and experience the joy of artistic achievement. More importantly, he would have failed to honour his mentor Gogon Pakrashi's valuable teaching that no role is beneath an artist's dignity. However, his actual decision to stay, rehearse sincerely and deliver a flawless performance transforms an apparently insignificant opportunity into a meaningful achievement. His inner satisfaction, despite receiving no payment, reinforces the idea that dedication and excellence are greater rewards than fame or money. Thus, his perseverance forms the very foundation of the story's inspiring message.

MIND MAP

