

THE FUN THEY HAD

MARGIE WRITES HER DIARY

Margie even wrote about the book in her diary. On the page headed 17 May, 2157, she wrote: 'Today Tommy found a real book !'. The real book

It was a very old book. Margie's grandfather once said that when he was a little boy his grandfather told him about a time, all stories were printed on paper. They turned the pages. These were wrinkled and yellow. The words stood still. They did not move on the screen as they do now.

TELEBOOKS

Tommy called it a waste. When they read the book they threw it away. Their television screen must have been very big to have many books. It was still good for many more books. It was same for Margie, though she had not seen many telebooks.

MARGIE'S HATRED FOR 'SCHOOL'

Margie was eleven and Tommy was thirteen. She asked him where he had found that book. He replied that he found that in his house. She asked what it was all about. He replied that it was about school. Margie exclaimed 'School!' What was there to write about school as she hated that?

WHY MARGIE HATES 'SCHOOL'?

She always hated school. But now she hated it more. It was because her mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography. She had been doing worse and worse. At last, her mother sent for the County Inspector.

TELEVISION TEACHER SET RIGHT

The Inspector was a round little man. He had a red face and a box of tools, dials and wires. He smiled at Margie and gave her an apple. He took the television teacher away. Margie hoped he wouldn't know how to set it right.

But after one hour it was brought again before her with its big screen. Lessons were shown and questions asked on it.

MARGIE'S LEARNING

She hated its slot in which she had to put | her homework. She had to write them in a punch code. She had been learning since she was six years old.

GEOGRAPHY SECTOR SET RIGHT

The Inspector smiled and patted Margie's head. He told Margie's mother that it was not Margie's fault. The geography sector was geared a little too quick. He had slowed that to an average ten-year level. Margie's progress had been quite satisfactory. Then he went away.

MARGIE'S WISH ABOUT HER TELEVISION TEACHER

Margie hoped that they would take her mechanical teacher away. They had done so to Tommy's for nearly a month. The history sector of Tommy had blanked out. Margie said to Tommy why anyone would write about school.

TOMMY TELLS HER ABOUT OLD SCHOOLS

Tommy told her that it was not their kind of school. That was a kind of old schools which they had there hundreds and hundreds of years ago.

MARGIE'S KNOWLEDGE ABOUT OLD SCHOOLS

Margie was hurt. She told that she did not know about these schools. She read the book over Tommy's shoulder. She then said that they had had a teacher anyway. Tommy replied that it wasn't a regular teacher. It was a man.

STUDENTS IN THOSE SCHOOLS

The teacher told the boys and girls things and gave homework. He also asked them questions. Margie told Tommy that man couldn't be smart enough. But Tommy said he was so.

OLD SCHOOLS EXPLAINED

Margie was not prepared to dispute that. She said that she wouldn't want a strange man to live in her house and teach her. Tommy told Margie that the teachers did not live in the house as the mechanical teachers lived. They had a special building. All the kids went there. And they learned the same thing. Also they were of the same age group.

ADJUSTMENT OF TELEVISION TEACHER

But Margie said that as per her mother a teacher had to be adjusted to fit the mind of each boy and girl it taught. So each kid had to be taught differently.

MARGIE'S SCHOOL TIME

Margie's mother Mrs Jones called that it was time for her 'school'. Margie asked Tommy if she could read the book some more with him after school. Tommy walked away. He had put the dusty old book under his arm.

MARGIE THINKS OF OLD SCHOOLS

Margie put her work in the slot with a sigh. She was thinking about the old schools. They had them when her grandfather's grandfather was a kid. All the kids from the neighbourhood came laughing and shouting in the schoolyard. They sat together at the end of the day. They learnt the same things so that they could help one another in their homework. And the teachers were human beings.

THINKING CONTINUES

The mechanical teacher was flashing on the screen the fractions of a question. Margie was thinking about how the kids must have loved the school in the old days. She was thinking about the fun they had.

NCERT SOLUTIONS

Thinking about the Text

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I. ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS IN A FEW WORDS OR A COUPLE OF SENTENCES EACH.

Question 1.

How old are Margie and Tommy?

Answer:

Margie is eleven and Tommy is thirteen years old.

Question 2.

What did Margie write in her diary?

