Chapter 2: The Pot Maker

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Exercise 2.1 — Check Your Understanding (mid-story) — The Pot Maker

Q1 Do you think pot making is easy? If yes, why? If no, why not?

SOLUTION

The text makes clear that pot making is not easy at all.

Arenla describes having to travel sixteen kilometres to reach the riverbank where clay is found, climbing down a sheer drop, and carrying a heavy load uphill back to the village.

The clay must then be pounded inside bamboo cylinders to soften it — a tedious process during which the mould may be dropped out of exhaustion, forcing a restart.

After shaping, pots need days of drying in sunlight before firing in a kiln, where over-firing or under-firing ruins the entire batch.

Sentila's own year-long struggle to shape even a single pot confirms that the craft demands exceptional physical endurance and fine manual skill.

Answer: No, pot making is not easy. It involves a gruelling journey to collect clay, exhausting pounding, delicate shaping, careful drying, and precise kiln-firing — with a small monetary reward after months of labour.

Q2 Would Sentila be able to fulfil her dream of becoming a pot maker? Explain.

SOLUTION

At this point in the story, the outlook is cautiously hopeful.
Sentila has shown extraordinary passion — secretly watching expert potters since childhood and persisting despite her mother's reluctance.
Her father's intervention through the village council has forced the family to acknowledge the village's expectation that the skill be passed on.
Mesoba's promise to the elders that 'you will soon see Sentila making the best pots in the village' suggests that Arenla will eventually teach her.
Her determination and the community's moral pressure make it likely that she will fulfil her dream.

Answer: Yes, Sentila is likely to fulfil her dream. Her deep passion, persistent self-learning, and the village council's intervention together create the conditions for her mother to finally teach her the craft.

Q3 Do you think Mesoba and Arenla would support Sentila? Give a reason.

SOLUTION

The village council summons Mesoba and warns him that it is Arenla's duty to pass on the skill handed down from generation to generation, and that such skills do not 'belong' to any individual.
Mesoba, in a humble tone, promises the elders that Sentila will soon make the best pots in the village — a public commitment that binds both parents.
He then goes home and discusses the matter with Arenla.
Although Arenla initially resisted, both parents will most likely support Sentila now, because community obligation and Mesoba's promise leave them little choice.

Answer: Yes, both are likely to support Sentila now. The village council's warning and Mesoba's public promise to the elders create a strong social obligation that compels them to teach her the craft.

Exercise 2.2 — Check Your Understanding (post-story) — The Pot Maker

Q1 Do you think Onula's support helped Sentila? If yes, why? If no, why not?

SOLUTION

Onula's support was decisive.

She noticed that Sentila's problem was not lack of ability but excessive tension: 'Sentila was too tense. As a result, the clay seemed unable or unwilling to yield the right shape.'

Onula demonstrated the technique herself, and with renewed confidence, Sentila fashioned a beautiful pot for the first time.

Onula then directed Sentila to watch her mother specifically when shaping the mouth of the pot — the one remaining weakness.

Without Onula's timely intervention and guidance, Sentila might have given up after a second year of failure.

Answer: Yes, Onula's support was crucial. She identified that tension — not lack of skill — was blocking Sentila, gave her a confidence-restoring demonstration, and pointed her to the specific technique she still needed to observe.

Q2 Sentila observes her mother making pots. What does this tell us about her?

SOLUTION

Sentila's close observation of her mother reveals her as a determined and perceptive learner.

Despite a year of unsuccessful practice, she did not give up; instead she watched carefully — noting how her mother held her left hand and the spatula, how she slackened the rhythm when fashioning the mouth, and how she added a strip of elongated dough to form the rim.

This deliberate, detail-oriented observation turned passive watching into active learning and ultimately enabled her breakthrough.

Answer: It shows that Sentila is a determined, detail-oriented learner who compensates for direct instruction by closely watching and internalising every nuance of her mother's technique.

Q3 Arrange the following events of the story in the correct sequence.

1. The village council called Mesoba to know about Arenla's unwillingness to teach pottery to Sentila.
2. Arenla made a new batch of pots and asked Sentila to continue the work as she was unwell.
3. Sentila observed how other expert potters crafted beautiful pots.
4. Sentila was passionate about pottery but did not share it with her mother.
5. Onula guided Sentila in the art of pot making.
6. Sentila overheard her mother saying that pot making was a tiring job and that she earned very little from it.
7. Onula observed two rows of pots inside the work shed, which she felt was the work of two people.
8. Sentila learnt the art of pot making for a year from her mother, but was unsuccessful.
9. Sentila was able to make pots quickly and skillfully, just one less than her mother's.

SOLUTION

Tracing events chronologically through the story:

4 → Sentila is passionate about pottery but hides it from her mother.
6 → She overhears Arenla complaining that pot making earns very little.
3 → She secretly visits expert potters and observes their craft.
1 → The village council summons Mesoba about Arenla's refusal to teach.
8 → Arenla teaches Sentila for a year, but Sentila remains unsuccessful.
5 → Onula guides Sentila and she makes a beautiful pot for the first time.
2 → Arenla asks Sentila to continue pot making alone, claiming illness.
9 → Sentila makes pots quickly and skillfully, just one short of her mother's tally.
7 → Onula sees the two rows of pots and senses something momentous.

Answer: Correct sequence: 4 → 6 → 3 → 1 → 8 → 5 → 2 → 9 → 7.

