

The Proposal

— Anton Chekov



OBJECTIVE Type Questions

[1 mark]

Extract Based Questions

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

CHUBUKOV: What a weight off my shoulders, out!

NATALYA: But, still you will admit now that Guess is worse than Squeezer.

LOMOV: Better!

NATALYA: Worse!

CHUBUKOV: Well, that's a way to start your family bliss! Have some champagne!

LOMOV: He's better!

NATALYA: Worse! Worse! Worse!

CHUBUKOV: [trying to shout her down] Champagne! Champagne!

[CBSE Question Bank 2021]

- (A) Which of the following titles of Shakespeare's plays might best apply to the relationship of Lomov and Natalya's relationship?
- (a) The Taming of the Shrew
 - (b) Romeo and Juliet
 - (c) As You Like It
 - (d) Two Gentlemen of Verona
- (B) How would you characterise Chubukov's mood based on the given extract?
- (a) cautious and celebratory

- (b) relieved and jubilant
 (c) merry, yet thoughtful
 (d) grateful, yet hurt
- (C) Ⓒ Based on the extract, Lomov and Natalya's closing lines can best be seen as:
 (a) a humorous and ironic take on typical marriage vows.
 (b) a reflection of their affections for Guess and Squeezer.
 (c) a sign of the prospective instability in their marital bliss.
 (d) the writer's statement that disagreement is part of marriage.
- (D) Ⓒ Choose the option that correctly uses the idioms to fill in the blanks of the paragraph below.
 In a team, it is important to (1)
 Otherwise, you would become (2)
 and incur the displeasure of the others. When that happens, you might feel (3)
 However, for the others, not having to carry you along would be a (4)
 (a) (1) pull your weight
 (2) dead weight
 (3) the weight of the world on your shoulders
 (4) weight off the shoulders.
 (b) (1) weight yourself
 (2) the weight of the world on your shoulder
 (3) like dead weight
 (4) weight off their shoulders
 (c) (1) throw weight around
 (2) worth your weight in gold
 (3) weight off your shoulders
 (4) dead weight
 (d) (1) lend weight to someone
 (2) heavy weight
 (3) like pulling your weight
 (4) weight off their shoulders
- (E) The liberal use of exclamatory marks in the given extract indicate that the characters are expressing:
 (a) apologies in a solemn and heartfelt tone.
 (b) good counsel and advice in a serious matter.
 (c) reconciliation on matters leading to argument.
 (d) strong feelings with a raised voice.

Ans. (A) (c) *As You Like It*

Explanation: The relationship of Lomov and Natalya was a forced one. There was nothing formal or polite in the proposal. It was full of disregards but even then, Chubukov was happy that the 'burden was off his shoulders' to marry off his daughter. The proposal was made whether they like it or not. Hence, (c) is the right answer.

(B) (b) *relieved and jubilant*

Explanation: Chubukov was relaxed when Lomov proposed to her Natalya for marriage. It was clear from Chubukov's expression when he said that 'the burden was off his shoulder' after hearing the proposal. Also, he asked to celebrate the new bliss with champagne which tells that he was jubilant. Hence, (b) is the right answer.

(E) (d) *strong feelings with a raised voice.*

Explanation: The use of exclamatory marks in the given extract indicate the strong feelings and the temperament of the speakers. It indicates that the speakers were shouting on each other. It doesn't represent (a) apologies in a heartfelt tone, (b) good counsel and advice or (c) reconciliation on matters leading to arguments. Hence, (d) is the right answer.

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

CHUBUKOV : [interrupting] My dear fellow... I'm so glad, and so on...

Yes, indeed, and all that sort of thing. [Embraces and kisses]

Lomov : I've been hoping for it for a long time. It's been my continual desire. [Sheds a tear] And I've always loved you, my angel, as if you were my own son. May God give you both — His help and His love and so on, and so much hope... What am I behaving in this idiotic way for? I'm off my balance with joy, absolutely off my balance! Oh, with all my soul... I'll go and call Natasha, and all that.

LOMOV : [greatly moved] Honoured Stepan Stepanovitch, do you think I may count on her consent?

(A) "My dear fellow... I'm so glad, and so on...". Why was Chubukov 'glad'?

(a) Lomov had come to lend him huge amount of money.

(b) Lomov had agreed that "Oxen Meadows" were Chubukov's.

