



Summary of the lesson

Madam Rides the Bus' is a very sensitive story of a young girl who goes on her first journey into the world outside her village on a bus. The story is about a little girl Valliammai known as Valli who decides to travel to town on a bus and surprises the bus conductor when she claims to be a grown-up person and not a child as she has paid full fare like everyone else. She had made careful plans for this journey and she was excited to be able to fulfil her dreams. She is surprised on seeing the big bright looking shops and huge buildings. She is scared when she realises that all the passengers have got down the bus, but somehow, she manages to keep herself calm. When she comes home, her aunt asks her about her whereabouts to which she replies that she wants to see the world outside. She is horrified when she sees a cow lying dead on the road after being hit by some fast-moving vehicle.

CHARACTER SKETCH:

The bus conductor in 'Madam Rides the Bus' comes across as an amiable person, with good manners and a general inclination to help and spread happiness. He exhibits genuine concern for a young girl, who is travelling alone, by making sure that she is comfortably seated and also offering to buy her something to drink. He takes it in a good spirit when Valli demands respect and does not wish to be treated as a child.

Valliammai was a cheerful girl of eight years. Curiosity about the things surrounding her made way towards gaining the worldly knowledge. Though quite young, she understood the importance of being mature. She was fascinated by the view of the town yet she did not get down the bus in her temptation. She even refused an offer of free cold drink from the conductor. Already a bit more mature than her age, she understood the mystery of life and death through her first ride on the bus. She realized that in a short span of time, people/ creatures that looked so lively a moment ago are snatched away by death. She was a mature girl when she began her ride but she actually returned as a mature lady.

VERY SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS:

1. How did Valli react when she saw the dead cow by the roadside?

When Valli saw the dead cow by the roadside, she was overwhelmed with sadness. The memory of the dead cow haunted her, depressing her enthusiasm. She no longer wanted to look out of the window.

2. Who was Valliammai? What was her favourite pastime?

Valliammai was an eight-year-old girl. She was a mature girl but did not have any playmate of her age. Her favourite pastime was standing in the front doorway of her house, watching what was happening in the street outside.

3. What was the most fascinating thing that Valli saw on the street?

Valli did not have any playmate of her age. She had a pastime of watching outside in the street. She used to watch the new passengers boarding the bus every day. The arrival of the bus was the most fascinating scene in the street for Valli. She watched the passengers boarding the bus and to listen to their conversation. The sight of the bus was a source of unending joy for Valli.

4. What did Valli wish? How did this desire creep in her mind?

Valli wished to have a ride on the bus. She used to listen to the passenger's conversation carefully. She heard about the city and many more things through them. A tiny wish crept into her mind and became a desire.

5. Why did Valli feel jealous of her friend?

Valli had a strong desire to ride the bus. One of her friends had already visited the city. She wanted to describe her experience to Valli. Valli was so jealous that she did not listen to her and shouted 'Proud! Proud!'

6. Why did Valli collect the information about the bus?

Valli had a strong desire to ride the bus. She had to plan her journey to the city by the bus. So, she started collecting information about the distance, time and fare of the journey.

7. What information did Valli collect about the bus journey?

Valli collected some details of the journey. The city was six miles from her village. The fare was thirty paise one way. The trip takes forty-five minutes one way. Now she could plan her journey by the bus in an easy way.

8. How did Valli slip away from her house?

Valli had calculated that if she left her house at one o'clock she would be back by two forty-five. This was the time she could be away without the knowledge of her mother. She slipped from her house and boarded the bus.

9. How did the conductor treat Valli? How did Valli feel when the conductor called her 'My Fine Madam'?

When Valli got on the bus, the conductor treated her as a child. He asked her who was coming in the bus. Valli told him confidently that it was she only. She bought the ticket and the conductor called her 'Madam' jokingly. The conductor was a jolly fellow. Valli did not like him treating her as a child. Her temperament made the conductor call her 'Madam'. Valli was overcome with shyness.

10. What did Valli see beyond the bank of a canal while on the bus ride?

While on the bus ride, Valli saw beyond the canal through the window. There were palm trees, grassland, distant mountains and the blue sky. It was a wonderful scene for Valli.

11. What did the conductor advise Valli while on the bus?

The conductor advised Valli to sit on her seat properly. She had taken a full ticket and need not stand on the seat. Moreover, she could have hurt herself while standing on the seat and watching outside.

12. Why did Valli rebuke the elderly woman on the bus?

The elderly woman treated Valli as a child. She asked her many questions. She tried to make Valli feel that it was not proper for a child to travel alone. Valli did not like her appearance and unnecessary interference. She rebuked her saying that she was not a child and she could take care of herself.