Exercise 2.3 — Critical Reflection I (extract-based) — The Pot Maker

Q1 Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

'Pounding the stubborn clay inside bamboo cylinders to soften it, is also tedious. So many times I've dropped the mould out of sheer exhaustion and have had to start all over again. It takes months to bring out a batch of pots after so much labour. And the reward? A few rupees. But if Sentila learns weaving, she can make much more money besides providing enough cloth for the family. Weaving is not messy like pot making and can be done indoors in all seasons. Also, the time spent on weaving one shawl is much less and the return is handsome.'

(i) Choose the correct reason for the given assertion.
Assertion (A): The effort in making pots is far greater than the returns.
A. The process of pot making is quite tiresome and long, and one hardly earns much.
B. The process of pot making is exhausting, takes a long time, yet gives a sense of satisfaction.

(ii) Why does Arenla want Sentila to learn weaving?

(iii) State one advantage that weaving has over pot making, as per the extract.

(iv) Choose the sentence that uses the word 'handsome' in the same way as in the extract.
A. My father is a handsome man.
B. They will make a handsome profit selling this property.

(v) 'And the reward? A few rupees.' What is the author's purpose of using a question mark here?

SOLUTION

(i) Option A is correct. Arenla describes how the clay-pounding is tedious, the mould is often dropped out of exhaustion, and months of labour yield only 'a few rupees'. There is no suggestion of satisfaction — only weariness and meagre reward.

(ii) Arenla wants Sentila to learn weaving because it earns far more money, can be done indoors in all seasons, takes less time per product (one shawl), and also

provides enough cloth for the family — making it practical and financially rewarding.

(iii) One advantage: Weaving can be done indoors in all seasons, unlike pot making which depends on outdoor conditions for drying and firing.

(iv) Option B is correct. In the extract, 'handsome' means generous or considerable (a handsome return = a large profit). Option B — 'a handsome profit' — uses the word in the same way. Option A uses 'handsome' to mean physically attractive, which is a different sense.

(v) The question mark in 'And the reward?' is used rhetorically to convey Arenla's bitter disillusionment. By asking a question and immediately answering it with 'A few rupees,' the author mimics Arenla's internal voice, emphasising the stark contrast between the enormous effort and the tiny, almost insulting, monetary reward.

Answer: (i) A. (ii) Weaving earns more money, is cleaner, can be done indoors, takes less time, and also produces cloth for the family. (iii) Weaving can be done indoors in all seasons. (iv) B. (v) The rhetorical question conveys Arenla's bitterness and highlights the glaring mismatch between immense effort and meagre pay.

Q2 Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

'Onula saw her taking out some clay and the implements from her basket quietly. She watched Sentila's clumsy efforts to make a pot and noticed that Sentila was too tense. As a result, the clay seemed unable or unwilling to yield the right shape. When Sentila wearily let the misshapen lump fall flat on the ground, Onula went to her and said, "Don't worry, little one, I shall teach you how to make a perfect pot." Sentila watched in amazement as Onula fashioned a beautiful pot and asked her to try again.'

(i) Complete the sentence with an appropriate reason.
Onula feels Sentila's effort at making a pot is clumsy because _____.

(ii) Choose the correct option to complete the following sentence.
'Don't worry, little one, I shall teach you how to make a perfect pot.' This shows that Onula was _____.
A. sincere and generous
B. forgiving and thoughtful
C. thoughtful and generous
D. forgiving and sincere

(iii) Which among the following is the effect of a cause?
A. As a result, the clay seemed unable or unwilling to yield the right shape.
B. Onula saw her taking out some clay and the implements from her basket quietly.

(iv) 'Onula fashioned a beautiful pot.' Here, the word 'fashioned' means _____. (created/styled)

(v) How might Sentila have felt when she saw 'the misshapen lump fall flat on the ground'?

SOLUTION

(i) Sentila's effort is clumsy because she is too tense — her anxiety and nervous strain prevent the clay from yielding the right shape under her hands.

(ii) Option C — thoughtful and generous — is correct. Onula is thoughtful because she observes Sentila's problem with empathy and understands its cause (tension), and generous because she immediately offers to teach her without being asked.

(iii) Option A is the effect. The cause is Sentila being too tense; the effect is that 'the clay seemed unable or unwilling to yield the right shape.' Option B describes Onula's observation, which is a preceding action, not an effect.

(iv) 'Fashioned' means created — Onula shaped and created a beautiful pot from the clay.

(v) Sentila likely felt deep frustration, shame, and discouragement. The word 'wearily' shows her physical and emotional exhaustion, and the misshapen lump falling flat would represent yet another failure after persistent effort.

Answer: (i) she is too tense, which prevents the clay from yielding the right shape. (ii) C. (iii) A. (iv) created. (v) Frustrated, ashamed, and deeply discouraged after yet another failure despite repeated effort.

Exercise 2.4 — Critical Reflection II (questions) — The Pot Maker

Q1 Describe the process of pot making followed by expert pot makers, as observed by Sentila.

SOLUTION

Sentila observes the potters mixing clay with water and pounding it until softened.
The potter then pushes the left hand into a lump of softened clay and deftly rotates the lump while shaping it with a spatula held in the right hand.
The regular tap of the spatula against the clay gradually draws out the pot's form.
After two or three days, the pots are given a final touch-up to retain their shape and test consistency.
They are then dried in the sun before being loaded in a uniform pattern on a bed of hay and dried bamboo inside a kiln and covered with the same materials.
The kiln is then fired, and the fire must be tended carefully — over-firing or under-firing ruins the entire batch.

