

The Tale of Custard the Dragon

— Ogden Nash



OBJECTIVE Type Questions

[1 mark]

Extract Based Questions

1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Belinda paled, and she cried Help! Help!
But Mustard fled with terrified yelp,
Ink trickled down to the bottom of the householed,
And little mouse Blink strategically mousehold.
But up jumped Custard, snorting like an engine,
Clashed his tail like irons in a dungeon,
With a clatter and a clank and a jangling squirm,
He went at the pirate like a robin at a worm.

[Delhi Gov. 2021]

- (A) Belinda cried for help because:
(a) she grew afraid of her pets.
(b) she was afraid of the pirate.
(c) she was drowning.
(d) she was afraid of the little mouse Blink.
- (B) Who came to rescue everyone in danger?
(a) Ink (b) Custard
(c) Blink (d) Mustard
- (C) The word 'dungeon' DOES NOT have a meaning similar to:
(a) jail (b) cell
(c) prison (d) park
- (D) "Belinda paled, and she cried Help! Help!"
The exclamatory mark conveys:
(a) a feeling of anticipation.
(b) a feeling of excitement.
(c) a feeling of sorrow.
(d) some thoughtful moments.
- (E) The word that DOES NOT indicate fear-stricken Belinda is:
(a) paled (b) cried
(c) terrified (d) snorting

Ans. (A) (b) she was afraid of the pirates

Explanation: Belinda was scared of the pirate that broke into her house through the window so, she cried for help. Hence, (b) is the right answer.

(B) (b) Custard

Explanation: It's clear from the extract that when everybody was hiding from the pirates, it was Custard who rescued them by charging at the pirate like a snorting engine. Hence, (b) is the right answer.

(C) (d) park

Explanation: The word 'dungeon' means an underground cell. Options (a), (b) and (c) are all same as dungeon while (d) park isn't. Hence, (d) is the right answer.

(D) (a) a feeling of anticipation

Explanation: The exclamatory marks are used by the poet to show the feeling of anticipation by Belinda on looking at pirate. Hence, (a) is the right answer.

(E) (d) snorting

Explanation: The term snorting means to make a loud scary sound while options (a), (b) and (c) define fear-stricken Belinda. Hence, (d) is the right answer.

2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Ink trickled down to the bottom of the household,
And little mouse Blink strategically mouseholed.
But up jumped Custard, snorting like an engine,
Clashed his tail like irons in a dungeon,
With a clatter and a clank and a jangling squirm,
He went at the pirate like a robin at a worm

[CBSE Question Bank 2021]

- (A) ④ Which option lists the quotes that support the ideas in the extract?
(1) Fear makes strangers of people who would be friends.
(2) If you're brave enough to start, you're strong enough to finish.
(3) Courage doesn't mean you don't get afraid. Courage means you don't let fear stop you.
(4) You get in life what you have the courage to ask for.
(5) Fear has a large shadow, but he himself is strong.
(a) (1) & (5) (b) (2), (3) & (4)
(c) (2) & (3) (d) (1), (3) & (5)
- (B) What is the poet's purpose of using the onomatopoeic words given in the extract?

- (a) It is to emphasize on the might and boldness of Custard.
 - (b) It is to introduce the character Custard to the readers.
 - (c) It is to impress upon the readers that Custard was ready.
 - (d) It is to make Custard bold enough to face the situation.
- (C) Pick an option that best fits the usage of the word 'trickled' as used in the extract.
- (a) The water trickled down the tap and filled the trough.
 - (b) Students trickled into the classroom as the teacher entered.
 - (c) Tears trickled down her cheeks as she heard the sad news.
 - (d) His enthusiasm for the task slowly trickled away.
- (D) Select the option that fits with the reaction of the characters in the context of the extract.
- Ink: terrified :: Blink : (i)
- Pirate: (ii) :: Custard: undaunted
- (a) (i) shocked (ii) displeased
 - (b) (i) petrified (ii) wondered
 - (c) (i) upset (ii) dazed
 - (d) (i) petrified (ii) shocked
- (E) 'He went at the pirate like a robin at a worm. Why has this comparison been used here? Just like the robin catches the worm,
- (a) Custard attacked the pirate after careful observation.

