



Subject: English

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Topic – P 5: THE SCHOOL BOY

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**Pre Activity : Write about a few things that make you unhappy in the school.**

**Summary :** A poem by William Blake called "The Schoolboy" may be found in Songs of Innocence. It is recounted from the viewpoint of a little kid heading to school over the summer. The boy hates going to school because he prefers summer mornings. He is bored at his desk and cannot pay attention to the class lesson since he prefers to play outdoors in natural settings.

"How can the bird born for joy sit in a cage and sing?" the speaker questions in the fourth verse. Here, the author compares young children- animated and joyful- to songbirds, who deserve the freedom to soar on the breezes. Children who are confined to a classroom, however, are unable to express themselves and cannot make use of all that extra energy. Thus, they are unable to reach their full potential.

The speaker confronts the parents in the last two stanzas, posing, "What will the summer fruits look like if buds are nipped/...and if fragile creatures are stripped/ of their delight? If kids cannot play and have fun throughout the summer, how can they develop and grow to their full potential?"

This poem is about letting children be children, play and run outdoors to enjoy the blessings of nature and the seasons. This practice benefits them just as much as academic learning does.

**Working with the poem-**

**1. Find three or four words/phrases in stanza 1 that reflect the child's happiness and joy.**

**Ans:** Phrases reflecting the child's happiness are:

- 'love to rise in a summer morning',
- 'birds sing on every tree',
- 'the Skylark sings with me',

- ‘O! what a sweet company’ and
- ‘huntsman winds his horn’.

**2. In stanza 2, the mood changes. Which words/phrases reflect the changed mood?**

**Ans:** Phrases reflecting the changes in mood are:

- ‘cruel eye outworn’,
- ‘in sighing and dismay’,
- ‘O! it drives all joy away’.

**3. ‘A cruel eye outworn (stanza 2)’ refers to**

**(i) the classroom which is shabby/noisy**

**(ii) the lessons which are difficult/uninteresting**

**(iii) The dull/uninspiring life at school with lots of work and no play.**

**Mark the answer that you consider right.**

**Ans:** (iii) the dull/uninspiring life at school with lots of work and no play.

**4. “Nor sit in learning’s bower worn thro’ with the dreary shower”**

**Which of the following is a close paraphrase of the lines above?**

**(i) Nor can I sit in a roofless classroom when it is raining.**

**(ii) Nor can I learn anything at school though teachers go on lecturing and explaining.**

**(iii) Nor can I sit in the school garden for fear of getting wet in the rain.**

**Ans:** (ii) nor can I learn anything at school though teachers go on lecturing and explaining.