Chapter 4: From the Diary of Anne Frank

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Exercise 4.1 — Oral Comprehension Check 1 (Page 50)

Q1 What makes writing in a diary a strange experience for Anne Frank?

SOLUTION

Writing in a diary is a strange experience for Anne for two reasons.

First, she has never written anything before, so putting her thoughts on paper is new to her.

Second, she feels that later on neither she nor anyone else will be interested in the musings of a thirteen-year-old schoolgirl. As she says, "it seems to me that later on neither I nor anyone else will be interested in the musings of a thirteen-year-old schoolgirl."

Answer: It is strange because she has never written before and feels no one will be interested in the musings of a thirteen-year-old girl.

Q2 Why does Anne want to keep a diary?

SOLUTION

Anne wants to keep a diary because she does not have a true friend.

Although she has loving parents, a sixteen-year-old sister, and about thirty people she can call friends, she feels she has no one in whom she can really confide.

She wants the diary to be the friend she has long awaited, and she decides to call this friend 'Kitty'.

Answer: She keeps a diary because she has no true friend and wants the diary to be the friend she can confide in.

Q3 Why did Anne think she could confide more in her diary than in people?

SOLUTION

Anne felt that "paper has more patience than people."

When she was with her friends, all she could talk about were ordinary, everyday things; they could not get any closer or confide in one another.

The diary, being patient and non-judgemental, could listen to all her innermost feelings without interrupting or losing interest, so she could confide in it more than in people.

Answer: Because paper has more patience than people, and she could not confide her deepest feelings in her friends.

Exercise 4.2 — Oral Comprehension Check 2 (Page 51)

Q1 Why does Anne provide a brief sketch of her life?

SOLUTION

Anne provides a brief sketch of her life because she is writing her diary as though she is telling her story to a friend named Kitty.

She feels that no one would understand a word of her stories to Kitty if she were to plunge right in without any background.

So she gives details about her family, her birth, her move from Frankfurt to Holland, and her schooling to help 'Kitty' understand her better.

Answer: So that 'Kitty' can understand her stories, since no one would follow them if she plunged right in without background.

Q2 What tells you that Anne loved her grandmother?

SOLUTION

Anne's deep love for her grandmother is clear from the way she remembers her.

She writes, "No one knows how often I think of her and still love her," showing that her grandmother was often in her thoughts.

Also, at her 1942 birthday celebration, "Grandma's candle was lit along with the rest," a touching gesture that shows how much she was missed and loved even after her death.

Answer: She often thinks of her and still loves her, and a candle was lit for Grandma at Anne's birthday celebration.

Exercise 4.3 — Oral Comprehension Check 3 (Page 53)

Q1 Why was Mr Keesing annoyed with Anne? What did he ask her to do?

SOLUTION

Mr Keesing, the maths teacher, was annoyed with Anne because she talked too much in class.

After several warnings, he assigned her extra homework as punishment: an essay on the subject 'A Chatterbox'.

When she continued to talk, he gave her a second essay, 'An Incorrigible Chatterbox', and finally a third, 'Quack, Quack, Quack, Said Mistress Chatterbox'.

Answer: He was annoyed because she talked too much, so he made her write an essay titled 'A Chatterbox'.

Q2 How did Anne justify her being a chatterbox in her essay?

SOLUTION

In her essay Anne argued that talking is a student's trait and that she would do her best to keep it under control.

However, she claimed she would never be able to cure herself of the habit, because her mother talked as much as she did, if not more.

Since it was an inherited trait, she argued that there was not much she could do about it.

Answer: She argued that talking was an inherited trait from her mother, so she could not cure herself of it.

Q3 Do you think Mr Keesing was a strict teacher?

SOLUTION

Yes, Mr Keesing appears to be a strict teacher, at least at first.

He warned Anne several times about her talking and then punished her by assigning her extra essays on the topic of chatterboxes.

However, he also had a sense of humour: he laughed at her clever arguments, took her verse essay in the right spirit, and even read her poem to other classes. So he was strict but fair and good-natured.

Answer: Yes, he was strict as he punished her repeatedly, but he was also fair and had a good sense of humour.

Q4 What made Mr Keesing allow Anne to talk in class?

SOLUTION

As punishment, Mr Keesing asked Anne to write an essay entitled 'Quack, Quack, Quack, Said Mistress Chatterbox'.

With her friend Sanne's help, Anne wrote the essay in verse. It was a beautiful poem about a mother duck and a father swan with three baby ducklings who were bitten to death by the father because they quacked too much.

Mr Keesing took the joke the right way and read the poem to the class and to several other classes. After this, he allowed her to talk and stopped assigning her extra homework.

