



## INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

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| <b>Class: IX</b> | <b>QUESTION BANK (2023-2024)</b><br><b>TOPIC: THE HOUSE IS NOT A HOME</b> | <b>SUBJECT: ENGLISH</b> |
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### Short Questions and Answers

**Q1. Why did Zan feel awkward and isolated during his first year of high school?**

**Ans:** Zan's position during his first year of high school as the junior most class made him feel awkward. The big size of the new school and the separation from his closest friends made him feel isolated.

**Q2. Why did the author miss his old teachers?**

**Ans:** The author missed his old teachers because they would encourage him to get involved in school activities so that he could meet new people. They also assured him that he would soon adjust to his new school. Their affection, warmth, and cooperation in making him feel special made the author miss them.

**Q3. What kind of day it was when a fire broke out in the author's house? What were the author and his cat doing at that time?**

**Ans:** On a cold and windy day in winter, the fire broke out. The author was at the dining-room table doing homework with the fire burning in the toy fireplace. His cat was lying over his papers, purring loudly and sometimes swatting at his pen.

**Q4. What does the author notice one Sunday afternoon? What is his mother's reaction? What does she do?**

**Ans:** One Sunday afternoon, the author smelled something strange and noticed smoke pouring in through the seams of the ceiling of his house. His mother reacted promptly and the two of them ran out into the front yard. However, she ran back into the house and brought out a small metal box full of important documents.

**Q5. What happened to the narrator's mother when she had run into the burning house?**

**Ans:** The author's mother inhaled a little smoke when she ran into the burning house. She was rescued by the firemen who put an oxygen mask on her after bringing her out. However, she was fine soon.

**Q6. How did Zan's mother save important documents from the burning house?**

**Ans:** Zan's mom risked her life by senselessly rushing into a burning house, saving important documents from the flames. Zan's mom undeniably succeeded with this task after she brought out a box that held all of those documents just before they were consumed.

**Q7. Why did Zan's mother run back into the house after having saved the important documents?**

**Or**

**"I knew what she was after". Why does Zan make this observation?**

**Ans:** Zan's mother ran back to save the pictures and letters of his father who had died when Zan was young. Zan knew that these memories of her husband were extremely precious for her and she did not want them to go up in flames.

**Q8. Why did Zan try to run after his mother and why did the fireman hold him back?**

**Ans:** Zan tried to run after his mother because he was afraid of losing her. He was afraid that she might get burnt in the fire. The fireman held him back because Zan's act was very rash and illogical. The lie could not have saved his mother and would have risked his life as well.

**Q9. Who brought out Zan's mother from the burning house? Why was an oxygen mask put on her?**

**Ans:** A fireman brought Zan's mother out of the burning house. She had inhaled a little smoke and so he rushed her to the truck and put an oxygen mask on her to facilitate better breathing.

**Q10. When did the author realise that his cat was missing?**

**Ans:** After five hours of a raging fire that burnt down the author's house almost completely, he realised that his cat was missing. He had not seen her all this while and realised to his horror that she was nowhere to be found.

**Q11. Why does the narrator say, "I was suffering loss, big time"?**

**Ans:** The author feels that he was suffering loss, big time because he had lost his old dear school and teachers, he had lost his house to the fire, and now he had lost his dear cat whom he loved dearly.

**Q12. Why does Zan break down in tears after the fire?**

**Ans:** After losing everything in the fire, Zan cries and it's possibly because he can no longer hold it all in. He has recently faced losses such as his old school, his house, and even his cat. The tears are an emotional reaction from a teenager who is struggling to handle adjustment problems.

**Q13. In what condition does the author go to school after the fire incident?**

**Ans:** After the fire incident, the author goes to school wearing the dress that he had worn to church on Sunday morning and the tennis shoes that he had borrowed from his aunt. His shoes, clothes, books, homework, and backpack had been destroyed in the fire.

**Q14. Why is the author deeply embarrassed the next day in school? Which words show his fear and insecurity?**

**Ans:** The author is embarrassed because he feels that his appearance is weird without uniform, books and a backpack. His fear and insecurity are shown by the words: “Was I destined to be an outcast and geek all my life?”.

