

Chapter – 6 The Browning Version

Understanding The Text

Q1. Comment on the attitude shown by Taplow towards Crocker-Harris.

Answer. Crocker Harris is Taplow's teacher. According to Taplow and me also; Mr. Crocker Harris is a strict disciplinarian. He was a hard working teacher and fully devoted to his duty as he called Taplow even on the last day of school to make up for his missed class. No student in his entire career has a courage to 'cut' Mr Crocker Harris. He is neither partial nor biased; he will give Taplow whatever he deserves. He tries to maintain an appropriate distance from his students. He never responds the feelings shown his students and remains shrivel. He is a man of principals and keeps the rules of the school. His students like him even after his strict behavior. His colleagues, even Frank, envy him for the effect he has on the students. He is strict but not a sadist that he seems to be.

Q2. Does Frank seem to encourage Taplow's comments on Crocker Harris?

Answer. Frank encourages Taplow to comment on Mr. Crocker Harris by cleverly asking Taplow several questions. He appreciated Taplow imitation of Mr. Crocker Harris and also asks him to repeat it.

Q3. What do you gather about Crocker-Harris from the play?

Answer. Mr. Harris is a teacher who would not compromise on the rules and regulations to suffice the sentiments of students. He believes in fair assessment of his students and is not swayed by emotions, as the man is hardly human. He is not a sadist. but strict in performance of his duties. Even on his last day at school, when he is over busy in own affairs, he does not neglect his duty towards students.

Talking About The Text

Q1. Discuss with your partner.

1. Talking about teachers among friends

Answer. 1. The most common trait among students is to talk about their teachers. Students have tremendous capacity to analyze the qualities (good or bad) of their teachers. Even a dumb student can understand, whether if a teacher is proficient in his subject or not. That is the reason, after each class, students form groups and discuss what had happened in the foregone period. Students, generally, pass comments on the teachers' appearance also. A well-dressed and smartly turned out teacher is always appreciated by the students. If one listens to the comments of the students one could easily decipher one fact-a teacher who is however strict but honest and unbiased, and knows his subject will definitely earn from his students. Nothing is more important for

students, than a teacher's ability to make them understand their subject.

2. The manner you adopt when you talk about a teacher to other teachers.

Answer. 2. We are always very guarded in voicing our opinions about a teacher when we talk to other teachers. First of all, we are never very sure that our comments about a teacher will not be passed to him/her by others. We always have this lingering doubt that, after all these teachers work together and their work culture demands to be interactive with their colleagues. Sometimes, we come across some teachers who ask mis-leading questions about other teachers as we saw in the lesson 'The Browning Version'. Frankly, it appears as if Frank was restricting Taplow to pass uncharitable comments on Crocker-Harris but, in fact, he wanted him to give a comprehensive report of Crocker-Harris. In similar circumstances, sometimes we lose our guard and say things about other teachers that may or may not be appropriate. One thing that all of us should understand is that before passing negative comments on our teachers', we have to ensure whom we are talking to.

3. Reading plays is more interesting than studying science.

Answer. 3. There is no doubt that reading plays is more interesting than studying science because reading plays makes us imaginative and provides us ideas about human life and behavior. It has good language that is helpful in building our linguistic skills. It is a source of entertainment and enjoyment. Reading science has its own merits. It provides us knowledge and fills us with a modern approach. Practical things that we do in laboratories are also useful in daily life. Science makes our future growth possible.

Working With Words

Q1. A sadist is a person who gets pleasure out of giving pain to others. Given below are some dictionary definitions of certain kinds of persons. Find out the words that fit these descriptions.

1. A person who considers it very important that things should be correct or genuine e.g. in the use of language or in the arts: P...

Answer. 1. perfectionist

2. A person who believes that war and violence are wrong and will not fight in a war: P...

Answer. 2. Pacifist

3. A person who believes that nothing really exists: N...

Answer. 3. Nihilist

4. A person who is always hopeful and expects the best in all things: O...

Answer. 4. Optimist

5. A person who follows generally accepted norms of behaviour: C...

Answer. 5. Conventionalist

6. A person who believes that material possessions are all that matter in life: M...

Answer. 6. Materialist

Think It Out

Q1. Identify the stanza that talks of each of the following

individuality	rationalism	hypocrisy
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Answer. Individuality- Third stanza Rationalism- First stanza Hypocrisy- Second stanza

Q2. What according to the poem is involved in the process of growing up?

Answer. According to the poem, the process of growing up involves the attainment of mental maturity. A person is said to be grown up when he has become logical, rational and is able to build his own thoughts. A grown up has the power to distinguish between reality and fantasy A grown up individual understands the actions of others just as the poet recognises the hiatus between the preaching and the practice of the adults. He realises the hypocrisy and the double standards maintained by the adults. A mature individual also asserts his thoughts and opinions.

Q3. What is the poet's feeling towards childhood?

Answer. The poet does not appear to feel sad or upset at the loss of his childhood. He only seems to be puzzled at the disappearance of childhood and the arrival of adulthood. He expresses his confusion when he asks the questions 'When' and 'Where did my childhood go'

Q4. Which do you think are the most poetic lines? Why?

Answer. The lines that seem to be the most poetic are: 'It went to some forgotten place, That's hidden in an infant's face; That's all I know.' These lines sum up beautifully the process of growth and the disappearance of a particular stage of life. These lines express metaphorically that an innocent face hides many things behind its smiles. Perhaps the childhood also lies hidden somewhere in the Child's consciousness.