



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

Class: IX	Department: ENGLISH	2025-26
COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH	Topic: KEEPING IT FROM HAROLD	QUESTION BANK

About the Author

P. G. Wodehouse was a very famous comic writer of 20th Century in English language, especially for his Jeeves collections. He owns variety of genres such as fiction, short stories, dramas, etc. that are so engrossing and difficult to keep it down.

Introduction

The story is woven around the central idea of difference of opinion between the parents and their child. Most parents unnecessarily worry about the growth and development of their child and go all lengths to ensure that their child does not have to face anything bad, objectionable, or hurtful in life. They keep worrying themselves to death as to what is appropriate for their child to learn and know about. Although they would want him/her to be truthful, they do not mind telling lies themselves just to closely guard certain 'secrets' they think their child must not know. In doing so, they often end up teaching their child wrong values or depriving him/her of something he/she might have reasons to be proud of. In short, the story suggests that children must be allowed to grow up as naturally as possible and should be told that there is nothing undignified about their parents' professions or economic status. Besides excellence in academics, a lot of self-esteem should be instilled into them.

Summary

Mr. and Mrs. Bramble were immensely proud of their son Harold. Harold is ten years old, a prodigy and an exceptional child by all standards. He is an intellectual and had won prizes in competitions. He is very classy and so superior that even his parents developed a complex. Harold is a model of an excellent behaviour, and he respected his parents a lot.

Mr. Bramble is a professional boxer and has been proud of his fame but ever since Harold was born, he had kept this a secret. Harold is told that his father is a commercial traveller. Mr. Bramble, who had thrived on his feats in the boxing ring, trembled to see his name in print now. Both Mr. and Mrs. Bramble are secretly a little afraid of their son and did not wish to fall in his esteem.

Mr. Bramble is already thirty-one years old, and he has decided to have his last boxing match and then retire. A week away, Bill Bramble has scheduled to have his last fight, the twenty-round contest with American Murphy at the National Sporting Club, for which he has been training at the White Hart down the road. Mrs. Bramble sends Harold for a walk, but she is surprised to see her husband and her brother, Major Percy Stokes in the doorway.

She is shocked to know that Bill has decided not to fight and there was lot of discussions regarding his decision with Percy Stokes.

Mrs. Bramble makes it clear that this is unacceptable to her, even if she did not like her husband's profession. Bill Bramble is supposed to win five hundred pounds, and one hundred and twenty, even if he lost. This money is very much needed to cater Harold's education. The trainer, Jerry Fisher, enters at this juncture and he is also shocked to discover that Mr. Bramble decided to quit his match. Jerry begged, pleaded, cried, and tempted Bill but he is steadfast in his decision because this fight would be covered by all the newspapers and then Harold would discover this secret. Tempers are running high, and at this critical moment, Harold makes his entry. Mr. Jerry Fisher feels cheated and wants his revenge. So, he spills the beans to Harold, despite all opposition. Bill feels let down in front of his son and told him frankly that he is not a man of wrath but just a professional boxer and he is withdrawing from his last match.

Harold, who has been watching it all, suddenly surprises everyone. He is angry with his parents for hiding this secret, but the content of his speech took everyone's breath away.

Harold reveals that he has been betting his pocket money on the defeat of Jimmy Murphy and his friends would have been awfully proud of him, had they known that his father is 'Young Porky'. He even requested for a photograph of his father to impress his friends.

This talk encourages Jerry Fisher and Bill, and he goes to complete his training. Harold reverts to playing games with his mother and continues with his affectionate chat.

MCQs:

1. How did Harold come to know that his father was a boxer?

- (i) Jerry Fisher told Harold the truth
- (ii) His mother told Harold the truth
- (iii) Major Percy told Harold the truth
- (iv) None of the Above

2. How much was Bramble going to get if he wins the match?

- (i) 130 pounds
- (ii) 420 pounds
- (iii) 500 pounds
- (iv) 730 pounds

3. What is Harold's friend name with whom he had betted?

- (i) Percy Stokes
- (ii) Jerry Fisher
- (iii) Young Porky
- (iv) Dicky Saunders

4. Which is of the following statement is not true about Mr. Bramble?

- (i) He was thirty-one years old.
- (ii) He was a part time commercial traveller.
- (iii) He had athletic built body.
- (iv) He was a very devoted and an overprotective father.

