

## Madam Rides the Bus

### Oral Comprehension Check (Page 119)

**Question 1:**

What was Valli's favourite pastime?

**Answer:**

Valli's favourite pastime was standing in the front doorway of her house and watching what was happening in the street outside.

**Question 2:**

What was a source of unending joy for Valli? What was her strongest desire?

**Answer:**

The sight of the bus that travelled between her village and the nearest town, filled with a new set of passengers each time it passed through the street near her house was a source of unending joy for Valli. Her strongest desire was to take a ride on the bus someday.

**Question 3:**

What did Valli find out about the bus journey? How did she find out these details?

**Answer:**

Valli found out that the bus journey to the town from her village was six miles and took forty-five minutes approximately. The fare for a one-way journey cost 30 paise. She listened to the conversations carefully between her neighbours and the people who regularly took the bus trip and asked a few questions to gain some information and small details about the bus journey.

**Question 4:**

What do you think Valli was planning to do?

**Answer:**

Valli was planning to travel on the bus and go to the town and return home on the same bus. She heard the onward journey fare was thirty paise that took forty five minutes approximately to reach the town. In this way, she planned that she would stay in her seat and pay another thirty paise for the return trip. This meant that she could take the one-o'clock afternoon bus, reach the town at 1.45 P.M. and return home by 2.45 P.M.

### Oral Comprehension Check (Page 122)

**Question 1:**

Why does the conductor call Valli 'madam'?

**Answer:**

The conductor called Valli 'madam' because she was behaving like a woman in an audacious and smart manner. She did not accept his help to get into the bus and was very quick in replying to the conductor's

questions. Amused by her antics and behaviour, the conductor teased her by calling her 'madam'.

**Question 2:**

Why does Valli stand up on the seat? What does she see now?

**Answer:**

Valli was enchanted by the view of the beautiful scenery outside the bus and was trying hard to look outside. But her view was blocked by the canvas blind that covered the lower part of the window. In order to catch a better glimpse, she stood up on the seat and peered over the blind. She saw the narrow road as the bus was going along the bank of a canal, palm trees, grassland, distant mountains, green fields and the blue sky. On the other side, there was a deep ditch and many acres of green fields stretched far and wide as much as her eyes could see.

**Question 3:**

What does Valli tell the elderly man when he calls her a child?

**Answer:**

When the elderly man in the bus referred to Valli as a child, she instantly replied that there was nobody in the bus who was a child. She further stated that she had paid her fare of thirty paise like other passengers in the bus.

**Question 4:**

Why didn't Valli want to make friends with the elderly woman?

**Answer:**

Valli was not interested to make friends with the elderly woman because she looked quite repulsive to her. She had big earlobes with bigger holes and wore ugly earrings. Besides, she was also chewing betel nut and her mouth was also filled with betel juice that was likely to spill all over her lips. Seeing all this, Valli thought that the elderly woman was not sociable enough to be friends with.

## Oral Comprehension Check (Page 125)

**Question 1:**

How did Valli save up money for her first journey? Was it easy for her?

**Answer:**

Valli had saved every stray coin meticulously that came her way. She resisted every temptation from buying peppermints, toys, balloons, etc. to save enough money for the bus trip. It had been really difficult for her as she had to control her urges and resisted the temptation to be on the merry-go-round in the village fair. After making a lot of sacrifices, she was able to save sixty paise for her first bus journey.

**Question 2:**

What did Valli see on her way that made her laugh?

**Answer:**

Valli was overjoyed upon seeing a young cow, tail high in the air running very fast right in the middle of the road just in front of the bus. The driver sounded his horn loudly again and again so that the cow moves away from the path. But the more he honked, the cow became more frightened and galloped as fast as possible. Seeing all this, it appeared very funny to Valli and she laughed out loud until tears rolled down her eyes.

**Question 3:**

Why didn't she get off the bus at the bus station?

**Answer:**

Valli's plan was only to take the bus ride and not roam around the town. She had painstakingly accumulated sixty paise for her onward and return bus journey. She knew that she had limited money to travel by bus and would spend thirty paise fare on her onward journey, go to the town and then return by the same bus before her mother woke up from her afternoon nap. She neither had the money to roam around the town, nor had she time to explore it, so she didn't get off the bus at the bus station.

**Question 4:**

Why didn't Valli want to go to the stall and have a drink? What does this tell you about her?

