

# MY CHILDHOOD

## **Prof. Abdul Kalam's birth and childhood**

This lesson tells us about Prof. Abdul Kalam's childhood. He is one of the world's greatest scientists. His father's name was Jainulabdeen. His mother's name was Ashiamma. He was born in 1931 at Rameswaram. His parents were neither much educated nor rich. Yet they were very generous and kind. Many outsiders ate with the family every day.

## **His house and family**

Abdul Kalam had three brothers and one sister. They lived in their old ancestral house. It was a large pucca house. It was on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram.

## **His first earning**

Abdul Kalam was only eight years old when the Second World War broke out in 1939. There was suddenly a great demand for tamarind seeds. Abdul Kalam would collect these seeds and sell them in the market. His cousin Samsuddin distributed newspapers. He employed Abdul Kalam as a helping hand. In this way, the child Abdul earned his first wages.

## **New teacher's casteist action**

Abdul Kalam's parents highly influenced him. Some of his friends and teachers also influenced him. He was in the fifth standard at Rameswaram Elementary School. A new teacher came to the class. Abdul was sitting with his close friend Ramanadha Sastry in the front row. The new teacher could not tolerate a Hindu priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy. He asked Abdul to sit on the back bench.

## **Effect of teacher's action**

He was very sad and so was Ramanadha Sastry. Abdul found Sastry weeping as he went to the last row. This made a lasting impression on Abdul. Later Ramanadha Sastry's father called the teacher. He asked him not to spread the poison of social separation among the children. The teacher felt sorry for the same.

## **His science teacher's anti-casteist action**

Abdul's science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer was a high-caste Brahmin. His

wife was very conservative. But he did his best to break social barriers. One day he invited Abdul to his home for a meal. His wife refused to serve Abdul in her kitchen. Then Sivasubramania served Abdul with his own hands. He sat down beside him to eat his meal. The teacher invited Abdul to come again the next weekend. He went to his house next week. His wife took Abdul inside her kitchen. She served him food with her own hands.

### **Abdul's inheritance of human values**

From his father, Abdul inherited honesty and self-discipline. Abdul grew up. He asked his father's permission to study at Ramanathapuram. His father allowed him to do so. He consoled his wife who had grown emotional.

### **How Abdul Kalam's father consoled Kalam's mother**

Abdul Kalam's father referred to Khalil Gibran, the Persian philosopher. He told her that her children were not hers. They were the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself. They came through her and not from her. She might give them her love. But their thoughts were theirs.

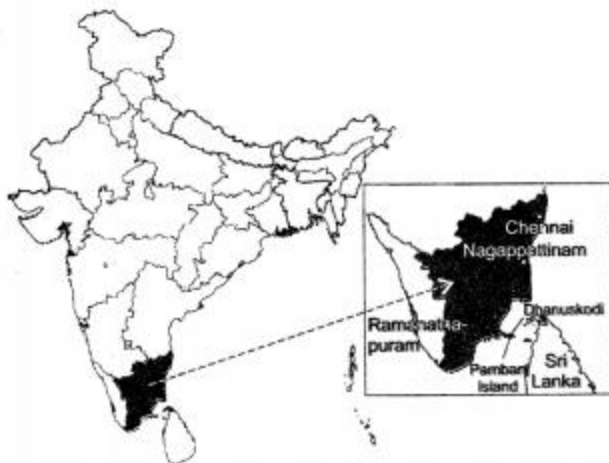
## **NCERT SOLUTIONS**

### **Thinking About The Text (Page 74)**

#### **Activity:**

Find Dhanuskodi and Rameswaram on the map. What language(s) do you think are spoken there? What languages do you think the author, his family, his friends and his teachers spoke with one another?

Answer:



For self-attempt.  
(People speak Tamil here).

## **I. Answer these questions in one or two sentences each.**

Question 1.

Where was Abdul Kalam's house?

Answer:

Abdul Kalam's house was on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram.

Question 2.

What do you think Dinamani is the name of? Give a reason for your answer.

Answer:

Dinamani is the name of a newspaper. Abdul Kalam attempts to trace the Second World War's news in the headlines of this newspaper.

Question 3.

Who were Abdul Kalam's school friends? What did they later become?

Answer:

Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakasan were his school friends. Ramanadha Sastry became a priest of the Rameswaram temple. Aravindan went into the business of arranging transport for visiting pilgrims. Sivaprakasan became a catering contractor for the Southern Railways.

