



**INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

Class: IX	QUESTION BANK (2026-2027)	SUBJECT: ENGLISH
	TOPIC: Vitamin-M	

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Asha Nehemiah is a well-known Indian writer of children's and young adult fiction. She was born in Chennai. She is celebrated for her humorous, adventure-filled stories. Her stories combine gentle humour with insight into everyday family dynamics. 'Vitamin-M' is one such story that captures the wit, warmth, and quiet wisdom of a grandfather-grandson bond.

Her best-selling works include 'Granny's Sari', 'The Grand Chapati Contest', and 'The Adventures of Mooli' series. She won the Children's Book Trust award for 'The Rajah's Moustache' and her contributions to children's literature.

SUMMARY

The story begins with a morning conversation between Vidya and her young son Ravi. Vidya jokingly laments that scientists should invent a "Vitamin M" (where 'M' stands for Memory) to help senior citizens restore their memory. Though the remark is made light heartedly, Ravi worries that his grandfather who is presumed to be hard of hearing, might overhear it and feel deeply hurt.

Grandfather has been compelled to relocate to the city after a fall in his hometown. He is prohibited from going out by himself due to his failing memory. He once he got hospitalized for taking double dose of medicine and also got lost in the city. Though he reminds Vidya that he had been taking care of himself all these years, she refuses to allow him to venture alone. The plot thickens when Grandpa stubbornly insists on going out all alone to buy his daily newspaper. Ravi, who has been given the responsibility to look after his grandfather during his vacation, is worried about his safety. He decides to trail him like a detective. This leads to a wild, comical chase through the city streets. Ravi takes great precautions to remain hidden while keeping a watchful eye on Grandpa's movements. He follows his grandfather and observes how he enjoys life all by himself, relishing sugary tea, two bananas and an ice-cream. Realising that he is being followed, Grandpa plays a trick on Ravi. He subtly hands his yellow signature cap to a total stranger and misleads Ravi. Ravi follows a stranger and gets into a bus. Having completely outsmarted his young "detective," Grandpa completes his errands and safely goes back home.

The climax occurs when Ravi returns home, only to find Grandpa waiting for him. Grandpa reveals his sharpness by presenting Ravi with a gift- a thick, hardcover book titled '*The Best Detective Stories*', playfully mocking the boy's failed attempt at keeping an eye on him. The story concludes with a sharp twist of *situational irony* when Grandpa presents his daughter with a gift as well. It turns out that Vidya, who spent the morning complaining about her father's memory, had completely forgotten her father's birthday despite marking it in the calendar. Turning the tables with wit, Grandpa remarks to Ravi's father that Vidya is the one who truly

needs a dose of “Vitamin-M” for her memory. Thus, Grandpa proves to be far more alert, independent, and clever than his family gives him credit for.

THEME

The central theme of the story is the importance of treating the elderly with respect, dignity, and trust rather than over-protective control. Through gentle humour, the story challenges the stereotype that old age automatically means helplessness and failing memory—Grandpa's sharp recall of chess history contrasts pointedly with the family's assumption that he is forgetful and needs to be watched like a child. A related theme is the bond between grandparent and grandchild, and how caregiving responsibilities can deepen affection and understanding across generations.

Message

Through the light hearted twist at the end of the story, the author gives a powerful message that the elderly do not require to be treated like helpless children; instead, they deserve to be treated with dignity and love. They definitely deserve the right to live as they like.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Ravi's mother wishes someone would invent ‘Vitamin-M’. What does this wish primarily reveal about her state of mind?

- A. Her scientific curiosity about vitamins and medicines
- B. Her frustration and underlying worry about her father's forgetfulness and the burden of caregiving
- C. Her wish to control what her father eats
- D. Her ambition to start a pharmaceutical business

Ans: B

2. Grandpa tells his daughter, “I've been looking after myself for the better part of my seventy-five years.” What does this statement reveal about his perspective on the move to the city?

