

**GRADE : 12 READING COMPREHENSION- 3 DATE:**

**1. Read the passage given below.**

(1) I felt stupid, being made to stand on the desk while the other kids were bent over their notebooks. I couldn’t understand my new school or my new classmates, or their alien language – English – and the fact that they could do sums in their head, while I struggled with a paper and pencil. For me, at age six, the good times

had ended. Life seemed a far cry from those days in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, all thanks to my grandfather’s reflected glory. He was a military doctor, a great man, and I lived with him. And so even policemen gave me affectionate salaams, which I learned to acknowledge with a nod, I’d simply lay my head down on the desk

and sleep in class, if bored. I was a pampered little prince.

(2) In early 1971, my parents decided it was time I moved to Bombay where father worked. My first few days were a disaster. No one spoke Tamil or Telugu, the only languages I knew. I couldn’t keep pace with their writing or reading. Then one day, a slight plump lady with large spectacles, wearing trousers walked into the classroom. “Hello,” she said, “My name is Miss Jean. I am your new class teacher.” She’d done her homework. Spotting me in a back corner, she beckoned me to the front. My almost empty notebooks must have given

Miss Jean a clue that I needed the extra attention. If the class had to write a page, I’d be made to write two. Even during PT, I had to stay back and write. When I was caught sneaking to the window to watch the others playing, Miss Jean put me in the middle row, far from the window.

(3) I made some progress and Miss Jean made it a point to praise every little achievement. If I did my work wrong, she’d call me to her desk, hug me and show me how to correct my errors. Mistakes were only human in her eyes, but neglecting home work was a crime-there’d be a terse comment in my diary for mother to see. And I’d be grounded that evening. Meanwhile I was getting possessive and minded if another child got more hugs. By Christmas, I stood fifth in class. “I am very proud of Srikant,” she told the class after reading

out the marks. I narrated that moment to mother again and again. When I returned after summer vacations, I heard that Miss Jean had got married and was going to Australia.

(4) Many years went by. I graduated in engineering, then in management, got a job, married and had kids. One day I found myself thinking of Miss Jean. Soon afterwards I found myself in Sydney, Australia, on an official trip. I tried looking up for my teacher in the phone book. But it was of no help as I did not know even her

surname. Thank you, Miss Jean wherever you are for, the tact and patience with which you taught me.

**Based on your understanding of the passage, answer any eight of the given questions. (1 × 8 = 8)**

**(i)** Why was the narrator feeling ‘stupid’ in the first paragraph?

**(ii)** Why is it that the narrator feels “English” to be an alien language?

**(iii)** The narrator said his “good times had ended” when he was six years old. Why?

 **(iv)** Why was life in Mumbai a “disaster” for the narrator?

**(v)** Why did Miss Jean treat the narrator ‘different’ from other students?

**(vi)** What made the narrator decide to look up Miss Jean when he went to Australia?

**(vii)** What, according to the author, did he learn from Miss Jean?

**(viii)** The narrator felt that he was targeted by Miss Jean when he was in school but then realized the true nature of her teaching after he grew up. What does this show?

**(ix)** What one attribute of Miss Jean can we take from the story that we can incorporate in our lives?

**2. Read the passage given below.**

(1) What amazing news for a new generation of students – Maths to be optional – is the new mantra from government that will potentially revolutionize the lives of students in grade 10 and upwards. I remember never enjoying Maths and to a degree I blame my poor understanding for many of my trials and tribulations

at school and college. The horrors of long division and the dread of algebra. However, are we really going to now ‘educate’ innumerate kids or is there enough practical maths given to survive in the world before grade10?

(2) I was an above-average kid in school. There used to be a ranking system, where I always competed to be in the top five. To be there, I’ve had many sleepless nights, long hours of tuition and this never-ending struggle

with my least favorite subject that used to always obstruct me from being the first name on the blackboard on the open-house day. I tell you though from these trials and tribulations I got my sense of competitiveness with myself and this is where my drive comes from. Nobody told me to take it easy, that’s how our education

system works. The world of sin, cos, tan was making me sad, however, there was no solution to escape from it. I struggled on until graduation.

