

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 1: THE FUN THEY HAD



THE FUN THEY HAD

~Summary~

-by Isaac Asimov

Diary Entry by Margie

The present story is set in the future when children don't have traditional books and schools. Margie, a little girl in the story, makes a diary entry-'Tommy found a real book'. The entry reveals the date, 21st May 2157, showing that the story is set much into the future. The book was a very old one, just like the one that her grandfather had in his time as a student. Its pages were yellow and she found it funny to read the words that were not moving like that on a computer screen.

Feelings about the Book

When Tommy had the book in his hand, he called it a waste because after one time reading, it could be thrown away. The same feeling was with Margie too. Tommy found that book in the attic of his house and that book was about a school. Margie hated her school and her mechanical teacher a lot. Her teacher was not a living being. He was an image that flashes on her screen in her study room. He gave her test after test in geography, and she was not doing well. Her failure in geography had invited an inspector who tried to trace out the problem. So, her mother had asked the County Inspector to come and find what was wrong.

The Arrival of the County Inspector

The County Inspector was a round little man with a red face. Margie had thought that he would take her mechanical teacher away completely, but it was not so. The Inspector set the teacher right within an hour or so. He told her mother that nothing was wrong with the girl rather the screen was too fast for the girl and therefore Margie was having troubles. Now, it had been slowed down so that, she would be okay with its level.

The Old Kind of School

On reading that book, Tommy had a discussion about the school with Margie. The old kind of schools were a building common to all and with human teachers who would teach all the boys and girls the same thing if they were of the same age.

He gave them tests as well as homework. Margie wanted to know more about those kinds of funny schools, but it was time for her to go to her school. It was time for Tommy too for his school and both of them decided to read the book later.

Margie's Schoolroom

Margie's schoolroom was next to her bedroom, where the mechanical teacher was on and waiting for Margie. Her school was open every day except Saturday and Sunday. Margie's mother believed that girls learn better if they do it regularly. The mechanical teacher (the screen lit up and started) was going to teach lesson on arithmetic. It was about the addition of proper fractions. Margie had no interest in it. Margie had to put yesterday's homework in the proper slot too. The mechanical teacher never forgot to ask for the homework.

Margie being Nostalgic

Margie was sitting in front of her mechanical teacher, but she was thinking of the good old days when the kids had a common time and place to study. She was also thinking of the human teacher that used to teach them. She was thinking of the fun they had at the school.

Conclusion of The Fun They Had

In the chapter – The Fun They Had illustrates how emerging technology is slowly taking precedence over various things around us. In the near future, it wouldn't be surprising to see if human teachers are replaced by mechanical devices or robots.

NCERT SOLUTIONS
Questions (Page No. 10-11)
(Thinking about the Text)

Answer these questions in a few words or a couple of sentences each.

Question 1. How old are Margie and Tommy?

Answer: Margie is eleven and Tommy is thirteen years old.

Question 2. What did Margie write in her diary?

Answer: Margie wrote in her diary "Today Tommy found a real book!"

Question 3. Had Margie ever seen a book before?

Answer: No, Margie had never seen a book before.

Question 4. What things about the book did she find strange?

Answer: The things about the book that she found strange were:

- a. The pages of the book were yellow and crinkly.
- b. The words stood still instead of moving.
- c. When they turned back to the previous page, it still had the same words on it that it had when they first read it.

Question 5. What do you think a telebook is?

Answer: I think the telebook must be a book that gets displayed on the screen of the television.

Question 6. Where was Margie's school? Did she have any classmates?

Answer: Margie's school was next to her bedroom.

No, she did not have any classmates.

Question 7. What subjects did Margie and Tommy learn?

Answer: Margie and Tommy learnt Geography, History and Arithmetic.

Answer the following with reference to the story.

Question 1. "I wouldn't throw it away."

- a. Who says these words?
- b. What does 'it' refer to?
- c. What is it being compared with by the speaker?

Answer:

- a. Tommy says these words.
- b. "It" refers to the books.
- c. The paperback book is being compared with the telebooks by the speaker.

Question 2. "Sure they had a teacher, but it wasn't a regular teacher. It was a man."

- a. Who does 'they' refer to?
- b. What does 'regular' mean here?
- c. What is it contrasted with?

Answer:

- a. "They" refers to the students centuries ago.
- b. "Regular" means the usual for the people in 2157. Here, regular teacher means the mechanical teacher.
- c. The mechanical teacher is contrasted with humans as teachers of earlier times.

Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (about 30 words).

Question 1. What kind of teachers did Margie and Tommy have?

