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ENGLISH TEACHER

ENGLISH-BEEHIVE (PROSE SECTION)

CLASS – IX

SESSION- 2020-2021

CHAPTER – 1

THE FUN THEY HAD

- ISAAC ASIMOV

INTRODUCTION

'The Fun They Had' is a science fiction story by an American writer Isaac Asimov. It is set in the year 2155, when children learn individually at home using a mechanical teacher. The writer imagines how the concept of schools in the future would change completely. We can hear such schools knocking at our doors, even today. The smart classrooms, fitted with TV screens, online classes/ courses are just a precursor of what future holds for us.

CHARACTERS OF THE STORY

- **Margie**
A small 11-year old girl, who is one of the main characters in the story. She studies in a modern school. She is not happy with her schooling system and longs for a change. She hates studying and finds it monotonous.
- **Tommy**
Tommy is a boy of thirteen years of age. He is Margie's friend who discovers a real 'book' from the old times. Together, he and Margie learn about old kind of schooling system and they find it more appealing than their modern electronic learning system.
- **Mrs. Jones**
Mrs. Jones is Margie's mother who is strict about Margie's studies.
- **County Inspector**
The computer engineer/ expert who had adjusted Margie's mechanical teacher to her level.
- **Mechanical Teacher**
The electronic teacher of Margie who taught her everything.

VALUE POINTS

- ❖ Margie and Tommy aged 11 and 13 are students of future schools.
- ❖ Tommy finds an old book about school in the attic. They turn yellow, crinkly pages of the book and are surprised to see still words in the book. They were used to only moving words of telebooks.

- ❖ They thought it to be wastage of resources, as it was to be thrown after reading once only. Whereas telebooks last longer and they contain many books together.
 - ❖ Margie hated school as her teacher (a computer) gave her test after and she performed badly in Geography.
 - ❖ She hated the slot for putting homework and test papers.
 - ❖ Margie's mother called county inspector who came with all his equipment and repaired it in an hour.
 - ❖ Margie wasn't happy as she thought he would take the teacher for a few days for repair work and she would have to be off from school.
 - ❖ County Inspector told her mother that Margie's bad performance in Geography was due to faulty setting of her teacher (computer).
 - ❖ As Margie hated school, she thought why anyone would write about school. Tommy explained that centuries ago the school was not like theirs. They had a man as a teacher who taught students different subjects, asked questions and gave Homework also.
 - ❖ Margie couldn't believe a man to be smart enough to have knowledge about different subjects.
 - ❖ Tommy told her that the school was in a special building and students would go there and children of same age group studied same things.
 - ❖ But Margie's mother had told her that every child has to be taught according to individual needs and children studied together in old school.
 - ❖ Now Margie was interested in reading about those old funny schools. But mother called her to attend the school next to her bedroom.
 - ❖ Tommy and Margie attended school at a fixed time from Monday to Friday.
 - ❖ While submitting homework to her 'teacher'. She thought about the old schools where kids had a lot of fun studying together and playing, helping each other in studies, sharing caring for each other.
 - ❖ Computer screen of her 'teacher' was flashing new chapter in arithmetic on the addition of proper fractions. But Margie was lost in the thoughts of old school.
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QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

Q.1. How old are Margie and Tommy ?

Ans. Margie and Tommy are eleven and thirteen years old, respectively.

Q.2. What did Margie write in her diary ?

Ans. On page, headed 17 May 2157, Margie wrote " Today Tommy found a real book!"

Q.3. Had Margie ever seen a book before ?

Ans. Margie had never seen a book before. She had always studied with the help of telebooks.

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

Ans. She found that the words stood still and did not move and disappear as they did in her telebooks. She also found that it had the same content whenever it was opened.

Q.5. What do you think is a telebook is ?

Ans. A telebook is a word made up to indicate a book shown on a television screen rather than printed and bound.

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

Ans. Margie's school was in a room next to her bedroom. She did not have any classmates. She had to study alone, under the guidance of her mechanical teacher, all by herself.

Q.7. What subjects did Margie and Tommy study ?

Ans. Margie and Tommy learnt all the subjects which the children in the past, studied centuries ago. However they had to use punch-code for doing their homework and tests.

Answer the questions in about 30-40 words : (Textual)

Q.1. What kind of teachers did Margie and Tommy had ?

Ans. Margie and Tommy had mechanical teachers. Mechanical teachers were, in fact, computers with a large screen on which words flashed. They were adjusted according to their age levels and learning abilities. They had slots on their computers for inserting their homework and tests. Their submitted work was corrected, within seconds, and feedback provided instantly.

Q.2. Why did Mrs Jones or Margie's mother send for the County Inspector ?

Ans. Margie was not doing well in Geography. Her mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test and rather than showing improvement she had been doing worse and worse. So her mother sent for the County Inspector, who knew how to repair and adjust the mechanical teacher.

Q.3. What did he do ?

Ans. He detected the problem. He found that the Geography sector was geared a little fast for Margie, therefore Margie was doing worse and worse in the tests given by the mechanical teacher. So he slowed it down by adjusting it to the level of an average eleven year old.

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

Ans. Margie was doing badly in geography because the geography sector of her mechanical teacher was geared a little fast for Margie's age. The County Inspector rectified the defect by slowing it down and adjusting it to the level of an average eleven year old.

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

Ans. The History sector of Tommy's teacher had blanked out. The County Inspector could not rectify the malfunctioning, at the site, where the teacher was installed. Therefore, it had to be taken away by the County Inspector and was re-installed, after a month.

