

A Letter to God

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Oral comprehension check – 1

1. What did lencho hope for?

Ans: Lencho hoped for rain for his crops.

2. Why did Lencho say the raindrops were like ‘new coins’?

Ans: He said so because the raindrops would brings coins.

3. How did the rain change? What happened to Lencho’s fields?

Ans: The rain changed into a hailstorm. It completely destroyed Lencho’s fields.

4. What were Lencho’s feelings when the hail stopped?

Ans: Lencho was very sad because the hail left nothing. He thought he would go hungry that year.

Oral comprehension check – 2

1. Who or what did Lencho have faith in? What did he do?

Ans: Lencho had faith in God. He wrote a letter to God.

2. Who read the letter?

Ans: The postmaster read the letter.

3. What did the postmaster do then?

Ans: The Post Master did not want to break Lencho’s faith. He collected money and sent to Lencho.

Oral comprehension check -3

1. Was Lencho surprised to find a letter for him with money in it?

Ans: No, Lencho was not at all surprised to find a letter for him with money in it. Because he had deep faith in God.

2. What made him angry?

Ans: He was angry to find 70 pesos while he asked to send 100 pesos.

Thinking about the text :

1. Who does Lencho have complete faith in? Which sentences in the story tell you this?

Ans: Lencho has complete faith in God.

The sentence is : “—the help of God, whose eyes, as he had been instructed, see everything, even what is deep in one’s conscience.”

2. Why does the postmaster send money to Lencho? Why does he sign the letter ‘God’?

Ans: The postmaster did not like that Lencho’s faith in God should break. So he sent money to Lencho. He signs the letter ‘God’ to keep lencho’s faith intact.

3. Did Lencho try to find out who had sent the money to him?

Ans: No, Lencho did not at all try to know who had sent him the money. Because he was certain that it was God who sent him the money. He had deep faith in God.

4. Who does Lencho think has taken the rest of the money? What is the irony in the situation? (Remember that the irony of a situation is an unexpected aspect of it. An ironic situation is strange or amusing because it is the opposite of what is expected.)

Ans: Lencho thinks that the employees of the post office have taken the rest of the money. The irony is that the employees of the office did a noble task. They deserve appreciation. But they are called 'Crooks'.

5. Are there people like Lencho in the real world? What kind of person would you say he is? You may select appropriate words from the box to answer the question.

Greedy naive stupid ungrateful
selfish comical unquestioning

Ans: Yes, People like Lencho can be still seen in this real world. Such a man is 'naive', 'stupid' and 'comical'.

6. There are two kinds of conflict in the story : between humans and nature and between humans themselves. How are these conflicts illustrated?

Ans: The first conflict is that the rain was welcome for the field. But it turned into hailstorm and destroyed the field. Second conflict is that the employees gave Lencho money but he called them 'Crooks'.

Thinking about Language :

1. Look at the following sentence from the story.

Suddenly a strong wind began to blow and along with the rain very large hailstones began to fall.

'Hailstones' are small balls of ice that fall like rain. A storm in which hailstones fall is a 'hailstorm'. You know that a storm is bad weather with strong winds, rain, thunder and lightning.

There are different names in different parts of the world's for storms depending on their nature. Can you match the names in the box with their description below, and fill in the blanks? You may use a dictionary to help you.

Gale, whirlwind, cyclone

Hurricane, tornado, typhoon

1. A violent Tropical Storm in which strong winds move in a circle :——c——
2. An extremely strong wind : —a—
3. A violent Tropical Storm with very strong winds:——p——
4. A violent storm whose center is a cloud in the shape of a funnel :——n——
5. A violent storm with very strong winds, especially in the western Atlantic Ocean :——r——
6. A very strong wind that moves very fast in a spinning movement and causes a lot of damage :——l——

Ans: 1. Cyclone

2. gale.

3. Typhoon

4. Tornado

5. Hurricane

6. Whirlwind

2. Notice how the word 'hope' is used in these sentences from the story :

(a) I hope it (that hailstorm) passes quickly.

(b) There was a single hope: help from God. In the first example, 'hope' is verb which means you wish for something to happen. In the second example, it is a noun meaning a chance for something to happen.

Match the sentences in column A with the meaning of 'hope' in column B.

A	B
1. Will you get the subject you want to study in college? I hope so.	-A feeling that something good will probably happen.
2. I hope you don't mind my saying this, but I don't like the way you are arguing.	-Thinking that this would happen (It may or may not have happened.)
3. This discovery will give new hope to HIV/AIDS sufferers.	-Stopped believing that this good thing would happen.
4. We were hoping against hope that the judges would not notice our mistakes?	-Wanting something to happen. (and thinking it quite possible.)
5. I called early in the hope of speaking to her before she went to school.	-Showing concern that what you say should not offend or disturb the other person : a way of being polite.
6. Just when everybody had given up hope , the fisherman came back, seven days after the cyclone.	-wishing for something to happen, although this is very unlikely.

Ans: A feeling that something good will probably happen.

Ans: Showing concern that what you say should not offend or disturb the other person : a way of being polite.

Ans: Thinking that this would happen (It may or may not have happened.)

Ans: Wishing for something to happen, although this is very unlikely.

Ans: Wanting something to happen. (and thinking it quite possible.)

Ans: Stopped believing that this good thing would happen.

3. Relative Clauses

Look at these sentences

(a) All morning Lencho – who knew his fields intimately – looked at the sky.

(b) The women, who was preparing supper, replied, "Yes, God willing ".

