Chapter 1: How I Taught My Grandmother to Read

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Exercise 1.1 — Pre-reading Vocabulary Match — How I Taught My Grandmother to Rea

Q1 Match the highlighted words (i)–(viii) in the passage below with their meanings (1–8).

Passage: 'The casting for the (i) protagonist of our school's annual play was done after a lot of (ii) debate as many good actors had auditioned for the role. We had decided to present an (iii) episode from an inspirational story. It was a life story of a group of children who worked with the (iv) community to spread literacy. Every day, we reached school early to practise with (v) concentration. We waited (vi) eagerly for the final presentation. All of us played our roles in a very (vii) convincing manner as our theatre teacher had (viii) guided us well.'

Meanings:
1. excitedly
2. believable
3. people living in one particular area
4. discussion
5. a part of a story
6. focus
7. main character

8. directed

SOLUTION

Go through each highlighted word and match it to the meaning that best fits its use in the passage.
(i) protagonist — 7. main character (the lead role in the play)
(ii) debate — 4. discussion (a debate among those deciding on casting)
(iii) episode — 5. a part of a story (they chose one episode from a larger story)
(iv) community — 3. people living in one particular area (children spread literacy in the community)
(v) concentration — 6. focus (they practised with full focus)
(vi) eagerly — 1. excitedly (they waited with excitement)
(vii) convincing — 2. believable (their performances were believable)
(viii) guided — 8. directed (the teacher directed/guided them)

Answer: (i)→7, (ii)→4, (iii)→5, (iv)→3, (v)→6, (vi)→1, (vii)→2, (viii)→8

Exercise 1.2 — Check Your Understanding (Part I) — How I Taught My Grandmother to

Q1 Complete the cause and effect table given below based on Part I of the story.

(i) Cause: The morning papers arrived late in the day and weekly magazines would come one day late.
(ii) Cause: The grandmother, Krishtakka, never went to school.
(iii) Effect: She was deeply interested in the story and discussed it with her friends.
(iv) Cause: The narrator went to a wedding for a week.
(v) Effect: The grandmother never went to school.
(vi) Cause: The grandmother regretted not going to school.

SOLUTION

Match each cause to its effect and each effect to its cause using details from Part I of the story.

(i) Cause — The morning papers arrived late; weekly magazines came one day late.

Effect (to find): All the villagers waited eagerly for the bus that brought the papers, magazines, and post.

(ii) Cause — The grandmother, Krishtakka, never went to school.

Effect (to find): She could not read; she depended on the narrator to read the Kashi Yatre serial aloud to her every Wednesday.

(iii) Effect — She was deeply interested in the story and discussed it with her friends.

Cause (to find): The grandmother identified strongly with the novel's protagonist (both had never gone to Kashi), so she was most eager to know what happened next.

(iv) Cause — The narrator went to a wedding for a week.

Effect (to find): The grandmother could not follow the latest episode of Kashi Yatre and was found in tears when the narrator returned.

(v) Effect — The grandmother never went to school.

Cause (to find): In those days people did not consider education essential for girls; her father was busy and remarried, and there was nobody to guide her.

(vi) Cause — The grandmother regretted not going to school.

Effect (to find): She made sure her children and grandchildren studied well.

Answer: (i) Effect: Everyone eagerly waited for the bus that brought papers and magazines. (ii) Effect: She could not read and depended on the narrator to read Kashi Yatre to her. (iii) Cause: She identified with the protagonist and was deeply curious about the story's outcome. (iv) Effect: The grandmother could not read the magazine and was found in tears. (v) Cause: Education was not considered essential for girls; no one guided her. (vi) Effect: She ensured her children and grandchildren studied well.

Q2 Do you think the narrator expected to see her grandmother in tears when she returned to the village? If yes, why? If no, why not?

SOLUTION

The text tells us that when the narrator returned, she 'was surprised, for I had never seen her cry even in the most difficult situations.'

This shows clearly that the narrator did NOT expect her grandmother to be in tears.

The grandmother was normally a strong, cheerful person — 'a good-looking lady who was usually always smiling.' Seeing her in tears was completely unexpected.

Answer: No, the narrator did not expect her grandmother to be in tears. She was surprised, as the grandmother was a normally strong and smiling person whom she had never seen cry even in the most difficult situations.

Q3 How might the narrator help her grandmother to fulfil her desire to learn to read and write?

SOLUTION

The grandmother expressed that she could not read the Kashi Yatre serial and felt helpless and dependent. She told the narrator, 'I have decided I want to learn the Kannada alphabet from tomorrow onwards.'

The most natural way the narrator — who reads and writes Kannada — could help is to teach her grandmother the Kannada alphabet and help her practise reading.

This is exactly what happens in Part II: the narrator begins giving the grandmother daily lessons in the Kannada alphabet, starting the very next day.

Answer: The narrator could teach her grandmother the Kannada alphabet and give her regular reading practice — which is precisely what she does in Part II of the story, making the grandmother literate in time for the Dassara festival.

Exercise 1.3 — Check Your Understanding (Part II) — True or False

Q1 State whether the following sentences are true or false.

