



QUESTION BANK – THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH (2024-25)

Sub: ENGLISH

Class: IX

REFERENCE TO CONTEXT QUESTIONS (SOLVED)

Read the given extracts and answer the questions that follow:

Question.1. The Sergeant asked, “You had any training before ?”

The Professor answered with a phrase that was to become familiar to all of us. “No, Sergeant. It’s all a matter of intelligent reading.”

- (a) Why did the Sergeant put this question?**
- (b) What was the Sergeant’s purpose in putting the Professor through so many questions?**
- (c) Give the meaning of ‘intelligent reading’.**

Answers:

- (a) The Sergeant put this question because the Professor had answered all the questions put to him by the Sergeant.**
- (b) The Sergeant put so many questions to belittle the Professor.**
- (c) It means ‘complete understanding of what is read’.**

Question.2. remember the first lesson we had in musketry. We stood in an attentive circle while a Sergeant, a man as dark and sun-dried as raisins, wearing North-West Frontier ribbons, described the mechanism of a service rifle.

- (a) What is the meaning of musketry?**
- (b) Describe the Sergeant.**
- (c) What does the phrase ‘North-West Frontier Ribbons’ convey about the person mentioned? (CBSE 2014)**

Answers:

- (a) It means the art of using musket, a type of gun.**
- (b) The Sergeant was a dark-complexioned, experienced soldier.**
- (c) It means that the Sergeant had won an honour fighting on the North-West Frontier.**

Question.3. When, after a hard morning’s work cleaning out our hut, we listened in silence to the Orderly Officer’s praise, the Professor would break out with a ringing, dutifully beaming, “Thank you, sir!” And how superior, how condescending he was. It was always, “Let me show you, fellow,” or “No, you’ll ruin your rifle, that way, old man.”

- (a) Give the meaning of the word ‘condescending’.**
- (b) Why did Private Quelch behave in this manner with his superiors?**

(c) Which expression tells us that Private Quelch was always cheerful?

Answers:

- (a) The word 'condescending' means behaving in a polite manner but showing as if one were obliging somebody.
- (b) Private Quelch behaved in an over-confident manner because he wanted to show off his knowledge.
- (c) The phrase is 'break out with a ringing, dutifully beaming'.

Question.4. A voice interrupted, 'Two thousand, four hundred and forty feet per second.'

- (a) Who spoke this line and to whom ?**
- (b) In which context did he speak ?**
- (c) Give the meaning of the word 'interrupted'.**

Answers :

- (a) Private Quelch spoke this line to the Sergeant.
- (b) He spoke when the Sergeant was telling about the speed of the bullet.
- (c) It means 'stopped someone to say or do something'.

Question.5. What could a gang of louts like us do with a man like that ?

- (a) Who utters these sentiments ?**
- (b) Which 'gang of louts' is referred to here ?**
- (c) What do you mean by 'louts' ?**

Answers :

- (a) The narrator, one of the trainees, utters these sentiments.
- (b) 'The gang of louts' refers to the group of trainees who are quite mischievous and aggressive.
- (c) 'those who behave rudely and aggressively'.

Question.6. He was our hero, and we used to tell each other that he was so tough that you could hammer nails into him without his noticing it.

- (a) Who is 'he' referred to here ?**
- (b) What kind of person was he ?**
- (c) What does 'tough' mean ?**

Answers:

- (a) 'He' is Corporal Turnbull.
- (b) He was a young man, very serious and tough-minded.
- (c) 'mentally strong'.

Question.7. The Corporal said nothing, but his brow tightened. He opened his mouth to resume.

- (a) What made the Corporal feel irritated?**
- (b) What did he resume?**
- (c) Give the meaning of 'resume'.**

Answers:

- (a) Private Quelch's interrupting his lecture made him feel irritated.
- (b) He was lecturing to new recruits.
- (c) 'begin again'.

Question.8. I met Private Quelch at the training depot. A man is liable in his first week of army life-together with his uniform, rifle and equipment-a nickname.

