# Mega Study Guide - English Core (Class XII)

## Flamingo (Class XII CBSE – Prose & Poetry)

- *The Last Lesson* Alphonse Daudet
- Lost Spring Anees Jung
- *Deep Water* William Douglas
- Indigo Louis Fischer
- Poem: My Mother at Sixty-Six Kamala Das
- Poem: Keeping Quiet Pablo Neruda
- Poem: A Thing of Beauty John Keats
- Poem: Aunt Jennifer's Tigers Adrienne Rich

## Vistas (Class XII CBSE – Supplementary Reader)

- *The Third Level* Jack Finney
- *The Tiger King* Kalki (Ramaswamy Krishnamurthy)
- *The Enemy* Pearl S. Buck
- Journey to the End of the Earth Tishani Doshi
- The Rattrap Selma Lagerlöf

# Writing Skills

- Notice Writing
- Invitation Writing (formal/informal, accepting/declining)

# Mega Study Guide - Section-Wise

# Section A – Flamingo Prose

- 1. The Last Lesson Alphonse Daudet
- 2. **Lost Spring** Anees Jung
- 3. **Deep Water** William Douglas
- 4. Indigo Louis Fischer

## Section B – Flamingo Poetry

- 1. **My Mother at Sixty-Six** Kamala Das
- 2. **Keeping Quiet** Pablo Neruda
- 3. **A Thing of Beauty** John Keats
- 4. Aunt Jennifer's Tigers Adrienne Rich

#### **Section C – Vistas (Supplementary Reader)**

- 1. **The Third Level** Jack Finney
- 2. **The Tiger King** Kalki
- 3. The Enemy Pearl S. Buck
- 4. **Journey to the End of the Earth** Tishani Doshi
- 5. The Rattrap Selma Lagerlöf

## **Section D – Writing Skills**

- Notice Writing (Format + Solved Examples)
- Invitation Writing (Formal / Informal, Acceptance & Decline)

#### For Each Lesson / Poem

- ✓ Introduction & Author Background
- ✓ Detailed Summary
- ✓ Themes & Messages
- ✓ Character Sketches (for prose) / Poetic Devices (for poetry)
- ✓ Reference to Context (Extract Q&A)
- ✓ Short Answer Qs (3–4 marks)
- ✓ Long Answer Qs (6 marks)
- ✓ MCQs (Factual, Conceptual, Assertion–Reason, Vocabulary)

# The Last Lesson – Alphonse Daudet

#### 1. Introduction & Author Background

Alphonse Daudet (1840–1897) was a French novelist and short-story writer. He often captured the struggles of ordinary people with warmth and sympathy. *The Last Lesson* reflects the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871), when Alsace and Lorraine were annexed by Germany, and French was replaced with German in schools.

#### 2. Detailed Summary

The story is narrated by **Franz**, a schoolboy who is often careless about his studies. On the day of the lesson, he is reluctant to go to school because he hasn't prepared his French grammar. Surprisingly, his usually strict teacher, **M. Hamel**, speaks gently and announces that this will be their **last French lesson**, as orders have come from Berlin that only German will be taught in Alsace and Lorraine schools.

The villagers, realizing the loss of their language, attend the class to show respect. M. Hamel speaks of the importance of mother tongue as a key to freedom and identity. He blames the people for neglecting their language and encourages Franz to value it. In his final moments, unable to speak due to emotion, M. Hamel writes on the blackboard:

"Vive La France!" (Long live France).

# 3. Themes & Messages

- Loss of Language and Identity Language is tied to cultural identity. Losing it means losing freedom.
- Patriotism and Love for Mother Tongue Respecting and preserving one's language is an act of patriotism.
- **Neglect of Education** The villagers regret ignoring education until it is too late.
- **Duty and Devotion** M. Hamel's dedication as a teacher shows the value of sincerity.

#### 4. Character Sketches

- Franz A young boy, careless at first, but deeply moved by the value of his language. He symbolizes the awakening of responsibility.
- **M.** Hamel A strict but dedicated teacher, who loves French and laments its loss. Represents discipline, duty, and patriotism.
- **Villagers** Symbolize regret, realization, and unity in valuing their language.

#### 5. Literary Devices

- **Irony** Franz, who never liked French, suddenly realizes its importance when it is too late.
- **Symbolism** The blackboard writing "Vive La France!" symbolizes national pride.
- **Personification** Language is treated as a living identity of the people.
- **Imagery** The calm classroom, pigeons cooing, and villagers sitting silently create a vivid atmosphere.

#### 6. Reference to Context (RTC) Questions

#### Extract 1:

"My children, this is the last lesson I shall give you. The order has come from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine."

- Q1. Who is the speaker?
- Q2. Why was this the last lesson?
- Q3. What emotions does this statement reflect?

#### Extract 2:

"Vive La France!"

- Q1. Where was this written?
- Q2. What does it symbolize?
- Q3. Why couldn't the teacher speak these words aloud?

## 7. Short Answer Questions (30–40 words)

- 1. Why was Franz reluctant to go to school?
- 2. What changes did Franz notice in the school that day?
- 3. How did M. Hamel describe the importance of the French language?
- 4. Why were the villagers present in the classroom?
- 5. What lesson did Franz learn that day?

## 8. Long Answer Questions (120–150 words)

- 1. Describe the feelings of M. Hamel and the villagers on the last day of the French lesson.
- 2. "When a people are enslaved, as long as they hold fast to their language, it is as if they had the key to their prison." Discuss with reference to the story.
- 3. Franz says, "I never listened so carefully, and never before had I understood how everything was explained so well." Explain the significance of this statement.

