

The Third level (Vistas Supplementary Reader)

1. Read the following extracts and answer the questions. (2024)

Anyway, here's what happened at Grand Central. One night last summer I worked late at the office. I was in a hurry to get uptown to my apartment so I decided to take the subway from Grand Central because it's faster than the bus.

Now, I don't know why this should have happened to me. I'm just an ordinary guy named Charley, thirty-one years old, and I was wearing a tan gabardine suit and a straw hat with a fancy band; I passed a dozen men who looked just like me.

(i) List any two details about how Charley was dressed up.

Ans.

- tan gabardine suit
- a straw hat with a fancy band

(ii) Charley decided to use the subway because it was :

- (A) quicker.
- (B) cheaper.
- (C) more fashionable.
- (D) safer.

Ans. (A) quicker.

(iii) Complete the following sentence appropriately.

Landing at the third level was due to Charley's flight of _____ .

Ans. imagination / fantasy / stairs

(iv) Which time frame is represented through the kind of outfit mentioned in the extract ?

- (A) pre world war era
- (B) the present times
- (C) the eighteenth century
- (D) in the future



Ans. (B) the present times

2. In the story "The Third Level", reality and fantasy are interwoven. Justify.

(2024)

Ans.

Reality

- post world war II scenario of 20th century
- wants to escape from reality
- took subway, reached 3rd level
- only two levels exist at the Grand Central Station
- Sam, his psychiatrist calls it a waking dream wish fulfillment
- buys old style currency from all his money
- keeps looking for 3rd level but never finds it again
- Sam goes missing – finds Sam's letter in grandfather's collection of first day covers

Fantasy

- Charley's imaginative description of the 3rd level
- old locomotive, smaller rooms , fewer ticket windows and train gates, Old looking information booth
- open gas flame lights, brass spittoons on the floor, pocket gold watch with cover
- "The World" news paper edition dated 11th June 1894
- use of old style currency notes
- old dressing style of men and women



Previous Years' CBSE Board Questions

SAI (2 marks)

1. Why did the booking clerk refuse to accept the money offered by Charley?

(2023)

SA III (4 marks)

2. To make sure, I walked over the news boy and glanced at the stack of papers at his feet. It was The World and The World hasn't been published for years. The lead story said something about President Cleveland. I've found that front page since in the Public library files, and it was printed June 11, 1894. I turned toward the ticket windows knowing that here - on the third level at Grand Central - I could buy tickets that would take Louisa and me anywhere in the United States we wanted to go. In the year 1894. And I wanted two tickets to Galesburg Illinois.

(2023)

(i) The newspaper that covered the lead story about President Cleveland was

- (a) The Pioneer
- (b) The New York Times
- (c) The World
- (d) The Times

(ii) The narrator wanted to buy tickets to _____.

(iii) Which of the following in the extract most nearly means the opposite of 'stare'?

- (a) glance
- (b) peek
- (c) ignore
- (d) examine

(iv) Charley wanted two tickets because he wanted to go with

- (a) Sam
- (b) Cleveland
- (c) Louisa
- (d) the Psychiatrist



3. Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow: (2023)

941 Willard Street

Galesburg, Illinois

July 18, 1894

Charley

I got to wishing that you were right. Then I got to believing you were right. And, Charley, it's true; I found the third level! I've been here two weeks, and right now, down the street at the Daly's, someone is playing a piano, and they're all out on the front porch singing 'Seeing Nelly Home'. And I'm invited over for lemonade. Come on back, Charley and Louisa. Keep looking till you find the third level! It's worth it, believe me!

The note is signed Sam.

(i) What was the feeling of Sam as conveyed in the letter? Choose the appropriate option in the context of the extract.

(a) surprise

(b) doubt

(c) excitement

(d) anger

(ii) What was Sam Weiner's reaction when Charley told him about the third level?

(a) dismissal

(b) acceptance

(c) wonderstruck

(d) puzzled

(iii) The phrase 'Charley, it's true' in the context of the extract implies which of the given options?

I. Sam is relaxed

II. Charley had migrated with Louisa

III. The existence of the third level

IV. Sam had met Charley's grandfather Choose the most appropriate option:

(a) I and II

(b) II and IV

(c) I and III

(d) IV only



(iv) Sam wrote the letter to Charley in order to _____.

LA II (6 marks)

4. Describe briefly the scene at the third level of Grand Central as seen (or seemed to be seen) by Charley.

(2020)

5. How does Charley try to escape from the world of insecurity, fear, war, worry and stress?

(2020 C)

CBSE Sample Questions

MCQ (1 mark)

1. Classify (1) to (4) as fact (F) or opinion (O), based on your reading of the third level.

(1) First day covers are never opened.

(2) Grand Central is growing like a tree.

(3) President Roosevelt collected stamps.

(4) Sam was Charley's psychiatrist.

(a) F-1,3,4; 0-2

(b) F-2, 3; 0-1,4

(c) F-2; 0-1,3,4

(d) F-3, 4; 0-1,2

(Term I, 2021-22)

SA I (2 marks)

2. 'It's easy to judge others and give advice, but much more difficult to apply it to ourselves. Elaborate with reference to the character of Sam in The Third Level.

(2022-23)

3. In his letter to Charley, Sam writes, "... then I got to believing you were right." What could have made Sam begin to believe?

