

Class 9 (English) (Beehive) Chapter 1 - The Fun They Had
By Isaac Asimov

Q1. How old are Margie and Tommy?

A. Margie and Tommy live in the future, in the year 2157. They are neighbours and spend time together. Margie is a girl of eleven years of age while Tommy is a boy of thirteen.

Q2. What did Margie write in her diary?

A. On 17 May 2157, Margie wrote that that day Tommy had found a real book in the attic of his house. It was an old book with yellow, crinkly pages.

Q3. Had Margie ever seen a book before?

A. No, Margie had not seen a book before the one found by Tommy in his house. She had only heard from her grandfather that his grandfather went to school as a boy and that they read books that were printed on paper.

Q4. What things about the book did she find strange?

A. As Margie lived in an era where students studied from a mechanical teacher and all the books appeared on the screen, she found it strange that the words on the printed book did not move. It was strange to see the same words appear on the pages as she flipped them over.

Q5. What do you think a telebook is?

A. A telebook is an electronic book also known as an e-book. It is stored in a computer and can be read by scrolling up or down the screen.

Q6. Where was Margie's school? Did she have any classmates?

A. Margie's school was in her house. It was a room next to her bedroom. It was a personal classroom where the computer was adjusted to her level of learning. She studied by herself and had no classmates.

Q7. What subjects did Margie and Tommy learn?

A. Margie and Tommy learnt a lot of subjects like Geography, History and Mathematics.

Answer the following with reference to the story.

1. "I wouldn't throw *it* away."

(i) Who says these words?

A. Tommy says these words.

(ii) What does 'it' refer to?

A. 'It' refers to the Computer screen on which Tommy reads various books.

(iii) What is it being compared with by the speaker?

A. 'It' is being compared to the paper book that Tommy found in his house.

2. "Sure *they* had a teacher, but it wasn't a *regular* teacher. It was a man."

(i) Who does 'they' refer to?

A. 'They' refers to the ancestors of the children who went to school and studied from a human teacher.

(ii) What does 'regular' mean here?

A. 'Regular' means the mechanical teacher which teaches Margie and Tommy.

(iii) What is it contrasted with?

A. The mechanical teacher is contrasted with a human teacher.

Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (about 30 words).

Q1. What kind of teachers did Margie and Tommy have?

A. Margie and Tommy had mechanical teachers. They were computers which had preloaded lessons on different subjects according to the learner's level. Whenever they malfunctioned, they were opened and repaired.

Q2. Why did Margie's mother send for the County Inspector?

A. Margie's mother called the County Inspector to check Margie's teacher. She thought that probably, Margie's teacher had a malfunction. Margie was failing the Geography tests repeatedly which could be due to a fault in the teacher.

Q3. What did he do?

A. The County Inspector was trained to repair the computer teacher. He opened the machine and checked it. The Geography sector was set on a higher level. He reset it to Margie's level and closed the teacher.

Q4. Why was Margie doing badly in geography? What did the County Inspector Do to help her

A. Margie was failing in the Geography tests as the teacher had developed a fault. The County Inspector told Margie's mother that Margie was not at fault. Her progress was good. He reset the teacher to Margie's level.

Q5. What had once happened to Tommy's teacher?

A. Once Tommy's teacher had developed a fault as the entire section on History had been deleted. His teacher had been taken for repairs and it took them a month to set it right.

6. Did Margie have regular days and hours for school? If so, why?

A. Margie studied at the same time everyday, except Saturdays and Sunday. Her mother was very particular and had told Margie that she would learn better if she studied at the same time every day.

Q7. How does Tommy describe the old kind of school?

A. Tommy said that in the old kind of schools, there was a man teacher who told a few things to the students, gave them home work and then asked them questions. The man teacher was as knowledgeable as the machine teacher.

Q8. How does he describe the old kind of teachers?

A. He says that the old teachers were not the regular kind they had. They were human beings and not machines.

Answer each of these questions in two or three paragraphs (100 –150 words).

Q1. What are the main features of the mechanical teachers and the schoolrooms that Margie and Tommy have in the story?

A. Margie and Tommy were taught by mechanical teachers. They had large black screens on which the lessons appeared. The lessons were followed by questions. The students had to insert homework and test papers in the slots provided. They had to write down the work in a punch code which was a computing language. The mechanical teacher checked the papers and gave them marks within a few seconds. These classrooms were in the student's home itself. Every student studied from his respective mechanical teacher. Each teacher was adjusted according to the level of the learner. They did not have classmates. They studied various subjects like Geography, History and Mathematics. Margie studied everyday at the same time except Saturdays and Sundays. Her mother said that she would learn better if she studied that way. The learning process was mechanical, dull and boring for them.

Q2. Why did Margie hate school? Why did she think the old kind of school must have been fun ?