- (c) Lomov had come to propose to his daughter for marriage.
 (d) Lomov invited him to the grand party in the town.
- (B) What were Chubukov's emotions when he knew about the proposal?
 (a) extremely ecstatic
 (b) very shocked
 (c) quite annoyed
 (d) not happy
- (C) "Do you think I may count on her consent?". Whose consent was Lomov talking about?
 (a) His mother
 (b) Natalya
 (c) Natalya's mother
 (d) Natalya's sister
- (D) Which word is NOT similar to 'fellow'?
 (a) comrade (b) companion
 (c) opponent (d) crony
- (E) Which word does NOT relate to 'glad'?
 (a) delighted (b) overjoyed
 (c) elated (d) dismayed

Ans. (A) (c) Lomov had come to propose to his daughter for marriage

Explanation: Lomov had come to Chubukov's house to ask him for the hand of his daughter Natalya in marriage. Hence, (c) is the right answer.

- (B) (a) extremely ecstatic

Explanation: It is clear from the extract that Chubukov was 'off his balance with joy' which tells that he was extremely happy about the proposal. Hence, (a) is the right answer.

- (C) (b) Natalya

Explanation: As Lomov had come to ask Natalya for marriage, he was hoping for her consent on it. There is no mention in the text about (a) his mother, (c) Natalya's mother or (d) Natalya's sister. Hence, (b) is the right answer.

- (D) (c) opponent

Explanation: The term 'fellow' means a partner or a companion. Here, options (a), (b) and (d) are all similar to 'fellow' while (c) opponent means a rival or a foe. Hence, (c) is the right answer.

- (E) (d) dismayed

Explanation: The term 'glad' means happy. Here, options (a), (b) and (c) are all similar to 'glad' while (d) dismayed means sad. Hence, (d) is the right answer.

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

Stepanovna is an excellent housekeeper, not bad-looking, well-educated. What more do I want? But I'm getting a noise in my ears from excitement. [Drinks] And it's impossible for me not to marry. In the first place, I'm already 35 — a critical age, so to speak. In the second place, I ought to lead a quiet and regular life. I suffer from palpitations, I'm excitable and always getting awfully upset; at this very moment my lips are trembling, and there's a twitch in my right eyebrow. But the very worst of all is the way I sleep. I no sooner get into bed and begin to go off, when suddenly something in my left side gives a pull, and I can feel it in my shoulder and head... I jump up like a lunatic, walk about a bit and lie down again, but as soon as I begin to get off to sleep there's another pull! And this may happen twenty times...

- (A) Which of the following is NOT true about Stepanovna?
 (a) She was well-educated
 (b) she was not bad-looking
 (c) she was an excellent housekeeper
 (d) she was tall
- (B) Choose the statement that is NOT true about Lomov:
 (a) Lomov was 35-year old man.
 (b) Lomov was medically fit.
 (c) Lomov was willing to get married to Natalya.
 (d) Lomov wanted to live a peaceful life.
- (C) What was Lomov's reaction to his decision of marrying Natalya?
 (a) content (b) confused
 (c) embarrassed (d) sad
- (D) Which of the following ailments was Lomov suffering from?
 (a) palpitations (b) twitches
 (c) Muscle pulls (d) lunacy
- (E) Which word is NOT similar to 'trembling'?
 (a) shaking (b) steady
 (c) quivering (d) twitching

Ans. (A) (d) she was tall

Explanation: It is clear from the extract that Natalya was (a) well-educated, (b) not bad-looking and (c) an excellent housekeeper. But, its nowhere mentioned in the extract that (d) she was tall. Hence, (d) is the right answer.

- (B) (b) Lomov was medically fit.

Explanation: It is clear from the extract that Lomov was suffering from several ailments. He wasn't (b) medically fit. Options (a), (c) and (d) are all true. Hence, (b) is the right answer.

(C) (a) content

Explanation: Lomov was (a) content at his decision of marrying Natalya as in the extract, he said "What more do I want?" This shows his contentment. Hence, (a) is the right answer.

(D) (d) lunacy

Explanation: It is clear from the extract that Lomov was suffering from (a) Palpitations, (b) twitches, and (c) Muscle pulls. But, he wasn't suffering from (d) lunacy. Hence, (d) is the right answer.

(E) (b) steady

Explanation: The word 'trembling' means to shake or shiver. Here, options (a), (c) and (d) are all similar to 'trembling' while (b) steady means to be still. Hence, (b) is the right answer.

Short Answer Type-I Questions (SA-I) [2 marks]

Answer the following questions in 20-30 words:

4. Why do you think Natalya Stepanovna asked her father to call Lomov back when she heard that he had come with a proposal?

