

## 2.5 Father Returning Home

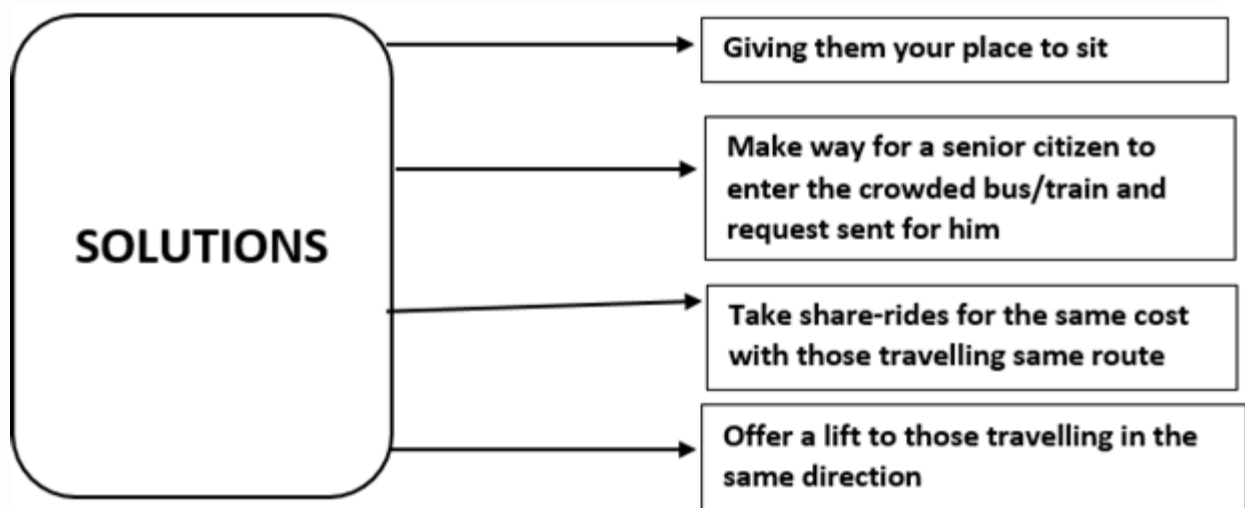
### ICE BREAKERS

**Q. 1.** Discuss with your partner the difficulties that you face while commuting to and from the college by public transport.

**Ans.**

- (a) **Crowded buses, trains**
- (b) **Are difficult to board in peak-hours**
- (c) **Have to miss a couple of trains/buses to board safely**
- (d) **On such days miss an important lecture**

**Q. 2.** The similar problems are faced by the other commuters on the way to their workplace. Imagine their plight and suggest three solutions.

