

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

Answers to NCERT Questions

THINKING ABOUT THE POEM

I. 1. What kind of place is Innisfree? Think about:

- (i) the three things the poet wants to do when he goes back there (stanza I)
- (ii) what he hears and sees there and its effect on him (stanza II)
- (iii) what he hears in his “heart’s core even when he is far away from Innisfree (stanza III)

Ans: (i) Innisfree is a small island in a lake called Lough Gill, in Sligo County, Ireland. It is quiet, simple, and full of natural beauty.

(ii) The poet wants to build a cabin made of clay and wattles. He is making plans of planting nine rows of beans, and a bee hive for honeybees.

(iii) He hears the sounds being made by the cricket, the rustling of the wings as the linnets fly to their homes in the evening. All of them has a very soothing effect on the poet. He is at peace.

In his “heart’s core, he can hear the sound of the waves lapping against the shores, even as he is standing on the pavement of a road in the city.

(i) “Glade is an open space in a forest, so we can probably visualise the bee glade as a clearing in the woods, surrounding the poet’s small cabin with swarms of honeybees. The poet wishes to live alone and be at peace with nature, listening to the buzz of the bees as they are busy doing their work.

(ii) The poet creates an imagery that is dreamlike. A linnet is a type of finch, typically brown and red breasted. The evening sky is full of linnet’s wings, make us think that its not just one small bird but all the linnets are in flight.

(iii) The poet imagines he can hear the soft and gentle sounds of the ripples in the lakes.

All of these pictures create the idyllic (like an idyll; extremely happy, peaceful, or picturesque) picture of a beautiful countryside blessed by the bounties of nature in our mind.

2. By now you may have concluded that Innisfree is a simple, natural place, full of beauty and peace. How does the poet contrast it with where he now stands?

Ans: Yeats has created a wonderful image of Innisfree, when he calls it a place of peace and calm. He says that the only sights and sounds one gets to see and hear, are

the beautiful and rhythmic creations of nature. The buzzing of the bees, the songs of the cricket, the breezing of the linnets, and the lapping of the waves, along with the beautiful sights of the breaking of dawn, the starry night skies, the lazy noons, and the lovely green plants and trees. In contrast, he says that the roads and pavements in the city are hard and grey, busy and loud, bereft of peace, calm, beauty and harmony.

These lines are very indicative of an image of a quiet and misty morning, where the sun has not made its glorious presence in the morning sky. Nature like a beautiful bride is hiding her lovely looks behind the veil of the disappearing darkness. Life is so unhurried and calm, therefore, the prevailing peace is encompassing the poet in her fold gradually. As the light emerges, the songs of the crickets fall upon his ears, as they are seen busying themselves with their morning chores.

It may also be interpreted as the gradual awakening of life and the sounds that emerge in the isle, quite unlike the hustle and bustle of the city life, which has the habit of holding us in its viscious trap, from where an escape is often a distant dream.

3. Do you think Innisfree is only a place, or a state of mind? Does the poet actually miss the place of his boyhood days?

Ans: I think it is a state of mind. We tend to fantasise or go back in time when we are sad or feel frustrated from the present situation or condition. It all depends on what the poet considers an ideal place. Sound is heard in the city as well as in the countryside but the question arises which sounds give us more pleasure and when. Yes, he misses the place of his boyhood days and recalls the sound of the lake washing its shore all day long in his heart's core. He misses the sounds of the crickets chirping in the woods and the sight of the linnets flying homewards in the evening sky. He misses the unveiling of the mist by the rising sun. He misses the midday sun enliven the island lake with its light and the midnights all a glimmer. Yes, this is the ultimate dream of every human being to settle in the quiet nature, far away from the bustle of the city.

Additional Questions

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow:(4 Marks each)

1. I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,

And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:

Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee;

And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

(a) What does Innisfree symbolise?

(b) Find a word from the extract which is the antonym of 'slumber'.

(c) Why does the poet say 'I will arise and go now'?

(d) How will the poet make his cabin?

Ans:

(a) Innisfree symbolises peace and tranquility.

(b) Arise

(c) The poet is most probably sad and depressed as he says 'I will arise and go now'. This expression shows the poet's urgency to leave the city for a more rustic environment.

(d) The poet will make his cabin of clay and wattle. It is an ancient construction technique known as 'wattle and daub' where clay is smeared over a frame of interwoven branches.

2. And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,

Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;

There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,

And evening full of the linnet's wings.

(a) Name the poem and the poet.

(b) What does the expression 'peace comes dropping slow' mean?

(c) What is beautiful about the morning?

(d) What is meant by "purple glow"?

Ans: (a) The name of the poem is 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' and the poet is 'William Butler Yeats'.

(b) It seems the poet equates the slow simple pace of life with peace. But here, the poet's words, 'peace comes dropping slow' suggest that the concept of peacefulness is being unravelled to him gradually and he is taking his time to relish the quiet and calm.

(c) The poet finds the morning beautiful when he is awakened to the chirping of the cricket's song as the mist is lifted by the rising of the sun.

(d) The colour purple is indicative of nobility and royalty. So the poet feels as if he is all aglow in the afternoon as he enjoys the warmth and peace, and the laziness that is the prerogative of the royals.