[CBSE Question Bank 2021]

Ans. When Natalya heard that Lomov had come to their house to propose her for marriage, she asked her father to call him back because Natalya was too desperate to get married. She was 'lovesick cat' and wanted someone to propose to her.

5. When Natalya comes to meet Lomov, she quotes her father's words – "and papa said, "Go; there's a merchant come for his goods." What do you think Chubukov meant?

Ans. By this, Chubukov meant that Lomov had come with a proposal to get married to his daughter; Lomov was a 'merchant' who wanted to ask for his 'goods' which was Natalya.

6. The argument about the dogs reflected that both Lomov and Natalya loved their respective dogs very much. Do you agree? Why/ why not?

Ans. No, the argument about the dogs didn't reflect their love for the respective dogs. Instead, it only reflected that both of them just wanted to prove the superiority of their dogs over the other person's dog.

7. Provide a brief insight into what Lomov and Natalya's married life might look like.

Ans. Lomov and Natalya's married life would be filled with loads of disagreements and arguments. They would spend their lives in proving their own family's superiority over the other person's.

8. How does Chubukov react when Lomov asked for the hand of his daughter in marriage?

[CBSE 2019]

Ans. Chubukov got extremely excited when Lomov asked for the hand of his daughter in marriage. He felt relaxed as the burden of getting her daughter married was finally going to get off his shoulders.

9. How does Lomov come to Chubukov's house? For what does he come? How is he received?

[CBSE 2012]

Ans. Lomov comes to Chubukov's house in a formal dress with gloves on. He comes to propose to Chubukov's daughter Natalya for marriage. He is received courteously and respectfully by Chubukov.

10. Why did Lomov want to get married to Natalya?

Ans. Lomov was a thirty-five-year old unmarried man. He wasn't getting a perfect match for himself. But looking at his advancing age and ailments, he decided to compromise and proposing to Natalya. Lomov also thought Natalya to be fairly good-looking, well – educated and a good housekeeper.

11. How is the quarrel over Oxen meadows settled at last?

Ans. When Natalya realises that Lomov has come to propose to her, she agrees that the Oxen Meadows are indeed Lomov's property and that is how the Oxen Meadow's matter is settled.

12. Why does Chubukov go and call Lomov back?

Ans. Natalya quarrels with Lomov and throws him out of the house. But when she learns that he has come to propose to her, she sends her father to call him back.

13. Chubukov says of Natalya: "... as if she won't consent! She's in love; egad, she's like a lovesick cat..." Would you agree? Find reasons for your answer.

Ans. No, I wouldn't agree that Natalya was in love. The way she quarrels with Lomov and even kicks him out of the house suggests that what her father says to Lomov is not true.

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

Answer the following questions in 40-50 words:

14. ② "The Lomovs and the Chubukovs have always had the most friendly, and I might almost say the most affectionate, regard for each other." How would you evaluate Lomov and Chubukov's relationship as neighbours?
[CBSE Question Bank 2021]

15. Do you think Chubukov is a good father? Justify your opinion based on your reading of the text.

Ans. No, I don't think that Chubukov is a good father because he considered his daughter Natalya as a burden rather than a responsibility. He was desperate to get Natalya married to anyone. Even when he saw that both Lomov and Natalya were arguing terribly, he was ready to get them married. Also, when Lomov proposed to Natalya, Chubukov gave consent on Natalya's behalf.

16. How does Natalya react when she comes to know that Lomov had come to propose her?
[CBSE 2014]

Ans. When Natalya knew that Lomov had come to propose her, she changed her stance, cried and asked her father to call him back. Natalya got elated and excited to hear about Lomov's proposal of marriage. She was a lovesick cat who desperately wanted someone to propose to her for marriage.

17. ② Was Chubukov sincere when he said that "And I've always loved you, my angel, as if you were my own son"?

18. What idea do you form about Russian weddings from statement that Chubukov made: "Go; there's a merchant come for his goods"?

Ans. This statement shows that during the time of Chekov, Russians used to see matrimony as business that could enhance their economic and societal status. Marriages then weren't based on bond of love or respect but material. Thus, Chubukov called Lomov a 'merchant' who came for his 'goods' Natalya.

19. Why does Chubukov suspect Lomov when he comes to his house? [CBSE 2016, 12]

Ans. When Lomov comes to Chubukov's house, he suspects that Lomov may be going somewhere

because he has come wearing a formal dress but when he explains to him that he has come to seek his help, Chubukov suspects that he has come to borrow money from him.