Answer: Her clever poem about the ducklings pleased Mr Keesing, who took the joke well and let her talk thereafter.

Exercise 4.4 — Thinking about the Text

Q1 Was Anne right when she said that the world would not be interested in the musings of a thirteen-year-old girl?

SOLUTION

No, Anne was not right.

Although she thought no one would be interested in the musings of a thirteen-year-old schoolgirl, her diary became one of the world's most widely read books.

It was translated from Dutch into many languages, and several films, television and theatrical productions, and even an opera have been based on it. The diary gives an intimate, insightful picture of daily life under Nazi occupation, so the world was very much interested.

Answer: No; her diary became one of the world's most widely read books, translated into many languages.

Q2 There are some examples of diary or journal entries in the 'Before You Read' section. Compare these with what Anne writes in her diary. What language was the diary originally written in? In what way is Anne's diary different?

SOLUTION

The entries in the 'Before You Read' section are short and factual, simply recording events, times or personal notes.

Anne's diary was originally written in Dutch. It was later translated into many languages and published in English as The Diary of a Young Girl.

Anne's diary is different because it is not merely a record of facts. She addresses it as a friend named 'Kitty' and pours out her personal feelings, thoughts and reflections, making it warm, intimate and expressive rather than a plain log of events.

Answer: It was originally written in Dutch; unlike plain factual entries, Anne's diary is personal and addressed to a friend, 'Kitty'.

Q3 Why does Anne need to give a brief sketch about her family? Does she treat 'Kitty' as an insider or an outsider?

SOLUTION

Anne gives a brief sketch of her family so that 'Kitty', the imaginary friend to whom she writes, can understand the background of her stories.

She says that no one would understand a word of her stories to Kitty if she were to plunge right in without any explanation.

She treats Kitty as an outsider, because she gives her all the basic details about her family, birth and life that an insider who already knew her would not need to be told.

Answer: She sketches her family so Kitty can follow her stories; she treats Kitty as an outsider who needs the background.

Q4 How does Anne feel about her father, her grandmother, Mrs Kuperus and Mr Keesing? What do these tell you about her?

SOLUTION

Anne loves and admires her father, calling him "the most adorable father I've ever seen."

She loved her grandmother deeply and often thought of her even after her death. She was fond of Mrs Kuperus, her sixth-form teacher and headmistress, and both were in tears when they said a heartbreaking farewell. About Mr Keesing she is honest, admitting he was annoyed with her yet later appreciating his sense of humour.

These feelings show that Anne was a loving, sensitive, honest and observant girl who valued her relationships and had a mature understanding of people.

Answer: She loves her father and grandmother, is fond of Mrs Kuperus, and is honest about Mr Keesing — showing her as loving, sensitive and honest.

Q5 What does Anne write in her first essay?

SOLUTION

Anne's first essay was on the subject 'A Chatterbox', assigned to her by Mr Keesing as punishment for talking too much.

In it she gave convincing arguments to prove the necessity of talking. She argued that talking is a student's trait and that she would do her best to keep it under control.

She also wrote that she would never be able to cure herself of the habit, since her mother talked as much as she did, if not more, and that there is not much one can do about inherited traits.

Answer: She argued that talking is a student's trait and an inherited habit from her mother that she cannot cure.

Q6 Anne says teachers are most unpredictable. Is Mr Keesing unpredictable? How?

SOLUTION

Yes, Mr Keesing does turn out to be unpredictable.

At first he was strict and annoyed with Anne, punishing her with essays for talking too much in class.

But he changed unexpectedly: he had a good laugh at her clever arguments, took her ridiculous verse essay in the right spirit, and read her poem to the class and to other classes. Afterwards he allowed her to talk and stopped giving her extra homework, and even began making jokes himself. This change from strict to good-humoured shows his unpredictability.

Answer: Yes; he changed from a strict teacher who punished Anne into a good-humoured one who let her talk and joked with her.

Q7 What do these statements tell you about Anne Frank as a person? (i) We don't seem to be able to get any closer, and that's the problem. Maybe it's my fault that we don't confide in each other. (ii) I don't want to jot down the facts in this diary the way most people would, but I want the diary to be my friend. (iii) Margot went to Holland in December, and I followed in February, when I was plunked down on the table as a birthday present for Margot. (iv) If you ask me, there are so many dummies that about a quarter of the class should be kept back, but teachers are the most unpredictable creatures on earth. (v) Anyone could ramble on and leave big spaces between the words, but the trick was to come up with convincing arguments to prove the necessity of talking.

SOLUTION

(i) This shows Anne is self-critical and honest; she does not blame others alone but admits it might be her own fault that she cannot confide in her friends.

