

B. COM. II

ENGLISH

PROSE

TRAVEL BY TRAIN

-J.B. Priestley.

Question: What are the different types of railway passengers as described by J. B. Priestley?

Answer:

‘Travel by Train’ is a humorous essay by J. B. Priestley in which, he has given his keen observations of various kinds of railway travellers and their eccentricities.

Priestley says that a typical Englishman behaves quite differently at home and in public places. The author says that he has rarely come across a quiet and inoffensive fellow passenger in a railway carriage.

A typical kind of traveller whom he hates, is a large middle-aged woman with a rasping voice. She carries a lot of luggage and there is always a whining puppy with her. She always enters the smoking compartment and occupies seat forcefully. She stares at people with fierce looks. However, such travellers will how soon be extinct because now there are stronger men in our midst.

There are other types of railway travellers who are harmless but still irritating. They are the ones who carry all their odd things and household utensils with them by packing them up in brown paper parcels of all sizes and shapes.

Then there are the simple folks who are always busy eating and drinking during the entire journey. They talk with their mouths full, scatter crumbs over the trousers of others and peel and eat bananas with such rapidity, that other travellers feel awkward and change the compartment. Children are not good fellow-travellers either. They always whimper and howl and play different cranks on a cold day, they would insist on opening the windows of the compartment and on a hot summer day, they would not allow the windows to be opened at all.

More to the taste of the author are the innocent travellers who always board the wrong train. They never bother about checking the time-tables or asking the railway officers. The author wonders if these travellers ever reach their desired destination.

The author, above all, envies the people who can sleep soundly during a train journey and wake up just before their station arrives and walk out refreshed. He calls them mighty sleepers and says that they are like the Seven of Ephesus.

Priestley finds seafaring men, good companions because their talk is entertaining and they get along well with anybody. However, they are not to be found on journeys away from the coastal towns.

The most dreadful fellow traveller according to Priestley is the nearly dressed but tobacco stained old man who sits in a corner and opens the conversation by saying that the train is three minutes behind time. Like Coleridge's Ancient-Mariner, he will take hold of you and bore you endlessly with the details of various trains and their timings. It seems, all his life has been spent in trains and he has read nothing but train time-tables. The author warns us to be at a distance from such a man.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

A.J. Cronin

Question: How does Cronin describe the two boys? What was the secret they kept?

Answer:

The author A.J. Cronin, in his touching account 'Two Gentlemen of Verona', describes the honesty, self-respect and hard work of two young children - Nicola and Jacopo. He ultimately traces and highlights their love for their ailing sister.

When the author was about to enter the city of Verona, he came across two young kids namely, Nicola and Jacopo. They were selling strawberries. Nicola, the elder was thirteen and Jacopo, the younger was twelve. With an intention to help them, the author bought a basket of strawberries from them. Next morning, the author saw them polishing shoes in the square opposite his hotel. The author became curious about them on seeing this. Soon, they became familiar with the author and the author came to know that both Nicola and Jacopo used to earn money by doing odd jobs in and around Verona. The author thought that they were doing such jobs to earn money and migrate to America. But the kids told him that they had some other plans.

When the author offered to do something for them, they asked him for a lift in his car to a nearby village called Poleta. Next day, when they reached Poleta, they asked the author to drop them in front of a big villa. The author followed them secretly to know more about them. He met a nurse who took him to a small cubicle. Through the glass partition of the cubicle, the author saw the Nicola and Jacopo, talking to a girl of twenty who was on the hospital bed.

The nurse explained to the author that the girl was their sister and that the three children, after losing their parents were left homeless due to a bomb blast. They worked for some time for the resistance movement against the Germans and later found that their sister was suffering from the tuberculosis of spine.

They did not give up. They brought their sister to the hospital at Poleta and urged them to treat her. Since then, the girl was undergoing treatment and her two brothers were paying regularly for it by doing odd jobs. Every week, they came and paid the fees for the treatment. They were extremely regular in their payments and soon, their sister was going to be fine.