Question 4.

How did Abdul Kalam earn his first wages?

Answer:

Abdul Kalam earned his first wages by distributing newspapers.

Question 5.

Had he earned any money before that? In what way?

Answer:

Yes, he earned money before also. He used to collect the tamarind seeds and sell them to a provision shop on the Mosque Street. A day's collection would fetch him the princely sum of one anna.

## **II. Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (about 30 words).**

Question 1.

How does the author describe:

1. his father
2. his mother
3. himself?

Answer:

1. The author describes his father as a wise and generous person. He felt happy when he helped others. He did not have much formal education and riches. He

was a man of confidence and great wisdom. He avoided inessential comforts and luxuries.

2. His mother was a noble and kind- hearted woman. She used to feed a large number of people. She had all the attributes of a typical Indian mother.
3. I was born into a middle-class Tamil family. I was a short boy with rather undistinguished looks, born to tall and handsome parents. I studied physics and aerospace engineering and became a scientist.

Question 2.

What characteristics does he say he inherited from his parents?

Answer:

The author inherited humility and benevolence from his parents. He learnt lessons in honesty and integrity from his parents. He was self-disciplined because of his parents' exemplary life.

### **III. Discuss these questions in class with your teacher and then write down your answers in two or three paragraphs each.**

Question 1.

“ On the whole, the small society of Rameswaram was very rigid in terms of the segregation of different social groups,” says the author.

1. Which social groups does he mention? Were these groups easily identifiable (for example, by the way they dressed)?
2. Were they aware only of their differences or did they also naturally share friendships and experiences? (Think of the bedtime stories in Kalam's house; of who his friends were ; and of what used to take place in the pond near his house.)
3. The author speaks both of people who were very aware of the differences among them and those who tried to bridge these differences. Can you identify such people in the text?
4. Narrate two incidents that show how differences can be created, and also how they can be resolved. How can people change their attitudes?

Answer:

1. The author talks about the people who belong to various castes and follow various religious preachings. Yes, these groups were easily identifiable. Their dressing, traditions, culture and rituals were different.
2. They did share their personal experiences and friendships. Lakshmana Sastry summoned the teacher who separated the author and his friend in the class and told him that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children.
3. The school teacher encouraged communal differences and Lakshmana Sastry and Sivasubramania Iyer discouraged this malpractice.
4. The influential people can do both the things. A teacher has the ability to bridge communal differences and can play with sentiments of the innocent and

ignorant people. This is what the new teacher did. But the Science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer changed his wife's attitude and showed her the right path.

Question 2.

1. Why did Abdul Kalam want to leave Rameswaram?
2. What did his father say to this?
3. What do you think his words mean? Why do you think he spoke those words?

Answer:

1. Abdul Kalam wanted to leave Rameswaram to study at the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram.
2. His father said that he knew he had to go away to grow. He gave the example of a seagull and said that a seagull flies across the sun alone and without a nest.
3. He spoke these words because he intended to hone his skills. He knew the harsh reality of life that children may have to live far from their parents to make their career and earn their livelihood. So he showed his wisdom and intelligence in uttering these words.

## **EXTRA QUESTIONS**

Short Answer Type

Question 1.

How many characters are there in the narrative? Name them.

Answer:

Jerome, George and Harris are the three human characters in the narrative. Jerome is the narrator of the story. Their pet dog, Montmorency too is an important character, who participates as enthusiastically in the packing as his masters.

Question 2.

Why did the narrator have to pack for the journey?

Answer:

As soon as the narrator offered to pack for the journey, his two friends, George and Harris accepted the offer with readiness and sat back to let him do it all. He had expected his friends would work under his guidance and directions rather than doing the task himself.

Question 3.

Why did the narrator volunteer to do the packing?

Answer:

Jerome, the narrator, prided himself in his packing skills. He wanted to show off his skills to his friends so he volunteered to do the packing. However, he had expected that his friends would work under his guidance and directions. He expected that under his guidance even poor packers like Harris and George could accomplish this task with great efficiency.

Question 4.

The narrator took pride in his packing skills. Comment.

Answer:

The narrator felt that packing was one of those things that he felt he knew more about than any other person living. This made him develop a sense of superiority about his ability as the best packer and he took pride in his packing skills. However, he was disorganised and bungling. First, he forgot to pack the boots and had to reopen the bag. Then, his frantic search for his toothbrush resulted in a complete mess. Later, he had to reopen the bag to take out his spectacles.

