

English

Class: 12th

Subject: English

Lesson 11: FIRST YEAR AT HARROW

Author: Sir Winston S. Churchill

❖ Exercise Short Questions:

1. The writer says that the examiners ask questions which students cannot answer and not those which they can answer. Is the complaint just?

Ans: Yes, the complaint is just because Churchill wanted to demonstrate what he knew, but examiners focused on what he did not know.

- This made him feel tested unfairly and prevented him from performing well.
- He felt examinations emphasized exposing ignorance rather than appreciating knowledge.

2. What sort of questions are asked by your examiners?

Ans:

- Examiners often ask questions on topics students are least familiar with.
- Questions are designed to challenge knowledge, sometimes beyond what has been taught.
- They may not focus on the student's strengths or what the student has studied thoroughly.

3. Why did not Churchill do well in examinations?

Ans:

- He was asked questions on subjects he fancied least, like Latin and Mathematics.
- The questions targeted areas where he had little knowledge.
- Examiners emphasized testing ignorance rather than rewarding knowledge.

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- **Consequently**, his performance in exams was poor despite his abilities in other subjects.

4. How did he do his Latin paper?

Ans:

- Churchill could not answer any question in Latin.
- He wrote only his name at the top of the paper and the number of the question.
- After thinking for a while, he added a bracket but could not write anything relevant or correct.
- His paper had blots and smudges, showing his inability to answer.

5. Churchill was taught English at Harrow and not Latin and Greek.

Was it a gain or loss?

Ans:

It was a gain because:

- He learned English thoroughly due to prolonged focus.
- He gained essential skills in sentence structure, parsing, and analysis.
- Unlike others who focused on Latin and Greek, he became confident in practical English.

6. What good did his three years stay at Harrow do him?

Ans:

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- He spent three times as long in the lowest form, which gave him more practice in English.
 - Learned English parsing and analysis in depth.
 - Developed a strong foundation in ordinary English sentences, which was practically useful.
 - Gained advantage over cleverer boys who had less focus on English.

7. In after years how did the knowledge of English stand him in good stead?

Ans:

- English helped him in his career and communication.
- His school-fellows who excelled in Latin and Greek struggled later when using common English.
- **Churchill's** mastery of English gave him confidence and practical ability in real life.

8. Write an appreciation or criticism of Churchill's views in regard to the study of Latin, Greek and English and their value in earning a living.

Ans:

Appreciation:

- Churchill valued practical learning that helps in real life.

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- He considered English essential for communication, earning, and success.
 - Latin and Greek were treated as honour and treat, not necessities.
 - His view encourages teaching useful skills first, and classical subjects later.

Criticism:

- Some may argue that Latin and Greek provide mental discipline and cultural knowledge.
- Ignoring them completely may limit literary and historical understanding.
- **Overall**, his emphasis on English is pragmatic and forward-looking, especially for earning a living.

❖ Important Short Questions:

1. At what age did the writer enter the world of examinations?

Ans: The writer entered the examinations shortly after his twelfth birthday, beginning a challenging academic journey.

2. For how many years did the writer have to face examinations?

Ans: He had to go through examinations for seven years, which were a continuous trial for him.

3. Which subjects did the writer wish to be examined in?

Ans: He wished to be examined in history, poetry, and essay writing, the subjects he liked and felt confident about.

4. Which subjects were preferred by the examiners?

Ans: The examiners were partial to Latin and Mathematics, which were the subjects the writer liked least.

5. Why did the writer fail to do well in examinations?

Ans: He often failed because the examiners asked questions on what he did not know, focusing on exposing ignorance rather than appreciating knowledge.

6. What was especially true of the writer's Entrance Examination to Harrow?

Ans: He could not answer a single question in Latin, and his paper only contained his name and the question number.

7. Who was the Headmaster of Harrow and what quality of his impressed the writer?

Ans: The Headmaster was Mr. Welldon, who impressed the writer by showing broadmindedness and discernment, recognizing general ability beyond written papers.

8. What did the writer write in his Latin paper?

Ans: He wrote only his name at the top, the number of the question, and added a bracket, but could not write anything relevant or true.

9. How long did the writer look at his Latin answer sheet during the examination?

Ans: He gazed at his Latin paper for two hours, unable to think of any correct answer.

10. On what basis did Mr. Welldon decide to pass the writer into Harrow?

Ans: Mr. Welldon passed him based on slender indications of scholarship and his ability to demonstrate general intelligence despite failing the Latin paper.

11. In which division of the school was the writer placed after admission?

Ans: He was placed in the third, or lowest, division of the Fourth form, at the bottom of the school list.

12. Why did the writer gain no advantage from the alphabetical order of names?

Ans: His name, Spencer-Churchill, began with 'S', so he was two from the bottom, gaining no benefit from alphabetical placement.

13. Why was the writer taught only English at Harrow?

Ans: He and the other weak students were considered dunces, so they were allowed to learn only English, not Latin or Greek.

14. Who was Mr. Somervell and what subject did he teach?

Ans: Mr. Somervell was a teacher of the weakest students, responsible for teaching them English writing and analysis.

15. What method did Mr. Somervell use to teach English to the boys?

Ans: He used a systematic method with coloured inks to break sentences into Subject, Verb, Object, and clauses, and practiced sentence parsing and analysis almost daily, ensuring thorough learning.

Note:

This chapter is designed to provide a solid foundation of knowledge, with the goal of deepening understanding and encouraging further exploration of the subject. The content has been carefully selected to support effective learning and inspire students to engage with the topic more deeply.

Author: Muhammad Asghar

Purpose: To contribute to education by offering insightful, valuable content that enhances learning and understanding.

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