



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (2026-27)
CLASS – IX
QB – HOW I TAUGHT MY GRANDMOTHER TO READ

SUMMARY

The story talks about the experience of the writer as a little girl, when she was living with her grandmother in the village of Shiggaon, Karnataka. The village was backward in terms of infrastructure and was serviced by a poor transport system, but the residents were educated folks. Thus, the newspaper and other readings materials were eagerly sought after, by them. The author's grandmother was a resident and like others she loved to hear her granddaughter read out to her a serialised portion of the novel 'Kashi Yatre' in a magazine of that time.

The delivery of printed matter to the village arrived by the afternoon bus and every Wednesday afternoon, the writer read out the story from the magazine to her grandmother. There had been no hitch in this arrangement till a time when the writer went to the neighbouring village to attend a marriage ceremony. During this period, the magazine had arrived as usual but grandmother was unable to enjoy the serialized story because she was embarrassed about asking someone else to read it to her.

On her return, the writer was shocked to find her grandmother in tears, after much coaxing, the grandmother had revealed that she was reduced to tears at her plight. The grandmother felt that despite their family being well-off, she felt dependent because of lack of education. Thus, she had taken pains to see that her sons and grandchildren had received a proper education. Thereafter she begged her granddaughter to teach her the Kannada alphabet, promising to be a hardworking pupil. She also set herself a goal of mastering the language by the time of the Dassara festival.

The writer found her a most competent pupil who worked hard at her homework.

At the time of Dassara festival, the grandmother called the writer to the pooja room and presented her a frock piece. Thereafter she did a most extraordinary thing by touching the feet of her little granddaughter. When the writer was taken aback by this gesture, she explained that it was written in the scriptures that a teacher was to be respected irrespective of gender or age. She went to add that she could now be fully independent as she was literate.

The granddaughter too realised why her grandmother had been such a fine pupil. She had brought the novel form of the serialised story 'Kashi Yatre', that the two had been reading, as a gift to her grandmother. Her grandmother opened the gift and read the title and name of the author all by herself. The writer knew at that moment that her 'pupil' had passed with flying colours.

THEME

The theme of this story is concerned with the benefits of education, particularly for women. It also brings out the fact that each educated person could become an instrument of change by helping an uneducated person become literate. The story also brings out the fact that the illiterate people realise their plight and are eager to be taught. Thus, they make fine and hardworking

pupils who work over their lessons, as did the old grandmother in the story. The story also stresses that a woman from a well-off family may have no financial constraints but does not feel independent because she is unable to manage her affairs due to lack of education. Hence, education, more than wealth, is the biggest tool for empowerment.

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. What does the grandmother's dependence on her granddaughter to hear the story of 'Kashi Yatre' symbolize?

- A. The lack of entertainment in villages
- B. The importance of oral traditions
- C. The physical weakness of old age
- D. The barrier created by illiteracy

Ans: D

2. Why did Krishtakka never go to school as a child?

- A. Her family was too poor to afford fees
- B. She was uninterested in studies
- C. There were no schools in her village
- D. Social norms prioritized early marriage over girls' education

Ans: D

3. The grandmother's decision to learn the alphabet at the age of sixty-two demonstrates which personality trait?

- A. Resilience and determination
- B. Stubbornness
- C. Impulsiveness
- D. Competitiveness

Ans: A

4. Why did the grandmother relate so deeply to the protagonist of 'Kashi Yatre'?

- A. They both shared the desire to visit Kashi
- B. They were both abandoned by their families
- C. They both eventually became teachers

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D. They both lived in the same village