- (b) Custard attacked the pirate without delay.
- (c) Custard attacked the pirate valourously.
- (d) Custard attacked the pirate stealthily.

Ans. (B) (a) It is to emphasize on the might and boldness of Custard.

Explanation: The poet has used the onomatopoeic words to show the might and bravery of Custard through the sounds emitting words. Hence, (a) is the right answer.

(C) (b) Students trickled into the classroom as the teacher entered.

Explanation: The word 'trickled' in the extract means to come/move slowly and gradually. Here, students get inside the classroom in a fearful manner. Hence, (b) is the right answer.

(D) (d) (i) petrified (ii) shocked

Explanation: Blink was 'petrified' to see the pirate while the pirate was 'shocked' to see Custard attacking him. Hence, (d) is the right answer.

(E) (b) Custard attacked the pirate without delay.

Explanation: A robin catches a worm suddenly without giving in any time. In the same way, after looking at the pirate, Custard charged at him all of a sudden. Hence, (b) is the right answer.

SUBJECTIVE Type Questions

Short Answer Type-I Questions (SA-I) [2 marks]

Answer the following questions in 20-30 words:

3. Custard humbly accepts that other animals are braver than him. Give a reason to support your stance that humility is a virtue worth possessing.

Ans. Humility is a wonderful human virtue. It makes a person humble and wiser. A person who has achieved something isn't required to boast about it as his hard work and success speaks for him.

4. What did Custard look like? [CBSE 2016]

Ans. Custard, the dragon, had big sharp teeth, spikes on top of him and scales underneath. His mouth was like a fireplace, his nose looked like a chimney, emitting smoke and daggers on his toes.

5. The poet could have included a burglar or an intruder in the poem, but chose to include a pirate. Explain this choice.

[CBSE Question Bank 2021]

Ans. The poet chose a pirate over any burglar or a thief because a pirate looks evil and nasty. The way his leg crippled as one of them was of wood, pistol in both of his hands and a cutlass between his teeth was scarier than a burglar.

6. The usage of words like 'realio trulio' creates a wonderful poetic effect. How?

Ans. The words 'realio trulio' are used by the poet to bring an amazing comic effect to the poem. The word 'realio' means 'really' while 'trulio' means 'truly'. These words add humor to the poem.

7.  How brave were Belinda's other pets according to her?

8. Why is it fair to say that Custard could be the 'poster-boy' for the belief that the real nature of a person is revealed at times of the greatest difficulty?

Ans. It is true that the nature of the person is revealed at the times of greatest difficulty. Custard could be the best example for the same. Although Custard was believed to be the most coward of all the pets, he proved himself to be the bravest of them all when the pirate broke in.

9. ② With what has the poet compared Custard's nose and why?

10. State the reason you think the poet named the animals Ink, Blink, Mustard and Custard?

Ans. The poet named the animals aptly. He named the little kitten as Ink as he was black, the mouse as Blink as he was small, the dog as Mustard as he was of a bright yellow colour and the dragon as Custard as he was a soft and timid creature.

Short Answer Type-II Questions (SA-II) [3 marks]

Answer the following questions in 40-50 words:

11. Belinda shares a post on Instagram with the following hashtags

#Ink#Blink#Mustard#Bravehearts#My family#My world#

She doesn't mention Custard in her post.

As a friend of Belinda, what would be your advice to her and why?

[CBSE Question Bank 2021]

Ans. If Belinda forgets to mention Custard in her post on Instagram then as her friend her, I would advise her to definitely include Custard in it because he proved himself to be the bravest of all her pets. Even if he wouldn't have been able to do so, she should have definitely included him in the post because all the pets should be equal in the eyes of the owner. No one should be left out to show appreciation or love.