Answer: Margie and Tommy had mechanical teachers. The mechanical teachers had big screens on which all the lessons were shown and questions were asked. The children were taught through computer and television screens. They did not have humans as teachers.

Question 2. Why did Margie's mother send for the County Inspector?

Answer: Margie's mother sent for the County Inspector because the mechanical teacher of Margie was not functioning properly. It kept giving Margie Geography tests and Margie was performing worse every time. Margie's mother was concerned and thus sent for the County Inspector.

Question 3. What did he do?

Answer: The County Inspector smiled at Margie and gave her an apple. He took the mechanical teacher apart from her. Then he fixed the mechanical teacher. He told Margie's mother that the geography sector of the mechanical teacher was geared a little too quick and that he has slowed it up to an average ten-year level.

Question 4. Why was Margie doing badly in geography? What did the County Inspector do to help her?

Answer: Margie was doing badly in geography because the questions that were displayed on the screen of the mechanical teacher were too quick for her age.

The County Inspector slowed its speed to an average ten-year level so that Margie would be able to perform satisfactorily.

Question 5. What had once happened to Tommy's teacher?

Answer: Tommy's teacher had to be taken away altogether for a month as the history sector had blanked out completely.

Question 6. Did Margie have regular days and hours for school? If so, why?

Answer: Yes, Margie had regular days and hours for school because Margie's mother believed that little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours.

Question 7. How does Tommy describe the old kind of school?

Answer: Tommy says that the old kind of school had special buildings. All the kids went to that building for studying.

Question 8. How does he describe the old kind of teachers?

Answer: He tells Margie that the old kind of teachers were humans instead of machines. The human teacher would educate the boys and girls and give them homework and ask questions.

Answer each of these questions in two or three paragraphs (100 –150 words).

Question 1. What are the main features of the mechanical teachers and the schoolrooms that Margie and Tommy have in the story?

Answer: The main features of the mechanical teachers that Margie and Tommy have are:

The mechanical teachers have big black screens on which lessons are displayed and questions are asked. The students need to put their homework and test papers in a slot that is present in the mechanical teacher. The students write answers in punch code and the mechanical teacher calculates the results right away.

The main features of the schoolrooms that Margie and Tommy have are:

In the story, the schools are there in the homes. For instance, Margie's school was right next to her bedroom.

The students do not have classmates. They study subjects like arithmetic, history, geography, etc. The mechanical teacher would turn on at the same time every day except on the weekends.

Question 2. Why did Margie hate school? Why did she think the old kind of school must have been fun?

Answer: Margie hated school because she felt it boring. The mechanical teacher started the class at the same time regularly. Margie's mechanical teacher was giving her test after test on Geography and she was performing badly.

Margie also did not like inserting homework and test papers in the slot on the mechanical teacher.

She thought that the old kind of school must have been fun because it would have had kids from various places of the neighbourhood. It would have been so interesting to sit together in the

classroom and leave the school together at the end of the day. All the kids learned the same things so they could help each other in studies and homework.

Question 3. Do you agree with Margie that schools today are more fun than the school in the story? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer: Yes, I agree with Margie that schools today are more fun than the school in the story. In the story, the schools are in the students' homes. This gives no space for interaction between students. Studying from screen and taking up tests sounds boring. Inserting homework and test papers in a slot on a mechanical teachers every day is monotonous. Writing answers in punch codes is even more draining.

Learning together in a class gives students a wider view of the people. Students also get familiar with others and learn how to interact and socialize. Getting taught by human teachers is way more dynamic than being taught by a machine. If there is any issue with any lesson or concept, the student can ask the human teacher then and there. But, mechanical teachers are programmed with a certain lesson and concept for a particular day. During the time when the student solves homework, he/she can get help from classmates. That's how the schools today are more fun than the school in the story.

Questions (Page No. 11-12) (Thinking about Language)

Adverbs

Read this sentence taken from the story:

They had once taken Tommy's teacher away for nearly a month because the history sector had blanked out completely.

The word complete is an adjective. When you add -ly to it, it becomes an adverb.

Question 1. Find the sentences in the lesson which have the adverbs given in the box below.

awfully sorrowfully completely loftily carefully differently quickly nonchalantly

Answer:

awfully:

They turned the pages, which were yellow and crinkly, and it was awfully funny to read words that stood still instead of moving the way they were supposed to — on a screen, you know.

sorrowfully:

The mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography and she had been doing worse and worse until her mother had shaken her head sorrowfully and sent for the County Inspector.

completely:

They had once taken Tommy's teacher away for nearly a month because the history sector had blanked out completely.

loftily:

He added loftily, pronouncing the word carefully, "Centuries ago".

carefully:

He added loftily, pronouncing the word carefully, "Centuries ago".

differently:

"But my mother says a teacher has to be adjusted to fit the mind of each boy and girl it teaches and that each kid has to be taught differently."

quickly:

"I didn't say I didn't like it," Margie said quickly. She wanted to read about those funny schools.

nonchalantly:

"Maybe," he said nonchalantly.