Answer:

Margie wrote in her diary. "Today, 17 May, 2157, Tommy found a real book."

Question 3.

Had Margie ever seen a book before?

Answer:

No, Margie had never seen a book before.

Question 4.

What things about the book did she find strange?

Answer:

The book had yellow and wrinkled pages.

The words of the book were still. They did not move as the words move on the computer screen. She found these things strange.

Question 5.

What do you think a telebook is?

Answer:

A telebook is displayed on the television screen and the text of a telebook is similar to a book.

Question 6.

Where was Margie's school? Did she have any classmates?

Answer:

Margie's school was near her own bedroom. She did not have any classmate.

Question 7.

What subjects did Margie and Tommy learn?

Answer:

Margie learnt Geography and Mathematics. Tommy learnt History and Mathematics.

II. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING WITH REFERENCE TO THE STORY.

Question 1.

"I wouldn't throw it away."

- 1. Who says these words?**
- 2. What does 'it' refer to?**
- 3. What is it being compared with by the speaker?**

Answer:

1. Margie says these words.
2. It refers to that real book that Tommy found.
3. The speaker compares it with a telebook.

Question 2.

"Sure, they had a teacher, but it wasn't a regular teacher. It was a man."

- 1. Who does 'they' refer to?**
- 2. What does 'regular' mean here?**
- 3. What is it contrasted with?**

Answer:

1. 'They' refer to the people of the old times.
2. Here, regular refers to the mechanical teacher then they had.
3. It is contrasted with a normal teacher of earlier times, who was a living human being.

III. ANSWER EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS IN A SHORT PARAGRAPH (ABOUT 30 WORDS).

Question 1.

What kind of teachers did Margie and Tommy have?

Answer:

Margie and Tommy had mechanical teachers. They were taught on computers and television screens. They didn't have a living person as a teacher who would teach the pupils in a classroom.

Question 2.

Why did Margie's mother send for the County Inspector?

Answer:

Margie's mother sent for the County Inspector because the mechanical teacher was not functioning efficiently. It had been giving her test after test in geography and she had been doing worse and worse.

Question 3.

What did he do?

Answer:

He slowed down the mechanical teacher's speed upto an average ten-year level. The mechanical teacher's speed was controlled and adjusted according to the IQ level of Margie.

Question 4.

Why was Margie doing badly in geography? What did the County Inspector do to help her?

Answer:

Margie had been doing badly in geography. This was because the mechanical teacher was very fast in displaying the questionnaire. The County Inspector adjusted its speed upto an average ten-year level. Thus, the mechanical teacher's speed was controlled appropriately. The County Inspector assured that the overall pattern of Margie's progress was quite satisfactory.

Question 5.

What had once happened to Tommy's teacher?

Answer:

Tommy's teacher was taken away for nearly a month because the history sector had blanked out completely. So, Tommy had nothing to do during that period. He only relaxed and enjoyed.

Question 6.

Did Margie have regular days and hours for school? If so, why?

Answer:

Yes, Margie had regular days and hours for school because her mother said little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours.

Question 7.

How does Tommy describe the old kind of school?

Answer:

Tommy says that the old schools were different. They had a special building and all the kids went there to study. They laughed and shouted in the schoolyard. They enjoyed time together and learned lessons together in a classroom.

Question 8.

How does he describe the old kind of teachers?

Answer:

He says that the old teachers did not live in the house. They had a special building and all the kids went there. They gave homework to students. They were not mechanical teachers, but living human beings.

IV. ANSWER EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS IN TWO OR THREE PARAGRAPHS. (100-150 WORDS).

Question 1.

What are the main features of the mechanical teachers and the schoolrooms that Margie and Tommy have in the story?

Answer:

Margie and Tommy have mechanical teachers. They need not go to school for getting a formal education. The mechanical teacher is placed in one of the rooms of the house and they can get the knowledge of various subjects of individually from the mechanical teacher. They don't have such classrooms where students sit together. They study from the telebooks. So they don't require books and exercise books. The examination system is very different. They do homework in a different way. Margie has to write them out in a punch code. She learnt it when she was six years old. So the system of their education is technologically advanced and not based on printed books.

Question 2.

Why did Margie hate school? Why did she think the old kind of school must have been fun?