5. Who tries to convince Bill to reconsider the decision to stop fighting?

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- (i) Percy Stokes
- (ii) Jerry Fisher**
- (iii) Young Porky
- (iv) Dicky Saunders

6. 'Certainly he was very persuasive. Mr. Bramble had fallen in with the suggestions without demur.'
In this line, what do you mean by 'without demur'?

- (i) Without happiness
- (ii) Without objection**
- (iii) Without delay
- (iv) getting ready

7. Why is Mrs. Bramble anxious?

- (i) About her son's education
- (ii) About her son's health
- (iii) About her husband's business**
- (iv) About her cousin's problems

8. Harold had defied the laws of heredity by ____ .

- (i) becoming a sportsperson
- (ii) being good at academics**
- (iii) being well-built and muscular
- (iv) respecting his parents

Read the given extracts and answer the questions that follow:

Question.1. "Goodness know I've never liked your profession, Bill, but there is this to be said for it, that it's earned you good money and made it possible for us to give Harold as good an education as any duke ever had, I'm sure."

What profession is being talked about ?

Who is the speaker?

What has prompted the speaker to say this ?

Answers:

The profession that is being talked about is boxing.

Mrs. Bramble is the speaker.

Mr. Bramble's refusal to fight his opponent has prompted the speaker to say this.

Question.2. "Before him on the tablecloth lay an open book. His powerful brain was plainly busy."

Who is he referred to here?

What kind of person he is?

Give the meaning of 'plainly'.

Answers:

He is Harold, Mr. Bramble's son.

He is a studious lad, an intellectual type.

'clearly'

Question.3. Mrs. Bramble took the book. “Yes, mother will hear you, precious.”

What is unusual in Mrs. Bramble’s speech?

What do you think of the speaker?

Give the meaning of ‘precious’.

Answers:

Her referring to herself in the third person is unusual.

The speaker, Mrs. Bramble, is a very loving and caring mother.
‘dear’.

Question.4. A slight frown marred the smoothness of Harold Bramble’s brow.

What annoyed Harold?

What did he want?

Give the meaning of ‘marred’.

Answers:

His mother addressed Harold as if he were a baby. This annoyed him.

He wanted to be treated as a grown-up boy.

‘spoiled appearance’

Question.5. “You do study so hard, dearie, you’ll give yourself a headache. Why don’t you take a nice walk by the river for half an hour, and come back nice and fresh?”

Who is the speaker?

What tells you that she is a caring mother?

What do you mean by ‘hard’ ?

Answers:

Mrs. Bramble is the speaker/ Harold’s mother.

She is a caring mother as she wants her son to remain active physically and mentally.
‘too much’.

Question.6. “Certainly, he was very persuasive. Mr. Bramble had fallen in with the suggestion without demur. In private life, he was the mildest and most obliging of men, and always yielded to everybody. The very naming of Harold had caused a sacrifice on his part.”

How was Mr. Bramble in life?

What does ‘demur’ mean?

Answers:

He was quite mild and obliging.

Saying something that one does not agree with/ to object something.

Question.7. “Percy, if you don’t keep quiet, I’ll forget I’m your sister and let you have one. What do you mean, Bill, you’ve come home? Isn’t there going to be the fight next week, after all? ...The fight’s over... said the unsuppressed Major, joyfully, and Bill’s won, with – me seconding him.”

Why was Mrs. Bramble angry ?

What had Bill told her?

Give the meaning of 'unsuppressed'.

Answers:

Mrs. Bramble was angry at her husband for his withdrawal of the match which in turn would affect the prize money that is essential for their son's education.

Bill had told her that Mr. Bramble had come back with the idea of not to fight.

'not preventing oneself to express feelings'.

Question.8. *"I hope you are keeping it from Harold. It is the least you can do".*

Who is the speaker here?

What suggestion does he make to Mrs. Bramble?

Give the meaning of 'keeping' in the present context.

Answers:

Mrs. Bramble's brother, Major Percy Stokes, is the speaker here.

His suggestion is that Harold should not be told the fact of his father being a boxer.

'hiding'.

Short Answers.

Question.1. Why did Mrs. Bramble address her son as "dearie"?

Answer. Mrs. Bramble was very proud of her son Harold, As Harold was a genius and, different from other ordinary children. Out of love and pride she addresses him as 'dearie'.

Question.2. Bill and his wife were a little afraid of their wonderful child'. Why?

Or

'His very perfection had led to a series of 'evasions' on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Bramble. Explain.