Answer: Expert potters mix and pound clay, push one hand into the lump and rotate it while shaping with a spatula, touch up the pots after two to three days, dry them in the sun, then fire them in a carefully tended kiln on a bed of hay and bamboo.

Q2 What warning was given to Mesoba by the village council?

SOLUTION

The village council cautioned Mesoba that it was Arenla's duty to teach her daughter the skill handed down from generation to generation.
The elders also told him that skills such as pot making, which catered to the needs of the people and symbolised their tradition and history, did not 'belong' to any individual.
Therefore, experts were obliged to pass on their skills not only to their own children but to anyone who wished to learn.

Answer: The council warned Mesoba that it was Arenla's duty to pass the craft to Sentila; that skills like pot making belong to the community's heritage, not any individual; and that all experts must teach anyone willing to learn.

Q3 How did Sentila feel when she failed at pot making even after a year of training with her mother?

SOLUTION

The text describes Sentila hanging 'her head in shame and frustration' during the shaping sessions when she could not even hold the lump of dough properly.

Despite a full year of training, she was 'unable to learn anything from her mother'.

This combination of shame, frustration, and inability to progress suggests she felt deeply demoralised and helpless, yet continued to try — pointing to her underlying determination.

Answer: Sentila felt deep shame and frustration, hanging her head after each failed attempt. Though demoralised by a year of no progress, she continued trying, showing that her passion overrode her discouragement.

Q4 'Onula stood there for a long time as if trying to absorb a new phenomenon.' Explain.

SOLUTION

After Arenla's death, Onula steps into the work shed and finds two neat rows of newly-made pots standing side by side.

She can find nothing to tell one batch from the other — the pots of mother and daughter are indistinguishable in quality.

Onula, who had guided Sentila, instantly grasps what this means: Sentila, in the very hour of her mother's death, had fully mastered the craft and achieved her mother's level of skill.

This is the 'new phenomenon' — a profound, almost mystical moment of realisation that a new master pot maker has emerged, and that the skill has been truly passed on.

The long pause reflects Onula's awe at witnessing this momentous transformation.

Answer: Onula sees two indistinguishable rows of pots — mother's and daughter's — and realises that Sentila has fully matched her mother's mastery at the very moment of Arenla's death. She pauses in awe at this profound, almost spiritual passing of skill from one generation to the next.

Q5 'The tradition and history of the people did not belong to any individual.' What does this symbolise?

SOLUTION

This statement, made by the village council to Mesoba, reflects the community's belief that traditional crafts like pot making are a collective cultural heritage.

Arenla's attempt to withhold the skill from her daughter is therefore not merely a family decision — it is an act that threatens the continuity of the community's identity and tradition.

The symbolism extends to the idea that skilled vocations are threads woven into the cultural fabric of a people; when they are not transmitted, part of the community's history dies.

It also suggests that no individual 'owns' knowledge or art — these belong to the people and must be freely shared to survive.

Answer: It symbolises that traditional crafts are collective cultural heritage, not private property. Withholding a skill threatens the community's identity and continuity; experts have a social obligation to transmit knowledge so that the tradition lives on.

Q6 What is the significance of the concluding line of the story, 'A new pot maker was born'?

SOLUTION

The final line is profoundly layered.

On the literal level, it marks the moment Sentila achieves complete mastery — she made almost as many pots as her mother — just one short of her tally — through her own hands.

On a symbolic level, the phrase echoes a birth: just as Arenla died, Sentila 'was born' as a craftswoman — suggesting that the skill has been reborn in the next generation at the precise moment it might have been lost.

It also resonates with the story's central theme about cultural continuity — the craft does not die with the individual but is carried forward.

Onula's intuitive sense of witnessing 'a profound revelation' reinforces this reading: the two rows of indistinguishable pots represent the seamless transfer of tradition.

Answer: The line marks both an end and a beginning — Arenla's death and Sentila's emergence as a master potter in the same moment. It symbolises the unbroken continuity of tradition: the skill lives on, reborn in the next generation just as it might have perished.

Q7 What is the role of perseverance in pursuing one's dreams? Elaborate with reference to Sentila.

SOLUTION

Perseverance is the central driving force in Sentila's journey.

Despite her mother's active discouragement, Sentila secretly watched expert potters for years, nurturing her passion without any formal support.

After a full year of training with Arenla during which she could not shape a single pot correctly, she did not abandon the craft.

Even in the dormitory, when she could have spent the evening at the musical gathering, she quietly practised alone — which led to Onula's intervention.

After Onula's guidance, she continued to observe her mother's specific technique for shaping the mouth of the pot, filling the one gap that remained.

Ultimately, her years of patient effort crystallised in a single afternoon when she matched her mother's skill.

Sentila's story shows that perseverance converts passion into mastery, and that obstacles — including family resistance and repeated failure — become stepping stones when met with sustained determination.

Answer: Sentila's story shows that perseverance is what transforms passion into mastery. Despite years of family resistance, a year of failed practice, and repeated discouragement, she never gave up. Each setback deepened her observation and determination, until her skill finally matched her mother's.

Exercise 2.5 — Vocabulary and Structures in Context I — The Pot Maker

Q1 Classify the following words/phrases as Tools/Implements, Raw Materials, or Process. (Words: dao, dough, pounding, bamboo, clay, kiln, spatula, basket, cylinders, rotating, bed of hay, shaping). The table already places dao under Tools/Implements, dough under Raw Materials, and pounding under Process as examples.

