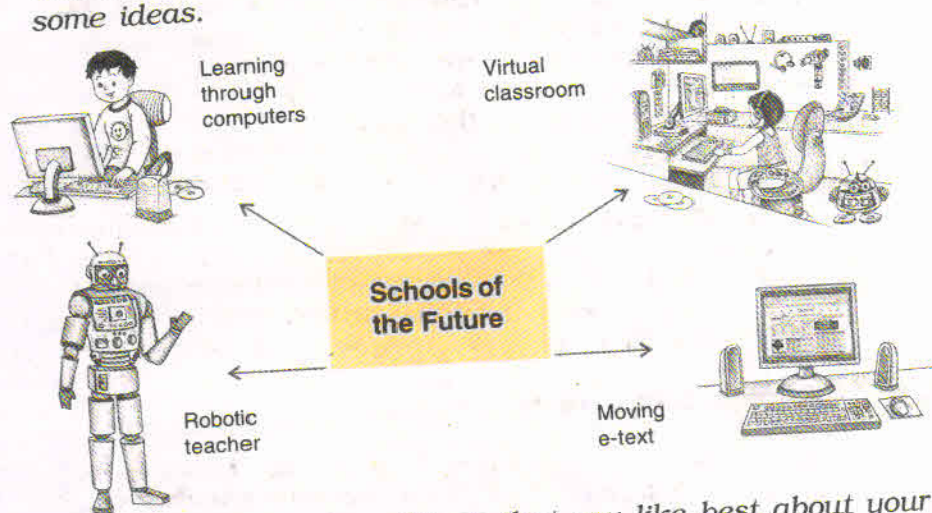


✿ 1. The Fun They Had

BEFORE YOU READ

- The story we shall read is set in the future, when books and schools as we now know them will perhaps not exist. How will children study then? The diagram below may give you some ideas.



- In pairs, discuss three things that you like best about your school and three things about your school that you would like to change. Write them down.
- Have you ever read words on a television (or computer) screen? Can you imagine a time when all books will be on computers, and there will be no books printed on paper? Would you like such books better?

- MARGIE even wrote about it that night in her diary. On the page headed 17 May 2157, she wrote, "Today Tommy found a real book!"

It was a very old book. Margie's grandfather once said that when he was a little boy his grandfather

told him that there was a time when all stories were printed on paper.

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. And then when they turned back to the page before, it had the same words on it that it had had when they read it the first time.

crinkly: with many folds or lines

2. "Gee," said Tommy, "what a waste. When you're through with the book, you just throw it away, I guess. Our television screen must have had a million books on it and it's good for plenty more. I wouldn't throw it away."

"Same with mine," said Margie. She was eleven and hadn't seen as many telebooks as Tommy had. He was thirteen.

She said, "Where did you find it?"

"In my house." He pointed without looking, because he was busy reading. "In the attic."

"What's it about?"

"School."

attic: a space just below the roof, used as a storeroom

3. Margie was scornful. "School? What's there to write about school? I hate school."

scornful: contemptuous; showing you think something is worthless

Margie always hated school, but now she hated it more than ever. 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.

4. He was a round little man with a red face and a whole box of tools with dials and wires. He smiled at Margie and gave her an apple, then took the teacher apart. Margie had hoped he wouldn't know how to put it together again, but he knew how all right, and, after an hour or so, there it was again, large and black and ugly, with a big screen on which all the lessons were shown and the questions were asked. That wasn't so bad. The part Margie hated

most was the slot where she had to put homework and test papers. She always had to write them out in a punch code they made her learn when she was six years old, and the mechanical teacher calculated the marks in no time.

slot: a given space, time or position

5. The Inspector had smiled after he was finished and patted Margie's head. He said to her mother, "It's not the little girl's fault, Mrs Jones. I think the geography sector was geared a little too quick. Those things happen sometimes. I've slowed it up to an average ten-year level. Actually, the overall pattern of her progress is quite satisfactory." And he patted Margie's head again.

geared (to): adjusted to a particular standard or level

Margie was disappointed. She had been hoping they would take the teacher away altogether. They had once taken Tommy's teacher away for nearly a month because the history sector had blanked out completely.

