

G. N. NATIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

CLASS - XII SUBJECT - ENGLISH (2020-21)

POEM - AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM IN A SLUM

ASSIGNMENT

1. What do you think is the colour of 'sour cream'? Why do you think the poet has used this expression to describe the classroom walls?

Ans. The colour of 'sour cream' is pale yellow. The poet has used this expression to describe the classroom walls to underline neglect. He wants to picturise the condition of the slum children. The dull colour echoes the situation of the children.

2. The walls of the classroom are decorated with the pictures of 'Shakespeare', 'buildings with domes', 'world maps' and 'beautiful valleys'. How do these contrast with the world of these children?

Ans. The walls of the classroom are decorated with the pictures of 'Shakespeare', 'buildings with domes', 'world maps' and 'beautiful valleys'. These contrast with the world of these children as their condition is miserable. These children are ill and exhausted, do not get good education. The buildings with domes are examples of a civilized world, which is unknown to these children. The world map is a bad example because the slum cannot be located by them. These children are deprived of natural beauty.

3. What does the poet want for the children of the slums? How can their lives be made to change?

Ans. The poet Stephen Spender wants a better life for the children of the slums. He wants the officials - the governor, inspector and visitors should take initiative to bring about a real change in their situation.

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He wishes that these children should be given proper education, because education is the key to prosperity.

Extra question

1. What message does Stephen Spender convey through the poem, 'An Elementary School Classroom in a Slum'?

Ans. The poet wants freedom from a life of hunger and misery for the poor children. They should be provided with quality education and be brought out from their ugly surroundings into the comforting lap of nature.

2. How is 'Shakespeare wicked and the map a bad example' for the children of the school in a slum?

Ans. Both represent a beautiful world and high values which the slum children will have never experienced. Since the slum children cannot relate to these things, there was no point in giving such examples.

Multiple Choice Questions

- a) The tall girl with her head weighed down means -
The girl -

Ans. is ill and exhausted

- b) The paper-seeming boy with rat's eyes means -

Ans. thin, hungry and weak.

- c) The stunted, unlucky heir of twisted bones means -
The boy -

Ans. has an inherited disability

- d) His eyes live in a dream. A squirrel's game, in the tree room other than this means -
The boy is -

Ans. distracted from the lesson.

- e) The children's faces are compared to 'rootless weeds'. This means they -
are insecure/wasters