Question 5.

How did George and Harris react to Jerome's offer to do the packing? Did Jerome like their reaction?

Answer:

George and Harris, who were rather lazy, agreed readily to Jerome's offer to do the packing because both – took it as an opportunity to sit back and relax while someone else did the work. George sprawled over the easy-chair while Harris cocked his legs on the table. Jerome did not at all like this reaction because he had actually wanted to supervise and instruct them on how to do the packing instead of doing it himself.

Question 6.

What did Harris and George do while Jerome was packing the bag? How did Jerome react to their behaviour?

Answer:

When Jerome told George and Harris to leave the job of packing to him, they accepted his suggestion at once. They settled themselves comfortably, George on the easy-chair and Harris with his legs on the table and watched Jerome packing the bag all by himself. As they watched, they smoked and found faults with Jerome's packing and also made fun of him. They made him reopen the packing by inquiring about items he had forgotten to pack. All this irritated Jerome.

Question 7.

When he offered to pack Jerome's real intention was not to do the packing himself. Elaborate.

Answer:

Jerome's real intention was not to pack himself but to make his friends George and Harris work under his directions and supervision. He would guide and direct and, pushing them aside every now and then, showing them the right way of packing things in – really teaching them, as you might say.

Question 8.

What kind of a man did the narrator once live with?

Answer:

The narrator lived with a man once who used to annoy him. He would loll on the sofa and watch the narrator doing things by the hour together. He said it did him real good to look on at the narrator, messing about.

Question 9.

“I lived with a man once who used to make me mad that way.” How did he do that?

Answer:

The man, with whom the narrator once stayed drove him mad by lolling on the sofa and watching him constantly as he went about messing the tasks at hand. The man said he really enjoyed that sight and felt good.

Question 10.

‘Now, I’m not like that.’ What does the narrator intend to convey by this statement?

Answer:

By this statement, the narrator intends to convey his dislike for sitting idle and watching someone else work hard, like the man he lived with did. He prefers to walk around and supervise work in his natural energetic way. However, this actually means that he, too, was not interested in toiling but liked to boss over others.

Question 11.

What did Harris ask the narrator after the bag was shut and strapped? Why do you think he waited till then to ask?

Answer:

After the bag had been shut and strapped by the narrator, Harris asked him whether he wasn’t going to pack the boots. He waited till the completion of packing to say this because he either thought the narrator knew about them and would pack them as he wanted to, or more likely, he wanted to irritate the narrator and have fun at his expense.

Question 12.

What “horrible idea” occurred to Jerome a little later?

Answer:

After packing everything in the bag for the second time, the horrible idea that occurred to Jerome was that he had packed his toothbrush in the bag. He realised that he would need his toothbrush the next morning. So, he reopened his bag and turned everything out but he could not find it.

Question 13.

Where did Jerome finally find the toothbrush?

Answer:

Jerome finally found the toothbrush inside a boot that he had packed in the bag. He found it after having taken out all the items he had packed and searching thoroughly for the toothbrush leading to a terrible mess.

Question 14.

Why does the narrator say that the packing of his toothbrush drives him to a point of madness?

Answer:

The narrator says that the packing of his toothbrush drives him to a point of madness because he either packs it even before he has brushed his teeth or doesn’t pack it at all. In both the cases, he has to unpack everything to locate his brush. It drove him to a point of madness because he always had to undo his packing to check if he had

packed it and then unpack once again, to use it. It was always left out and he had to search for it at the last moment and carry it wrapped up in his pocket-handkerchief.

Question 15.

Why did Jerome have to reopen the packed bag again and again?

Answer:

Jerome had to reopen the packed bag because he kept forgetting things. First, he forgot to pack his boots and then couldn't remember having packed his toothbrush. After having spent a lot of time unpacking and packing, he packed his spectacles and spectacles in by mistake and had to reopen the bag yet again.

Question 16.

How many times did the narrator have to reopen the bag? Why?

Answer:

The narrator had to reopen his bag at least three times. First, he forgot to pack his boots. Then he was not sure if he had packed his toothbrush and had to reopen the bag to take it out as he needed it in the morning. Then he had to open it once again to take out his spectacles.

Question 17.

Why did it take the narrator longer than he had expected to pack the bag?