13. Why did Valli not get down from the bus in the town?

Valli did not get off the bus at the bus station because she had to come back to her village by the same bus. When the conductor asked her to get down, she refused to do so. She was afraid of moving alone. Moreover, she did not have money to buy things from there.

15. How did Valli react on seeing the cow for the first time?

On her way to the city, Valli saw a small cow running in front of the bus. She was filled with joy. She laughed wholeheartedly until her eyes filled with tears. She saw life in the form of a cow.

16. Why did she become sad while returning from the town?

She became sad while coming back from the city. She saw a dead cow on the road. It was the same cow that filled her with joy only a while ago. The scene of dead cow haunted her and she could not enjoy her back journey.

17. What did Valli find her mother doing when she came back?

When Valli came back from the city, she found her mother standing and conversing with one of her aunts. They were discussing the things happening outside the world.

18. What was the topic of discussion between Valli's mother and her aunt?

They were discussing the things happening outside the city and they were unable to understand them.

19. What did Valli remark when she heard the conversation between her mother and her aunt?

When Valli heard the conversation between her mother and her aunt, she remarked that she agreed with what they said about things happening outside without their knowledge.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Valli got jealous every time one of her friends told her about the bus ride and the sights of the town. Do you think jealousy is a positive trait? What should be done to keep jealous thoughts away?

Valli has a deep desire to visit the town and experience a bus journey. The world outside holds a charm for her. Whenever one of her friends tells Valli about her bus ride and the sights of the town, she gets jealous and tells them 'Proud,Proud'. Jealousy is not a positive trait. It's a negative feeling that arises out of hatred and contempt for others. We must not ever be jealous of others instead, we must share the achievements and happiness of our friends. We should feel inspired by their accounts and try to achieve our goal with all our heart.

2. Valli posed herself to be very confident when the conductor offered her help to ride the bus. Later on, she felt shy when all laughed at her. What does this tell you about Valli's character? What do we learn from her character?

Valli posed to be very confident in front of the conductor when he offered her help to ride the bus. This shows her confidence, intelligence and careful nature. But when everybody laughed at her, she felt shy. She was innocent too. Being aware of that fact that she was travelling for the first time, she was taking every precaution not to be fooled by anybody. Although she should not have travelled alone yet it was wise on her part to behave confidently. Sometimes, situations arise when a child has to travel or live alone. In such a situation, it is necessary for children to get training in order to be self-confident. She teaches us to be confident, compassionate and sympathetic towards others.

3. Valli dared to travel alone in the bus and behaved haughtily with everyone who showed care and concern for her. Why do you think she was behaving in such a way? Was it proper on her part to go to the city without the knowledge of her mother? What advice would you give to such children?

As Valli was travelling alone in a bus for the first time, it was natural on her part to behave like this. Initially she seemed haughty but later on she joined other people, though maintaining a distance. In fact, Valli was a very confident and mature girl. She saved her pocket money and planned carefully for the journey. She knew that the world outside was strange to her so she was being extra cautious. I appreciate her sense of responsibility but it was also not proper on her part to go out alone without telling her parents. Children must confide in their parents in whatever they do. Our elders have experience and knowledge and under their guidance, we can make our life a success.

5. Valli sternly refused the conductor's offer of a cold drink though she might be willing to have one. What lesson do you learn from her gesture?

By the end of the journey, the conductor had got quite fond of Valli. When the bus reached its destination, the conductor went to the nearby stall to have something to drink. He offered to bring one for Valli as a treat from him but Valli refused sternly. She didn't have much money and out of the feeling of self-respect she was not ready to take obligation either. Such a conduct from an eight-year-old girl shows her good upbringing. We learn not to be greedy and live within our means. We must not get lured by the attractions, however strong they may be. It is always wise to spend money judiciously. Children must not waste their pocket money on unwanted items.

6. The sight of the dead cow filled Valli with sadness. The harsh reality of life and death are shown through this episode. What kind of life do you think one must have to live peacefully until death comes?

On her way to the town, Valli saw a young cow running helter-skelter. She got very amused and

laughed a lot. But while on her return journey to the town, she saw the same cow lying dead in a pool of blood by the side of the road. Valli got very upset and lost her enthusiasm of looking outside the window. The episode reveals the fact that life is transitory. Death is uncertain. God has given us a very precious life so we must not waste it in doing wrong deeds. Our aim in life should be to live happily with our friends, neighbours and relatives. Leaving all the negative thoughts like anger, jealousy, greed and pride, etc. a person can feel calm, and peaceful at heart. Death is a harsh reality but life is beautiful. We must not lose an opportunity to live it to the fullest by getting entangled in the webs of life.

