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AUTUMN BREAK HOMEWORK (2025-26)
ENGLISH

ENGLISH CORE CLASS 12 MRS BINA MATHEW

Q1. Comprehension passage 1

As we walked back to the longhouse, Chabok, who was in front of me, suddenly stopped on the track and raised his blowpipe, quickly inserting a dart into the mouthpiece and packing the end with a small twist of raw cotton. To one side and above him, about twelve meters away, a squirrel was scampering on a branch. I wanted to see Chabok bring it down with a dart but at the same time I had an almost uncontrollable urge to cry out and frighten the animal away. It seemed such a small squirrel. Chabok aimed his blowpipe, and I felt myself holding my breath until he shot. 'Thip!' went the dart as it left the end of the tube, and I didn't see it go. The squirrel stayed on the branch unmoved, and I was sure that he had missed and called to him, "You've missed it! You've missed!" and he began to run forward shouting, "I haven't, Master! I haven't! I haven't!" And as he ran, the squirrel toppled over like a rag doll and hit the ground with a soft thud. It was still alive when Chabok picked it up - he poisoned splinter sticking right through its neck - but it was quite paralyzed and unable to move. It died some minutes later. On the way back to the longhouse Chabok sang happily for the first time since leaving the River Yai and in the evening, everyone had a small piece of squirrel meat. My own piece, no more than a mouthful, tasted like stringy rabbit.

The Temiar blowpipe is normally some two meters long and made from one single length of bamboo. It has a slender inner tube inside the outer covering so that one length warps against the other and it always remains true. From it they shoot a small dart, a splinter of wood some twenty or twenty-five centimeters in length; a pith cone at one end, the other sharpened end tipped with poison. Most aborigines are extremely accurate with a blowpipe up to a range of nine to ten meters, though for some reason they are more accurate if the target is moving vertically than if it moves horizontally. Several times I have put a cigarette on end in a tree and watched it be pinned to the bark by a blowpipe dart but a cigarette placed parallel to the ground is missed seven times out of ten.

The poison with which the darts are smeared is a mixture of poisonous saps from jungle trees and creepers. The sap is tapped from the trees and creepers with knives and is collected in small bamboo cups. This is then stirred together and boiled. The darts are dipped in the boiled mixture and allowed to dry in the sun. Any surplus is left to cool and solidify and it can then be stored away for a considerable period - allegedly as long as two years. When next needed, it is soaked in fresh water and reboiled; but for some reason the water must be fresh and water which has been standing for several days in a bamboo container cannot be used. The strength of the poison can be varied according to the strength of the mixture. Usually the tips of the darts are one of three colors. The red - procured from a fully-grown poisonous tree in its prime - is the strongest and once in the bloodstream, is fatal after about six or seven minutes. The black - which is from an old poisonous tree - is effective after half an hour, and the white - from a young sapling tree - does not take effect until after a lapse of an hour or more.

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Who do you think Chabok probably was?
2. Why was the writer torn between wanting to see Chabok shoot the squirrel with his blowpipe and wanting to frighten it away?
3. Why was Chabok singing happily all the way back to the longhouse?
4. What does a Temiar blowpipe look like?

5. What conclusion did the writer draw from his observation that a cigarette placed parallel to the ground is missed seven times out of ten?
6. What was the tip of colour of the dart used by Chabok to kill the squirrel?
7. According to the passage, how do the aborigines make poisonous darts?
Fill in the blanks with one correct word from the passage.
8. The doctors removed a _____ of glass from the eye of the accident victim.
9. The hunter aimed accurately at the _____ before firing his shotgun.
10. "The accused was _____ seen behaving suspiciously near the vicinity of the deceased house," the prosecutor argued.

