

# No Men Are Foreign

## Introduction

This poem has been written by James Kirkup, an English poet. The poem emphasises the fact that basically all men across all nations are similar.

## Summary

The poet says that no men are strange and none of the countries are foreign. Under different dresses a similar body breathes. Everybody walks on the same land and everybody will ultimately lie down in the lap of mother earth. The poet further says that everyone needs sun, air and water for their survival. The peaceful times help people to flourish and grow whereas wars leads to starvation everywhere. Everybody has to work to earn their living. He further goes on to say that everyone has eyes through which they see. They are easily won over by love. The poet also says that in every country life is the common factor that all recognise and understand. The poet also cautions us against those who try to spread the poison of hatred. He says that everyone is our brother and when we fight it is only with our brothers. Also by fighting we pollute the environment with feelings of hatred and contempt. So, the poet wants us to remember that basically all men are the same living on the laps of Earth.

## Message

The poem conveys the message of universal brotherhood and peace.

## Extract Based Questions ↘

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow:

1. Remember, no men are strange, no countries foreign

Beneath all uniforms, a single body breathes  
Like ours; the land our brothers walk upon  
Is earth like this, in which we all shall lie.

- (a) 'Uniforms' in this extract refers to that of .....
- (b) The message is that the entire Earth is one and all the people living on this Earth belong to .....
- (c) The poet in this extract is attempting to remove the ..... from the Earth.
- (i) caste system                      (ii) borders  
(iii) humanity                        (iv) people
- (d) An antonym of the word 'foreign' is .....

### Answers

- (a) soldiers  
(b) one human race  
(c) (ii) borders  
(d) native
2. They, too, aware of sun and air and water,  
Are fed by peaceful harvests, by war's long winter starv'd.  
Their hands are ours, and in their lines we read  
A labour not different from our own.
- (a) 'They' in this extract refers to .....
- (b) 'War' has been compared with .....
- (c) 'Peaceful harvests' here in this extract means:
- (i) ample wealth  
(ii) get food during the time of peace  
(iii) relaxed life  
(iv) natural things
- (d) State whether the given statement is True or False.  
The poet says that everyone has to work to earn his living.

### Answers

- (a) people of other countries or foreigners  
(b) winter  
(c) (ii) get food during the time of peace  
(d) True
3. Remember they have eyes like ours that wake  
Or sleep, and strength that can be won  
By love. In every land is common life  
That all can recognise and understand.
- (a) The God has given the people of another country the ..... which can be won through love.  
(b) The message conveyed through this extract is that if we understand the feelings of others, there will be no ..... between us.  
(c) The common thing in every land is:
- (i) strength                              (ii) human beings  
(iii) life                                    (iv) feelings
- (d) An antonym of the word 'common' is .....

### Answers

- (a) strength  
(b) wars  
(c) (iii) life  
(d) rare
4. Let us remember, whenever we are told  
To hate our brothers, it is ourselves  
That we shall dispossess, betray, condemn.  
Remember, we who take arms against each other.  
It is the human earth that we defile.
- (a) 'We' here are told to .....
- (b) Whenever we pick weapons against any person we make the Earth .....
- (c) The poet says that we should stay away from:
- (i) humanity                              (ii) enemies  
(iii) tolerance                            (iv) negativity
- (d) A synonym of the word 'condemn' is .....



## Answers

- (a) hate other country's people
- (b) defile
- (c) (iv) negativity
- (d) censure/denounce

### Short Answer Type Questions ↘

**Q 1. Explain, 'in their lines we read, A labour not different from our own'.**

**Ans.** The poet wants to say that people across nations have lines on their hands. These lines are made by hard work that we do to earn their living. By saying these lines the poet wants to convey the fact that no one across the world can sustain himself without hard work. It is a common factor which bounds us together.

**Q 2. Who are our brothers? What shall happen if we hate our brothers?**

**Ans.** The poet says that people living across the countries are our brothers. If we hate our brothers' we deprive humanity of its true self. It is a sense of betraying and condemning ourselves.

**Q 3. When do we defile the Earth?**

**Ans.** We defile the Earth when we take up arms against each other, that is during the periods of war. Earth is ruined through war, hatred and exploitation of any kind.

**Q 4. When the poet mentions that no men are strange and no countries foreign, what is it that we think of?**

**Ans.** According to the poet we should remember that basically all human beings are similar and that they live on similar lands. Everyone eats, drinks and breathes and then die. All understand the feeling of love and everyone faces devastation during wars.

**Q 5. Explain the line, 'In every land is common life'.**

**Ans.** This line in the poem explains that life is common in every country which can be easily recognised and understood.

**Q 6. How does the Earth act as a unifying force for people living in different countries?**

**Ans.** The Earth acts as a unifying force in the following manner:

- (i) All human beings walk on Earth.
- (ii) After their death, all human beings will become a part of the Earth.

### Long Answer Type Questions ↘

**Q 1. Why do you think we don't live with other people harmoniously? What makes us fight and hurt other people? Discuss.**

**Ans.** Some deep-rooted evils in our society discriminate between people. We know that all customs and conventions have been made by people. God has made all people equal. But we differentiate between people for our selfish motives. We start to hate even our family members due to our ego to be more powerful. By doing so, we harm ourselves. We become the objects of spreading hate in the society. In society, people dislike selfish people. So, before doing any act, first of all we should think whether such an act is justified. We should learn to live with others as brothers. We should learn to tolerate, forgive and compromise. Only in this way, our life would be happy and peaceful.

**Q 2. Describe in your own words that 'No Men Are Foreign'.**

**Ans.** In the poem, '*No Men Are Foreign*' the poet states that all human beings in this world are the same. They are like blood brothers. Their bodies are the same under different nationalities. The land on which they walk is the same. They are dependent of sun, air, water, etc., like us. Their hands are like ours. They labour with their hands as we labour with our hands. Their eyes are like ours. They can be won by love as we can be. Life is common in every land that can be recognised and understood. So, when we hate people living in other countries, we betray ourselves. We must remember that when we fight together, we make the Earth suffer. Our hatred insults our innocence so we must love all human beings as we all are the same.