

Song of the Open Road

ICE BREAKERS [PAGE 93]

Ice Breakers | Q 1 | Page 93

Choose the mode of travel that you would like the most for a journey.

- a. Airways
- b. Waterways
- c. Railways
- d. Roadways

Give reasons for your preference.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Solution: I would like to choose railways for the following reasons.

- 1. Railways are relatively cheaper than airways and roadways.
- 2. They are the most convenient mode of transport for long-distance travel.
- 3. They are free of traffic jam hassles, unlike roadways.

Ice Breakers | Q 2 | Page 93

Discuss with your partner, the preparations you would like to make for the journey chosen.

Solution: I would make following preparations for the journey by railways:

- i. I would pack my luggage in bags of suitable dimensions, so that they could be comfortably tucked in under the seats.
- ii. I would carry some savouries and water for emergency, in case the train doesn't have a pantry car.
- iii. I would remember to carry my tickets and an identity card to show the ticket-checker.
- iv. I would carry the tourist guidebook of the place I am visiting, in case I am travelling for sight-seeing

Ice Breakers | Q 3 | Page 93

Discuss the ways in which you would overcome the problems/ hindrances/ difficulties you face during your journey.

Solution:

- i. To spare myself the boredom of long journey, I would keep some reading material handy, such as a novel or a magazine.
- ii. I would have to keep my luggage fastened with chains to prevent its theft.

- iii. I would need to keep my tickets safe till the completion of journey to avoid getting fined by the ticket-checker.
- iv. I would be alert and observant of my surroundings at all times.

Ice Breakers | Q 4 | Page 93

During every journey we have to observe certain rules. Discuss your ideas of the journey without any restrictions. You can begin like this

- i. I would go alone / with selected friends/ _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____
- iv. _____

Solution:

- i. I would like to go all alone, as I am highly individualistic by nature.
- ii. I would like to travel as far as I can, so as to explore new places.
- iii. I would prefer home-stays, so that I could get to know people from different cultures.
- iv. I would try to live off the land as much as possible.
- v. I would use my mobile phone only in case of emergencies during the travel, so that I could enjoy my journey without being distracted by my phone.

BRAINSTORMING (A1) [PAGE 95]

Brainstorming (A1) | Q 1 | Page 95

Pick out the lines showing that the poet is prepared to enjoy every moment of his journey.

Solution:

1. Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
2. Healthy, free, the world before me,
3. Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
4. Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing, v. Strong and content I travel the open road.

Brainstorming (A1) | Q 2 | Page 95

By 'old delicious burdens' the poet means-

1. the luggage
2. the food he carries
3. the stress he bears during the travels
4. sweet memories of the past

Solution: the stress he bears during the travels

Brainstorming (A1) | Q 3 | Page 95

The poet is a person who is free from all inhibitions. Discuss how the concept of 'freedom' is expressed in the poem.

Solution: The poet has written the poem with an objective of stirring the idea of freedom on the reader's mind. The spirit of freedom is expressed in the poem through the symbolic reference to the open road, where men come together irrespective of their social status. Freedom implies the independence to choose one's road, both literally and figuratively. It also means enjoying nature in a free state of mind.

As the poet sets out on his journey, he is light-hearted and content because he has left his mundane life behind in order to seek adventure. His quest to live a free life is so strong that he doesn't hesitate or postpone setting out on this journey. He has freed himself of the elite society that surrounded him, as that was not something he desired. However, he does carry the fond memories of people along the journey, because that satisfies him and makes him complete.\

BRAINSTORMING (A2) [PAGE 96]

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 1 | Page 96

Following are the activities of the poet related to his journey on the road. Divide them into two parts as 'activities the poet will practice' and 'activities he will not practice'.

- a. Walking along the road though he does not know where it reaches
- b. Complaining about the discomforts during the journey
- c. Postponing the journey
- d. Praying for good fortune
- e. Carrying the fond memories of the good people
- f. Creating contacts with famous and influential people
- g. Striving to achieve high and bright success.
- h. Reflecting and developing his own 'self'

Solution: Activities the poet will practice:

- e. Carrying the fond memories of the good people
- h. Reflecting and developing his own 'self'

Activities the poet will not practise:

- a. Walking along the road though he does not know where it reaches
- b. Complaining about the discomforts during the journey
- c. Postponing the journey
- d. Praying for good fortune
- f. Creating contacts with famous and influential people
- g. Striving to achieve high and bright success.