1. The grandmother wanted to learn the Kannada alphabet to gain independence.
2. The grandmother asked someone in the village to read Kashi Yatre to her while the narrator was away.
3. The narrator was the grandmother's first teacher and taught her how to read Kannada.
4. The grandmother believed that there was no age limit for learning.
5. The grandmother touched the narrator's feet as a mark of respect for her as a teacher.
6. The narrator was disappointed with the progress her grandmother made in learning to read.

SOLUTION

1. TRUE — The grandmother said, 'I want to be independent.' Her reason for learning was to be able to read on her own without depending on others.
2. FALSE — The grandmother said, 'I could have asked somebody in this village but I was too embarrassed to do so.' She did not ask anyone.
3. TRUE — The narrator says, 'I was her only teacher and she was my first student.'
4. TRUE — The grandmother declared, 'For learning there is no age bar.' She set out to learn the alphabet at sixty-two.
5. TRUE — The grandmother touched the narrator's feet saying, 'I am touching the feet of a teacher, not my granddaughter,' as a mark of respect for the teacher.
6. FALSE — The narrator was highly impressed. She writes that the grandmother's progress was 'amazing' and that 'my student had passed with flying colours.'

Answer: 1. True 2. False 3. True 4. True 5. True 6. False

Exercise 1.4 — Critical Reflection — Extract-based Questions

Q1 Read the extract and answer the questions:

'When I came back to my village, I saw my grandmother in tears. I was surprised, for I had never seen her cry even in the most difficult situations. What had happened? I was worried. "Avva, is everything all right? Are you okay?" I used to call her Avva, which means mother in the Kannada spoken in north Karnataka. She nodded but did not reply. I did not understand and forgot about it. In the night, after dinner, we were sleeping in the open terrace of our house. It was a summer night and there was a full moon. Avva came and sat next to me. Her affectionate hands touched my forehead.'

(i) Complete the sentence: 'The phrase "never seen her cry in the most difficult situations" tells us that the grandmother was _____.' (A. strong-willed B. understanding C. considerate D. bold)

(ii) Fill in the blank: 'Grandmother did not reply when the narrator asked if she was alright because she might have been too _____ (emotional/tired) to respond.'

(iii) Identify the clue from the extract that indicates a rural setting with traditional customs.

(iv) Which lines of the extract establish a tender atmosphere?

(v) Which of the following aspect is NOT emphasised in the given extract? (A. the emotional turmoil of the grandmother B. the affectionate bond between the narrator and her grandmother C. the grandmother's regret over her lack of education D. the narrator's concern for her grandmother)

SOLUTION

(i) The phrase tells us that despite life's hardships, the grandmother never broke down — she is A. strong-willed.

(ii) The correct word is 'emotional'. The grandmother was deeply upset about missing the serial episode and feeling helpless, so she was too emotional to speak at that moment.

(iii) The clue is 'sleeping in the open terrace of our house. It was a summer night' — sleeping outdoors on the terrace is a traditional rural custom in North Karnataka for hot summer nights.

(iv) The lines 'Avva came and sat next to me. Her affectionate hands touched my forehead.' establish a tender, loving atmosphere through the grandmother's gentle, caring gesture.

(v) C — the grandmother's regret over her lack of education is NOT emphasised in this extract. The extract focuses on the narrator's surprise and worry, the bond between them, and the grandmother's emotional state. The regret is revealed later when the grandmother explains her feelings.

Answer: (i) A. strong-willed (ii) emotional (iii) Sleeping in the open terrace on a summer night — a rural custom (iv) 'Avva came and sat next to me. Her affectionate hands touched my forehead.' (v) C

Q2 Read the extract and answer the questions:
'"I have decided I want to learn the Kannada alphabet from tomorrow onwards. I will work very hard. I will keep Saraswati Puja day during Dassara as the deadline. That day I should be able to read a novel on my own. I want to be independent." I saw the determination on her face. Yet I laughed at her. "Avva, at this age of sixty-two you want to learn the alphabet? All your hair is grey, your hands are wrinkled, you wear spectacles and you work so much in the kitchen..." Childishly I made fun of the old lady. But she just smiled. "For a good cause if you are determined, you can overcome any obstacle. I will work harder than anybody but I will do it. For learning there is no age bar."'

(i) What does the grandmother's statement 'I want to be independent' reveal about her character? (A. She wanted to be literate. B. She desires self-sufficiency. C. She wants to prove her intelligence to others. D. She feels pressured by society to learn.)
(ii) Fill in the blank: 'The grandmother's determination shows that learning has no _____ (age limit/gender bias/cultural barriers).'
(iii) Complete the following with a suitable reason: 'The narrator laughs at her grandmother's decision to learn the alphabet at the age of sixty-two because _____."
(iv) List any two qualities displayed by the grandmother.
(v) How can we say that the narrator is making assumptions about her grandmother?

SOLUTION

(i) B — She desires self-sufficiency. Her exact words are 'I want to be independent,' meaning she wants to be able to read on her own without needing others — which is self-sufficiency. (A is a means, not the core desire she states.)

(ii) age limit — The grandmother's words 'For learning there is no age bar' directly

indicate there is no age limit.

(iii) The narrator laughs because she thought sixty-two was too old to begin learning — she saw the grandmother's grey hair, wrinkled hands, spectacles, and kitchen workload as signs that learning the alphabet was impractical at that age.