SOLUTION

Tools/Implements: dao (given), spatula, basket, kiln, cylinders
Raw Materials: dough (given), clay, bamboo, bed of hay
Process: pounding (given), rotating, shaping

Notes: The kiln is the firing apparatus (implement); cylinders are the bamboo tubes used for pounding (implement); bamboo and bed of hay are materials used in the process; rotating and shaping are actions/steps in the process.

Answer: Tools/Implements: dao, spatula, basket, kiln, cylinders. Raw Materials: dough, clay, bamboo, bed of hay. Process: pounding, rotating, shaping.

Exercise 2.6 — Vocabulary and Structures in Context III — Grammar (Noun Clauses and

Q1 Complete the following sentences with suitable noun clauses.

(i) The elders emphasised that _____.

(ii) Mesoba explained why _____.

(iii) Onula's promise was that _____.

(iv) Sentila observed her mother carefully when she was shaping the mouth of the pot, which _____.

(v) The kiln, where _____, required careful attention to prevent over-or-under firing.

SOLUTION

(i) The elders emphasised that skills such as pot making did not belong to any individual and that it was Arenla's duty to teach her daughter the craft.

(ii) Mesoba explained why Arenla had not yet taught Sentila — saying they had wanted her to grow stronger after her illness.

(iii) Onula's promise was that she would teach Sentila how to make a perfect pot.

(iv) Sentila observed her mother carefully when she was shaping the mouth of the pot, which helped her understand how a strip of elongated dough was added to make the rim.

(v) The kiln, where the pots were loaded on a bed of hay and dried bamboo and then fired, required careful attention to prevent over-or-under firing.

Answer: (i) skills such as pot making did not belong to any individual and it was every expert's duty to teach the craft. (ii) Arenla had not yet taught Sentila because they wanted her to recover from illness first. (iii) she would teach Sentila how to make a perfect pot. (iv) helped her learn how to shape the mouth and add the rim. (v) the pots were loaded on hay and bamboo and fired.

Q2 Underline the main clause and circle the subordinate clause in the following sentences.
(i) Arenla took Sentila to the riverbank where the grey and red clay was found.
(ii) She started on the next one, and like a sprinter who had suddenly found momentum...
(iii) … skills such as pot making, which not only catered to the needs of the people...

SOLUTION

(i) Main clause: 'Arenla took Sentila to the riverbank'. Subordinate (adjectival/relative) clause: 'where the grey and red clay was found' — modifies 'riverbank'.
(ii) Main clause: 'She started on the next one'. Subordinate (relative) clause: 'who had suddenly found momentum' — modifies 'sprinter'.
(iii) Main clause: 'skills such as pot making … did not belong to any individual' (the full sentence context). Subordinate (relative) clause: 'which not only catered to the needs of the people' — modifies 'pot making'.

Answer: (i) Main: 'Arenla took Sentila to the riverbank'; subordinate: 'where the grey and red clay was found'. (ii) Main: 'She started on the next one'; subordinate: 'who had suddenly found momentum'. (iii) Main: the independent statement about skills; subordinate: 'which not only catered to the needs of the people'.

Q3 Complete the following sentences with suitable relative clauses.
(i) Sentila, whose _____, practised the craft diligently.
(ii) The village council, where _____, sought an explanation for Arenla's reluctance.
(iii) The potter's hands, which _____, shaped the clay into beautiful creations.
(iv) Arenla, her mother, wanted her to learn weaving, which _____.
(v) Mesoba went home and discussed the matter with Arenla, who _____.

SOLUTION

(i) Sentila, whose passion for pot making had begun in childhood, practised the craft diligently.
(ii) The village council, where elders gathered to uphold community traditions, sought an explanation for Arenla's reluctance.
(iii) The potter's hands, which moved with remarkable dexterity and precision,

shaped the clay into beautiful creations.

(iv) Arenla, her mother, wanted her to learn weaving, which earned more money and could be done indoors in all seasons.

(v) Mesoba went home and discussed the matter with Arenla, who finally agreed to teach Sentila the art of pot making.

Answer: (i) whose passion for pot making had begun in childhood. (ii) where elders gathered to uphold community traditions. (iii) which moved with remarkable dexterity. (iv) which earned more money and could be done indoors. (v) who finally agreed to teach Sentila the craft.

Q4 (i) Find out some more determiners from the text of 'The Pot Maker'.
(ii) Fill in the blanks with suitable determiners. (First two blanks already done: 'The florist arranged five bouquets for her clients, that were displayed in _____ elegant floral shop.' / 'The carpenter crafted _____ unique tables, and _____ became the centrepiece in _____ furniture collection.' / '_____ of _____ apprentices in _____ culinary class demonstrated _____ knife skills during the intense cooking session.' / '_____ of _____ sculptures were displayed at _____ art exhibition, showcasing _____ diverse artistic skills.')

SOLUTION

(i) Additional determiners found in the text:

Articles: 'a' (a dao, a quick learner, a pot), 'the' (the riverbank, the clay, the kiln)

Demonstratives: 'this' (this way — implied by context), 'that' (that she would soon outgrow)

Possessives: 'her' (her daughter, her basket), 'his' (his daughter), 'their' (their place)

Indefinite numerals: 'some' (some clay), 'many' (many times), 'no' (no expert potters), 'any' (anyone who wished to learn), 'all' (all pot makers), 'enough' (enough days of sunshine)

Definite numerals: 'one' (one short of her mother's tally), 'two' (two neat rows)

(ii) Filling in the blanks:

A. 'that were displayed in an elegant floral shop.'

B. 'The carpenter crafted some unique tables, and these became the centrepiece in his furniture collection.'

C. 'Each of the apprentices in the culinary class demonstrated their knife skills

during the intense cooking session.'