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 2.1 | Page 96

Write down the traits the poet exhibit through the given line.

Henceforth, I ask for no good fortune-I myself am good fortune

Solution: Self-confidence

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 2.2 | Page 96

Write down the traits the poet exhibit through the given line.

Henceforth, I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing.

Solution: Determination and Positivity

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 2.3 | Page 96

Write down the traits the poet exhibit through the given line.

I do not want the constellations any nearer.

Solution: Contentment

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 2.4 | Page 96

Write down the traits the poet exhibit through the given line.

I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them

Solution: Genuineness

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 2.5 | Page 96

Write down the traits the poet exhibit through the given line.

I am filled with them – I will fill them in return.

Solution: Inter-dependence

Brainstorming (A2) | Q 3 | Page 96

‘Healthy, free, the world before me’. Express your views regarding the above line.

Solution: In the line ‘Healthy, free, the world before me’, the poet is trying to convey that the world that lies ahead in his journey of life is healthy and free. In my view, the

line is full of hope and optimism. It gives an idea of the world being free from all shackles of routine and monotony. It depicts a picture where the world, which the poet encounters on his journey, is in better shape than the one he has left behind.

BRAINSTORMING (A3) [PAGE 96]

Brainstorming (A3) | Q 1 | Page 96

The poet has used many describing words such as 'healthy' in this poem.

Make a list and classify them as -

- a. For the world _____
- b. For himself _____
- c. For the road _____

Solution: a. For the world

- free
- healthy

b. For himself

- afoot
- light-hearted
- strong
- content

c. For the road

- long
- brown
- open

BRAINSTORMING (A4) [PAGES 96 - 97]

Brainstorming (A4) | Q 2 | Page 97

The road in the poem does not mean only the road to travel. The poet wants to suggest the road of life. Explain the metaphor with the help of the poem.

Solution: The road referred to in the poem has both literal and figurative meanings. It also refers to the journey of life in its figurative sense. The poet celebrates the road as a metaphoric space of free spirit where people come together, irrespective of their social status. People who travel this road of life are a community in themselves. Like the poet,

they too have broken the shackles of their daily life and have commenced their journey seeking adventure, because the road is also symbolically a call of adventure.

Brainstorming (A4) | Q 4 | Page 97

There are certain words that are repeated in the poem. For example, 'no more' (Line 7). Find out other similar expressions.

Explain the effect they have created in the poem.

Solution: Such repetition is seen in lines 5 to 8 with words 'henceforth' and 'good-fortune' and in lines 13 to 20 with the personal pronoun 'I'. Repetition, as a figure of speech, adds flourish to the poem, adds emphasis and imparts poetic appeal to it. In particular, the repetition of 'I' enhances the narrative appeal of the poem.

Brainstorming (A4) | Q 5 | Page 97

The use of personal pronoun 'I' is evident and prominent in this poem. Give reasons.

Solution: The poet uses the personal pronoun 'I' to emphasize his own independence in travelling the open road and also his freedom in choosing the road that he wishes to take. Moreover, he asserts through the abundant use of 'I' that he wants to live life on his own terms and always be in command of his circumstances.

BRAINSTORMING (A5) [PAGES 97 - 98]

Brainstorming (A5) | Q 1 | Page 97

With the help of the following points, write a poetic appreciation of the poem 'Song of the Open Road'.

- About the poem/poet and the title
- The theme
- Poetic style
- The language/poetic devices used in the poem
- Special features
- Message, values, morals in the poem
- Your opinion about the poem

Solution: Appreciation of the poem 'Song of the Open Road'

'Song of the Open Road' is a classic travel poem written by Walt Whitman. This narrative poem centers on the quest for freedom and shunning a life of monotony to take to the open road to course through life. The poet views the road as a space that offers countless opportunities as it can lead people to anywhere they desire to go. The

poem is written in free verse, as the lines are unrhymed and of varying lengths. The poet makes use of simple poetic devices such as Alliteration, Antithesis, Consonance, Inversion, Metaphor, Paradox and Repetition. He employs Metaphor when he refers to road to actually mean 'the road of life', as also when he likens constellations to influential people. The use of these poetic devices helps to convey the message in lucid and expressive narrative and hence adds to the poetic appeal. The use of parenthesis in fourth stanza is a distinctive feature of the poem that makes the stanza more of a remark, rather than a continuation of the central topic of the poem. The use of imagery enhances the overall appeal of the poem, with words like 'long, brown' describing the road, the words 'healthy, free' describing the world and words like 'afoot', 'strong' and 'content' describing the poet paint a pretty picture of the poet's wanderlust. The poem conveys the message that we should not be bound by the routines of ordinary life; instead we should step out into the open air and live life in a free-spirited manner. I like the poem for its timeless appeal. It drives me to set out and be free, while leaving my worries behind.