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

Ans. Margie had regular days and hours for school. The mechanical teacher was always on at the same time, except Saturday and Sunday. Margie had to study regularly for fixed hours. Her mother was of the opinion that little girls learned better if they studied at regular hours.

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

Ans. Tommy described to Maggie that the old kind of schools were specially designated buildings. Children of the same age group studied together in the same schoolroom. They were taught by men. The men gave homework and tests. They also asked questions. They used real books printed on paper and hardbound. The books, after having read, were of no use and had to be thrown away.

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

Ans. Tommy described the old teachers as men. The teachers did not live in the houses of students they taught. They also did not teach students individually. All the children of the same age group were taught by them together in a schoolroom. The school room was a part of a specifically designated building for teaching children. All the kids learnt the same thing.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

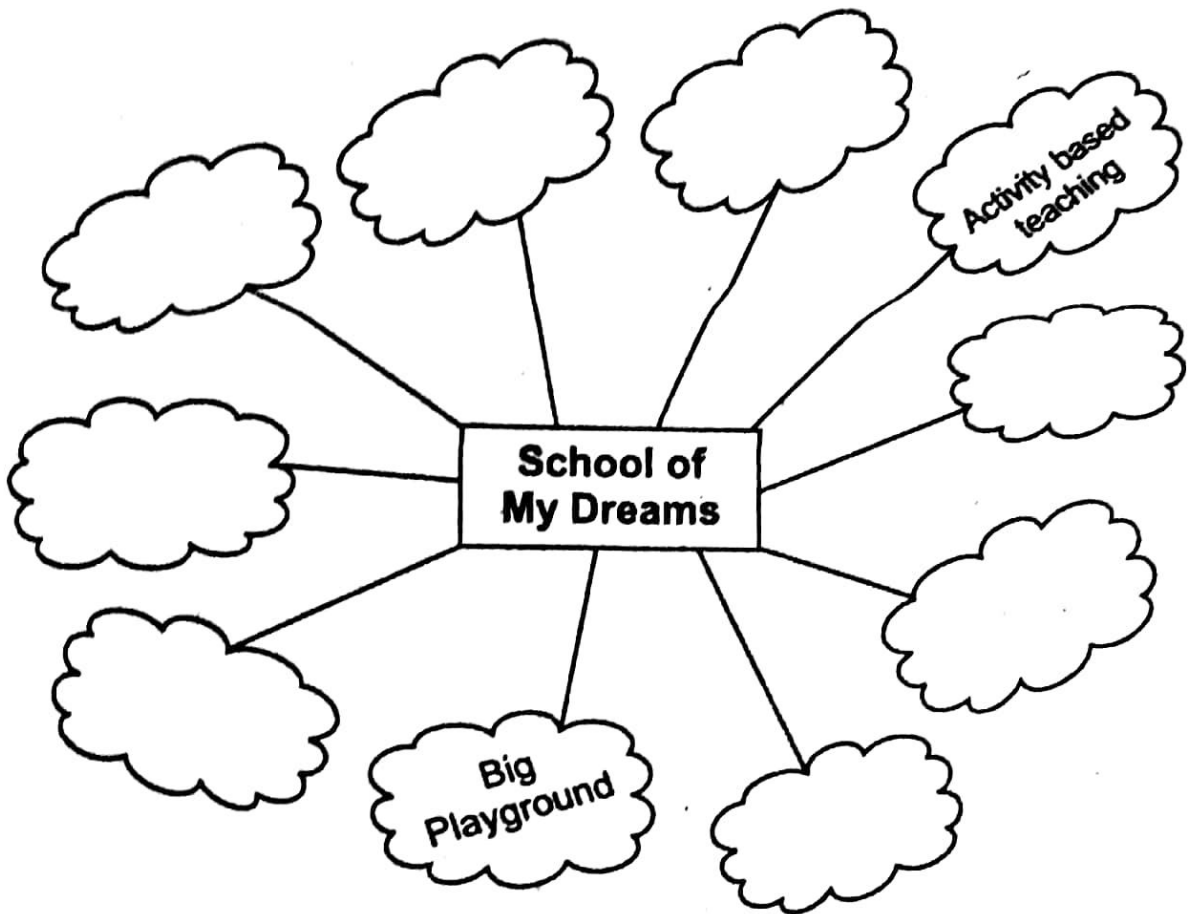
Q.2. Why did Margie hate school ? Why did she think the old school must have been fun ? [Textual]

Ans. Margie hated school because she was taught by a mechanical teacher. She had to study all alone. It was not at all flexible. It never did what she wanted. She had to study each day, at regular hours, except Saturday and Sunday. She could not escape from her mechanical teacher, it being in the room, just next to her bedroom. Under the watchful eyes of her mother she could not miss school, ever.

Her mechanical teacher gave her homework and tests which she had to complete and insert in the slots on the computer. The feedback of her performance was also immediate. Recently her mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test and she had been faring worse and worse.

She found the old schools much more fun than her own schoolroom. The idea of studying with the children of her own age group, the same thing, together in a schoolroom, excited her. All the kids of the neighbourhood coming to school, laughing and shouting in the schoolyard and enjoying themselves was indeed different than being all by oneself. Coming back together from school, with the neighbourhood kids, seemed fun to her. Because all kids were getting the same homework they could have also taken help from each other in their homework and discussed it, too. The whole concept of enjoying school with the other kids seemed fun to Margie.

ACTIVITY



Write about the school of your dreams in the space provided above