So she said to Tommy, "Why would anyone write about school?"

6. Tommy looked at her with very superior eyes. "Because it's not our kind of school, stupid. This is the old kind of school that they had hundreds and hundreds of years ago." He added loftily, pronouncing the word carefully, "Centuries ago."

loftily: in a superior way

Margie was hurt. "Well, I don't know what kind of school they had all that time ago." She read the book over his shoulder for a while, then said, "Anyway, they had a teacher."



They had a teacher... It was a man.

The Fun They Had / 7

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

"A man? How could a man be a teacher?"

regular: here, normal; of the usual kind

"Well, he just told the boys and girls things and gave them homework and asked them questions."

7. "A man isn't smart enough."
"Sure he is. My father knows as much as my teacher."

"He knows almost as much, I betcha."

betcha (informal): (I) bet you (in fast speech); I'm sure

Margie wasn't prepared to dispute that. She said, "I wouldn't want a strange man in my house to teach me."

dispute: disagree with

Tommy screamed with laughter. "You don't know much, Margie. The teachers didn't live in the house. They had a special building and all the kids went there."

"And all the kids learned the same thing?"

8. "Sure, if they were the same age."
"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."

"Just the same they didn't do it that way then. If you don't like it, you don't have to read the book."

"I didn't say I didn't like it," Margie said quickly. She wanted to read about those funny schools. They weren't even half finished when Margie's mother called, "Margie! School!"

Margie looked up. "Not yet, Mamma."

"Now!" said Mrs Jones. "And it's probably time for Tommy, too."

Margie said to Tommy, "Can I read the book some more with you after school?"

9. "May be," he said nonchalantly. He walked away whistling, the dusty old book tucked beneath his arm.

nonchalantly: not showing much interest or enthusiasm; carelessly

Margie went into the schoolroom. It was right next to her bedroom, and the mechanical teacher was on and waiting for her. It was always on at the same time every day except Saturday and Sunday,



The mechanical teacher was flashing on the screen...

because her mother said little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours.

The screen was lit up, and it said: "Today's arithmetic lesson is on the addition of proper fractions. Please insert yesterday's homework in the proper slot."

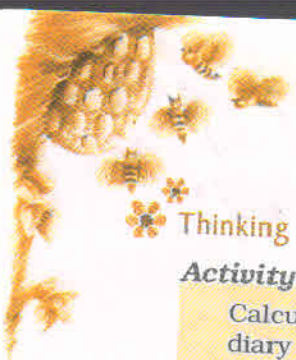
10. Margie did so with a sigh. She was thinking about the old schools they had when her grandfather's grandfather was a little boy. All the kids from the whole neighborhood came, laughing and shouting in the schoolyard, sitting together in the schoolroom, going home together at the end of the day. They learned the same things, so they could help one another with the homework and talk about it.

And the teachers were people...

The mechanical teacher was flashing on the screen: "When we add fractions $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$..."

Margie was thinking about how the kids must have loved it in the old days. She was thinking about the fun they had.

ISAAC ASIMOV



Thinking about the Text

Activity

Calculate how many years and months ahead from now Margie's diary entry is.

- I. Answer these questions in a few words or a couple of sentences each.
 1. How old are Margie and Tommy?
 2. What did Margie write in her diary?
 3. Had Margie ever seen a book before?
 4. What things about the book did she find strange?
 5. What do you think a telebook is?
 6. Where was Margie's school? Did she have any classmates?
 7. What subjects did Margie and Tommy learn?
- II. Answer the following with reference to the story.
 1. "I wouldn't throw it away."
 - (i) Who says these words?
 - (ii) What does 'it' refer to?
 - (iii) What is it being compared with by the speaker?
 2. "Sure *they* had a teacher, but it wasn't a *regular* teacher. It was a man."
 - (i) Who does 'they' refer to?
 - (ii) What does 'regular' mean here?
 - (iii) What is it contrasted with?
- III. Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (about 30 words).
 1. What kind of teachers did Margie and Tommy have?
 2. Why did Margie's mother send for the County Inspector?
 3. What did he do?
 4. Why was Margie doing badly in geography? What did the County Inspector do to help her?
 5. What had once happened to Tommy's teacher?
 6. Did Margie have regular days and hours for school? If so, why?
 7. How does Tommy describe the old kind of school?
 8. How does he describe the old kind of teachers?
- IV. Answer each of these questions in two or three paragraphs (100–150 words).
 1. What are the main features of the mechanical teachers and the schoolrooms that Margie and Tommy have in the story?
 2. Why did Margie hate school? Why did she think the old kind of school must have been fun?

