Chapter 6: Expert Detectives

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Exercise 6.1 — Comprehension Check

Q1 What did Nishad give Mr Nath? Why?

SOLUTION

When Nishad knocked on Mr Nath's door, he took the man's hand in his own and thrust a bar of chocolate into it.

He did this because he had been upset by Mr Nath's gaunt appearance and believed the man was starving. Being kind-hearted, he wanted to feed him.

Answer: Nishad gave Mr Nath a bar of chocolate. He did it because he was upset by Mr Nath's thin, gaunt appearance and thought he was starving, so he wanted to give him something to eat.

Q2 What is "strange" about Mr Nath's Sundays?

SOLUTION

Ramesh told Nishad that almost every Sunday he carries two lunches to Mr Nath's room, and the same man is with him each time.

This visitor is tall, fair, stout and wears spectacles, and unlike Mr Nath (who hardly speaks) he talks a lot. It is the only day Mr Nath has a visitor, which the children find strange.

Answer: The strange thing is that almost every Sunday Ramesh takes two lunches to Mr Nath's room because the same visitor comes to eat with him. This tall, fair, stout, spectacled man is Mr Nath's only visitor, and unlike the silent Mr Nath, he talks a lot.

Q3 Why did Nishad and Maya get a holiday?

SOLUTION

The monsoons broke the next day, with blinding lightning, roaring thunder and a heavy downpour that flooded the streets.

School was to have reopened after the summer holidays, but no traffic could move through the flooded roads, so there was an unexpected holiday.

Answer: They got a holiday because the monsoon broke with heavy rain that flooded the streets. School was supposed to reopen after the summer holidays, but no traffic could move on the flooded roads, so there was an unexpected holiday.

Exercise 6.2 — Working with the Text

Q1 What does Nishad find out about Mr Nath from Ramesh? Arrange the information as suggested below. • What he eats • When he eats • What he drinks, and when • How he pays

SOLUTION

Nishad went to the restaurant where Ramesh works and questioned him. Ramesh gave the following details about Mr Nath.
What he eats: The same food every day — two chapattis, some dal and a vegetable; he is not particular about what he eats.
When he eats: Two meals every day, one in the morning and one in the evening.
What he drinks, and when: Two cups of tea — one in the morning and one in the afternoon.
How he pays: He pays cash and tips well.

Answer: What he eats: the same food every day — two chapattis, some dal and a vegetable. When he eats: two meals a day, one in the morning and one in the evening. What he drinks, and when: two cups of tea, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. How he pays: he pays cash and tips well.

Q2 Why does Maya think Mr Nath is a crook? Who does she say the Sunday visitor is?

SOLUTION

Maya thinks Mr Nath is a crook because he does not work anywhere yet has money to pay for food and tips well, so she believes he has stolen money hidden away in his trunk. He also lives alone, has no friends, keeps to his room all day, receives no letters, and people are scared of him — which, to her, all point to a criminal on the run.
She says the Sunday visitor is Mr Nath's accomplice or partner in crime, who keeps the stolen loot and comes to give Mr Nath part of it for his expenses.

Answer: Maya thinks Mr Nath is a crook because he does no work yet has money for food and tips, so she believes he has hidden loot; he also lives alone, has no friends or visitors, gets no letters, and people are afraid of him. She says the Sunday visitor is his accomplice or partner in crime, who keeps the loot and brings him his share.

Q3 Does Nishad agree with Maya about Mr Nath? How does he feel about him?

SOLUTION

No, Nishad does not agree with Maya. He does not believe Mr Nath is a criminal, saying he does not look like one and looks so ordinary.
Nishad feels sorry for Mr Nath. He pities him for being thin, lonely and friendless, and instead of wanting to trap him, he wants to find out why he is so alone and decides to try and be his friend.

Answer: No, Nishad does not agree with Maya. He does not think Mr Nath is a crook because he looks so ordinary. He feels sorry for him — he is troubled that Mr Nath is thin and lonely, and instead of wanting to trap him, he wants to know why he is so lonely and decides to try to become his friend.

Exercise 6.3 — Working with Language

Q1 The word 'tip' has only three letters but many meanings. Match the word with its meanings below. (i) finger tips (ii) the tip of your nose (iii) tip the water out of the bucket (iv) have something on the tip of your tongue (v) tip the boat over (vi) tip him a rupee (vii) the tip of the bat (viii) the police were tipped off (ix) if you take my tip (x) the bat tipped the ball

SOLUTION

Match each phrase to the meaning that fits the sense of 'tip' being used.
(i) finger tips — the ends of one's fingers
(ii) the tip of your nose — the pointed end of your nose
(iii) tip the water out of the bucket — empty a bucket by tilting it
(iv) have something on the tip of your tongue — be about to say something
(v) tip the boat over — make the boat overturn
(vi) tip him a rupee — give a rupee to him, to thank him
(vii) the tip of the bat — the end of the bat
(viii) the police were tipped off — the police were told, or warned
(ix) if you take my tip — if you take this advice
(x) the bat tipped the ball — the bat lightly touched the ball

Answer: (i) the ends of one's fingers; (ii) the pointed end of your nose; (iii) empty a bucket by tilting it; (iv) be about to say something; (v) make the boat overturn; (vi) give a rupee to him, to thank him; (vii) the end of the bat; (viii) the police were told, or warned; (ix) if you take this advice; (x) the bat lightly touched the ball.