**Q15. Why did the author dislike growing up?**

**Ans:** The author disliked growing up because he felt that growing up had brought so many losses with it. He had lost his old school, his friends, his house and most of all his dear pet cat.

**Q16. What is surreal? Why does the author feel that everything was surreal?**

**Ans:** Surreal means something strange or unreal. The author felt that everything was surreal because too many unfortunate things had happened to him – his house was burnt down, his cat was lost, his mother was left with no money and he had no books, shoes, clothes and school uniform. His secure zone had been ripped away suddenly and the changes were too much and too many for him to handle.

**Q17. What was the extent of the damage caused by the fire?**

**Ans:** All belongings except photo albums, documents and some personal items had got burnt in the fire. Whatever remained had got destroyed by the water and chemicals that had been used to put out the fire.

**Q18. The author’s heart ached for his cat but there was no time to grieve. Why? The author felt pain at the loss of his cat but life had to move on.**

**Ans:** He could not grieve as a new place to live had to be found and new clothes had to be bought for school.

**Q19. Why did Zan’s mother have to borrow money from his grandparents?**

**Ans:** Zan’s mother had to borrow money from his grandparents because her credit cards, cash and even identification that was needed to draw money from the bank had got burnt up in the fire. She had to rent a new place, buy new clothes for Zan and resettle quickly. She did not have time to wait for the recovery of her lost documents till then.

**Q20. Why did the narrator go over to his burnt house even though they had rented an apartment nearby?**

**Ans:** The protagonist went back to his burned house when he had the luxury option of a rented apartment nearby because he hoped his cat would be found somewhere. The protagonist would watch the progress of the removal, but he would not find his cat.

**Q21. What thoughts crossed Zan’s mind when he missed his cat?**

**Ans:** Zan thought of his cat as the vulnerable little kitten who would tag along after him in the morning. He thought of how she would climb up his robe and crawl into his pocket to fall sleep.

**Q22. How and why were people acting stranger than usual at Zan’s school?**

**Ans:** When Zan was getting ready for gym class at his locker, people were gathering around him asking him to hurry up. This was stranger than usual as they almost seemed to shove him into the gym. They behaved so because they had put up a surprise collection of school supplies and clothes etc for Zan in the gym.

**Q23. What help did the author get from his schoolmates after the fire accident?**

**Or**

**What kind of gesture did Zan's schoolmates show to him?**

**Ans:** The author's schoolmates helped him by getting him school supplies, notebooks, and different clothes – jeans, tops sweatshirts. Those who had never spoken to him introduced themselves and many invited him to their homes.

**Q24. Why was the author overcome by emotions when he got help from his schoolmates?**

**Ans:** The author was overcome by emotions when he got help from his schoolmates because they had gone out of their way to bring him the things he needed. He was touched by their genuine outpouring of concern.

**Q25. When does the author say "It was like Christmas"? Why?**

**Ans:** The author says this when he gets inside the gym to see the surprise load of school supplies and different clothes on the big table only for him. This seemed like Christmas because these assorted gifts were similar to the surprise gifts that one gets from loved ones on Christmas.

**Q26. What made the author finally breathe a sigh of relief?**

**Ans:** The thought for the first time that things were going to be okay made the author finally breathe a sigh of relief. He had made friends in the new school who had a genuine concern for him.

**Q27. Why was it different for Zan to see his house getting rebuilt? How did the fire help him?**

**Ans:** It was different to see his house getting rebuilt because Zan wasn't alone this time. Two of his new friends from school were with him. The fire had helped him by diverting his mind away from his feelings of insecurity. He now opened up to the wonderful people around.

**Q28. Where was the cat after the fire? Who brings it back and how?**

**Or**

**How did Zan get back his beloved cat?**

**Ans:** The cat had been so freaked by the fire that she had run away over a mile away. A woman brings her back by locating the owners through different sources because the phone number etched on the cat's collar could not be reached as it had been disconnected due to the fire.