- A. He is grateful for constant supervision from his daughter
- B. He is indifferent to where he lives, as long as it is comfortable
- C. He resents the assumption that old age automatically means helplessness, and values his independence
- D. He wants to return to his former profession as a lawyer

Ans: C

3. Why does the author most likely include the detail of Grandpa's sharp, detailed recall of historic chess games?

- A. To highlight that Grandpa's memory is selectively sharp, undermining the assumption of forgetfulness in old age
- B. To show off Ravi's own chess skills
- C. To create rivalry and tension between Ravi and Grandpa
- D. To set up a subplot about a chess tournament

Ans: A

4. Analyse Ravi's motivation for secretly following Grandpa instead of simply stopping him from going out.

- A. He wanted an adventure of his own during the holidays
- B. He was caught in a dilemma—unwilling to hurt Grandpa's pride by treating him like a child, yet anxious about breaking his promise to keep him safe
- C. He wanted to test the detective skills he later reads about in his gift book
- D. He simply disliked staying indoors

Ans: B

5. What is the likely significance of Grandpa eating forbidden foods—sugar in his tea, bananas, and ice cream—during his outing?

- A. It shows that he has completely lost control over his choices
- B. It is meant to make Ravi feel guilty about following him
- C. It proves that he has genuinely forgotten his health restrictions
- D. It reflects a quiet reclaiming of autonomy and enjoyment of simple pleasures usually denied to him at home

Ans: D

6. The story ends with Ravi unsure whether “the twinkle in Grandpa's eye was an innocent gleam or a mischievous one.” What does this ambiguity most likely suggest to the reader?

- A. Grandpa is genuinely confused about the day's events
- B. The story invites readers to question whether the elderly are truly as unaware or dependent as their families assume
- C. Ravi has failed completely as an amateur detective
- D. The ending is simply left incomplete by the author

Ans: B

7. Which of the following best captures the central irony conveyed by the story's title, ‘Vitamin-M’?

- A. The person assumed to need help with memory turns out to have sharper recall of important things than expected, while it is his daughter who forgets his birthday
- B. Ravi's mother needs the vitamin literally, for a diagnosed medical condition
- C. Grandpa actually invents Vitamin-M by the end of the story
- D. Vitamin-M refers to a real medicine that Grandpa is prescribed

Ans: A

ASSERTION – REASON QUESTIONS

Instructions:

- (A) Both Assertion and Reason are true, and Reason is the correct explanation of Assertion.
- (B) Both Assertion and Reason are true, but Reason is not the correct explanation of Assertion.

(C) Assertion is true, but Reason is false.

(D) Assertion is false, but Reason is true.

9. Assertion: Ravi's mother insists that Grandpa should not go out alone.

Reason: She is worried about his safety after his recent fall and hospitalisation.

Ans: A

10. Assertion: Grandpa forgets the names of people he meets often.

Reason: This proves that his memory has failed him completely in every area of his life.

Ans: C

11. Assertion: Ravi felt embarrassed several times while secretly following Grandpa.

Reason: He had to hide behind bushes, trees, and cars, and was mistaken for a suspicious stranger by shopkeepers and street vendors.

Ans: A

12. Assertion: Grandpa is entirely unaware that Ravi followed him throughout the day.

Reason: Grandpa gifts Ravi a book titled 'The Best Detective Stories' and speaks 'solemnly' about avoiding detection while trailing a suspect.

Ans: D

13. Assertion: Ravi's mother forgets her father's birthday despite having marked it on the calendar at the start of the year.

Reason: She has been preoccupied with the stress of caregiving and daily responsibilities.

Ans: B

14. Assertion: The story shows that Grandpa is always treated with complete respect and independence by his family.

Reason: Ravi's mother speaks to Grandpa in an 'over-loud tone', as though he cannot hear or understand her properly.

Ans: D

FILL IN THE BLANKS / COMPLETION QUESTIONS

15. Ravi's mother wished somebody would invent a _____ and call it _____.

Ans: memory (pill); Vitamin-M

16. Grandpa's walking stick was made of shiny-black mahogany with a brass handle carved in the shape of a/an _____.

Ans: eagle's head

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (30–40 words each)

1. Why did Ravi's mother decide that Grandpa should live with them?

Ans. Grandpa was getting too old to live alone. After a difficult month—taking a double dose of his medicine, getting lost on a walk, and falling in his garden and lying outside all night—his daughter felt he was no longer safe by himself.

2. How did Grandpa react to his daughter's instructions about not going out alone?

Ans. Grandpa felt insulted and suspicious, accusing Ravi of treating him like a baby or a prisoner. He resented losing his independence after decades of managing his own life and household.

3. Describe two embarrassing situations Ravi faced while secretly following Grandpa.

Ans. While hiding behind a bush, Ravi was scolded by a woman who accused him of ‘shooing’ her child; later, he was thrown out of a Ladies' Hairdressing Salon after ducking in to get a closer look at a bald head, mistaking a stranger for Grandpa.

