

Small Towns and Rivers

ICE BREAKERS [PAGES 128 - 129]

Ice Breakers | Q 1.1 | Page 128

Most of the civilizations have flourished on the banks of the rivers. Discuss the reasons in the class. One is done for you.

- a. Availability of water
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

Solution:

- a. **Availability of water**
- b. Rivers as trade-routes
- c. Rivers as source of livelihood (fish from the rivers and the meat from the thirsty animals drawn to the river banks)
- d. Availability of fertile soil

Ice Breakers | Q 1.2 | Page 129

Write down the names of the famous cities that are situated on the banks of the rivers given below. One is done for you.

River	City
Ganga	Varanasi
Yamuna	
Godawari	
Varada	
Krishna	
Tapi	

Solution:

River	City
Ganga	Varanasi
Yamuna	Delhi



Godawari	Nashik
Varada	Kalasa
Krishna	Vijaywada
Tapi	Bhusawal

Ice Breakers | Q 1.3 | Page 129

Write down the names of the rivers on the banks of which following cities have prospered:

City	River
London	
Cairo	
New york	
Paris	

Solution:

City	River
London	Thames
Cairo	Nile
New york	Hudson
Paris	Seine

Ice Breakers | Q 2.1 | Page 129

Divide your class into groups and discuss the changes that might have taken place when the cities grow on the banks of the rivers.

Solution: The students can use the following pointers to build their discussion:

1. There is an increase in population due to immigration.
2. Industries are built and more employment opportunities are generated.
3. The sanitation of the growing town or city keeps getting poorer due to increased congestion.

Ice Breakers | Q 2.2 | Page 129

Share your views in the class on the topic 'Conservation of Rivers and Development of the Cities'.

Solution: The following pointers can be considered by the students while sharing their views on Conservation of Rivers and Development of the Cities:

1. The two parts of the topic are interlinked.
2. Many of the cities, both big and small, are located on river banks, which is of great commercial significance to those cities.
3. They provide water for human consumption and as raw material for industries located on those rivers.
4. It's of paramount importance to keep these rivers in good state for ensuring the welfare of the people in cities that depend on them. They must be kept clean by ensuring that no human waste or industrial effluent is led untreated into them. Also, the water from the rivers should not be overdrawn.
5. 'Rally for Rivers' is an example of a recent mass-campaign for river conservation in India.

BRAINSTORMING (A1) [PAGE 132]

Brainstorming (A1) | Q 1 | Page 132

Discuss the importance of Nature in the lives of the people from the Northeastern part of India as expressed in the poem with reference to-

Flowers

Solution: Flowers - (tuberoses) used for making wreaths.

Brainstorming (A1) | Q 2 | Page 132

Discuss the importance of Nature in the lives of the people from the Northeastern part of India as expressed in the poem with reference to-

River

Solution: River - large dependency of the people on the river for the livelihood and the almost divine status given to the rivers due to their all-knowing nature and immortality; they form an important part of nature, where one finds god

Brainstorming (A1) | Q 3 | Page 132

Discuss the importance of Nature in the lives of the people from the Northeastern part of India as expressed in the poem with reference to-

Bamboo



Solution: Bamboo - the small structures built at the burial sites

Brainstorming (A1) | Q 4 | Page 132

Discuss the importance of Nature in the lives of the people from the Northeastern part of India as expressed in the poem with reference to-

East

Solution: East - the souls rise and walk into the 'house of the sun', which is to the golden East.

BRAINSTORMING (A2) [PAGE 132]

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 1 | Page 132

The poet has described her small town in Arunachal Pradesh. Pick out the lines that describe the poet's town.

Solution: The lines that describe the poet's town are as follows:

Stanza 1

My hometown lies calmly amidst the trees,
It is always the same,
in summer or winter,
with the dust flying
or the wind howling down the gorge.

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 2 | Page 132

Make a list of natural elements mentioned in the poem.

Solution: The natural elements mentioned in the poem are:

1. trees
2. dust
3. wind
4. gorge
5. river
6. tuberose
7. fish
8. stars
9. mist
10. mountaintops
11. water

- 12. rain
- 13. earth

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 3 | Page 132

‘The river has a soul.’ Elaborate the concept in your words as the poet has explained it in the poem.