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

* Thinking about Language

I. 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.

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

awfully sorrowfully completely loftily
carefully differently quickly nonchalantly

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

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

Remember:

An adverb **describes action**. You can form adverbs by adding -ly to adjectives.

Spelling Note: When an adjective ends in -y, the y changes to i when you add -ly to form an adverb.

For example: angr-y → angr-i-ly

3. Make adverbs from these adjectives.

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| (i) angry | _____ | (ii) happy | _____ |
| (iii) merry | _____ | (iv) sleepy | _____ |
| (v) easy | _____ | (vi) noisy | _____ |
| (vii) tidy | _____ | (viii) gloomy | _____ |

II. If Not and Unless

- Imagine that Margie's mother told her, "You'll feel awful *if* you *don't finish* your history lesson."
- She could also say: "You'll feel awful *unless* you finish your history lesson."

Unless means *if not*. Sentences with *unless* or *if not* are negative conditional sentences.

Notice that these sentences have two parts. The part that begins with *if not* or *unless* tells us **the condition**. This part has a verb in the present tense (look at the verbs *don't finish*, *finish* in the sentences above).

The other part of the sentence tells us about a **possible result**. It tells us what **will happen** (if something else doesn't happen). The verb in this part of the sentence is in the future tense (you'll *feel*/you *will feel*).

Notice these two tenses again in the following examples.

Future Tense

- There won't be any books left
- You won't learn your lessons
- Tommy will have an accident

unless
if
unless

Present Tense

we preserve them.
you don't study regularly.
he drives more slowly.

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

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

✿✿ Writing

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

Your letter might look like this:

Your address

Date _____ (DD/MM/YY)

The addressee's address

Dear Sir/Madam,

Yours sincerely,

• Your signature

Remember that the language of a formal letter is different from the colloquial style of personal letters. For example, contracted forms such as 'I've' or 'can't' are not used.

Speaking

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 ...

*False science creates atheists; true science
prostrates Man before divinity.*

VOLTAIRE



HOLY TRINITY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Grade: IX ENGLISH

Unit – 1 The Fun They Had (prose)

Q1. Who are Tommy and Margie? How old are they?

(Textual)

Ans. Tommy and Margie are students from the year 2157. They are neighbours and spend time together like children of their age usually do. Tommy is a thirteen-year-old boy and Margie is an eleven-year-old girl.

Q2. What did Margie write in her diary?

(Textual)

Ans. On 17 May 2157 Margie recorded in her diary the discovery of a real book by Tommy. It was a very old paper book with yellow and crinkly pages.

Q3. Where did Tommy find the book and in what condition?

Or

Describe the book that Tommy had found in the attic.

Ans. Tommy found a real book in the attic of his house. The pages had turned yellow and crinkly because it was at least two hundred years old. Moreover, it was all covered with dust as it had been lying in the attic for ages.

Q4. Had Margie ever seen a book before?

(Textual)

Ans. No, Margie had never seen a book before till she saw the one that Tommy had found in the attic of his house. She had only heard about books from her grandfather who himself had not seen any. He too had heard about a printed book from his own grandfather.

Q5. Did Margie like the printed book? Why/Why not?

Ans. Margie was so excited to know that Tommy had found a 'real' book which was unlike the on-screen books the two were used to reading, that she recorded the discovery in her diary. As she turned the yellow and crinkly pages of the book with Tommy, she found it awfully funny to read it. While Tommy found it a waste, Margie was fascinated by it and liked it.