Ans: A

5. How does the narrator's attitude toward teaching her grandmother change?

A. From eagerness to boredom

B. From fear to confidence

C. From anger to pity

Ans: B

6. What was the grandmother's 'deadline' for her learning goal?

A. Dussehra festival

B. The granddaughter's graduation

C. Her birthday

D. New Year's Day

Ans: A

7. The act of the grandmother touching the feet of her granddaughter/teacher signifies:

A. A Kannada tradition of welcoming guests

B. A way to ask for forgiveness

C. A sign of her old age and frailty

D. The traditional respect given to a guru, regardless of age

Ans: D

8. In the story, 'Karmaveera' is the name of a:

A. Weekly magazine

B. Character in the novel

C. Local school

D. Religious book

Ans: B

9. What is the primary message Sudha Murthy conveys through this story?

- A. Learning has no age limit
- B. Village life is better than city life
- C. Reading novels is a good hobby
- D. Children should always obey their grandparents

Ans: A

10. How did the grandmother feel when she couldn't read the magazine in her granddaughter's absence?

- A. Angry at her granddaughter
- B. Indifferent
- C. Helpless and dependent
- D. Helpless and independent

Ans: C

11. The grandmother compares being unable to read to being like 'a blind man living in a world of color.' What does this metaphor suggest?

- A. She literally had failing eyesight due to her age.
- B. She felt that people who can read are naturally superior.
- C. The magazines she liked were printed in very bright colors.
- D. The beauty of literature and knowledge was invisible to her.

Ans: D

12. What specifically triggered the grandmother's 'crying' when the granddaughter returned from the wedding?

- A. She had missed her granddaughter's company terribly.
- B. The realization of her total helplessness without a reader.
- C. She was upset that she couldn't attend the wedding herself.
- D. She had lost the latest issue of the magazine 'Karmaveera'.

Ans: B

Select the right options of the questions from 13 to 19 (Competency Based)

Instructions:

- (A) Both Assertion and Reason are true, and Reason is the correct explanation of Assertion.

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- (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.

13. **Assertion:** Krishtakka was determined to learn the Kannada alphabet at the age of sixty-two.

Reason: She felt helpless and dependent when she couldn't read the latest episode of *Kashi Yatre* during her granddaughter's absence.

Ans: A

14. **Assertion:** The grandmother touched the feet of her young granddaughter on the day of Dassara.

Reason: In Indian culture, it is a tradition for elders to touch the feet of children regardless of the occasion.

Ans: C

15. **Assertion:** The granddaughter at first found the idea of teaching her grandmother to read quite ridiculous.

Reason: The grandmother was already very well-educated in subjects other than Kannada.

Ans: C

16. **Assertion:** The protagonist of the novel *Kashi Yatre* and Krishtakka shared a similar desire.

Reason: Both women had a strong longing to visit the holy city of Kashi.

Ans: A

17. **Assertion:** Krishtakka set a deadline for herself to be able to read a novel by the festival of Dassara.

Reason: She wanted to prove to the villagers that age is no bar to learning.

Ans: C

18. When the grandmother touched the narrator's feet, she was 'shaken' and taken aback. Replace the word 'shaken' with another suitable one.

Ans: Surprised, upset, Flustered

19. In the story, the author uses the magazine '*Karmaveera*' as a _____ that connects the grandmother to her ultimate goal of achieving _____.

Ans: Bridge, Literacy (or learning to read)

20. The secondary theme in the story besides 'Learning has no age limit' is _____

Ans. The bond of empathy and patience between generations.

21. State whether the given statement is true or false

In her childhood, Krishtakka's duties as a girl and daughter were prioritized over her literacy

Ans: True

22. By the end of the story, the grandmother has truly gained _____

Ans: Independence and literacy.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

Answer these in 30-40 words.

1. Why did the grandmother choose her granddaughter to be her teacher instead of a professional tutor?
2. Describe the grandmother's reaction when the granddaughter laughed at her proposal to learn. What does this reveal about her resolve?
3. How does the title 'How I Taught My Grandmother to Read' reflect the shifting roles within a family?
4. Why was the story 'Kashi Yatre' so significant to the women of the village during that time?
5. What did the grandmother mean when she said, "I am touching the feet of a teacher, not my granddaughter"?