- (a) What was the nickname of Private Quelch?**
- (b) Why was he called ‘Professor’?**
- (c) Give the meaning of the word ‘liable’.**

Answers :

- (a) The nickname of Private Quelch was ‘Professor’.**
- (b) He was called Professor because of his habit of sermonizing to one and all.**
- (c) ‘likely to have/get’.**

Question.9. “Really. I must protest against this abominably unscientific and unhygienic method of peeling potatoes. I need to only draw your attention to the sheer waste of vitamin values “

- (a) Who is ‘I’ here?**
- (b) Where is the speaker?**
- (c) What does he want to say? Why?**

Answers:

- (a) ‘I’ here is Private Quelch.**
- (b) Private Quelch, the speaker, is in the kitchen.**
- (c) He is trying to tell his co-workers the best way of peeling potatoes. He wants to show that he has better knowledge about the task than they do.**

Question.10. “Thank you, Private Quelch. Fall in with the others now”.

- (a) Who thanked Private Quelch?**
- (b) What task was entrusted to Private Quelch?**
- (c) What does ‘fall in’ mean?**

Answers:

- (a) Corporal Turnbull thanked Private Quelch.**
- (b) Private Quelch was asked to lecture on the characteristics of the grenade.**
- (c) ‘form lines’.**

Question.11. So this was the great moment.

- (a) Why was that moment considered the great ?**
- (b) What duty was assigned to Private Quelch ?**
- (c) Use another word for ‘moment’.**

Answers:

- (a) The ‘moment’ was great as the trainees thought that the Corporal was going to nominate one of them for a big job or for a stripe.**
- (b) Private Quelch was assigned kitchen duties permanently.**
- (c) ‘instant’.**

Question.12. Of course, it was a joke for days afterwards; a joke and joy to all of us.

- (a) What was the ‘joke’?**
- (b) Why were the trainees happy?**
- (c) What do you mean by ‘all of us’ here?**

Answers:

- (a) The 'joke' was the assigning of kitchen duties to Private Quelch quite unexpectedly.
- (b) The trainees were happy because Private Quelch would no longer be with them to browbeat them with his superior knowledge.
- (c) 'all trainees including the narrator'.

Question.13. He had brains. He was sure to get a commission, before long. As a first step, he meant to get a stripe.

- (a) Who is 'he' referred to ?
- (b) What made him so confident ?
- (c) What do you mean by 'stripe' ?

Answers :

- (a) 'He' is referred to Private Quelch, 'Professor', who was one of the trainee soldiers.
- (b) His knowledge and intelligence made him confident.
- (c) 'a V-shaped band to indicate the rank of a soldier'.

Question.14. "What about a song, chaps ?" is not greeted politely at the end of thirty miles.

- (a) Who would suggest singing a song ?
- (b) Why was this suggestion resented by his fellow trainees ?
- (c) What do you mean by 'chaps' ?

Answers :

- (a) Private Quelch would suggest singing a song.
- (b) The suggestion was resented because all the trainees, except perhaps Quelch, were dead tired at the end of a long thirty-mile route march.
- (c) 'boys'.

Question.15. We tried to hit back at him with clumsy sarcasms and practical jokes.

- (a) Who is 'him' referred to here ?
- (b) Why was he 'attacked' ?
- (c) Give the meaning of 'sarcasms'.

Answers :

- (a) 'Him' is here referred to Private Quelch.
- (b) He was 'attacked' for browbeating his fellow trainees with his vast knowledge.
- (c) 'remarks that are intended to hurt someone'.

Question.16. The Professor scarcely noticed; he was too busy working for his stripe.

- (a) What did the Professor scarcely notice ?
- (b) What impression do you form of him ?
- (c) Give the meaning of 'scarcely'.

Answers :

- (a) The Professor scarcely noticed the sarcasm in the remarks of his fellow trainees.
- (b) He was simple-minded, though he sounded rude and aggressive.
- (c) 'hardly'.