The italicised parts of the sentence give us more information about Lencho and the women. We call them relative clauses. Notice that they begin with a relative pronoun who. Other common relative pronouns are whom, whose, and which.

The relative clauses in (a) and (b) above are called non-defining because we already know the identity of the person they describe. Lencho is a particular person, and there is a particular woman he speaks to. We don't need the information in the relative clauses to pick these people out from a large set. A non-defining relative clauses usually has a comma in front of it and a comma after it (some writers use a dash (-) instead, as in the story). If the relative clauses come at the end, we just put a full stop.

Join the sentences given below using who, whom, whose, which, as suggested.

1. I often go to Mumbai. Mumbai is the commercial capital of India. (which)
2. My mother is going to host a TV show on cooking. She cooks very well. (Who)
3. These sportspersons are going to meet the president. Their performance has been excellent. (Whose)
4. Lencho preyed to God. His eyes see into our minds. (whose)
5. This man cheated me. I trusted him. (whom)

Ans: 1. I often go to Mumbai which is the commercial capital of India.

2. My mother who cooks very well is going to host a TV show on cooking.

3. The sports persons whose performance has been excellent are going to meet the president.

4. Lencho prayed to God whose eyes see into our minds.

5. This man whom I trusted cheated me. Sometimes the relative pronoun in a relative clause remains 'hidden' . For example, look at the first sentence of the story.

(a) The house – the only one in the entire valley – sat on the crest of a low hill.
We can rewrite this sentence as:

(b) The house – which was only one in the entire valley – sat on the crest of a low hill.

In (a), the relative pronoun which and verb was are not present.

4. Using Negative for Emphasis

We know that sentences with words such as no, not or nothing show the absence of something, or contradict something. For example :

(a) This year we will have no corn. (Corn will be absent)

(b) The hail has left nothing. (Absence of a crop)

(c) These aren't rain drops falling from the sky, they are new coins. (contradicts the common idea of what the drops of water falling from the sky are) But sometimes negative words are used just to emphasize an idea. Look at these sentences from the story :

(d) Lencho..... had done nothing else but see the sky towards the north-east.
(He had done only this)

(e) The man went out for no other reason than to have the pleasure of feeling the rain in his body. (He had only this reason)

Lencho showed not the slightest surprise on seeing the money. (He showed no surprise at all.)

Now look back at example (c). Notice that the contradiction in fact serves to emphasise the value or usefulness of the rain to the farmer. Find sentences in the story with negative words, which express the following ideas emphatically.

1. The tress lost all their leaves.
2. The letter was addressed to God himself.
3. The postman saw this address for the first time in his career.

Ans: 1. Not a leaf remained on the trees.

2. It was nothing less than a letter to God.

3. Never in his career as a postman had he known that address.

5. Metaphors.

The words metaphor comes from Greek wording 'transfer' . Metaphors compare two things or ideas : a quality or feature of one thing is transferred to another thing. Some common metaphors are

* the leg of the table :- The leg supports our body. So the object that supports a table is described as a leg.

* the heart of the city :- The heart is an important organ in the centre of our body. So this words is used to describe the Central Area of a city.

In pairs, find metaphors from the story to complete the table below. Try to say what qualities are being compared. One has been done for you.

Object	Metaphor	Quality of Feature compound
Cloud	Huge Mountains of clouds	The mass or 'hugeness' of mountains
Raindrops	—	—
Hailstones	—	—
Locusts	—	—
—	—	An epidemic (a disease) that spreads very rapidly and leaves many people dead

–	An ox of a nan	–
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Ans: Raindrops – coins, new coins – Valuable because they help to produce good crop and get money.

Hailstones – frozen pearls – water is frozen and dazzles.

Locusts – a plague of Locusts – destruction of crops.

Plague – a fatal disease – An epidemic (a disease) that spreads very rapidly and leaves many people dead.

Lencho – An ox of a man – works like an animal.

Speaking

6. Have you ever been in great difficulty, and felt that only a miracle could help you? How was your problem solved? Speak about this in class with your teacher.

Ans: Once I was in great difficulty. I missed that last bus to come home back. The weather was not good. I never like the idea of staying outside for nothing. I almost prayed to God. Suddenly a motor-bike appeared who gave me a lift. He was coming to our village. Thanks God.

7. Listening

Listen to the letter (given under 'In this lesson) read out by your teacher/on the audio tape. As you listen fill in the table given below.

Bhatt House

256, Circuit Road

Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India

25 January, 2006

Dear Arti,

How are you? I'm sorry I haven't written for a very long time. I think I last sent you a birthday card in the month of September 2005.

We have just moved house(see our new address above). This is our new home. Sarah has just about started going to school. We have admitted her to 'Little Feet' as this is very close to our new home.

I'm sitting here by the windows sill, writing to you. There is a slight drizzle outside and I'm reminded of the good times we had together in Bangalore last year.

Do write back. Love, Gaya

The writer apologises (says sorry) because.	—
The write has sent this to the reader.	—
The writer sent it in the month of.	—
The reason for not writing earlier.	—
Sarah goes to	—
Who is writing to whom?	—
Where and when were they last together?	—

Ans: The writer apologises (says sorry) because → she hasn't written to her friend Arti for a very long time.

The write has went this to the reader → after sending a birthday card in September 2005 last.

The writer has sent it in the month of → January 2006.

The reason for not writing earlier → The writer shifted to Kanpur.

Sarah goes to → a school named 'Little Feet'.

Who is writing to whom? → Jaya is writing to arti.

Where and when were they last together → They were together at Bangalore last year.