

Chapter – 1

The Fun They Had

Thinking About The Text

QI. Answer these questions in a few words or a couple of sentences each.

1. How old are Margie and Tommy?
2. What did Margie write in her diary?
3. Had Margie ever seen a book before?
4. What things about the book did she find strange?
5. What do you think a telebook is?
6. Where was Margie's school? Did she have any classmates?
7. What subjects did Margie and Tommy learn?

Answer. 1. Margie was eleven years old while Tommy was thirteen.

2. Margie wrote in her diary, "Today Tommy found a real book!"

3. No, Margie had never seen a book before.

4. On turning the pages of the book, she found it awfully funny to read words that stood still instead of moving the way they were supposed to on a screen. When they turned back to the previous page, it had the same words on it when they read it the first time.

5. A tele book is a book that could be read on screen. Words move on the screen for the students to read. All the lessons appear on the big screen and are followed by questions from the book.

6. Margie's school was in her home itself. In fact, it was next to her bedroom. It was a mechanical teacher on whose screen lessons and questions appeared. She had to put her homework in a particular slot and write the answers in a punch code. She did not have any classmates.

7. Margie and Tommy learnt geography, history and arithmetic.

QII. Answer the following with reference to the story.

1. "I wouldn't throw it away."

(i) Who says these words?

(ii) What does 'it' refer to?

(iii) What is it being compared with by the speaker?

2. "Sure they had a teacher, but it wasn't a regular teacher. It was a man."

(i) Who does 'they' refer to?

(ii) What does 'regular' mean here?

(iii) What is it contrasted with?

Answer. 1. (i) Tommy said these words.

(ii) 'It' refers to the television screen, which had a million books on it.

(iii) Tommy is comparing the television screen to the books in the earlier times in which words were printed on paper. He thought that after reading such books, one would have to throw them away. However, he would never have to throw away his tele books.

2. (i) 'They' refers to the students who studied in the old kind of schools centuries before the time the story is set in.

(ii) Here, 'regular' refers to the mechanical teachers that Tommy and Margie had.

(iii) The mechanical teacher is contrasted with the teacher of the earlier times, who was a human being.

QIII. Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (about 30 words).

1. What kind of teachers did Margie and Tommy have?

2. Why did Margie's mother send for the County Inspector?

3. What did he do?

4. Why was Margie doing badly in geography? What did the County Inspector do to help her?

5. What had once happened to Tommy's teacher?

6. Did Margie have regular days and hours for school? If so, why?

7. How does Tommy describe the old kind of school?

8. How does he describe the old kind of teachers?

Answer. 1. Margie and Tommy had mechanical teachers. They had large black screens on which all the lessons were shown and questions were asked. These mechanical teachers had a slot in which the students had to put their homework and test papers. They had to write their answers in a punch code and the mechanical teacher calculated the marks immediately.

2. Margie had been given many tests in geography by the mechanical teacher. She had been performing worse and worse in them. It is for this reason that she sent for the County Inspector.

3. The County Inspector gave Margie an apple and started working on the mechanical teacher. Margie had hoped that the Inspector would not know how to put the mechanical teacher together again, but he managed to assemble it. He slowed up the geography sector of the teacher because it had become too quick.

4. Margie was doing badly in geography because the geography sector of the mechanical teacher had been adjusted at a higher level. The County Inspector rightly told her that she could not be blamed for her poor performance. The County Inspector slowed down the geography sector of the mechanical teacher to an average ten-year level. He also told Mrs. Jones that Margie's progress pattern was satisfactory.

5. Once, Tommy's teacher had to be taken away for nearly a month because its history sector had blanked out completely.

6. Yes, Margie had regular days and hours for school. The mechanical teacher always turned on at the same time every day except Saturdays and Sundays. Margie had regular days and hours for school because her mother said that little girls learned better when they learned at regular hours.

7. Tommy says that the old kind of school existed centuries ago. They had a teacher, who was a man. This teacher taught in a special building where all the kids assembled and learned the same things according to their respective ages.

8. He says that the teacher in old times was a man, who taught the students inside a special building. He gave them homework and asked them questions. When Margie said that a man was not smart enough to be a teacher, he contradicted her by saying that his father knew as much as his mechanical teacher.

QIV. Answer each of these questions in two or three paragraphs (100 –150 words).

