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CLASS: IX

ANSWER KEY

SUBJECT: ENGLISH LITERATURE

POEM - 1 THE NIGHT MAIL

Passage - 1 [Page No 62 - Page No 69]

1. Where is the Night Mail heading for? What does it carry?

Ans. The Night Mail which is a train that runs at night is heading for Scotland from England. It carries cheques, postal orders and letters for everyone whether they are rich or poor. These letters are for ^{the} shopkeeper of the shop at the corner and the girl next door. It carries letters for ^{everyone}.

- (ii) 'Letters for the rich, letters for the poor.'

Comment on the significance of this line.

Ans. The given line emphasises the fact that it is not partial as it carries letters for both the rich as well as the poor, the shop at the corner and the girl next door. It does not differentiate between anyone and serves everyone equally despite the wide disparity which is difficult to bridge up.

- (iii) How does the mail train start its journey? How would you describe it?

Ans. The night mail starts its journey at night smoothly heading for its destination. While pulling through Beattock it slows down as the climb is a bit difficult so the steep climb at this town slows down its speed but still it is on time. As the night mail is personified so it is described as a calm, quick, steady and kind being.

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(iv) Describe various regions in which the train passes.

Ans - The train passes through various regions. After passing through Beattock it passes through cotton grass fields, a vast uncultivated area full of weeds and very large rocks producing white steam over her shoulders and ^{through the area} threw off noisily as it goes through stretched fields of air-bent fields.

(v) How does the poet describe Glasgow area later in the context?

Ans: This area is marked with a lot of industrial and technological advancement. Glasgow is a city in Scotland which was the major centre of ship building and manufacturing during the 1930s. One can see steam tugs, rows (glade) of cranes, fields of apparatus and the furnaces. All these things seem to set on the dark plain area like huge chessmen on a chessboard or are seen lying on open grassy fields.

PASSAGE-2

(i) Which figure of speech is used in Line 1?

Ans: Personification is used by the poet in Line 1. It is personification as the birds turn their heads, like human beings, to see what was coming. The first line also contains an example of consonance as 'd' sound is repeated in

Birds turn their heads as she approaches.

(ii) The train coaches pulled along by the train are personified as persons with no expressions as the 'Night Mail' does not carry passengers

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it simply carries letters, cheques and postal orders so as it does carry passengers that's the reason the coaches are expressionless. They don't have any will of their own. They just follow where they are being led.

- (iii) The sheep dogs which are used to guard the sheep they run along the track. They want the train to change its course but they fail in their intention. so they extend their paws across and sleep again.
- (iv) The sleeping people remain unaware of the passing train. They seem to have become habitual of its arrival every day.
- (v) The train carries many kinds of letters: love letters, official letters, job applications, letters of invitations, letters from relatives, condolence messages, so on ...

PASSAGE - 3

- (i) The train is heading for Scotland. The train starts its slow but steady ascent as she passes through the hilly area. Though the slope is sharp still the train is on time.
- (ii) Glasgow is an industrial area. Huge cranes and furnaces have been set on the grassy lands. It shows how industries are fast coming up, harming the peaceful countryside (village life) and agriculture.
- (iii) The figure of speech used in line 5 is Simile. Huge machinery and furnaces have been set on the grassy land are compared to huge chessmen

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pawns in the game, for earning more and more money by the industrialists.

- (iv) The things carried by the train are different - 2 kinds of letters, cheques, postal orders, invitations, condolence letters and so on...
- (v) The poet tells us that the people of Scotland are still asleep, having nightmares and pleasant dreams as well. When they wake up, they will long for letters of their loved ones carried by the train. They eagerly wait for some knock at the door by the postman.

PASSAGE - 4

- (i) The train starts climbing the hills slowly but steadily. It passes through hills, plains and the moorland.
- (ii) Glasgow is described as a region dotted with huge machinery and furnaces, as it is an industrial area which is a popular hub of many manufacturing units.
- (iii) The 'Night Mail' or train carries many things besides letters, cheques, postal orders, receipts and newspapers.
- (iv) The train is carrying official letters, love letters, letters of invitation, letters from relatives, job applications from varied institutes etc.
- (v) People wait anxiously for the train because all of them desire to be remembered by their near and dear ones residing in different parts of the world.

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PASSAGE 5

- (i) The train has passed through various regions before reaching Glasgow. It has passed through hills, plains and moor land.
- (ii) The train is carrying letters of all kinds, cheques, postal orders, newspapers and so on.
- (iii) The line tells us that some letters are formal, while others are informal and friendly, some are spiteful, some are simply boring, and some are written in ^{an}adoring matter to some loved ones.
- (iv) Letters are written on papers of all colours - pink, violet, white, blue etc. Some of them are typed, some others are hand written with spelling mistakes. Each letter from the way it is written and on the paper on which it is written reveals, some trait of the letter writer - whether he/she is friendly, formal, careless, spiteful, etc.
Glasgow's people are still sleeping as the train reaches its destination. When they wake up, they expect to receive some letter. They eagerly wait for the knock of the postman at their door.

PASSAGE 6

- (i) During the night the train starts its journey slowly by passing through the hills steadily as it is a steep climb. Then it passes through farm houses in the plains and the moorland. Despite the difficult climb and slow speed, it is still on time.

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- (ii) The Night Mail has carried all types of letters, cheques, postal orders, newspapers, job applications, official receipts etc.
The people have been dreaming of horrible monsters, or friendly tea parties at famous restaurants - Cranston or Crowford. When they wake up, they expect to receive a letter from someone dear to them.
- (iv) Rhetorical question is used in the last line. It is used to make a point rather than to get an answer.
- (v) The poet emphasises the importance of human connections - the need to be remembered by someone - by asking a rhetorical question without expecting an answer.