Answer:

It took the narrator much longer to pack the bag than he had expected because he was disorganised and forgetful. First, he forgot to pack the boots and had to reopen the bag. Then, in his frantic search for his toothbrush he had to turn everything out and then repack the bag. Later, he had to reopen the bag to take out his spectacles. Thus, the packing of the bag took longer than expected.

Question 18.

Why did George and Harris offer to pack the hamper?

Answer:

George and Harris offered to pack the hamper because Jerome had already taken a lot of time packing the bag. It was late night and they were now left with less than twelve hours to leave.

Question 19.

Do you think George and Harris were experts at packing? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer:

No, George and Harris do not seem to have been experts, because they started by breaking a cup, and continued by squashing a tomato under the bottle of jam. They packed the pies at the bottom and thus squashed them, spilt salt over everything and as for the butter, they stepped on it, sat on it and put it all over themselves and the room.

Question 20.

Why did George and Harris have to pick out the tomato with a teaspoon?

Answer:

While packing the hamper, Harris packed a strawberry jam on top of a tomato and squashed it. So, they had to pick out the tomato with a teaspoon which was a messy and time-consuming task.

Question 21.

Who was better at packing – Jerome or George and Harris? Give reasons for your choice.

Answer:

George and Harris were, in fact, much worse than Jerome as they set about packing. They fumbled and blundered many times while packing the hamper. They broke a cup at the outset and then squashed a tomato which had to be scrapped off with a spoon and stepped on the butter. They jumbled up the items to be packed and crushed softer things like pies under heavy objects.

Question 22.

Who was Montmorency and how did he contribute to the packing?

Answer:

Montmorency was the pet dog of the narrator and his two friends. He made a complete nuisance of himself. He sat down on things which had to be packed, pushed his nose into Harris or George's hand whenever they reached out for anything, put his leg into the jam, played with a teaspoon and pretended the lemons were rats. He chased the lemons inside the hamper till he 'killed' three of them, before he was hit by Harris with a frying pan.

Question 23.

What was the 'highest aim and object' of Montmorency, according to the narrator?

Answer:

According to the narrator, Montmorency's highest aim and object was to get in people's way and make them stumble over him. He aspired to get cursed by everyone and liked things to be thrown at him for his unbearable interference.

Question 24.

How did Harris and George fare at packing the hamper?

Answer:

Harris and George fared miserably at packing, the hamper. Salt flew all over while they packed. They put the things to be packed in the most disorganised manner. They damaged a lot of items by breaking, crushing or stepping on them.

Question 25.

The narrator says he was better than Harris and George in packing? Do you agree with him? Why/ why not?

Answer:

According to the narrator, he was the best packer in the world while George and Harris were the worst. I agree with him when he says he is better in packing as he packs the bag neatly and seriously while his friends pack the hampers carelessly while laughing, playing, fighting and breaking things.

Question 26.

Why did Harris tell Jerome that he encouraged the antics of Montmorency? What was Jerome's defence?

Answer:

Harris blamed Jerome for encouraging Montmorency because Jerome did not prove effective in shooing away the dog. Jerome's defence was that an ill-trained dog like Montmorency did not need any encouragement to misbehave. Indiscipline came naturally to him.

Question 27.

'I never saw two men do more with one-and two pence worth of butter...'. Why did the narrator say so?

Answer:

Harris and George had a tough time packing the butter. First, George trod on it and it stuck to his slipper and had to be scrapped off. Then they tried to keep it in the kettle where it wouldn't go in, and what was in wouldn't come out. After they scraped it out at last, they put it down on a chair, and Harris sat on it, and it stuck to him, and they went looking for it all over the room. They searched for it for a long time and then they kept it in the teapot.

Question 28.

Why did the narrator place a bathtub beside George while he was sleeping?

Answer:

George went off to sleep when the narrator and Harris were still arguing over the time they wanted him to wake them up in the morning. To ensure that he would wake up fully, they placed the bath where he could tumble into on getting out in the morning.

## Long Answer Type

Question 1.

Who offered to pick the bag for the trip? Was he happy at his own offer

Answer:

The author and his friends decided to go on a holiday. The author, who saw himself as an expert in packing. "I rather pride myself on my packing. Packing is one of those many things that I feel I know more about than any other person living." He told his friends, George and Harris that he would do the packing.

They readily agreed to his suggestion. George sat in an easy chair, while Harris put his legs on a table. The author had not intended this. He was unhappy with himself for having offered to pack. He had thought that Harris and George would pack and he would supervise them, teaching them how to do things better. When he worked and his friends relaxed, he was greatly irritated.