Question.17. Each time one of us made a mistake the Professor would publicly correct him.

- (a) Who was called the Professor?
- (b) What tells you that he was a tactless fellow?
- (c) Give the meaning of 'publicly'.

Answers:

- (a) Private Quelch was called Professor in jest.
- (b) His habit of correcting others in public showed that he was tactless.
- (c) 'when other people, especially strangers are present'.

Question.18. "Forty four".

"What's that?" The Corporal looked over his shoulder.

- (a) Who spoke 'forty four'? What did he mean?
- (b) What was the Corporal's reaction?
- (c) What do you mean by 'looked over'?

Answers:

- (a) Private Quelch spoke 'forty four'. He meant to say that a grenade is divided into forty four fragments.
- (b) The Corporal was baffled at this sudden, unexpected remark.
- (c) 'inspected/examined'.

Question.19. The Professor was speaking again. "Shouldn't you have started off with five characteristics of the grenade? Our instructor at the other camp always used to, you know."

- (a) Who was being addressed to by the Professor ?
- (b) What was the most tactless remark he made ?
- (c) Give the meaning of 'characteristics'.

Answers :

- (a) The Corporal was being addressed to by the Professor.
- (b) The most tactless remark was : "Our instructor at the other camp always used to...".
- (c) 'features/qualities'.

Question.20. The squad listened in a cowed, horrified kind of silence.

- (a) What do you mean by 'the squad' here?
- (b) What made them horrified and silent?
- (c) Give the meaning of 'cowed'.

Answers:

- (a) A small group of trainee soldiers.
- (b) They were horrified and silent at the humiliating comments made by the Professor for the Corporal.
- (c) 'frightened'

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (SOLVED)

Answer each of the following questions in 30-40 words.

Question 1. Who was Private Quelch? Where did the narrator meet him?

Answer. Private Quelch was a trainee soldier. He was a bespectacled, lanky person. He was a serious-minded person. He looked frowning all the time. He was in the bad habit of sermonising and philosophising. The narrator met him at his training depot as he himself was a trainee there.

Question 2. Why was Private Quelch labelled as the 'Professor'?

Answer. Private Quelch, a trainee soldier, was a bespectacled, serious-type of person. He had a great knowledge in his field. He was in the habit of sermonizing and finding fault with others. Se he was labelled as the Professor by his fellow trainees.

Question 3. Who is an Orderly Officer in lesson ‘The Man Who Knew Too Much’? How did the Professor behave in front of him?

Answer. An Orderly Officer in the lesson is an officer of the day. The Professor wanted to please him. So, he cleaned his hut so thoroughly that the officer could not help praising him. In this task he outshone his fellow trainees.

Question 4. Describe Private Quelch.

Answer. Private Quelch was a young trainee soldier. He was lank, stooping and serious. He wore horn-rimmed spectacles. He had awesome knowledge in his field. Everyone was jealous of him. He earned the label of the Professor.

Question 5. Aircraft recognition was a matter of pride for the narrator and his friends in the lesson ‘The Man Who Knew Too Much’. How did the Professor humiliate them?

Answer. One day the trainee fellows of the Professor, among whom was the narrator, heard the sound of an aircraft. The aircraft was not visible in the sun. The Professor at once said on hearing the drone of the plane that it was a North American Harvard Trainer, while no one could recognize the plane. It was something humiliating for the narrator and his friends.

Question 6. How did Private Quelch respond to mistakes made by his colleagues in the army training camp in the lesson ‘The Man Who Knew Much’?

Answer. In the army training camp Private Quelch would at once respond to the mistakes made by his colleagues. He would intervene to show how the rifle is handled properly and used to fire a bullet. His habit of correcting others in public was not liked by anyone.

Question 7. What was Private Quelch’s attitude to his juniors? Give examples to support your answer.

Answer. Private Quelch’s superior attitude to his juniors was resented by one and all. Once he intervened to tell someone to handle the rifle properly. At the end of a long, tiring march he angered others by suggesting, “What about a song, chaps?”