D. 'Many of the sculptures were displayed at the art exhibition, showcasing their diverse artistic skills.'

Answer: (i) Determiners from the text include: a, the (articles); her, his, their (possessives); some, many, no, any, all, enough (indefinite numerals); one, two (definite numerals). (ii) A. an; B. some / these / his; C. Each / the / the / their; D. Many / the / the / their.

Exercise 2.7 — Reflect and Respond I (riddles) — Gifts of Grace: Honouring Our Vocatio

Q1 Read the four riddles and identify who these people are.

1. 'In furrows deep, secrets I sow, / As time passes, / I watch them grow. / Who am I?'
2. 'From wheel to kiln, my skill is born, / Step by step, an art takes form. / Who am I?'
3. 'I lay foundations, brick by brick, / To build a house, it's me you pick. / Who am I?'
4. 'I work with pots, pans, and spice, / Creating dishes that taste so nice. / Who am I?'

SOLUTION

1. 'In furrows deep, secrets I sow' — furrows are lines in the soil; sowing seeds and watching them grow refers to farming. The person is a farmer.
2. 'From wheel to kiln' — a potter's wheel and kiln are the tools of pottery. The person is a potter.
3. 'I lay foundations, brick by brick, to build a house' — this describes construction work. The person is a mason/builder.
4. 'I work with pots, pans, and spice, creating dishes' — this describes cooking. The person is a cook/chef.

Answer: 1. A farmer. 2. A potter. 3. A mason / builder. 4. A cook / chef.

Exercise 2.8 — Check Your Understanding I (True/False) — Gifts of Grace: Honouring C

Q1 Based on your understanding of the poem, state whether the following statements are true or false. Rectify the false statements.

1. The poem highlights the skilled work of craftsperson.
2. The poet shares that musicians express emotions through their instruments.
3. The carpenters in the poem are admired for their logical work.
4. The electricians in the poem are recognised for their crucial role in lighting up lives.
5. The poem pays homage to shoemakers who manufacture quality footwear.
6. The poem celebrates the patriotism of the people of Bharat.
7. The poet feels that each vocation deserves to be respected.

SOLUTION

1. TRUE. The poem highlights the skilled work of craftspersons — weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, cooks, and others are all celebrated.

2. TRUE. The poem mentions 'artisans with lutes, each hailing varied emotions and celebrating dreams' — lutes are musical instruments used to express emotions.

3. FALSE. The correct statement: The carpenters in the poem are admired for their mathematical precision ('They create anything out of wood with mathematical precision'). The word 'logical' is not used; precision is the quality highlighted.

4. TRUE. The electricians are recognised for working 'with cables and wires to brighten our lives' — a direct reference to their crucial role in providing electricity/light.

5. FALSE. The correct statement: The poem pays homage to shoemakers who affirm (declare with confidence) the quality of their work — the poem does not say they 'manufacture'; it focuses on the pride shoemakers take in their craft.

6. FALSE. The correct statement: The poem celebrates the diverse vocations and skilled workers of Bharat, not patriotism per se. The title 'Gifts of Grace' and the content focus on honouring workers and their crafts, not on love of country.

7. TRUE. The line 'The voice of their vocation is the voice of their identity' and the poem's overall celebration of every vocation — from boatmen to cooks to designers — reflects the poet's view that every vocation deserves respect.

Answer: 1. True. 2. True. 3. False — carpenters are admired for their mathematical precision, not logical work. 4. True. 5. False — shoemakers are celebrated for affirming the quality of their work (not for manufacturing). 6. False — the poem celebrates the diverse vocations/workers of Bharat, not patriotism. 7. True.

Exercise 2.9 — Check Your Understanding II (Poetry Appreciation) — Gifts of Grace: Ho

Q1 Rhyme Scheme and Lineation.

(i) Does the poem strictly adhere to a rhyme scheme, or is it in free verse?

(ii) What is the impact of the varying length of lines in the poem?

(iii) What is the pattern in the structure of most lines of the poem?

SOLUTION

(i) The poem is in free verse. There is no consistent end-rhyme pattern — lines do not rhyme in a fixed scheme. The poem celebrates its subjects through imagery and tone rather than formal rhyme.

(ii) The varying line lengths mirror the diversity and individuality of each vocation. Shorter lines can create a crisp, emphatic effect, while longer lines allow for richer description of a craft. This variation also reflects the natural rhythms of speech and celebration, making the poem feel like a living, breathing chorus of voices.

(iii) Most lines follow a pattern of naming a group of workers (the carpenters, the electricians, the boatmen, the shoemakers) and then describing what they do or what makes their work distinctive. This cataloguing or list-like structure gives the poem a procession-like quality, as if different vocations are passing by in a parade.

Answer: (i) Free verse — no fixed rhyme scheme. (ii) Varying line lengths mirror the diversity of vocations and create a natural, speech-like rhythm. (iii) Most lines name a group of workers and describe their distinctive activity — a cataloguing or list structure.

Q2 Speaker.

(i) Who appears to be the speaker and what is her/his role here?

SOLUTION

The speaker appears to be an observer — someone who listens to and witnesses the celebrations of all the workers of Bharat.

