

# The Hack Driver

— Sinclair Lewis




## OBJECTIVE Type Questions

[ 1 mark ]

### Extract Based Questions

1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

*After graduating with honours, I became a junior assistant clerk in a magnificent law firm. I was sent, not to prepare legal briefs, but to serve summons, like a cheap private detective. I had to go to dirty and shadowy corners of the city to seek out my victims. Some of the larger and more self-confident ones even beat me up. I hated this unpleasant work, and the side of city life it revealed to me.*

- (A)  The law firm that the narrator joined was:  
(a) splendid (b) philanthropic  
(c) reputable (d) contemporary
- (B) 'Like a cheap private detective' is a reference to the fact that the speaker?  
(a) wasn't drawing as good a salary as a detective.  
(b) was upset about working in the private sector.  
(c) wasn't trying to be an established detective.

- (d) was disappointed with his allotted work.
- (C) Which of the following options was NOT a part of this unpleasant work?
- (a) searching for law-breakers
  - (b) serving summons
  - (c) getting beaten up
  - (d) preparing legal documents
- (D) The shadowy corners of the city conjure up images of places:
- (a) with many trees to provide shade.
  - (b) where crime is not uncommon.
  - (c) which receive absolutely no sunlight.
  - (d) with tall buildings and their shadows.
- (E) Choose the option that is NOT TRUE.
- The speaker found this side of the city life unpleasant because it revealed people who had:
- (a) robbed others of their belongings.
  - (b) threatened others.
  - (c) swindled the innocent.
  - (d) served summons for a case.

**Ans. (B)** (d) was disappointed with his allotted work.

**Explanation:** It is clear from the extract that the speaker 'hated his unpleasant work'. Hence, (d) is the right answer.

- (C) (d) preparing legal documents

**Explanation:** It is given in the extract that the speaker was sent "not to prepare legal briefs, but to serve summons". Options (a), (b) and (c) are mentioned as his work. Hence, (d) is the right answer.

- (D) (b) where crime is not uncommon.

**Explanation:** It is clear from the extract that the speaker had to go to the 'dirty places' and 'shadowy corners' to serve summons on people who were required to be present at the court. So, he had to go to places where crime was common. Hence, (b) is the right answer.

- (E) (a) robbed others of their belongings.

**Explanation:** It is nowhere mentioned in the extract that the people in this side of the city had robbed others. Options (b), (c) and (d) can be inferred from the extract. Hence, (a) is the right answer.

## 2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

*So I rejoiced one day when they sent me out forty miles in the country, to a town called New Mullion, to serve summons on a man called Oliver Lutkins. We needed this man as a witness in a law case, and he had ignored all our letters. When I got to New Mullion, my eager expectations of a sweet and simple country village were severely disappointed. Its streets were rivers of mud, with rows of*

*wooden shops, either painted a sour brown, or bare of any paint at all. The only agreeable sight about the place was the delivery man at the station. He was about forty, red-faced, cheerful, and thick about the middle. His working clothes were dirty and well-worn, and he had a friendly manner. You felt at once that he liked people.*

- (A) The narrator was sent forty miles away to:
- (a) meet his senior officer.
  - (b) give court order to Oliver Lutkins.
  - (c) practice law.
  - (d) be a witness for a case.
- (B) Pick the option that is NOT true as to why the narrator's expectation of New Mullion was not fulfilled.
- (a) Its streets were rivers of mud.
  - (b) There were rows of wooden shops.
  - (c) The shops were either painted a sour brown, or bare of any paint at all.
  - (d) There was no electricity in the village.
- (C) The only pleasing sight at the place was:
- (a) street vendors selling yummy food.
  - (b) children playing.
  - (c) cheerful delivery man.
  - (d) garlands of roses at shops.
- (D) The term 'well-worn' is NOT related to:
- (a) fine
  - (b) torn
  - (c) not good
  - (d) faded
- (E) Which word does NOT have a meaning similar to 'rejoice':
- (a) elated
  - (b) pleasure
  - (c) jovial
  - (d) depressed

**Ans. (A)** (b) give court order to Oliver Lutkins.

**Explanation:** It is clear from the extract that the narrator was sent to New Mullion to 'serve summons' to Oliver Lutkins. Summons refers to a 'court order'. Hence, (b) is the right answer.

- (B) (d) There was no electricity in the village.

**Explanation:** Options (a), (b) and (c) are mentioned in the extract while (d) is nowhere mentioned. Hence, (d) is the right answer.

- (C) (c) cheerful delivery man.

**Explanation:** It is given in the extract that the only pleasing sight at the place was the delivery man who was cheerful. Hence, (c) is the right answer.