Question 2.

Briefly describe Jerome's attempt at packing.

Answer:

Right in the beginning Jerome volunteered to pack, because, according to him, he

was especially good at it and George and Harris agreed readily. What Jerome of course had meant was that he would supervise the packing while they packed. They of course meant he'd pack while they watched from lounging positions. Jerome packed all their personal belongings, from boots to toothbrushes. When he had finished, Harris pointed out whether he wanted to leave the boots out.

Once the boots were packed, Jerome realised he needed his toothbrush out for the morning, so the entire bag had to be unpacked and the toothbrush searched. It was found in a boot. The bag was again repacked when Jerome discovered he had packed his spectacles in. Once again, the bag was unpacked to take out the spectacles and then repacked. After going through several unpleasant rounds of unpack, repack, unpack, repack, the job was done, with only the soap (possibly) having been forgotten.

### Question 3.

How did George and Harris fare with the packing of the hamper?

Answer:

After Jerome's display of expert packing, George and Harris thought that, they'd better pack the foods and supplies. They had the "big hamper" to pack with these items. They started by breaking a cup, then squashing tomatoes with the jam. Then they packed the pies and "smashed the pies in" with heavy things on top. They spilled salt everywhere then, in turns, stepped on the butter, tried to cram it into the kettle, sat on the butter, hunted for the now missing butter (until George got a back view of Harris), and finally shoved it into the teapot.

Montmorency played his role during the packing incident by assuming his cold nose was what Harris's and George's hands were reaching for. He sat on the very item that was to be packed next, upset the spoons, put his leg into the jam and attacked the lemons in the hamper. Once the hamper was packed and closed, Harris sat on the lid of the hamper, and said he hoped nothing . "would be found broken," to which George replied that "if anything was broken it was broken."

### Question 4.

Of the three, Jerome, George and Harris, who do you think is the best or the worst packer? Support your answer with details from the text.

Answer:

According to me, Jerome is the best in packing. Although Jerome, George and Harris are equally disorganised as packers, Jerome is not as clumsy as his two friends, Harris and George. While Jerome takes a lot of time to pack the bag, George and Harris damage a lot of things while packing the hamper. Jerome, who considers himself a skilled packer, is able to arrange the items to be packed in the bag neatly and in order.

However, there is a lot of delay because he first forgets to pack his boots and then forgets having packed his toothbrush. After unpacking twice, he again packs in his spectacles absentmindedly. On the other hand, both Harris and George messed up everything. They began by breaking a cup.

Then, Harris packed the strawberry jam on top of a tomato and squashed it. George stepped on the butter, then Harris sat on it. They spread salt all over the place. Of course, Montmorency constantly got in their way and made things worse. Once the hamper was packed and closed, Harris sat on the lid of the hamper, and said he hoped nothing “would be found broken,” to which George replied that “if anything was broken it was broken.” Thus, we can easily conclude that though Jerome and George and Harris bungled equally. However, Jerome did not cause as much breakage or chaos as George and Harris.

Question 5.

How did the butter episode in the story cause nuisance?

Answer:

The butter episode in the story caused a lot of nuisance as it brought out the bungling clumsiness of George and Harris. First of all, George stepped on the butter and it stuck to his slipper. After George had got it off his slipper, he and Harris tried to put it in the kettle. It wouldn't go in, and what was in wouldn't come out. They did manage to scrape it out at last, and put it down on a chair. Then Harris sat on it, and it stuck to him, and they went looking for it all over the room.

“I'll take my oath I put it down on that chair,” said George, staring at the empty seat. George finally noticed it behind Harris's back from where it was removed and put inside the teapot. Hence, the butter episode created a lot of nuisance and became the funniest episode in the story.

Question 6.

Do you find this story funny? What are the humorous elements in it?

Answer:

The story is very funny with dry and slapstick humour. The chaos and confusion created by all the characters is very amusing. The gap between the self-assessment of Jerome, George and Harris and their actual capabilities is highly entertaining. Montmorency's contribution to humour is no less significant.

Jerome's sense of pride about his packing skills and the manner in which he packs the bag is very funny. He claims, “I rather pride myself on my packing. Packing is one of those many things that I feel I know more about than any other person living.” While Jerome expected to use the opportunity for bossing over his friends, of “pushing them aside every now and then with, “Oh, you!” “Here, let me do it.” “There you are, simple enough!” — really teaching them, as you might say.” They make him toil instead, lounging about and offering helpful suggestions. Jerome's forgetfulness and the subsequent unpacking of the bag many times over is quite amusing.