Solution: The expression ‘river has a soul’ personifies the river that flows through the small towns in the poet’s home state. This personification is seen in stanzas three and four of the poem, where the poet has given the river many human-like qualities such as ‘being a torrent of grief’, ‘holding its breath’, ‘seeking a land of fish and stars’, ‘knowing the first drop of rain’, ‘stretching past the town’, and ‘knowing the immortality of water’. By attributing such qualities to the river, the poet has highlighted its omnipresence in the life of the people of her land.

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 4 | Page 132

The poet is convinced with the thought of immortality of water. Pick out the relevant lines.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Solution: The relevant lines from the poem that show that the poet is convinced with the immortality of water are as follows:

Stanza 4

- a. from the first drop of rain to dry earth
- b. and mist on the mountaintops,
- c. the river knows the immortality of water

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 5.1 | Page 132

The poet has used some unconventional expression. Illustrate them in your words.

Torrent of grief

Solution: Torrent of grief:

It refers to the pain or desperation that the river brings to the people in small towns in summer, due to the reduced flow of water.

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 5.2 | Page 132

The poet has used some unconventional expression. Illustrate them in your words.



Shrine of happy pictures

Solution: Shrine of happy pictures:

The poet refers to her childhood as a pristine period full of fond memories.

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 5.3 | Page 132

The poet has used some unconventional expression. Illustrate them in your words.

The land of fish and stars

Solution: The land of fish and stars:

It refers to the idyllic world that the 'river with soul' aspires for when it comes to know that it has become a torrent of grief for people.

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 6 | Page 132

The poet is anxious about the existence of natural beauty of her town in the future. But she touches the strings of the hearts while appealing to conserve Nature. Explain the way she has expressed it in the first and the last line of the poem.

Solution: In the first line of the poem 'small towns always remind me of death' the poet says that for her, the small towns are reminders of death. Her tone is sombre, as she thinks about the permanency of the small towns, come summer or winter, and she compares this to the permanency of death.

However, in the last line "in small towns by the river/ we all want to walk with the gods" she persuades the reader to think favourably of the need to conserve nature, for the reason that we, the inhabitants of the small towns on the riverbank, all want to live a quality life. In other words, 'we all want to walk with the gods'. So, there is a shift in tone from anxiety to optimism from the opening to the closing lines.

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 7 | Page 132

The poet has connected the need to preserve Nature with the belief of a particular community and her childhood memories.

Write down the measures you would take to convince the people regarding the need to conserve the Nature.

Solution: I would take the following measures to convince people regarding the need to conserve nature.



1. I would try and make people understand the need for changing their consumption patterns. For instance, I plan to educate them about the environmental impact of producing paper by cutting trees. So, I would strongly suggest them to avoid taking printouts at their workplace and homes, unless absolutely necessary.
2. I would use the reason that is the converse of one given by the poet, i.e., of her childhood memories of the beautiful nature. This means that I would convince people to conserve nature in all ways possible so that their children and future generations can enjoy the bounties of nature.

BRAINSTORMING (A3) [PAGES 132 - 133]

Brainstorming (A3) | Q 1 | Page 132

Write down the expressions related to 'the seasons' from the extract.

Solution: The expressions related to 'the seasons' from the extract are as follows:

1. summer
2. winter
3. dust flying
4. wind howling
5. first drop of rain
6. dry earth
7. mist on the mountaintops

Brainstorming (A3) | Q 2 | Page 133

Match column 'A' with column 'B'.

Column A	Column B
Cool	Silence
Happy	Earth
Dreadful	Bamboo
Dry	Pictures

Solution:

Column A	Column B
Cool	Bamboo
Happy	Pictures
Dreadful	Silence
Dry	Earth

BRAINSTORMING (A4) [PAGE 133]



Brainstorming (A4) | Q 1 | Page 133

Read the expression 'a sad wreath of tuberose'. 'Is the wreath sad?' Explain the figure of speech.

Solution: No, the wreath itself cannot be sad because it's an inanimate object. The sadness is associated with someone's funeral, in which the wreath is placed on the dead body. This sadness is transferred from the occasion to the wreath.

The figure of speech used here is Transferred Epithet.