Answer. Bill and his wife knew that their son Harold was a child prodigy. He was excellent in his studies and behaviour. Both were made to believe that Harold would be ashamed to know that his father was a boxer. So, they were a bit afraid of him. They continued to hide the truth from Harold.

Question.3. Why did Bill have fluctuating thoughts regarding his profession?

Answer. Bill came to believe that Harold would not be happy to know that his father was a professional boxer. Harold might feel embarrassed and ashamed of him. So, Bill decided to give up boxing and try out a job as an instructor at some school or college.

Question.4. Which event was Mrs. Bramble waiting for that could end all her anxieties?

Answer. Mrs. Bramble was waiting for the last fight her husband would have with Murphy. Even if Mr. Bramble would lose, he was to get a hundred and twenty pounds. That amount, Mrs. Bramble thought, would end all her worries and, enable them to lead a comfortable life.

Question.5. What did Mr. Bramble hide from Harold?

Answer. He began to hide his profession lest Harold should feel embarrassed about it. He lied to the boy that he was a firm's touring representative.

Question.6. Why did Bill stop Jerry from uttering anything?

Answer. Jerry Fisher, Bill's trainer, was angry at Bill's refusal to fight. So, he wanted to retaliate by telling

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Bill's secret to the child Harold. As Bill did not want his son Harold to know that he was a professional boxer, he stopped Jerry from uttering anything.

Question.7. Why did Bill decide not to fight with Murphy?

Answer. Bill was keeping his profession from Harold. He was reluctant to be in the limelight as it could let the cat out of the bag. When Percy explained to him that his fight with Murphy would be a national affair, he realized that it could become a media frenzy and therefore can reveal his true identity to Harold. Bill couldn't bear this very possibility and decided to quit his last fight with American Murphy even though it could have provided for Harold's education.

Question.8. How did Harold react on learning about his father's profession?

Answer. Harold was at first angry to learn that he was not told that he was the son of a famous boxer, Young Porky. Then he felt sad that if he knew who he was, no one at school would have made fun of him by calling him 'Goggles'.

Question.9. What good did it bring when the truth was disclosed?

Answer. Jerry Fisher, Bill's trainer, decided to reveal Harold the secret of his father being a professional boxer. He met Harold and revealed the secret. Harold felt proud of being the son of a great boxer. He was angry at the fact that he was deprived of the glory and honour for a long time.

Question.10. Who was Jerry Fisher? How did he persuade Bill to take the fight?

Answer. Jerry Fisher was the trainer of Bill Bramble. He was angry with Bill for deciding not to fight. He tried to convince him that he would earn a lot of money if he fought. He said he should also think of all the troubles he had gone through to earn name and fame as a boxer.

Question.11. What was the irony found in the story?

Answer: The irony is that everybody assumed Harold to be disappointed and humiliated if he gets to know the truth but, to everyone's surprise, he felt it to be a privilege to be the son of a great boxer.

Question. 13. What is the message of the lesson? What do you learn from the lesson?

Answer: Keeping it from Harold throws light on the generation gap and highlights the need of good communication and understanding in a family. They had to tell a series of lies to their child and miserably failed to read the mindset of Harold's generation and their child's heart. A healthy communication eases all the possible tensions in a family and doesn't allow any generation gap.

Question.14. What was Mrs. Bramble's constant source of amazement?

Answer. It was a constant source of amazement to Mrs. Bramble that she should have brought such a prodigy as Harold into the world. Harold was different from other children and his father. He was devoted to his books and excelled in academics.

Question.15. What was Bill Bramble's real profession? What did they tell Harold?

Answer. Bill Bramble was a professional boxer. He was the 'poster boy' of the people of London and was known for his left hook. However, they had told Harold that Bill was a commercial traveller.

Question.16. 'A week from tonight would see the end of all her anxieties.' What were Mrs. Bramble's anxieties and how would they end?

Answer. The fact that her son Harold did not know that his father was a professional boxer was the cause of her anxiety. In a week's time Bill was going to participate in his last fight and after that they wouldn't need to hide anything from Harold so her tension would end then.

Question.17. How did the birth of Harold change Brambles' life?

Answer. Before the birth of Harold, Mr. Bramble had been proud of being a professional boxer. But after having Harold, a child prodigy, in their life, they thought that the profession of boxing was too disgraceful for their son, so they hid Mr. Bramble's profession from him.

Question.18. What change did Harold bring to his father's professional life?