- (D) (a) fine

**Explanation:** The term 'well-worn' means not to be in a good condition. Options (b), (c) and (d) represent a bad condition while (a) does not. Hence, (a) is the right answer.

- (E) (d) depressed

**Explanation:** The term 'rejoice' means 'pleasure'. Options (a), (b) and (c) means the



same as 'rejoice' while (d) depressed means to be sad. Hence, (d) is the right answer.

**3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:**

*Fritz looked at me, hiding behind Bill. He hesitated, and then admitted, "Yes, he was in here a little while ago. Guess he's gone over to Gustaff's to get a shave." "Well, if he comes in, tell him I'm looking for him." We drove to Gustaff's barber shop. Again, Bill went in first, and I lingered at the door. He asked not only the Swede but two customers if they had seen Lutkins. The Swede had not. He said angrily, "I haven't seen him, and don't care to. But if you find him you can just collect that dollar thirty-five, he owes me." One of the customers thought he had seen Lutkins walking down Main Street, this side of the hotel.*

[CBSE Question Bank 2021]

- (A) Fritz's hesitation was on account of wanting to:
- take a moment to comprehend and fall in with the prank.
  - understand what was being asked and answer accordingly.
  - pretend ignorance at the question asked to waste time.
  - confirm that it was him being addressed, before replying.
- (B) The narrator lingered at the door while Bill went in first and made enquiries. Pick up the option that does not correctly use the word 'linger' in the sentences:
- It's best if you can linger in the lobby while I get my luggage.
  - I blurted out the final question that had been lingering in my mind.
  - If a customer lingers over a product, the cameras zoom in to record facial expressions.
  - Mom reminded us that household business cannot be lingered hastily.
- (C) The narrator hovered near the door because he:
- wanted to eavesdrop on the conversation.
  - didn't trust Bill to enquire sternly.
  - had been asked to remain there by Bill.
  - found the interior too stuffy.

- (D) One person mentioned that he had seen Lutkins walking down Main Street.

This was an example of:

- being taken to the cleaners.
  - sending someone on a wild goose chase.
  - stretching the truth.
  - making scales fall off someone's eyes.
- (E) The extract is an example of writing in the style of a/an:
- personal narrative.
  - biography.
  - historical fiction.
  - research article.

- Ans. (A)** (a) take a moment to comprehend and fall in with the prank.

**Explanation:** Fritz' wasn't aware of the prank that Bill was playing, so he had to take a moment to understand and be a part of it. Hence, (a) is the right answer.

- (B) (d) Mom reminded us that household business cannot be lingered hastily.

**Explanation:** The term 'lingered' means to 'wait' or 'stay at a place' as per the sentence. Options (a), (b) and (c) represent the same meaning while (d) explains linger as 'stop' or 'end'. Hence, (d) is the right answer.

- (C) (c) had been asked to remain there by Bill.

**Explanation:** Bill asked the narrator to stand behind him as he would himself enquire about Lutkins to avoid letting Lutkins escape in suspicion. Hence, (c) is the right answer.

- (D) (b) sending someone on a wild goose chase.

**Explanation:** It is clear from the extract that the people were making the narrator a fool by making him run to find Lutkins everywhere even when they knew that Bill was Lutkins. (b) sending someone on a wild goose chase is an idiom that describes the above situation aptly. Hence, (b) is the right answer.

- (E) (a) personal narrative.

**Explanation:** The extract is not a (b) biography, (c) historical fiction or a (d) research article. It is a (a) personal narrative of the speaker. Hence, (a) is the right answer.

## SUBJECTIVE Type Questions

### Short Answer Type Questions

(SA-I)

[ 2 marks ]

Answer the following questions in 20-30 words:

4. Explain how the narrator's expectations fell short of what he'd expected when he was sent to New Mullion?

[CBSE Question Bank 2021]

**Ans.** The narrator's expectations of a sweet and simple country village were not met when he was sent to New Mullion. As its streets were rivers of mud, with rows of wooden shops, either painted a sour brown, or bare of any paint at all.

**5. Do you think the lawyer was gullible? How could he have avoided being taken for a ride?** [CBSE 2015]

**Ans.** Yes, the narrator was gullible. He believed everything that the hack driver told him. He could have avoided being taken for a ride by cross-checking the information given about Lutkins by the hack driver with the other villagers.

**6. ② Why did the narrator feel his job was 'unpleasant'?**

**7. What about the delivery man appealed to the young junior assistant clerk from the city?**

**Ans.** The delivery man was the only grace-saving thing at the New Mullion station. He was a red-faced, plump man of forty years. He was so cheerful and friendly that his warmth appealed to the narrator.

**8. What did the hack driver tell the narrator about Lutkins' mother?** [CBSE 2014]

**Ans.** The hack driver told the narrator that Lutkins' mother was about nine feet tall and four feet thick. She had a rough temper and was great at swearing at people. She was a dreadful lady who could beat the soul out of anybody.

