

4. The Pedestrian

1. Text-based Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

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|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. <i>c</i> | 2. <i>b</i> | 3. <i>b</i> | 4. <i>b</i> | 5. <i>c</i> |
| 6. <i>d</i> | 7. <i>a</i> | 8. <i>c</i> | 9. <i>a</i> | 10. <i>d</i> |
| 11. <i>d</i> | 12. <i>c</i> | 13. <i>a</i> | 14. <i>b</i> | 15. <i>b</i> |

2. Comprehension Passages

PASSAGE-1

- (i) In this extract the word 'he' refers to Leonard Mead. His routine included long walks at night. He used to walk for hours alone.
- (ii) The passage describes the evening time in the month of November. The year 2053 mentioned in the story indicates the futuristic nature of the story.
- (iii) The author says that 'it really made no difference; because he has to walk alone on the roads and there is no one of his own. In this situation it does not matter which direction he chooses for his walk.

- (iv) There were cottages and homes with open windows. They would attract a solitary walker.
- (v) The squads of dogs would accompany him in the open. They would accompany him if he wore hard heels.

PASSAGE-2

- (i) The shadows of the people appearing on the walls of their houses are called the gray phantoms. They have been called the phantoms as they do not look like real people. They can be seen from the open windows of their houses only.
- (ii) He would see the gray phantoms on the inner room walls where a curtain was still undrawn against the night.
- (iii) The houses are tomblike because the people living in them are passive and silent. They simply exist like phantoms. This picture of the atmosphere prevailing there is similar to that of a graveyard.
- (iv) Walking past the houses which were completely deserted and silent was like walking through a graveyard. The people living there seemed dead and lifeless.
- (v) The life hinted at this place is artificial, passive and mechanical. It is marked by the silence of a graveyard.

PASSAGE-3

- (i) It was the evening time. The indication about the evening time is the going on and off of the lights.
- (ii) The speaker tells about the experience of walking in a frosty cold November evening on the deserted roads. The image 'lungs blaze like a christmas tree inside', indicates the oppressive atmosphere all around that seems suffocating.
- (iii) The speaker reacted to the scenery outside by whistling between his teeth and trying to listen to the sound of his own shoes. He also whispered 'Hello, in there' on every side as he walked on.
- (iv) The speaker is a lively but lonely person. He likes to go on long walks in the evening. He is disappointed to find the people leading a passive and dry life.
- (v) The expression 'all the branches filled with invisible snow' implies the cold and sterile life of the people living there. They do not have any interaction with one another and there is no warmth in their relationships.

PASSAGE-4

- (i) The picture that the speaker presents here is of a deserted and lonely place. There is silence all over. There are no signs of life. It is a picture of dismay.

- (ii) The speaker compares himself with some lonely person walking in the windless Arizona desert. He draws this comparison to highlight the loneliness of the place.
- (iii) The speaker is a lively person who enjoys going for long walks. But he is pained to notice the lifeless atmosphere all around. He is different from the people who accept a deserted and mechanical life.
- (iv) The speaker is wandering in the wintry November night of 2053 in the deserted city. He mentions Arizona to highlight the loneliness of the place.
- (v) A police car encounters the speaker later. He is questioned by the police car because he is unlike the other inhabitants of the deserted lonely city.

PASSAGE-5

- (i) Leonard Mead is the speaker. The listeners here are the people living in the city who sit in their homes watching television.
- (ii) The murders the speaker talks about are the ones depicted in the T.V. programmes. There are frequent murder scenes. The speaker asks about the murders as he notices the time that matches the programmes showing murders on T.V.
- (iii) A revue is a light theatrical entertainment satirical in nature. The revue here is to take place on the television.
- (iv) A look at his watch showing eight P. M. makes him ask the questions about the murders and revue as he thinks that it was time for these programmes to appear on the T.V. But he gets only a murmur of a laughter as response to his question which does not satisfy him.
- (v) A mechanical, boring and suppressed life is lived in the city. The people follow the dictates of the rulers and the authorities very strictly. The speaker does not appreciate this type of life and criticizes it.

PASSAGE-6

- (i) The speaker was on a side street circling around toward his house when he was stopped.
- (ii) The speaker was stopped because he was roaming in the streets at night in the city where it was considered something deviant and unlawful. He was stopped by the authorities symbolized by a police car.
- (iii) The speaker was within a block of his destination toward his house when a sudden light flashed upon him. He felt stunned by the light.
- (iv) When he was asked to stop he simply stood there surprised. He could utter only one word 'But' Thus, he reacted in a wonderstruck way.

- (v) There was some police officer in the car as the voice of someone speaking is heard by the speaker. But later we find that there was no one in it. It implies the invisible and domineering presence of the authorities symbolized by the car that speaks.

The light that fell on the speaker was a fierce white cone shaped one.

PASSAGE-7

- (i) The event that the story refers to is the taking place of elections. Since then the police force had been reduced from three to one car only.
- (ii) Due to the ebbing of crime, there was no need of more force. Consequently the number of cars *i.e.*, the police force had been reduced.
- (iii) The passage hints at the limited activities and movements of the people. Most of the people stayed indoors in a disciplined way.
- (iv) Seeing a car wandering at night is something incredible because the number of cars had been reduced to one only. The crime had also come down. There was no need for a police car to wander at night as most of the people followed the rules and stayed inside the houses watching T.V.
- (v) The first question that the car asked the speaker is about his name. It is a strange kind of police car moving around to enforce the law. But there are no human officers in it. The car speaks on its own like a police officer.

PASSAGE-8

- (i) The back seat was like a small prison. It was black and had bars like that of a jail. It also smelt of harsh antiseptic.
- (ii) The back seat smelling of harsh antiseptic means that it was meant to control the people and keep them in check as anti-septic keeps the germs. It also implies killing people like germs. The speaker here wants to convey the inhuman attitude of the government agencies towards the common people.
- (iii) The speaker Leonard Mead says , 'There was nothing soft there'. It means that the police force represented by the car was cruel and harsh. There were no humane feelings or kindness in them.
- (iv) The car was being driven by some police officer though it has not been mentioned clearly. The speaker was being taken to the police station.
- (v) The speaker was taken in the car as the car represented the authorities and was used to control crime. The crime of the speaker was that he had not behaved like other citizens. He was a non-conformist for the authorities.

PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS

Class Activity