



Grade VII

Lesson 4. Chivvy

POETRY

SOUL OF THE POEM

The poem 'Chivvy' is a catalogue of various do's and don'ts that the grown-ups dictate to young children. The adults constantly give a list of instructions to the children about how to sit, how to talk, how to eat and so on.

The poem, however, indicates a passage of time when the young child has grown up and is incapable of taking a decision on his own. The same adults, then child the grown up child for not being able to think independently.

Stanza wise Explanation of the Poem

Stanza 1

Grown-up say things like:

Speak up

Don't talk with your mouth full

Don't stare ; Don't point

Don't pick your nose

Reference The above lines have been taken from Michael Rosen's poem 'Chivvy'

Context The poet points out to a series of instructions given by the grown-ups.

Explanation The poem opens with a long list of instructions. In all likelihood, these instructions are being issued by the adults to their young ones. Speak, up don't talk while your mouth is full of food and so on are just a few examples.

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Stanza 2

Sit up; Say please; Less noise

Shut the door behind you

Don't drag your feet

Haven't you got a hankie?

Take your hands out of

Your pockets

Reference same as in Stanza 1

Context The poet continues to put an emphasis on how the young children are directed to act in accordance to the instructions issued by the adults.

Explanation the second stanza of the poem continues with yet another set of instructions. Each and every activity of the young child is administered and put under the surveillance of the grown-ups.

Stanza 3

Pull your socks up; Stand up straight

Say thank you; Don't interrupt

No one thinks you're funny

Take your elbows off the table

Can't you make your own

Mind up about anything?

Reference Same as in Stanza 1

Context The poet showcases how the child is still being reprimanded by the adult, though the child has grown up.

Explanation The final couplet of the poem shows that perhaps the young of child has grown up. However, the adults around him continue to reprimand him. But, this time for a different reason. The child is unable to decide anything for himself. He is not certain about anything. It's quite ironical as the entire childhood of this child was spent blindly following the instructions.



NCERT FOLDER

Working With The Poem

1. Discuss these questions in small groups before you answer them.

(i) When is a grown-up likely to say this Don't talk with your mouth full.

The grown-ups are likely to tell the children not to talk while their mouth is full of food.

(ii) When do you think an adult would say this? Say thank you.

The children are likely to be reminded to say thank you when they receive a gift or a favour from someone.

(iii) When do you think an adult would say this? No one thinks you are funny.

Adults are likely to tell children, 'no one thinks you are funny' when the children are too shy to speak or perform before the others.

2. The last two lines of the poem are not prohibitions or instructions. What is the adult now asking the child to do? Do you think the poet is suggesting that this is unreasonable? Why?

The adult is now asking the child to think independently. The poet finds this entirely unreasonable because the young child has not been trained to use his mind. He has only been trained to follow the instructions given by the adults.

3. Why do you think grown-up say the kind of things mentioned in the poem? Is it important that they teach children good manners, and how to behave in public?

The adults constantly give instructions to their children for various reasons. They try to train them to behave in a decent, well-mannered and sophisticated way. This however, robs away their childlike innocence.

4. If you had to make some rules for grown-ups to follow, what would you say? Make at least five such rules. Arrange the lines as in a poem.

Don't dictate and impose your rules. Your ways and thinking is different from ours and so are the times. Don't talk over the phone while eating. Please spend some time with us.



CHAPTER PRACTICE

Very Short Answer type questions

1. Why do the grown-ups tell the children not to talk with their mouth full?

The grown-ups tell the children not to talk with their mouth full of food because it is bad manners to talk while eating.

2. What all instructions are given by the adults regarding noise?

The adults tell the children not to make much noise, neither while talking nor while eating or walking.

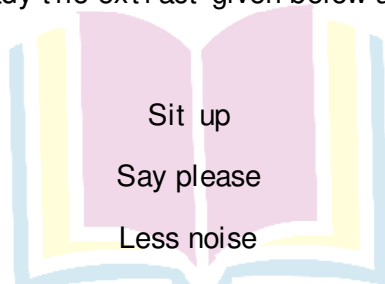
Short Answer type questions

1. What happens when the adults give too many instructions to their children?

When the adults give too many instructions to their children, they kill their children's spontaneity and willingness to use his/her mind to understand life. These instructions rob away their innocence, making them dependent on their elders.

Extract Based questions

Directions (Q. Nos. 1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.



Shut the door behind you

Don't drag your feet

Haven't you got a hankie?

Take your hands out of your pocket

Pull your socks up

Stand straight.



1. Why is the child asked to stand straight?

The child is asked to stand straight because that shows that he is attentive.

2. What does walking by dragging feet suggest?

Dragging feet while walking suggests bad manners.

3. Make a sentence of your own using the word 'drag'

My brother forcibly dragged me to the fete.

4. Who is giving these instructions?

- (a) The poet (b) An adult (c) A child (d) The teacher
(b) An adult

5. To whom are these instructions being addressed?

- (a) The poet (b) An Adult (c) A child (d) The teacher
(c) A child

6. Why would the child need a hankie?

- (a) To clean his mouth (b) To clean his shoes
(c) To clean his bag. (d) To clean his slate.
(a) To clean his mouth.
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