Brainstorming (A4) | Q 2 | Page 133

List and explain the metaphorical expressions from the poem. For example, 'torrent of grief'

Solution: The 'grief' of the people of the town has been indirectly compared to a 'torrent' as it is brought on by the reduced flow of the river during summer.

Brainstorming (A4) | Q 3 | Page 133

'The river has a soul.'

'Life and death.'

These are the two expressions that are repeated in the poem; but both of them indicate different figures of speech. Find out and discuss.

Solution: 'The river has a soul.'
'Life and death.'

Personification: The 'river' is personified as it is said to have a 'soul'.

Antithesis: Two opposite ideas 'life' and 'death' have been placed in the same line to represent the perpetual cycle of birth and death, thus conveying their temporary nature.

Brainstorming (A4) | Q 4 | Page 133

Find out the beauty of the free verse reflected in this poem.

Solution: The poem 'Small cities and the River' is written in free-verse, as there is no rhyme scheme across its seven stanzas. I think that the use of free verse gives a free hand to the poet to express her ideas without the constraints imposed by a rhyme scheme. The free verse also gives the poem an earthy appeal, and the reader hence finds participative experience in the theme of the poem.

BRAINSTORMING (A5) [PAGE 133]



Brainstorming (A5) | Q 1 | Page 133

Prepare the arguments for group discussion on the topic-

‘A balanced progress never harms the Nature.’

Solution:

Moderator:	You've all been given a few minutes to think on your topic for today's group discussion, which is 'A balanced progress never harms the Nature' 'You may now begin the discussion. Who would like to start?
Ramesh:	The world today is driven by progress, that is, progress in all key aspects of life – construction, transport or communication. With time, everything has become more complex yet connected.
Swati:	That is true. Technological advancements have led to the invention and discovery of things, which at one point seemed impossible. It has only made this world a better place to live in.
Kalpesh:	I agree that technological growth has led to a lot of advancements, but I beg to differ on the point that it has made the world a better place to live in. Though we have gained much, we have also lost a lot of things in the process. Don't you think so?
Meena:	I totally agree with Kalpesh. We have ventured into forest lands, cut countless trees and are also damaging coastal areas in the bargain.
Swati:	I would like to point something out. We need to keep progress as our top priority as we take on the world. However, that should be in sync with nature. It needs to be balanced, because only then can it be termed as growth in the true sense.
Deepak:	I am afraid I don't completely agree with that. Keeping the environment unaffected is very uncertain! Take the example of the Mumbai Metro. Numerous trees have been cut which has drastically reduced the green cover of the city. Also, when we



	think of Delhi, it is now synonymous with pollution, in spite of being the capital of the country and one of the most advanced cities in the world.
Kalpesh:	Excuse me! I would like to add something here. Even when we look at cities like Bangalore, the lakes and gardens are being affected and it looks like we are losing more than we are gaining. Also, consider the global scenario, incidents such as the forest fires in the Amazon and most recently the deadly blaze in Australia are all examples of development and progress having grossly affecting nature.
Ramesh:	I think I agree with Swati though. There may be a lot of things to consider, but growing while maintaining the balance with nature is what we need to master. Only then will it be true progress.
Deepak:	I can see your point; but do you mean that progress should come to a halt? How will we be at par with the developed world if we do not grow at a rapid pace? I feel progress requires us to be cut throat and unidirectional, but yes not at the cost hampering Mother Nature
Moderator:	All right, everyone. Your time is nearly up. Could someone summarise this discussion, please?
Swati:	Considering everything spoken about today, I think it would be fair to conclude that though progress is necessary; it is also a responsibility. We should focus on dreaming bigger and reaching higher but always conscious of the fact that balance is the key and causing minimal damage to the environment should always be a priority!

Brainstorming (A5) | Q 2 | Page 133

Compose 4 to 6 lines on 'Gift of the Seasons'.

Solution:



Gift of the Seasons

The Gift of the Seasons,
That infuses our life with a hundred reasons
To enjoy the summer mango,
To curl up in the winter quilt,
or to prance in the rain,
The seasons help us forget many a pain,
of the life so dreary and mundane!

Brainstorming (A5) | Q 3 | Page 133

Write an appreciation of the poem 'Small Towns and the River'. Refer to the earlier poems for the points to be covered for appreciation.

