

On the Face of It (Vistas Supplementary Reader)

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

Derry: I...there....I thought this was an empty place. I didn't know there was anybody here....

Mr. Lamb: That's all right. I'm here. What are you afraid of, boy?
That's all right.

Derry: I thought it was empty....an empty house.

Mr. Lamb: So, it is. Since I'm out here in the garden. It is empty. Until I go back inside. In the meantime, I'm out here and likely to stop. A day like this. Beautiful day. Not a day to be indoors.

Derry: [Panic] I've got to go.

(i) Derry was stammering because of :

- (A) a speech defect.
- (B) excitement.
- (C) anger.
- (D) fear.

Ans. (D) fear.

(ii) Complete the sentence appropriately.

Derry insisted on going back because _____.

Ans. was taken by surprise when he saw Mr. Lamb / panicked after seeing Mr. Lamb /thought it was an empty house

(iii) Mr. Lamb was trying to tell Derry that :

- (A) it was a matter of perception.
- (B) Derry could stay with him.
- (C) he spent all his days in the garden.



(D) he was fond of company.

Ans. (A) it was a matter of perception. / (B) Derry could stay with him.

(iv) From the extract, one can infer that Mr. Lamb was a/an :

- (A) compassionate man.
- (B) mysterious character.
- (C) new neighbour.
- (D) unreasonable man.

Ans. (A) compassionate man.

Previous Years' CBSE Board Questions

SA I (2 marks)

1. Why does Derry not like being with people? (2023)
2. How does Mr. Lamb try to overcome loneliness? (2022 C)
3. Why does Mr. Lamb not react when Derry climbs over the garden wall and enter his garden? (2022 C)
4. When Mr. Lamb tells Derry that, while some describe the sound that the bees make as 'buzzing', to him it seems they are singing. What character trait of Mr. Lamb is brought to light? Why?

(Term II, 2021-22)

5. How did Mr. Lamb's conversation and company change Derry's desire to isolate himself from the world?

(Term II, 2021-22)

6. Why does Derek (Derry) not like being with people? (2020 C)
7. In what sense is the friendship between Mr. Lamb and Derry fruitful? (Delhi 2014C)
8. Why did Mr. Lamb help Derry? (AI 2014C)

SA II (3 marks)

9. Why does Derry's mother not want him to go back to visit Mr. Lamb? (2018)
10. Why did Derry insist that he would go back to Mr. Lamb? (Delhi 2015C)



11. How did Derry's handicap damage his life? (AI 2015C)

SA III (4 marks)

Read the following extract and answer the questions that follows:

12. Derry: What do you do all day?

Mr. Lamb: Sit in the sun. Read books, Ah, you thought it was an empty house, but inside, it's full. Books and other things. Full.

Derry: But there aren't any curtains at the windows.

Mr. Lamb: I'm not fond of curtains, shutting things out, shutting things in. I like the light and the darkness, and the windows open, to hear the wind.

(2023)

(i) The description of the house indicates that Mr. Lamb _____.

(ii) The expression 'does not like shutting things out, shutting things in' suggest Mr. Lamb's

(a) welcoming nature.

(b) poverty-stricken existence.

(c) lack of resources.

(d) confused state of mind.

(iii) Mr. Lamb spends his time _____.

I. reading books

II. cooking meals

III. shutting things out

IV. enjoying beauties of nature

Which of the following options are appropriate?

(a) I and IV

(b) II, III and IV

(c) I and II

(d) I and III

(iv) On the basis of the extract, study the two statements, I and II given below:

I. Mr. Lamb liked meeting people.

II. Mr. Lamb accepted life as it came.

Choose the most appropriate option:

(a) I can be inferred from the extract, but II cannot.

(b) II can be inferred from the extract, but I cannot.

(c) Both I and II can be inferred from the extract.

(d) Neither I nor II can be inferred from the extract.

