

# 4

## A Roadside Stand

### Fastrack Revision

#### Master Card

- ▶ A roadside stand constructed outside a small house, by the side of the road.
- ▶ Seems to request the fast speeding cars to stop.
- ▶ Is symbolic of the desire of rural people to earn money by selling products to the rich travellers from city.

#### City Elites

- ▶ Mean and insensitive, no one ever stops or gives them a thought.
- ▶ If ever the rich talk about the poor, it is to criticise them for having constructed a stand that spoiled the beauty of the surroundings.

#### Rural People

- ▶ Innocent
- ▶ Believe city money can help them live a comfortable life as shown in the movies or promised by political parties.
- ▶ Trust often betrayed by the rich folks.
- ▶ A hollow promise made by the rich elites from the city : Rural people will be relocated to a better area with theatre and store.

#### Irony

- ▶ Comforts promised only to distract them from the real issues of poverty.
- ▶ Served vested (selfish) interests of the rich.
- ▶ Deprived them of peace of mind.
- ▶ As long as the rural people ignorant and unaware of their exploitation, the rich remain at peace.
- ▶ The poet, *Robert Frost*, feels pained at the childlike longing on the faces of the poor.
- ▶ Realises villagers wait all day at windows.

#### Literary Devices used in the Poem

- ▶ Transferred epithet—'Polished traffic' and 'Selfish cars'. (Description)
- ▶ Personification—'The sadness that lurks behind the window', 'The roadside stand that too pathetically pled'.
- ▶ Alliteration: 'greedy good-doers' and 'beneficent beasts of prey', 'pathetically pled'.
- ▶ Oxymoron : 'greedy good-doers' and 'beneficent beasts of prey'. (Contrast)





# Practice Exercise



## Extract Based Questions

**Directions:** Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow:

1. **In front at the edge of the road where the traffic sped,  
A roadside stand too pathetically pled,  
It would not be fair to say for a dole of bread,  
But for some of the money, the cash, whose flow supports  
The flower of cities from sinking and withering faint.  
The polished traffic passed with a mind ahead,  
Or if ever aside a moment, then out of sorts  
At having the landscape marred with the artless paint  
Of signs that with N turned wrong and S turned wrong**  
(CBSE 2023)

- (a) What is the tone of the poet in the extract?  
(i) optimistic (ii) resigned  
(iii) sympathetic (iv) Indifferent
- (b) With reference to the given extract, what harm has been caused by the 'artless paint'?
- (c) The city folk are compared to .....  
(i) a landscape (ii) signs of N and S  
(iii) a flower (iv) a dole of bread
- (d) The roadside stand is:  
(i) at the edge of the road.  
(ii) marred with artless paint.  
(iii) like the flower of cities.  
(iv) well maintained.
- (e) What type of expectations do the stand owners have from the city dwellers who come there?
- (f) Complete the analogy with a word from the given extract:  
donate : contribute :: dying : .....

### Answers

- (a) (iii) sympathetic  
(b) The artless paint of signs made at the stand has spoiled the beauty of the landscape. On seeing it, the city people feel out of sorts.  
(c) (iii) a flower  
(d) (i) at the edge of the road.  
(e) The stand owners expect from the city dwellers who come there that they should stop there and buy some goods from them so as to enable them to earn some extra money for a decent living.  
(f) withering
2. **Sometimes I feel myself I can hardly bear  
The thought of so much childish longing in vain,  
The sadness that lurks near the open window there,  
That waits all day in almost open prayer.  
For the squeal of brakes, the sound of a stopping car,  
Of all the thousand selfish cars that pass,  
Just one to inquire what a farmer's prices are,**  
(CBSE 2023)

- (a) What is the sentiment expressed in the above extract?  
(I) remorse (II) regret  
(III) empathy (IV) disappointment  
(V) guilt  
Choose the correct appropriate option:  
(i) (III) and (IV) (ii) (II) and (III)  
(iii) (IV) and (V) (iv) (I) and (V)
- (b) Identify the phrase in the extract that suggests 'innocent desires'.
- (c) The roadside stand owners pray for .....  
(i) a relief from the heat  
(ii) free housing  
(iii) cars stopping  
(iv) benefits from pollution
- (d) Complete the following analogy correctly:  
He fought like a lion : Simile :: selfish cars : .....
- (e) On the basis of the extract, choose the correct option with reference to (I) and (II) given below:  
(I) The people who have put up the roadside stand keep waiting for customers.  
(II) They become sad when someone turns up.  
(i) (I) is true, but (II) is false.  
(ii) (I) is false, but (II) is true.  
(iii) Both (I) and (II) are true.  
(iv) Both (I) and (II) are false.
- (f) Fill the blank appropriately with reference to the extract:  
'Squeal of brakes' implies .....