(iv) Two qualities displayed by the grandmother: (a) Determination / strong willpower — she sets a firm deadline and refuses to give up despite mockery. (b) Wisdom / open-mindedness — she calmly responds with the truth that 'For learning there is no age bar' instead of getting upset.

(v) The narrator assumes that old age, grey hair, wrinkled hands, and wearing spectacles mean a person cannot learn to read. She judges the grandmother solely by her physical appearance and age, without giving her a chance. This is an assumption, as the grandmother goes on to prove her wrong completely.

Answer: (i) B. She desires self-sufficiency. (ii) age limit (iii) She assumed that sixty-two was too old to begin learning, judging the grandmother by her grey hair, wrinkled hands, spectacles, and heavy workload. (iv) Determination and wisdom. (v) The narrator assumes the grandmother cannot learn based only on her age and physical appearance, without considering her capability or willpower.

Q3 Answer the following questions.

1. Why do you think the grandmother felt embarrassed to ask someone else to read to her while the narrator was away?
2. Why does the narrator initially laugh at her grandmother's determination to learn at the age of sixty-two?
3. What significance does the story of Kashi Yatre have in both the grandmother's life and the story?
4. What does the grandmother's desire to learn the Kannada alphabet reflect about her?
5. What lessons can we infer from the grandmother's action of touching the narrator's feet?
6. What does the following line tell us about the broader theme of the story? 'For a good cause if you are determined, you can overcome any obstacle.'
7. How effectively does the story highlight the value of education in supporting personal independence?

SOLUTION

1. The grandmother said, 'We are well-off, but what use is money when I cannot be independent?' She felt her inability to read made her dependent, and seeking help from a neighbour would expose that dependence openly. Her self-respect and pride made her too embarrassed to admit her illiteracy to others in the village.

2. The narrator was only twelve years old and thought in a childish, superficial way. She saw only the grandmother's grey hair, wrinkled hands, spectacles, and constant kitchen work, and could not imagine that someone of sixty-two could start learning the alphabet. The narrator herself calls this reaction 'childish.'

3. Kashi Yatre is the Kannada serial about an old woman who sacrifices her lifelong dream of going to Kashi to fund a poor orphan girl's wedding. The grandmother identifies deeply with this protagonist — she too had never gone to Kashi. The serial's serial format is also the direct trigger for the grandmother's crisis: she cannot read the next episode while the narrator is away, which becomes the moment she decides to learn. Thus Kashi Yatre drives both the emotional core of the grandmother's character and the plot of the story itself.

4. The grandmother's desire reflects her strong sense of self-respect, her longing for personal independence, and her belief in lifelong learning. Despite being sixty-two with a full household workload, she is willing to work hard to overcome her illiteracy so she can be self-sufficient.

5. In Indian tradition, one touches the feet of God, elders, and teachers — never the other way around. By touching the narrator's feet, the grandmother shows that she values knowledge and the role of a teacher above age or family hierarchy. It teaches us that a teacher deserves respect regardless of age or gender ('Is it not written in our scriptures that a teacher should be respected, irrespective of the gender and age?'), and that learning can beautifully reverse and strengthen relationships.

6. The line states the story's central theme: determination and a worthy goal together can overcome any barrier — age, social norms, or personal limitations. The grandmother embodies this: despite being sixty-two and illiterate all her life, her determination makes her literate within a few months. The story uses her example to universalise this message.

7. The story highlights this effectively through the grandmother's own words and actions. She could not read one magazine episode and felt 'very dependent and helpless' despite being financially comfortable. The moment she becomes literate, she declares herself 'independent.' The story shows concretely that education is

not just about knowledge — it is the foundation of personal dignity and self-reliance.

Answer: 1. Her self-respect and pride prevented her from revealing her illiteracy to a neighbour. 2. The narrator was twelve and judged superficially by the grandmother's age and appearance. 3. Kashi Yatre is the novel the grandmother identifies with personally (she too never went to Kashi) and it is the direct trigger that drives her to learn to read. 4. It reflects her self-respect, desire for independence, and belief in lifelong learning. 5. It teaches that knowledge and teaching deserve respect above age and family hierarchy. 6. It states the central theme: determination in a worthy cause can overcome any obstacle. 7. Very effectively — the story shows that without literacy, even a financially comfortable person feels helpless and dependent.

Exercise 1.5 — Vocabulary and Structures in Context — How I Taught My Grandmother

Q1 Match the binomials in Column 1 with their meanings in Column 2.

Column 1:
1. sink or swim
2. on and off
3. mix and match
4. all or nothing
5. part and parcel
6. pick and choose
7. sooner or later
8. leaps and bounds

Column 2:
(i) put different things together to get a range of possibilities
(ii) complete part of or belong to
(iii) choose only the best (things, people, etc.)
(iv) at some time in the future
(v) sometimes, occasionally
(vi) increase or develop very quickly
(vii) succeed or fail without help
(viii) something to be done completely or not at all

SOLUTION

1. sink or swim — (vii) succeed or fail without help
2. on and off — (v) sometimes, occasionally
3. mix and match — (i) put different things together to get a range of possibilities
4. all or nothing — (viii) something to be done completely or not at all
5. part and parcel — (ii) complete part of or belong to
6. pick and choose — (iii) choose only the best (things, people, etc.)
7. sooner or later — (iv) at some time in the future
8. leaps and bounds — (vi) increase or develop very quickly

Answer: 1→(vii), 2→(v), 3→(i), 4→(viii), 5→(ii), 6→(iii), 7→(iv), 8→(vi)

Q2 Use any five of the binomials (sink or swim, on and off, mix and match, all or nothing, part and parcel, pick and choose, sooner or later, leaps and bounds) in sentences of your own.