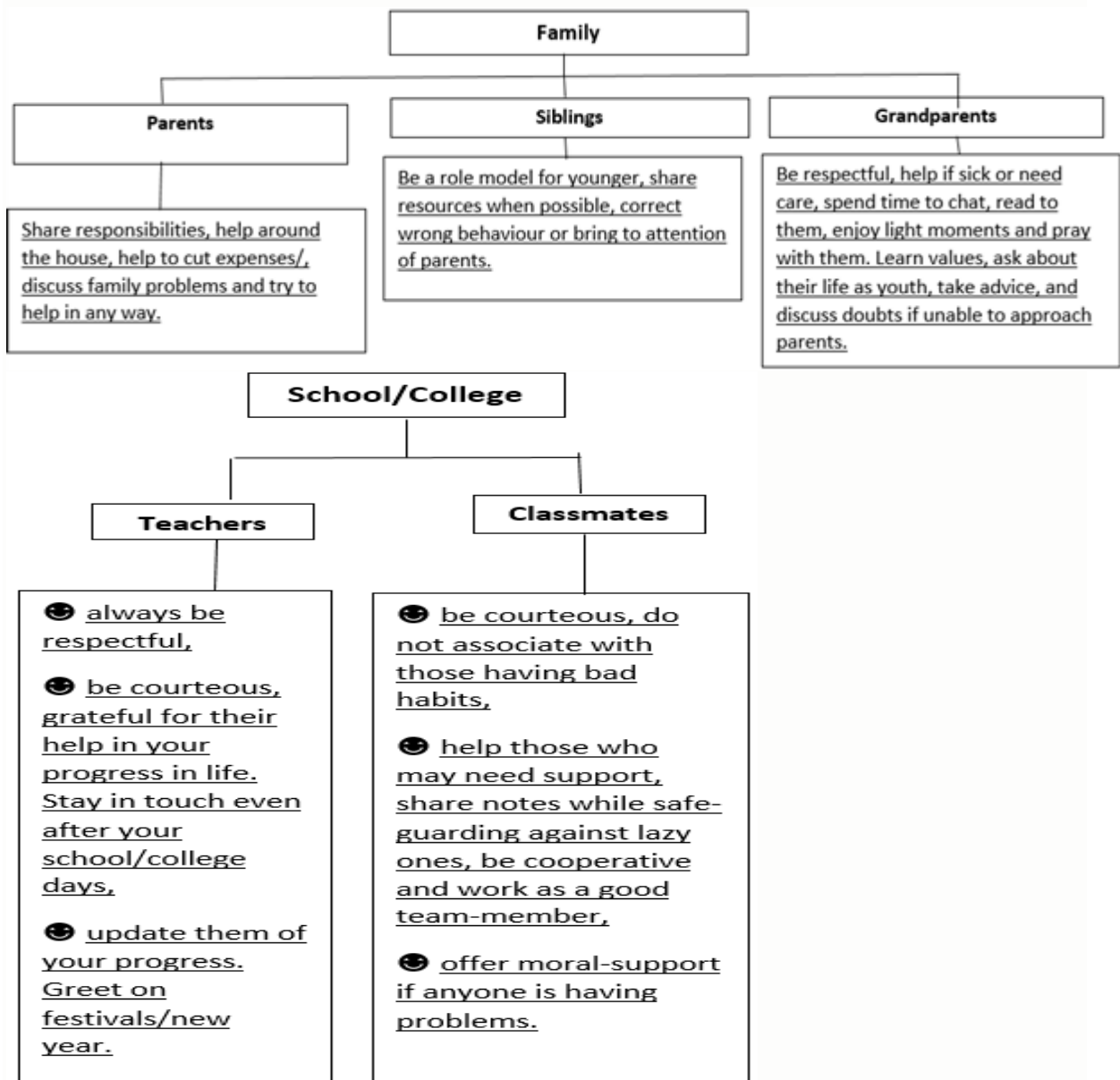


**Q. 3.** Complete the following table :  
(The answers are given directly and underlined.)

A	B
The way our elders take care of us	The way you can take care of elders in your family.

<p>(1) Love and protect us.</p> <p>(2) <u>Support, educate and guide us through childhood and youth until we are independent.</u></p> <p>(3) <u>Provide us with pocket-money and gifts we ask for.</u></p>	<p>(1) Help them in daily chores.</p> <p>(2) Help with errands to the bank, stores or other requirements.</p> <p>(3) Ensure good health with exercise/social engagement/doctor visits/meditation.</p>
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**Q. 4. Write your duties towards the following:  
(The answers are given directly and underlined.)**



## BRAINSTORMING

**(A1) (i) Discuss with your friend the difficulties faced by the father in the extract.**

**Ans.** (1) The father is not greeted on his arrival home at the end of the day; is not served any nourishing food – has weak tea and stale *chapati*.

(2) The family does not interact with him. His book is his company.

(3) His children are bad tempered sharing no details of their life or asking about his day.

(4) He must be going to work like this, also returns silently, to a silent home to his unfriendly family for whom he works.

(5) He is unnoticed, uncared for, unappreciated, almost like an outsider in his own home and family.

(6) The father is returning late in the day.

(7) He has to stand the entire trip home.

(8) He is in wet clothes for a long time till he can reach home.

(9) His sight is weak with age.

(10) His cheap footwear is muddy and maybe inconvenient in the monsoon.

**(ii) Discuss and write the character sketch of the father with the help of the given points.**

**(His pathetic condition, the treatment he receives at home, his solitude, the way he tries to overcome it)**

**Ans.** The father is on the late train. This shows he is hard-working. He does not spend any money on himself as his appearance is shown as shabby. He is uncaring about his appearance probably because he is lonely and heart-broken.

He is silent on the train-trip home. He does not speak to co-passengers. Perhaps the sadness in his heart prevents him from even small-talk. He has no travel-mates. He is silent through the trip, and gets off without waving goodbye to any passenger.

His family is cold, distant and uncaring. He is not greeted on arrival. He is given cold food which is not nourishing. He is left to eat the meal alone just reading his book.

At the end of the work-day he reads a book, eats by himself, listens to the radio and dreams of the future all alone.

Thus the father is a lonely old man, neglected by his own family in spite of working hard for them and heart-sick of his existence.