Q2. Comprehension Passage 2

Many are well aware that Johann Gutenberg invented printing. On the other hand, do we know who invented paper? Ts'ai Lun's name has never gained as much popularity as Gutenberg's. Researchers have discovered that the former invented paper about the year 105 AD. However, many major encyclopaedias and standard history textbooks seldom mention him. Not a great deal is known about Ts'ai Lun's life.
According to certain Chinese records and the official history of the Han Dynasty, he was an employee of the imperial court about 1800 years ago. Around the year 105 AD, he presented Emperor ho Ti with samples of paper. The emperor was so pleased with his invention that he promoted and bestowed on him an aristocratic title. However, he became involved in a political problem which soon led to his downfall. Upon being disgraced, he committed suicide. The Chinese have always credited Ts'ai Lun with the invention of paper, and his name is well known in China. Other aspects of his biography are hardly known, if not vague. However, his contribution to society is too important to ignore.
Today, paper is so common that we take it for granted, and it is hard to imagine what the world would be like without it. In China, before Ts'ai Lun's invention, most books were made of bamboo. Obviously, such books were extremely heavy and clumsy. Some books were written on silk, but that was too expensive for general use. In the West, before paper was introduced, most books were written on parchment or vellum which was made of specially-processed sheepskin or calfskin.
The use of paper became widespread in China during the second century, and within the next few centuries, the Chinese were exporting paper to other parts of Asia. For a long time, they kept the technique of paper-making a secret. However, they were unable to keep it for too long. In 751 AD, some Chinese papermakers were captured by the Arabs, and not long afterwards, paper was manufactured in certain parts of the Arab world. The art of papermaking gradually spread to the rest of the area. I was only in the 12th century that the Europeans learnt the art from the Arabs. The use of paper gradually spread, and after Gutenberg invented modern printing, paper replaced parchment as the main writing material in the West.
Due to the existence of paper, books and other written materials can be produced so cheaply today and in such considerable amounts. The Chinese civilization advanced rapidly because of paper. However, the invention of printing by Gutenberg improved the use of paper. Gutenberg was born about the year 1400 in the city of Mainz, Germany. He improved the inefficient style of printing so that books could be produced in masses with speed and accuracy. This contribution to the art of printing was made in the middle of the century.
Gutenberg did not gain much fame or fortune through his invention during his time. His best known work is the Gutenberg Bible. It was printed at Mainz, around 1454. Although it was clearly printed

with the equipment he had invented, his name did not appear on the Bible. This was the case for many of his books. In his lifetime, he did not appear to have been a good businessman either.
Both Ts'ai Lun and Gutenberg died leaving a tremendous impact on Man's progress. Their contributions during their era helped cultivate a better civilization for the Chinese and the Europeans respectively.

Answer the following questions using complete sentences

1. Why was Ts'ai Lun not well known for his invention for a long time ?
2. How did Ts'ai Lun rise in status ?
3. What were books made of in China before paper was invented ?
4. ' ... the Chinese were exporting paper to other parts of Asia.' (paragraph 4). Although other parts of Asia were aware of the existence of paper, explain clearly why they did not make their own.
5. Why are books made of paper considered better than those made from other materials ?
6. Explain briefly how the knowledge of papermaking spread to Europe.
7. When did the West stop using specially-processed sheepskin or calfskin for writing ?
8. How were books printed before Gutenberg made some changes to the older form of printing ? State **two** ways.
9. 'Gutenberg did not gain much fame ...' (paragraph 6). Explain what could have been the reason for this.
10. Why did Gutenberg not gain much fortune from his invention during his time?

Q3 As compared to the older generation the youth of today are greatly inclined to pursue adventurous activities either for money or for
fun. There is a latest craze for joining reality shows, rafting, rock climbing, mountaineering etc. Write an article in 150-200 words on which life you would prefer—safe or adventurous

Q4. India is said to be a young country and is emerging as a global power. The youth is getting increasingly concerned about the problems of corruption, environment, pollution, misuse of natural resources, etc. Write an article in 150-200 words on your vision of India in 2040.

Q5. You are a resident of Mahalakshmi Apartments, Patparganj, Delhi. Your residential area is flooded with roadside dwellers who are deprived of the basic civic amenities like light, public toilets and bathrooms. Write a letter to the Editor of The Hindustan Times, highlighting the problems of these roadside dwellers, and also the problems posed by them to the public. Give suggestions for improvement.

Q6. You are Rama/Ranjan Srinivassan of Gacchibowli, Hyderabad, where there is no post office. Write a letter to the Editor of a national daily drawing the attention of the government to this basic need of the residents of your area. Justify the opening of a post office-cum-telegraph office in your locality in not more than 200 words.

Q7 Project completion