6. Valli's journey to the town is also her induction into the mystery of life and death. Such real experiences of life make us mature. Do you agree? Elaborate.

It is true that Valli's journey to the town is also her induction into the mystery of life and death. While on her way to the town, Valli saw a cow running very fast in the middle of the road, right in front of the bus. Valli was very happy. She kept on laughing until her eyes welled up with tears. She saw life in the image of a cow. This is what life gives us, happiness and enjoyment. On her way back home, she saw a dead cow lying on the road. It was killed in a road accident. Valli recognised it. It was the same cow which filled her life with happiness and joy a short while ago. She was upset and realised how death can change the things. Something that was lovable and charming a while ago had lost all the charms. Yes, such real-life experiences make one mature. It's a great lesson of life.

7. Valli is a very sensitive girl. She is different from ordinary people who are becoming more and more callous and insensitive to the joys and sufferings of the people around them. She grieves the accidental death of the young cow. Do you think the values of being sensitive and sympathetic are missing from our society? What do you learn from Valli?

It is true that Valli is a very sensitive girl. She is different from ordinary people who are becoming more and more callous and insensitive to the joys and sufferings of the people around them. She grieves the accidental death of the young cow. She was very happy while going to the city. She was happy seeing the young cow and enjoyed her activity. When she was returning home, she found the cow dead, she was very upset and grieved by her death. It shows that she was very sensitive. No doubt the values of being sensitive and sympathetic are missing from our society. These values must be restored and inculcated in the new generation. Today we find people very callous and insensitive towards the victim of road accidents. In some cases, the victim is not given any help and dies on the road itself. We must be sensitive towards them. Valli gives us a lesson that we should be sensitive to our surroundings and people.

8. Curiosity is the mother of learning. If one has an urge to know more about anything, one learns many things. Valli also has an urge to know more and more about things and her surroundings which makes her an intelligent, confident and mature girl. What traits of her character make her so? What do you learn from her character?

Curiosity is the mother of learning. If one has an urge to know more about anything, one learns

many things. Valli also has an urge to know more and more about things and her surroundings. The people and surroundings are a good book to learn. Valli in the lesson, 'Madam Rides the Bus' learns a lot from others. She is a small inquisitive girl of eight years. She always enjoys standing in the front door of the house to watch various activities going in the house. She is very confident. She has a deep urge to travel by bus so she listened carefully to the conversation of the neighbours. She has a lot of questions and does not hesitate in asking them. She sometimes asks discreet questions to get details about the journey. While on her journey to the town she becomes friendly with the conductor who gives her a lot of information. Her curious nature makes her intelligent and confident. I, as a student, learn from her that we should have an urge to know more. It makes one confident and intelligent.

REFERENCE-TO-CONTEXT

Read the following extract carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. But for Valli, standing at the front door was every bit as enjoyable as any of the elaborate games other children played. Watching the street gave her many new unusual experiences.

(a) Watching the street gave Valli experiences.

Answer:

unusual

(b) Standing at the front door was every bit as as any of the games other children played.

Answer:

enjoyable

(c) The arrival of the bus was the most disgusting experience of Valli. (True/False)

Answer:

False

(d) Find the meaning of the words 'different, not normal'.

Answer:

unusual

2. The most fascinating thing of all was the bus that travelled between her village and the nearest town. It passed through her street each hour, once going to the town and once coming back. The sight of the bus, filled each time with a new set of passengers, was a source of unending joy for Valli.

(a) The most fascinating thing for Valli was the bus that between her village and the nearest town.

Answer:
travelled

(b) The sight of the bus, filled with a new set of passengers, was a source of _____ joy for Valli.

Answer:
unending

(c) The bus passed through Valli's street each hour, once going to the town and once coming back. (True/False)

Answer:
True

(d) Find the same meaning of the words 'extremely interesting' in the extract.

Answer:
fascinating

3. Day after day she watched the bus, and gradually a tiny wish crept into her head and grew there: she wanted to ride on that bus, even if just once. This wish became stronger and stronger, until it was an overwhelming desire. Valli would stare wistfully at the people who got on or off the bus when it stopped at the street corner.

(a) Gradually a tiny wish crept into Valli's head: she wanted to _____ on that bus.

Answer:
ride

(b) Valli would wistfully _____ at the people who got on or off -the bus daily.

Answer:
stare

(c) The bus stopped near Valli's house. (True/False)

Answer:
False

(d) Find the same meaning of the words 'thinking sadly' in the extract.