SOLUTION

Model sentences using five of the binomials:

1. sink or swim: When he joined the new company without training, it was sink or swim for him.
2. on and off: She has been practising the piano on and off for several months.
3. leaps and bounds: Since joining the coaching class, Priya's mathematics skills have improved by leaps and bounds.
4. sooner or later: If you keep skipping your homework, sooner or later it will affect your grades.
5. part and parcel: Hard work and patience are part and parcel of achieving any great goal.

Answer: Model sentences: (1) When he joined the new company without training, it was sink or swim for him. (2) She has been practising the piano on and off for several months. (3) Since joining the coaching class, Priya's skills have improved by leaps and bounds. (4) Sooner or later, hard work always pays off. (5) Challenges are part and parcel of any learning journey.

Q3 Add the suitable prefix (un, im, dis, in, mis, extra) to the following words from the text to give them an opposite or negative meaning. One example is done: popular → unpopular.

2. belief
3. important
4. respect
5. correct
6. continue
7. understand
8. ordinary
9. interesting
10. possible

SOLUTION

Choose the prefix that correctly negates each word:

2. belief → disbelief (dis- for lack of belief)
3. important → unimportant (un- for not important)
4. respect → disrespect (dis- for lack of respect)
5. correct → incorrect (in- for not correct)
6. continue → discontinue (dis- to stop/reverse)
7. understand → misunderstand (mis- for wrong understanding)
8. ordinary → extraordinary (extra- for beyond ordinary)
9. interesting → uninteresting (un- for not interesting)
10. possible → impossible (im- before 'p' for not possible)

Answer: 2. disbelief 3. unimportant 4. disrespect 5. incorrect 6. discontinue 7. misunderstand 8. extraordinary 9. uninteresting 10. impossible

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Q4 Identify any five words with prefixes from the story 'How I Taught My Grandmother to Read' and make sentences using each.

SOLUTION

Five words with prefixes found in the story:

1. unfortunately (un-) — Unfortunately, Triveni died very young.
   Sentence: Unfortunately, we could not attend the festival due to bad weather.
2. immensely (im-) — I loved her immensely.
   Sentence: The students were immensely grateful to their teacher for her patience.
3. irrespective (ir-) — A teacher should be respected irrespective of gender and age.
   Sentence: Everyone should have access to education irrespective of their background.
4. independent (in-) — I want to be independent.
   Sentence: Learning to read made her feel independent and confident.
5. unhappy (un-) — Her face was unhappy.
   Sentence: He was unhappy when he missed the final chapter of the story.

Answer: Five prefixed words from the story: unfortunately (un-), immensely (im-), irrespective (ir-), independent (in-), unhappy (un-). Model sentences given above for each.

Q5 Match the idioms related to 'learning' in Column 1 with their meanings in Column 2.

Column 1:
1. to hit the books
2. to draw a blank
3. to learn the ropes
4. to rack one's brain
5. to learn by heart
6. burn the midnight oil

Column 2:
(i) to memorise something
(ii) to think very hard
(iii) to study seriously
(iv) to study or work late into the night
(v) to be unable to remember
(vi) to understand how to do an activity

SOLUTION

1. to hit the books — (iii) to study seriously
2. to draw a blank — (v) to be unable to remember
3. to learn the ropes — (vi) to understand how to do an activity
4. to rack one's brain — (ii) to think very hard
5. to learn by heart — (i) to memorise something
6. burn the midnight oil — (iv) to study or work late into the night

Answer: 1→(iii), 2→(v), 3→(vi), 4→(ii), 5→(i), 6→(iv)

Q6 Use the idioms (to hit the books, to draw a blank, to learn the ropes, to rack one's brain, to learn by heart, burn the midnight oil) in sentences of your own.

SOLUTION

Model sentences for each idiom:

1. to hit the books: With the exams just a week away, Rajan decided to hit the books every evening.

2. to draw a blank: When the teacher asked me the capital of Iceland, I drew a complete blank.

3. to learn the ropes: It took Meera a month to learn the ropes of her new job at the library.
4. to rack one's brain: I racked my brain trying to remember where I had kept the key.
5. to learn by heart: Avva could repeat the entire episode of Kashi Yatre by heart after hearing it once.
6. burn the midnight oil: The students burned the midnight oil to finish their science project before the deadline.

Answer: Model sentences provided above for all six idioms.

Q7 Fill in the blanks with the simple past and past perfect tense form of the verbs given in brackets.