**Answer:**

Valli didn't want to go to the stall as she had saved sixty paise only for the bus journey. She didn't want to waste money on anything unnecessary as she had to return by the same bus at any cost. So, when the conductor suggested her to get down and get a drink for herself, she refused. He also offered to get her a drink in case she doesn't have money, but she still refused. This implies that she was an independent girl who did not want to rely on anyone for her needs.

**Thinking about the Text (Page 127)****Question 1:**

What was Valli's deepest desire? Find the words and phrases in the story that tell you this.

**Answer:**

Valli's deepest desire was to take a ride on the bus that she saw everyday from her house. The words and phrases in the story that depict her desire are 'an overwhelming desire', 'source of unending joy', 'stare wistfully', and 'kindle in her longings, dreams and hopes'.

**Question 2:**

How did Valli plan her bus ride? What did she find out about the bus, and how did she save up the fare?

**Answer:**

Valli had been carefully listening since many days to the conversations between her neighbours and the people who regularly used the bus and asked a few discreet questions. She learnt from them that the town was six miles away from her village and the bus charged thirty paise as fare for the onward journey and it took forty-five minutes to complete one-way bus trip. She also made up her mind to stay in the bus and return in the same bus that would cost her sixty paise to and fro. She was determined not to get down from the bus to roam around the town as she didn't have enough money. Hence, she saved sixty paise meticulously and resisted all kinds of urges and temptation to buy peppermints, toys, etc. and even a ride on the merry-go-round at the village annual fair. It was Valli's secret adventurous bus trip that she had planned without her parents' knowledge.

**Question 3:**

What kind of a person is Valli? To answer this question, pick out the following sentences from the text and fill in the blanks. The words you fill in are the clues to your answer.

(i) "Stop the bus! Stop the bus!" And a tiny hand was raised \_\_\_\_\_.

- (ii) "Yes, I \_\_\_\_\_ go to town," said Valli, still standing outside the bus.
- (iii) "There's nobody here \_\_\_\_\_," she said haughtily. "I've paid my thirty paise like everyone else."
- (iv) "Never mind," she said, "I can \_\_\_\_\_. You don't have to help me. "I'm not a child, I tell you," she said, \_\_\_\_\_."
- (v) "You needn't bother about me. I \_\_\_\_\_," Valli said, turning her face toward the window and staring out.
- (vi) Then she turned to the conductor and said, "Well, sir, I hope \_\_\_\_\_."

**Answer:**

Valli was a confident eight-year-old girl who believed that her age was not a limiting factor for her to travel alone in the bus to the town. She considered herself to be a grown up person and also acted like one.

- (i) "Stop the bus! Stop the bus!" And a tiny hand was raised **commandingly**.
- (ii) "Yes, I **simply have to** go to town," said Valli, still standing outside the bus.
- (iii) "There's nobody here **who's a child**," she said haughtily. "I've paid my thirty paise like everyone else."
- (iv) "Never mind," she said, "I can **get on by myself**. You don't have to help me. "I'm not a child, I tell you," she said, **irritably**.
- (v) "You needn't bother about me. **I can take care of myself**," Valli said, turning her face toward the window and staring out.
- (vi) Then she turned to the conductor and said, "Well, sir, I hope **to see you again**."

**Question 4:**

Why does the conductor refer to Valli as 'madam'?

**Answer:**

The conductor called Valli 'madam' as she behaved like a grown up woman and responded irritably on being referred to as a child. She was an eight-year-old girl and considered herself old enough to travel alone in the bus. Besides, she also refused his help when he extended his hand to help her get into the bus, she replied commandingly that she could manage getting into the bus on her own.

**Question 5:**

Find the lines in the text which tell you that Valli was enjoying her ride on the bus.

**Answer:**

Valli thoroughly enjoyed her bus ride to the town. The following lines from the text are a proof that exhibit her excitement:

- (i) "Valli devoured everything with her eyes."
- (ii) "The bus was now going along the bank of a canal. The road was very narrow. On one side there was the canal and, beyond it, palm trees, grassland, distant mountains, and the blue, blue sky. On the other side was a deep ditch and then acres and acres of green fields — green, green, green, as far as the eye could see."
- (iii) "Oh, it was all so wonderful!"
- (iv) "Everyone laughed, and gradually Valli too joined in the laughter."
- (v) "Suddenly Valli clapped her hands with glee. A young cow, tail high in the air, was running very fast, right in the middle of the road, right in front of the bus."
- (vi) "Somehow this was very funny to Valli. She laughed and laughed until there were tears in her eyes."
- (vii) "Valli wasn't bored in the slightest and greeted everything with the same excitement she'd felt the first time."