Q6. What things about the book did Margie find strange?

(Textual)

Ans. Margie lived in an era of mechanical education with telebooks stored in a machine. So she found it strange that the words in the printed book remained fixed unlike the moving ones on her television screen.

Q7. "What a waste!" What is Tommy referring to as a 'waste'? Is it really a waste?

Ans. Tommy thinks that the paper books with words printed and fixed on them are a waste. Once a book is read, it becomes useless and must be thrown away because it has the same content. Actually, printed books are not a waste. They can be read by many people over and over again and should be preserved for future generations.

Q8. What do you think a telebook is?

(Textual)

Ans. A telebook is a compact book in an electronic form. It is stored in a computer and can be read by scrolling its pages up, down or sideways on a screen.

Q9. How does Tommy find the telebooks of his own time to be better?

Ans. Tommy felt that his telebooks were better than the printed books of the ancient times because they could be stored on television and read again and again. They occupied very little space as compared to the printed books and need not be discarded once they had been read.

Q10. Where was Margie's school? Did she have any classmates?

(Textual)

Ans. Margie's school was inside the comfort of her house. It was just next to her bedroom. It was a customised school, set up exclusively for her according to her level and needs. No, she did not have any classmates.

Q11. Why had Margie started hating her school?

Ans. Margie never liked school. But recently her hatred had increased because of her poor performance in geography tests. Her mechanical teacher gave her one test after another and her performance went on becoming worse and worse.

Q12. Which part of her school did Margie hate the most?

Or

What did Margie hate the most about her school?

Ans. The part that Margie hated most was the slot where she had to put homework and test papers. She always had to write them in a punch code that she was made to learn at the tender age of six. Besides, the mechanical teacher calculated her marks in no time which left no scope for Margie to relax after submitting the assigned tasks.

Q13. What subjects did Tommy and Margie learn? (Textual)

Ans. Tommy and Margie learnt a lot of subjects like History, Geography and Mathematics.

Q14. What kind of teachers did Margie and Tommy have? (Textual)

Ans. Margie and Tommy had mechanical teachers. They were not real persons but televisions which had different subject sectors. These teachers were customised to the level of a student. In case of malfunction, they were disbanded and repaired.

Q15. Why did Margie's mother send for the County Inspector? (Textual)

Or

Why did Margie's mother shook her head one day and send for the County Inspector?

Ans. Margie's mother sent for the County Inspector because Margie had been performing poorly in Geography. The repeated fall in her daughter's performance disappointed her. So, she decided to call a specialist, the County Inspector, who could locate the problem and correct it.

Q16. What views did Margie's mother have about teachers and learning?

Ans. Margie's mother was very particular about her child's education and made sure that Margie attended her tele-school regularly and studied properly and punctually. She believed that a tele-teacher had to be adjusted to the mind of each student and that each student had to be taught differently. Whenever she noticed a snag in Margie's tele-teacher, she sent for the County Inspector to get the snag removed so that Margie did not miss Out of her school and learning.

Q17. What was the County Inspector trained to do?

Ans. The County Inspector worked as a technical expert. He was trained to identify and rectify errors in the functioning of the system installed in the mechanical teachers.

Q18. What idea do you form of the County Inspector as a person?

Ans. The County Inspector was certainly a kind-hearted man. Instead of finding fault with Margie, he gave her an apple and told her mother that if Margie was not performing well, it was not her fault, but the fault of the mechanical teacher. He aligned the speed of the geography sector keeping in mind the level of the girl. Before leaving, he patted Margie on the head and expressed satisfaction at her performance.

Q19. Why was Margie doing badly in geography? What did the County Inspector do to help her? (Textual)

Ans. Margie was doing badly because the speed of the geography sector had been fixed too fast for her level. The County Inspector slowed down the speed to suit the level of an average ten-

year-old. As Margie was of eleven years, she was comfortable with the new level set by the County Inspector.

Q20. "Margie was disappointed," says the author. Why was she disappointed?

Or

How did the County Inspector disappoint Margie?