The repeated refrain 'I hear Bharat celebrating, the varied vocations I hear' positions the speaker as an attentive, admiring witness who takes in the sounds and sights of every craft.

The speaker's role is that of a celebrant and chronicler — one who honours and records the contributions of all vocations, giving voice to those who are often overlooked, and affirming that every worker's identity is inseparable from their

work.

Answer: The speaker is an observant witness — someone who listens to and celebrates all the vocations of Bharat. Their role is to honour and chronicle the diverse workers, affirming that every vocation is a vital part of the nation's identity.

Q3 Tone and Mood.

(i) Fill in the blanks with suitable options from the box: serious, celebratory, hostile, reverential, joyful, sympathetic.

A. The tone is _____ and _____, depicting a sense of admiration and respect for the artisans and craftspersons.

B. There is a _____ mood throughout the poem, capturing the vibrancy and richness of cultural traditions and skills.

SOLUTION

A. The tone is reverential and celebratory — 'reverential' captures the deep respect and admiration for the artisans, while 'celebratory' captures the joyous, affirmative voice of the poem.

B. There is a joyful mood throughout the poem, capturing the vibrancy and richness of cultural traditions and skills.

Answer: A. reverential and celebratory. B. joyful.

Q4 Imagery.

(i) Select any two descriptions from the poem that evoke visual images.

(ii) Fill in the blanks with suitable phrases. 'The poem includes auditory imagery through mentions of artisans with lutes, _____, and _____, emphasising the sounds associated with each vocation.'

SOLUTION

(i) Two visual images from the poem:

1. 'The boatmen gathering their nets from the shore, sailing, and singing while at work' — this evokes a vivid picture of fishermen at sea, pulling in nets at the shoreline.

2. 'The carpenters celebrating; they create anything out of wood with mathematical precision' — this conjures an image of skilled carpenters measuring and crafting wooden objects with careful exactness.

(ii) The poem includes auditory imagery through mentions of artisans with lutes,

the delicious singing of the cook, and the boatmen singing while at work, emphasising the sounds associated with each vocation.

Answer: (i) 1. 'Boatmen gathering their nets from the shore, sailing, and singing.' 2. 'Carpenters creating anything out of wood with mathematical precision.' (ii) 'the delicious singing of the cook' and 'the boatmen … singing while at work'.

Q5 Metaphor.
(i) State whether the following sentence is true or false.
'The mention of "delicious singing" of the cook is a metaphor because it implies that the quality of the singing is so enjoyable or pleasing that it can be equated to the experience of tasting something delicious.'

SOLUTION

TRUE.
'Delicious singing' transfers the quality of taste ('delicious') to sound (singing). This is a metaphor that equates the pleasure of hearing the cook sing to the pleasure of eating delicious food.
It implies that the cook's singing is so warm, joyful, and richly satisfying that it can be 'tasted' — evoking the cook's complete immersion in their vocation.

Answer: True. 'Delicious singing' is a metaphor that applies the sensory pleasure of taste to sound, implying that the cook's singing is as deeply satisfying and rich as their food.

Q6 Personification.
(i) Select the line that tells us that the poet personifies vocations by attributing human-like qualities to them.

SOLUTION

The line 'The voice of their vocation is the voice of their identity' personifies vocations by giving them a 'voice' — a distinctly human quality.
A vocation (a job or calling) cannot literally speak, but the poet attributes a voice to it, suggesting that each vocation expresses who the worker is — as if the work itself were speaking on behalf of the person.

Answer: 'The voice of their vocation is the voice of their identity.' — This personifies vocations by giving them a 'voice', a human attribute, implying that each craft speaks for and defines its practitioner.

Q7 Repetition.

(i) Why might the poet have begun and ended with the same line — 'I hear Bharat celebrating, the varied vocations I hear!'?

SOLUTION

The repetition of this line creates a circular, frame-like structure that encloses all the vocations described in the poem within a single, unifying act of listening and celebration.

Opening and closing with the same line reinforces the poem's central message: India (Bharat) is defined by the collective voice of all its workers — not any single vocation, but the whole symphony of them.

The repetition also mimics the idea of a refrain in a song, giving the poem a musical, celebratory quality that matches its subject matter.

Beginning and ending with 'I hear' emphasises that the poet's role is to listen and bear witness — and that this diversity of vocations is ongoing, not a one-time event.

Answer: The repeated line frames the poem as a continuous act of listening and celebration. It reinforces that Bharat's identity is built from all its workers together, gives the poem a song-like refrain quality, and emphasises the poet's role as a witness who honours every vocation.

Q8 Alliteration.

(i) Identify two examples of alliteration from the poem.

SOLUTION

Alliteration is the repetition of the same initial consonant sound in nearby words.

The clearest examples both come from the boatmen lines of the poem:

1. 'sailing, and singing' — repetition of the 's' sound.
2. 'tell the tales' (from 'return to tell the tales of life at sea') — repetition of the 't' sound.

Answer: 1. 'sailing, and singing' — repetition of the 's' sound. 2. 'tell the tales' — repetition of the 't' sound.

Q9 Symbolism.

(i) Each vocation in the poem symbolises something more than just a job. What does it symbolise?

SOLUTION

Each vocation in the poem symbolises the worker's identity, dignity, and contribution to the larger community.

The poem's closing line — 'The voice of their vocation is the voice of their identity' — makes this explicit: a person's work is inseparable from who they are.