Long Answer Type Questions (LA) [5 marks]

Answer the following questions in 100-120 words:

20. ② Look at the given matrimonial advertisement published in the Morning Post (newspaper) in December 1822. It was fairly common practice in the nineteenth century for gentlemen and ladies to seek courtship and matrimony by placing a suitable advertisement

MATRIMONY.—A Middle-aged Gentleman, of a respectable rank in life, who enjoys an income of Two Hundred Pounds a Year, with fair expectations, and who might otherwise offer a favourable account of himself, wishes to MARRY. The intimations of any Lady, of unblemishable character, of an age not less than thirty, nor more than thirty-seven, and of an income at least equal to his own (as his rank requires such), having a similar wish, and condescending to favour him, will be received with due respect, and attended to with strict honour and inviolable secrecy. Letters to be addressed, post paid, S. H., No. 8, Park-place, Kensington.

(a) Based on your reading of the play and an understanding of the characters, what details would Lomov provide (and specifically leave out) in a matrimonial advertisement to find a bride like Natalya?

(b) Think of what might make Chubukov shortlist Lomov's advertisement if he was scanning the matrimonial section of the newspaper.

[CBSE Question Bank 2021]

21. Chubukov and Natalya chased Lomov away from their house by arguing with him. But when Natalya came to know about the reason behind Lomov's coming, she asked her father to bring him back.

Imagine yourself as the playwright of the play and write an imaginary conversation between Natalya and her father if Lomov wouldn't have returned back with the proposal.

Ans. Natalya: (angrily) Papa! Why haven't you told me that he has come with a proposal of marriage for me? O God! I missed the opportunity to get married to a rich gentleman because of you.

Chubukov: Natalya! Don't forget that it was you who had chased him away by your silly arguments over 'Oxen Meadows'.

Natalya: No way! It was you papa. You hurled abuses at him and his family. Why would he marry a daughter of a quarrelsome man?

Chubukov: Shut up! Everybody knows that you are a quarrelsome lady. How many times have I told you to control your anger and behave nicely with people? You missed a chance to get married yet again.

Natalya: Alas! I missed such a wonderful proposal papa.

22. ④ Chubukov has used humor and exaggeration in the play to comment on courtship in his times. Illustrate with examples from the play, 'The Proposal.' Also mention the values, you think, any healthy relationship requires.

23. ④ What do you understand by the 'marriage of convenience'? Do you think that the relation between Lomov and Natalya is a 'marriage of convenience'? Justify your stance.

24. Lomov's and Chubukov's families never got along well but still Lomov went to Chubukov with a proposal of marriage for his daughter Natalya. Comment.

Ans. Lomov was an unmarried man in his mid-thirties. He couldn't get a bride of his choice but looking at his advancing age and several ailments that he had, he decided to compromise by proposing to Natalya for the marriage. Natalya was Chubukov's daughter and Lomov's immediate neighbour. Both the families never got along well. Even after that, Lomov thought Natalya to be fairly good-looking, well-educated and a great housekeeper. So, Lomov visited Chubukov's home with a proposal to marry his daughter.

25. In the end, Chubukov forcefully gave Natalya's hand in Lomov's hand and asked them to kiss each other as they were ready to get married.

Imagine yourself as the playwright of this play and depending on their characteristics, write an imaginary conversation between Natalya, Chubukov and Lomov if Lomov had said no for the marriage in the end.

Ans. Chubukov: Oh my handsome son! It's time you give your hand in my daughter's hand. Let the bells of your wedding ring, my child.

Lomov: I won't deny that my decision, a few minutes ago, was to propose to your daughter Natalya. But, now I think I would like to change that. I don't think it will work!

Natalya: (*crying*) Noooo....But what went wrong? Papa and I respect you and your family a lot Lomov.

Chubukov: (*angrily*) What do you mean it won't work? You son of a beggar, my daughter is of such a high class. She doesn't even deserve you.

Natalya: And I was already going to reject you anyway, you poor child. How can you think of marrying the daughter of the owners of "Oxen Meadows"?

Lomov: (*loudly*) Oh Miss Natalya...don't you forget that the "Oxen Meadows" is ours.

26. ④ Lomov had come to the house of the Chubukovs to propose to their daughter Natalya.

Imagine yourself as the playwright of the play and depending on their characteristics, write an imaginary conversation between Natalya and Lomov if they would have got married in the end.