Answer:

Margie hated her school because she had a mechanical teacher. It was in her house. She was supposed to sit in that room alone to complete her homework or assignments. The part Margie hated most was the slot where she had to put homework and test papers. She thought that the old schools must have been

fun because the students used to sit together in the classroom. They enjoyed, laughed and shouted in the schoolyard. Children needed company to enhance their skills. If they are isolated, they get depressed and dejected.

Question 3.

Do you agree with Margie that schools today are more fun than the school in the story? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer:

There is no doubt that today's schools are funnier than the future school discussed in the story. This school has nothing but a mechanical teacher with no emotions and sentiments. It does not have the ability to understand the psychology of a child. Moreover, it guides a pupil according to its adjusted modes. But today's schools work for the overall development of a child. They learn the same thing. The teachers are real human beings. They learn how to adapt themselves to the new surroundings.

THE FUN THEY HAD EXTRA QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SHORT ANSWER TYPE

Question 1.

Who are Margie and Tommy? How old are they?

Answer:

Margie and Tommy are students from the year 2157. Tommy is a thirteen-year-old boy and Margie is an eleven-year-old girl. Both are neighbours and good friends who like to spend time together like children of their age usually do.

Question 2.

What did Margie write in her diary?

Answer:

On 17 May 2157 Margie recorded in her diary about the discovery of a “real” book by Tommy. It was a very old book printed on paper and had yellow and crinkly pages, unlike the telebooks of the twenty-second century.

Question 3.

Where had Tommy found the book? How was it different from the books Margie and Tommy were used to?

Answer:

Tommy found a real book in the attic of his house. The book was at least two hundred years old so pages had turned yellow and crinkly. It was a different from the books Margie and Tommy were used to because they had telebooks to read from while the book Tommy found was printed on paper.

Question 4.

Had Margie ever seen a real book before? Did she know about such books?

Answer:

No, Margie had never seen a book before till she saw the one Tommy found in the attic of his house. She had only heard about books from her grandfather who himself had not seen any. He too had heard about a printed book from his own grandfather.

Question 5.

What things about the book did Margie and Tommy find strange?

Answer:

Margie and Tommy read telebooks where words moved on a screen. Books were stored in a machine that could store a million books on it and still be good for plenty more. So they found it strange that the words in the printed book remained fixed unlike the moving ones on their television screen.

Question 6.

“What a waste!” What is Tommy referring to as a ‘waste’? Is it really a waste? Why/Why not?

Answer:

Tommy thought the paper book he found in his attic with words that were printed and did not move was a waste. Once a book had been read, it became useless and must be thrown away because it had the same content.

Yes: Printed books are a waste as telebooks are more accessible. They can be stored in a television and read again and again. They occupy very little space as compared to the printed books and need not be discarded once they have been read. In addition, paper books consume resources like trees from which paper is made and water that is consumed in the process of making paper.

No: Printed books are not a waste as they can be read by many people over and over again and can be preserved for future generations. Moreover, the data in a telebook can be lost or stolen, but in a printed book, the data printed on a page remains for ever.

Question 7.

What do you think a telebook is?

Answer:

A telebook is a book made available in text on a television screen. Many books can be stored and read in this manner. (The telebook is the author’s imagined version of an e-book as this story was written in 1951, long before their advent.)

Question 8.

Did Margie like the printed book? Why/Why not?

Answer:

Margie was really excited to see the ‘real’ book Tommy found as it was unlike the telebooks the two were used to reading. It was such a novelty that she recorded the discovery in her diary. As she turned the yellow and crinkly pages

of the book with Tommy, she found it quite fascinating, unlike Tommy who found it a waste. In fact, she was really reluctant to stop reading the book and go to study. She wanted to read the book again after school.

Question 9.

Where was Margie's school? Did she have any classmates?

Answer:

Margie's school was a room next to her bedroom in her house. No, she did not have any classmates as her school was a customised school, set up exclusively for her according to her level and needs.

Question 10.

What kind of teachers did Margie and Tommy have? How were they different from teachers in the book?

Answer:

Margie and Tommy had mechanical teachers, which were large and black and ugly, with a big screen on which all the lessons were shown and the questions were asked. There was a slot where they had to put homework and test papers and the mechanical teacher calculated the marks in no time. Margie and Tommy's teachers were different from the teachers in the book as the teachers in the book were men and not mechanical teachers.