On a broader level, the collection of all vocations symbolises the diversity and richness of Bharat itself — a nation built and sustained by the skilled hands of ordinary people.

Vocations also symbolise cultural heritage: the carpenter's mathematical precision, the shoemaker's commitment to quality, the boatman's tales of the sea — each represents a living tradition that connects the individual to their community and history.

Answer: Each vocation symbolises the worker's identity and dignity — the line 'The voice of their vocation is the voice of their identity' makes this explicit. Together, all vocations symbolise the diverse, living heritage of Bharat, built and sustained by the skilled labour of its people.

Exercise 2.10 — Critical Reflection I (extract-based) — Gifts of Grace: Honouring Our Vo

Q1 Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

'The shoemakers affirming the quality of their work, for the feet that walk, dance, run, jump, return home.
The delicious singing of the cook, or the rhythm of designer, mason, each celebrating what belongs to them and to none else,'

1. The poet says that the shoemakers 'affirm' the quality of their work. What does 'affirm' refer to here?
(i) to make adjustments in
(ii) to declare with confidence
(iii) to label the goods
(iv) to justify the efforts

2. What do quality shoes help with, according to the poet?

3. What does 'return home' symbolise besides the literal act of returning?

4. Identify the phrase that tells us that every worker's contribution is distinct.

5. Complete the following with suitable words.
'…for the feet that walk, dance, run, jump, return home' refers to _____.

SOLUTION

1. (ii) to declare with confidence. Shoemakers 'affirm' the quality of their work — they assert with pride and confidence that their shoes are made well.

2. Quality shoes help the feet walk, dance, run, jump, and return home safely — enabling the full range of human physical activity and movement.

3. 'Return home' symbolises safety, completion, and the fulfilment of purpose. Beyond the literal homecoming, it suggests that quality shoes protect the wearer through life's journeys — work, play, celebration — and ensure they come back safely. It can also symbolise belonging and the comfort of what is familiar.

4. The phrase 'each celebrating what belongs to them and to none else' — this tells us that every worker's contribution is unique and exclusively theirs; no other craft produces the same thing in the same way.

5. '…for the feet that walk, dance, run, jump, return home' refers to all human beings and the full range of their daily activities — it represents the entire human community that relies on the shoemaker's craft.

Answer: 1. (ii) to declare with confidence. 2. Quality shoes help the feet walk, dance, run, jump, and return home — enabling all human movement. 3. 'Return home' symbolises safety, completion, and the fulfilment of purpose. 4. 'Each celebrating what belongs to them and to none else.' 5. All human beings and the full range of their daily activities.

Exercise 2.11 — Critical Reflection II (questions) — Gifts of Grace: Honouring Our Vocat

Q1 Why does the poet say, 'I hear Bharat celebrating, the varied vocations I hear'?

SOLUTION

The poet uses this line to frame the poem as an act of attentive listening to the country's diverse workforce.

By saying 'I hear Bharat celebrating', the poet suggests that the sound of people at work — the tap of the carpenter's tool, the boatman's song, the cook's singing — is itself a form of celebration, a joyful expression of skill and identity.

'The varied vocations I hear' emphasises that this celebration is not uniform but richly diverse — each vocation has its own distinct voice.

The line positions Bharat's strength as resting on the collective labour and pride of all its workers, not just any single group.

Answer: The poet uses this line to express that the sounds of Bharat's workers — at their crafts and trades — constitute a celebration of the nation's diversity and heritage. Every vocation has a distinct voice, and together they form the vibrant, living identity of Bharat.

Q2 What does the electrician 'humming' while getting ready for work suggest?

SOLUTION

The electrician humming suggests contentment, enthusiasm, and a positive attitude towards work.

Humming is an involuntary or casual expression of happiness or ease — it implies the electrician is comfortable in their role and approaches their work with quiet joy rather than dread.

It also suggests that the worker is so accustomed to and at ease with their craft that it does not feel burdensome; the work is an integral, natural part of their life.

The detail also contributes to the poem's auditory imagery — the hum joins the lutes, singing boatmen, and cook's song as part of the soundscape of vocations.

Answer: The electrician humming suggests contentment and ease — the worker is happy in their craft, approaching it with quiet joy. It also adds to the poem's auditory imagery, weaving the electrician's hum into the broader symphony of working Bharat.

Q3 Explain the significance of the line, 'The voice of their vocation is the voice of their identity.'

SOLUTION

This line is the philosophical core of the poem.

It asserts that a person's vocation — their craft, trade, or calling — is not merely a means of earning a livelihood but an expression of who they are.

The carpenter's precision, the boatman's songs, the cook's 'delicious singing' — all are ways in which workers communicate their identity to the world.

The line also gives dignity to every form of work: there is no hierarchy among vocations; each has its own voice, and that voice is as important as the person who carries it.

It also echoes the story 'The Pot Maker', where pottery is not just Arenla's job but the very core of her community's identity — a thread connecting generations.

Answer: The line asserts that a person's work is inseparable from their identity — it is how they express who they are to the world. It elevates every vocation as a dignified, unique form of self-expression, with no craft ranked above another.

Q4 Do you think the role of all the people belonging to different vocations is important in our daily lives? Support your answer with a reason.

SOLUTION

Yes, the role of people in different vocations is essential to daily life.

The poem itself illustrates this — electricians provide the light we depend on, carpenters build our furniture and homes, boatmen supply the fish many communities rely on, cooks sustain us with food, and shoemakers ensure we can move about comfortably.

