

The Hundred Dresses - I

Oral Comprehension Check (Page 65)

Question 1:

Where in the classroom does Wanda sit and why?

Answer:

Wanda Petronski used to sit in the seat next to the last seat in the last row in Room Thirteen. She sat in the corner of the room where the rough boys who did not get good marks sat. She was a poor and shy girl and sat at that place because her feet were usually caked with dry mud. She did not want to be laughed at for her appearance by others, so she preferred to sit alone in the corner.

Question 2:

Where does Wanda live? What kind of a place do you think it is?

Answer:

Wanda used to live in Boggins Heights. That place was very far away from her school and it was muddy all around, which indicated that there were no proper roads in that place and poor people usually lived there.

Question 3:

When and why do Peggy and Maddie notice Wanda's absence?

Answer:

Wanda was absent from school on Monday and Tuesday, but nobody noticed her absence as she had no friends in the class. Peggy and Maddie noticed Wanda's absence on Wednesday as they were waiting to make fun of her after school hours. They waited for a long time, but she was nowhere to be seen.

Question 4:

What do you think "to have fun with her" means?

Answer:

"To have fun with her" means to ridicule her or make fun of Wanda's imperfections. She was a shy and quiet girl, and her classmates would often taunt her for her name and appearance. She was a source of amusement for them as she had claimed that she had a hundred dresses and sixty pairs of shoes in her closet.

Oral Comprehension Check (Page 67)

Question 1:

In what way was Wanda different from the other children?

Answer:

Wanda Petronski was a Polish girl whose parents had shifted to America from Poland. She was a source of amusement because of her name, which her classmates had never heard before. They found it difficult to pronounce as Americans did not have such names. Hence, she was treated differently by her classmates.

She came to school all by herself, and her feet were always caked with mud. She had no friends in the class. She preferred to sit in isolation as she feared being ridiculed by others. She had only one faded blue dress, but she claimed to have a hundred dresses and sixty pairs of shoes when asked by Peggy and Maddie. These are some of the reasons which set her apart from other children.

Question 2:

Did Wanda have a hundred dresses? Why do you think she said she did?

Answer:

Wanda was teased every single day by her classmates after school hours. She used to wear a faded blue dress to school regularly. They used to make fun of her dress, appearance and her name. Hearing all the teasing and taunting every day, she got fed up and claimed to have a hundred dresses and sixty pairs of shoes in her closet, but nobody believed her.

Generally speaking, Wanda was a strong and determined girl for whom the number of dresses were not the main concern, but the inner talent that mattered the most.

Question 3:

Why is Maddie embarrassed by the questions Peggy asks Wanda? Is she also like Wanda, or is she different?

Answer:

Maddie was embarrassed by the questions Peggy asked Wanda because she was poor herself and empathized with Wanda's mental condition. She also wore somebody else's clothes that were handed down to her. She came from a poor family too and understood Wanda's state of mind. She could feel for Wanda but was not sorry for Wanda for the hundred dresses she claimed to have. Meanwhile, she also wished Peggy would stop teasing Wanda for her looks and name.

Oral Comprehension Check (Page 70)**Question 1:**

Why didn't Maddie ask Peggy to stop teasing Wanda? What was she afraid of?

Answer:

Maddie didn't ask Peggy to stop teasing Wanda because Peggy was her best friend and the most popular girl in the school. Maddie thought that Peggy was a nice girl, but she treated Wanda differently. Otherwise, she had a helpful nature. Although she wanted Peggy to stop teasing Wanda, she didn't ask her to do so as she feared that if she objected, she would be Peggy's next target of mockery.

Question 2:

Who did Maddie think would win the drawing contest? Why?

Answer:

Maddie always had a strong belief that Peggy would win the drawing contest as she was good at drawing and was loved by everyone in school. She was well-known and had made a good impression on her teachers and classmates. She was so good at drawing that she could copy a picture in a magazine or draw any celebrity's face easily. Considering all this, Maddie felt that Peggy definitely had a very good chance of winning the drawing and colouring contest among the girls.

Question 3:

Who won the drawing contest? What had the winner drawn?

Answer:

Among the boys, Jack Beggles won the contest for his design for an outboard motor that was on exhibition in Room Twelve. Among the girls, Wanda Petronski won the drawing contest by drawing a hundred

sketches of beautiful dresses, which were all very colourful and beautiful. Miss Mason mentioned that each of the paintings was capable of winning the contest individually. Wanda had drawn all the hundred dresses she claimed to have had when asked by her classmates. Everybody was awestruck and impressed at her talent and applauded her.

Thinking about the Text (Page 70)

Question 1:

How is Wanda seen as different by the other girls? How do they treat her?

Answer:

Wanda Petronski was a Polish girl who had settled with her parents in America. She lived in Boggins Heights where there were no proper roads. She came to school from a far-off place and wore the same faded blue dress every day, and her feet were always covered with mud. Her classmates often made fun of her name as it was difficult to pronounce, and different from other American names. Her appearance was also not proper, owing to which her classmates made fun of her and teased her after school hours. Being repeatedly teased for her attire broke the limits of her endurance, and she claimed to have had a hundred dresses and sixty pairs of shoes in her closet.

Question 2:

How does Wanda feel about the dresses game? Why does she say that she has a hundred dresses?