(ii) This shows she is imaginative and emotional; she does not want a dry record of facts but wants the diary to be a real, living friend.

(iii) This shows her sense of humour and light-hearted way of describing even the fact of her arrival in Holland.

(iv) This shows she is bold, frank and observant, freely giving her opinions about her classmates and teachers.

(v) This shows she is intelligent and thoughtful, able to build convincing arguments rather than merely filling pages with empty words. Together, these statements reveal Anne as an honest, imaginative, witty and clever girl.

Answer: They reveal Anne as honest, self-critical, imaginative, witty, bold and intelligent.

Exercise 4.5 — Thinking about Language

Q1 I. Match the compound words under 'A' with their meanings under 'B': 1. Heartbreaking, 2. Homesick, 3. Blockhead, 4. Law-abiding, 5. Overdo, 6. Daydream, 7. Breakdown, 8. Output.

SOLUTION

Matching each compound word with its meaning:

1. Heartbreaking - producing great sadness.
2. Homesick - missing home and family very much.
3. Blockhead - an informal word which means a very stupid person.
4. Law-abiding - obeying and respecting the law.
5. Overdo - do something to an excessive degree.
6. Daydream - think about pleasant things, forgetting about the present.
7. Breakdown - an occasion when vehicles/machines stop working.
8. Output - something produced by a person, machine or organisation.

Answer: 1-producing great sadness, 2-missing home, 3-very stupid person, 4-obeying the law, 5-excessive degree, 6-pleasant thoughts, 7-machines stop working, 8-something produced.

Q2 II. Phrasal Verbs. 1. Look up the following in a dictionary for their meanings: (i) plunge (right) in (ii) kept back (iii) ramble on (iv) get along with.

SOLUTION

Meanings of the phrasal verbs:

(i) plunge (right) in - to begin or go straight to the topic without any introduction.
(ii) kept back - not promoted; made to stay in the same grade.
(iii) ramble on - to talk or write aimlessly for long, without focus.
(iv) get along with - to have a good relationship with someone.

Answer: plunge in = go straight in; kept back = not promoted; ramble on = talk without focus; get along with = have a good relationship.

Q3 II. Phrasal Verbs. 2. Match the phrasal verbs with their meanings: (i) plunge in (ii) kept back (iii) move up (iv) ramble on (v) get along with (vi) calm down (vii) stay in (viii) make up for (ix) hand in.

SOLUTION

Matching each phrasal verb with its meaning:

(i) plunge in - go straight to the topic.
(ii) kept back - not promoted.
(iii) move up - go to the next grade.
(iv) ramble on - speak or write without focus.
(v) get along with - have a good relationship with.
(vi) calm down - make (them) remain quiet.
(vii) stay in - stay indoors.
(viii) make up for - compensate.
(ix) hand in - give an assignment (homework) to a person in authority (the teacher).

Answer: plunge in-go straight in; kept back-not promoted; move up-next grade; ramble on-write without focus; get along with-good relationship; calm down-make quiet; stay in-stay indoors; make up for-compensate; hand in-submit homework.

Q4 III. Idioms. 1. Here are a few sentences from the text which have idiomatic expressions. Can you say what each means? (i) Our entire class is quaking in its boots. (ii) Until then, we keep telling each other not to lose heart. (iii) Mr Keesing was annoyed with me for ages because I talked so much. (iv) Mr Keesing was trying to play a joke on me with this ridiculous subject, but I'd make sure the joke was on him.

SOLUTION

Meanings of the idiomatic expressions:

(i) quaking in its boots - shaking with fear and nervousness.
(ii) not to lose heart - not to be discouraged; to remain hopeful.
(iii) for ages - for a very long time.
(iv) the joke was on him - he became the object of the joke instead; the joke turned against him.

Answer: quaking in its boots = shaking with fear; not to lose heart = stay hopeful; for ages = a very long time; the joke was on him = the joke turned against him.

Q5 V. Contracted Forms. 2. Find in the text the contracted forms that stand for two different full forms, and say what these are.

SOLUTION

Some contracted forms in the text can stand for two different full forms:

I'd = I had or I would.
she's = she is or she has.
he'd = he had or he would.

For example, 'I'd worry about that later' means 'I would', while in another context 'I'd finished' would mean 'I had'.

Answer: I'd = I had / I would; she's = she is / she has; he'd = he had / he would.

Exercise 4.6 — Thinking about the Poem — Amanda!

Q1 How old do you think Amanda is? How do you know this?

SOLUTION

Amanda seems to be a young girl, probably around nine or ten years old, or a young teenager.