Ans. Margie was disappointed because she hated school and hoped that her mechanical teacher would be taken away for repairs as Tommy's teacher was once taken away for a month. But when the County Inspector promptly repaired and reset it at her home itself, she was unhappy.

Q21. What had once happened to Tommy's teacher?

(Textual)

Ans. Once, Tommy's mechanical teacher had developed a fault and its history sector had blanked out absolutely. The teacher had to be taken away for repairs and it had taken a month to put it in order.

Q22. Did Margie have regular days and hours for school? If so, why?

(Textual)

Ans. Yes, Margie had regular days and hours for school. She studied from Monday to Friday at the same time every day. Although her school was a large black television screen installed in her own house, she had to attend it regularly. Her mother thought that young girls learnt things better if they studied them at regular hours.

Q23. How does Tommy describe the old kind of school?

(Textual)

Ans. Tommy describes the old school as a special building where all the children went to study together. The students of the same age-group learnt the same things which were taught by human teachers.

Q24. How does Tommy describe the old kind of teachers?

Ans. Tommy tells Margie that the teachers in olden times were not mechanical but real men. They taught various things to boys and girls, gave them homework and also asked them questions. The teachers went to a special building called the school where they taught the children in the classrooms.

Q25. How did Margie react when Tommy told her that twentieth-century schools had human teachers?

Or

Why did Margie remark, "How could a man be a teacher"?

Ans. Margie made this remark when she heard Tommy mention that children were taught by human teachers in the times gone by. She could not believe the truth of Tommy's comment because she had not seen any human teacher; she was used to studying with the help of her mechanical tele-teacher only. Moreover, she believed that a human teacher could not match the mechanical teacher in intelligence and knowledge.

Q26. Who interrupts Margie and Tommy's conversation? Why?

Ans. Margie and Tommy were lost in unravelling the exciting mystery of the 'real' book that the latter had found in his attic, when Margie's mother interrupted them saying "Margie! School!" and she even suggested to Tommy that it was time for him to attend school, too.

Q27. When Margie went to her school, what did the teacher on the screen teach?

Ans. When Margie went to her school, which was a room next to her bedroom, the mechanical teacher taught an arithmetic lesson on the addition of proper fractions. It taught her how to add the fractions $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$.

Q28. Why couldn't Margie concentrate on the Arithmetic lesson?

Ans. Margie could not concentrate on the arithmetic lesson because her mind was pre-occupied with the thoughts about the school that Tommy had just described her. She was awestruck to

learn that children studied together and were taught by real persons in these old schools. She thought how much fun those students must have had while studying together.

Q29. Why did Margie think that children must have loved to go to school when her grandfather's grandfather was a little boy?

Or

Why did Margie feel that children in old times had fun while studying in school?

Or

why does Margie feel that learning was fun in the schools of the past?

Ans. Margie attends a tele-school, which is just a machine in the room next to her bedroom and she studies alone unlike students of the schools in the bygone times. She feels that learning was more fun in those days because hundreds of children had the opportunity of congregating and studying together with the help of human teachers and printed books. Schools were huge buildings where a lot of activities could be carried out by students in groups. Compared to that, her present school is much too mechanical, boring, monotonous and demanding, and she hates it.

Q30. What was Tommy's opinion about the 'real book'?

Ans. Tommy found the 'real book' a waste as once read you, just throw it away. It did not seem interesting and useful. The words were fixed on it and not any other thing can be printed on it.

Q31. How does Tommy describe the old kind of teachers?

Ans. He says that the old teachers did not live in the house. They had a special building and all the kids went there. They gave homework to students. They were not mechanical teachers, but human beings.

Q32. Who was the Country Inspector? What was his work?

Ans. The country Inspector was the man who repaired the mechanical teacher. He adjusted the level of the teacher as per the child's requirements and intelligence.

Q33. Why was Margie doing worse in geography? What did the County Inspector do to help her?

Ans. Margie had been doing worse in geography because the mechanical teacher was very fast in displaying the questionnaire. The County Inspector adjusted its speed up to an average ten-year level. Thus, the mechanical teacher's speed was controlled appropriately. The County Inspector assured that the overall pattern of Margie's progress was quite satisfactory.