Question 11.

Why had Margie started hating her school?

Answer:

Margie never liked school. But lately she had come to hate it more than ever because of her poor performance in geography. The mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in the subject and she had been doing worse and worse.

Question 12.

How were Margie and Tommy assessed in their subjects?

Answer:

Margie and Tommy were given assignments by their mechanical teachers. They wrote their answers in a punch code they were trained in. Then they inserted their special answer sheets in the slot in the mechanical teacher. The teacher corrected their assignments and calculated their marks in no time.

Question 13.

What did Margie hate the most about her school?

Answer:

The part that Margie hated most about her school was the slot where she had to put homework and test papers. She always had to write them in a punch code that she was made to learn at the age of six. The mechanical teacher calculated her marks in no time leaving no time for Margie to relax after submitting the assigned tasks.

Question 14.

Write a brief note on Margie's school routine.

Answer:

Although Margie was taught by a large black television screen installed in a room next to her bedroom, Margie followed a strict routine and had regular days and hours for school. She studied from Monday to Friday at the same time every day as her mother thought that young girls learnt things better if they studied them at regular hours.

Question 15.

Margie's mother was very particular about her studies. Justify with evidence from the story.

Answer:

Margie's mother was very particular about her studies and made sure that Margie attended her tele-school regularly and at fixed times as she felt little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours. She took a keen interest in Margie's performance and when she felt she was not doing too well in a

particular subject, she called the County Inspector to have a look at the mechanical teacher.

Question 16.

Who was the County Inspector? What did he do to improve Margie's performance?

Answer:

The County Inspector was a technical expert who identified and rectified errors in the functioning of the mechanical teachers. When the County Inspector examined the working of Margie's mechanical teacher, he found that the geography sector had been geared too quick. He slowed it up to an average 10-years level. He found the overall pattern of Margie quite satisfactory.

Question 17.

Write a brief note on the County Inspector.

Answer:

The County Inspector was a round little man with a red face and a whole box of tools with dials and wires. He was certainly a kind-hearted man and he put Margie at ease by giving her an apple and telling her mother that if Margie was not performing well, it was not her fault, but the fault of the mechanical teacher. He aligned the speed of the geography sector keeping in mind the level of the girl. Before leaving, he patted Margie on the head and expressed satisfaction at her performance.

Question 18.

Why was Margie not doing well in geography? What did the County Inspector do to help her?

Answer:

Margie was not doing well in geography. In fact, her performance was getting worse day by day. Her mother sent for the County Inspector to look into the problem. He told Mrs Jones that the geography sector in Margie's mechanical

teacher was geared up a little too quick for her and that he had slowed it up to the level of an average ten-year-old.

Question 19.

Why did Margie get disappointed after the geography sector of her teacher was set right?

Answer:

Margie's mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography and her mother had asked the County Inspector to look into it. Margie had hoped that her mechanical teacher would be taken away for some time as Tommy's had been when it had malfunctioned. But she was disappointed when the County Inspector set the mechanical teacher right there and then.

Question 20.

What had once happened to Tommy's teacher?

Answer:

Once, Tommy's mechanical teacher had developed a fault and its history sector had blanked out absolutely. The teacher had to be taken away for repairs and it had taken almost a month to put it in order.

Question 21.

What does Tommy tell Margie about the old kind of school?

Answer:

Tommy describes the old school as a special building where all the children went to study together. Students of the same age-group were taught the same things which by human teachers. These teachers taught various things to boys and girls, gave them homework and also asked them questions.

Question 22.

What was Margie's reaction when Tommy told her that twentieth-century schools had human teachers?

Answer:

When Margie heard Tommy mention that children were taught by human teachers in the times gone by, she could not believe the truth of Tommy's statement. She believed that a human teacher could not match the mechanical teacher in intelligence and knowledge. This was because she had been taught by a mechanical teacher and had never seen any human teacher.

Question 23.

Why could Margie and Tommy finish reading the book Tommy found?

Answer:

When Margie and Tommy were reading the book Tommy had found in his attic, Margie's mother interrupted them and told Margie to go to her schoolroom to study. She even suggested Tommy too went to attend school.

Question 24.