Answer:
wistfully

4. Their faces would kindle in her longings, dreams and hopes. If one of her friends happened to ride the bus and tried to describe the sights of the town to her, Valli would be too jealous to listen and would shout, in English: “Proud! proud!” Neither she nor her friends really understood the meaning of the word, but they used it often as a slang expression of disapproval.

(a) The faces of the people who got on and off the bus would her longing for the bus ride.

Answer:

kindle

(b) Valli was too to listen the description of the bus ride by her friends.

Answer:

jealous

(c) Neither Valli nor her friends really understood ‘proud! proud!’ a slang expression of disapproval. (True/False)

Answer:

True

(d) Find the meaning of the words ‘kindle’ in the extract.

Answer:

Ignite

5. Over many days and months Valli listened carefully to conversations between her neighbours and people who regularly used the bus, and she also asked a few discreet questions here and there.

(a) Valli heard the conversations about the _____ and the city.

Answer:

bus journey

(b) Valli wanted to know more and more about her _____ and the bus.

Answer:

city

(c) Valli asked a few discreet questions for a joy ride in the bus. (True/False)

Answer:

True

(d) Find the same meaning of the words ‘carefully’ in the extract.

Answer:

discreet

6. This way she picked up various small details about the bus journey. The town was six miles from her village. The fare was thirty paise one way – “which is almost nothing at all,” she heard one well-dressed man say, but to Valli, who scarcely saw that much money from one month, to the next, it seemed a fortune. The trip to the town took forty-five minutes.

(a) The town was from Valli’s village.

Answer:

six miles

(b) The trip to the town took minutes.

Answer:

45

(c) The fare was sixty-five paise for one-way bus journey. (True/False)

Answer:

False

(d) Find the meaning of ‘chance or luck’

Answer:

‘fortune’

7. Well, one fine spring day the afternoon bus was just on the point of leaving the village and turning into the main highway when a small voice was heard shouting: “Stop the bus! Stop the bus!” And a tiny hand was raised commandingly.

(a) On a fine spring day, the bus was just on the point of leaving Valli’s village.

Answer:

afternoon

(b) It was Valli whose tiny _____ stopped the bus.

Answer:

voice

(c) Valli was going to her school. (True/False)

Answer:

False

(d) Find the same meaning of the word 'powerfully' in the extract.

Answer:

Commandingly

Question 8.

The bus slowed down to a crawl, and the conductor, sticking his head out of the door, said: "Hurry then! Tell whoever it is to come quickly."

"It's me," shouted Valli. "I'm the one who has to get on." By now the bus had come to a stop, and the conductor said: "Oh, really! You don't say so!" "Yes, I simply have to go to town," said Valli, still standing outside the bus, "and here's my money." She showed him some coins.

(a) The bus slowed down to a and the conductor asked Valli to come quickly.

Answer:

crawl

(b) Knowing the fact that a small child was travelling alone the conductor.

Answer:

surprised

(c) Valli shouted because she wanted to get on the bus. (True/False)

Answer:

True

(d) Find the same meaning of the phrase 'a very slow speed'.

Answer:

crawl

Question 9.

"May we start now, madam?" the conductor asked, smiling. Then he blew his whistle twice, and the bus moved forward with a roar.

(a) The conductor blew his twice and the bus moved forward with a roar.

Answer:

whistle

(b) The conductor addressed Valli smiling.

Answer:
madam

(c) Valli blew the whistle to stop the bus. (True/False)

Answer:
False

(d) Find the meaning of the word, 'a loud noise in the extract.

Answer:
roar

Question 10.

It was a new bus, its outside painted a gleaming white with some green stripes along the sides. Inside, the overhead bars shone like silver. Directly in front of Valli, above the windshield, there was a beautiful clock. The seats were soft and luxurious.

(a) The outside of the bus was _____ painted a white with some green stripes along the sides.

Answer:
gleaming

(b) Inside the bus, the overhead bars shone like _____

Answer:
Silver

(c) Directly in front of Valli, above the windshield, there was a beautiful globe. (True/False)

Answer:
False

(d) Find the meaning of the word, 'a glass screen'.

Answer:
windshield

Question 11.

Valli devoured everything with her eyes. But when she started to look outside, she found her view cut off by a canvas blind that covered the lower part of her window. So, she stood up on the seat and peered over the blind.

(a) Valli _____ everything with her eyes.

Answer:
devoured

(b) Valli started to look at the outside view very keenly because she wanted to _____ every moment of her bus journey.

Answer:
enjoy

(c) Valli stood up on the seat as she could not see outside clearly. (True/False)

Answer:
True

(d) Find the meaning of the word, 'screen' in the extract.

Answer:
blind

Question 12.