**9. Why did Lutkins pretend to be Bill Magnuson?** [CBSE 2015]

**Ans.** Lutkins didn't want to appear before the court as a witness. When he got to know that the narrator was there to serve summons on him, he disguised himself as Bill Magnuson just to fool the narrator. He wanted the narrator to go back empty-handed.

**10. What do you think inspired the minister's wife to sing the loudest in church when she was most in debt?**

[CBSE Question Bank 2021]

**Ans.** It is a human trait that in the hour of need, one remembers God the most. One wants to pray hard to God to make Him listen to him/her and help one out of adversity. This is the reason why the minister's wife would sing loudest in church when she was in debt.

**11. Why did the young lawyer wish to return to New Mullion?** [CBSE 2019]

**Ans.** The young lawyer was so impressed and overwhelmed by the warmth and friendliness of the people at the village that he wished to return to New Mullion in order to start practising law there.

**12. ② Why was the narrator sent back to New Mullion the next day?**

**13. The young man earned for himself the ire of his office people on his return from New Mullion. Explain why.**

**Ans.** The young lawyer wasn't able to complete his assignment. He was supposed to find Oliver Lutkins and serve the summons on him as he was a witness for a case and had to be present before the court. Hence, the people at his office were offended as he couldn't do his job.

## Short Answer Type Questions (SA-II) [ 3 marks ]

*Answer the following questions in 40-50 words:*

**14. What do you think of Oliver Lutkins as a person? Give examples from the text?**

**Ans.** Oliver Lutkins was a shrewd prankster. Although he was a countryman, he gave the educated narrator a run for his money. The way Lutkins fooled the intelligent yet innocent lawyer, he proved to be a sharp-witted conman. Lutkins was also a sociable person who was liked by everybody. All the villagers whom he asked about the whereabouts of Lutkins joined him in his prank happily.

**15. Who befriended the narrator when he went to New Mullion? Where did he take him?**

[CBSE 2019]

**Ans.** The hack driver befriended the lawyer when he went to New Mullion to serve summons to a man called Oliver Lutkins. The hack driver took him to all the places that Lutkins hanged out at. They went to Fritz's to see if Oliver was playing a game of poker, then to many other places and finally to Lutkins' mother's farm. But all this was in vain.

**16. 'Bill made me sound very important, and the woman was impressed.'**

**(a) Why did this particularly gladden the narrator's heart?**

**(b) What does it tell us about human nature and the young man in particular?**

[CBSE Question Bank 2021]

**Ans.** (a) The narrator was glad to see the way Bill described his work and profession. The narrator didn't have a very respectful job and used to do a quite unpleasant work of serving summons but the way Bill narrated his position gladdened his heart.

(b) It is human nature to feel good when somebody praises us or represent us in a mighty way. In the same way, the young man was happy to hear about himself in a good way.

**17. Why did the narrator think that in finding New Mullion he had found a 'treasure'?**

**Ans.** The narrator had found Bill, a deep and richly human, and thought he would grow to love Fritz and Gustaff and a hundred other slow-spoken, simple and wise neighbours. He pictured an honest and happy life beyond the strict limits of universities and law firms. He had discovered a new way of life as a treasure.

**18. Oliver Lutkins had to be served summons to appear as a witness in a law case. Why do you think he had ignored all their letters thus far and successfully thwarted their attempt at serving summons?**

**Ans.** Oliver Lutkins had to be served summons to appear in a law case. But he successfully thwarted the attempts by the court as he didn't want to be present at the court in the form of a witness. He didn't want to be the victim of a proceeding. So, he always ignored the letters sent by the law firm.

**19. ② The young man didn't like his unpleasant job. What was so 'unpleasant' about the young man's job?**

## Long Answer Type Questions (LA)

[ 5 marks ]

*Answer the following questions in 100-120 words:*

**20. It would have been very easy for anyone to spoil Lutkins' game, but no one did.**

(a) Why do you think everyone joined hands with him?

(b) What does it reveal about Oliver?

[CBSE Question Bank 2021]

**Ans.** (a) It is true that anybody would indeed have easily spoiled the prank that Lutkins was playing on the narrator but nobody chose to do it. In fact, everybody joined Lutkins in fooling the narrator. The reason behind this is that everybody loved the jovial prank

master Lutkins. They all were aware of how mischievous Lutkins was and they liked him for his cheerfulness and pranks.

(b) The support that Lutkins got from his fellow villagers tells us that Lutkins was a sociable and happy-go-lucky kind of a person. He had a cheerful approach towards everyone. The way he talked to people was very pleasing and loving. He had the ability to attract people towards him and this is why the entire village became a part of his game.