Answer: Mr. Bramble, his father use to be proud and fight with all due publicity. After Harold is born, he becomes cautious and keeps it all hidden assuming it would affect Harold's esteem. He was terrified and ashamed of his profession and hid it since Harold was born. But when Harold got to know the truth, his very joy and pride of his father encouraged Mr. Bramble and changed his perception on his profession that he decided to continue his boxing.

Question 19. Did Harold accept the fact that his father is a great boxer?

Answer: Harold is completely positive and in fact proud that his father is a celebrity. He was even betting with his friends about the match without even knowing that 'Young Porky' his father. When he acknowledged the truth, he was totally thrilled and proud of the fact.

Question 20. Who breaks the ice to Harold? What does it mean?

Answer: Jerry Fisher, the coach breaks the ice. He is the one who reveals the truth about Mr. Brumble's profession.

Answer the following value-based questions in 80-100 words each.

Question.1. One should take pride in one's profession. Comment upon the statement in the context of the story 'Keeping It from Harold'.

Or

Are Mrs. and Mr. Bramble justified in not taking pride in their profession. Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer. You should really take pride in your profession when it is ethically right. Only then can others give you respect and recognition. Those who look down upon their profession remain guilt-ridden and a failure. In the story 'Keeping It from Harold' both Mrs. and Mr. Bramble are guilty of undermining the profession of boxing. Mr. Bramble is a famous boxer, known as "Young Porky". Until his son's birth he thinks high of his profession.

Then both he and his wife come to believe that their son Harold would feel embarrassed and ashamed of the fact that he was the son of a boxer. They keep Mr. Bramble's profession a secret from Harold. They are pleasantly shocked when Harold feels angry at being deprived of the glory and honour of being a famous boxer's son. This proves that his parents were not justified in downgrading a good profession. Boxing, though an aggressive and bloody game, is an honourable profession like any other profession.

Question.2. Harold is considered to be fond of only intellectual activities. He proves to be much matured than his parents think. How?

Answer. Harold is an intelligent boy who is a model in studies and behaviour. Everyone at school praises him. He has already won some prizes in academics. He is a bespectacled child. His parents are in a bit of awe of

him. His mother, Mrs. Bramble, calls him ‘dearie’ and looks upon him as a child prodigy. His father is equally fond and proud of him. His parents come to believe that he should not know that he is the son of a professional boxer. He can never think that he could be a lover of boxing and boxers. When Harold learns about his being the son of a famous boxer, he feels angry of being deprived of glory and honour. He tells his parents that if the fact was known to his school children, they would never have dared to make fun of him by calling ‘Goggles’. His interest in games, especially boxing, shows that is much matured than his parents can ever think of.

Question.3. Jerry Fisher, in his pursuit to unravel the secret that the Brambles had hidden so long from Harold, actually helped the Bramble family. Discuss.

Answer. The Brambles had not told their son Harold that his father was a professional boxer. They were afraid that Harold would feel bad and bitter about the truth. So, they told a lie to him that his father was a firm’s touring representative. Mr. Bramble wanted to take part for the last time in a boxing match. He went for training with Jerry Fisher. When he learnt that the match would be reported in the Mail with his photograph, he got frightened. He thought that their secret would be out. So, he withdrew himself from the training. As they needed money, the matter caused both he and his wife a lot of worry and tension. Jerry Fisher, in anger, revealed their secret to their son Harold. When Harold announced his interest in boxing and his feelings of pride in being the son of a boxer, Mr. and Mrs. Bramble were relieved of their burden and guilt. Thus, Jerry Fisher, in revealing the secret, helped them regain normalcy.

Question.4. What was it that Harold did not like about his mother?

Answer. While Harold loved his mother, there was one aspect of her behavior that he disliked: Her habit of addressing him as “dearie” and treating him like a small child. He did not like the fact that his mother referred to herself in the third person, as if she were addressing a baby, instead of a young man of ten. This habit of his mother irritated him. It bothered Harold because he felt it was infantilizing and didn’t acknowledge his maturity and intellectual development. He wanted to be treated as a young man, not a little boy. This is evident in several instances throughout the story, such as when Harold sighs in annoyance when his mother calls him “dearie” and when he expresses his desire to be seen as someone capable of handling the truth about his father’s profession.

It’s important to note that Harold’s dislike of this specific behavior stemmed from his desire for independence and recognition, not from a lack of love or respect for his mother.

Question.5. ‘Keeping It from Harold’ underlines the idea that boxing is as dignified as any other activity, physical or mental. What happens when we downplay one activity over the other, especially our own ability? What should be our attitude?

