



INDIAN SCHOOL NIZWA - WORKSHEET

ENGLISH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM IN A SLUM

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: XII Sec: ____

I *Belled, flowery, Tyrolese valley. Open-handed map
Awarding the world its world
..... and yet for these children, these windows
not this map, their world, where all their future's painted with a fog.
A narrow street sealed in with lead sky far far from rivers,
capes and stars of words*

1 What do the classroom walls have?

Ans. The walls of the classroom have a portrait of Shakespeare, pictures of building with domes ,sunrise and beautiful alpine valley ,and world map.

2 Why does the poet refer to the Tyrolese valley in these lines?

Ans. The beautiful Tyrolese valley is in sharp contrast to dim and dingy slums.The life of slum children is far removed from the life represented in the photograph of alpine valley as they never get to enjoy the natural beauty of the mountains and the flowery valley.

3 What are the narrow street and lead sky indicative of?

Ans. Narrow streets are indicative of restricted and a confined life of slum children .Lead sky signifies dullness, dreariness and despair invading the lives of the slum dwellers.

III *Surely, Shakespeare is wicked, the map a bad example.....
.....So blot their maps with slums as big as doom*

1 Why is Shakespeare described as wicked?

Ans. – no correlation between Shakespeare’s works and the life of the slum children
– classic literature of Shakespeare beyond the understanding of slum children
– beautiful world depicted by Shakespeare is denied to the slum children
- Arouses the desire among the students to taste the joy of higher education, which for them seems to be unattainable.

2 Why is the map a bad example?

Ans. The map is a bad example as it gives the children an idea of viewing vast and bountiful world , which for them is a distant dream. In order to fulfil their desires and aspirations they adopt illegal ways.

3 Explain “from fog to endless night.”

Ans. “Fog” stands for obscurity and uncertainty and “endless night” signifies endless darkness and misery. The phrase means that slum children have no hope of progress and prosperity. They simply exist in their cramped holes stumbling from one despair to another.

IV *“Unless, governor, inspector, visitor,
This map becomes their window and these windows
That shut upon their lives like catacombs*

1 Why does the poet invoke ‘governor, ‘inspector’ and ‘visitor’?

Ans. The poet invokes the ‘governor, ‘inspector’ and ‘visitor’ because they are the powerful people



INDIAN SCHOOL NIZWA - WORKSHEET

who can bring about a drastic change in the miserable lives of the slum children. They can remove the social injustice and class inequalities.

2 What have 'these windows' done to their lives?

Ans. These windows have cramped their lives, stunted their physical and mental growth shutting them inside filthy and dingy holes.

3 What do you understand by catacombs?

Ans. Catacombs are long underground graves. Here they stand for the dirty slums which block their progress.

4 Which literary device has been used? Explain.

Ans. Simile has been used to describe the oppressive effect of the surroundings on their pathetic lives. The simile is: 'these windows that shut upon their lives like catacombs.'

V *Break O break open till they break the town
And show the children to green fields, and make their world
Run azure on gold sands, and let their tongues
Run naked into books the white and green leaves open
History theirs whose language is the sun.*

1 What is expected of the governor, inspector and visitor?

Ans. The governor, inspector and the visitor need to take appropriate steps to break the barriers that stand in the way of the progress of the slum children. They need to release the children from poverty, get them educated and give them opportunity to experience the beauty of the world.

2 What are the windows doing in their lives at present?

Ans. The windows offering the view of dirty surroundings have cramped their lives, and blocked their mental and physical development. They have shut the children inside the drab holes like the dead bodies are shut in underground graves.

3 What is meant by white and green leaves?

Ans. White and green leaves refer to the colourful pages of the book which the poet wishes to provide to the students.

4 'History is theirs whose language is the sun'. Explain.

Ans. This statement means that those who have the power and confidence in speech to influence others create history. One can make a mark only if one can outshine others. Education only can give them power and strength like the sun which will bring about a change in the lives of the people.

SHORT QUESTIONS



INDIAN SCHOOL NIZWA - WORKSHEET

1 The walls of the classroom are decorated with the pictures of 'Shakespeare', 'buildings with domes', 'world maps' and 'beautiful valleys'. How do these contrast with the world of these children?

Ans. The pictures present the world full of richness, beauty and progress. On the other hand the lives of the slum children comprise of small, dim and dingy huts as well as narrow and dirty lanes. The world of these children is full of dullness, hopelessness and hunger.

2 What is the theme of the poem?

Ans. In the poem, Spender depicts the pathetic life of slum children who are victims of social injustice and class inequalities that prevails in society. The poem is a bitter criticism on the state of education in elementary schools in slum areas.

3 Explain : 'Far from gusty waves'.

Ans. 'Gusty waves' represents energetic and cheerful children who are like strong waves. The slum children are unlike the usual children. They are undernourished, impoverished and enervated.

4 "So blot their maps with slums as big as doom," says Stephen Spender. What does the poet want to convey?

Slums are a blot on the map/ blot out these slums from the map
No representation of the slums on the world map of Big cities
Map is blotted with all the misery associated with slums
The poverty and misery of the slum children