(i)
A. When the delegates _____ (arrive) at the conference, the keynote speaker _____ (already begin) the session.
B. After the students _____ (learn) how to identify fake news online, they _____ (start) verifying information before sharing it.
C. Before Kiran _____ (start) using digital payment platforms, she _____ (ensure) her understanding of online fraud prevention.
D. By the time Varun _____ (recognise) the importance of budgeting, he _____ (exhaust) most of his savings.
E. When Raghu _____ (log in) to the cybersecurity webinar, the instructor _____ (already discuss) the importance of strong passwords.

SOLUTION

Rule: The earlier completed action takes the past perfect (had + past participle); the more recent action takes the simple past.
A. arrived / had already begun — The keynote speaker's beginning happened before the delegates arrived.
B. had learned / started — Learning how to identify fake news happened before they started verifying.
C. started / had ensured — Kiran ensured safety knowledge before she started using digital payments.
D. recognised / had exhausted — Exhausting savings happened before he recognised the importance of budgeting.

E. logged in / had already discussed — The instructor's discussion began before Raghu logged in.

Answer: A. arrived / had already begun B. had learned / started C. started / had ensured D. recognised / had exhausted E. logged in / had already discussed

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Q8 Fill in the blanks with the correct form of verbs given in brackets.

Last year, my parents and I A. _____ (take) a financial planning course. When we B. _____ (review) our expenses, we realised we C. _____ (spend) too much on unnecessary purchases. After my parents D. _____ (discuss) ways to save, I E. _____ (open) a savings account. By the time we F. _____ (set) our budget, the course G. _____ (already introduce) investment strategies. We H. _____ (hurry) to take notes, but many participants I. _____ (complete) their financial plans. Despite that, we J. _____ (enjoy) learning how to manage money wisely.

SOLUTION

Apply simple past for main narrative events and past perfect for events completed before another past event.

A. took — main narrative event (simple past)

B. reviewed — main event: 'when we reviewed' (simple past)

C. had spent — this happened before they realised, so past perfect

D. had discussed — the discussion preceded the opening of the account, so past perfect

E. opened — the result after discussion (simple past)

F. set — 'by the time we set' — this is the reference point (simple past)

G. had already introduced — the course introduced strategies before they set the budget (past perfect)

H. hurried — main action (simple past)

I. had completed — others completed their plans before this point (past perfect)

J. enjoyed — concluding statement of the narrative (simple past)

Answer: A. took B. reviewed C. had spent D. had discussed E. opened F. set G. had already introduced H. hurried I. had completed J. enjoyed

Exercise 1.6 — Check Your Understanding — Bharat Our Land (poem by Subramania B

Q1 Fill in the blanks by choosing appropriate words from the box to complete the summary of the poem 'Bharat Our Land'.

Words: warriors, peerless, Upanishads, Ganga, Buddha, Himavant, sages, praise, historical greatness, Brahma-knowledge

The poem is a tribute to India, celebrating its natural beauty, spiritual heritage, and 1. _____. The poet praises the 2. _____, describing it as mighty and unparalleled. The 3. _____ is depicted as generous and graceful, while the 4. _____ are honoured as sacred and unmatched. The poem highlights the contributions of 5. _____ and 6. _____ who have enriched the land with their bravery and wisdom. It also acknowledges the presence of 7. _____ and the teachings of 8. _____, highlighting India's deep-rooted spiritual and philosophical traditions. The poet repeatedly asserts that India is 9. _____, urging everyone to 10. _____ her.

SOLUTION

Match each blank to the word that fits the context of the poem:

1. historical greatness — the poem celebrates India's natural beauty, spiritual heritage, and historical greatness
2. Himavant — the mighty mountain range
3. Ganga — described as generous and graceful
4. Upanishads — sacred scriptures honoured as unmatched
5. warriors — gallant warriors
6. sages — sages who sanctified the land
7. Brahma-knowledge — spiritual knowledge that has taken root in India
8. Buddha — whose dhamma (teachings) were preached in India
9. peerless — 'she's peerless' is the poem's refrain
10. praise — 'let's praise her'

Answer: 1. historical greatness 2. Himavant 3. Ganga 4. Upanishads 5. warriors 6. sages 7. Brahma-knowledge 8. Buddha 9. peerless 10. praise

Q2 Complete the following features about the poem 'Bharat Our Land'.

1. The impact on the readers (mood):
2. The poet's attitude (tone):
3. The rhyme scheme:
4. Examples of personification:

SOLUTION

1. Mood: The poem creates a mood of patriotic pride, admiration, and reverence. Readers feel inspired and emotionally connected to India's greatness.
2. Tone: The poet's tone is reverential, celebratory, and patriotic — a tone of deep admiration and pride for the motherland.
3. Rhyme scheme: The poem follows a pattern where the second and fourth lines of each stanza (or the lines after the hyphens) rhyme, giving it an ABCB-like pattern with a recurring refrain. For example, 'earth' / 'grace' / 'them' / 'her' across different couplets, with the refrain 'she's peerless, let's praise her!' repeating at the end of stanzas.
4. Examples of personification: (a) 'The mighty Himavant is ours' — the mountain is referred to with a personal name and treated as a living entity belonging to the nation. (b) 'The generous Ganga is ours — which other river can match her grace?' — the Ganga is personified as 'generous' and given the feminine pronoun 'her', as if she has a personality and grace. (c) India itself is personified throughout as 'she' — 'she's peerless, let's praise her!'