**Q29. How did the author's feelings of loss and tragedy seem to diminish?**

**Ans:** The author felt gratitude for life, his new friends, the kindness of the woman who had rescued his cat and certainly for the life of his beautiful cat. This gratitude diminished his feelings of loss and tragedy.

**Q.30. What problem does the author face when he moves to a new school?**

**Ans.** In the junior school, he was the head boy of his class. He was very close to all the teachers. He enjoyed the seniority. But when he joins a new school at senior level, he faces many problems. This school was twice as big as his old school. He felt very isolated.

**Q.31. Even after taking admission in a new school, why did the author keep visit his teachers at the old school**

**Ans.** He felt very alone in his new school. It was a big school, and he didn't know anyone. All of his friends had gone to other schools. However, the teachers at the previous school were close to him. So he visited often.

**Q.32. What was the effect of the smoke on the author's mother?**

**Ans.** Their house got a big fire. In a crazed state, she ran inside the house to get the pictures of her dead husband. The second time also she rushed inside. But this time she inhaled smoke. A fireman rescued her from inside the house.

**Q33. What does the author notice one Sunday afternoon? What is his mother's reaction? What does she do?**

**Ans.** The author, while doing his homework, noticed the smoke pouring in through the seams of the ceiling. The room was filled with the smoke very quickly. The author and his mother ran outside to save their life. His mother ran out of the house with a small metal box full of important documents. She became so crazy that she rushed back to the house just after dropping the box.

**Q34. Why is the author deeply embarrassed the next day in school? Which words show his fear and insecurity?**

**Ans.** The author was full of remorse as he was left with nothing. He didn't have a proper dress and study material. He had no backpack. He had a feeling of insecurity. All things appeared strange to him. He was shocked deeply and seemed frustrated. The words uttered by him "Was I destined to be an outcast and a geek all my life? I didn't want to grow up, change or have to handle life, if it was to going to be this way. I just wanted to curl up and die". These words reveal his fear and insecurity.

**Q35. What was the author's mother doing on a Sunday afternoon?**

**Ans.** It was blowing cold on that Sunday afternoon. And the author was doing homework at the dining table. His mother was fuelling the fire at the fireplace to keep the room warm.

**Q36. How did Zan's mother save important documents from the burning house?**

**Ans.** When the house caught fire, the narrator and his mother were in the house. Zan's mother ran out of the house carrying a small metal box full of important documents. She again ran back to bring back her husband's pictures and letters.

**Q37. Why did the firemen hold the author?**

**Ans.** The author loved his mother too much. He saw his mother running into the burning house. He got emotionally charged out and trying to follow her. The fireman stopped him forcefully, otherwise, he would have jumped into the fire he could have lost his life.

**Q38. Which three things made the author's house a home?**

**Ans.** The fire tragedy changed the author's life. He was so depressed that he did not want to grow up and wanted to die. But his reunion with his cat, his new friends in the school and his new house made his house 'a home' where he could live.

### **Long Answer Questions**

**Q1. The cat and the author are very fond of each other. How has this been shown in the story?**

**Ans:** The red tabby cat had been rescued by the author when she was a helpless kitten. She would never be far from him and knew that he was the one responsible for giving her a good life. He would get up early in the morning and teasingly disturb her. She would then tag along after him, climb up his robe and crawl into his pocket to fall asleep. Zan loved her so much that he would allow the cat to sit over his papers and swat at his pen while he did his homework. He missed her terribly after losing her and would go over to watch the clearing of debris with the hope to find her somewhere. When she was restored back to Zan, the cat purred as happily as the author felt elated to get her back. Even the woman who rescued the cat knew that she was loved and sorely missed.

