

1.1 An Astrologer's Day -R. K. Narayan

ICE BREAKERS

(1) Discuss with your partner and complete the table :

(Note: Students can discuss and write the answers.)

Your Strengths	Why do you feel so?	Your Dream Career
painting and drawing	can visualise, express	commercial artist, cartoonist
<u>writing and communication</u>	<u>have an open mind, can communicate precisely</u>	<u>author, editor, copywriter, journalist</u>
<u>cooking and baking</u>	<u>love to cook and experiment can bake well</u>	<u>chef, baker</u>
<u>read, research and experiment</u>	<u>have a knack to discover obscure knowledge and go to the core of concepts</u>	<u>scientist, research scholar</u>

(2) The scene in a local market of a village/ town/city is very attractive. People with different occupations sell their wares. Discuss with your partner the variety of activities at the local market.

- ☺ selling flowers, selling grocery.
- ☺ selling garments and cloth.
- ☺ selling imitation jewellery and accessories.
- ☺ selling snacks and fast food.
- ☺ selling steel and earthenwares.

(3) In a village/town/city it is quite a common sight to see an astrologer sitting by the roadside with his professional equipment. Discuss with your partner and list the requirements for his trade.

- ☺ parrot, cards, etc.
- ☺ turban, beard, dhoti.
- ☺ dried leaves with writing on them.
- ☺ cloth with mystic signs to spread his cards.
- ☺ bead necklace, coins, shells, punchang, etc.

(4) There are certain unreasonable beliefs among people living in our society. Certain common events are linked with superstitions. List such events, discuss the superstitions linked with them and the means of their eradication.

Ans. Events and superstitions linked with them:

- ☺ A cat crossing your path (something bad will happen)

- ☹ Walking under a ladder (something unfortunate will happen)
- ☹ Wearing black clothes for an auspicious function (will bring bad luck to the hosts)
- ☹ Spilling salt (unlucky for the person)
- ☹ A black crow cawing outside your window (you will be having guests)

Means of eradication : The only means of eradication is through education. Scientific attitude must be developed in society. Religious heads must counsel and guide their followers. The elders in families must also get rid of old beliefs.

BRAINSTORMING

(A1) (i) Given below are some descriptions. Discuss them with your partner and find out one word for each of them.

(a) The scientific study of the universe and the objects in it, including stars, planets, nebulae and galaxies:

Ans. Astronomy.

(b) The study of the movements of the planets, Sun, Moon, and Stars in the belief that these movements can have an influence on people's lives:

Ans. Astrology.

(c) A prediction of what will happen in the future :

Ans. Prophecy.

(d) Scientific discipline that studies mental states and processes and behaviour in humans and other animals :

Ans. Psychology.

(ii) In the story we are told that The Town Hall Park was a remarkable place in many ways for an astrologer to build his business. List the exceptional qualities of the place from this extract.

Ans. The exceptional qualities of the place were:

(1) A surging crowd.

(2) A variety of trades and occupations, like medicine sellers, sellers of stolen hardware and junk.

(3) magicians.

(4) auctioneers of cheap cloth.

(5) a vociferous vendor of fried groundnuts.

(6) lack of municipal lighting.

(7) flare from the groundnut heap.

(8) hissing gaslights, some with naked flares, and cycle lamps.

(9) bewildering criss-cross of light rays and moving shadows.

(iii) The astrologer never opened his mouth till the other had spoken for at least ten minutes. Discuss the reasons behind his act.

Ans. (1) He is good at reading the people.

(2) He obtained a lot of information about their lives from their talk.

(3) He could analyse their character and understand their problems.

(4) He could easily frame his statements to their satisfaction.

(A2) (i) The Tactics used by the astrologer to earn his wages are...

Ans. (1) analysis of human troubles

(2) perception of the woes of his customers

(3) suitable statements that flattered the customer

(4) ambiguous, general questions, which could be common to anybody

(ii) An astrologer's appearance helps to create an impression on his clients, Complete the following :

(1) The turban on his head.

(2) The sacred ash and vermilion on his forehead.

(3) dark whiskers covering the face.

(4) a sparkle in his eye accompanied by an abnormal gleam.

(iii) Read the following sentences and choose the correct one:

(a) The astrologer says that if Nayak does not leave his village again, he would

(1) return the money

(2) face danger

(3) go back home and stop looking for the man who tried to kill him

(4) not find the killer.

Ans. (2) face danger.

(b) According to the narrator the astrologer's success in his profession is primarily due to

(1) luck

(2) the bargains he drives

(3) his appearance

(4) his understanding of people.