Answer:

Wanda was a shy and quiet girl who used to feel embarrassed about her appearance but always remained silent in class. She never talked to anyone and sat in the corner of the room with rough boys so that nobody would notice her. She was always snickered at by other girls but never complained about it. To avoid their constant taunts and humiliation, Wanda claimed that she had a hundred dresses and sixty pairs of shoes in her closet. Later on, she drew sketches of all the hundred dresses on paper for the drawing competition and won the first prize among girls for her talent.

Question 3:

Why does Maddie stand by and not do anything? How is she different from Peggy? (Was Peggy's friendship important to Maddie? Why? Which lines in the text tell you this?)

Answer:

Peggy was the most popular girl in the class, and she was Maddie's best friend. Although Maddie was poor, Peggy never teased her as she did with Wanda because Maddie believed that Wanda was being taunted for her claim of having a hundred dresses. Maddie was afraid of losing Peggy's friendship. Hence she always supported her. She did not dare annoy Peggy and always preferred to remain silent while the latter teased Wanda. The line, "Peggy was the best-liked girl in the whole room. Peggy could not possibly do anything that was really wrong", illustrates that Maddie always stood by Peggy.

Question 4:

What does Miss Mason think of Wanda's drawings? What do the children think of them? How do you know?

Answer:

Miss Mason was very impressed with Wanda's drawings. She felt that each dress was drawn beautifully and was worthy to win the contest individually. The children were also impressed by Wanda's drawing skills as they all applauded her and the boys who didn't understand much about dresses also whistled in appreciation when she won the drawing contest among the girls.

Thinking about Language (Page 71-72)**Question I:**

Look at these sentences

(a) She sat in the corner of the room where the rough boys *who did not make good marks* sat, the corner of the room *where there was most scuffling of feet*, ...

(b) The time *when they thought about Wanda* was outside of school hours ...

These italicised clauses help us to identify a set of boys, a place, and a time. They are answers to the questions 'What kind of rough boys?' 'Which corner did she sit in?' and 'What particular time outside of school hours?' They are 'defining' or 'restrictive' relative clauses. (Compare them with the 'nondefining' relative clauses discussed in Unit 1.)

Combine the following to make sentences like those above.

1. This is the bus (what kind of bus?). It goes to *Agra*. (use *which* or *that*)
2. I would like to buy (a) shirt (which shirt?). (*The*) shirt is in the shop window. (use *which* or *that*)
3. You must break your fast at a *particular time* (when?). You see the moon in the sky. (use *when*)
4. Find a word (what kind of word?). *It begins with the letter Z*. (use *which* or *that*)
5. Now find a person (what kind of person). *His or her name begins with the letter Z*. (use *whose*)
6. Then go to a place (what place?). *There are no people whose name begins with Z in that place*. (use *where*)

Answer:

1. This is the bus *that* goes to *Agra*.
2. I would like to buy a shirt *that* is in the shop window.
3. You must break your fast at a particular time *when* you see the moon in the sky.
4. Find a word *that* begins with letter *Z*.
5. Now find a person *whose* name begins with letter *Z*.
6. Then go to a place *where* there are no people whose name begins with letter *Z*.

Question II:**The Narrative Voice**

This story is in the 'third person'. That is, the narrator is not a participant in the story. But the narrator often seems to tell the story from the point of view of one of the characters in the story. For example, look at the italicized words in this sentence

Thank goodness, she did not live up on Boggins Heights or have a funny name.

Whose thoughts do the words 'Thank goodness' express? Maddie's, who is grateful that although she is poor, she is yet not as poor as Wanda, or as 'different'. (So she does not get teased; she is thankful about that.)

1. Here are two other sentences from the story. Can you say whose point of view the italicised words express?

(i) But on Wednesday, Peggy and Maddie, *who sat down front with other children who got good marks and who didn't track in a whole lot of mud*, did notice that Wanda wasn't there.

(ii) Wanda Petronski. *Most of the children in Room Thirteen didn't have names like that. They had names easy to say, like Thomas, Smith or Allen.*

2. Can you find other such sentences in the story? You can do this after you read the second part of the story as well.

Answer:

1. (i) The italicised words in the given sentence express the point of view of Peggy and Maddie.

(ii) The italicised words in the given sentence express the point of view of the narrator about the names of other children in Wanda's class.

2. Activity to be done by yourself.

Question III:

Look at this sentence. The italicised adverb expresses an opinion or point of view.

Obviously, the only dress Wanda had was the blue one she wore every day. (This was obvious to the speaker.)

Other such adverbs are *apparently, evidently, surprisingly, possibly, hopefully, incredibly, luckily*. Use these words appropriately in the blanks in the sentences below. (You may use a word more than once, and more than one word may be appropriate for a given blank.)

1. _____, he finished his work on time.
2. _____, it will not rain on the day of the match.
3. _____, he had been stealing money from his employer.
4. Television is _____ to blame for the increase in violence in society.
5. The children will _____ learn from their mistakes.
6. I can't _____ lend you that much money.
7. The thief had _____ been watching the house for many days.
8. The thief _____ escaped by bribing the jailor.
9. _____, no one had suggested this before.
10. The water was _____ hot.

Answer:

1. **Surprisingly**, he finished his work on time.
2. **Hopefully**, it will not rain on the day of the match.
3. **Possibly**, he had been stealing money from his employer.
4. Television is **evidently** to blame for the increase in violence in society.
5. The children will **hopefully** learn from their mistakes.
6. I can't **possibly** lend you that much money.

7. The thief had **apparently** been watching the house for many days.
8. The thief **luckily** escaped by bribing the jailor.
9. **Surprisingly**, no one had suggested this before.
10. The water was **incredibly** hot.