Answer. Mr. Bramble, a famous boxer, hides his profession from his intellectually brilliant son, fearing that he might come to hate him. He decides to stop boxing.

We feel that when we downplay one activity over the other illogically, we are not doing something fair. If we happen to downplay and dislike our own ability, like Mr. Bramble, we are likely to fall in our own eyes. We lose our self-confidence and self-pride. Others may or may not despise us, but we begin to despise ourselves. The Brambles are surprised when their son says that he would have loved to be known as the son of a famous boxer.

Therefore, we need to be proud of our own achievements. We should be proud of whatever profession we are in. We should try to excel in it and feel proud of what we do. Only then will other people love and respect us. We should remember that no activity or profession is undignified or low. It is our thinking that makes something desirable or undesirable.

Long answer questions

Question 1: Harold is considered to be fond of only intellectual activities. He proves to be much matured than his parents think. How?

Answer. Harold initially appears to be solely focused on intellectual pursuits, such as reading and academics. However, throughout the story, he demonstrates maturity in ways that surprise his parents:

Understanding and Acceptance:

Despite his initial shock upon learning the truth about his father's profession, Harold ultimately comes to understand and accept his father's choices. He recognizes his father's hard work and dedication and chooses to support him rather than judging him.

Curiosity and Openness: Instead of clinging to resentment or denial, Harold shows genuine curiosity about his father's boxing career. He asks questions, expresses interest in his father's past, and even requests a picture of him as Young Porky. This openness to learning and understanding his family's history demonstrates maturity beyond his age.

Empathy and Consideration:

After learning the truth, Harold considers the potential impact it might have on his parents and the family dynamics. He recognizes the burden of their secret and shows empathy towards their anxieties and concerns.

Challenging Stereotypes:

Harold's initial surprise and disappointment reflect the societal prejudice, associated with boxing. However, he chooses to overcome these biases and embrace his father's profession, demonstrating maturity in challenging societal norms and judging individuals based on their character rather than their occupation.

These qualities highlight Harold's maturity and emotional intelligence. He demonstrates the ability to understand complex emotions, navigate challenging situations, and make decisions based on reason and empathy. His growth throughout the story shows him progressing beyond the image of a bookish child towards a young man capable of understanding, acceptance, and responsible judgment.

Question.2. "He was a professional boxer. That was the trouble." Discuss.

Answer. The statement "He was a professional boxer. That was the trouble," from "Keeping it from Harold," encapsulates the societal prejudice and judgment associated with boxing during the story's setting. It highlights several key points:

Societal Stigma:

Boxing is often viewed as a violent, working-class sport, incompatible with intellectual pursuits and respectable social standing. This stigma led Harold's parents to believe that revealing his father's profession would bring shame and embarrassment upon him.

Conflicting Values:

The story presents a clash between intellectual pursuits, represented by Harold's academic achievements, and physical activities like boxing. This reflects a broader societal tendency to elevate intellectual work over physical labour, despite the inherent value and skills required in both.

Fear of Judgment:

Harold's parents feared their son's disappointment and potential social ostracization if he knew about his father's profession. This reflects the fear of judgment and social exclusion associated with breaking societal norms and defying expectations.

The statement "He was a professional boxer. That was the trouble," serves as a powerful critique of societal prejudice and its impact on individual lives and family relationships. It encourages readers to question

established norms, challenge preconceived notions, and recognize the inherent value and dignity in all pursuits.

Question.3. Do you agree with Harold's parents' decision of hiding from him the fact that his father was a boxer? Why/Why not?

Answer. I feel that Harold's parents' decision of hiding facts was not right. While Harold's parents' intentions were driven by love and a desire to protect him, the story suggests that the potential negative impacts of deception can outweigh the intended benefits. Open communication and honesty are crucial for building trust and fostering healthy relationships within the families, Whether or not Harold's parents were right to hide his father's profession from him is a complex issue with no easy answer.

- *Breach of trust:* Keeping such a significant secret from Harold damaged the trust between him and his parents. It hindered open communication and prevented them from forming a deeper and more honest relationship.
- *Denying Harold the opportunity to know his true identity:* By concealing his father's profession, Harold was denied the chance to understand his family's history and develop a complete sense of self. This could lead to feelings of confusion and resentment with his parents later in life.
- *Perpetuating negative stereotypes:* The decision to hide the truth reinforces the negative perceptions associated with boxing and working-class professions. It suggests that these pursuits are something to be ashamed of and concealed, instead of being valued and respected.