(3) However, I am all too aware of the negative impact that this can and is having on children. The prospect of failing through no fault of your own terrifies most adults and can have serious implication for youngsters. The real danger in sticking with the old system I went through is that kids get a sense of being ostracized from their peers and this can impact how they interact with group later. This move by Bombay HC may prove a blessing to so many mathematically challenged students, thanks in part to the psychiatrist who brought it

to the court’s attention. Allowing them to drop maths in grade 10 is sensible because of the huge pressure felt by the students, who fail to progress due to this single subject being impossible for them to comprehend. Dropping maths as one of the compulsory subjects for matriculation –an idea that was first introduced in

the 1960’s and is clearly now considered not the best way forward for all. The effect will be felt from 2017but unfortunately as yet there is no system to retrospectively activate it for kids passing through grade 10 from 2015-2017. Will this create a two-tier university entrance system or will it be a fairer way of allowing more students to enter subjects such as the arts or languages?

(4) It’s hard to say but there’s no doubt that at the root of the decision is student welfare and rights. This can only be a good thing and having passed through until grade ten everyday maths won’t be a problem for most – the problem is that the more academic subject of maths is not attainable for everyone. One option put forward is the study of Sanskrit. This has raised some eyebrows but there is no doubt as time goes on people will settle to the idea or there will be more elective subjects put forward. This however may look like a different system so much so that rather than a rigid set of 7 or 8 subjects, students will have the choice from a broader range allowing them to choose whatever they want and drop whatever they want.

**Based on your understanding of the passage, answer any six of the following questions. (1 × 6 = 6)**

**(i)** What did the government plan to do to revolutionize the Class 10th and senior student education system?

**(ii)** What was the opinion of the author about the move to make maths optional?

**(iii)** The narrator is critical of the old educational system. Why?

**(iv)** How was the move to make maths an optional subject started?

**(v)** What type of student was the author like during her schooling days?

**(vi)** The author used the word “ostracized” when talking about students who were not doing well in maths.

What does this show?

**(vii)** What was the “amazing news” in the first paragraph?

**1. (i)** The narrator felt stupid because he was made to stand on the desk as a punishment in class while his

classmates were doing their class-work.

**(ii)** English, to the narrator, was an alien language because he was neither good in it nor could he read or

write. Moreover, he was unable to do any of the things that his classmates were capable of doing in class.

**(iii)** Up till he was 6, he had stayed with his grandparents and had been treated like a “pampered little prince”. But after he stayed with his parents, life changed.

**(iv)** Life in Mumbai was a disaster because no one spoke Tamil or Telugu, the two languages that he knew.

**(v)** Miss Jean treated the narrator differently because he was ‘less educated’ compared to the other students.

She knew that he required extra attention, which was why she focused on him in particular.

**(vi)** When on a business trip to Sydney, the narrator decided to try to look for Miss Jean to most probably

thank her for her influence in his life.

**(vii)** Miss Jean taught him tact and patience that he needed in his life.

**(viii)** This shows that Miss Jean was merely acting out of love rather than discrimination or any hatred. She,

as a teacher, realized that he needed extra attention if he was to learn anything in class.

**(ix)** Her act of praising the good done but still able to reprimand the mistakes through love and patience is a

lesson we can take from Miss Jean.

**2. (i)** In order to revolutionalise the Class 10th and senior students, the government plans to make maths

an optional subject rather than a compulsory necessity for a student to move on to the next class.

**(ii)** The author welcomes the move to make maths optional for Class 10th students.

**(iii)** The narrator believes that the old educational system restricts students who are less interested and

good in subjects like maths who do not have the means to progress further.

**(iv)** The first attempt to make maths optional was in the 1960s but was unsuccessful.

**(v)** The author was an above- average kid in school but struggling with maths like most students.

**(vi)** The word “ostracized” is used to talk of something that is negatively taken, or something outlawed. In

this sense, the author used the word to talk of students who fail in maths as being “disowned” or “shunned” by

peers.

**(vii)** The “amazing news” in the first paragraph was that of the removal of maths as a compulsory subject

and rather given or listed as an optional subject.