12. How do the other pets celebrate Custard getting rid of the pirate?

Ans. When Custard successfully destroyed the pirate, Belinda embraced him. The other pets too celebrated his victory. Mustard, the dog licked him, Ink, the cat and Blink, the mouse danced around him in circles. They showed their love and appreciation to him in their own ways.

13. Blowing one's trumpet is a well-known idiom.

Disagree with a friend's opinion in the context of this idiom.

Friend: It's important to recount your achievements whenever there's an opportunity.

People need to know about your qualities, accomplishments and awards. Always project yourself as superior.

You: Gosh! I disagree. What's the point blowing one's own trumpet? You see,

.....(continue).

Ans. You: Gosh! I disagree. What's the point in blowing one's own trumpet? You see if a person has achieved something, then it isn't required for him/her to tell tales of his/her own success. His/her hard work, success and development will tell about his/her struggle and achievements on their own. Humility and modesty are very valuable assets for a person to grow.

14. Describe the pirate who comes through the window?

Ans. The pirate who invaded the house through the window was crippled due to a wooden leg. His beard was black. He had a pistol each in both of his hands and he held a cutlass in his teeth. The appearance of the pirate was so frightful and evil. It looked like he had no good intentions.

15. ② The poem is a light-hearted ballad with a powerful message. If the poem was written in any other style, do you think it would have created the same effect on readers? Justify your response with reason(s).

Long Answer Type Questions (LA) [5 marks]

Answer the following questions in 100-120 words:

16. Custard was discriminated against, bullied and made fun of. Such behaviour often has a disastrous impact on the victims and etches a permanent scar on their minds.

Write opinions of Wanda and Mandela on this issue.

Wanda: In my personal opinion,
.....(continue)

Nelson Mandela: I strongly believe that
.....(continue)

Ans. Wanda: In my opinion, bullying and teasing can leave a person depressed for life. One might never get his/her self-confidence back.

The mocking which seems fun to the doer might destroy the victim's positive mindset. The world is full of evil people.

Nelson Mandela: I strongly believe that nobody on this planet is born full of hate. It's just the surroundings that make a person bad. However, you are absolutely right that even a small instance of evil oppression or hatred against anyone might leave them scared for life.

Wanda: Yes sir. I hope people someday will understand this and try to make this world a better place to live.

- 17. Being impressed by Custard's feat, the young seagull's sister wrote a letter to Custard seeking advice on addressing the situation with her young brother. Write Custard's response to this letter. Base the advice from his experiences.**

You may begin like this:

Dear Ms. Seagull

Thank you for seeking me out. I'm humbled.
Based on my limited experiences, I feel...

Ans. Dear Ms. Seagull

Thank you for seeking me out. I'm humbled. Based on my limited experiences, I feel that what a human actually possesses in him can only be proven at the times of utmost difficulty. In my case, not only Belinda and the other pets

took me as a coward, but also I was unaware of my own courage. It was only when I saw Belinda crying for help on the sight of a pirate breaking in; I knew that I had to do it at any cost. So, I without thinking, I charged at the pirate with all my strength. Similarly, I believe that when your younger brother will face such a situation where he would be left with no choice but to fly, he would definitely take the plunge. He was too unaware of the courage he had in himself like me. But, he would soon prove himself to everyone.

- 18. Describe the incident that showed that the pet who was considered the most coward was actually the bravest of them all?**

Ans. In the poem, when the other pets ran away petrified at the sight of the pirate breaking in, Custard charged angrily at him. The pirate got so scared of the dragon that to overcome his fear, he took out a bottle of wine from his pocket and gulped some of it. He even fired two shots at the dragon, none of which hit him. However, Custard bravely attacked the pirate and ate every bit of his body. This incident of Custard saving everyone from the pirate, showed that the dragon whom Belinda and her other pets looked down upon as a coward and bullied him, was actually the bravest of them all.