(2020-21)

LA I (5 marks)

4. Read the given extract to attempt questions that follow:

He said I was unhappy. That made my wife kind of mad, but he explained that he meant the modern world is full of insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it, and that I just want to escape. Well, who doesn't? Everybody I know wants to escape, but they don't wander down into any third level at Grand Central Station.

But that's the reason, he said, and my friends all agreed. Everything points to it, they claimed. My stamp collecting, for example; that's a 'temporary refuge from reality. Well, maybe, but my grandfather didn't need any refuge from reality.

(i) Why did Sam's verdict make Charley's wife 'mad'?

- (a) It made it difficult for her to accept that Charley would consult a psychiatrist.
- (b) It seemed to suggest to her that she was the cause of Charley's unhappiness.
- (c) It made her aware of Charley's delicate state of mind.
- (d) It offended her that Charley and Sam collectively accused her.

(ii) Sam's explanation to the reaction of Charley's wife was _____ in nature.

- (a) critical
- (b) aggressive
- (c) clarifying
- (d) accusatory

(iii) Select the option that signifies the condition of people of the 'modern world' mentioned in the extract.

- (1) unsure
- (2) lazy
- (3) offensive
- (4) anxious
- (5) afraid
- (a) (1) and (3)
- (b) (2) and (5)
- (c) (2), (3) and (4)
- (d) (1), (4) and (5)

(iv) Select the option that displays a cause-effect set.

(a)

cause	effect
Charley's stamp collecting	Wandering into the third level

(b)

cause	effect
Everybody wants to escape	Modern world full of insecurity

(c)

cause	effect
Charley's wandering into the third level	Charley's stamp collecting

(d)

cause	effect
Modern world full of insecurity	Everybody wants to escape

(v) Why didn't Charley's grandfather need refuge from reality?

(a) He was too busy to bother.

(b) He had chosen to deny his reality.

(c) He lived in peaceful times.

(d) He was a very secure person.

(Term I, 2021-22)

ANSWERS

Previous Years' CBSE Board Questions

1. The money that Charley offered the billing clerk were old-style bills, bigger in size and they looked different. He did not pay in the currency notes that were in circulation in 1894. Therefore, the clerk refused the money and threatened Charley.

2. (a) (i) (c) The World

(ii) The narrator wanted to buy tickets to Galesburg, Illinois.

(iii) (c) ignore

(iv) (c) Louisa

3. (i) (c) excitement

(ii) (b) acceptance

(iii) (c) I and III

(iv) confirm the existence of the third level.

4. When Charley reached the third level of the Grand Central Railway Station, New York much to his amazement, Charley saw a world that looked hundred years old, everyone was dressed like in 1890s, people had side burns and funny moustaches and beards. They had gold pocket watches with strings in their vests. Men wore derby hats, four buttoned suits and tiny lapels. Women wore dresses with leg of mutton sleeves, skirts to the top of high buttoned shoes. There were no electricity instead open-flame gaslights. The gas lights were dim and flickering. The currency which was used there was old fashioned. The locomotives running there were very small. There were brass spittoons on the floor. It was like Charley had deported himself in an old-world setting.



5. Charley was not satisfied with his life. His fears, anxieties and insecurities are taking a toll on his mind. Feeling helpless and frustrated with his life, he seeks temporary respite from the harsh realities of life.

Being unable to cope with his fast paced and stressful life, his flight to the third level was undoubtedly a medium of escape for him. But the whole episode of the third level through which he was able to time travel to the past was but a creation of his own mind. He wants to escape from the modern world of insecurity, fear, worries, war, stress, and the like. Through this time travel, he seeks an exit, a medium to get away from the world of dreams and fancies. His imagination of the Grand Central as a tree growing roots clearly shows his need to keep it as a thriving reality for him to escape any time he struggles with reality.

CBSE Sample Questions

1. (a) F-1,3,4; 0-2

2. In the lesson "The Third Level", Charley, a curious 31 year old man who commutes daily, accidentally arrives at a 3rd level of (imaginary) Grand Central Station. His psychiatrist, Sam diagnoses Charley's problem as an escape from life, although he himself is bothered by the humdrum existence and is frustrated. While no one is sure if such a world exists, the psychiatrist has a desire to live in a tranquil, easy going, peaceful and contented life at Galesburg and he disappears one day. This is a very interesting turn to the story. In a strange way, both Charley and Sam are similar because they both wish to escape the insecurities and anxieties of modern-day life and want to return to 1894, when they didn't hear about world wars. This shows that Sam is the same as Charley. While Sam could have dismissed Charley's discovery and imagination concerns and judged him as a psychiatrist and pathologise him, he did not. He instead set out to discover the truth himself and find a cure from his problems just like Charley. So, the sentence "It's easy to judge others and give advice, but much more difficult to apply it to ourselves", holds true in the context of Sam's story.

3. Sam's letter to Charley is a mystery that blends together the worlds of reality and fantasy, and thus, needs further exploration. There are two perspectives from which one can look at the letter. At one level, it proves that Sam has reached Galesburg of 1984. Maybe Sam did find the third level exist while trying to help Charley dismantle his delusion. But it could also mean that Sam, as his psychiatrist, only wanted to give a closure to Charley's obsession with the third level. There's no certain conclusion on what made Sam believes in Charley as the letter itself is vague and strange.

4. (i) (b) It seemed to suggest to her that she was the cause of Charley's unhappiness.



(ii) (c) clarifying

(iii) (d) (1), (4) and (5)

(iv) (d)

cause	effect
Modern world full of insecurity	Everybody wants to escape

(v) (c) He lived in peaceful times.