Answer: 1. Mood: patriotic pride and admiration. 2. Tone: reverential and celebratory. 3. Rhyme scheme: structured couplets with a repeating refrain; the lines after the hyphens rhyme within stanzas. 4. Personification: the Himavant treated as a personal possession ('is ours'); the Ganga called 'generous' with 'her grace'; India referred to as 'she' throughout.

Q3 What is the impact of the refrain, 'she's peerless, let's praise her!'?

SOLUTION

A refrain is a line or phrase repeated at regular intervals in a poem.

The refrain 'she's peerless, let's praise her!' appears at the end of each stanza, creating a chant-like, anthem quality that builds emotional intensity with each repetition.

Its impact is threefold: (a) It reinforces the central claim that India is unmatched and matchless — 'peerless' — hammering this idea into the reader's mind. (b) It is

an inclusive call to action ('let's'), drawing the reader into a collective act of patriotic praise. (c) The repetition gives the poem a musical, incantatory rhythm that makes it feel like a hymn or song of praise to the motherland, deepening the feeling of national pride.

Answer: The refrain 'she's peerless, let's praise her!' reinforces India's uniqueness with each repetition, creates a chant-like, anthem quality, and unites the reader in a collective act of patriotic celebration — making the poem feel like a national hymn.

Q4 Complete the following sentence appropriately: 'India is metaphorically described as "this sunny golden land," suggesting that it is _____.'

SOLUTION

The metaphor 'sunny golden land' combines two ideas: 'sunny' suggests warmth, brightness, and abundance of natural light, while 'golden' suggests richness, prosperity, and great value.

Together, the phrase suggests that India is a land of warmth, brightness, abundance, and immense value — radiant with natural beauty and cultural richness.

Answer: India is metaphorically described as 'this sunny golden land,' suggesting that it is a bright, warm, and richly blessed land full of beauty and prosperity.

Q5 The poet uses symbolism. Match the symbols in Column 1 to what they suggest in Column 2.

Column 1:
1. Himavant
2. Ganga
3. Upanishads
4. Gallant warriors and sages
5. Brahma-knowledge and Buddha's Dhamma
6. Sunny golden land

Column 2:
(i) knowledge and enlightenment
(ii) spiritual and philosophical legacy

(iii) purity and generosity
(iv) richness and glory
(v) strength and permanence
(vi) courage and wisdom

SOLUTION

1. Himavant → (v) strength and permanence — the mighty, immovable Himalayas symbolise enduring strength
2. Ganga → (iii) purity and generosity — the Ganga is described as 'generous' and its holy waters symbolise purity
3. Upanishads → (ii) spiritual and philosophical legacy — the sacred scriptures embody India's spiritual and philosophical tradition
4. Gallant warriors and sages → (vi) courage and wisdom — warriors represent courage; sages represent wisdom
5. Brahma-knowledge and Buddha's Dhamma → (i) knowledge and enlightenment — both represent paths to supreme knowledge and spiritual enlightenment
6. Sunny golden land → (iv) richness and glory — the golden, sunny image symbolises abundance and radiant glory

Answer: 1→(v), 2→(iii), 3→(ii), 4→(vi), 5→(i), 6→(iv)

Q6 The poet uses imagery (descriptive language to create vivid mental pictures that appeal to the senses). Give any two examples from the poem.

SOLUTION

Imagery in poetry uses vivid descriptive language that appeals to sight, sound, touch, taste, or smell.

Example 1: 'The mighty Himavant is ours — there's no equal anywhere on earth.' — This creates a powerful visual image of the towering, majestic Himalayas, appealing to the sense of sight and evoking awe at their grandeur.

Example 2: 'The generous Ganga is ours — which other river can match her grace?' — This creates a flowing, graceful visual image of the Ganga river, suggesting both its physical beauty and its life-giving abundance.

Answer: Two examples of imagery: (1) 'The mighty Himavant' — creates a visual image of the towering Himalayas. (2) 'The generous Ganga…which other river can match her grace?' — evokes the flowing, graceful image of the sacred river.

Q7 What is the impact of the use of hyphens in the first stanza? Select the options that are true.

1. Creates deliberate pauses to reinforce the sense of admiration and pride
2. Emphasises the contrast between India's strengths and weaknesses
3. Lends to the lyrical quality giving it a measured, chant-like rhythm
4. Suggests hesitation or uncertainty in the poet's claims about India
5. Presents a key element of India's greatness before the hyphen and makes a strong assertion about its uniqueness after the hyphen

SOLUTION

Examine each option against the poem's first stanza: 'The mighty Himavant is ours— there's no equal anywhere on earth. The generous Ganga is ours— which other river can match her grace? The sacred Upanishads are ours— what scriptures else to name with them?'

1. TRUE — The hyphen creates a deliberate pause; after naming the great thing ('Himavant is ours'), the pause lets the admiration and pride sink in before the assertion of its uniqueness.
2. FALSE — The poem never mentions weaknesses; it is entirely celebratory.
3. TRUE — The pattern 'X is ours— [assertion]' repeated three times gives a measured, chant-like, rhythmic quality.
4. FALSE — There is no hesitation; the statements are confident assertions of greatness.
5. TRUE — Each line presents the key element (Himavant, Ganga, Upanishads) before the hyphen, then makes a strong assertion of its uniqueness after (e.g., 'there's no equal anywhere on earth').