Question 8. What was Private Quelch’s attitude to his seniors? Give examples to support your answer.

Answer. Private Quelch’s attitude to his seniors was irritating. He interrupted the Sergeant and told him the exact speed of the bullet. Then he interrupted Corporal Turnbull to tell him that a grenade has exactly forty four fragments.

Question.9. What was Turnbull’s reaction to Private Quelch’s answer?

Answer. Corporal Turnbull became angry on listening to Private Quelch’s answer. His brow tightened. He asked him to give a lecture on the grenade in place of him. In order to teach him a lesson, he nominated him for permanent cookhouse duties.

Question.10. What was the announcement made by Corporal Turnbull in the lesson The Man Who Knew Too Much’? Why did he make the announcement?

Answer. Corporal Turnbull announced that he was nominating Private Quelch on permanent cookhouse duties. He made this announcement to take revenge on Private Quelch for humiliating and correcting him before others.

Question.11. Why was everybody happy when Private Quelch was shifted to the cookhouse?

Answer. When Private Quelch was shifted to the cookhouse, everybody was happy. He had become a nuisance for them by finding faults with one and all in the public. Everyone felt that it was a good riddance.

Question.12. What was the Professor teaching his colleagues in the cookhouse?

Answer. Even in the cookhouse, the Professor did not stop sermonizing. He told his colleagues how to peel potatoes to preserve their hygienic value. He protested against the way they were peeling potatoes.

Question.13. Which characteristics of Private Quelch do you like most?

Answer. Private Quelch was not a narrow-minded or evil-minded person. We appreciate his simple-mindedness and his desire to be helpful to others. His hard-working nature and intelligence are really appreciable.

Question.14. What made Private Quelch unpopular?

Answer. Private Quelch was in the habit of finding faults with others. He would flaunt his knowledge by correcting even his seniors in the public. This habit of his made him unpopular in the army camp.

Question.15. Narrate in your own words the incident that proved to be a turning point in Private Quelch's life.

Answer. Private Quelch was hopeful of getting a commission soon. One day, as usual, he corrected his senior, Corporal Turnbull, by telling him the exact number of fragments a grenade has. This infuriated the Corporal who sent him on permanent cookhouse duties as punishment. This barred him from realizing his ambition.

Question.16. What did the Professor mean by "intelligent reading"?

Answer. By "intelligent reading" the Professor meant thorough understanding of what he read. He did not read anything casually. He made it a point to learn everything by heart.

Question.17. What were the Professor's ambitions in the army?

Answer. The Professor's ambitions were to get a stripe and a commission in the army. He really worked hard for realizing these ambitions. Only his impractical and tactless approach took him away from his goal.

Question.18. Did Private Quelch's day to day practices take him closer towards his goal? How can you make out?

Answer. No, Private Quelch's day to day practices did not take him closer towards his goal. He had antagonized everyone including his instructors by interrupting and correcting everyone publicly. The Corporal sent him to the kitchen for permanent cookhouse duties.

Question.19. Describe Corporal Turnbull.

Answer. Corporal Turnbull was a strong and sturdy man. He was boastful of his physical toughness. He had come back from Dunkirk. He was tough, serious and even revengeful. He did not take Private Quelch's interruption lightly and took a sort of revenge on him by sending him to kitchen to do cooking duties.

Question.20. Do you think Private Quelch learnt a lesson when he was chosen for cookhouse duties? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer. Private Quelch did not learn any lesson. Even in the kitchen he continued with his interruptions and sermons. The author and his friend heard him protesting against the unscientific method of peeling potatoes, which was “a sheer waste of vitamin.

VALUE-BASED LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS (SOLVED)

Answer the following questions in 80-100 words each.

Question.1. “Too much knowledge is also a bane’. Comment on the statement with reference to Private Quelch’s character.