The author was moved to learn this. He did not say anything. However, he felt a deep respect for their dignity, courage and selflessness. The author rightly felt that they had brought a new nobility to human life and gave a new hope to human society.

GO, KISS THE WORLD

-Subroto Bagchi

How did Subroto Bagchi's parents shape him? OR

Summarize Subroto Bagchi's views as mentioned in the term lesson 'Go kiss the world'.

Answer:

Subroto Bagchi's lesson, 'Go, kiss the world' is actually a speech that he gave in front of the students of IIM, Bangalore.

Subroto Bagchi was the youngest child of a government servant. Bagchi's father was a District Employment Officer in Koraput, Orissa. He used to get transferred to various places.

Bagchi's mother was a refugee from what was then East Pakistan. Both his father and mother instilled good values in their children.

As a government servant, Bagchi's father was given a jeep by the government. But he never used it for personal work. The children were taught to treat the driver with respect. Bagchi's father used to make him read out an English newspaper to him every day.

His mother was also a very honest and hardworking lady. She used to build a small fence around the quarter and plant flowering bushes. She never cared whether they would be benefitted by the flowers or not. She lost her eyesight later in life, but never complained about it. Both the father and mother of Subroto Bagchi thought him to think of others first. When Bagchi's father was on deathbed due to burn injuries, he used to inquire if the nurse was late for going home.

Similarly, when his mother had a stroke of paralysis, she asked Bagchi, not to worry about her, but to go and kiss the world. By this, she meant that her son should treat the whole world as his family and should not limit himself only to his immediate family.

Thus, Bagchi's parents taught him to be a part of the larger world and to give back more than what he had received.

The Struggle for an Education

Up from Slavery: An Autobiography

-Booker T. Washington

Question: Describe Booker T. Washington's struggle for education.

Answer:

Booker T. Washington was one of the great leaders of the Afro-Americans in the late 19th and early 20th century. Himself an Afro-American, he was born into poverty and slavery, but he worked his way up through school and university and became the co-founder of Tuskegee University. He struggled all his life, for the upliftment of the African-American community.

'Struggle for an Education' is an extract from his autobiography 'Up from Slavery'. In this extract, he has described his struggle to get admission in the Hampton Institute for Afro-Americans in Virginia.

Once, while working in a coal mine, Booker T Washington overheard two coal miners talking about a school called Hampton Institute in Virginia. It was meant for education Afro-Americans. Washington was very eager to get education. Hence, he started harbouring hopes for getting admission to the Hampton Institute. He resolved to go to Hampton at any cost. With this aim, he started working in the house of Mrs Ruffner. He earned enough money, but it was consumed by his stepfather and the rest of the family. With a very small amount he started his cumbersome travel to Virginia and after a lot of struggle, somehow reached the city of Richmond. He worked in Richmond as a labourer and earned money for his food and further travel to Hampton.

When he finally reached Hampton, he was overjoyed at the sight of the three-story red building of the institute. His appearance was shabby and the head teacher did not take his request for admission seriously at first. However, she asked him to sweep the next room. When Washington cleaned to room perfectly well, she was pleased and she gave admission to him.

Thus, from Booker T Washington's experiences, we get to learn the virtues of patience, perseverance, self-belief and a never-say-die attitude.

POETRY

Where the Mind is Without Fear

-Rabindranath Tagore

Q. Summarize the poem 'Where the Mind is Without Fear'.

Answer:

The poem 'Where the Mind is Without Fear' is from Rabindranath Tagore's collection of poems 'Gitanjali'. It is one of the most famous poems by Tagore. It was written when India was struggling for freedom from the British rule. In this poem, the poet prays to the Almighty God to give true freedom to India.

In the very first line, he says that every person in the country should be fearless and should have a sense of self dignity. He dreams of a nation where knowledge would be free. Education would not be restricted to the upper class only but everybody would be allowed to acquire knowledge. The poet longs for unity, not only among his countrymen, but among all the people of the world. He thinks that there should be no division among people based on their caste, creed, colour, religion or other baseless superstitions. In other words, prejudices and superstitions should not divide the people in groups and break their unity.