Ans. (4) his understanding of people.

(c) The story suggests that the astrologer's comments and observations pleased people by

(1) promising them success and good fortune

(2) proving, as time passes, to have been true

(3) flattering them or supporting their own views

(4) helping them to learn to solve their own problems.

Ans. (3) flattering them or supporting their own views.

(d) Guru Nayak consults the astrologer because he wants to

(1) understand the past

(2) find out who the astrologer is

(3) make some money through a bet

(4) get the answer to a specific question.

Ans. (4) get the answer to a specific question.

(e) Guru Nayak is looking for the man who tried to kill him

- (1) to take revenge
- (2) to get an apology
- (3) to demand an explanation
- (4) to prove that the man was unsuccessful.

Ans. (1) to take revenge.

(f) The astrologer's remarks make Guru Nayak feel all of the following except –

- (1) relieved
- (2) suspicious
- (3) impressed
- (4) disappointed.

Ans. (2) suspicious.

(g) Reactions of the astrologer's wife to his news suggest that she

- (1) was unaware of his past
- (2) has been worried about his safety
- (3) has known him since he was young
- (4) is concerned about her future with him.

Ans. (1) was unaware of his past.

**(iv) Read the following sentences and find out the True and False sentences.
Correct the False sentences:**

(a) The astrologer gave a correct prediction to the client about his past that he was stabbed, thrown into a well and left for dead.

Ans. True.

(b) When the astrologer came to know that the man whom he killed is alive he felt that he was relieved of his guilt.

Ans. True.

(c) The astrologer tried to back out of the deal and talked about the client's past.
Ans. False –

Correct sentence. The astrologer struck a bargain with the client and then talked about the client's past.

(d) The astrologer rescued himself from Guru Nayak's revenge.
Ans. True.

(e) The moral of the story is that we must be responsible about what we have done and should not run away from our mistakes.

Ans. False : The moral of the story is that we must be responsible about what we have done and should not run away from our mistakes.

Corrected sentence : The moral is that we should never believe in superstitions.

(v) The astrologer had changed appearance and his persona when he arrived in the city. Give specific reasons for this.

Ans. The astrologer thought that he had killed a man after a quarrel. He was afraid that he would be arrested and jailed for this crime. Hence, to avoid detection he changed his appearance and his persona when he arrived in the city.

(vi) "The darkness load that was inside the astrologer has disappeared". Through this sentence, explain the significance of the title 'An Astrologer's Day'. OR The astrologer feels relieved that Guru is not dead as it relieves a great burden from him. Critically justify the statement and explain it.

Ans. The astrologer thought that he had killed a man after a quarrel. Hence he had run away from his village, changed his appearance and his persona when he arrived in the city, and become an astrologer. However, he still felt guilty for what we had done. When he came to know that the man he thought he had killed was actually alive, the dark load inside him disappeared, and it made his day, i.e. he felt relieved and happy. This is the significance of the title 'An Astrologer's Day's.

(vii) The astrologer feels relieved that Guru is not dead as it relieves a great burden from him. Critically justify the statement and explain it.

Ans. The astrologer feels relieved to discover that Guru is not dead. This is so because the astrologer had attempted to kill Guru in his early age and left him for dead. To know that Guru isn't dead must have acquitted him of the guilt of being an assassin. Hence, it unburdened him from the prick of conscience.

(viii) The astrologer wins/gets the sympathy, criticism of the reader in the end Express your opinion with the support of the main story.

Ans. I think I sympathize with the astrologer. He did not try to intentionally kill Guru Nayak it had happened in the heat of the moment. Of course, he should not have tried to run away but should have accepted responsibility for his crime. However, he is genuinely sorry for what had happened. His words 'a great load is gone from me today. I thought I had the blood of a man on my hands all these years' indicates this. Hence, I sympathize with him and am happy that he can now live in peace.

(ix) If we have to eradicate the superstitions and other ill practices from our society, what steps would you like to suggest?

Ans. To eradicate superstitions and other ill practices from our society the first and most important step is education. Schools and colleges must help their students to develop a scientific attitude and think logically and rationally. Secondly, as people in India tend to listen to their religious heads, all religious heads should send out clear messages to their followers about the eradication of superstitions. And lastly, the older generation should change their opinions and ideas and get rid of silly superstitious beliefs.

(x) In the story, the astrologer has great listening power. Listening helps in developing good relations with people. Express your opinion.

Ans. Yes, listening helps in developing good relations with people. When we listen, we indicate to the speaker that we care about him/her and are interested in his/her problems/joys. We show that we are ready to help him/her if necessary. We share his/ her ideas. We also realize how we can deal with people successfully by listening to their views.