### Answers

- (a) (i) (III) and (IV)  
(b) Childish longing  
(c) (iii) cars stopping  
(d) transferred epithet  
(e) (i) (I) is true, but (II) is false.  
(f) stopping of cars
3. **Or beauty rest in a beautiful mountain scene,  
You have the money, but if you want to be mean,  
Why keep your money (this crossly) and go along.  
The hurt to the scenery wouldn't be my complaint  
So much as the trusting sorrow of what is unsaid:**
- (a) Whom does the poet call as 'mean'?  
(i) The owner of the shed  
(ii) The rich people of the city  
(iii) Those who buy things from the roadside standers  
(iv) None of the above
- (b) Whom do the roadside standers complain?  
(i) The people who live around  
(ii) The rich passengers who go away without buying anything from them  
(iii) The people in power who keep bullying them  
(iv) None of the above



- (c) The name of the poem is .....
- (d) Whom does 'you' refer to?
- (e) What does 'mean' mean here?
- (f) State whether the given statement is True or False.

The country folk are happy and satisfied.

### Answers

- (a) (ii) The rich people of the city
- (b) (ii) The rich passengers who go away without buying anything from them
- (c) A Roadside Stand
- (d) 'You' refers to the rich people in their cars, coming from cities.
- (e) 'Mean' here means 'miser'.
- (f) False

4. Here far from the city we make our roadside stand  
And ask for some city money to feel in hand  
To try if it will not make our being expand,  
And give us the life of the moving-pictures' promise  
That the party in power is said to be keeping from us.

- (a) Where do they make their roadside stand?
- (b) What do you understand by 'city money'?
- (i) Money in the form of coins
- (ii) Money which the poor people make by selling their business in the city
- (iii) Money which the rich people earn through business in the city
- (iv) None of the above
- (c) What does the poet want to convey through 'life of the moving-pictures'?
- (i) The luxurious life style which is projected as a dream world in the movies
- (ii) Life of the travellers
- (iii) Life of the pictures which are not still but moving
- (iv) None of the above
- (d) The attitude of the ruling party towards the roadside standers is that .....
- (e) What does 'expand' mean here?
- (f) State whether the given statement is True or False.

The party in power has raised the standard of the country folk.

### Answers

- (a) They make their roadside stand away from the city.
- (b) (iii) Money which the rich people earn through business in the city
- (c) (i) The luxurious life style which is projected as a dream world in the movies
- (d) they promise them but do not fulfil their promises.
- (e) 'Expand' here means 'develop'.
- (f) False

5. It is in the news that all these pitiful kin  
Are to be bought out and mercifully gathered in  
To live in villages, next to the theatre and the store,  
Where they won't have to think for themselves  
anymore,

- (a) Whom does 'these pitiful kin' refer to?
- (i) The rich people of the city
- (ii) The politicians
- (iii) The poor village folk
- (iv) None of the above
- (b) What promise is made to these villagers?
- (i) Their children will be given admission to government schools
- (ii) Their living conditions will be improved
- (iii) The rich people will donate money to them
- (iv) None of the above
- (c) State whether the given statement is True or False.
- The poet's name is *Robert Frost*.
- (d) A synonym of 'gathered' is .....
- (e) What is the rhyme scheme of the stanza?
- (f) Which part of speech does 'mercifully' belong to?

### Answers

- (a) (iii) The poor village folk
- (b) (ii) Their living conditions will be improved
- (c) True
- (d) collected.
- (e) The rhyme scheme of the stanza is *oabb*.
- (f) 'Mercifully' is an adverb.



### Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. The city folk who drove through the countryside hardly paid any heed to the roadside stand or to the people who ran it. If at all they did, it was to complain. Which lines bring this out? What was their complain about?

Ans. "..... then out of sorts

At having the landscape marred with the artless paint  
Of signs that with N turned wrong and S turned  
wrong.'

Their complaint was that the artless and clumsy paint  
on the roadside

stand spoiled the beauty of the whole landscape. They  
were also irritated that even signs like N and S were  
turned wrong.

Q 2. What was the plea of the folk who had put up the roadside stand?

Ans. The folk who had put up the roadside stand expected  
that the city people would stop there to buy something  
or the other but they considered the owners of the  
stand as beggars.