**Question 6:**

Why does Valli refuse to look out of the window on her way back?

**Answer:**

Valli refused to look out of the window on her way back to her village because she was upset on seeing the dead body of the cow that was running towards the bus while she was going to town. The poor animal was hit by some fast-moving vehicle on the road. She was overcome with sadness and extremely frightened to look outside the bus window as the memory of the cow was haunting her.

**Question 7:**

What does Valli mean when she says, "I was just agreeing with what you said about things happening without our knowledge."

**Answer:**

When Valli's mother casually mentioned that there are certain things that happen around them without their knowledge, Valli instantly agreed to her mother's words and said, "I was just agreeing with what you said about things happening without our knowledge." She was happy about her adventurous bus trip to the town which she had taken without the knowledge of her parents.

**Question 8:**

The author describes the things that Valli sees from an eight-year-old's point of view. Can you find evidence from the text for this statement?

**Answer:**

Yes, the author had described various things from an eight-year-old's point of view. Some of these include — 'she was fascinated by the bus' and 'watching the bus fill with a new set of people each time was a source of unending joy for her'. The author described the colour and look of the new bus as 'its outside painted a gleaming white with some green stripes along the sides. Inside, the overhead bars shone like silver.' Through this description, the author wanted to express how a child would be attracted towards the colour of the bus. 'The seats were soft and luxurious'. This description implies that the author wanted to show the excitement of a child to travel in the luxury of a bus for the first time. 'The blue sky' and 'acres and acres of green field', show the zeal and enthusiasm of a child. Further, when Valli sees the cow running in front of the bus, this fascinated her too whereas the sight of a dead cow brought tears in her eyes. The memory of the cow haunted her and she refused to look outside the window on her return journey. These

were some of the lines which beautifully described the typical reactions and behaviour of an eight-year-old child in an ideal manner.

### Speaking (Page 127)

**Question 1:**

This story has a lot of people talking in it. The conductor jokes and laughs with Valli, some passengers try to show their concern for her, and her mother and her aunt spend time chatting.

Read the conversations carefully. Then think of similar people, or similar situations that you have experienced. Mimic a person or persons who spoke to you, saying what they said, along with your replies.

**Answer:**

Activity to be done by yourself.

(Note: Students can write this answer as per their personal experiences.)

### Writing (Page 128)

Write a page — about three paragraphs — on one of the following topics.

**Question 1:**

Have you ever planned something entirely on your own, without taking grownups into your confidence? What did you plan, and how? Did you carry out your plan?

**Answer:**

Activity to be done by yourself.

(Note: Students can write this answer as per their personal experiences.)

**Question 2:**

Have you made a journey that was unforgettable in some way? What made it memorable?

**Answer:**

Activity to be done by yourself.

(Note: Students can write this answer as per their personal experiences.)

**Question 3:**

Are you concerned about traffic and road safety? What are your concerns? How would you make road travel safer and more enjoyable?

**Answer:**

Activity to be done by yourself.

(Note: Students can write this answer as per their own understanding.)

## The Tale of Custard the Dragon

### Thinking about the Poem (Page 132)

**Question 1:**

Who are the characters in this poem? List them with their pet names.

**Answer:**

The characters in this poem are Belinda, a little girl and her pets: a little black kitten, a little grey mouse, a little yellow dog, a little pet dragon and a pirate.

The names of the pets are listed below:

Character	Pet Name
Kitten	Ink
Mouse	Blink
Dog	Mustard
Dragon	Custard

**Question 2:**

Why did Custard cry for a nice safe cage? Why is the dragon called “cowardly dragon”?

**Answer:**

Custard cried for a nice safe cage because it was a coward and used to get scared easily. It is called a “cowardly dragon” because everyone in the house was very brave. Belinda was as brave as a barrel full of bears, Ink and Blink could chase lions down the stairs, Mustard was as brave as a raging tiger, but Custard always cried for a nice safe cage as it feared a lot and wanted to stay safe from any danger.