Tagore wants a nation where people are truthful. They should not be superficial and words should come out from the depth of their hearts. He wants his people to follow reason and be rational. They should "led forward" to "ever-widening thought and action" by the Almighty.

Finally, he asks the Almighty to awaken his country into such a 'heaven of freedom' where all the above conditions meet.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

-Robert Frost

Q. Why does the poet decide to move on despite the beauty of the woods? OR

Q. What is the allegorical significance of the poem 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening'?

Answer:

'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening', is an allegorical poem by Robert Frost. Though it is a very simple poem, it raises an important philosophical question. It is very tempting to enjoy life and laze. However, one must continue discharging one's duties faithfully till the last breath.

On one snowy evening, the poet happens to pass through beautiful woods. It is a dark evening and the poet stops between the woods and the frozen lake. He is spellbound by the beauty of

the woods. He perhaps knows the owner of the woods who lives in the village. But the owner cannot surely see the poet stopping and enjoying the beauty of his woods. The poet's horse feels strange and shakes his harness bells to check if the poet has made some mistake in stopping with no farmhouse nearby. The only other sound in the woods is that of the wind and the falling snowflakes.

The poet says that the woods are definitely very beautiful, dark and deep. But he cannot stay there and enjoy the beauty. He has to attend the call of duty. He has to fulfil many promises and go miles before he sleeps eternally.

Leisure

-William Davis

William Davies an American poet. In his poem, 'Leisure', he explains the biggest problem of today's life. Each and every individual is so occupied and busy with their day to day work, to achieve the larger objectives in life, that they forget to notice the smaller things in life and the **happiness** that lies in them.

The beauty of nature for example is essential to be noticed. But today nobody has the time to stop for a minute also and observe the extraordinary pleasure in ordinary things such as standing under the trees and witnessing its beauty just like the cows and sheep do. We are interested only in our daily routine.

People have become machines today. They get up at a fixed alarm time, reach their places of work on time and have their meals on time. They even have separate time allotted for their family. Such an individual must be called a machine.

Davies strongly believes that life must be lived in a casual and leisurely manner. It is essential to enjoy our free time and the little breaks we get from our work. It is essential to understand the love nature has bestowed upon us.

We should also notice the shimmering and glittering light that is reflected in the streams at night. We should take time to notice the beautiful glance of a maiden and admire her dancing skills and her smile. If we admire the minute details and beauty of nature, we can fill our lives with joy and happiness. As a result, we will also get rid of the emptiness that has essentially become a part of our lives as a result of our fast lives.

Davies is of the opinion that if an individual is surrounded by material pleasures and has no time to enjoy these pleasures and the beauty of nature, he or she is living a miserable and meaningless life.

Daffodils

- William Wordsworth

Summarize Wordsworth's poem 'Daffodils'

Daffodils is one of the most famous poems by William Wordsworth. In this poem, the poet shows his immense love and passion for natural beauty. Wordsworth regarded Nature as God. He was always moved by the beauty of Nature. In this poem, Wordsworth describes his feelings after seeing a field full of Daffodils flowers. The poet says that once he was wandering lonely just like a cloud. While wandering, he came across a lake. On the shore of the lake, there had bloomed thousands and thousands of Daffodils flowers.

The beautiful yellow Daffodils had bloomed endlessly across the entire shore of the lake. Wordsworth says that he was deeply moved and overjoyed to see this beautiful scene. At a glance, he saw infinite number of Daffodils. They were dancing to the tune of the wind. The yellow Daffodils really looked beautiful. The waves of the lake were also dancing along with the flowers. But the flowers outdid the waves in joy.

The poet could not help but feel ecstatic after seeing such a wonderful scene. He stared and stared but could not realise what wealth the scene brought to him. Ultimately, Wordsworth says that whenever he feels vacant or is in pensive mood, the site of the dancing Daffodils flashes upon his inward eye. They become the bliss of Solitude for him. His heart then fills with joy and dances with the Daffodils.

An Introduction to Communication

What is communication? How is it important in our lives?