**Q2. What actions of the schoolmates change the author's understanding of life and people, and comfort him emotionally? How does his loneliness vanish and how does he start participating in life?**

**Or**

**What role did Zan's school play in normalising his life after the fire accident?**

**Ans:** After the loss of all his belongings in the fire that ravaged his house, Zan, the narrator, started feeling depressed and embarrassed. At this time, the friendly and helpful actions of his schoolmates changed his understanding of life and people and comforted him emotionally. His schoolmates took up a collection and bought him school supplies, notebooks, and all kinds of clothes – jeans, tops, and sweats etc. Those who had never spoken to him before came up to him and introduced themselves. Many invited him to their houses. Their genuine concern touched Zan. He felt relieved and began to believe that everything would be okay. He stopped focusing on his feelings of insecurity and opened up to all the wonderful people around him. The company of his new friends and sharing joys with them made his loneliness vanish and reconnected him to life.

**Q3. What is the meaning of "My cat was back and so was I"? Had the author gone anywhere? Why does he say that he is also back?**

**Ans:** Zan's cat was brought back home after more than a month of absence. She had run away due to fear of fire and could not be brought back early as her collar had those phone numbers that had got disconnected due to the fire. Zan too was back to his normal cheerful life. His absence was emotional unlike the physical absence of his cat. Zan says that he is also back since he wants to point out the return of his faith in the goodness of life. He had drifted away from joys of friendship and comfort of familiarity on moving to a new school. By the time his cat returned, his gratitude for life had also returned in the company of new friends.

**Q4. Describe the fire tragedy that struck Zan’s house?**

**Ans:** What was stoked to keep the house nice and warm, triggered a major fire break out that turned Zan’s house to cinders and left him and his mother devastated.

At first, Zan only smelled something strange but soon noticed smoke pouring in through the seams of the ceiling. The smoke filled the room quickly and Zan and his mother could barely see.

Somehow, they groped their way to the front door and ran out into the front yard.

No sooner had they made their way outside than the whole roof was engulfed in flames, and the fire spread quickly. Zan ran to his neighbours to call the fire department and his mother ran back into the house and soon came out carrying a small metal box full of important documents. She rushed back into the house to retrieve his husband’s pictures and letters – the only things she had to remember him by.

Zan tried to run after her but was stopped by a fireman. The fire truck had already arrived and was busy dousing the fire. Some firefighters ran into the house and safely brought out Zan’s mother and gave her an oxygen mask because she had inhaled smoke.

It took five hours to finally put out the fire but the house was almost completely burnt and there was the sign of Zan’s pet cat. Zan feared that she was burnt alive.

**Q5. What values in Zan’s mother endeared him to her?**

**Ans:** Zan’s mother was his sole support after the death of his father. She carried out her responsibilities as a single parent with complete devotion. Zan loved her a lot and obeyed all that she asked him to do because he respected her for her value of devotion towards him. He willingly changed school and tried to adjust to the new environment because he knew his mother was doing everything for his good. She valued memories and knew the significance of the letters and pictures of her late husband. She risked her life to recover these things and thus displayed the value of courage. Her son, Zan, acknowledged this value when he evaluated the few things that could be saved from the fire, all because of his mother’s courage. She possessed the value of emotional strength and hence quickly brought back normalcy to Zan’s life by sending him to school the next day after the fire incident. Zan admired her because of her positive values both as a mother and as a human being. That is why he rushed after her to save her from the fire, without worrying about his own safety, because he did not want to lose her at any cost.

**Q.6. Describe the author’s experience at school after the fire tragedy.**

**Ans.**

The author had just enrolled in a new school, and he was facing a big problem: making himself fit in. Within days, his house caught on fire, destroying his school bag and shoes.

The next day he went to school. He was around school like a lifelong wanderer, despite having been there only one day. Everything seemed strange the second time around. Again, he didn’t know what was going to happen to him. That night after returning from school, he fell apart and felt completely lost in his life.

“The next day when he went to school,” he said, “he found a strange atmosphere all around. People were getting together all around him. They had collected money for him and arranged school supplies and clothing for him. This changed his vision of life once again.”