- 1. Who is the narrator of the story *The Last Lesson*?
  - a) M. Hamel
  - b) Franz
  - c) A villager
  - d) The Prussian soldier
- 2. Which war forms the background of the story?
  - a) World War I
  - b) World War II
  - c) Franco-Prussian War
  - d) Crimean War
- 3. What did the villagers symbolize by sitting quietly in the classroom?
  - a) Respect for their teacher and language
  - b) Anger against Prussians
  - c) Desire for rebellion
  - d) Support for German rule
- 4. What did M. Hamel write on the blackboard at the end?
  - a) Adieu!
  - b) Vive La France!
  - c) Long Live Germany!
  - d) Education is Power
- 5. What is the central message of the story?
  - a) Learn foreign languages
  - b) Respect and preserve your mother tongue
  - c) Teachers should be strict
  - d) Wars bring progress

# Lesson 2 – Lost Spring – Anees Jung

#### 1. Introduction & Author Background

Anees Jung is an Indian author and journalist, best known for her works highlighting social injustice, poverty, and child labour. In *Lost Spring: Stories of Stolen Childhood*, she exposes the harsh realities faced by children who are denied the joys of childhood because of poverty and exploitation.

#### 2. Detailed Summary

The lesson consists of two narratives:

- 1. "Sometimes I find a rupee in the garbage" This part is about Saheb, a ragpicker in Seemapuri, Delhi. Saheb, whose name ironically means "Lord of the Universe," once lived in Dhaka but migrated due to poverty and floods. He dreams of going to school, but poverty forces him to pick garbage. Eventually, he works at a tea stall, losing his carefree independence.
- 2. "I want to drive a car" This part describes the life of Mukesh, who lives in Firozabad, famous for its bangle-making industry. Generations of his family are trapped in poverty, working in glass-blowing furnaces. Children like Mukesh suffer health problems and bonded labour. Yet Mukesh shows determination to become a motor mechanic, symbolizing hope.

## 3. Themes & Messages

- **Poverty and Exploitation** Children are forced into labour instead of education.
- Lost Childhood Innocence and dreams are destroyed by harsh realities.
- **Social Injustice** Generational poverty and government neglect trap children.
- **Hope and Resilience** Despite hardships, children like Mukesh dream of a better life.

#### 4. Character Sketches

- Saheb A ragpicker, innocent yet burdened by poverty. His lost freedom when working at a tea stall symbolizes the crushing of dreams.
- **Mukesh** A boy from Firozabad's bangle industry, strong-willed and hopeful, determined to break free.
- Villagers of Seemapuri & Firozabad Represent collective misery caused by poverty, exploitation, and lack of government support.

#### 5. Literary Devices

- **Irony** Saheb's name ("Lord of the Universe") contrasts with his poverty.
- **Symbolism** Garbage symbolizes survival; bangles symbolize tradition and also a trap of poverty.
- **Imagery** Seemapuri's squalor and Firozabad's dark furnaces create vivid visuals.
- Metaphor "Lost Spring" symbolizes lost childhood and opportunities.

#### 6. Reference to Context (RTC)

#### Extract 1:

"Garbage to them is gold."

- Q1. Who are "them"?
- Q2. Why is garbage compared to gold?
- Q3. What does this reflect about their lives?

#### Extract 2:

"It is his karam, his destiny, to work like his father."

- Q1. Who is being referred to here?
- Q2. How is destiny linked to their poverty?
- Q3. What social evil does this highlight?

#### 7. Short Answer Questions

- 1. Why had Saheb's family migrated from Dhaka to Seemapuri?
- 2. How is Mukesh different from others in his community?
- 3. What are the conditions of ragpickers in Seemapuri?
- 4. What health hazards do bangle workers face?
- 5. Explain the title *Lost Spring*.

#### 8. Long Answer Questions

- 1. Describe the miserable plight of the children in Seemapuri and Firozabad.
- 2. "Saheb is no longer his own master." Explain with reference to the story.
- 3. How does Anees Jung use irony and symbolism to convey her message in *Lost Spring*?

- 1. Saheb originally belonged to:
  - a) Seemapuri
  - b) Firozabad
  - c) Dhaka
  - d) Delhi
- 2. What work did Saheb take up after ragpicking?
  - a) Shoe-polishing
  - b) Working at a tea stall
  - c) Driving a rickshaw
  - d) Selling newspapers
- 3. What is Firozabad famous for?
  - a) Pottery
  - b) Weaving
  - c) Bangles
  - d) Leatherwork

- 4. What does "Lost Spring" symbolize?
  - a) Seasonal change
  - b) Lost childhood and dreams
  - c) Migration problems
  - d) Changing climate
- 5. What is Mukesh's dream?
  - a) To become a teacher
  - b) To own a bangle shop
  - c) To become a motor mechanic
  - d) To go abroad

# Lesson 3 – Deep Water – William Douglas

#### 1. Introduction & Author Background

William O. Douglas (1898–1980) was an American jurist and Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. His autobiographical story *Deep Water* describes his childhood fear of water and how he overcame it through determination.

## 2. Detailed Summary

As a child, Douglas developed a fear of water after two traumatic incidents:

- 1. At age three, he was knocked down by waves at a beach.
- 2. At age ten or eleven, a bully threw him into the deep end of a swimming pool. He almost drowned but was saved.

This fear haunted him for years, depriving him of the joy of swimming, fishing, and boating. Later, he hired a swimming instructor who trained him step by step. Even after training, occasional fear lingered, but Douglas challenged it by swimming alone in lakes and rivers until he conquered it completely.

#### 3. Themes & Messages

- **Conquering Fear** Fear is deep-rooted but can be defeated by willpower.
- Courage and Determination Persistence helps overcome obstacles.
- Freedom Liberation from fear opens the path to enjoying life fully.

#### 4. Character Sketch

- **Douglas (Narrator)** Determined, persistent, and courageous. He symbolizes human strength against psychological barriers.
- The Bully at YMCA Pool Represents cruelty and indifference.
- **The Instructor** Patient and methodical, guiding Douglas toward freedom.