Each vocation fills a specific need that no other can replace — as the poem puts it, each worker celebrates 'what belongs to them and to none else'.

If any one of these groups were absent, the interconnected fabric of daily life would be disrupted.

Recognising this interdependence is precisely the poet's purpose: every worker, however ordinary their role may seem, is indispensable.

Answer: Yes. Every vocation fills a specific, irreplaceable need — electricians provide light, carpenters build homes, cooks feed us, shoemakers enable movement. The poem shows that these roles are interdependent; without any one of them, daily life would be disrupted.

Q5 Why is the poet celebrating all the vocations in the poem? Explain by giving examples from your context.

SOLUTION

The poet celebrates all vocations because every craft and trade contributes to the well-being and cultural richness of the nation.

The poem suggests that in a society focused on formal education and white-collar careers, skilled workers — artisans, electricians, boatmen, cobblers — are often overlooked despite being the backbone of daily life.

By giving each worker a place in the poem and linking their voice to their identity, the poet demands that society recognise and honour these contributions.

In a school context, for example, the janitor who keeps classrooms clean, the cook who prepares midday meals, and the electrician who keeps the lights on are all as vital as the teachers — yet rarely celebrated.

The poet's act of naming and celebrating each vocation is an act of social justice and gratitude.

Answer: The poet celebrates all vocations to affirm that every form of skilled work — however 'ordinary' — sustains the nation and deserves respect. The poem counters the tendency to overlook manual and skilled workers by giving each vocation a proud, distinct voice.

Q6 How does the poet use sensory imagery to bring out the beauty of everyday work?

SOLUTION

The poet employs multiple senses to make the world of work vivid and alive.

Auditory imagery: 'artisans with lutes … hailing varied emotions', 'the boatmen … singing while at work', 'the delicious singing of the cook', 'the electricians humming' — the poem is rich in sound, turning each workplace into a musical space.

Visual imagery: 'boatmen gathering their nets from the shore', 'carpenters …

creating anything out of wood' — these conjure pictures of skilled hands at work.
Tactile/kinaesthetic imagery: 'rhythm of designer, mason' — the word 'rhythm' evokes the physical, repetitive movements of craft, and 'brick by brick' calls up the feel of heavy, methodical labour.
Gustatory imagery (via metaphor): 'delicious singing' borrows from the sense of taste to describe the cook's song, blending two senses.
Together, these images make everyday work feel beautiful, dignified, and worthy of celebration.

Answer: The poet uses auditory imagery (lutes, singing boatmen, humming electricians, the cook's 'delicious singing'), visual imagery (nets at shore, carpenters with wood), and tactile imagery ('rhythm of mason', 'brick by brick') to make each craft feel vivid, sensory, and beautiful — transforming ordinary work into art.

Exercise 2.12 — Vocabulary in Context I (matching vocations) — Gifts of Grace: Honouri

Q1 Match the vocations given in the box with the descriptions that follow.
(Vocations: ASHA worker, confectioner, sericulturist, welder, horticulturist, goldsmith)

1. A person who studies or grows garden plants: _____
2. A trained female community health worker: _____
3. A producer of raw silk: _____
4. A person whose job is making or selling sweets and chocolates: _____
5. A metalworker who specialises in working with precious metals: _____
6. A person who fuses materials together: _____

SOLUTION

1. A person who studies or grows garden plants → horticulturist (from Latin hortus = garden)
2. A trained female community health worker → ASHA worker (Accredited Social Health Activist, as noted in the 'Did You Know' box)
3. A producer of raw silk → sericulturist (sericiculture = the production of silk by raising silkworms)
4. A person whose job is making or selling sweets and chocolates → confectioner
5. A metalworker who specialises in working with precious metals → goldsmith
6. A person who fuses materials together → welder

Answer: 1. horticulturist. 2. ASHA worker. 3. sericulturist. 4. confectioner. 5. goldsmith. 6. welder.

Exercise 2.13 — Vocabulary in Context II (find the non-synonym) — Gifts of Grace: Hono

Q1 Identify the word from Column 2 that is NOT a synonym of the word in Column 1.

Column 1 → Column 2

1. myriad → (i) countable, innumerable, numerous, abundant
2. hues → (ii) shades, tints, drawing, colour
3. precision → (iii) exactness, accuracy, correctness, calculation
4. varied → (iv) assorted, diverse, uniform, different
5. delicious → (v) mouth-watering, inedible, tasty, flavourful

SOLUTION

1. myriad = a vast, uncountable number. The non-synonym is 'countable' — myriad means innumerable (cannot be counted), so 'countable' is its antonym, not a synonym.
2. hues = shades or tints of colour. The non-synonym is 'drawing' — drawing is an art form/technique, not a type of colour or shade.
3. precision = exactness. The non-synonym is 'calculation' — calculation is a process (working out a result by mathematics), not a quality meaning exactness or correctness.
4. varied = assorted, diverse, different. The non-synonym is 'uniform' — uniform means the same throughout, which is the opposite of varied.
5. delicious = tasty, flavourful. The non-synonym is 'inedible' — inedible means not fit to be eaten, which is the opposite of delicious.

Answer: 1. countable (myriad means innumerable, so countable is its antonym). 2. drawing (hues are shades/colours; drawing is an art technique). 3. calculation (precision means exactness, not the act of calculating). 4. uniform (varied means diverse; uniform means the same). 5. inedible (delicious means tasty; inedible means not fit to eat).