What did the teacher teach Margie when she went to her school?

Answer:

When Margie went to school the mechanical teacher taught an arithmetic lesson on the addition of proper fractions. It taught her how to add the fractions

Question 25.

Why was Margie not able to concentrate on the Arithmetic lesson?

Answer:

Margie could not concentrate on the arithmetic lesson because her mind was pre-occupied with the thoughts about the school that Tommy had just described her. She was fascinated by the fact that in olden days all the kids from the whole neighbourhood came, laughing and shouting in the schoolyard, sitting together in the schoolroom, going home together at the end of the day. They learned the same things, so they could help one another with the homework and talk about it.

Question 26.

Why did Margie think that children in olden days had fun while studying in school?

Answer:

Margie attended a tele-school, which was just a machine in the room next to her bedroom and she studied alone unlike the students of the schools in the bygone times. She found her present school much too mechanical, boring, monotonous and demanding, and she hated it. She felt that learning was more fun in those days because hundreds of children had the opportunity of congregating and studying together with the help of human teachers and printed books. Schools were large buildings where students learned the same things, so they could help one another with the homework and talk about it.

THE FUN THEY HAD EXTRA QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS LONG ANSWER TYPE

Question 1.

How did Margie and Tommy react to the book Tommy found in his attic? Why?

Answer:

Margie and Tommy were neighbours and friends. They lived in 2157, in an age of technology when going to school meant sitting in a room by oneself, being taught by a mechanical teacher that was adjusted to fit the learner's mind and reading from a telebook with moving words.

Then on the Then one day 7 May 2157, Tommy found an old paper book with yellow and crinkled pages in the attic of his house. He shared the exciting news with his friend Margie and together they are wonderstruck, for they had before that never seen or heard about a book that had no screen but only fixed text on pages.

The book was quite different from the tele-books they were used to. As Margie and Tommy read the book, they were amazed by its contents. They discovered that hundreds of years ago schools were huge buildings where hundreds of

children went to study and where children of the same age studied together and carried out the same activities and tasks. They were taught by real human teachers with the help of real books.

Question 2.

Describe the old school as described in the book? How did it influence Margie?

Answer:

The book which Tommy found was about school. However, it was not the kind of school Margie and Tommy were used to, but the old kind of schools that were there hundreds and hundreds of years ago. School was a special building and all the kids went there. Children went to these schools to study and were taught by a 'regular' teacher, a man who told the boys and girls things and gave them homework and asked them questions.

At school, all children of the same age studied together and carried out the same activities and tasks. Margie thought about the old kind of school. She was thinking about all the kids from the whole neighbourhood came, laughing and shouting in the schoolyard, sitting together in the schoolroom, going home together at the end of the day. They learned the same things, so they could help one another with the homework and talk about it. Margie thought about the old school system and how much fun the children must have had, learning and spending time together.

Question 3.

Write a short note on the school system in "The Fun They Had".

Answer:

Margie and Tommy are young school going children in the year 2157. Schools and teachers in the twenty- second century are entirely different from the ones in present day. Margie and Tommy's school is not in a separate special building but a room in their respective houses where the television or the mechanical teacher is placed. Each student has to sit and study alone with the help of mechanical teacher, a large and black and ugly machine, with a big screen on which all the lessons are shown and the questions are asked.

The 'teacher' assigns tests to the students and assesses their progress. The speed of the different subject sectors is fixed according to the age level of each student. There is a special slot in the tele-teacher where students have to insert their homework or tests. If the mechanical teacher develops any fault, there are engineers to repair it.

Sometimes the fault may be a major one and it takes long to repair it, as was the case when Tommy's history teacher developed a snag and it took a month to repair it. Thus, the mechanical teachers and schoolrooms of Margie and Tommy are fully computerised and are completely different from the present day schools.

Question 4.

Do you agree that schools today are better than the schools in the story 'The Fun They Had'. Give reasons for your choice.

Answer:

Yes: In the story The Fun They Had writer Isaac Asimov talks about the schools of the future. In this future, school is a room in the house where each child is taught by a mechanical teacher and there are telebooks on television screens.

After reading the story, I think that we pupils in the present should be satisfied. I agree an individual teacher for each child can work better and more intensively with the pupil and when the parents set the school time a child can have flexible school hours. If the school(room) is at home, the children do not have to walk or drive so far and this saves time and money.

