



INDIAN SCHOOL NIZWA - WORKSHEET

ENGLISH KEEPING QUIET

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: XII Sec: ____

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

*Now we will count to twelve,
and we will all keep still.
For once on the face of the Earth,
let's not speak in any language,
let's stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.*

a. How long does the poet want to stay still?

Ans. The poet exhorts each one of us to count to twelve and then be quiet, silent and motionless for a brief moment

b. What does he hope to achieve by keeping quiet?

Ans. He hopes to achieve and realise the value of quiet introspection. In this silence, we shall feel that all are together and will experience a strange feeling of togetherness.

c. What does the poet mean by "not move our arms so much"?

Ans. By this, he means that we should not make any physical movement, as physical activity will stop or interrupt our introspection

d. Why does the poet suggest us not to speak in any language?

Ans. The poet wants us to simply be silent for a moment and utilise that time to understand ourselves as well as others. Besides, language differences often lead to conflict, which the poet, perhaps, wants to avoid.

2 *It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines,
we would all be together
in a sudden strangeness.*

a. What will happen if there is no rush or running of engines?

Ans. It will be an ecstatic moment of tranquillity without rush or running of engines.

b. Why would it be called an exotic moment?

Ans. It would be called an exotic moment because it will be an instance of universal peace and brotherhood. In that moment, all of us would initiate introspection through meditation and the whole world will be enveloped in quietness.

c. How would we feel at that moment?

Ans. We would feel very strange at that moment, because at that time everyone will have a feeling of oneness with their fellow human beings. It will be a new feeling altogether.

d. Name the poem and the poet.

Ans. The poem is 'Keeping Quiet', and the poet is Pablo Neruda.



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3 *Perhaps the Earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead
and later proves to be alive
Now I'll count upto twelve
and you keep quiet and I will go.*

a. What does the Earth teach us?

Ans. The Earth teaches us how new life springs from dead remains, and how there is life under apparent stillness.

b. What does the poet mean to achieve by counting upto twelve?

Ans. The poet wants to achieve peace by counting upto twelve. He wants us to introspect in a moment of silence.

c. What is the significance of 'keeping quiet'? (All India 2013; Modified)

Ans. Keeping quiet doesn't mean just not speaking. It means that we should avoid all activities which hurt nature and, in turn, hurt us.

d. What is always alive, even when everything seems to be dead?

Ans. The Earth is always alive, even when everything else seems to be dead. There is always some activity going on in nature beneath its apparent stillness

4 *"If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves with death.*

a. Whom does 'we' refer to in the above lines?

Ans. 'We' refers to the human beings, who are always thinking about their own progress and advancement.

b. Why does the poet want us to 'do nothing' for once?

Ans. The poet wants us to 'do nothing' for once so that our mind can be at peace and we are able to introspect and analyse our own actions.

c. What is the 'sadness' that the poet refers to in the poem?

Ans. The poet refers to the 'sadness' which arises due to the fact that people fail to understand themselves. They have no time to introspect about their actions and their consequences.

d. How can a huge silence do good to us?

Ans. A huge silence can do good to us because we are able to achieve peace in this silence. It helps us in analysing ourselves and our actions, interrupting the sadness of threatening ourselves with death.

SHORT QUESTIONS

1 **What is the sadness that the poet refers to in the poem 'Keeping Quiet'? or**

Ans. **What is the sadness that the poet refers to in the poem? (All India 2011)** The poet refers to the sadness which surrounds man due to not having any time for himself, the pain of not understanding what he or his fellow human beings want. He has no time for introspection; as a result, he is unable to analyse his own actions and understand its consequences.

2 **Which images in the poem 'Keeping Quiet' show that the poet condemns violence?**

Ans. The images of fishermen not harming the whales in the sea and wars leaving behind no survivors to celebrate the victory show that the poet condemns violence. The poet wants the warmongers to change their blood-stained clothes to clean ones. The poet's refusal to have any



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association or dealing with death also shows that he is not in favour of any form of violence.

3 **What symbol from nature does the poet use to prove that keeping quiet is not total inactivity?**

Ans. The poet uses nature as a symbol to explain his idea that there can be life under apparent stillness. According to him, keeping quiet is not total inactivity. A seed may appear to be dead and inactive, but one day, the same seed may turn into a fruitful tree..

4 **How can suspension of activities help?**

Ans. The poet believes that suspension of activities will allow man to introspect, which can help them in analysing their own actions, and in solving many of their problems based on caste, religion or nationality. It will help them develop a new understanding of their surroundings, and thus make them mend their destructive ways.

5 **Do you think the poet advocates total inactivity and death?**

Ans. No, the poet clearly states that his asking for stillness should not be confused with total inactivity or death. He perceives life to be a continuous process, where man's activities should not lead to destruction of fellow human beings or nature, but should be channelised in a resourceful way.