(A3) (i) In the story, the astrologer, Guru Nayak and astrologer's wife reveal their qualities through words and actions. Pick out from the box the words that describe them and write in the appropriate columns.

shrewd	clever	suspicious	gullible
arrogant	demanding	antagonistic	quarrelsome
overconfident	manipulative	skeptical	mystical
smart	caring	protective	sharp
rational	mean	intuitive	aggressive
worried	cunning	humanistic	impetuous

Astrologer	Guru Nayak	Astrologer's Wife
shrewd	manipulative	caring
clever	gullible	suspicious
smart	quarrelsome	protective
sharp	arrogant	worried
intuitive	aggressive	humanistic
mystical	demanding	rational
cunning	antagonistic	
mean	skeptical	
over-confident	impetuous	

(ii) Match the suffixes with the words and make nouns. One is done for you.
(The answer is given directly and underlined.)

Word	Suffix	Noun
auction	able	auctioneer
enchant	ure	<u>enchantment</u>
know	ment	<u>knowledge</u>
prepare	eer	<u>preparation</u>
proceed	ance	<u>procedure</u>
appear	ledge	<u>appearance</u>
remark	tion	<u>remarkable</u>

(iii) 'An Astrologer's Day' has ironic elements where the astrologer pretends have 'supernatural knowledge that coincidentally turns out to be the truth.

Irony means a situation or statement characterized by a significant difference between what is expected and what actually happens, or between what is understood and what is meant.

Find out the examples of irony from the story and write them down. One has been done for you.

Ans. (a) He knew no more of what was going to happen to others than he knew what was going to happen to himself the next minute.

(b) He was as much a stranger to the stars as were his innocent customers.

(c) He said things which pleased and astonished everyone that was more a matter of study, practice, and shrewd guesswork.

(d) When he told the person before him, gazing at his palm, "In many ways you are not getting the fullest results for your efforts," nine out of ten were disposed to agree with him.

(e) "Most of your troubles are due to your nature. How can you be otherwise with Saturn where he is? You have an impetuous nature and a rough exterior." This endeared him to their hearts immediately, for even the mildest of us loves to think that he has a forbidding exterior.

(f) His eyes sparkled with a sharp abnormal gleam which was really an outcome of a continual searching look for customers. but which his simple clients took to be a prophetic light and felt comforted.

(iv) In the story, many Indian words are used.

☺ 'Cowrie shells'. This is an example of code-mixing.

Find out other such words from the story and write them down.

Ans. Pies, anna, rupee, cheroot, jutka, annas, pyol, turban.

(v) There are some phrases where the word 'crown' is used with different shades of meaning. Use the following phrases to complete the sentences meaningfully.

One is done for you.

Crowning achievement, to crown the effect, crown of thorns, crowning glory, to crown it all

e.g. To crown the effect, he wound a saffron coloured turban around his head.

(a) The works of Shakespeare are the crowning glory of English drama.

(b) Amitabh has given us awesome movies throughout five decades. But his crowning achievement is his performance in the movie 'Black'.

(c) In her pursuit of success, Radha has distanced herself from her family. Her fame has become a real crown of thorns.

(d) They threw a wonderful party for me with costumes, games and to crown it all my favourite kind of ice-cream.

(e) Medical science has great inventions, but organ transplantation is definitely a crowning achievement for human beings.

(A4) (i) Word Usage

Use the words given in the brackets and rewrite the sentences.

(a) The power of his eyes was considerably enhanced. (enhancement)

Ans. There was considerable enhancement in the power of his eyes.

(b) He had a working analysis of mankind's troubles. (worked)

Ans. He had worked out an analysis of mankind's troubles.

(c) He knew what was going to happen to himself next minute. (happening)

Ans. He knew what could be happening to himself the next minute.

(d) If you find my answers satisfactory, will you give me five rupees? (satisfaction)

Ans. If my answers give you satisfaction, will you give me five rupees?

(e) He shook his head regretfully. (regret)

Ans. He shook his head with regret.

(f) It was a bewildering crisscross of light rays. (bewildered)

Ans. He was bewildered by the crisscross of light rays.

(g) "I should have been dead if some passer-by had not chanced to peep into the," exclaimed the other, overwhelmed by enthusiasm. (enthusiastically)

Ans. "I should have been dead if some passer-by had not chanced to peep into the well," exclaimed the other enthusiastically.

(h) You tried to kill him. (killing)

Ans. You tried killing him.