But on the other hand, we lose an opportunity for social contacts. The most important advantage we have today is we have contact with other kids, in the breaks we can talk to each other and we have fun with them. Pupils solve problems together – very important for the later life and the development of a child. And a human teacher is definitely a better educator than a machine because he knows the problems of humans and children. A machine will never be able to feel like a human. Moreover, a human teacher can provide valuable guidance and values that a mechanical teacher cannot.

'or'

No: *The Fun They Had* by Isaac Asimov is a science-fiction story schooling in the twenty-second century. Margie, an eleven-year-old girl, and Tommy, who is thirteen, live in the year 2157, where school means learning from a machine teacher at home. Both kids have never seen a printed book, because they read telebooks.

The author shows us how school could be in two hundred years, when everything is managed by computers and other technology. In his story, in spite of the advances in technology, the two children are still like kids today. Isaac Assimov shows very clearly the typical behaviour of an eleven-year-old girl and a thirteen-year- old boy, so in his story their characters are not influenced by the technical advancement.

An advantage of a mechanical teacher is that the mechanical teacher can be geared to the mental level of the student. Thus, it becomes easier for the child to understand the lessons. Different styles of learning of students can be addressed using mechanical teacher and technology. Mechanical teachers can analyze the specific mistakes that students make and give instant feedback which would prove helpful for the students.

Question 5.

Do you think Asimov is warning us about the dangers of too much computerisation?

Answer:

In his short story “*The Fun They Had*” Isaac Asimov depicts the school system in 2157 which is based on technical advancement. Thirteen-year-old Tommy and eleven-year-old girl Margie both study with a computer teacher at home. While the individual teaching can train the personal talents and it is a perfect way to give every child knowledge and information baed on the child’s capacity, but there are some disadvantages, too.

Pupils do not learn like a computer. Learning has to be fun, otherwise the probability of forgetting is higher. Another disadvantage is that there are no social relationships like at school today. Learning with friends at school can be a motivation. Students improve their communication skills and their behaviour in a group. A mechanical teacher cannot give moral values to the children.

I think Asimov is trying to warn us that the school system which is being followed in 2157 is a good way of giving children knowledge and information for jobs, but it is not good at giving ability for interpersonal relationships. In my opinion the disadvantages are more serious than the advantages and I feel this is a warning given by Isaac Asimov that this kind of schooling may not, in fact, be an ideal option for students. Surroundings and cope with the strangers. The students sit and learn together. These activities don't give vent to the feelings of depression, alienation and segregation.

THE FUN THEY HAD EXTRA QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REFERENCE TO CONTEXT

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

Question 1.

“Today Tommy found a real book!”

It was a very old book. Margie's grandfather once said that when he was a little boy his grandfather told him that there was a time when all stories were printed on paper.

(a) Who are Margie and Tommy?

Answer:

Tommy is a thirteen-year-old boy and Margie an eleven-year-old girl who live in the twenty second century.

(b) Where had Tommy found the book?

Answer:

Tommy had found the book in the attic of his house.

(c) What is meant by “real book”?

Answer:

The book is “real” as it is printed on paper rather than a telebook.

(d) How had Margie heard of such a book?

Answer:

Margie's grandfather had told her that he had heard from his grandfather about a time when all stories were printed on paper.

Question 2.

It was a very old book. Margie's grandfather once said that when he was a little boy his grandfather told him that there was a time when all stories were printed on paper. They turned the pages, which were yellow and crinkly, and it was awfully funny to read words that stood still instead of moving the way they were supposed to-on a screen, you know.

(a) Why were the pages of the book yellow?

Answer:

The pages of the book were yellow because the book was quite old.

(b) What kind of books did Margie and Tommy read?

Answer:

Margie and Tommy read telebooks

(c) What do you think a telebook is?

Answer:

A book that is not printed on paper, but one that can be read on a screen. Words move on the screen for the students to read.

(d) Why did Tommy find the book a "waste"?

Answer:

Unlike their telebooks, the words on the page stayed the same and did not change. He felt when one was through with the book, one would just throw it away.

Question 3.

They turned the pages, which were yellow and crinkly, and it was awfully funny to read words that stood still instead of moving the way they were supposed to-on a screen, you know.