**Q 3. What is the 'childish longing' that the poet refers to? Why is it 'vain'?**

**Ans.** Waiting for the prospective customers is the 'childish longing'. It is vain because they never turn up.

**Q 4. Where was the roadside stand? What was its condition?**

**Ans.** The roadside stand was located at the edge of the highway. Its tastelessly painted signboard hardly attracted anyone, though the owner had given it a new look by renovating its shed.

**Q 5. What support do the countryfolk expect from the city dwellers?**

**Ans.** The money hungry countryfolk look upto the city dwellers for their financial support. They feel that if the city money flows into their hands, they can also hope to lead an improvised life.

**Q 6. What according to the poet, contributes to the progress and affluence of the cities?**

**Ans.** The advancement in science and technology has given rise to industrialisation in the cities which helps in generating money. Hence, their purchasing power has also increased. But the country side is languishing in poverty.

**Q 7. Did the city dwellers stop at the roadside stand?**

**Ans.** The city dwellers hardly bothered to stop at the roadside stand. Firstly they were not impressed by its poor decor. Moreover they were lost in their own worries. The busy life of the city dwellers had made them selfish, so they had no time to wait and fulfil the needs of the poor villagers.

**Q 8. Did the city dwellers appreciate the roadside stand?**

**Ans.** No, the city dwellers never appreciated the roadside stand. They rather found faults in it. Sometime they complained of its poor decor, on other times they would complain about the signs being wrongly put there.

**Q 9. The roadside stand is a farmer's den. What textual evidence do you find in support of your answer?**

**Ans.** The roadside stand is a farmer's den because it sells wild berries and golden squash which are the fruits and vegetables of the country-side. The city dwellers have no interest in things offered to them at the roadside.

**Q 10. How would the flow of city money into the hands of the countryfolk help them?**

**Ans.** If some of the city money flows into the hands of the countryfolk, they would be able to enjoy better life standard and a progressive lifestyle.

**Q 11. What is the complaint of the countryfolk against the party in power?**

**Ans.** The party in power gives them lofty dream by promising them a luxurious and progressive life. But these promises prove to be hollow as they are never materialised. So, the countryfolk complain that they are deprived of what they had been promised by the people in power.

**Q 12. What empty promises are made to the country people?**

**Ans.** The men in power assure the innocent countryfolk through media (newspaper) that they would soon be pulled out of their miserable lot. They would be provided better living conditions with theatres and stores nearby. They can then enjoy a secure life and will not have to worry about themselves any longer.

**Q 13. Quote examples of contrast and irony used in the poem.**

**Ans.** Expressions like 'beneficent beasts of prey' and 'greedy good-doers' beautifully bring out the use of irony and contrast by the poet. The men in power pose to be the benefactors and good doers of the poor rural people. In reality, they are greedy for power and exploit the rural masses for their selfish motives.

**Q 14. Are the politicians genuinely interested in the betterment of the countryside?**

**Ans.** No, not at all, the politicians are not genuinely interested in the upliftment of the countryside. They shower benefits in the form of their false promises only during the times of elections. Thereafter they just sleep over the promises they had made.

**Q 15. What is the 'open prayer' made by the countryfolk?**

**Ans.** The countryfolk make a silent appeal to the city dwellers not to be selfish. They make an open prayer for the city cars to stop at their roadside stand and help them earn some money by buying their stuff so that they can also live a better life.

**Q 16. What are the various reasons for which the cars halt at the roadside stand?**

**Ans.** The city dwellers do brake their cars at the roadside stand but not to buy their articles. They halt at times to plough the grass and use the yard to back and turn around. At other times, they stop to make inquiry regarding the route and sometimes ironically to ask if they could sell then a gallon of gas which they don't seemingly have.

**Q 17. What does the expression 'polished traffic' refer to? What does it reveal about city people? (CBSE 2023)**

**Ans.** The expression 'polished traffic' refers to the shining and bright cars which belonged to the rich people of the city. It reveals about city people that they live a luxurious life. It also suggests that the city has a well-developed infrastructure and transportation system. There is smooth and efficient flow of traffic in the city.

**Q 18. Who does the poet accuse of having double standards in 'A Roadside Stand'? (CBSE 2023)**

**Ans.** The poet accuses the so-called politicians and the welfare organisations who claim that they are helping the poor. They make hollow promises and never fulfil their promises.