Answer: Options 1, 3, and 5 are true. Options 2 and 4 are false.

Q8 The poem is an ode. An ode is a lyrical poem that expresses deep admiration, praise, or reverence for a person, place, object, or idea, often in an elevated and formal style. Identify examples from the poem that correspond to it being an ode.

SOLUTION

Features of an ode: deep admiration/praise for a subject, elevated language, enthusiasm, and emotional celebration of extraordinary qualities.

Examples from 'Bharat Our Land':

1. The entire poem praises and celebrates India as the subject — 'she's peerless, let's praise her!' is a direct call to praise, which is the defining purpose of an ode.

2. The elevated, grand language ('mighty Himavant', 'generous Ganga', 'sacred Upanishads', 'gallant warriors', 'divinest music', 'all auspicious things') reflects the formal, celebratory style of an ode.
3. The enthusiastic, reverential tone — every line expresses admiration without any critical note — is characteristic of an ode.
4. The repeating refrain 'she's peerless, let's praise her!' functions like the chorus of a hymn-ode, reinforcing the admiration repeatedly.

Answer: The poem qualifies as an ode because: (1) it directly praises and celebrates India throughout; (2) it uses elevated language ('mighty', 'generous', 'sacred', 'divinest'); (3) its tone is wholly reverential and enthusiastic; (4) the repeating refrain 'she's peerless, let's praise her!' serves as the ode's celebratory chorus.

Q9 The poet uses allusion in the poem. Identify the matching allusions from the poem for the following:
(a) An allusion to the ancient Indian scriptures that form the philosophical core and symbolise deep wisdom and enlightenment.
(b) An allusion to the concept of spiritual knowledge associated with self-realisation and ultimate truth.
(c) An allusion to Gautama Buddha's teachings, which include compassion, non-violence, and enlightenment.

SOLUTION

(a) 'The sacred Upanishads are ours — what scriptures else to name with them?' — The Upanishads are the ancient Indian philosophical texts that form the intellectual and spiritual core of Vedic philosophy, symbolising deep wisdom.
(b) 'Here Brahma-knowledge has taken root' — Brahma-knowledge (Brahmavidya) refers to the highest spiritual knowledge about the ultimate reality (Brahman) and self-realisation.
(c) 'And the Buddha preached his dhamma here' — This alludes directly to Gautama Buddha's teachings (Dhamma), which encompass compassion, non-violence, the Middle Path, and the path to enlightenment.

Answer: (a) 'The sacred Upanishads are ours' — alludes to the ancient philosophical scriptures. (b) 'Here Brahma-knowledge has taken root' — alludes to Brahmavidya, the knowledge of ultimate reality and self-realisation. (c) 'And the Buddha preached his dhamma here' — alludes to Gautama Buddha's teachings of compassion and enlightenment.

Exercise 1.7 — Critical Reflection — Bharat Our Land (poem)

Q1 Read the extract and answer the questions:

'The mighty Himavant is ours— there's no equal anywhere on earth.
The generous Ganga is ours— which other river can match her grace?
The sacred Upanishads are ours— what scriptures else to name with them?'

1. Complete the sentence: 'The word "mighty" refers to the _____ of the Himavant.'
2. The question mark at the end of the fourth and sixth line of the extract is used to _____ (i. show doubt and uncertainty ii. emphasise a point iii. highlight confusion and hesitation iv. reveal inquiry and curiosity).
3. The poet uses the word 'generous' to describe the Ganga. Why?
4. Why has the movement of the river been described as graceful?
5. Fill in the blank: 'The poet is implying that the Upanishads are _____ (unmatched/abundant) in their wisdom and spiritual depth.'

SOLUTION

1. The word 'mighty' refers to the immense strength and grandeur (power and towering stature) of the Himavant. It suggests both physical enormity and awe-inspiring power.

2. (ii) emphasise a point — The rhetorical questions ('which other river can match her grace?', 'what scriptures else to name with them?') are not genuine questions seeking answers; they are rhetorical devices that emphasise the point that nothing can compare to the Ganga and the Upanishads.

3. The Ganga is described as 'generous' because it gives abundantly and freely — it is a source of water, life, and sustenance for millions of people. It nourishes the plains, supports agriculture, and has been a spiritual source for countless pilgrims. Like a generous person who gives without keeping, the Ganga gives its waters selflessly.

4. The Ganga's movement is described as graceful because a great river does not rush chaotically — it flows in sweeping, broad, majestic curves across the plains. The slow, wide flow of a major river has an elegance and dignity to it, much like the graceful movement of a dancer or a dignified person.

5. unmatched — The rhetorical question 'what scriptures else to name with them?' implies there are no scriptures that can be compared to the Upanishads,

making them unmatched.

Answer: 1. strength and grandeur (power/towering stature) 2. (ii) emphasise a point 3. The Ganga gives its waters freely and abundantly, sustaining millions of lives — like a generous benefactor. 4. A great river flows in broad, sweeping, dignified curves, giving its movement a natural elegance. 5. unmatched

Q2 Answer the following questions.