## 5. Literary Devices

- **Imagery** Vivid description of drowning experiences.
- **Personification** Fear is personified as a force gripping him.
- Symbolism Water symbolizes both danger and later freedom.
- Contrast Between helpless childhood fear and triumphant adulthood.

#### 6. Reference to Context (RTC)

#### Extract 1:

"In the midst of the terror came a touch of reason."

- Q1. What terror is being referred to?
- Q2. What was the "touch of reason"?
- Q3. Did it help the narrator?

#### Extract 2:

"In death there is peace. There is terror only in the fear of death."

- Q1. Who is the speaker?
- Q2. What realization comes here?
- Q3. What universal truth does it express?

# 7. Short Answer Questions

- 1. What incidents led Douglas to fear water?
- 2. How did the instructor help him overcome his fear?
- 3. Why did Douglas say, "All we have to fear is fear itself"?
- 4. What was the final test of Douglas's courage?
- 5. How does the story inspire readers?

## 8. Long Answer Questions

- 1. Describe how William Douglas overcame his childhood fear of water.
- 2. "Fear itself is the greatest enemy." Explain with reference to *Deep Water*.
- 3. How does *Deep Water* show the value of perseverance?

- 1. Where did Douglas have his first fearful incident with water?
  - a) YMCA pool
  - b) Yakima River
  - c) Beach in California
  - d) Lake Wentworth
- 2. Who threw Douglas into the swimming pool?
  - a) His friend
  - b) A bully
  - c) Instructor
  - d) Stranger
- 3. What lesson does the story convey?
  - a) Avoid swimming
  - b) Overcome fear through courage
  - c) Never trust strangers
  - d) Learn survival tricks
- 4. Who helped Douglas to overcome his fear?
  - a) His father
  - b) A swimming instructor
  - c) His friend
  - d) Nobody
- 5. What does water symbolize in the story?
  - a) Death only
  - b) Fear and freedom
  - c) Childhood games
  - d) Nature's fury

# Lesson 4 - Indigo - Louis Fischer

#### 1. Introduction & Author Background

Louis Fischer (1896–1970) was an American journalist and writer, known for his political works and biographies. His essay *Indigo* highlights Gandhi's leadership during the Champaran Movement (1917), which marked the beginning of India's struggle for freedom through non-violence.

#### 2. Detailed Summary

In Champaran, Bihar, peasants were forced by British landlords to grow indigo on 15% of their land and sell it cheaply. This exploitation led to poverty. Gandhi visited Champaran after being requested by Rajkumar Shukla, a peasant.

Despite opposition, Gandhi investigated and mobilized peasants. He defied government orders to leave, leading to a court case, which was later dropped due to public support. Finally, landlords were compelled to return 25% of compensation to peasants.

This movement not only ended indigo exploitation but also marked Gandhi's first step in India's freedom struggle, emphasizing **Satyagraha** (non-violent resistance).

## 3. Themes & Messages

- Truth and Non-violence Power of peaceful protest.
- **Colonial Exploitation** Oppression of Indian peasants.
- Courage and Leadership Gandhi's moral authority.
- Unity of People Collective action brings justice.

#### 4. Character Sketches

- Mahatma Gandhi Fearless leader, firm believer in truth and non-violence.
- Rajkumar Shukla Determined peasant, instrumental in bringing Gandhi.

- **British Landlords** Symbol of exploitation.
- **Peasants of Champaran** Victims of injustice but empowered by Gandhi's leadership.

### 5. Literary Devices

- **Symbolism** Indigo represents exploitation.
- **Irony** Oppressors forced to bow before non-violence.
- Imagery Scenes of poverty and court trial.
- Allusion Reference to historical Champaran Movement.

#### 6. Reference to Context (RTC)

#### Extract 1:

"The real relief for them is to be free from fear."

- Q1. Who are "them"?
- Q2. How is fear connected to exploitation?
- Q3. Who brought them relief?

#### Extract 2:

"The battle of Champaran is won."

- Q1. Who said this?
- Q2. What "battle" is referred to?
- Q3. What victory did it symbolize?

## 7. Short Answer Questions

- 1. Who was Rajkumar Shukla?
- 2. What were the conditions of peasants in Champaran?
- 3. Why did Gandhi refuse to obey the government's order to leave Champaran?

- 4. How did Gandhi win the case against British landlords?
- 5. Why is Champaran considered the beginning of India's freedom struggle?

### 8. Long Answer Questions

- 1. Describe the exploitation of peasants by British landlords in Champaran.
- 2. How did Gandhi use truth and non-violence to bring justice in Champaran?
- 3. "Champaran was the beginning of Indian independence." Explain.

- 1. Who persuaded Gandhi to visit Champaran?
  - a) Jawaharlal Nehru
  - b) Rajkumar Shukla
  - c) Sardar Patel
  - d) Subhash Bose
- 2. What percentage of land had to be sown with indigo?
  - a) 10%
  - b) 15%
  - c) 20%
  - d) 25%
- 3. What was the outcome of the Champaran Movement?
  - a) Complete removal of indigo farming
  - b) Landlords returned 25% compensation
  - c) British left India
  - d) Gandhi was imprisoned
- 4. What method did Gandhi use to fight injustice?
  - a) Violence
  - b) Court petitions
  - c) Satyagraha (non-violence)
  - d) Boycotts only

- 5. What did Gandhi realize was the peasants' greatest need?
  - a) Education
  - b) Wealth
  - c) Freedom from fear
  - d) Land ownership

# Poem 1 – My Mother at Sixty-Six – Kamala Das

### 1. Introduction & Poet Background

Kamala Das (1934–2009), also known as Madhavikutty, was an Indian poet who wrote in both English and Malayalam. Her poetry is deeply personal, often exploring themes of love, loss, aging, and relationships. *My Mother at Sixty-Six* expresses her fear of losing her aged mother and the universal theme of separation.