## Long Answer Type Questions

**Q 1. How does the poet criticise the city ways?**

**Ans.** The city people being too busy with their materialistic lifestyle have no time to stop for a while and appreciate the natural beauty. They travel by expensive cars and speed past the countryside without showing any compassion and concern for the poor countryfolk. They also show no appreciation towards the beautiful mountain scene. They rather criticise the poor roadside standers for spoiling the scenic beauty of the mountains with their tastelessly painted signboards.

**Q 2. How does the poet highlight the mean and selfish nature of the city dwellers?**

**Ans.** Robert Frost observes the city dwellers as mean and selfish as they fail to realise the miserable condition of the poor people by the roadside. They don't bother to extend financial help to the country folk by buying their stuff. They are rich and affluent but still possessive about their money. They do not let their money flow into the hands of the country folk.

**Q 3. 'A Roadside Stand' is a social satire depicting the two contrasting worlds existing in society. Justify this statement with reference to the poem. (CBSE 2023)**

**Ans.** 'A Roadside Stand' by Robert Frost is certainly a social satire depicting the two contrasting worlds existing in society. The poem is set in a rural countryside, where there is a roadside stand.

The poem describes the two types of people: the rich and the poor. The rich or the city folk are materialistic, superficial and self-absorbed. They have expensive cars, fancy clothes and consider themselves superior. They hardly bother to stop at the roadside stand. The busy life of city dwellers has made them selfish. They have no time to wait and fulfil the needs of the poor.

On the other hand, the country folk have to face struggles and suffer pains. They sell fruits and vegetables. They look upto the city dwellers for financial support. They expect that the city people will stop there to buy something. They feel that if the city money flows into their hands, they can also hope to lead a progressive life. The government and other social service agencies appear to help them, but actually do them no good.

**Q 4. Imagine you are Pablo Neruda, the poet of *Keeping Quiet*.**

**What advice might you offer to Robert Frost, the poet of *A Roadside Stand*, in the context of his conflicted emotions, as displayed in the given lines:**

*The requisite lift of spirit has never been found,  
Or so the voice of the country seems to complain,  
I can't help owning the great relief it would be  
To put these people at one stroke out of their pain.*

Pen down your advice, in a letter to Frost.

You may begin this way:

Dear Robert,

I recently read your poem, "A Roadside Stand," and...

You may end this way:

I hope this advice is helpful to you. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to support you.

Warmly,

Pablo Neruda

(CBSE SQP 2023-24)

**Ans.** Dear Robert,

I recently read your poem, "A Roadside Stand," and was struck by the conflicting emotions that you expressed towards the end. I understand that it can be difficult to make decisions when we are overwhelmed by our emotions.

In my own experience, I have found that taking a moment of stillness and reflection can be very helpful in gaining a deeper understanding of the situation and connecting with our own humanity and that of others. This is the message that I try to convey in my poem, "Keeping Quiet."

I would advise you to take a moment to be still and contemplative before making any decisions about the fate of the people at the roadside stand. By quieting your mind and being present in the moment, you may be able to understand their struggles and pain objectively, and gain a new perspective about your own place in the world too. I also feel that by breaking from your routine and taking a moment of stillness and reflection, you might gain a deeper understanding of the situation and make a more functional decision.

I believe that this moment of reflection could help you to see beyond your conflicting emotions. We are all human, after all and before connecting with others and resolving their issues, we must try to connect with our own selves to advise from a place of balance and calm.

*I hope this advice is helpful to you. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to support you.*

Warmly,

Pablo Neruda





## Chapter Test

### Extract Based Question

**Q 1. Of all the thousand selfish cars that pass,  
Just one to inquire what a farmer's prices are.  
And one did stop, but only to plow up grass  
In using the yard to back and turn around;  
And another to ask the way to where it was bound;  
And another to ask could they sell it a gallon of gas  
They couldn't (this crossly); they had none, didn't it  
see?**

**(a) Who are referred to as 'selfish'?**

- (i) The people in power
- (ii) The villagers
- (iii) The rich travelling in cars without thinking of the poor roadside standers
- (iv) None of the above

**(b) Why did the first car stop?**

- (i) To buy articles from the roadside stander
- (ii) To ask the prices of their stuff

(iii) To back and turn around

(iv) To relax for a while

**(c) The name of the poem is .....**

**(d) Find a word from the extract which means 'to ask'.**

**(e) State whether the given statement is True or False.**

The city people often bought fruits from the roadside stand.

**(f) Which part of speech does 'selfish' belong to?**

### Short Answer Type Question

**Q 2. What do the country folk say about the government.**

### Long Answer Type Question

**Q 3. What does the poet say about the city people?**