(a) Who are 'they' in this extract?

Answer:

'They' are Margie and Tommy, the young children who are reading the book.

(b) Which book had yellow and crinkly pages?

Answer:

The book that Tommy found in the attic of his house had yellow and crinkly pages.

(c) What do the yellow and crinkly pages reveal about the book?

Answer:

The yellow and crinkly pages reveal that it was a very old book and had not been lying in the attic for a long time.

(d) What did 'they' find funny? Why?

Answer:

The children found the fixed and still words in the book funny because they were used to reading electronic books on the television screen in which the words kept moving.

Question 4.

"I wouldn't throw it away."

(a) Who says these words?

Answer:

Tommy, a thirteen-year-old boy says these words

(b) What does 'it' refer to?

Answer:

'It' refers to the television screen of the computer on which Tommy reads books. It has a million books and space for a lot more.

(c) What is it being compared with, by the speaker?

Answer:

'It' is being compared with the paper book that Tommy had found in the attic of his house.

(d) Why would the speaker not throw it away?

Answer:

The speaker, Tommy, wouldn't throw the television screen on which he read books away because it had a million books on it and it could be used many times.

Question 5.

"What's it about?"

"School"

Margie was scornful. "School?" What's there to write about school? I hate school. "

(a) What does 'it' refer to?

Answer:

'It' refers to the book Tommy found in his attic.

(b) Why was Margie scornful about the book?

Answer:

Margie was scornful about the book as it was about school. She hated her school and felt school would not be an interesting enough topic to read about.

(c) Why did Margie not like school?

Answer:

Margie had never liked her school, but now she hated her mechanical teacher so she disliked school even more.

(d) Why did Margie hate her mechanical teacher?

Answer:

The mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography and she had been doing worse and worse.

Question 6.

He was a round little man with a red face and a whole box of tools with dials and wires. He smiled at Margie and gave her an apple, then took the teacher apart.

(a) Who is 'he'?

Answer:

He is the County Inspector.

(b) Why had he been called?

Answer:

Margie's mother, Mrs Jones, had called him because Margie's mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography and she had been doing worse and worse. She wanted the County Inspector to fix the teacher.

(c) Why did he give Margie an apple?

Answer:

He smiled at Margie and gave her an apple to reassure her.

(d) How did he fix the teacher?

Answer:

The County Inspector found that the teacher's the geography sector was geared a little too quick. He slowed it up to an average ten-year level.

Question 7.

He said to her mother, "It's not the little girl's fault, Mrs Jones. I think the geography sector was geared a little too quick. Those things happen sometimes. "

(a) Who is 'he' and which 'little girl' is he talking about?

Answer:

He is the County Inspector. He is talking about Margie.

(b) What, according to him, is not the girl's fault?

Answer:

According to him, the girl's continuous poor performances in Geography tests was not her fault.

(c) What was wrong with the geography sector of the mechanical teacher?

Answer:

He finds that the pace of the geography sector has been a bit too fast for the girl's level.

(d) What does the County Inspector do to correct the fault?

Answer:

The County Inspector took apart the mechanical teacher and slowed it up to an average ten-year level.

Question 8.

"Actually, the overall pattern of her progress is quite satisfactory. " And he patted Margie's head again. Margie was disappointed. She had been hoping they would take the teacher away altogether.

(a) Who is the speaker? Whose progress is being talked about?

Answer:

The speaker is the County Inspector. He is talking about Margie's progress.

(b) Why was Margie disappointed?

Answer:

Margie was disappointed as her teacher was not taken away as she wished for.

(c) Whose teacher had been taken away? Why?

Answer:

Tommy's teacher had been taken away for nearly a month because the history sector had blanked out completely.

(d) What subjects did Margie and Tommy learn?

Answer:

Margie and Tommy learnt geography, history and arithmetic.

Question 9.

Tommy looked at her with very superior eyes. "Because it's not our kind of school, stupid. This is the old kind of school that they had hundreds and hundreds of years ago." He added loftily.

(a) What does Tommy mean by "our kind of school"?

Answer:

They study in classrooms in their own homes with mechanical teachers.

(b) Why did Tommy call Margie stupid?

Answer:

Tommy called Margie stupid because she was ignorant about schools of the past.