## 2. Detailed Summary

While driving to Cochin airport, the poet notices her mother dozing with an open mouth, pale and frail like a corpse. The sight fills her with fear of losing her. To escape this thought, she looks outside at young trees sprinting and children playing, which symbolize energy and life.

At the airport, she feels the same childhood fear of separation but smiles and says goodbye, trying to mask her pain. The smile symbolizes her courage and acceptance of mortality.

## 3. Themes & Messages

- Aging and Mortality Inevitability of death.
- Fear of Separation Emotional pain of parting from loved ones.
- Contrast of Life and Death Vibrant children vs. frail mother.
- Acceptance and Courage Smiling despite inner pain.

#### 4. Poetic Devices

- **Simile** "Her face ashen like that of a corpse."
- **Imagery** Pale mother, sprinting trees, children playing.
- Contrast Old age vs. youth.
- Symbolism Smile represents courage, trees/children symbolize life.

## 5. Reference to Context (RTC)

#### Extract 1:

"...her face ashen like that of a corpse..."

- Q1. Whose face is described here?
- Q2. What does it symbolize?
- Q3. How does it affect the poet?

#### Extract 2:

"But all I said was, see you soon, Amma, all I did was smile and smile and smile."

- Q1. Why does the poet repeat "smile"?
- Q2. What does the smile hide?
- Q3. What universal truth is reflected?

#### 6. Short Answer Questions

- 1. How does the poet describe her mother in the car?
- 2. What thoughts distract her at first?
- 3. What did the sight of children and trees symbolize?
- 4. Why does the poet smile repeatedly at the end?
- 5. What fear does the poet confess?

## 7. Long Answer Questions

- 1. How does Kamala Das contrast life and death in the poem?
- 2. Discuss the role of imagery and symbolism in conveying the theme of separation.
- 3. How does the poem express a daughter's universal fear?

- 1. Where was the poet going when she observed her mother?
  - a) Delhi
  - b) Cochin airport
  - c) Mumbai
  - d) Chennai
- 2. What does "ashen like a corpse" signify?
  - a) Weakness of old age
  - b) Natural sleep
  - c) Happiness
  - d) Illness only
- 3. What do "young trees sprinting" symbolize?
  - a) Nature's beauty
  - b) Energy and youth
  - c) Death approaching
  - d) Airport scene
- 4. Why did the poet smile repeatedly?
  - a) To hide her pain
  - b) Out of happiness
  - c) To reassure her mother
  - d) Both a & c
- 5. The central theme of the poem is:
  - a) Love of nature
  - b) Fear of aging and separation
  - c) Childhood memories
  - d) Joyful journeys

# Poem 2 – Keeping Quiet – Pablo Neruda

#### 1. Introduction & Poet Background

Pablo Neruda (1904–1973) was a Chilean poet, diplomat, and Nobel Prize winner (1971). His poetry reflects human emotions, social justice, and peace. *Keeping Quiet* advocates silence, stillness, and self-reflection as a way to achieve peace and harmony.

#### 2. Detailed Summary

The poet asks people to count to twelve and keep still, without speaking or moving. Silence will bring unity, peace, and a chance to reflect on ourselves. He urges us to stop wars, fishing, and destructive activities temporarily, to realize the value of life.

The poem does not advocate total inactivity but meaningful silence, which will help us understand each other better and live in harmony.

## 3. Themes & Messages

- **Peace and Brotherhood** Silence promotes understanding.
- Introspection Self-reflection helps correct mistakes.
- Harmony with Nature Avoid destruction of earth.
- **Life vs. Death** Silence as renewal, not inactivity.

#### 4. Poetic Devices

- Alliteration "Sudden strangeness."
- **Imagery** Fishermen pausing, wars ceasing.
- **Symbolism** "Counting to twelve" symbolizes universal unity.
- Paradox Stillness as renewal, not death.

## **5. Reference to Context (RTC)**

#### Extract 1:

"Now we will count to twelve and we will all keep still."

- Q1. What does "twelve" symbolize?
- Q2. What is the effect of keeping still?
- Q3. What is the poet's intention?

#### Extract 2:

"It would be an exotic moment without rush, without engines..."

- Q1. What moment is described?
- Q2. What is meant by "without rush"?
- Q3. How would the moment be "exotic"?

#### 6. Short Answer Questions

- 1. What does the poet want people to do by "keeping quiet"?
- 2. Why does he use the number twelve?
- 3. What will fishermen and salt gatherers do during silence?
- 4. What is the difference between stillness and total inactivity?
- 5. How can silence help humanity?

# 7. Long Answer Questions

- 1. How does Pablo Neruda link silence with peace and self-realization?
- 2. Discuss the significance of "counting to twelve" as a universal symbol.
- 3. How is *Keeping Quiet* a call for global brotherhood?

- 1. Who is the poet of *Keeping Quiet*?
  - a) Kamala Das
  - b) John Keats
  - c) Pablo Neruda
  - d) Adrienne Rich
- 2. What does "keeping quiet" mean here?
  - a) Laziness
  - b) Stillness and reflection
  - c) Silence before war
  - d) Sleep
- 3. What would fishermen do in silence?
  - a) Catch fish
  - b) Rest and not harm whales
  - c) Sing
  - d) Trade
- 4. What does the poet warn against?
  - a) Engines and rush
  - b) Total inactivity and death
  - c) Laziness
  - d) War only
- 5. What is the central idea of the poem?
  - a) Need for rest
  - b) Importance of peace and harmony
  - c) Memories of childhood
  - d) Joy of festivals

# Poem 3 – A Thing of Beauty – John Keats

### 1. Introduction & Poet Background

John Keats (1795–1821), an English Romantic poet, is famous for his sensuous imagery and celebration of beauty in nature. In *A Thing of Beauty* (from *Endymion*), he expresses that beauty is eternal and provides solace against suffering.