1. About the poem/poet and the title
2. Theme
3. Poetic style
4. The language/poetic devices used in the poem
5. Special features
6. Message, values, morals in the poem
7. Your opinion about the poem

Solution:

Appreciation of the poem 'Small Towns and the River'

The poem 'Small Towns and the River' is written by Mamang Dai, a writer from North-east India. It is a nature poem, but with a difference that while celebrating nature around her hometown, the poet also laments the destruction of that nature to make way for the lifeless small towns along the river. The poem consists seven stanzas of unequal length and is written in free verse, which means that it does not have a rhyme scheme. In fact, the poet begins by narrating the flip side of small towns situated amidst trees, which remind her of death with their flying dust and howling wind. She treats life and death as transient, but the nature and rituals as permanent. The river has a predominant presence in her poem. It is depicted as the one alongside which lie numerous small



towns, the one with a soul, the one which 'knows', the one which brings grief to inhabitants of the towns in summer, and the one which knows about the 'immortality' of its water. She speaks of life during childhood, full of happiness, transitioning into the later life of anxiety, as symbolized by the growth of the small towns by the river. The lines are short and the verses are lucid. The poet has used poetic devices like Alliteration, Antithesis, Inversion, Metaphor, Onomatopoeia, Personification, Repetition, Simile, and Transferred Epithet to beautify the poem. The extensive use of Personification can be seen in the animate/human qualities attributed to the river "the river has a soul", "it holds its breath" and "the river knows". The traditional belief that the souls of the dead dwell in nature, and rise with the sun, the cold bamboo that springs back with the sunlight, and the significance of the same in the life, form imagery in the poem. The depiction of the towns during the summer and winter seasons adds to the visual imagery of the poem. The elaborate descriptions of the river as a living entity also make for the special feature of imagery used by the poet. The main message of the poem is the conveying of the poet's mixed, almost antithetical, feelings about nature and the small towns which lie by the river. While the poet employs nature to imply positivity, she looks upon the small towns as a symbol of death, since they have grown at the cost of nature. Overall, the poem is an interesting read and I like it for its curious mix of the positive and the negative aspects.

Brainstorming (A5) | Q 4 | Page 133

Write a dialogue between two friends on 'Importance of the rivers'.

Solution:

Ananya:	Hi, Seema, have you completed the geography homework for today?
Seema:	Yes, Ananya! It was indeed a very interesting lesson on rivers today. I could barely wait to get home and finish it!
Ananya:	I agree. You know, back in my village, there is a mighty river flowing by our house. Whenever I visit, I cannot stop wondering about how important these rivers are to us!



Seema:	True, we get water, the elixir of life from these rivers. The agriculture industry too depends heavily on rivers.
Ananya:	That's right. These rivers are also an important habitat to many different types of aquatic plants and animals. They provide food to us too. The amazing fresh catch makes for some yummy fish curry in the village. Oh, those memories!
Seema:	Wow! That sounds great! I am just thankful for the river that we cross to reach my village. My village is far in the interiors on a hill which is separated by a river. Thus, it makes the river the only way to reach it.
Ananya:	Well, I can imagine, that must make for a very essential transport system for you and many others who need to cross travel to and from the village.
Seema:	Not just that, this fast-flowing river is also used for the generation of hydroelectric power, which lights up my village.
Ananya:	There are so many useful things these rivers do for us. They can be providers and protectors.
Seema:	True, let us pick a project on river conservation this semester, what do you think?
Ananya:	That's a great idea! Let's speak to our teacher about this tomorrow. Now, I better get home and finish my pending homework. Bye!

BRAINSTORMING (A6) [PAGE 133]

Brainstorming (A6) | Q 1 | Page 133

Collect information about rivers in Maharashtra.



Solution: The students can use the following pointers. One is done for you as a reference.

The major rivers of Maharashtra are:

1. Godavari:
1465 km, originates at Trimbakeshwar, flows through Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh before draining into the Bay of Bengal.
2. Krishna
3. Narmada
4. Koyna
5. Mula-mutha
6. Nira
7. Pavana
8. Patalganga
9. Ulhas
10. Vaitarna
11. Wainganga

Brainstorming (A6) | Q 2 | Page 133

Further reading:

1. 'The River Poems' - Mamang Dai
2. 'The World Is Too Much With Us' - William Wordsworth

Solution: Do it yourself.