The butter episode, in particular, generates a lot of laughter. First of all, George steps on the butter and it sticks to his slipper. After George has got it off his slipper, he and Harris try to unsuccessfully put it in the kettle. They put it down on a chair and then Harris sits on it, and it sticks to him, and they go looking for it all over the room. George finally noticed it behind Harris's back from where it is removed. Montmorency, the dog, too adds to the humour with his habit of getting in the way of things. His indiscipline and inquisitiveness earns him curses but he still manages to

put his leg in the jam and chase lemons like rats till he is hit by Harris with a frying pan. All these instances lend humour to the story.

Question 7.

When did the “horrible idea” occur to Jerome? Why was it a “horrible idea”?

Answer:

The “horrible idea” that occurred to Jerome as soon as he had finished packing in his boots was whether he had packed in his toothbrush or not. He often forgot to pack his toothbrush, or, would pack it at night before using it in the morning. This would haunt him so much that at night he would dream that he had not packed the toothbrush. He would wake up in a cold sweat, get out of bed and hunt for it and pack it without using it in the morning, which meant that he would have to unpack it again.

And whenever he was looking for it, it would be the last thing to come out of the bag. After using it he would again forget to pack it and at the last moment would have to rush upstairs to fetch it. As a result he would carry it to the railway station, wrapped up in his pocket-handkerchief. Thus, the toothbrush was a constant source of horrible nightmares for Jerome.

## Reference to Context

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

Question 1.

I rather pride myself on my packing. Packing is one of those many things that I feel I know more about than any other person living. (It surprises me myself sometimes, how many such things there are.)

(a) Who is the speaker?

Answer:

The speaker is the narrator, Jerome.

(b) How many characters are there in the narrative?

Answer:

There are four characters in this narrative – the narrator, Jerome, his two friends, George and Harris, and their dog, Montmorency.

(c) Why was “I” going to pack?

Answer:

The narrator and his friends, George and Harris were going on a trip on the Thames. They needed to pack for it.

(d) What do you learn about the speaker from the above lines.

Answer:

The speaker is rather boastful and arrogant.

Question 2.

Their taking it in the way they did irritated me. There is nothing does irritate me more than seeing other \_people sitting about doing nothing when I'm working.

(a) Who is the speaker here and whom is he talking about?

Answer:

The speaker here is Jerome, the narrator of the story. He is talking about his friends, George and Harris.

(b) What does the speaker mean by 'it'?

Answer:

By 'it', the speaker means the response of his friends to his suggestion for packing. Both of them at once left the entire task to him and stretched themselves comfortably while he struggled alone.

(c) What is it that most irritates the speaker?

Answer:

The speaker is irritated the most when other people sit idle while he is working.

(d) What work did the speaker have to do?

Answer:

The speaker, Jerome, had to pack the bag for the trip that the three friends had to go on the next morning.

Question 3.

Now, I'm not like that. I can't sit still and see another man slaving and working. I want to get up and superintend, and walk round with my hands in my pockets, and tell him what to do. It is my energetic nature. I can't help it.

(a) What does the narrator refer to when he says 'that'?

Answer:

The narrator had lived with a man who I lived with a man once who would loll on the sofa and watch him doing things by the hour together.

(b) How is the narrator do when he sees someone working?

Answer:

The narrator likes to superintend the one who is working and tell the person what to do.

(c) What does this tell you about the narrator?

Answer:

The narrator considers himself an expert and would much rather supervise work, offering helpful suggestions rather than work himself.

(d) What is the narrator's tone in the extract?

Answer:

The narrator's tone is dry and ridiculing about himself.

Question 4.

However, I did not say anything but started the packing. It seemed a longer job than I had thought it was going to be.

(a) Why did the narrator (Jerome) volunteer to do the packing?

Answer:

The narrator, Jerome, thought that he was the best packer in the world. He was proud of his ability and wanted to show it. So, he volunteered to do the packing for his friends.

(b) What had been his intention?

Answer:

The speaker had expected his friends – George and Harris – would do the packing under his supervision and direction.

(c) How did George and Harris react to this? Did Jerome like their reaction?

Answer:

Jerome offered to pack with an intention to superintend his friends. But George and Harris thought that Jerome would do the entire job while they sat idle. It irritated the narrator.