1. What are the main features of the mechanical teachers and the schoolrooms that Margie and Tommy have in the story?

2. Why did Margie hate school? Why did she think the old kind of school must have been fun?

3. Do you agree with Margie that schools today are more fun than the school in the story? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer. 1. Margie and Tommy had mechanical teachers. They had large black screens on which all the lessons were shown and questions were asked. They had a slot in which students had to put their homework and test papers. They had to write their answers in a punch code and the mechanical teacher calculated the marks immediately. Their schools were in their homes itself. They did not have any classmates. They learnt geography, history and arithmetic. They had regular days and hours for school. Margie's school was right next to her bedroom. The mechanical teacher always turned on at the same time every day except Saturdays and Sundays because her mother said that little girls learned better when they learned at regular hours.

2. Margie hated school because it was not fun. She had been doing badly in the geography tests that her mechanical teacher had been giving her. When her mother sends for the County Inspector, she hopes that the inspector would take the mechanical teacher away. She is disappointed when the County Inspector manages to assemble all the parts of the mechanical teacher. The part that she hated the most was inserting the homework and test papers in the slot on the mechanical teacher. She did not like the

fact that she had to write her answers in a punch code. She thought that the old kind of school must have been fun as she imagined all the kids from the entire neighborhood coming together, laughing and shouting in the schoolyard. She imagined that they would sit together in the classroom and go home together at the end of the day. They would learn the same things and could help one another with the homework and talk about it. Also, the teachers were people. All these aspects made her believe that the old kind of school must have been fun.

3. Yes, schools today are more fun than the school in the story. In the story, there is no interaction among students regarding studies. Studying and answering questions seems to be a boring idea. Doing homework without anybody's help and writing them in a punch code would also be draining. Moreover, children develop a better understanding about each other and of their surroundings when they go to a school and interact with each other. It is a healthier way of learning. Listening to teachers explaining lessons is always more interesting than reading the entire lesson on a mechanical computer. Also, if any student faces any problem with the subject or in homework, he can discuss it with the teacher and other kids. The excitement of waiting to know the marks scored in exams is greater when one is sitting in a classroom with other students. It does not have the same effect when the marks are calculated immediately after a test has been taken. Therefore, schools today are more fun than the school in the story as they are more interactive. They promote a healthy environment for the students to study and learn.

Thinking about Language

QV. Read this sentence taken from the story:

They had once taken Tommy's teacher away for nearly a month because the history sector had blanked out completely. The word complete is an adjective. When you add -ly to it, it becomes an adverb.

1. Find the sentences in the lesson which have the adverbs given in the box below.

awfully sorrowfully completely loftily
carefully differently quickly nonchalantly

2. Now use these adverbs to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- (i) The report must be read so that performance can be improved.**
- (ii) At the interview, Sameer answered our questions , shrugging his shoulders.**
- (iii) We all behave when we are tired or hungry.**
- (iv) The teacher shook her head when Ravi lied to her.**
- (v) I forgot about it.**
- (vi) When I complimented Revathi on her success, she just smiled and turned away.**
- (vii) The President of the Company is busy and will not be able to meet you.**
- (viii) I finished my work so that I could go out to play.**

3. Make adverbs from these adjectives.

- (i) angry _____
- (ii) happy _____
- (iii) merry _____
- (iv) sleepy _____
- (v) easy _____
- (vi) noisy _____
- (vii) tidy _____
- (viii) gloomy _____

Answer. Answer. 1. (i) Awfully They turned the pages, which were yellow and crinkly, and it was awfully funny to read words that stood still instead of moving the way they were supposed to - on a screen, you know.

(ii) Sorrowfully The mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography and she had been doing worse and worse until her mother had shaken her head sorrowfully and sent for the County Inspector.

(iii) Completely They had once taken Tommy's teacher away for nearly a month because the history sector had blanked out completely.

(iv) Loftily He added loftily, pronouncing the word carefully, "Centuries ago."

(v) Carefully He added loftily, pronouncing the word carefully, "Centuries ago."

(vi) Differently "But my mother says a teacher has to be adjusted to fit the mind of each boy and girl it teaches and that each kid has to be taught differently."

(vii) Quickly "I didn't say I didn't like it," Margie said quickly.

(viii) Nonchalantly Copyfish "May be," he said nonchalantly.

2. (i) The report must be read carefully so that performance can be improved.

(ii) At the interview, Sameer answered our questions loftily, shrugging his shoulders.

(iii) We all behave differently when we are tired or hungry.