**(A2) (i) Given below are the ideas conveyed through the poem. Match the pairs and draw out the hidden meaning from those expressions :**

Expressions	Meaning
(a) Children avoid expressing themselves.	(1) Father is so eager to meet family members that he doesn't even bother about his safety.
(b) Father was deprived of refreshing hot beverages or nourishing diet.	(2) Hostility of children.
(c) The father hurries home crossing railway line.	(3) Indulge into his past and future.
(d) The father was destined to listen only to the crackling sounds on media.	(4) Uncomfortable journey.
(e) His sordid present is devoid of any hope.	(5) His basic daily requirements were also not catered to.
(f) The father's endless commuting distance him from his children.	(6) Father is not less than any tribal wanderer, a modern nomad.
(g) Suburban area, visible through the train, is passed unnoticed.	(7) Has least value in the society where his presence or absence might hardly make any difference.
(h) He is just as a small word, dropping from a sentence.	(8) Because there is hardly anything enchanting/interesting in the monotonous routine journey to look out of the window.
(i) He doesn't get a place in a crowded train.	(9) The father couldn't even fulfil the least expectation of entertaining himself.

**Ans.**

(1) Children avoid expressing themselves – Hostility of children.

(2) Father was deprived of refreshing hot beverages or nourishing diet – His basic daily requirements were also not catered to.

(3) The father hurries home crossing railway line – Father is so eager to meet family members that he doesn't even bother about his safety.

(4) The father was destined to listen only to the crackling sounds on media – The father could not even have some entertainment by himself on the radio.

(5) His sordid present is devoid of any hope – He could only indulge in imagination about his past and future.

(6) The father's endless commuting distance him from his children – Father is not less than any tribal wanderer, a modern nomad.

(7) Suburban area, visible through the train, is passed unnoticed – Because there is hardly anything enchanting/interesting in the monotonous routine journey to look out of the window.

(8) He is just as a small word, dropping from a sentence. – He has so little value in the society where his presence or absence might hardly make any difference.

(9) He doesn't get a place in a crowded train. – Uncomfortable journey.

**(ii) Find the lines to prove the following facts from the extract :**

(a) Father is deprived of good food.

**Ans.** 'Home again, I see him drinking weak tea Eating a stale *chapati*'

(b) Children did not have a healthy relation with the father

**Ans.** His sullen children have often refused to share Jokes and secrets with him.

**(iii) The poet deals with the theme of man's estrangement from a man-made world. Analyze it with the help of the extract.**

**Ans.** There are two scenarios in the poem. The first part is about the father's time spent time outside, and the second part describes his time in his home.

The first line says he is travelling on the evening train. The Mumbai local trains are famously crowded. But among the crowds he does not speak to a fellow passenger. He stands silently through the commute till he gets down. He doesn't take leave of any friend and no one waves to him. Among the crowds he is alone.

The father reaches home. He has a lonely poor meal, served without care. The stale cold food also indicates the coldness in relationships in the family. The weak tea is a metaphor for the fragile family bond. There is no bonding. Home is only a shelter for him and he is only a provider for them. The father is lonely among his own family as well.

So the father is alone in the crowd of strangers and also among his own family.

**(iv) The father contemplates his past and peeps into his future. Give reasons.**

**Ans.** The father silently ponders on his past. There is no communication with his family members. He would have sat with family members together to recall happy memories and enjoy them again. Reliving the past would have been one way for the family to bond. But the father thinks of the past alone. Future plans could be also discussed with family members. A lot of discussions could have happened about

money, savings, career, a wedding and so on. Advice, suggestions are given, arguments and disagreements happen, and even anger sometimes. But the father has nothing like this happening in his presence. There is only a sullen silence. He remembers his past and thinks of possible grandchildren. No one shares his dreams. He spends the past, present and future alone and in silence.

**(A3) Complete the following using suitable describing words as they appear in the poem with the help of the words given in the brackets :**

**(weak, dim, muddy, soggy, stale)**

**Ans.**

(a) Father's attire - soggy

(b) Father's tea - weak

(c) Father's footwear - muddy

(d) Father's food - stale

(e) Father's eyesight - dim

**(A4) (i) 'Fade homeward through the humid monsoon night'.**

**In the above line the weather is humid, not the night. The epithet or adjective is transferred from the weather to the night. The figure of speech is Transferred Epithet.**

**Find out such other examples of transferred epithet from the poem.**

**Ans.** 'Suburbs slide past his unseeing eyes. The 'unseeing' is transferred to eyes. The eyes are seeing but his mind is not registering any sight. So the quality of 'not seeing' is given to the eyes.