#### 2. Detailed Summary

Keats states that a beautiful thing brings joy forever and never fades. Beauty provides peace, removes sadness, and nourishes the soul. He lists natural beauties like the sun, moon, trees, flowers, rivers, and hills. He also praises heroic tales and art as eternal sources of inspiration.

Beauty is like a never-ending fountain of happiness bestowed by God, which refreshes humanity.

## 3. Themes & Messages

- **Eternal Nature of Beauty** Beauty never dies.
- Solace in Suffering Beauty helps us endure life's hardships.
- Power of Nature and Art They nourish the human spirit.
- **Spiritual Joy** Beauty is divine and eternal.

#### 4. Poetic Devices

- Metaphor Beauty as a "bower quiet for us."
- Imagery Nature's elements described vividly.
- Alliteration "Some shape of beauty moves away the pall."
- Symbolism Fountain symbolizes eternal joy.

## 5. Reference to Context (RTC)

#### Extract 1:

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever..."

- Q1. What is the significance of this line?
- Q2. How does beauty affect us?
- Q3. Why is it called "forever"?

#### Extract 2:

"Therefore are we wreathing a flowery band to bind us to the earth."

- Q1. What is the "flowery band"?
- Q2. How does beauty connect us to earth?
- Q3. What feeling does it evoke?

#### 6. Short Answer Questions

- 1. How does beauty provide shelter to man?
- 2. What kind of beauty does Keats refer to?
- 3. Which natural objects are mentioned as beautiful?
- 4. How does beauty help us face difficulties?
- 5. What is meant by the "endless fountain of immortal drink"?

# 7. Long Answer Questions

- 1. Explain the significance of beauty as described in Keats' poem.
- 2. How does A Thing of Beauty reflect Romantic ideals?
- 3. How is beauty both a physical and spiritual force?

- 1. Who wrote *A Thing of Beauty*?
  - a) John Keats
  - b) Pablo Neruda
  - c) Kamala Das
  - d) William Wordsworth
- 2. What is beauty compared to?
  - a) Money
  - b) Fountain of joy
  - c) Strength
  - d) Palace
- 3. What does beauty remove from life?
  - a) Pain and suffering
  - b) Knowledge
  - c) Responsibility
  - d) Death
- 4. Which of the following is NOT mentioned in the poem?
  - a) Sun and moon
  - b) Trees and daffodils
  - c) Rivers and flowers
  - d) Castles and kings
- 5. What does "immortal drink" symbolize?
  - a) Wine
  - b) Eternal joy given by God
  - c) Youth
  - d) River water

## Poem 4 – Aunt Jennifer's Tigers – Adrienne Rich

### 1. Introduction & Poet Background

Adrienne Rich (1929–2012) was an American poet and feminist. Her works often explore women's struggles in patriarchal societies. *Aunt Jennifer's Tigers* portrays a woman's oppressed life and her artistic expression through embroidery.

#### 2. Detailed Summary

Aunt Jennifer embroiders tigers that are fearless, bright, and free, unlike her own life, burdened by marital oppression (symbolized by "massive weight of uncle's wedding band"). While Aunt Jennifer lives in fear and submission, her tigers continue to symbolize freedom and strength, even after her death.

#### 3. Themes & Messages

- **Gender Inequality** Women oppressed in marriage.
- Art as Freedom Creativity expresses hidden desires.
- Contrast Aunt's timid life vs. fearless tigers.
- Immortality of Art Art outlives human suffering.

#### 4. Poetic Devices

- **Symbolism** Tigers symbolize freedom and courage.
- **Imagery** Tigers prancing with confidence.
- **Metaphor** "Wedding band" symbolizes oppression.
- Contrast Aunt's weakness vs. tiger's strength.

## 5. Reference to Context (RTC)

#### Extract 1:

"Aunt Jennifer's tigers prance across a screen, bright topaz denizens of a world of green."

- Q1. What are Aunt Jennifer's tigers like?
- Q2. What do they symbolize?
- Q3. How are they different from Aunt Jennifer?

#### Extract 2:

"The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand."

- Q1. What does the "wedding band" symbolize?
- Q2. How does it affect Aunt Jennifer?
- Q3. What does this reveal about her marriage?

#### 6. Short Answer Questions

- 1. Describe Aunt Jennifer's tigers.
- 2. What is the "wedding band" a metaphor for?
- 3. How does Aunt Jennifer find escape from her fears?
- 4. What contrast is shown between Aunt Jennifer and her tigers?
- 5. How does the poem end?

# 7. Long Answer Questions

- 1. Discuss the feminist concerns in Adrienne Rich's Aunt Jennifer's Tigers.
- 2. How does the poem show the immortality of art?
- 3. Explain how symbolism is used to contrast oppression and freedom.

- 1. Who is the poet of Aunt Jennifer's Tigers?
  - a) Adrienne Rich
  - b) Kamala Das
  - c) Sylvia Plath
  - d) Emily Dickinson
- 2. What do the tigers symbolize?
  - a) Strength and freedom
  - b) Domesticity
  - c) Marriage
  - d) Death
- 3. What does the "wedding band" symbolize?
  - a) Love
  - b) Oppression and burden of marriage
  - c) Fashion
  - d) Wealth
- 4. What is Aunt Jennifer's art form?
  - a) Painting
  - b) Embroidery
  - c) Sculpture
  - d) Music
- 5. What will remain fearless even after Aunt Jennifer's death?
  - a) Her uncle
  - b) Her art (tigers)
  - c) Her children
  - d) Her jewelry

# Lesson 1 – The Third Level – Jack Finney

#### 1. Introduction & Author Background

Jack Finney (1911–1995) was an American writer of science fiction and fantasy. His works often explored time travel and alternate realities. *The Third Level* reflects escapism, blending reality with imagination, and the human desire to find peace in a troubled world.