(iv) The teacher shook her head sorrowfully when Ravi lied to her.

(v) I completely forgot about it.

(vi) When I complimented Revathi on her success, she just smiled nonchalantly and turned away.

(vii) The President of the Company is awfully busy and will not be able to meet you.

(viii) I finished my work quickly so that I could go out to play.

3. (i) angry Angrily

(ii) happy Happily

(iii) merry Merrily

(iv) sleepy Sleepily

(v) easy Easily

(vi) noisy Noisily

(vii) tidy Tidily

(viii) gloomy Gloomily

QVI. If Not and Unless

- Imagine that Margie's mother told her, "You'll feel awful if you don't finish your history lesson."
- She could also say: "You'll feel awful unless you finish your history lesson."

Unless means if not. Sentences with unless or if not are negative conditional sentences. Notice that these sentences have two parts. The part that begins with if not or unless tells us the condition. This part has a verb in the present tense (look at the verbs don't finish, finish in the sentences above). The other part of the sentence tells us about a possible result. It tells us what will happen (if something else doesn't happen). The verb in this part of the sentence is in the future tense (you'll feel/you will feel). Notice these two tenses again in the following examples.

<i>Future Tense</i>		<i>Present Tense</i>
• There won't be any books left	<i>unless</i>	we preserve them.
• You won't learn your lessons	<i>if</i>	you don't study regularly.
• Tommy will have an accident	<i>unless</i>	he drives more slowly.

Complete the following conditional sentences. Use the correct form of the verb. 1. If I don't go to Anu's party tonight, _____ 2. If you don't telephone the hotel to order food, _____ 3. Unless you promise to write back, I _____ 4. If she doesn't play any games, _____ 5. Unless that little bird flies away quickly, the cat _____

- Answer.** 1. If I don't go to Anu's party tonight, she will be angry.
2. If you don't telephone the hotel to order food, you will miss your evening meal.
3. Unless you promise to write back, I will not write to you.
4. If she doesn't play any games, she will become dull and lazy.
5. Unless that little bird flies away quickly, the cat will pounce on it.

Writing

Q1. A new revised volume of Issac Asimov's short stories has just been released. Order one set. Write a letter to the publisher, Mindfame Private Limited, 1632 Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi, requesting that a set be sent to you by Value Payable Post (VPP), and giving your address. Your letter will have the following parts. • Addresses of the sender and receiver • The salutation • The body of the letter • The closing phrases and signature

Answer. Do Attempt it.

Think About The Poem

Q1. 1. Where does the traveller find himself? What problem does he face?

2. Discuss what these phrases mean to you.

- (i) a yellow wood
- (ii) it was grassy and wanted wear
- (iii) the passing there
- (iv) leaves no step had trodden black
- (v) how way leads on to way

3. Is there any difference between the two roads as the poet describes them

- (i) in stanzas two and three?
- (ii) in the last two lines of the poem?

4. What do you think the last two lines of the poem mean? (Looking back, does the poet regret his choice or accept it?)

Answer. 1. The traveller finds himself at a point where two roads diverge His problem is to decide on which road he should walk.

2. 1. A forest in the autumn season.

2. The road was grassy because it was a less travelled road. It wanted people to move on it

3. It implies walking on the road.

4. It means the leaves had not been crushed under the feet of travellers.

5. How one road leads to another?

3. 1. There no difference between the two roads in stanzas two and three

2. In the last two lines of the poem the poet tells that the road he opted for is less travelled.

4. The last two lines have the quintessence of the poem The poet expresses his opinion that it becomes difficult for a normal human being to change his/her decision. The poet intends to walk on the first road but he couldn't do so because life does not offer multiple chances to choose The decision taken may mar one's future or lead one to success. It makes all the differences. He now repents for not getting a chance to travel on the first road.

QII. 1. Have you ever had to make a difficult choice (or do you think you will have difficult choices to make)? How will you make the choice (for what reasons)?

2. After you have made a choice do you always think about what might have been, or do you accept the reality?

Answer. 1. Such situations occur everyone's life. In today's world people have numerous alternatives But the decision should be taken after considering all the ins and outs of the situation. We must ruminate over the disadvantages also.

2. One should live in the present and not in the past. The philosophy of 'is' is the key to attaining success. Life is not a bed of rose³ Its hurdles are to be crossed bravely One must not feel nervous and get dejected the trying circumstance. On some instances, one needs to be confident about the choice he/she makes.