Q34. Did Margie have regular days and hours for school? If so, why?

Ans. Yes, Margie had regular days and hours for school because her mother said little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours.

Q35. Why did Tommy pronounce the word 'centuries ago' carefully?

Ans. Tommy pronounced the word carefully because he wanted to lay stress on the fact that the school was very old and it was quite different from theirs.

Q36. What had once happened to Tommy's teacher?

Ans. Once Tommy's teacher was taken away for about a month because the history sector had blanked out completely.

Q37. What is the 'slot'? Why does Margie hate it?

Ans. 'Slot' was a space in the mechanical teacher where each student is to put his homework and test assignments for marking. Margie hates it the most because she has to work hard to punch code for answering homework.

Q38. Evaluate 'The Fun They Had' as a futuristic story.

Ans. 'The Fun They Had' is a futuristic story. It tells us about the revolutionary changes that will come in the field of education in the 22nd century. Technology will replace the concept of old

schools and printed books. Margie and Tommy are the students of the year 2157. They are taught in their bedrooms serving as virtual classrooms. A mechanical teacher will replace a human teacher. Computers and e-books will replace old printed books.

Q.39. How will the e-books be different from the old books that existed centuries ago?

Ans. The very concept of 'the books' will change in the 22nd century. The e-books will replace old books. The books will not be printed on papers. The words will move on a TV/computer screen. The television screen may have more than a million books on it.

40. What did Margie's mother think about the teacher' and 'the school'?

Ans. Margie's mother thought that every child had a different intelligence and capacity to understand things. The mechanical teacher should be adjusted to fit the mind of each boy and girl it taught. Each kid had to be taught differently. She thought that little girls and boys would learn better if they learned at regular hours at the 'school'.

Q41. Describe the characteristics of the old school? How did it influence Margie?

Ans. The old school had several characteristics — the children went to a big building. The man worked as a teacher and taught the boys and girls. The teacher gave them homework. He also asked them questions. They sat together and studied the same subject. In the old school, children studied and played together. It was quite opposite to the school that has been talked about in the chapter. Margie was very much influenced by the old school. In her class, she was busy thinking about the fun the children had at that time.

Q42. Will future schools be completely devoid of humans and human values? Give a reasoned answer.

Ans. Certainly, a revolutionary change will come in the field of education in future. The mechanical teachers and tele-books will dominate the scene. Every student will be taught by the mechanical teacher according to his or her ability. However, the institution of schools will remain in one form or the other. Human teachers will not disappear altogether. Education will never be completely devoid of humans and human values.

Q43. Why did Tommy and Margie think the old book a wastage of resources?

Ans. Because they found the words in the old book not moving. The pages had turned yellow and crinkly. Moreover, the old book could not last long.

Q44. What difference did Margie's mother find in the old school?

Ans. Margie's mother was of the opinion that children should be taught according to their individual needs. But in the old school, the children of the same age group studied the same things

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS (to be answered in about 100 – 150 words each)

Q1. How did a chance discovery of a paper book leave Margie and Tommy awestruck?

Ans. Margie (9) and Tommy (13) are neighbourhood friends in the year 2157. It is an age of total automation, mechanisation, digitalisation and computerisation. Children do not go to a school building and they are not taught by a human teacher. Instead, their teacher is a tell teacher, a computer like a machine that has millions of books. It can be customised according to the age and learning needs and abilities of individual students. Reading is done on a screen that displays movable text. So, one day when Tommy finds an old, dusty paper book in the attic of his house, he shares the exciting news with his friend Margie and together they are awestruck, for they had hitherto never seen or heard about a book that had no screen but only fixed text on pages that had to be flipped with fingers. As the duo kept reading the book further and further, their excitement kept growing. They were awestruck to discover that ancient schools were huge buildings where hundreds of children studied together with the same syllabus, the same subjects and carried out

the same activities and tasks. They were taught by real human teachers with the help of real books. Margie believes that students those days must have had a lot of fun studying together.