3. I will arise and go now, for always night and day

I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;

While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

- (a) What is the mood of the poet in the last line of the extract?
- (b) What is happening “always night and day”?
- (c) What does the poet hear deep in his heart?
- (d) Find the internal rhyme in the given extract.

Ans:

- (a) The poet is sad and feels frustrated with the fact that he cannot leave his place of work in the city.
- (b) The poet is reminiscing every day and night about the beautiful life in the countryside.
- (c) The poet can hear in his heart the sound of water hitting against the shore of Innisfree island all through the day.
- (d) “Roadway rhymes with “grey, but they both don’t come at the end of the line (hence, calling it “internal rhyme). It is the kind of thing you don’t notice unless you’re reading the poem aloud.

Short Answer Questions (30–40 words: 2 Marks each)

1. What does the poet plan to do when he reaches the isle?

Ans: The poet intends to build a small cottage of clay and wattle, and live all by himself near the glade where the bees buzz around in their hive. He also plans to plant nine rows of beans.

2. Explain the expression, ‘the lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore’ ?

Ans: These words describe the beautiful natural environment in the lake isle of Innisfree, where the lake water gently strikes the island shore making soft sounds which is musical to the ears. The water gently hitting the shore is like a lullaby that soothes the senses and makes one feel at peace with oneself.

3. What does the cabin symbolise in the poem?

Ans: The cabin on the lake symbolises the simple life, a life free of distraction and troubles. Symbolism is an object that has a meaning larger than itself. Just as the cabin is simple, ‘of clay and wattles made,’ the life in the isle allows us to rely on nothing more than ourselves.

4. What is the poet trying to convey when he is referring to the bees, birds, crickets and the waves?

Ans: The poet is referring to the continuous activities that goes on in the countryside. All the creations of nature are busy in their activities, but despite all this, they unknowingly provide peace and solace to man. On the other hand, in the city, infested by human beings, no one has the time to bother about the cares and concerns of the other. Man does not provide the tranquility that the other creations of nature provide, and they do so without expectations of any form of reward or appreciation from man.

Long Answer Questions (100–150 words: 8 Marks each)

1. Describe the image that has been created about the isle in your mind.

Ans: The poet has been so effective in transferring the image of the isle into the minds of the reader. Which ever part of the world the reader belongs to, he/she can close the external eye and picturise in the mind's eye, a small little cottage, surrounded by a wicket fence, in the middle of the woods, close to the lake that flows through the countryside. In the frontyard in a "hammock (a bed made of canvas or rope mesh suspended from two supports by cords at both ends.), the poet is lying with a book in his hand, savouring the sounds of the waves, birds and bees. The setting is akin (of similar character) to that of a paradise on earth.

2. Describe the island the poet would like to go to?

Or

What is it about the "Lake Isle of Innisfree that appealed to the poet?

Ans: The lake isle of Innisfree has been untouched by urbanisation. It is peaceful as the poet equates peace with nature. He would like to wake up in the morning, hearing the chirping of the crickets from the woods, after the mist/fog is slowly lifted by the rising sun. The rich purple colour that glows from the heather as the afternoon sun caresses it. Also the feeling of royalty as one luxuriates in the countryside. The beautiful sight of the linnets flying in large flocks in the evening sky and the night sky alight with the twinkling stars is a sight to behold. There is the constant rhythm of the waves as they strike the shores of the isle.

3. Describe the behaviour of the bee that has been given so much importance in the poem.

Ans: Honeybees are capable of maintaining a close association with human beings. Honeybees live in well-organised colonies and do not require hibernation.

Honeybees are social creatures and live within colonies with a queen, thousands of workers and a few male drones. Each bee has a task to perform. The age of honeybees also plays an important role in determining which individuals perform various daily activities. Honeybees behave similarly in Africa, Asia, Europe and other parts of the world, though certain species are known to be more aggressive than others. Honeybees behave defensively when intruders are near, guarding the entrance of their nests. However, honeybees are able to sting only once, and they die immediately.

Self- Assessment Test

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,

And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:

Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee;

And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

(a) Who is 'I'?

(b) Why does he want to go to Innisfree?

(c) What does 'bee-loud glade' mean?

(d) Which word in the extract means 'rods or stakes interlaced with twigs or branches'?

2. I will arise and go now, for always night and day

I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;

While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,

I hear it in the deep heart's core.

(a) How does the poet hear the sound of the water in the lake?

(b) What is happening to the poet day and night?

(c) Name the poem and the poet.

(d) Name the poetic device and the rhyme scheme used in the above lines.

Short Answer Questions

1. How does the poet describe the waves of the lake?

2. What is the poet's idea about peace?

3. Being a city dweller, do you appreciate the yearnings of the poet? Explain.
 4. What is the moral of the poem, 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree'?
 5. Why does the poet wish to spend his time in the cabin alone?
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Long Answer Questions

1. "Health is the greatest gift, contentment is the greatest wealth, faithfulness is the best relationship. Elaborate this thought of Gautam Buddha, by taking ideas from the poem, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree.
2. Your class had been taken on a cruise to an island. Write an article for your school magazine, elaborating about the beauty of the place. Take inputs from "The Lake Isle of Innisfree.
3. Imagine that you are sitting by a lake in your village. Do you experience the same pleasure that the poet experienced?