(c) Whom does 'they' here refer to?

Answer:

'They' here refers to the students of centuries ago who were mentioned in the book.

(d) How was 'their' school different?

Answer:

Their school was a special building that they went to and they learned the same thing if they were the same age. They had a person as a teacher who taught the whole class.

Question 10.

"Sure they had a teacher, built wasn't a regular teacher. It was a man."

(a) Who speaks these words and about what?

Answer:

Tommy speaks these words about the schools in the olden times.

(b) Who does 'they' refer to in these lines?

Answer:

'They' refers to the students from the schools of the olden times.

(c) What does 'regular' mean here?

Answer:

Here 'regular' means a mechanised teacher like the ones Margie and Tommy had.

(d) What is 'regular' contrasted with?

Answer:

'Regular' is contrasted with the teachers from the olden days who were real men and not programmed machines.

Question 11.

"A man? How could a man be a teacher?"

“Well, he just told the boys and girls things and gave them homework and asked them questions. ”

(a) Who feels a man cannot be a teacher? Why?

Answer:

Margie feels a man cannot be a teacher as a man is not smart enough. Moreover, she was used to being taught by a mechanical teacher.

(b) What does ‘he’ refer to here?

Answer:

‘He’ refers to a man, a human teacher of the twentieth century.

(c) What job did ‘he’ do?

Answer:

His job was to teach boys and girls and give them work to do at home and ask them questions.

(d) Where had the speaker got this information?

Answer:

The speaker, Tommy, had found this information in the old book that he had found in the attic of his house.

Question 12.

Tommy screamed with laughter. “You don’t know much, Margie. The teachers didn’t live in the house. They had a special building and all the kids went there. “

(a) Why did Tommy scream with laughter?

Answer:

Tommy screamed with laughter at the ignorance of Margie who thought that in old times the human teacher lived in the house of a student and taught him there.

(b) What did Margie not know? Why?

Answer:

Margie did not know about the functioning of the schools of olden times because she lived in the year 2157 when education had been made fully computerized.

(c) What 'special building' does the speaker refer to?

Answer:

By 'special building' Tommy means the buildings that housed schools in olden times.

(d) How is the special building a unique place for Margie and Tommy?

Answer:

Margie and Tommy are the students of the year 2157. They are taught at home by mechanical teachers. Their television screen is their school. Therefore, a special building for teaching children is a unique thing for them.

Question 13.

Margie went into the school room. It was right next to her bedroom and the mechanical teacher was on and waiting for her. It was always on at the same time every day except Saturday and Sunday because her mother said little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours.

(a) What was 'it'? Where was 'it'?

Answer:

'It' in these lines is Margie's schoolroom. It was next to her bedroom.

(b) Why was 'it' next to 'her' bedroom?

Answer:

It was next to her bedroom because in the twenty-second century students were taught through a customized education system under where students were taught at home by mechanical teachers.

(c) Why was the mechanical teacher on and waiting for her?

Answer:

The mechanical teacher was on and waiting for her because it was a programmed machine that worked . as per a fixed time-plan and Margie's mother wanted her to follow a fixed time plan.

(d) Why did Margie not like the mechanical teacher?

Answer:

Margie did not like the mechanical teacher because it was very boring and demanding. She had to sit in front of it regularly at fixed hours.

Question 14.

Margie did so with a sigh. She was thinking about the old schools they had when her grandfather's grandfather was a little boy. All the kids from the whole neighbourhoods came, laughing and shouting in the schoolyard, sitting together in the school room going home together at the end of the day. They learned the same things, so that they could help one another with the home work and talk about it.

(a) What did Margie do with a sigh?

Answer:

Margie put her homework into the slot of her mechanical teacher with a sigh.

(b) Which school is Margie thinking about in the above lines?

Answer:

Margie was thinking about the old schools of centuries ago as written about in the book Tommy had found.

(c) Where was Margie's school? Did she have any classmates?

Answer:

Margie's school was in her home itself. It was right next to her bedroom. No, she did not have any classmates.

(d) How is the school under reference different from the present ones?

Answer:

The present schools were located in the student's house, where a mechanical teacher taught the student as per the child's individual capacity. The schools under reference had a separate building where all children of a certain age were taught together by human teachers.