



English

Class: 12th

Subject: English

Lesson 5: ON DESTROYING BOOKS

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❖ **Exercise Short Questions:**

1. What sort of books were presented by the British public to soldiers?

Ans: The books presented by the public to the soldiers were mostly ordinary and common. Many of them were quite unsuitable, including old magazines, outdated guides, and back numbers of almanacs. Some

books were valuable or interesting, but a large number were considered worthless or of minor literary quality.

2. Was it interest of soldiers that prompted their action, or was it the wish to get rid of useless books?

Ans: It was not the interest of soldiers that prompted the action. Many people sent books to get rid of things they did not want themselves. While some may have accidentally included useless books, often it was a way for non-bookish people to clear unwanted volumes from their shelves.

3. Why should bad books be destroyed?

Ans: Bad or worthless books should be destroyed because:

- It makes more room for useful and new books.
- It prevents future generations from having to sort and store useless volumes.
- Keeping bad books serves no purpose and can be considered a public duty to remove them from circulation.

4. Why is it difficult to destroy books?

Ans: Destroying books is difficult because they are not easily consumable. They “die hard”; it is almost impossible to burn them without opening, and they cannot simply be thrown away without thought. Physically, books are solid and resistant, making simple destruction a challenge.

5. Why could not the author burn the unwanted books?

Ans: The author could not burn the books because:

- He did not have a kitchen range or a fire suitable for burning them.
- Consuming them leaf by leaf in his small study fire was hopeless.
- Books are almost as difficult to burn as a piece of granite, making this method impractical.

6. How did he decide to get rid of them?

Ans: Finally, the author decided to tie the books in a sack and throw them into the river. He improvised a sack, stuffed the books into it, and carried them to the river to dispose of them quietly. This method was practical and effective, given the number of books and his small living space.

7. Describe the author's midnight venture to throw the books in the river and the suspicions which his action were likely to arouse.

Ans: The author stepped out at nearly midnight, with a sack of books over his shoulder.

- **The night was cold**, with stars in the sky and greenish-yellow lamps casting long gleams on the road.
- **He passed a policeman and felt uneasy**, imagining that he might be suspected of carrying stolen goods.

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- **As he reached the Embankment**, he was anxious about the splash his books would make in the river and feared someone might misinterpret the act, thinking a person or a baby had fallen.
 - **Despite these fears**, he cautiously looked around and waited for the right moment, feeling both fear and anticipation.

8. How did he muster up courage at last to fling them into the river?

Ans: The author encouraged himself by thinking about bravery and past sacrifices. He reflected:

- "Better men than you have gone to the gallows."
- If he failed now, he would never hold his head up again.
- With the courage of despair, he approached the circular bay on Chelsea Bridge, knelt on the seat, and finally flung the sack of books into the river.

9. Did he come to have a feeling for those books once he had got rid of them?

Ans: Yes, after disposing of the books, the author felt a little sad and reflective. He imagined the books lying forlorn on the riverbed, forgotten, yet covered in mud and remnants of their sack. Though they were "horrible bad books," he still felt some sympathy, as if they were poor innocent victims of his action.

❖ Important Short Questions:

1. How many volumes were presented to the troops by the public?

Ans: Over two million volumes were presented by the public to the troops.

2. What kinds of books were included among the unsuitable ones sent to the soldiers?

Ans: Unsuitable books included old magazines (twenty years old), guides to the Lake District, and back numbers of Whitaker's Almanac.

3. Why did some people send unwanted books to the troops?

Ans: Some people sent unwanted books to get rid of books they did not want themselves, rather than for the soldiers' interest.

4. Why do non-bookish people hesitate to throw away books?

Ans: Non-bookish people are reluctant to throw away anything that looks like a book, even if it is useless.

5. What happens to worthless books in illiterate households?

Ans: In illiterate households, every worthless volume finds its way to a shelf and stays there.

6. Why does the author say it is a public duty to destroy rubbish books?

Ans: Destroying bad books makes room for new books and saves heirs the trouble of sorting or storing useless volumes.

7. What problem did the author face due to the accumulation of books in his flat?

Ans: The author had too many books of inferior verse in his small flat, leaving him the choice of evicting the books or moving out himself.

8. Why could the author not sell the unwanted books?

Ans: No one would have bought the books because they were of minor or inferior literary value.

9. Why was burning the books not possible for the author?

Ans: The author had no kitchen range, and burning them leaf by leaf in his study fire was impractical, as books are hard to burn like granite.

10. What method did the author finally choose to destroy the books?

Ans: He tied the books in a sack and threw them into the river.

11. At what time did the author step into the street with the sack of books?

Ans: He stepped out nearly at midnight.

12. Why did the author feel uneasy when he passed the policeman?

Ans: He feared the policeman might suspect him of carrying stolen goods, even though the books were harmless.

13. What fear struck the author when he stood by the river?

Ans: He feared that the splash of the books might make someone think a person or a baby had fallen and that he might be seized.

14. From where did the author finally throw the books into the river?

Ans: He threw them from the circular bays on Chelsea Bridge.

15. What feelings did the author have after throwing the books away?

Ans: He felt sad and reflective, imagining the books lying forlorn and forgotten at the bottom of the river, despite being worthless.

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.

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

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