**Q7. Sometimes, unexpected trouble strikes our life. But people around us come to our aid. Describe this with reference to the lesson ‘A House Is Not a Home’.**

**Ans.**

In 'A House Is Not a Home,' the narrator falls into deep trouble. His home is burned down in a fire. He also has to move to a new rented house. Despite joining a new school, he still feels isolated. But very soon, all his problem comes to an end. His schoolmates contribute all the things he needs, including books and clothes. Further, he is greatly sad about the loss of his pet cat. A woman in the neighbourhood locates his cat and gives it to him. The narrator feels very happy. He feels that normalcy had been restored in his life. Thus, people around him played a big role in making him happy again.

**Q8. The value of a person in one's surrounding is truly known in one's hardship. Comment with reference to the story 'A House is not a Home'.**

**Ans.** People in one's surroundings are sometimes indifferent and less co-operative. They keep busy in their own business but they are truly known in one's hardship when they come forward to support whole-heartedly to the sufferer. In the story 'A House is not a Home', the author felt uncomfortable in the new school because he was not familiar with the school environment, teachers and classmates. When he lost each and everything in the fire, he felt insecure and in this harsh time, his schoolmates introduced themselves to him. They all contributed and gifted his school supplies. As everyone was aware of his plight, all the teachers knew about his hardship. Thus the sympathy and co-operation in school comforted him. Now his opinion changed about his new school and he started making friends.

**Q9. The lady who handed over Zan's cat to him did a noble deed. Write a few reasons to appreciate her deed.**

**Ans.** The author loved his cat very much. He lost his cat when his house caught fire. He tried to find the cat but did not get her. After a month, a woman came to him with his cat. He could not believe it. He grabbed his cat and started jumping. The wonderful woman somehow handed over his cat to him. She tried her best to find the owner of the cat. On seeing the collar and the phone number written on it, she decided that the cat was loved and missed. She was a good lady. She realized the feeling of the owner of the cat. The author called her wonderful as getting his cat back was no less than wonder for him. Really, she did a noble deed.

**Q10. Zan's life, one month after the fire incident, was happier than his earlier life. Discuss a few reasons for this change.**

**Ans.** Zan is a schoolboy who moves from Junior school to High School. He finds some initial problems in adjusting to life in the new school. Unfortunately, his house gets burned down in a fire and he is in deep trouble. But his schoolmates help him out by providing everything to him. A neighbour also greatly increases his joy by helping him to find his lost cat. So the narrator manages to become happy again after facing a lot of troubles. The affection he gets from many people touched him. He is able to get rid of his insecurity and opens up to others. A new chapter has opened in his life.

**Q11. How is a Home different from a House? Explain with reference to the lesson 'A House Is Not a Home'.**

**Ans.** Life without love is not life. Human relationship is based on love. The title itself indicates it clearly that a house is not a home without love. The author had to face adverse circumstances in his life. He was a fatherless boy. He led a satisfactory life with his old friends and teachers. But when he changed his school, he could not adjust himself in the new environment. He felt alienated. Later, on his house caught fire and he lost all the things including his cat. He started feeling dejected and isolated. Life had no interest in him any more. He started building a new house. But it was not home, as a house is a home only when there are love and happiness. The author did not have any



attachment to the new house. His reunion with his cat, his new friends and the new house made his house a home.

**Q12. The teachers and students in the school were aware of Zan's plight. What did they do to help him?**

**Ans.**

With the help of friends, the author rebuilt his life. He had a rough childhood with no father and no mother to care for him. They had a chat and he appreciated their efforts. Then his house caught fire and they lost everything.

He, in his new school, did not feel good. He kept visiting his old school and teachers. His life had become dull. He had lost all hopes to live. When he visited his new school the next day, he found the atmosphere strange. His new friends provided him with all the necessary items. They invited him to their homes. All this contributed a lot to the author. He lost the feeling of isolation, dejection and insecurity. He started leading a happy life again.

