



LESSON 10

THE SCHOOL BOY

SOLUTIONS:

COMPREHENSION

1. Answer the following questions:

- i) Describe the feelings of the school boy on a summer morning.

Ans: The school boy is mirthful and is getting up in a sweet beautiful summer morning. Sweet singing of the birds thrills and elates the boy. He loves to listen to the blows and sounds of the clarion by the hunter. He also likes to enjoy the sweet melodious music of the skylark. But, he doesn't like to go to school during such a sweet and nice weather.

- ii) What does the poet mean by "Oh! What sweet company"?

Ans: The school boy loves to wake up in summer morning, when birds are singing on the trees. The boy gets entertained by the company of the hunter who blows his clarion from a distant field and sweet melodious music of skylark.

- iii) What does the boy feel about going to school in a summer morning?

Ans: The young boy has to go to school even in a summer morning when there is so much to enjoy in the open fields and forest. He doesn't like to go to school during such a sweet and nice weather. He doesn't like to stay under the strict super-vision of the teachers and the school system. The class sessions bring boredom to the child. The lessons are difficult and uninteresting. The schoolboy says that going to the school in the summer morning is something which takes away all his joy.

2. Explain what the poet means by the following lines:

- i) Under a cruel eye outworn,

The little ones spend the day

In sighing and dismay.

Ans: These lines have been taken from the poem, 'The School Boy' composed by William Blake. The speaker, a young boy, is mirthful in getting up in a sweet and beautiful summer morning. He is thrilled by the sweet singing of the birds. He likes to enjoy the melodious music of the skylark. Whenever the boy thinks of going to the school, all his enjoyment and mirth fades away. He doesn't enjoy or learn anything under the cruel and strict supervision of the teacher. Little kids like the boy spend their day in utter anxiety, dejection and dismay.

- ii) Nor sit in learnings bower

worn thro' with the dreary shower.

Ans: Here the poet describes the dull uninspiring life at school with lots of work and no play. With a spiritless drooping figure, the boy spends hours in anxiety. Bower refers to leafy shelter. And here 'bower' means the school or the classroom in which he feels imprisoned. He does not enjoy any lesson imparted in a dull manner.

- iii) How can the bird that is born for joy

Sit in a cage and sing?

Ans: The poet here brings the example of a bird. A bird which is meant for joy and freedom will never sing sweet songs in a trapped case, similarly a child can never enjoy the happiness under the umbrella of fear and tension. He loves to rise in a summer morn when the birds sing on every tree; the huntsman blows his horn and the skylark sings with him.

iv) How can a child, when fears annoy

But droop hid tender wing,

And forget his youthful spring?

Ans: The pleasure of childhood is in being free and happy like a bird. But the child is put in the school just as a bird is put in the cage. So, the child is as unhappy as a caged bird. A bird which is meant for joy and freedom will never sing in a cage. Likewise, a child who is always under a situation of fear will forget his childlike tenets (principle/belief) and drop down his wing of freedom and ecstasy. He will forget his childhood innocence and activities.

v) Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy,

Or bless the mellowing year,

When the blasts of winter appear?

Ans: According to the poet, summer cannot be joyful when the buds of flowers are cut and the flowers and the twigs are thrown away. The fruit of summer will never appear. The schoolboy compares the children to the spring plants which have been destroyed. According to him, like the flowers, the children too need freedom for efficient growth. Depriving the child of joy and freedom means depriving the world of its spring.

3. What, according to the poet, are the things that go against the joy and fruits of summer?

Ans: 'The School Boy' is a poem which is based upon the perspective of a young school boy. He loves to rise in the summer morning when birds are singing on the trees. He loves to listen to the blows and sounds of the clarion of the hunter. The pleasure of childhood is in being free and happy like a bird. But the child is put in the school just as a bird is put in the cage. So, the child is as unhappy as a caged bird. He doesn't like to stay under the strict supervision of the teachers and the school system. The child has to spend many tensed hours in the school and he is tired and even puzzled. The young school boy turns to address his parents as he sees them as the ones that could possibly change his situation. He speaks about his own childhood joys as being 'buds' that are being 'nipped' and 'blossoms' that are blowing away. The poet calls upon the

parents to let their kids grow and play joyfully in early years. If unhappiness crushes the sensitive plants, beautiful and newborn buds, summer can never be joyful.

4. Write the substance of the poem.

Ans: 'The School Boy' by William Blake is told from the perspective of a young boy. In the poem, the boy loves to wake up to see the summer morning. The sound of the birds singing and the huntsman's horn are both pleasant. In such a fine morning, he doesn't like to go to school as he finds school a boring place with lots of work and no play. He gets tired with the rules of teachers and direct supervision on him. He feels like a song bird trapped in a cage. He speaks about his own childhood joys as being 'buds' that are being nipped and blossoms that are blowing away. If the buds are nipped, blossoms are blown away and tender plants are stripped, the flowering, fruiting and mellowing season of summer cannot arrive in joy. Instead like a destroyer, the blasts of winter will destroy everything. Depriving the child of joy and freedom means a world without spring. A happy childhood helps to build a confident youngman who could serve the society in a productive way.

5. Pick out the rhyming words from the first two stanzas;

Morn	-	horn	
Tree	-	me	- company
Morn	-	outworn	
Away	-	day	- dismay



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (S)
Government of Manipur