LA I (5 marks)

13. Mr. Lamb stands as a symbol of optimism and hope. Support your answer with examples from the text. **(2023)**

14. What benefits did Derry reap from his association with Mr. Lamb?
(Delhi 2014)

15. Both Derry and Lamb are physically impaired and lonely. It is the responsibility of society to understand and support people with infirmities so that they do not suffer from a sense of alienation. As a responsible citizen, write in about 100 words what you would do to bring about a change in the lives of such people. **(AI 2014)**

LA II (6 marks)

16. "Things that matter. Things nobody else has ever said. Things I want to think about." What are the 'things' that Derry is referring to? How did Derry's chance meeting with Mr. Lamb prove meaningful for him? **(AI 2019)**

17. Derry and Mr. Lamb both are victims of physical impairment, but their attitudes towards life are completely different. Elaborate. **(Delhi 2019)**

18. Derry's association with Mr. Lamb brings about a welcome change in his life. Comment. **(2019 C)**

19. Derry sneaked into Mr. Lamb's Garden and it became a turning point in his life. Comment. **(Delhi 2016)**

20. Both Derry and Lamb are victims of physical impairment, but much more painful for them is the feeling of loneliness. Comment. **(AI 2016)**

21. Both Derry and Lamb are victims of physical impairment, yet each has a different attitude from the other. Comment. **(Foreign 2016)**

22. What change took place in Derry when he met Mr. Lamb? **(Delhi 2015C)**

LA IV (10 marks)

23. How did Mr. Lamb's meeting with Derry become a turning point in Derry's life? **(Delhi 2015C)**



CBSE Sample Questions

SA I (2 marks)

1. How do you think Derry's mother contributes to his sense of alienation and isolation?

(Term II, 2021-22)

SA III (4 marks)

2. DERRY: You're... peculiar. You say peculiar things.

You ask questions I don't understand _____.

MR LAMB: I like to talk. Have company. You don't have to answer questions.

You don't have to stop here at all. The gate's open.

DERRY: Yes, but...

MR LAMB: I've a hive of bees behind those trees over there. Some hear bees and they say, bees buzz. But when you listen to bees for a long while, they humm. ... and hum means 'sing'. I hear them singing, my bees.

DERRY: But...I like it here. I came in because I liked it when I looked over the wall.

MR LAMB: If you'd seen me, you'd not have come in.

DERRY: No. (2022-23)

(i) List the playwright's purpose of using ellipses (...) in this extract.

(ii) Select the option that best describes Derry and Mr. Lamb in the extract.

- (a) Derry: introvert; Mr. Lamb: friendly
- (b) Derry: fearful; Mr. Lamb: domineering
- (c) Derry: friendly; Mr. Lamb: weird
- (d) Derry: open minded; Mr. Lamb: charming

(iii) Which of the following best summarises Mr. Lamb's attitude towards the bees?

- (a) Beauty is being true to yourself.
- (b) There is a kind of beauty in imperfection.



(c) Beauty is the promise of happiness.

(d) The beauty of the world lies in the details.

(iv) Derry says, "I came in here because I liked it" What was the one significant thing Derry might have liked about the place, as per the extract?

LAI (5 marks)

3. Mr. Lamb calls Derek his friend while Derek refuses his affirmation. Would you consider their relationship with each other as friendship? Support your answer with reference to the instance(s) from the text. **(2020-21)**

ANSWERS

Previous Years' CBSE Board Questions

1. Derry has a disfigured face due to an acid burn. He thinks that his face looks ugly and repulses people and they don't prefer talking to him because of it. He feels secluded from society. He complains that total strangers also call him "a terrible thing". They pity him. All these experiences have resulted in him developing an inferiority complex and it is the main reason Derry doesn't like being with people.

2. Mr. Lamb would always keep his gate open so that strangers would enter and have a conversation with him. He did not mind people entering his gate and would openly start a conversation with whoever is willing. He also revealed that he would listen to the bees 'sing' and not 'buzz'.