Q2 The words helper, companion, partner and accomplice have very similar meanings, but each word is typically used in certain phrases. Can you fill in the blanks below with the most commonly used words? A dictionary may help you. (i) business ___ (ii) my ___ on the journey (iii) I'm mother's little ___. (iv) a faithful ___ such as a dog (v) the thief's ___ (vi) find a good ___ (vii) tennis/ golf / bridge ___ (viii) his ___ in his criminal activities

SOLUTION

Each blank takes the word that most naturally collocates with the phrase.
(i) business partner
(ii) my companion on the journey
(iii) I'm mother's little helper.
(iv) a faithful companion such as a dog
(v) the thief's accomplice
(vi) find a good helper
(vii) tennis/ golf / bridge partner
(viii) his accomplice in his criminal activities

Answer: (i) partner; (ii) companion; (iii) helper; (iv) companion; (v) accomplice; (vi) helper; (vii) partner; (viii) accomplice.

Q3 Now let us look at the uses of the word break. Match the word with its meanings below. Try to find at least three other ways in which to use the word. (i) The storm broke (ii) daybreak (iii) His voice is beginning to break (iv) Her voice broke and she cried (v) The heat wave broke (vi) broke the bad news (vii) break a strike (viii) (Find your own expression. Give its meaning here.)

SOLUTION

Match each use of 'break' to its meaning.
(i) The storm broke — it began or burst into activity
(ii) daybreak — the beginning of daylight
(iii) His voice is beginning to break — changing as he grows up
(iv) Her voice broke and she cried — could not speak; was too sad to speak
(v) The heat wave broke — this kind of weather ended
(vi) broke the bad news — gently told someone the bad news
(vii) break a strike — end it by making the workers submit
(viii) Your own expression, for example: 'break a record' — to do better than anyone has done before; or 'break the ice' — to start a conversation and ease an awkward situation; or 'take a break' — to stop work and rest for a while.

Answer: (i) it began or burst into activity; (ii) the beginning of daylight; (iii) changing as he grows up; (iv) could not speak, was too sad to speak; (v) this kind of weather ended; (vi) gently told someone the bad news; (vii) end it by making the workers submit; (viii) e.g. 'break a record' = do better than anyone before; 'break the ice' = start a conversation and ease awkwardness; 'take a break' = stop and rest.

Exercise 6.4 — Working with the Poem (Mystery of the Talking Fan)

Q1 Fans don't talk, but it is possible to imagine that they do. What is it, then, that sounds like the fan's chatter?

SOLUTION

The poet imagines the fan is talking, but really the sound comes from the machine itself.
It is the whirring, humming and rattling noise made by the fan's little whirling electric motor that sounds like the fan's chatter.

Answer: It is the humming, whirring and rattling noise made by the fan's little electric motor as it whirls that sounds like the fan's chatter.

Q2 Complete the following sentences. (i) The chatter is electrical because ___ (ii) It is mysterious because ___

SOLUTION

Fill each blank in a way that fits the sense of the poem.
(i) The chatter is electrical because it is produced by the fan's electric motor running on electricity, not by a real voice.
(ii) It is mysterious because the poet cannot understand or clearly hear what the fan seems to be saying, so its 'talk' remains a puzzle.

Answer: (i) The chatter is electrical because it is made by the fan's electric motor working on electricity, not by an actual voice. (ii) It is mysterious because the poet cannot quite hear or make out what the fan seems to be saying, so its 'talk' stays a puzzle.

Q3 What do you think the talking fan was demanding?

SOLUTION

The fan chattered noisily until someone oiled its little whirling motor, after which it ran silently.
This suggests the fan was noisy because it needed oiling. Its chatter was really the sound of a dry, un-oiled motor, so the fan seemed to be demanding to be oiled.

Answer: The talking fan seems to have been demanding oil. Its noisy chatter was the sound of a dry, un-oiled motor, and once somebody oiled its whirling motor it grew quiet, so it was really asking to be oiled.

Q4 How does an electric fan manage to throw so much air when it is switched on?

SOLUTION

When the fan is switched on, electricity runs its motor, which spins the blades very fast.
The blades are set at a slant (angle), so as they whirl round quickly they push and drive the air forward, throwing out a lot of air as a breeze.

Answer: When switched on, electricity runs the fan's motor, which spins the blades very fast. Because the blades are set at a slant, their rapid whirling pushes and drives the air forward, so the fan throws out a lot of air as a cool breeze.