1. How does the poem reflect a strong connection to cultural identity and heritage?
2. What can you infer about the poet's attitude towards India from the repeated phrase 'she's peerless, let's praise her!'?
3. What does the line 'many a sage has sanctified this land' suggest about India's spiritual heritage?
4. How does the poet connect warriors and music to India's greatness?
5. How does this poem foster a sense of national pride?

SOLUTION

1. The poem reflects a strong connection to cultural identity by celebrating the specific geographical landmarks (Himavant, Ganga), sacred texts (Upanishads), spiritual traditions (Brahma-knowledge, Buddha's Dhamma), and historical figures (warriors, sages) that are uniquely Indian. These are not generic symbols but specifically Indian ones, rooting the poem's celebration in a distinct cultural identity and heritage.

2. The repeated phrase reveals that the poet feels absolute, unwavering admiration for India — he sees her as peerless (without equal) and believes this needs to be proclaimed again and again. The inclusive 'let's' shows he wants all people to share this admiration. His attitude is one of deep, passionate, reverential patriotism.

3. The line suggests that India is not merely a geographical territory but a spiritually consecrated land. Many great sages chose India as the place to seek truth and achieve realisation, and their presence and prayers over centuries have made the land sacred. It implies India has a rich, ancient spiritual heritage that gives it a unique moral and religious significance.

4. The poet writes, 'Gallant warriors have lived here, / many a sage has sanctified this land. / The divinest music has been heard here.' He connects warriors (representing courage and the defence of culture) and music (representing the

highest achievements of art and civilisation) as two different pillars of India's greatness — one military, one artistic. Together they show India's greatness is both in strength and in beauty/culture.

5. The poem fosters national pride by presenting India's natural wonders (Himavant, Ganga), its intellectual and spiritual achievements (Upanishads, Brahma-knowledge, Buddha's Dhamma), its historical heroes (warriors, sages), and its cultural richness (divinest music, auspicious traditions) as collectively unmatched. The recurring refrain 'she's peerless, let's praise her!' is a rallying call that invites every reader to feel this pride personally and collectively.

Answer: 1. By naming India's specific mountains, rivers, scriptures, and traditions rather than generic symbols, the poem roots national pride in concrete cultural identity. 2. The poet is deeply and passionately patriotic — he sees India as absolutely unmatched and urges everyone to share this admiration. 3. That India is a spiritually consecrated land, blessed by the presence and wisdom of countless sages across centuries. 4. Warriors represent courage and cultural defence; music represents the heights of civilisation — together they show India is great in both strength and culture. 5. By celebrating India's specific, irreplaceable natural, spiritual, and cultural achievements and calling readers to collective praise through the refrain.

Exercise 1.8 — Vocabulary in Context — Bharat Our Land

Q1 Complete the table by choosing words from the poem for the given suffixes.

Suffix | Meaning | Examples (from the poem)
-ous | full of, having the qualities of kindness | 1. _____ous
-ity | the state of being very old or ancient | 2. _____ity
-est | superlative form | 3. _____est
-less | without something | 4. _____less

SOLUTION

Scan the poem for words ending in -ous, -ity, -est, and -less:

1. -ous: 'generous' — from 'The generous Ganga is ours' (generous = full of generosity)
2. -ity: 'antiquity' — from 'Of hoary antiquity is Bharat' (antiquity = the state of being very ancient)
3. -est: 'divinest' — from 'The divinest music has been heard here' (superlative of divine)
4. -less: 'peerless' — from 'she's peerless, let's praise her!' (peerless = without peers/equals)

Answer: 1. generous (-ous) 2. antiquity (-ity) 3. divinest (-est) 4. peerless (-less)

Q2 Complete the following table by adding a different suffix to form new words and create a sentence using each. One example is done: indicate → indication.

1. (suffix -tion) new word and sentence
2. (suffix -ive) new word and sentence
3. (suffix -ment) new word and sentence
4. (suffix -ed) new word and sentence

SOLUTION

Form new words by adding each suffix to a word from the poem or related vocabulary, then write a sentence.

1. Suffix -tion (the action or process of): celebrate → celebration
   Sentence: The celebration of India's cultural heritage brings people together.
2. Suffix -ive (quality or nature of): admire → admirable → (more directly) assert → assertive

Alternatively: generate → generative

Example word: admire → admire (use a root) — praise → (not directly) OR sanctify → use 'creative' (create → creative)

Best fit from poem vocabulary: admire — admire is not directly transformable; use 'express → expressive'

Sentence: The poet's language in the ode is expressive and emotionally powerful.

3. Suffix -ment (the action or result of): acknowledge → acknowledgement

Sentence: The poem is an acknowledgement of India's unparalleled spiritual and natural greatness.

4. Suffix -ed (past-tense form): sanctify → sanctified

Sentence: Many a sage has sanctified this ancient land through their wisdom and prayers.

Answer: 1. celebrate → celebration — 'The celebration of India's cultural heritage brings people together.' 2. express → expressive — 'The poet's language is expressive and emotionally powerful.' 3. acknowledge → acknowledgement — 'The poem is an acknowledgement of India's greatness.' 4. sanctify → sanctified — 'Many a sage has sanctified this land through their wisdom.' (Accept other valid words with these suffixes.)