3. As he was living alone, Mr. Lamb would always keep his gate open so that strangers may enter and have a conversation with him. And even though Derry did not enter through the gate but climbed in from the wall, Mr. Lamb did not mind. He simply observed the young boy from a distance and then tried to have a conversation with him to ease him up.

4. In spite of his own handicap, Mr. Lamb lived an independent life and also encouraged the young Derry to focus on the positive things in life. He wanted him to have a positive approach, not wallowing in self-pity and face the world boldly and confidently.

5. Mr. Lamb presented a positive vibe to Derry and lent a listening and patient ear to the young boy. He also talked about things that matter in life and told him to focus on the future. This inspired Derry to be confident and not wallow in self-pity. Mr. Lamb's optimism instilled a newfound confidence in the young boy to come out of his shell and start living life in his own terms.



6. Derry did not like being with people because of his acid-burned face. He did not like people staring at his face, wondering or even pitying him. He also said that people pretend to not see his face so as not to make him upset. The very thought of people pitying him and pretending to not notice the burned face is why Derry did not like 'being with people, any people'.

7. Mr. Lamb helped Derry overcome his sense of inferiority. He advised him not to pay too much attention to what others thought about him; to celebrate life and its wonders. Mr. Lamb brought about a positive change in Derry's attitude.

8. Mr. Lamb helped Derry because he too was handicapped, therefore he understood how Derry felt. Also, he was concerned about Derry's negative attitude towards life. Mr. Lamb wanted to save the little boy from the habit of self-pitying.

9. Derry's mother does not want him to go back to visit Mr. Lamb because she has not heard good things about him and hence, she does not have positive views about him. She thinks that Mr. Lamb is not a nice man and forbids Derry to get acquainted with him or even see him.

10. Derry insisted that he would go back to Mr. Lamb because it was for the first time that Derry felt comfortable and happy in someone's presence. That someone was Mr. Lamb. While Derry was jovial with Mr. Lamb, Derry completely forgot about his burnt face. He felt that he too could live an independent life for he had all his faculty intact. Therefore, even though his mother forbade him from meeting Mr. Lamb, Derry insisted on going; he did not want to lose his newly found companion.

11. Fourteen years old Derry had half a burnt face, which resulted in poor self image. He became conscious of people's stares and their comments hurt him. This made him avoid people. Eventually, he became introverted. Thus, Derry's handicap damaged his life.

12. (i) Mr. Lamb is free and happy on his own.

(ii) (a) welcoming nature.

(iii) (a) I and IV

(iv) (c) Both I and II can be inferred from the extract.

13. Derry is a withdrawn and defiant boy. He does not like to be around people because they look at his face and pass uncharitable remarks. Once, one side of his face got burnt by acid, which left a scar on his face. This created a complex in his mind. He thinks that people are afraid of him. Mr. Lamb is a physically challenged man, whose one leg is made of tin.

Mr. Lamb is a complete contrast to Derry when it comes to his attitude and outlook towards life. He is an optimist who does not allow trivial teasing and name calling bother him. In fact, he likes having company. Mr. Lamb is not repulsed by Derry's scarred face. Neither is he angry nor put off by the boy's rudeness. Instead, Mr. Lamb understands Derry's anguish and tries to make him realise that being handicapped is not a drawback.

His meeting with Mr. Lamb becomes a turning point in Derry's life because Derry is ready to overcome his obstacles and face the world. He finds courage and strength to get and do what he wants.

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16. In the story, both Derry and Lamb are physically impaired and lonely. To bring about a change in the lives of such people, as a responsible citizen, I shall treat them with respect and honour and not punish them with heartless ridicule and pity. People like Derry and Mr. Lamb expect empathy, rather than sympathy from others. Therefore, instead of looking down upon them with a pessimistic approach, I shall be supportive and considerate. They must be treated as equals. That is why I shall encourage them to take part in all activities. They deserve to study in regular educational institutions and get regular jobs. Therefore, advocacy of this idea is very important. Only proper awareness and empowerment can make the world view them as equals and at the same time make the 'differently abled' people feel socially accepted.