(d) Why did the job take longer than he had expected?

Answer:

The job took longer than expected as Jerome had to pack the bag for all three of them. In addition, he had to unpack and repack it over and over again to put in things he had left out or he thought he might not have packed.

Question 5.

"Ain 'tyou going to put the boots in?" said Harris. And I looked round, and found I had forgotten them.

That's just like Harris. He couldn't have said a word until I'd got the bag shut and strapped, of course. And George laughed-one of those irritating, senseless laughs of his. They do make me so wild.

(a) What made narrator "so wild"?

Answer:

Harris did not tell him about the boots till he had shut the bag and strapped it. George laughed at the narrator as he had forgotten to pack his boots before strapping the bag.

(b) When did Harris tell the narrator about the boots?

Answer:

Harris told the narrator about the boots after he had finished packing the bag and strapped it.

(c) Why did George laugh? How did it affect the narrator?

Answer:

George laughed at the narrator who had boasted about his skill in packing but had forgotten to pack the boots and would have to open the bag again. George's laugh annoyed the narrator.

(d) What did the narrator have to do then?

Answer:

He would need to unpack the bag and fit his boots in.

Question 6.

My toothbrush is a thing that haunts me when I'm travelling, and makes my life a misery. I dream that I haven't packed it, and wake up in a cold perspiration, and get out of bed and hunt for it. And, in the morning, I pack it before I have used it, and have to unpack again to get it, and it is always the last thing I turn out of the bag; and then I repack and forget it, and have to rush upstairs for it at the last moment and carry it to the railway station, wrapped up in my pocket-handkerchief.

(a) Why does the narrator's toothbrush haunt him when he is travelling?

Answer:

He is haunted by the idea that he has forgotten to pack his toothbrush.

(b) What does the narrator dream of? Why does he hunt for it?

Answer:

The narrator dreams he hasn't packed his toothbrush. He gets up to look for it and pack it.

(c) Why does he have to unpack in the morning?

Answer:

He has to unpack it in the morning to use it.

(d) How does he end up carrying his toothbrush?

Answer:

He ends up forgetting to repack it, and then at the last minute carrying it wrapped in his pocket handkerchief.

Question 7.

Of course, I had to turn every mortal thing out now, and, of course, I could not find it. I rummaged the things up into much the same state that they must have been before the world was created, and when chaos reigned. Of course, I found George's and Harris's eighteen times over, but I couldn't find my own. I put the things back one by one, and held everything up and shook it. Then I found it inside a boot. I repacked once more.

(a) What was the author looking for?

Answer:

The author was looking for his toothbrush.

(b) Why was the author looking for 'it'?

Answer:

The author did not want to pack his toothbrush in the bag just then but in the morning after he had used it.

(c) What did the author do as he searched for 'it'?

Answer:

He reopened his bag to search for his toothbrush. He had to get everything out but did not find his toothbrush.

(d) Where did he find 'it'?

Answer:

He found his toothbrush in one of his boots.

Question 8.

When I had finished, George asked if the soap was in. I said I didn't care a hang whether the soap was in or whether it wasn't; and I slammed the bag shut and strapped it, and found that I had packed my spectacles in it, and had to re-open it. It got shut up finally at 10.05 p.m., and then there remained the hampers to do.

(a) What had the narrator finished?

Answer:

The narrator had finished packing the bag finally.

(b) What two things that the narrator pack in the bag which he wanted out to use before leaving?

Answer:

The narrator wanted to use his spectacles and toothbrush before he left, but he found he had packed them and had to reopen his bag.

(c) When was the bag finally packed?

Answer:

The bag was finally packed by 10:05 pm.

(d) What did George and Harris start on then?

Answer:

George and Harris started packing the hampers.

Question 9.

Harris said that we should be wanting to start in less than twelve hours' time and thought that he and George had better do the rest; and I agreed and sat down, and they had a go.

(a) What was 'the rest' that Harris and George offered to do?

Answer:

'The rest' refers to the packing that remained after the bag had been packed. Jerome had packed the bag and now the hampers were left.

(b) Why did Harris and George offer to do 'the rest'?

Answer:

Harris and George had seen Jerome's clumsiness while packing the bag. So, they offered to take care of the rest of the packing, lest the task too long and their departure got delayed. '

(c) Why did Harris particularly mention that they had less than twelve hours' time to start?