Answer. Having too much knowledge is not a bane. In fact, each one of us should aim at getting as much knowledge as possible. A knowledgeable person, if he is wise also, is respected and honoured everywhere. It is the public show of knowledge which is bad. Sometimes it proves to be harmful, as in the case of Private Quelch. No one can dislike Private Quelch for his extraordinary knowledge. It is his tactless floundering of knowledge that proves to be harmful to him. He is in the habit of correcting even his superiors in public. He angers the Sergeant for telling him the exact speed of the bullet while he was lecturing to the trainees. He infuriates Corporal Turnbull by correcting him and telling him to improve his lecture. Corporal Turnbull sends him on permanent cookhouse duties, jeopardizing his career.

Question.2. Self-promotion always brings resentment from others. Keeping the above statement in mind, comment on the character of Private Quelch.

Answer. Self-promotion is now an accepted social value. Everyone, from a politician to an actor, is engaged in self-promotion. Watch any TV serial, you will come across examples of brazen self-promotion. But it is a fact that too much self-promotion often boomerangs. This is what we see in the case of Private Quelch. Private Quelch or the ‘Professor’ has awesome knowledge about his field. He is in a hurry to impress others with his knowledge to realize his aim of getting commission in the army. So, he tactlessly makes a show-off of his knowledge. He loses no opportunity to correct even his seniors in public. His fellow trainees begin to resent his attempts at self-promotion. He becomes a butt of their sarcasms and jokes. He tries to impress the Sergeant and the Corporal by interrupting and correcting them before others. Finally, his self-promotion costs him dearly. He is sent on permanent cookhouse duties. He loses a golden chance to get commission in the army.

Question.3. Private Quelch’s ambition had blinded him. Analyse Corporal’s reaction to his behaviour.

Answer. It is good to have an ambition. There cannot be any progress without having an aim in life. However, one should never be blinded by ambition. One should never be in a hurry to achieve one’s aim. When one is in a hurry, one becomes tactless and irrational, as Private Quelch becomes. He wants to get commission in the army. He has acquired knowledge which is more than sufficient. He can easily achieve his aim. Yet he jeopardizes his prospects by his tactless behaviour. He annoys Corporal Turnbull by publicly correcting him. The Corporal takes a revenge on him by sending him on permanent cookhouse duties. His reaction is natural. But we feel that it is too severe and negative. He should have given Private Quelch some other less severe punishment.

Question.4. ‘It’s all a matter of intelligent reading’, said Private Quelch. Evaluate the statement on the basis of Professor’s character.

Answer. Private Quelch made this remark when the Sergeant, impressed by his knowledge, asked him, “You had any training before?” The remark is quite tactless and reveals Professor’s self-pride and his tendency to show off. It, no doubt, annoys his senior. Even his juniors feel that he has crossed the limits by publicly correcting the Sergeant as to what the exact speed of the bullet is. Intelligent reading is good, but the way it is used matters a lot. Private Quelch uses his knowledge for self-promotion and, that too, tactlessly. No wonder, he gets his career jeopardized by infuriating Corporal Turnbull.

Question.5. Although the Professor was knowledgeable and willing to share his knowledge with his mates, they avoided crossing paths with him. Comment with reference to ‘The Man Who Knew Too Much.’

Answer. Knowledgeable persons are sometimes avoided by their friends and associates. It is so because no one wants to be overshadowed all the time by someone. Private Quelch or the Professor has acquired much knowledge about his field. When he begins to outdo his fellow trainees with his superior knowledge they began to avoid him. One day at the end of a tiring, thirty-mile route march he suggested with his horrible heartiness, “What about a song, chaps?” No one greeted the suggestion. Day in and day out he began to lecture to them in his droning, remorseless voice on every aspect of human knowledge. Very soon his peers were in an awe of him. He was made a butt of sarcasms and jokes.

Question.6. What were the negative characteristics of Private Quelch’s character? Explain any four.