#### 2. Detailed Summary

The story is narrated by **Charley**, a 31-year-old man who discovers a mysterious **third level** at New York's Grand Central Station. Unlike the usual two levels, this third level transports him to the year **1894**.

Charley longs to escape modern life full of insecurity and stress, especially after World War II. At the third level, he sees people dressed in 19th-century fashion, hears old-style music, and observes steam engines. He plans to buy tickets to Galesburg, Illinois — a peaceful, old-world town.

Charley's psychiatrist friend **Sam** dismisses it as a hallucination born from stress. Later, Sam disappears, and a letter is found from Galesburg (1894), suggesting that the third level might indeed be real.

## 3. Themes & Messages

- **Escapism** Desire to flee from modern stress to a simpler past.
- **Reality vs. Imagination** Thin line between illusion and truth.
- Longing for Peace Nostalgia for a world without war and fear.
- **Human Psychology** Our subconscious creates escapes in times of stress.

#### 4. Character Sketches

- Charley A common man seeking peace; imaginative and nostalgic.
- Sam (Psychiatrist) Rational, skeptical, but ironically disappears into the past.
- Louisa (Charley's wife) Represents domestic stability and reality.

## 5. Literary Devices

- Irony Sam, who dismisses the third level, ends up in 1894.
- **Imagery** Vivid description of Grand Central Station.
- Symbolism The third level symbolizes escape from modern anxieties.
- **Fantasy** Blending reality with imagination.

#### 6. Reference to Context (RTC)

#### Extract 1:

"Yes, I've taken the obvious step: I talked to a psychiatrist friend of mine."

- Q1. Who is the speaker?
- Q2. Why did he consult a psychiatrist?
- Q3. What explanation did the psychiatrist give?

#### Extract 2:

"The note was signed Sam."

- Q1. What note is referred to?
- Q2. What was unusual about the note?
- Q3. What does this suggest about Sam?

## 7. Short Answer Questions

- 1. Why did Charley want to escape to Galesburg?
- 2. How did Charley describe the third level?
- 3. What explanation did Sam give about Charley's discovery?

- 4. Why was the discovery of Sam's letter significant?
- 5. How does the story mix fantasy with reality?

## 8. Long Answer Questions

- 1. Discuss the theme of escapism in *The Third Level*.
- 2. How does Jack Finney blur the boundaries of reality and imagination?
- 3. What does the ending of the story suggest about Sam and Charley's belief in the third level?

- 1. Who is the narrator of *The Third Level*?
  - a) Sam
  - b) Louisa
  - c) Charley
  - d) The station master
- 2. What year did Charley reach at the third level?
  - a) 1884
  - b) 1894
  - c) 1944
  - d) 1950
- 3. Where did Charley want to go from the third level?
  - a) Chicago
  - b) Galesburg, Illinois
  - c) Boston
  - d) Washington
- 4. What did Sam say about Charley's discovery?
  - a) A dream
  - b) A temporary escape
  - c) A hallucination due to stress
  - d) A magical experience
- 5. What is the central idea of the story?
  - a) Value of wealth
  - b) Escapism from modern life

- c) Power of technology
- d) Importance of history

# Lesson 2 – The Tiger King – Kalki (Ramaswamy Krishnamurthy)

#### 1. Introduction & Author Background

Kalki (1899–1954) was a Tamil writer, journalist, and freedom fighter. His story *The Tiger King* is a satire on the arrogance of power, blind faith in astrology, and man's exploitation of nature.

## 2. Detailed Summary

The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram, nicknamed the **Tiger King**, was predicted at birth to die by a tiger. Determined to defy fate, he killed ninety-nine tigers.

To complete his count, he even married a princess to hunt in her kingdom. When he failed to find the hundredth tiger, his men arranged a weak tiger for him. The bullet missed, but his men killed it secretly to avoid his wrath.

Ironically, later, the Maharaja dies not from a tiger but from an infection caused by a **wooden toy tiger's splinter**. Thus, the prophecy is fulfilled.

## 3. Themes & Messages

- Fate vs. Free Will No one can escape destiny.
- Satire on Kingship Arrogance and misuse of power.
- Irony of Life Attempts to escape death lead directly to it.
- **Ecological Message** Reckless killing of animals for pride.

#### 4. Character Sketches

- **The Tiger King** Proud, arrogant, but also foolish; symbol of human vanity.
- Royal Astrologer Represents blind superstition.
- **Dewan** A sycophant, manipulative courtier.
- Maharaja's wife Practical, used as a means to achieve his target.

## 5. Literary Devices

- **Irony** Killed 99 tigers but died of a toy tiger.
- **Satire** Criticism of rulers' arrogance and obsession.
- Foreshadowing Astrologer's prophecy.
- **Humour** Exaggerated royal behavior.

## 6. Reference to Context (RTC)

#### Extract 1:

"The astrologer said, the child born will one day have to meet its death."

- Q1. Who is the child?
- Q2. How does this prophecy shape the story?
- Q3. Was the prediction correct?

#### Extract 2:

"The bullet had missed its mark."

- Q1. Which bullet is referred to?
- Q2. What happened to the tiger?
- Q3. How did this incident prove ironic later?

## 7. Short Answer Questions

- 1. Why was the king called "Tiger King"?
- 2. How did the astrologer's prophecy influence the king's life?
- 3. Why did the king marry a princess?
- 4. How did the king die?
- 5. What message does the story convey?

## 8. Long Answer Questions

- 1. Discuss *The Tiger King* as a satire on human arrogance.
- 2. How is irony the central device in the story?
- 3. What ecological message does Kalki highlight in the story?