Answer:

Harris mentioned 'less than twelve hours' time as he felt that Jerome had taken so much time to pack the bag and that twelve hours might not be sufficient for him to complete rest of the packing.

(d) Why did the narrator agree to the proposal?

Answer:

He agreed to the proposal as he knew well how incompetent his friends were. He wanted to see them fumble as they went about packing the hamper.

Question 10.

I made no comment; I only waited. With the exception of George, Harris is the worst packer in this world; and I looked at the piles of plates and cups, and kettles, and bottles, and jars, and pies, and stoves, and cakes, and tomatoes, etc., and felt that the thing would soon become exciting.

(a) What was the narrator waiting for?

Answer:

The narrator was waiting for his friends to fumble and falter while packing the hamper.

(b) How does the narrator show there was an unending collection of articles to be packed?

Answer:

By using the word 'and' eight times in the passage the narrator wants to impress upon the reader that there was a never-ending collection of articles that had to be packed in the hampers.

(c) What does the word 'thing' here refer to? How would it become exciting for the speaker?

Answer:

The 'thing' here means the simple task of packing the hampers. The task would become exciting for the speaker due to the clumsiness of his friends George and Harris.

(d) What was the first accident George and Harris had as they started packing?

Answer:

The first accident George and Harris had as they started packing was that they broke a cup.

Question 11.

They did scrape it out at last, and put it down on a chair, and Harris sat on it, and it stuck to him, and they went looking for it all over the room.

(a) What does 'it' refer to?

Answer:

'It' refers to the butter.

(b) What had happened to 'it' earlier?

Answer:

George had trodden on it and the butter had stuck to his slipper.

(c) Why did they have to scrape 'it'?

Answer:

They had to scrape the butter because they were neither able put it into the kettle nor pull it out. Left with no alternative they had to scrape it.

(d) Why did they go about looking for 'it' all over the room?

Answer:

When Harris sat on the butter, it had stuck to his back. However, both of them were unaware of this, and they looked for it all over.

Question 12.

If he can squirm in anywhere where he particularly is not wanted, and be a perfect nuisance, and make people mad, and have things thrown at his head, then he feels his day has not been wasted.

(a) Whom does 'he' stand for in these lines?

Answer:

In these lines, 'he' stands for Montmorency, the pet dog of the three friends George, Harris and Jerome.

(b) In what ways did he become a perfect nuisance?

Answer:

Montmorency became a perfect nuisance by finding his way to the spot where he would not be wanted at all.

(c) How would 'he' annoy people?

Answer:

Montmorency would irritate everyone immensely so much so that his activities would

make people lose their heads and they would hurl things at his head to shoo him away.

(d) When did 'he' feel that his day was not wasted?

Answer:

Montmorency felt that his day was not wasted when he was allowed to irritate people and make them lose their temper by his annoying actions.

Question 13.

He came and sat down on things, just when they wanted to be packed; and he laboured under the fixed belief that, whenever Harris or George reached out their hand for anything, it was his cold damp nose that they wanted. He put his leg into the jam, and he worried the teaspoons, and he pretended that the lemons were rats, and got into the hamper and killed three of them before Harris could land him with the frying-pan.

(a) What is Montmorency's ambition in life according to the author?

Answer:

According to the author, Montmorency's ambition is to interfere with others and then get abused by them.

(b) What were the things 'he' sat on?

Answer:

He sat on the things George and Harris were packing in the hampers.

(c) Where did he put his leg?

Answer:

He put his leg in the jam.

(d) How did he play with the lemons?

Answer:

He pretended the lemons were rats and destroyed three of them.

Question 14.

Harris said I encouraged him. I didn't encourage him. A dog like that doesn't want any encouragement.

(a) What sort of encouragement is Harris referring to?

Answer:

Harris believes that Jerome encourages Montmorency to get in people's way and be a perfect nuisance. He feels that it is Jerome who is responsible for the dog's irritating behaviour.

(b) How did he annoy the packers?

Answer:

He sat on things, stepped into the jam, chased the lemons and whenever Harris or

George reached out their hand for anything, he put his cold damp nose into their hand.

(c) What does the phrase “a dog like that” mean?

Answer:

A dog like that means a dog who has habits that are bound to annoy people.

(d) What impression do you form about ‘him’ from this extract?

Answer:

This extract suggests that Montmorency was a dog that had an inborn urge to trouble the people and make them lose their temper. He didn't need anybody's support to behave in such an annoying manner.