4. How did Ravi feel when he found Grandpa safely asleep at home?

Ans. Ravi felt great delight and relief. He knelt beside the bed, studied Grandpa's wrinkled face affectionately, and hugged him, suddenly overwhelmed with tenderness for his grandfather.

5. What surprise did Grandpa have for the family, and how did Ravi's mother react?

Ans. Grandpa distributed gift-wrapped parcels, claiming it was his tradition to gift every child in the house on his birthday. Ravi's mother flushed with embarrassment, realising she had forgotten his actual birthday despite marking it on the calendar.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. ‘Vitamin-M is not just a humorous story but a meaningful commentary on how society treats the elderly.’ Discuss with reference to the story.

Ans. The story humorously portrays a common family dilemma—balancing safety with dignity when caring for elderly relatives. Ravi's mother, though well-intentioned, speaks to Grandpa in an ‘over-loud tone’, instructs Ravi to prevent him from going out, and effectively restricts his freedom, echoing how the elderly are often infantilised by well-meaning family members. Grandpa, in turn, resists this loss of autonomy, insisting he managed his own household for decades and should not be treated ‘like a baby... or a prisoner.’ His sharp recall of chess history contrasts pointedly with his supposed memory loss, challenging the stereotype that ageing equals total decline. The story ultimately suggests that elderly individuals retain agency, wit, and the capacity to outsmart even their well-meaning caretakers, as hinted at in its ambiguous ending. Through humour rather than moralising, Asha Nehemiah invites readers to reconsider assumptions about old age, advocating for a caregiving approach rooted in respect and trust rather than control.

2. Trace Ravi's emotional journey through the story, from being given responsibility for Grandpa to the story's end.

Ans. At the start, Ravi feels the weight of responsibility mixed with sympathy for his anxious mother, promising to look after Grandpa. When Grandpa insists on going out alone, Ravi is torn—reluctant to hurt his grandfather's feelings, yet afraid of breaking his promise—so he chooses to secretly follow him. This leads to a comic sequence of embarrassment and mounting

anxiety, as Ravi loses sight of Grandpa and grows frantic with worry, even trying and failing to reach his parents by telephone. His fear turns to relief and deep affection when he finds Grandpa safely asleep at home, kneeling tenderly beside him. By the end, Ravi is left in a state of amused uncertainty, unsure whether Grandpa was aware of his surveillance all along—a journey that deepens his understanding and appreciation of his grandfather as a complex, capable individual rather than someone to merely be managed.

3. How does the author use humour to explore serious themes in ‘Vitamin-M’? Support your answer with examples from the text.

Ans. Asha Nehemiah uses situational humour—Ravi’s clumsy attempts to shadow Grandpa, hiding behind an elephant-shaped bush, being threatened with an umbrella, and being thrown out of a Ladies’ Hairdressing Salon—to lighten what is fundamentally a serious subject: the tension between safety and independence in caring for the elderly. The comic mix-up with a stranger wearing an identical yellow cap heightens suspense while keeping the tone light-hearted. Even Grandpa’s ‘craftily’ delivered dialogue and his teasing birthday-gift twist carry serious undertones about memory, fairness, and being truly seen by one’s family. By wrapping themes of ageing, trust, and family duty in humour, the author makes the story engaging and relatable for young readers while still prompting reflection on how the elderly should be treated with dignity.

4. ‘Grandpa outwits everyone in the story, including the reader.’ Do you agree? Justify your answer with evidence from the text.

Ans. There is strong evidence to support this view. Grandpa’s cunning chess play, his sly response (“‘Good,” said Grandpa craftily’) when he traps Ravi into agreeing he is not treated like a baby or a prisoner, and his pointed remark to Ravi’s father that his daughter ‘needs some Vitamin-M... for her memory’ all suggest a mind fully in control, using perceived forgetfulness as camouflage. His gift of a detective-story book to Ravi—who spent the entire day awkwardly ‘detecting’ him—is the clearest hint that Grandpa may have known about the secret pursuit all along, choosing not to embarrass Ravi by confronting him directly. The story’s final line, leaving Ravi and the reader unsure whether the twinkle in Grandpa’s eye is innocent or mischievous, reinforces this reading. Thus, Grandpa emerges not as a frail old man needing protection, but as a witty, self-aware individual who quietly outmanoeuvres everyone around him.