ANSWERS

1. The grandmother shared a bond of deep trust and comfort with her granddaughter. In a traditional setting, admitting the "shame" of illiteracy to an outsider would be difficult; with her granddaughter, she felt safe, supported, and knew the girl was already familiar with her passion for the story.
2. Instead of getting offended or giving up, the grandmother remained calm and serious. She explained the pain of her dependency, showing that her desire to learn wasn't a whim but a necessity for her self-respect. This reveals her maturity and unshakable resolve.
3. The title suggests a reversal of the traditional hierarchy. Usually, elders teach the youth; here, the "guru" is the child and the "shishya" (student) is the elder. It highlights that knowledge transcends age and that family members can empower one another.
4. The story mirrored the real-life struggles and spiritual aspirations of many Hindu women who dreamed of visiting Kashi for salvation. Since most village women were not independent, they lived vicariously through the protagonist's selfless journey.
5. She was upholding the Indian tradition of *Guru-shishya*, where the teacher is revered as a source of light. By doing this, she looked past the "granddaughter" label and honored the person who gave her the gift of literacy and independence.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. "For learning, there is no age bar." Discuss this statement with reference to Krishtakka's journey in the story.
2. Compare and contrast the protagonist of the novel *Kashi Yatre* with the grandmother. How did one inspire the other to change her life?
3. The story highlights the plight of many girls in pre-independent and early independent India regarding education. Using the grandmother's childhood as a reference, discuss the social barriers to female literacy.
4. Imagine you are the granddaughter. Write a diary entry describing your feelings after your grandmother successfully read the first page of 'Kashi Yatre' by herself.
5. How does this story emphasize the value of 'Gratefulness' and 'Respect' in the teacher-student relationship, regardless of the biological relationship?

ANSWERS

1. Krishtakka proves that the only real barrier to learning is the lack of will. At 62, most people consider themselves too old for new academic pursuits. However, driven by the "helplessness" she felt when her granddaughter was away, she practiced the Kannada alphabet with immense dedication.

She set a deadline (Dussehra) and worked harder than a school-going child. Her success in reading the book independently proves that intellectual growth is possible at any stage of life if one has the courage to be a student again.

2. Both the protagonist of the novel and Krishtakka are women of great sacrifice and spiritual depth. The novel's protagonist gives up her savings for Kashi to help an orphan, choosing duty over her own dreams. Similarly, Krishtakka sacrificed her education in her youth to take care of her family and children. However, while the novel's hero finds fulfillment in charity, Krishtakka finds it in self-reliance. The protagonist's struggle inspired Krishtakka to stop being a passive listener and become an active reader of her own destiny.

3. The grandmother's childhood reflects a time when female education was considered unnecessary or even a hindrance to domestic life. Girls were often married off very young (as Krishtakka was) and expected to manage the household. Education was seen as a male privilege. The story highlights how these social barriers created a generation of intelligent women who remained "blind" to the written word, not due to a lack of ability, but due to a lack of opportunity and the weight of patriarchal traditions.

4. 19th April, 2026, Sunday

6.30 pm

Dear Diary,

Today, my heart is full. I saw my grandmother—my student—do something incredible. She sat down with 'Kashi Yatre' and read the first page aloud, all by herself. I remember laughing when she first asked me to teach her, but today I felt ashamed of my initial immaturity. Seeing the sparkle of independence in her eyes as she recognized the letters was better than any gift I've ever received. I am no longer just her granddaughter; I am the person who helped her find her voice. I've never been a prouder teacher.

NAME

5. The story culminates in a powerful lesson: knowledge is the greatest wealth, and the giver of that wealth deserves the highest respect. The grandmother's gesture of touching her granddaughter's feet was a radical act of humility. It stripped away the ego of being an elder. By treating the narrator as a 'Guru,' she taught the narrator (and the reader) that respect is not just about age, but about the value of the wisdom being passed down. It emphasizes that a true student is one who is grateful enough to acknowledge their teacher's role in their transformation.