

2 Children at work

Comprehension Check (Page 9)

Questions:

1. Velu stood on the platform but he felt “as if he was still on a moving train.” Why?
2. What made him feel miserable?
3. (i) Velu travelled without a ticket. Why?
(ii) How did he escape the ticket collector’s attention?
4. Why had Velu run away from home?
5. Why did he decide to follow the ‘strange’ girl?

Answers:

1. Velu had run away from home. Being a small boy he was naturally tired, hungry and afraid of the ticket examiner. He lay down near the compartment door. He could not get over the feeling that his train journey was over.
2. Velu was alone, tired and hungry. He didn’t have a ticket also. So he felt miserable.
3. (i) Velu travelled without a ticket because he had no money.
(ii) He escaped the ticket collector’s notice because the ticket collector did not come to that unreserved compartment.
4. Velu had run away from home because of the misdeeds of his father, who used to snatch all the money from him and his sister. He also beat the children.
5. Velu agreed to go after the ‘strange’ girl because he was hungry and the girl promised to get food for him.

Comprehension Check (Page 13)

Questions:

1. Can Velu read Tamil and English? How do you know?
2. “If you are not careful, you will soon be counting bars there,” the girl said.
3. (i) What is she referring to?
(ii) What does she mean when she says “If you are not careful.”?
(She says something a little later which means the same. Find that sentence.)
4. (i) Where did the girl lead Velu to?
(ii) What did they get to eat?
5. What work did she do? (Think of a one-word answer).

Answers:

1. Velu could not read sign boards in English. But he read the Tamil sign on the Central jail.
2. (i) She is referring to Central jail
(ii) She pointed out to Velu that doing wrong was not so important as escaping the police or getting caught.
The sentence is: ‘You don’t have to do anything. Just don’t get caught, that’s all’.
3. (i) The girl led Velu to a marriage hall.
(ii) They got some food from the garbage bin. It was leftover food.

Comprehension Check (Page 15)

Questions:

- (i) What material are the 'strange' huts made out of?
(ii) Why does Velu find them strange?
- What sort of things did Jaya and children like her collect and what did they do with those things?
- Is Velu happy or unhappy to find work? Give a reason for your answer.

Answers:

- (i) The 'strange' huts are made out of tin sheets, bricks, wood and plastic.
(ii) Velu finds those huts strange because in his own village the huts were made of mud and palm leaves.
- Jaya and other children like her collected paper, plastic, and glass etc. They sold all that to a kabadi or junk-dealer.
- Velu is not at all happy. He had never done such a dirty job in his village.

Exercise (Page 16)

Discuss the following questions in small groups. Write their answers afterwards.

Question 1:

Is Velu a smart boy? Which instances in the text show that he is or isn't?

Answer:

No, Velu is not a smart boy. He runs away from his home to escape his father's beatings. He felt miserable at the railway station. He found himself alone and hungry. He accepted rag picking because he wasn't fit for any other job.

Question 2:

Do you think Jaya is a brave and sensitive child with a sense of humour? Find instances of her courage, kind nature and humour in the text.

Answer:

Yes, Jaya is a brave and sensitive girl. She takes pity on Velu and gets food for him. She herself earns her livelihood bravely by collecting discarded material and selling them. She has a sense of humour also. She calls the 'dirty trickle of water Buckingham Canal'.

Question 3:

What one throws away as waste may be valuable to others. Do you find this sentence meaningful in the context of this story? How?

Answer:

Yes, the plastic, the paper and rusty metal sheets thrown away by the people, become valuable to ragpickers. They eat leftover food for survival. They sell junk food to some dealer to earn their livelihood.

MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED

I.SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Question 1:

How old was Velu when he left his home? Why did he leave his home?

Answer:

Velu was eleven when he ran away from home. He took this risk because he could not tolerate his drunkard father's beating.

Question 2:

What problems did Velu face when he stood on Chennai platform?

Answer:

Velu was alone, tired and hungry. He felt miserable. For two days, he had eaten nothing except some peanuts. He was penniless and homeless too.

Question 3:

How did Jaya earn her livelihood?

Answer:

Jaya was a small girl who lived in a cottage near a dirty drain. She was a ragpicker. She earned her livelihood by collecting paper, plastic, glass and even food from the dustbins and heaps of rubbish.

Question 4:

What sort of girl was Jaya? How did she help Velu?

Answer:

Jaya was a poor little girl ragpicker who carried a bag on her back. She collected waste material from the dustbins. Though small, she was kind-hearted. She helped Velu with food as well as a regular job as ragpicker.

Question 5:

What problems do millions of poor children face in India? What basic issue does the story discuss?

Answer:

This story gives us a picture of children who are bound to work to support not only themselves but also their parents. They can't go to school, they can't play like other children of their age. The story draws our attention to the evil of child labour.

II. LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS**Question 1:**

Under what circumstances did Velu become a ragpicker?

Answer:

Velu was an eleven year old boy. He ran away from home because his father was addicted to drinking. He used to beat him and his sister and snatched whatever they earned. He came to Chennai where he met a girl of his own age. The girl was carrying a big sack on her back. She was picking up plastic cups and putting them into the sack. Seeing Velu in a miserable condition she took pity on him and got food for him. She brought Velu to her hut, which was built out of wood, plastic and sheets. She gave him a pair of old shoes, a sack and a stick. He wondered what work she wanted him to do. She told him that he was now a ragpicker like her. He too now had to collect things from waste materials. Velu was alone in that big city. He had no option and therefore accepted the job of a ragpicker.