**(ii) Identify and write the lines from the extract which expresses the following figures of speech:**

**(The answer is given directly and underlined.)**

Figures of speech	Lines
(1) <b>Simile</b>	'Like a word dropped from a long sentence' The father getting off the train is compared to a word dropped unnoticed as many others words are there.
(2) <b>Alliteration</b>	(1) My father travels on the late evening train [1] The sound 't' is repeated. (2) 'Suburbs slide past his unseeing eyes' [3] the sound 's' is repeated. Man's estrangement from a

	man-made world The sound 'm' is repeated.
(3) <b>Repetition</b>	'He hurries' is repeated in lines 10 and 12. This is used to emphasize the father's eagerness to get home, back to shelter from the wet. Back to his family after a long day at work.
(4) <b>Onomatopoeia</b>	Static on the radio - sounds like the meaning of the word.

(iii) I see him drinking weak tea, eating a stale *chapati*.

Here '*stale chapati*' stands for stale food/ non-nourishing food or diet, where the part symbolizes the whole, i.e. food. Guess the name of the figure of speech.

**Ans.** The figure of speech is 'Synecdoche'.

(A5) (i) Write a counterview on the following topic:

**"Every day is a mother's/ father's day."**

(a) If you love them, you don't need to wait for such days.

(b) Celebrating days is just a formality.

(c) Celebrations of the days condition your expression of emotions.

(d) It is a kind of a pretext to neglect your everyday responsibilities.

**Ans.** We love and respect our parents. We must be sure to be loving and respectful in our everyday behaviour and actions. They work, laugh, sacrifice - all only for their children -US! When we behave respectfully and lovingly with elders, the cards or a special day in the year are just a formality.

Our feelings for our parents are unconditional. We don't say 'if they do something, only then will we do something in return, while interacting with elders in the family, We cannot be loving, caring, obedient and helpful only on a Father's/Mother's Day. We have to be all these towards our parents and elders EVERY DAY.

So 'Every day is Mother's/Father's Day!'

(ii) Conduct a group discussion on the role of children towards their 'Parents and Senior Citizens'.

**Ans.**

<b>Moderator:</b>	You've all been given a few minutes to think on your topic for today's group discussion, which is 'The role of children towards their 'Parents and Senior Citizens'. You may now
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	begin the discussion. Who would like to start?
<b>Sakshi:</b>	<p>I think the topic of this discussion is very relevant to all of us here. As children, we all share the responsibility of being obedient and caring towards our parents.</p> <p>However, I think our responsibility doesn't stop with just being good to our parents; it extends beyond home and we must be equally caring and respectful of the senior citizens in our society.</p>
<b>Vijay:</b>	<p>I agree with Sakshi that our responsibility extends beyond the confines of home. The society in which we live has a significant role in moulding our personalities. It certainly includes those innumerable people who have held our hands in nurturing our growth in school, the caring people of our neighbourhood, and the vendors whom we have seen since our childhood, who are now in the autumn of their lives. We all owe a lot to such people who have shaped us into the individuals that we are today.</p>
<b>Pooja:</b>	<p>Yes, I would like to add that we should not take a limited perspective of calling ourselves good children just by being obedient to our parents; yes, we must try and measure up to our parents' expectations because they are our first teachers and they have indeed grown old in seeing us through our childhood and adolescence. But once we cross the threshold of our homes, there are others as well who took charge of our upbringing. Be it our teachers, the bus driver, the doctor or the sanitation worker, who have given the primes of their lives to make way for younger generation; we must see our foster-parents in them and treat them on par in terms of respect and care.</p>



<b>Vijay:</b>	Yes, Pooja, you are absolutely right. But I think we can't be blindly good to every elderly person around. We never know the type of person we are dealing with unless he or she is an acquaintance or a family friend. We children are also in the vulnerable position of being exploited if we mistakenly engage with the wrong person, irrespective of our good intent to help the elderly.
<b>Priya:</b>	Yes, this is true. We keep hearing so much of bad news through the media about child abuse and molestation. After all, the same society has both virtuous and evil-minded people. Therefore, it is very important for us to be careful while trying to be nice to the elderly of our society.
<b>Pooja:</b>	I agree with what Priya says, We have to be socially responsible while ensuring our own safety and security.
<b>Vijay:</b>	That is right. And coming back to our responsibilities towards our parents, it is important that we spend time with them, ask them about their day, and help them out if they seem stressed. When we were kids, our parents understood what we needed and provided it to us even before we had to ask for it. As they age now, it is essential that we, too, ensure their well-being just like they did for us.
<b>Pooja:</b>	I completely agree with you, Vijay. In fact, as our parents grow old, they might become forgetful or might not understand everything as quickly as they used to before. We need to be patient with them, because as they lose their old self, their insecurities rise and they begin to think that they have become a burden on their children. At such times, it becomes essential for us to make them feel safe and loved. We must share their

	responsibilities and assure them that they can count on us.
<b>Sakshi:</b>	I would support Pooja and also like to add that our compassion should also extend to the elderly outside our homes, irrespective of whether we know them or not. After all, kindness begets kindness.
<b>Moderator:</b>	All right, everyone. The given time is almost over. Who would like to conclude the discussion please?
<b>Pooja:</b>	Friends, considering all the points brought forth in this discussion, we can conclude that we children must be responsible individuals both, at home and outside home. Let us be as respectful and as caring of the senior citizens in the society, as we would be towards our parents. Let us bear in mind that the parents and the others have shouldered a collective responsibility in our nurture and hence both deserve similar respect and care from us.