The word 'communication' is derived from the Latin word *communico* or *communicare* which means to 'share'. Communication has been defined as the science and practice of transmitting information. Communication is one of our most basic needs. It is the process of conveying our thoughts, ideas and feelings to others with verbal or non-verbal signs. Whenever we communicate, we send and receive messages. We communicate for varied purposes. We communicate to control the actions of others- formally or informally, to share our emotions, ideas, information, to resolve conflicts as well as to coordinate.

Animals communicate only for the fulfilment of their basic needs. But human beings communicate for countless purposes. Wherever we are- in society, school, at home or workplace- we must communicate. In order to be successful, it is therefore essential to have good communication skills. Effective and successful communication helps us achieve our goals while miscommunication may lead to disastrous effects. Thus, communication forms an integral part of our lives.

Types of communication networks:

1. Downward communication:

In this kind of communication network, the information flows from top level of an organization to the lowest level through different tiers in the hierarchy. For example, the Managing Director of a company may communicate to the workers through Senior Managers, Supervisors, and Assistants and so on. The management of the organization uses this kind of network to convey policy decisions or give specific directives to the employees as a way of exercising control over them.

Downward communication can sometimes lead to the distortion of the original message as it has to pass through several tiers. Many organizations are now solving this problem by shifting to a more open work culture where the person at the top will talk directly to a worker.

2. Upward communication:

Upward communication is a type of organizational communication networks in which the information flows from the lower level of organization to its upper level through different tiers of its hierarchical structure. This kind of communication is useful because it gives the management the feedback and suggestions from the employees not just about different policies and products of the organization, but also about how the employees feel about the organization and the working conditions there in general. Usually, it is the people at the lower level who are more aware of the grass root realities and problems and can give valuable suggestions and feedback to the top brass of the organization.

However, there could be a number of barriers to this kind of communication. Firstly, the people at the bottom may feel hesitation and fear about giving honest and true feedback. Secondly, even if such feedback is given, it may be blocked by the people in the middle because it may not be convenient for them.

These problems can be addressed by creating an open, friendly and secure atmosphere within the organization and by rewarding good and fruitful suggestions.

3. Horizontal communication:

Horizontal communication network, which is least structured, enables each employee to communicate freely with others. There are no restrictions on who can communicate with whom. All are equal as no one employee, formally or informally assumes a leading role. Hence, everybody's views are equally and openly shared. The persons participating in this form of communication are usually peers from the same or different departments or branch offices. The best example of this kind of communication is a hospital where consultants, resident doctors, nurses, support staff etc. all talk to each other freely despite belonging to different ranks.

This kind of lateral information flow is very fast and it increases the speed of work and the speed of decisions. People at the same level can share information, experiences and ideas more freely. Such type of communication is important not only in large organizations or complex organizations with specialist divisions, but also in small organizations because it fosters better coordination and team work. However, personality clashes, unhealthy competition and poor communication skills are some of the things to be avoided to make this kind of communication network successful.

4. Informal Communication Network (Grapevine):

Grapevine is defined as an informal transmission of information, gossip or rumour from person to person. The grapevine is the informal and unsanctioned information network within every organization. This network helps the people in the organization understand what is happening around them and thus provide relief from emotional stress. Keith Davis, one of the leading experts on the subject, says that in every organization, grapevine is an expression of healthy human motivation to communicate.

Since it is unstructured and not under complete control of management, it grows in every direction. But it is possible to classify grapevine into some types which are as follows:

1. Single Strand: It is the way in which, most people see grapevine. Here the message is passed from one person to another along a single strand.

2. Gossip: In gossip network, one person passes information to all the others.

3. Probability: In this type of network, each person tells others at random.

4. Cluster: Cluster is the most popular type of grapevine network. It refers to that flow of communication, in which some people tell a select few of the others. Which persons are active on the grapevine often depends upon the message.

Barriers to Effective Communication

1. Absence of the Common Frame of Reference:

Communication process takes place in a common frame of reference i.e. the shared knowledge about the same subject by the sender and the receiver. Absence of this knowledge will not help make meaning to one or both the participants in the communication process.