Q2. What are the main features of the mechanical teachers and the schoolrooms that Margie and Tommy have in the story? (Textual)

Ans. Tommy and Margie are young schools going children in the year 2157. Schools and teachers have an entirely different form from the ones in the twentieth century. Margie and Tommy's school is not in a separate special building but in a room in their respective houses where the television or the mechanical teacher is placed. Each student has to sit and study alone with the help of the mechanical teacher. The 'teacher' assigns tests to the students and assesses their progress. The speed of the different subject sectors is fixed according to the age level of each student. There is a special slot in the tele-teacher where students have to insert their homework. If the mechanical teacher develops any fault, there are engineers to repair it. Sometimes the fault may be a major one and it takes longer to repair it, as was the case when Tommy's history teacher developed a snag.

Thus, the mechanical teachers and schoolrooms of Tommy and Margie are fully computerised and are completely different from the present day schools.

Q3. Why did Margie hate school? Why did she think the old kind of school must have been fun? (Textual)

Ans. Margie hated school because it did not have any fun. Her schedule was too regimented and she had to study at a fixed time on all days of the week except Saturdays and Sundays. She did not have any classmates to study with and seek help from. Her mechanical teacher sometimes developed a snag and assigned the tests that were quite difficult for her. Constant failure to perform well in such tests was disappointing for her. There were times when she wanted a break, but the technical advancement of 2157 did not give her a chance. The County Inspector took just a little while to set right the Geography sector of her teacher.

She thought that the old kind of school must have been fun because unlike her school, the ancient schools were in special buildings where the students from the whole neighbourhood came laughing and playing. Students of the same level would be in the same room and were taught by human teachers. The students would sit together in the schoolroom, go home together, learn the same things, help one another with the homework and talk about it. Hence, schools in olden days did not restrain their students but gave them a chance to grow up together.

Q4. Do you agree with Margie that schools today are more fun than the school in the story? Give reasons for your answer. (Textual)

Ans. Margie's school, as described in the story, seems to be a boring place where learning is a mere task. In comparison, schools today are more fun. Students get a chance to come out of their homes and travel to reach school. On their way, they laugh, play and have so much fun. The schoolyard too is a great open place where the students get a chance to interact informally with each other. They get an opportunity to share their experiences and help each other. Their learning schedule is also flexible and gives them enough time to have fun. They have so many extra-curricular activities which teach a lot of skills in a fun-filled way. Their teacher is a real person who makes them sit together and teaches them the same topic. In this way, they learn to adjust and adapt which helps them develop the values of tolerance and cooperation. Hence, Margie's view that schools today are more fun than her school is totally justified.

Q5. Suppose you are Margie. Write a diary entry dated 17th May 2157 about Tommy's real book that he found in his attic.

Ans.

Tuesday,
17th May 2157
p.m.

10.00

Dear Diary

It has been a wonderful day for me as I have seen a real, hard-bound printed paper book. In fact, Tommy found the book in the attic of his house when he was cleaning the cupboard of his grandfather. It consists of about 200 pages which have become yellow and crinkly with time. It is a strange experience to read the words fixed on its papers unlike the ones in my telebooks that keep moving as I scroll.

When I turn the page, I find the same words again. The book is about a school from olden times, about two centuries ago. Can you believe that in those times a school was not a room in one's own house but a special building dedicated to the purpose of teaching and learning! The students of the same level studied the same things sitting together in the same classroom. It is really wonderful to think that the teachers were men and not machines. I really believe that it must have been great fun for children to go to such schools together, laughing, joking, playing, and teasing each other. How wonderful it must have been that the students helped each other with lessons as well! I wish I could travel back in time and study in one of those schools.

Margie

Q6. Why did Margie hate school? Why did she think the old kind of school must have been fun?

Ans. Margie hated school because she had a mechanical teacher. It was at her house. She was supposed to sit in that room alone to complete her home task or assignments. The part Margie hated the most was the slot where she had to put homework and test papers. She thought that the old schools must have been fun because the students used to sit together in the classroom. They enjoyed, laughed and shouted in the schoolyard, going home together at the end of the day. They learned the same things so that they could help one another with homework and talk about it. All the teacher were people. Children needed a company to enhance their skills. If they are isolated, they get depressed and dejected.

