

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 5: THE SCHOOL BOY



THE SCHOOL BOY

~Summary~

-by William Blake

"**The School Boy**" is a poem written by **William Blake**. The poem is divided into five stanzas. In the first stanza, he wakes to the sound of birds and enjoys the pleasant **summer** morning. However, the tone shifts in the later stanzas as he expresses his **dislike** of going to school. He says that the children spend their days in utter **despair** under the "**cruel eye**" of their teacher. The speaker also compares his plight to a **caged bird**, and a **tender plant** whose life has been plucked away. He also poses several **rhetorical questions** to his parents and society, expressing the **meaningless** life of young students.

According to the speaker, a school is a place where a child's **individuality** and **independence** are snatched away. Schools are often associated with **punishments** and **fear**. As a result, the child's wings of imagination and possibilities are restrained, and he is made to forget his "**youthful spring**". The speaker asks his parents how can summer be enjoyable when there is a lot of **destruction** happening within him. He wonders how a plant can produce **fruit** when the bud and blossoms are plucked away. Likewise, how can a child grow into a talented and successful person if the very **childhood** is stolen away from them? The poem is a call to action against the constraining, cage-like **educational system** and the intolerable **pressure** and **expectations** forced upon the kids by their parents.

~Conclusion~

The poem teaches us that being parents we shall take due care of our children. It is our duty to see that our children are happy, joyful, and free. If we want our generations to be happy and prosperous we need to make their childhood a happy one.

NCERT SOLUTIONS**Questions (Page No. 84)**
(Working with the poem)

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

Answer: The words or phrases in stanza 1 that reflect the child's happiness and joy are "love to rise in a summer morn", "birds sing on every tree", "distant huntsman winds his horn", "the skylark sings with me" and "sweet company".

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

Answer: The words or phrases reflect the changed mood are "it drives all joy away", "a cruel eye outworn" and "in sighing and dismay".

Question 3. 'A cruel eye outworn' (stanza 2) refers to

- a. the classroom which is shabby/noisy.
- b. the lessons which are difficult/uninteresting.
- c. the dull/uninspiring life at school with lots of work and no play.

Mark the answer that you consider right.

Answer:

- c. the dull/uninspiring life at school with lots of work and no play.

Question 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?

- a. Nor can I sit in a roofless classroom when it is raining.
- b. Nor can I learn anything at school though teachers go on lecturing and explaining.
- c. Nor can I sit in the school garden for fear of getting wet in the rain.

Answer:

- b. Nor can I learn anything at school though teachers go on lecturing and explaining.

SHIVOM CLASSES
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