- 1. Who is the author of *The Tiger King*?
  - a) Pearl Buck
  - b) Kalki
  - c) Jack Finney
  - d) Louis Fischer
- 2. What was the prediction at the Tiger King's birth?
  - a) He would die in war
  - b) He would die by a tiger
  - c) He would die of poison
  - d) He would live forever
- 3. How many tigers did the king kill?
  - a) 100
  - b) 50
  - c) 99
  - d) 25
- 4. How did the king actually die?
  - a) By a tiger's attack
  - b) By illness
  - c) From a splinter of a toy tiger
  - d) In battle
- 5. What does the story mainly criticize?
  - a) Hunting
  - b) Destiny
  - c) Human arrogance and misuse of power
  - d) Marriage customs

# Lesson 3 – The Enemy – Pearl S. Buck

### 1. Introduction & Author Background

Pearl S. Buck (1892–1973) was an American writer and Nobel Prize winner, best known for *The Good Earth*. Her works often explored humanity beyond political and racial barriers. *The Enemy* highlights the conflict between nationalism and humanitarianism during wartime.

### 2. Detailed Summary

Dr. Sadao, a Japanese surgeon, lives near the coast with his wife Hana. During World War II, they find a wounded American soldier (enemy prisoner of war) washed ashore. Sadao, despite being a loyal Japanese citizen, is also a doctor bound by duty to save lives.

They hide him, treat his wounds, and protect him despite fear of being accused of treason. Sadao informs the General about the soldier, who promises to have assassins kill him, but they never arrive. Eventually, risking his own safety, Sadao helps the soldier escape in a boat.

The story reflects Sadao's moral dilemma between patriotism and humanity.

### 3. Themes & Messages

- **Humanitarianism vs. Nationalism** Humanity should come before enmity.
- **Moral Dilemma** Conflict between duty as a citizen and duty as a doctor.
- Racism & Prejudice Foreigners treated as enemies.
- Compassion & Ethics Human life is sacred beyond borders.

#### 4. Character Sketches

- **Dr. Sadao** Skilled, loyal Japanese, yet compassionate and ethical.
- **Hana** Supportive wife, shares her husband's moral conflict.
- The General Selfish, concerned only about his health.
- The American Soldier Helpless enemy, symbolizes humanity in crisis.

### 5. Literary Devices

- Irony A Japanese doctor saves an American enemy soldier.
- **Symbolism** The wounded soldier symbolizes humanity beyond boundaries.
- Imagery Coastline, wounds, and tense atmosphere vividly described.
- **Conflict** National duty vs. human duty.

#### 6. RTC Extracts

#### Extract 1:

"A white man! He was wounded!"

- Q1. Who discovered him?
- Q2. Why is "white man" significant?
- Q3. What dilemma arises from this?

#### Extract 2:

"This man must be saved, for he was wounded."

- Q1. Who said this?
- Q2. Why must the man be saved?
- Q3. What does this reflect about the speaker's values?

### 7. Short Answer Questions

- 1. How did Dr. Sadao and Hana find the soldier?
- 2. What dilemma did Sadao face after saving him?
- 3. Why didn't the General's assassins kill the soldier?
- 4. How did Sadao arrange for the soldier's escape?
- 5. What does the story teach us about humanity?

### 8. Long Answer Questions

- 1. Discuss the conflict between patriotism and humanitarianism in *The Enemy*.
- 2. How do Dr. Sadao and Hana's actions reflect compassion above all else?
- 3. Why is *The Enemy* relevant even today?

### 9. MCQs

- 1. Who was Dr. Sadao?
  - a) A soldier
  - b) A surgeon
  - c) A farmer
  - d) A fisherman
- 2. Who did Dr. Sadao find on the shore?
  - a) A fisherman
  - b) A villager
  - c) An American soldier
  - d) A Japanese officer
- 3. What decision did Sadao finally make?
  - a) Hand him over to the police
  - b) Let him die
  - c) Help him escape
  - d) Kill him
- 4. Why didn't the assassins kill the soldier?
  - a) They were bribed
  - b) The General forgot

- c) Hana stopped them
- d) Soldier escaped early
- 5. What is the main theme of the story?
  - a) Medical science
  - b) Humanity above borders
  - c) Loyalty to country
  - d) Superstition

# Lesson 4 - Journey to the End of the Earth - Tishani Doshi

### 1. Introduction & Author Background

Tishani Doshi is an Indian poet, novelist, and journalist. In this travelogue, she recounts her journey to Antarctica and reflects on climate change, nature, and human responsibility.

### 2. Detailed Summary

The author joins the **Students on Ice programme** led by Geoff Green, traveling to Antarctica. She describes its pristine environment, unique ecosystem, and geological significance.

She learns how Antarctica once was part of Gondwana, the supercontinent, and how human activities like fossil fuel consumption and deforestation now threaten the planet. She realizes how Antarctica is crucial for studying climate change, as even small changes there impact the whole world.

Her reflections stress the importance of protecting Earth for future generations.

### 3. Themes & Messages

- Environmental Awareness Need to preserve nature.
- Climate Change Impact of human activities on Earth.
- $\bullet \quad \textbf{Interconnectedness of Life} \textbf{Small changes affect the whole planet}.$
- **Educational Exploration** Learning beyond textbooks.

#### 4. Character Sketch

- Narrator (Tishani Doshi) Curious, observant, reflective.
- **Geoff Green** Explorer, environmentalist, guiding students toward awareness.

### 5. Literary Devices

- Imagery Descriptions of Antarctica's vast ice and wildlife.
- **Allusion** Reference to Gondwana and evolutionary history.
- Symbolism Antarctica as a mirror of Earth's future.
- **Contrast** Between pristine nature and polluted modern world.

#### 6. RTC Extracts

#### Extract 1:

"Take care of small things and the big things will fall into place."

- Q1. Who said this?
- Q2. What small things are referred to?
- Q3. How is this linked to environment?