2. Noise:

Noise can be the human noise or electronic noise that creates disturbances in the communication process and hampers the transmission and/or perception of meaning. This ultimately ruins the communication process.

3. Muddled Messages:

The sender sometimes sends badly organized or confused messages which form a barrier to communication.

4. Language (Linguistic Barriers):

It is important that the sender and the receiver should share the same language. If they do not share the same language, the communication will fail.

5. Stereotyping/Selective Perceptions:

Stereotyping is to have preconceived notions about others. Selective perception means incomplete understanding of the other person. These two barriers do not allow the communication process to happen in a neutral and unbiased way and thus damage the communication process.

6. Use of Jargon:

Jargon means the technical terminology related to a particular subject. If the sender uses too much jargon, the receiver will not be able to understand the message and therefore there will be a miscommunication.

7. Selective Reporting:

If the sender reports selectively, i.e. if he reports only those parts of the message that are convenient to him, the receiver will not be able to get the complete picture. Thus, the message will be transmitted only partially and the communication may lead to nothing.

8. Poor Listening Skills:

Listening is a skill. It is important to give due attention to the message of the sender to understand it completely. Poor listening skills lead to wrong perception. Proper listening ensures proper communication.

9. Gender Psychologies (Male vs. Female):

Males and females are fundamentally different in certain aspects. This difference results into different gender psychologies. If the sender and the receiver are of different genders, it is important for them to understand and respect these differences.

10. Communication Apprehension (Phobia):

Sometimes the sender or the receiver or both suffer from a phobia or fear of communication which prevents them from communicating freely.

Presentations

Essentials of a good presentation:

Presentation is basically a talk giving information about an idea, a product or a subject. It is used to present reports, proposals, policy statements and feasibility studies. Presentation has nowadays become an important form of oral communication in the fields of academics and business in particular. Students, teachers, administrators, businessmen- all need to be skilled in giving presentations today. Some of the different types of presentation are:

- Computer projection with LCD Projector and applications like PowerPoint.
- OHP (Over Head Projector).
- Slide Projector.
- Note cards /Cue Cards.
- Flipcharts/Blackboards/Whiteboards
- Interactive Whiteboards.
- Vide or film.
- Real objects.

Following steps are involved in preparing and giving a good presentation:

Planning the presentation

First step in planning a presentation is to decide your subject if it is not already not already given. The subject should be well-chosen keeping in mind the audience and the occasion. Your formality and style will depend on the kind of audience you are going to address. Break down the topic into main points and sub points. Prepare a script of your presentation. Also, be mindful of the time limit provided to you.

Structuring the content

You should structure your presentation smartly. It should have a beginning, middle and an end. The first part should contain a general statement of purpose and a broad introduction to the topic. The second part will have the main content of the presentation, and this will have its own internal structure. The last part should contain a brief recap or summary of the main points and concluding remarks. The presentation

should be structured logically so that the audience can follow the presentation. At the end, there should be some time for a brief question and answer session.

Choosing visual aids

Visual aids make presentations effective. You should choose the one most suitable for you. You may choose one or more visual aids but always make sure you are comfortable with it. Know the technical operations properly. You may choose one or more of the following visual aids:

- Computer projection with LCD Projector and applications like PowerPoint.
- OHP (Over Head Projector).
- Slide Projector.
- Note cards /Cue Cards.
- Flipcharts/Blackboards/Whiteboards
- Interactive Whiteboards.
- Vide or film.
- Real objects.

Making the presentation

Besides preparing and structuring the presentation smartly, it is highly important that the actual giving of the presentation is successful. It is vital to remember following points while making your presentation:

- Plan your presentation in such a way that you can observe the time limit strictly.
- Stick to the topic of your presentation and avoid diversions howsoever attractive or tempting they may be.
- Use your voice cleverly according to the size of the room and vary the pitch and tone of the voice to avoid being monotonous and boring.
- Avoid pacing up and down. It often distracts the audience.
- Your appearance, eye contact and body language contribute a lot to the success of your presentation. Work on them and improve them.