**(iii) Write an appreciation of the poem 'Father Returning Home' considering the following points:**

- 1) About the poem/poet/title
- 2) Theme
- 3) Poetic devices, language, style
- 4) Special features - tone and type
- 5) Values, message
- 6) Your opinion about the poem

**Ans.** The poem 'Father Returning Home', by Dilip Chitre a bilingual poet - is about a lonely old man's coming home from a long day at work. The poet describes his silent and lonely journey home in the crowded Mumbai local train. It is a metaphor for the father's isolated life even though he is among people.

The poet speaks of the 'unseeing' eyes on the scenery flashing past the train. The same thing the man sees daily when commuting has nothing new, just like his uninteresting life. The setting is dusk in monsoon. The man's dress and appearance are also metaphorical.

His soggy clothes and mud stained raincoat symbolize his shabby appearance

and also his sad life.

The man carries a bag full of books. He is well-read maybe. Thus when the man gets off the train the poet compares it to a word falling from a sentence. He goes unnoticed as an unimportant word dropped from a long sentence – a simile. The 'long sentence' – imagery – makes us imagine the long train and the passenger is one word that is getting down.

The platform he crosses is grey. colour imagery for gloominess or dirty surroundings. The poet uses informal language and an easy style. The poet describes him 'hurries' along the platform and again 'hurries' on to his home. This repeated word shows his eagerness to reach his shelter and get dry. The words create an imagery of a shabby. Pitiable but scholarly man.

The second part of the poem is about the man in his home. The meal he eats shows the poor quality as well as the careless way it is served. He reads a book while he eats. That is a clear imagery for his loneliness at home also. The family offers no company after his long day and tiring commute.

In the toilet he is pondering on how he has been shut out of the world although he is in the crowd. He is a stranger among his family in his own home. His children don't speak to him and won't share any part of their life. They are not interested in his life also. He goes to sleep thinking of the past and future, listening to harsh sounds on the radio.

The message is how the elderly are used by their own children but neglected when they need care. The poem is about a man who may be misunderstood. He is lonely even in the middle of crowds. It teaches how we should not behave to persons who are in the autumn of their life.

I feel sorry for such people who have worked hard in their life but the younger relatives discard them once their use is over.

**(iv) Compose a short poem in about 4-6 lines on your father.**

**Ans. My Father**

He is unselfish, caring,  
Honest and hard-working

Simple, strict and well-read;  
Upright, always respected  
By family and every friend.  
He tried to excel till the end.

**(v) Write a character sketch of any one of your family member.**

**Ans. My Mother**

If anyone cannot believe angels walk on the earth they should come and meet my mother. My mother is the most affectionate and gentle human I have ever met. She has never spoken a harsh word to anyone as far as I recall. She is so very concerned for the comfort of every other person that she neglects herself.

She looks after her father-in-law who is in his eighties. He is a great scholar and gets many visitors. She attends cheerfully to them all apart from looking after us. My father, my sister and I help out with as much of the household chores as we can. But the main load of running the home falls on her. She takes care of that responsibility so cheerfully as if it is very light. She is loving and jovial with our friends when my

sister and I invite them home. She advises us not to overspend but always has a tasty meal when friends and relatives gather for a festival meal.

My father does not make any important decisions in my mother's absence. She discusses everything till they arrive at the most suitable decision. Our grandfather will not eat anything which my mother has not made. After my grandmother passed, he relies on 'Saru' my mother, for his diet meals, medicine, his reference books, walking stick, shawl and everything to be in their place.

**My mother is our world.**

**(A6) (i) Dilip Chitre has translated Sant Tukaram's 'Abhangas' (devotional poems) for which he received Sahitya Akademi Award. Browse the internet to collect more information about it.**

**Ans.** Do it yourself.

**(ii) List various occupations related to services which can be rendered to senior citizens.**

**Ans.**

(a) To counsel patients of Alzheimers' disease.

(b) Render service at old age homes.

(c) Offer Geriatric medicine speciality in hospitals for old age care.