Question 2. Now use these adverbs to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- a. The report must be read _____ so that performance can be improved.
- b. At the interview, Sameer answered our questions _____, shrugging his shoulders.
- c. We all behave _____ when we are tired or hungry.
- d. The teacher shook her head _____ when Ravi lied to her.
- e. I _____ forgot about it.
- f. When I complimented Revathi on her success, she just smiled _____ and turned away.
- g. The President of the Company is _____ busy and will not be able to meet you.
- h. I finished my work _____ so that I could go out to play.

Answer:

- a. The report must be read **carefully** so that performance can be improved.
- b. At the interview, Sameer answered our questions **loftily**, shrugging his shoulders.
- c. We all behave **differently** when we are tired or hungry.
- d. The teacher shook her head **sorrowfully** when Ravi lied to her.
- e. I **completely** forgot about it.
- f. When I complimented Revathi on her success, she just smiled **nonchalantly** and turned away.
- g. The President of the Company is **awfully** busy and will not be able to meet you.
- h. I finished my work **quickly** so that I could go out to play.

Question 3. Make adverbs from these adjectives.

(i) angry (ii) happy

(iii) merry (iv) sleepy

(v) easy (vi) noisy

(vii) tidy (viii) gloomy

Answer:

(i) angry – angrily (ii) happy – happily

(iii) merry – merrily (iv) sleepy – sleepily

(v) easy – easily (vi) noisy – noisily

(vii) tidy – tidily (viii) gloomy – gloomily

II. If Not and Unless

Complete the following conditional sentences. Use the correct form of the verb.

- If I don't go to Anu's party tonight, _____.
- If you don't telephone the hotel to order food, _____.
- Unless you promise to write back, I _____.
- If she doesn't play any games, _____.
- Unless that little bird flies away quickly, the cat _____.

Answer:

- If I don't go to Anu's party tonight, **she will get irritated.**
- If you don't telephone the hotel to order food, **you will miss your meal.**
- Unless you promise to write back, **I will not write you another letter.**
- If she doesn't play any games, **she will become lazy.**
- Unless that little bird flies away quickly, the cat **will pounce on it and kill it.**

Questions (Page No. 12-13) (Writing)

Question 1. A new revised volume of Issac Asimov's short stories has just been released.

Order one set. Write a letter to the publisher, Mindfame Private Limited, 1632 Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi, requesting that a set be sent to you by Value Payable Post (VPP), and giving your address. Your letter will have the following parts.

- Addresses of the sender and receiver
- The salutation
- The body of the letter
- The closing phrases and signature

Answer:

416, Sector 18

Nagpur, Maharashtra

04/08/2020

Mindfame Private Limited, 1632

Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi

Dear Sir/Madam,

I recently came to know that a new revised volume of Issac Asimov's short stories has been released. This is to request you to send me a set of the same by Value Payable Post (VPP) on my mailing address. I shall be highly obliged.

Yours sincerely,

Adwait Tiwari

Questions (Page No. 14) (Speaking)

Question 1. In groups of four discuss the following topic.

'The Schools of the Future Will Have No Books and No Teachers!'

Your group can decide to speak for or against the motion. After this, each group will select a speaker to present its views to the entire class.

You may find the following phrases useful to present your argument in the debate.

- In my opinion . . .
- I/we fail to understand why . . .
- I wholeheartedly support/oppose the view that . . .
- At the outset let me say . . .
- I'd/we'd like to raise the issue of/argue against . . .
- I should like to draw attention to . . .
- My/our worthy opponent has submitted that . . .
- On the contrary . . .

- I firmly reject . . .

Answer:

For the motion

I would like to put forth my views in favour of the motion “The Schools of the Future Will Have No Books and No Teachers!”

The emergence of digital technologies like computers, laptops, mobile phones, etc. has brought about a lot of changes in the way education is imparted and received. Now itself, we can see how important the electronic gadgets and internet have become. We learn so many things through Google, YouTube and other platforms. The concept of online classes is getting more acknowledgement than ever. The internet speed is improving with time and usage. More and more people are being drawn towards the limitless possibilities of learning online. Gradually, we might see the schools teaching the students online with soft copies of books.

When the robots become a part of our lives, we shall see the time when the schools will have no real books and no human teachers, instead we will have online books and robots as teachers!