**Question 3:**

“Belinda tickled him, she tickled him unmerciful...” Why?

**Answer:**

Belinda tickled Custard, the dragon unmercifully because it was always very scared and cried for a nice safe cage. She rubbed her fingers creating a tingling sensation that would disturb the dragon and everyone would laugh at its cowardice.

**Question 4:**

The poet has employed many poetic devices in the poem. For example: “Clashed his tail like iron in a dungeon” — the poetic device here is a simile. Can you, with your partner, list some more such poetic devices used in the poem?

**Answer:**

The poet has extensively used similes across the poem. One such simile was “mouth like a fireplace”. Also he has repetitively used the word ‘little’ in the first stanza to emphasize that everything in Belinda’s house including her pets were little in size. In the seventh stanza, the poet used an incorrect spelling as a poetic device such as ‘winda’ instead of ‘window’ that rhymes with Belinda’s name in the previous line. Furthermore, the poet has also used alliteration in the tenth stanza in the sentences “Clashed his tail” and “With a clatter and a clank”. In the eleventh stanza, the poet used the terms, “The pirate gaped” and “gulped some grog” as some of the poetic devices in the poem.

**Question 5:**

Read stanza three again to know how the poet describes the appearance of the dragon.

**Answer:**

The poet describes the appearance of the dragon, Custard as one which had big sharp teeth and spikes on top of its body and scales underneath. Its mouth was like a fireplace with a chimney-like nose and sharp dagger-like toes.

**Question 6:**

Can you find out the rhyme scheme of two or three stanzas of the poem?

**Answer:**

The rhyme scheme of two or three stanzas of the poem is ‘aabb’.

**Question 7:**

Writers use words to give us a picture or image without actually saying what they mean. Can you trace some images used in the poem?

**Answer:**

Writers often use words and phrases that do not exactly convey a meaning but they are indicative of their related meanings. Such words or phrases are basically used to trigger our imagination into thinking and visualizing them like a painting with a hidden meaning. The poet has used some images in the poem such as: ‘mouth like a fireplace’, ‘chimney for a nose’, ‘brave as a barrel full of bears’, ‘brave as a tiger in a rage’, ‘went at the pirate like a robin at a worm’, etc.

**Question 8:**

Do you find The Tale of Custard the Dragon to be a serious or a light-hearted poem? Give reasons to support your answer.

**Answer:**

‘The Tale of Custard the Dragon’ is a very light-hearted and funny poem which was written in such a way so that everyone enjoys it. The poem was composed with a fixed rhyme scheme that makes it interesting and enjoyable to read. The poet has also used wrong spelling ‘winda’ instead of ‘window’ to maintain the rhyme scheme with ‘Belinda’ in the seventh stanza. The poet also described the features of Belinda and her pets in a humorous manner. He compared Belinda’s bravery to a barrel full of bears, her kitten, Ink and mouse, Blink to be so brave that they could scare a lion down the stairs and her dog, Mustard was brave enough like a raging tiger. On the contrary, her dragon Custard was the only one who has been projected to be a coward who looks for a cage for itself and was made fun of often by others for its cowardice. However, when the pirate attacked the little house and everyone was scared, it was the same ‘cowardly’ dragon who saved everyone and jumped snorting like an engine on the pirate. It clashed its tail



and charged towards the pirate like a robin at a worm and ate him. Although everyone made fun of the little dragon, it proved to be the bravest of all. Hence, the poem is dramatically ironic which is funny and reflects the fun and humorous side of the poet.

**Question 9:**

This poem, in ballad form, tells a story. Have you come across any such modern song or lyric that tells a story? If you know one, tell it to the class. Collect such songs as a project.

**Answer:**

Activity to be done by yourself.

**Writing (Page 132)****Question 1:**

Have fun writing your ballad. Gather information (choose/decide an idea/theme), organise your materials under characters and story and then write. Revise and edit your ballad to make it entertaining. Use the following guidelines to write your ballad.

- Purpose of writing the ballad: to entertain and interest
- To whom I am writing: decide for whom you are writing
- How should I structure features? :
  - Tell a simple narrative
  - A few major characters
  - A strong rhythm and rhyme
  - May have a refrain (single or two line(s) repeated often)
  - Divide into verses

**Answer:**

Activity to be done by yourself.