Brainstorming (A5) | Q 2 | Page 98

Write four to six lines of Free Verse on the topic 'The road that leads to my college'. Express that it is the road to knowledge and bright future. You may begin like this: Every day I tread with the bag of books ...

Solution:

The road that leads to my college

Every day I tread with the bag of books,
Thereby I plod the long scalding path,
To be taught by someone, and to be that someone someday.
Not easy are my steps, mired as they are in toil,
But undaunted I go, for fruits of labour aren't easy to come by.

Brainstorming (A5) | Q 3 | Page 98

Write a blog on the following topic:

'Man is free by birth.'

Solution:

Man is free by birth

Have you ever seen a baby in solitude? A blissful sight it is! A world of their own, no rules, no filters! Isn't that how each one of us is born – pure and free? Growing up,

social conditioning casts us into these moulds which may or not be the perfect fit. The world around us shapes us but the world within makes us; this world we are free to create. We allow our lives to be run by others and we follow the rules laid down by society. This often is the cause of our unhappiness and we then tend to blame the situations because we are unable to control them. Instead, we should take responsibility of our own lives. We all have the sense to differentiate the right from the wrong. We are capable of leading sound lives resulting from the choices that we make for ourselves. We are not someone else's responsibility or liability. We should set ourselves free from the shackles of societal restrictions and soar high in liberty. We are free by birth and bound only by the limitations we set for ourselves.

Brainstorming (A5) | Q 4.1 | Page 98

Expand the idea suggested in the following line:

All roads lead to Rome

Solution:

All Roads Lead to Rome

'All roads lead to Rome' is a proverb that has a literal meaning and a figurative meaning. The literal meaning is that whichever road one takes, they will always end up in Rome. This is because in the ancient Roman Empire, Rome was placed as the center and all the roads were constructed in a manner that they all eventually led to Rome. The figurative meaning of this proverb is that no matter which way one chooses to reach their goal, they will always end up where they are meant to be. This proverb is relevant in all aspects of life – education, career, and relationships. For example, three people try to solve a problem using different methods, but arrive at the same solution; or two people use different approaches on a single project but achieve the same outcome. Essentially, our choices may determine and alter our paths, but we will ultimately reach the destination intended for us, because 'All roads lead to Rome!'

Brainstorming (A5) | Q 4.2 | Page 98

Expand the idea suggested in the following line:

A man without liberty is a body without a soul.

Solution:

A man without liberty is a body without a soul

A composition of muscle, bone and tissue in varying proportions generates the physical form, but what makes us a spiritual 'human' being is the soul. The soul is what actually makes the body whole. Similarly, the freedom to make choices, without any

restrictions, is what makes a person whole. Without it, we are all mere puppets, dancing to someone else's tunes. As social beings, we are blessed with the power of choice to make sound decisions. But with time, we impose rules and restrictions upon ourselves to align with society. Consequently, these impositions then govern our lives and keep us from being true to ourselves. They take away our freedom and confine us in the monotony of tedious routines. However, to lead a sound and happy life, we need to be the free-spirited beings that we were in the past. We need to have the liberty to follow our hearts because without this liberty, our lives are as empty as a body without a soul.

BRAINSTORMING (A6) [PAGE 98]

Brainstorming (A6) | Q 1 | Page 98

Take help from the sources available on the internet and make a list of proverbs and quotations about 'road'.

Solution:

1. "It is a rough **road** that leads to the heights of greatness."
2. "If you don't like the **road** you're walking, start paving another one."
3. "Nobody travels on the **road** to success without a puncture or two."
4. "If you make the mistake of looking back too much, you aren't focused enough on the **road** in front of you."

Brainstorming (A6) | Q 2 | Page 98

Read the poem 'The Road Not Taken' by Robert Frost.

Solution: Do it yourself.