17. Derry is an angry, withdrawn and defiant young boy. One side of his face was burnt because of which he lacked self-confidence. He was lonely because he had no friends. People either feared him, found him disgusting to look at, treated him with pity or made fun of him. Derry had alienated himself from the society completely. One day, Derry sneaked into Mr. Lamb's Garden and it became a turning point in his life.

One of Mr. Lamb's leg was made out of tin. Due to his physical impairment, he could not move around much. As a result, Mr. Lamb too was isolated from the rest; children called him Lamey-Lamb. However, it did not affect him. Instead, he always kept the gates of his garden open.

Seeing Derry suffer so much at such a young age, Mr. Lamb struck up a conversation with him. Spending time with Mr. Lamb made Derry look at the world and love and admire everything he saw and heard.

Mr. Lamb encouraged Derry to make friends and not be bothered by their comments. He told the boy not to hate people. Mr. Lamb's life and attitude inspired Derry quite a lot. In spite of his handicap, Mr. Lamb lived an independent and happy life. Seeing his positive approach to life, Derry decides to get rid of the habit of self-pity and face the world boldly with his newly gained self-confidence.

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20. Mr. Lamb and Derry have different sorts of physical disability. While Mr. Lamb has a tin leg, one side of Derry's face was burnt by acid and now is scarred. Both Derry and Mr. Lamb are victims of physical impairment, but much more painful for them is the feeling of loneliness. Both suffer alienation from the society. Derry feels that he is feared rather than accepted by the society because of his scarred face.

Mr. Lamb also has to face name calling - 'Lamey-Lamb' although it does not bother him much. Loneliness has caused constant pain for both Derry and Mr. Lamb. They both crave for friends, but neither of them has it. However, while his isolation makes Derry a bitter person, Mr. Lamb has a positive outlook and believes that being a handicap is not a drawback. Both expect that the society would neither treat them differently, as freaks, nor with pity. They want to be treated with empathy as equals.



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CBSE Sample Questions

1. Derry's mother saw her son only with pity and a helpless victim, overprotectively trying to shield him from the outside world. Though this may have been a great motherly gesture, the inner desire of Derry to have companionship, the need to interact with others would only lead to him feeling alienated and isolated from anyone. His need and eventual return to Mr. Lamb is a result of his longing for companionship.

2. (i) To indicate that the character is pausing as he thinks and speaks his words.

(ii) (a) Derry: introvert; Mr. Lamb: friendly

(iii) (d) The beauty of the world lies in the details.

(iv) Because the place was beautiful and away from the crowd.

3. Derek and Mr Lamb share a bond indeed. Their friendship was founded on the fact that both had physical deformities. What connected Mr. Lamb and Derry is the loneliness and alienation they experience on account of their physical disabilities. Mr. Lamb lost a leg in the war and has a tin leg while Derry has an acid burn on one cheek which gives him an ugly appearance. The actual pain and inconvenience caused by a disability is often much less than the sense of estrangement felt by a disabled person. But, unlike Derry, Mr. Lamb always maintains a positive attitude towards life and is a downright extrovert.

Mr. Lamb inspires Derry by telling him not to focus on the shortcomings of life and his handicap and instead he should try to enjoy the blessings of life. He tells him to be thankful to God for two arms, two legs, two eyes and ears, a tongue and a brain and advises him to be friendly with everyone around him. Mr. Lamb's inexplicable words of wisdom inspire Derry and towards the end of the story we see him rushing back to Mr. Lamb's Garden to adopt the attitude and path that have been shown by him. Derry's long conversation with Mr. Lamb helps him overcome his inferiority complex and poor self-esteem.