Answer. Private Quelch was a hardworking, simple-minded fellow. But he has some glaring negative personality traits. He was in the bad habit of showing off his knowledge. He would lose no opportunity to do so. Then he was quite tactless. He did not know that it was not good to interrupt one’s seniors in an effort to impress them. He was also ready to correct others in public. He was unaware that one feels embarrassed and humiliated if corrected before strangers. He was also a very condescending person. He would sometimes try to please his seniors by outshining others. All these character traits made him unpopular among both his seniors and juniors.

Question.7. What were the positive characteristics of Private Quelch’s character? Explain any four.

Answer. Private Quelch was a hardworking fellow. He would spend a lot of time in reading books and manuals. He wanted to acquire as much knowledge as possible. Indeed, he was a highly knowledgeable person. He could recall the minor details of what he had read. Then he was quite helpful. Whenever he found someone doing something wrong, he extended his helping hand willingly. He seemed to be free from ill-will against anyone. He did not pay any attention to his fellow trainees’ sarcasms and jokes. He had no grudge even against Corporal Turnbull. He seemed to be happy and contented with his duties in the cookhouse.

Question.8. “As a punishment Quelch was put on kitchen duties.”

Imagine yourself as the author of the story “The Man Who Knew Too Much”. Write a letter to your friend explaining the reason for giving him such punishment.

Answer.

10 Green House
Mountain Top, MA

3rd March, 2024

Dear George

Hope you're fine! Thank you for reading my story. You have protested against the unjust punishment given to Private Quelch. You will agree with me that showing off one's knowledge to belittle others in public is not a minor offence. It can infuriate anyone. Corporal Turnbull, if you remember, is a severe, hardy person.

How can he ignore anyone's snub? He acts as per his character traits. If he does not punish the Professor he will be acting against his own nature. So, he sends him to kitchen so that he dares not cross his path again. Private Quelch, according to me, deserves punishment, and that is the message of the story: don't cross the limits of decency even if you're right.

Hope you'll agree with me. Or we can agree to disagree. What do you say?

Yours sincerely,

Alexander

Question.9. ‘Each time one of us made a mistake the Professor would publicly correct him.’

The ‘Professor’ was in the habit of finding faults. He would criticize anyone in public. Do you approve or disapprove his behaviour? Should we make fun of others in public, even if they are wrong? What would be the consequences if we do so?

Answer. Private Quelch, called ‘Professor’ in jest, was in the habit of finding faults, sermonizing and publicly correcting others. He was not tactful, as he berated even his seniors in public, for which he had to suffer. He was sent on an unimportant duty in the kitchen.

We disapprove his behaviour. We should not berate anyone in public even if he is at fault or his knowledge is imperfect. We should particularly be careful while dealing with our superiors. Our superiors who can harm us will not tolerate any public criticism, however fair they may be.

If we persist in criticising and correcting others in public, we are likely to invite trouble. The person thus criticised will feel humiliated and react in some way or the other. He may assault us physically in anger. If in power, he may harm our career in some way. So, we should be tactful and practical.

We should show off our knowledge only when it is safe and desirable to do so.

Question.10. You are ‘Professor’. Write a diary entry after your first day at the cookhouse, describing the events that led to this assignment, also express your thoughts and feelings about the events of the day in about 150 words.

Answer. 2nd January, 20, Wednesday

10 p.m.

I am sad at what happened today. I was peeling potatoes in the cookhouse-something I had never dreamt of. I know it will be very difficult for me to get the active duties once again. Corporal Turnbull is really angry with me.

I don't know what possessed me when I could not contain myself and interrupted the Corporal when he was explaining the structure of the grenade. When he asked me to give the lecture in his place, I did not realize its implications. In my zeal to prove myself I spoke on the subject well. My colleagues seemed to be overawed. They were silent and perhaps knew better than me what was in my store. The Corporal got really offended with my approach. He said nothing but sent me to the cookhouse.

I know it is a punishment duty. But what can I do? Even here when I find people doing something wrong, I fail to check myself and try to correct them. People call it 'sermonizing'. Whatever it is, it is. I cannot overlook ignorance. Of course, I shall try to be a bit more rational and tactful in future.