A. Margie hated school because it was not fun. There was a mechanical teacher and the learning process lacked life. It was like a machine carrying out the usual working, there was nothing new, no fun or laughter. Margie's mechanical teacher was giving her tests in Geography and she was performing bad at them. Later it was discovered that the teacher had developed a fault due to which it was giving her tests of a higher level. Margie's mother called the County Inspector. He opened the teacher, found the fault and rectified it. Margie disliked the teacher and hoped that he would not be able to repair it. She hated inserting the homework and test papers into the slot provided. She thought that the children in the past must have had a lot of fun when they went to school with fellow children. She found it amazing that all the children studied together, the same things and could discuss studies and help each other with the homework too. As the teachers were people, they would not behave like machines. The human aspect of education in the past made her feel that the school of the past were fun.

Notes:

Theme / Central Idea of the Lesson

The story "The Fun They Had" by Isaac Asimov is about the year 2157 when every child has his own machine teacher and schools like today do not exist anymore. The main theme of the short story is that of education. More specifically the narrative deals with the future of education which will become increasingly computerised and estranged from social interactions. Ultimately the theme is to understand the importance of the present time lively school atmosphere in which we keep on finding faults over nothing.

Moral/ Message of the lesson – The Fun They Had

The author's message is one of warnings against the dangers of computerized homeschooling which keeps away the children from the benefits of the personal interactions between students and teachers, which help them develop social skills as well as many more things. So without criticising the present schooling we should understand the value of the present lively education system and enjoy it to the fullest.

Significance of the Title The Fun They Had –

The title 'The Fun They Had' is pretty much justified because the story tells us about the discovery of a book by two children from centuries ahead in future and their understanding of the schools from the past, where students went to a common building and were taught by human teachers.

Class 9 (English) (Beehive) Poem 1 - The Road Not Taken
By Robert Frost

Q1. Where does the traveller find himself? What problem does he face?

A. The traveller finds himself standing on a fork in the path. He is in a problem as he must choose one path and is unable to decide which one to choose.

2. Discuss what these phrases mean to you.

(i) a yellow wood

A. 'Yellow wood' refers to the forest which has withering leaves as in the season of autumn. It represents a world full of aging people.

(ii) it was grassy and wanted wear

A. It means that the path had a lot of grass on it. This means that it had not been walked over by many people. It had to be worn out by the steps of the people who walked on it.

(iii) the passing there

A. It means that when he walked over the path that he had chosen.

(iv) leaves no step had trodden black

A. It means that no one had walked over the leaves as they were still green. If they had been walked over, they would have turned black.

(v) how way leads on to way

A. It means that as we walk on a path, we come across more options and make choices further. We keep on walking ahead on that way.

3. Is there any difference between the two roads as the poet describes them

(i) in stanzas two and three?

A. The two paths were similar. In the beginning, the poet felt that one of them was grassy and had not been walked over by many people, but when he walked on it for some distance, he realized that it was like the other road.

(ii) in the last two lines of the poem?

A. Here, again the poet talks of his initial decision when he thought that the roads were different and chose the one that had been walked over by a lesser number of people.

Q.4. What do you think the last two lines of the poem mean? (Looking back, does the poet regret his choice or accept it?)

A. The last two lines show the importance of making a choice in one's life. The poet had taken a path that was rather unused so far. And that has made for him all the difference. I think the poet regrets his choice of taking the road that was less travelled by.

II. 1. Have you ever had to make a difficult choice (or do you think you will have

difficult choices to make)? How will you make the choice (for what reasons)?

A. No, till now I have never been in a situation in which I had to make a difficult choice. But a day will come when I have to make a difficult choice between various things. After completing my general education, I will have to choose my stream through which I want to pursue further study. Then it will be difficult to make a choice in between them. I will make choice according to my capabilities and strong points at that time. I will choose a path that gives me satisfaction and mental peace. I will not join the rat race for money. Like the poet in poem, I will choose a challenging and unexplored path in my life.

Q2. After you have made a choice do you always think about what might have been, or do you accept the reality?

A. After making a choice, it is no use to think about what is gone as it can't be recalled. I always accept the reality and try to make the most of it

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Theme/ Central Idea of the Poem The Road Not Taken-

"The Road Not Taken" deals with the dilemmas that man faces in life. The two roads serve as a metaphor for the choices we make in life. Life throws up many alternatives. Man being an individual cannot take up all choices. The choice we make has a far-reaching consequence. Hence, our decision is a shot in the dark though our future is dependent on it. If the choice made by us happens to be not correct, we have to face the consequences as steps once taken cannot be retracted.

Significance of the Title The Road Not Taken –

'The road' is the symbol of the choice made by us in life. Many times, we regret the choice made by us but what is done once cannot be undone. Man yearns for what he has denied himself in life, rather than what he has chosen. Hence, the poet has given his poem the title "The Road Not Taken".

Message/ Moral of the poem The Road Not Taken

Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken" seems to hold out the moral that life is a continuous journey full of divergence every now and then. The important thing is to move on without looking back whether the choice of paths taken was right or wrong. The right or the wrong are relative terms. We cannot get everything in life and have to make choices. Whatever direction our life takes is determined by the choice made by us. Make a wise choice and be firm keep on moving without being in a dilemmatic condition. Be confident in your choices.