Q7. The old schools are considered fun by the modern generation. Explain.

Ans. The ancient schools consisted of Gurukuls in which the students stayed in the building with the guru. Then with the change of time Gurukuls changed into schools. Hence the teacher and the student have a formal relationship. In these schools, teachers are human beings and books are real ones made of paper. Now with times, the modern generation's school replaced by e-text and computers. The future generation would envy when they come to know about the old system of education in which all the kids went to school together. They studied together, played together. They could have better innovative minds as they got a chance to discuss things with each other. The old system of education in which 'man' as a teacher could influence his students by the charisma of his personality. Future generation would utter what fun the schools were long ago.

Q8. Do you agree with Margie that schools today are more fun than the school in the story? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans. There is no doubt that today's schools have more fun than the school discussed in the story. This school has nothing but a mechanical teacher with no emotions and sentiments. It does not have the ability to understand the psychology of a child. Moreover, it guides a pupil according to its adjusted modes. But today's schools work for the overall development of a child. They are given training in leadership, sports, politics and science. They learn how to adapt themselves to

the new surroundings and cope with strangers. The students sit and learn together forgetting their caste, colour and creed. These activities don't give vent to the feelings of depression, alienation and segregation.

Q9. Will the existing schools and teachers become totally irrelevant in future 'school'? Give a reasoned answer.

Ans. Naturally, schools that existed centuries ago will not be the same in the coming centuries. The system of education will be highly computerised and mechanical. The 'school' will have no separate building. Nor will they be taught the same thing together. The mechanical teacher will be a big TV screen, good for a million books. The mechanical teacher will be adjusted according to the age and capacity of the student. But it will be an exaggeration to say that everything about the old schools will disappear. Even the future schools can't be completely devoid of the human angle. Perhaps the institution of the old schools and teachers will remain. Human involvement can't disappear altogether.

Q10. Describe the characteristics of old schools. How did they arouse so much interest in Margie and Tommy?

Ans. The good old students reflected the charm and romance of their times. Every school had its own buildings. Students from different parts of the town went there for studies. All the students in a class were taught the same things. They received the same kinds of homework. Hence, students could help one another. The teachers were real human beings. The books were printed on papers.

There was an air of romance about the old schools. Margie's interest was around about them. She got the relevant information about them from Tommy. In comparison to her mechanical teacher and her 'school', the old schools charmed Margie. She was fascinated by the way children went to their schools. They studied together. They were taught the same things. It was easier for them to help one another. Margie was rather envious of the fun the children had in old schools.

Q11. Can you imagine a school without teachers and books? Give your opinion on the basis of the lesson 'The Fun They Had'.

Ans. No one can deny the role of modern technologies in our lives and in our studies. Nowadays education is changing but schools without teachers and without books are beyond imagination. Without teachers, teaching would not be good because no one would be there to explain and to teach as well. No student would like the environment, it would be like an office. Teachers are very important for education. Teachers not only teach us different subjects but they also teach us to live in discipline and to live together. Teachers resolve the student's problem and doubt and if they aren't in schools the students don't study enough. As in the lesson Margie does not like her school, she finds it tedious as she does not have the opportunity to be with other students and to do every work together. Modern technologies can be taken as an aid to improve the standard of studies but the schools without books and teachers will never be preferred.

Q12. What is the role of a teacher in the life of a student? How is a human teacher better than a mechanical teacher?

Ans. Teachers play a very important role in the life of a student. They not only provide bookish knowledge but also inspire their student to live a meaningful and successful life. They burn themselves like a candle throughout their lives to remove the darkness and ignorance from their student's life. This can be done by a human teacher only. A mechanical teacher can provide ample knowledge on various subjects but he/she can not boost up their student to do something distinguished. There is a single mechanical teacher having various sectors geared up according to

the level of the child. There is no companion, no playground and no fun at all. The teaching is mechanical and monotonous. Thus the human teachers are better than the mechanical teachers in many ways. They know individually intellect of their students which help them to guide them individually according to the mental level of students.