(i) I will prepare some nice stuff for her. (preparation)

Ans. I will make a preparation of some nice stuff for her.

(j) The other groaned on hearing it. (heard)

Ans. The other groaned when he heard it.

(A5) (i) Prepare a speech on Science and Superstitions.

Ans. Science and Superstitions

Respected teacher and my dear friends,
I wish you all a very good morning. Today we are celebrating Science day in our school, and on this occasion I, Rohan Kamte, would like to say a few words about Science and Superstitions.

Science and Superstitions are two opposite ends of a pole. Those who have the scientific attitude and believe in science cannot possibly believe in superstitions. After all, what exactly are superstitions? They are only some tales made up by people for some reason or the other. Let me give you an example. Many years ago, in a house in a village they were having an auspicious function. A lot of food was being cooked. A cat and her kitten were moving about here and there in the kitchen. Afraid that the cat would be trampled upon or may fall into one of the open fires, the mistress of the house ordered the servant to put the cat and its kitten under a basket, and to do so every time there was a function in the house. This became a 'superstition and in some houses, people actually brought a cat

into the house and put it under a basket whenever they had a function! This is what superstitions are all about. The superstition of bad luck if you walk under a ladder too has its reasons. The ladder could fold up and injure a person walking beneath it, or something could fall on the person's head. So friends, I request you : In this age of Science, do not believe in silly superstitions. Keep your minds open. Be rational and logical. Analyse things. Believe something only if it has the backing of Science. Thank you.

(ii) Read the following proverbs. Share your views and expand the ideas.
(Note: We have given complete answer for the first one, and points for the rest. Students may discuss and expand these points.)

(a) Actions speak louder than words.

Ans. Actions speak louder than words.

Today a lot of importance is being given to the way we speak and what we speak. But we have to remember that ultimately it is not words but actions that are important. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation, did not give any grand speeches. However, by his actions he saw that India gained her freedom. Our soldiers do not give long lectures on patriotism; they merely act to defend the country. What would have happened if they had only spoken but not acted?

This very well-known proverb is very apt when it comes to parent-child interaction. It has been seen that children observe the actions of their parents and imitate them, not their words. In the animal kingdom too, the actions of the parent are of paramount importance. During elections, politicians make loud speeches but later on do not work. It is because of this behaviour that they lose the trust of the people. Thus, we must act with responsibility, always remembering that people observe our actions and are not swayed by our words.

(b) The face is the index of the mind.

(Points: facial expressions and eyes indicate one's thoughts--this is non-verbal communication--that is why we smile when happy and frown when sad--however, smart people can hide their feelings so that face does not show them--so one has to be careful while reading faces)

(c) Speech is silver and silence is golden.

[Points : we speak--we give others information or reveal our thoughts--others speak, we get information--sometimes we speak hastily and hurt others--create problems--remain silent and think--can find solutions--many leaders speak hastily--create international problems--better to be silent and let one's actions speak]

(d) Argument is the worst kind of communication.

[Points: arguments--people get angry--angry words and raised voices--hurt people--confusion--relationships spoil--instead talk softly and allow others to talk--accept that others can think in a different way---'a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still']

(e) Attitudes are the real figures of speech.

[Points quote by Edwin H Friedman--in communication, more than the verbal message the non-verbal message important--your attitude and behaviour have more impact than your words--for example, if you say sorry in a harsh tone without any apology on your face--the word has no meaning--hence body language and attitude are very important)

(f) The wise man has long ears and a short tongue.

(Points : better to listen than to speak--wise people listen more and speak only when they have something important to say--speech is silver and silence is golden--in any situation it is better to remain silent and evaluate situation--empty vessels make the most noise)

(A6) (i) Bill Naughton has written a collection of wonderful stories which you can read in his book 'The Goal Keeper's Revenge and Other Stories'. Read all the stories and discuss their theme/s with your partner.

Ans. Do it yourself.

(ii) Read R.K. Narayan's humorous collections of short stories and novels. Here are some titles you can read.

(a) 'Under The Banyan Tree'.

(b) 'The Doctor's Word'.

(c) 'Lawley Road'.

(d) 'A Horse and Two Goats'!

(e) 'Gateman's Gift'.

Ans. Do it yourself.

(A7) Surf the internet and find out the career opportunities in Astronomy.

Ans. The following are the career opportunities available in the field of Astronomy.

1. Space Technician.
2. Space System Programmer.
3. Energy Researcher.
4. Astrophysicist.
5. Space Medicine Consultant.

6. Research Scientist.

7. University Professor.