### **Extract Based Questions**

**Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow.**

**(I)**

*She was never far from me. I had rescued her when she was a kitten, and somehow she knew that I was the one responsible for giving her 'the good life'.*

**1. Who is 'I' in these lines? Whom had he rescued?**

**Ans:** 'I' in these lines is the author, Zan. He had rescued a red tabby cat when she was still a kitten.

**2. Why was 'she' never far from the speaker?**

**Ans:** She was never far from the speaker, Zan, because he loved her a lot and took good care of her. She was his pet and he tended to all her needs for food, play and love. She, in turn, responded to love with loyalty.

**3. What does the speaker mean by 'good life'?**

**Ans:** 'Good Life', according to the speaker, Zan, means a life where the pet cat was fed well, pampered, and taken care of in every way.

**4. How did 'she' know that the speaker was the one responsible for giving her 'a good life'?**

**Ans:** She, the red tabby cat, knew that Zan was responsible for giving her a good life because he was quite liberal with her. He allowed her to lie over his papers and punch at his pen while he did homework.

**(II)**

*He held on to me while other firefighters ran into the house. He knew that I wasn't acting very logically and that if he were to let go, I'd run. He was right.*

**1. Who held on to whom and why?**

**Ans:** One of the firefighters held on to Zan because he tried to run after his mother who was inside their burning house.

**2. Why did the other firefighters run into the house?**

**Ans:** The other firefighters ran into the house to rescue Zan's mother.

**3. 'He was right'. Why?**

**Ans:** The firefighter was right, since Zan would have run after his mother into the burning house. However, if the firefighter had left him outside, he would have endangered his life too.

**4. Which trait of the speaker do these lines highlight?**

**Ans:** The speaker's abundant love for his mother and his strong emotional dependence on her is highlighted here.

**(III)**

*Regardless, I had to go. We piled into the car with just the clothes on our backs and a few of the fireman's blankets and made our way to my grandparents' house to spend the night.*

**1. Who is the speaker? Where did he have to go and why?**

**Ans:** The speaker is Zan and he had to go to his Grandparent's house since his house had been burnt down and was unsafe to stay in even after the firefighters had doused the fire.

**2. Who does 'we' stand for?**

**Ans:** "We" stands for Zan and his mother.

**3. Why did they take 'so few' belongings with them?**

**Ans:** They took so few belongings with them because everything they owned had got burnt down in the house.

**4. "Regardless, I had to go". Why does the speaker say this?**

**Ans:** The speaker, Zan, says this because he had to go without knowing whether his cat was dead or alive. This was a crisis situation, and his priority was to ensure his and his mother's safety and to start life fresh.

**(IV)**

*Everyone in the high school, including my teachers, was aware of my plight. I was embarrassed as if somehow I were responsible. What a way to start off at a new school! This was not the kind of attention I was looking for.*

**1. Who is the speaker of these lines and what was his plight?**

**Ans:** The speaker is Zan and his plight was that his house had been burnt down in the fire. All his belongings – his clothes, his books, his backpack – everything had been destroyed.

**2. Why was he embarrassed?**

**Ans:** He was embarrassed because he held himself responsible for his shabby appearance at school. He did not have a proper dress, shoes, or even backpack like other children.

**3. Why was he uncomfortable about starting school in this manner?**

**Ans:** He was uncomfortable about starting school in this manner because he felt uncomfortable without proper clothes, shoes and a backpack.

**4. Why didn't he want this kind of attention?**

**Ans:** He had been ahead of his class in the previous school and was loved by his teachers for his grades. But now he was embarrassed as he had to attend school in awkward clothes and without notebooks or bag.

(V)

*There was a big table set up with all kinds of stuff on it, just for me. They had taken up a collection and bought me school supplies...*

**1. Who is the speaker and who are 'they' in these lines?**

**Ans:** Zan is the speaker and 'they' are his new schoolmates.

**2. Where was the big table?**

**Ans:** The big table was in the school gym.

**3. Why had the collection been taken up?**

**Ans:** The collection had been taken up to help Zan after he had lost all his belongings in the fire that had burnt his house.

**4. What was the speaker's response to this gesture?**

**Ans:** The speaker, Zan was overwhelmed by this gesture and felt as if the school supplies, notebooks, and different clothes kept on the table for him, were like Christmas gifts.