**21. The young lawyer was sent to the New Mullion again to serve summons to Oliver Lutkins. The next day, he went back to the village with his companion and got to know that 'Bill' was himself Oliver Lutkins.**

Imagine yourself as the writer of the story "The Hack Driver" and write an imaginary conversation between Lutkins and the narrator in which the narrator blames Lutkins for duping him and breaking his trust.

**Ans. Narrator:** So...you are Oliver Lutkins! How dare you? I had spent an entire day with you and put my complete trust in you as Bill only to know in the end that I was being made a fool.

**Lutkins:** Sorry, young man. I am not a boring ethical person. I love playing pranks on people for fun. But I never harm them in any way. Also, I didn't want to accept that summon that you were to serve on me. I don't like to appear before the court.

**Narrator:** What a con-man you are! You charged a lot from me for nothing. I thought you were an innocent and helpful person.

**Lutkins:** I hope I made you learn that appearances might be deceptive. You need to learn a lot young man. You are such a naïve soul in a world full of people like me.

**Narrator:** Thanks. I will always remember the lesson you taught me 'Bill'.

**22. ② Read the extracts given below and compare the characters on the basis of their wisdom and knowledge about people.**

(A) Bill didn't know about colleges and cities, but he had travelled around a lot, and had had a lot of jobs. From his adventures, he had brought back a philosophy of simplicity and laughter. He strengthened me.

(B) Really, I considered returning to New Mullion to practise law. If I had found



Bill so deep and richly human, might I not grow to love Fritz and Gustaff and a hundred other slow-spoken, simple, wise neighbours? I pictured an honest and happy life beyond the strict limits of universities and law firms. I was excited.

- 23. What did the hack driver tell the narrator about Lutkins' mother? How did she treat the narrator? [CBSE 2020]**

**Ans.** The hack driver told the narrator that Lutkins' mother was a big and healthy lady. She was nine feet tall and four feet thick. She had a rough and bad temper and was great at the art of 'swearing' at people. If enraged, she could beat the soul out of anybody. When the narrator reached Lutkins' home with the hack driver, the hack driver told Lutkins' mother that they needed to know the whereabouts of Lutkins and that the narrator was a lawyer representing the court so they had the rights to check the house too. Hearing them, the woman went to the kitchen and returned with a red-hot iron rod to threaten the narrator and the hack driver. She told them that they could search her house only after getting burnt with the hot rod. She laughed at both the men and forced them out of the house by her wacky behaviour.

- 24. The young lawyer agitated all the people at his office when he failed in serving the summons to Oliver Lutkins.**

**Imagine yourself as the writer of the story "The Hack Driver" and write the imaginary conversation between the narrator and his senior officer who scolds the former for being unable to complete his assignment.**

**Ans. Officer:** So, young man...did you serve the summons on Oliver Lutkins?

**Narrator:** No Sir, ...I searched the entire village for him but couldn't find him anywhere.

**Officer:** (shouting) Whaaaaaat! Don't tell me you were unable to do the minimal assignment given to you. Do you know that this failure of yours might end your whole law career before even starting?

**Narrator:** I am sorry, sir. I tried my best. In fact, the whole village helped me find Lutkins but to no avail. I even went to his house to search for him. But his mother too didn't know anything about him.

**Officer:** I don't care! All I need is to get the summons served on Oliver Lutkins. Go back to New Mullion tomorrow morning and serve the summons. Also, take someone who knows Oliver, along with you.

**Narrator:** Okay, sir.

- 25. "Lutkins? I saw him around here about an hour ago. Hard fellow to catch though — always up to something or other."**

**Do you think the speaker is right about Lutkins? Elaborate with the help of examples from the text. [CBSE Question Bank 2021]**

**Ans.** The speaker of the line is the hack driver and he is right about Lutkins. The hack driver offered the narrator to help him search Oliver Lutkins for him. However, he warned the narrator that it was very difficult for him to find Lutkins as he was always upto something or other. The hack driver took the narrator to the Fritz shop where he thought Lutkins would be found playing cards. But Lutkins left the place to go to the Gustaff's for a shave. At Gustaff's, the owner told that Lutkins had just left for a shave at Grey's but Lutkins wasn't found even there. He had just left for the poolroom. Again at the poolroom, he was found to have left a while ago. So, Lutkins was nowhere to be found and he kept the hack driver and the narrator on a wild chase for him.

- 26. ② The only house that was left from being included in the prank carried out by Lutkins on the narrator was Lutkins' neighbours.**

**Imagine yourself as the writer of the story "The Hack Driver" and write the imaginary conversation between the narrator, Lutkins and his neighbours where Lutkins tell them about all that they missed the previous day.**