We can guess this from the kind of instructions given to her: don't bite your nails, don't hunch your shoulders, sit up straight, finish your homework, tidy your room and clean your shoes.

The mention of her acne suggests she may be approaching her teenage years. These everyday scoldings are the sort given to a school-going child.

Answer: She seems to be about nine or ten (a young school child), shown by the everyday scoldings about homework, nails and posture.

Q2 Who do you think is speaking to her?

SOLUTION

The person speaking to Amanda is most probably her mother (or a parent/elder).

This is clear from the constant instructions and scoldings about Amanda's habits, homework, room and appearance.

The final lines, "Anyone would think that I nagged at you, Amanda!", confirm that it is an elder who feels she is being made to look like a nag.

Answer: It is most likely her mother (or a parent/elder), who keeps giving her instructions and scoldings.

Q3 Why are Stanzas 2, 4 and 6 given in parenthesis?

SOLUTION

Stanzas 2, 4 and 6 are given in parenthesis (brackets) because they express Amanda's own inner thoughts and imagination.

They are not spoken aloud; they are the daydreams going on silently in her mind while her mother scolds her.

The parenthesis separates these private, imaginative musings from the actual spoken words of the nagging elder in the other stanzas.

Answer: Because they show Amanda's private, unspoken daydreams, as opposed to the elder's spoken scoldings.

Q4 Who is the speaker in Stanzas 2, 4 and 6? Do you think this speaker is listening to the speaker in Stanzas 1, 3, 5, and 7?

SOLUTION

The speaker in Stanzas 2, 4 and 6 is Amanda herself, lost in her own imaginary world.

In these stanzas she imagines being a mermaid in an emerald sea, an orphan roaming the streets, and Rapunzel in a tower.

No, this speaker (Amanda) is not really listening to the elder in Stanzas 1, 3, 5 and 7. She has drifted away into her daydreams to escape the constant nagging.

Answer: Amanda is the speaker in those stanzas, and she is not really listening to the elder — she has escaped into her daydreams.

Q5 What could Amanda do if she were a mermaid?

SOLUTION

If Amanda were a mermaid, she would be the sole inhabitant of a languid, emerald sea.

She imagines herself drifting blissfully in the water, all alone and completely free.

There would be no one to scold or instruct her, and she could enjoy perfect peace and freedom.

Answer: She would be the only one in a calm emerald sea, drifting blissfully and free, with no one to scold her.

Q6 Is Amanda an orphan? Why does she say so?

SOLUTION

No, Amanda is not really an orphan. She has parents/elders who keep instructing and scolding her.

She only imagines being an orphan, roaming the street, patterning soft dust with her hushed, bare feet.

She says so because as an orphan she would have no one to nag or control her, and she longs for that golden silence and sweet freedom.

Answer: No; she only imagines being an orphan because then she would have freedom and no one to nag or control her.

Q7 Do you know the story of Rapunzel? Why does she want to be Rapunzel?

SOLUTION

Rapunzel is a fairy-tale girl with long hair who was kept locked in a tall tower.

Amanda imagines herself as Rapunzel because life in a tower is "tranquil and rare" — calm, peaceful and away from everyone.

However, she adds, "I'll certainly never let down my bright hair!" — meaning that, unlike Rapunzel, she would never let anyone climb up to disturb her solitude. She wants to be alone and free from all nagging.

Answer: Rapunzel was locked in a tower; Amanda wants that tranquil solitude, but unlike Rapunzel she would let no one disturb it.

Q8 What does the girl yearn for? What does this poem tell you about Amanda?

SOLUTION

The girl, Amanda, yearns for freedom, peace and solitude.

She longs to be free from the constant nagging, instructions and control of the elders around her, which is why she escapes into daydreams of being a mermaid, an orphan and Rapunzel.

The poem tells us that Amanda is a sensitive, imaginative and dreamy child who feels suffocated by too many restrictions and wishes to enjoy her own free, quiet world.

Answer: She yearns for freedom and solitude; the poem shows Amanda as a sensitive, imaginative child stifled by constant nagging.

Q9 Read the last stanza. Do you think Amanda is sulking and is moody?

SOLUTION

In the last stanza the elder complains, "Stop that sulking at once, Amanda! You're always so moody, Amanda!"

Amanda is not really sulking or moody. She is simply tired of being nagged and controlled all the time, so she has withdrawn into silence and her own thoughts.

Her quietness is misunderstood as sulking and moodiness by the elder, whereas it is actually her way of escaping the constant scolding.

Answer: No; she is not truly sulking or moody but has withdrawn into her thoughts to escape the constant nagging, which is misread as moodiness.