An elderly woman came and sat beside her. "Are you all alone, dear?" she asked Valli as the bus started again.

Valli found the woman absolutely repulsive—such big holes she had in her ear lobes, and such ugly earrings in them! And she could smell the betel nut the woman was chewing and see the betel juice that was threatening to spill over her lips at any moment.

(a) Valli found the elderly woman absolutely

Answer:
repulsive

(b) The elderly woman asked Valli if she was going

Answer:
all alone.

(c) Valli liked the elder woman's big holes in her ear lobes, and such ugly earrings in them! . (True/False)

Answer:
False

(d) Find the meaning of the word, 'strong dislike' in the extract'.

Answer:
repulsive

Question 13.

"Do you know exactly where you're going in town? What's the street? What's the house number?" "You needn't bother about me. I can take care of myself," Valli said, turning her face towards the window and staring out.

(a) An old woman enquired Valli about her _____

Answer:
whereabouts

(b) Valli turned her face towards the _____ because she did not like the old woman.

Answer:
window

(c) Valli was a courageous and confident girl. (True/False)

Answer:
True

(d) Find the same meaning of the word, 'gaze' in the extract'.

Answer:
stare out

Question 14.

The bus slowed to a crawl, and the driver sounded his horn loudly again and again. But the more he honked, the more frightened the animal became and the faster it galloped—always right in front of the bus.

(a) The bus slowed to a crawl when a _____ was running very fast ahead of it.

Answer:
young cow

(b) The cow was frightened by the repeated _____ of the driver.

Answer:
honking

(c) The driver of the bus was sounded his horn repeatedly to stop galloping of the cow.

(True/False)

Answer:
True

(d) Find the meaning of the word, 'running very fast' in the extract'.

Answer:
'gallop'.

Question 15.

Struck dumb with wonder, Valli gaped at everything. Then the bus stopped and everyone got off except Valli.

“Hey, lady,” said the conductor, “aren’t you ready to get off? This is as for as your thirty paisa takes you.”

(a) Struck dumb with wonder, Valli _____ at everything.

Answer:
gaped

(b) The bus stopped and everyone got off except _____

Answer:
Valli

(c) Valli was struck dumb with wonder to see the wonderful thing outside. (True/False)

Answer:
True

(d) Find the same meaning of ‘astonishment’ in the extract’.

Answer:
wonder

Question 16.

“Won’t your mother be looking for you?” the conductor asked when he gave the girl her ticket. “No, no one will be looking for me,” she said. The bus started, and again there were the same wonderful sights.

(a) Valli’s mother did not know where she was _____

Answer:
going

(b) The conductor asked her if her _____ would be looking for her.

Answer:
mother

(c) When the bus started again there were horrible sights outside. (True/False)

Answer:
False

(d) Find the same meaning of ‘set off in the extract.

Answer:
started

Question 17.

Valli wasn’t bored in the slightest and greeted everything with the same excitement she’d

felt the first time. But suddenly she saw a young cow lying dead by the roadside, just where it had been struck by some fast-moving vehicle.

(a) Happily, Valli greeted everything with the same _____

Answer:
excitement

(b) The scene of a _____ cow changed her mood.

Answer:
dead

(c) Villi was glad on seeing a dead cow on her return journey. (True/False)

Answer:
False

(d) Find the same meaning of 'hit' in the extract'.

Answer:
struck

Question 18.

“Isn't that the same cow that ran in front of the bus on our trip to town?” She asked the conductor. The conductor nodded, and she was overcome with sadness. What had been a lovable, beautiful creature just a little while ago had now suddenly lost its charm and its life and looked so horrible, so frightening as it lay there, legs spread-eagled, a fixed stare in its lifeless eyes, blood all over.

(a) Death of the cow made her extremely _____

Answer:
sad

(b) Life looked _____ and frightening due to the death of the cow.

Answer:
horrible

(c) The conductor nodded and Valli was overcome with sadness. (True/False)

Answer:
True

(d) Find the same meaning of 'overwhelmed' in the extract.

Answer:
overcome

Question 19

“Yes you’re right,” her mother said. “So many things in our midst and in the world outside. How can we possibly know about everything? And even when we do know about something, we often can’t understand it completely, can we?”

(a) There were so many things in the world outside but we do not have of everything.

Answer:

knowledge

(b) According to Valli’s mother, her aunt was right to say that one cannot anything completely knowing something. ”

Answer:

understand

(c) On hearing the conversation, Valli felt that, they might know about her first bus ride.

(True/False)

Answer:

False

(d) Find the same meaning of word comprehend’ in the extract.

Answer:

Understand