#### Extract 2:

"Antarctica is the perfect place to study the past, present, and future of the Earth."

- Q1. Why is Antarctica perfect for this?
- Q2. What does the author learn there?
- Q3. How is it connected to climate change?

### 7. Short Answer Questions

- 1. What was the Students on Ice programme?
- 2. Why is Antarctica significant to study climate change?
- 3. What is Gondwana?
- 4. What lessons did Tishani Doshi learn from the journey?
- 5. How does Antarctica serve as a warning to humanity?

### 8. Long Answer Questions

- 1. How does Antarctica help us understand the impact of human activity on Earth?
- 2. What role do educational trips like Students on Ice play in awareness?
- 3. Discuss *Journey to the End of the Earth* as a call for environmental conservation.

#### 9. MCQs

- 1. Who led the Students on Ice programme?
  - a) Tishani Doshi
  - b) Geoff Green
  - c) Louis Fischer
  - d) Jack Finney
- 2. What was Antarctica once part of?
  - a) Pangaea
  - b) Gondwana
  - c) Asia
  - d) Europe
- 3. Why is Antarctica important?
  - a) For tourism
  - b) To study Earth's past and climate change
  - c) For military bases
  - d) For mining
- 4. What lesson does the author stress?
  - a) Respect for history
  - b) Conservation of environment
  - c) Adventure spirit
  - d) Scientific career
- 5. What is the central theme?
  - a) Human relationships
  - b) Climate change awareness
  - c) Discovery of Antarctica
  - d) Literature and travel

# Lesson 5 – The Rattrap – Selma Lagerlöf

### 1. Introduction & Author Background

Selma Lagerlöf (1858–1940) was a Swedish author and the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature (1909). *The Rattrap* is a story of redemption, showing how kindness can change even a hardened soul.

### 2. Detailed Summary

The story revolves around a poor peddler who sells rattraps but also steals to survive. He views the world as a rattrap, where material things tempt and trap humans.

One day, after stealing money from a crofter, he gets lost in a forest but is welcomed by **Edla Willmansson** and her father, the Ironmaster. Initially mistaken for an old acquaintance, the peddler is treated with kindness.

The generosity of Edla transforms him. On Christmas, instead of stealing, he leaves behind a gift — a rattrap containing the stolen money and a note, signing himself as "Captain von Stahle," showing his moral rebirth.

### 3. Themes & Messages

- Human Goodness Compassion can change hearts.
- **Symbolism of the Rattrap** Temptations of the world trap humans.
- **Redemption & Transformation** Even sinners can reform.
- **Power of Kindness** Genuine care transforms lives.

#### 4. Character Sketches

- The Peddler Poor, bitter, but capable of redemption.
- Edla Willmansson Kind, compassionate, catalyst of change.
- The Ironmaster Stern, but influenced by Edla's kindness.
- **The Crofter** Simple, generous, but robbed by the peddler.

### 5. Literary Devices

- **Symbolism** Rattrap as a symbol of life's temptations.
- **Irony** The peddler's philosophy becomes his own reality.
- **Contrast** Between society's cruelty and Edla's kindness.
- **Imagery** Forest and Christmas setting enhance the theme.

#### 6. RTC Extracts

#### Extract 1:

"The world is nothing but a big rattrap."

- Q1. Who said this?
- Q2. What does it mean?
- Q3. How does it reflect his philosophy?

#### Extract 2:

"The peddler had been touched by the kind of sympathy he had received."

- Q1. Who showed him sympathy?
- Q2. How did it affect him?
- Q3. What did he decide in return?

### 7. Short Answer Questions

- 1. How did the peddler view the world?
- 2. Why did the peddler steal from the crofter?
- 3. How did the peddler end up at the Ironmaster's house?
- 4. Why did Edla insist on letting him stay for Christmas?
- 5. What transformation took place in the peddler?

# 8. Long Answer Questions

- 1. Discuss how *The Rattrap* is a story of redemption.
- 2. How does the rattrap symbolize human life and temptations?
- 3. Explain the role of Edla in transforming the peddler's life.

### 9. MCQs

- 1. Who is the author of *The Rattrap*?
  - a) Kalki
  - b) Selma Lagerlöf
  - c) Pearl Buck
  - d) John Keats
- 2. What did the peddler sell?
  - a) Toys
  - b) Clothes
  - c) Rattraps
  - d) Books
- 3. What was the peddler's view of the world?
  - a) A place of joy
  - b) A big rattrap
  - c) A paradise
  - d) A safe shelter
- 4. Who transformed the peddler?
  - a) Crofter
  - b) Ironmaster
  - c) Edla Willmansson
  - d) Soldiers
- 5. What gift did the peddler leave behind?
  - a) Money
  - b) A rattrap with money and a note
  - c) A book
  - d) A letter

# Section D - Writing Skills

# 1. Notice Writing

#### **Format**

- 1. Name of the Institution / Organization
- 2. The word "NOTICE"
- 3. Date
- 4. **Heading / Subject** (what the notice is about)
- 5. **Body** (details in 50 words: What, When, Where, Who, Why)
- 6. Signature, Name, and Designation

### Sample Notice 1 (Lost & Found)

# **DAV Public School, Haldia**

#### **NOTICE**

#### 12 March 2025

#### **Lost Wrist Watch**

A Titan wristwatch with a black strap has been lost in the school playground during the lunch break today. The finder is requested to return it to the undersigned. A suitable reward will be given.

Rohit Sharma

Class XII, Monitor

# **Sample Notice 2 (Event / Competition)**

# **Paul Academy**

#### **NOTICE**

20 March 2025

# **Debate Competition**

A Debate Competition will be held on **28 March 2025 at 11 a.m. in the school auditorium**. The topic is "*Technology is a Boon or Bane*." Interested students may give their names to the undersigned by **25 March 2025**.

Anita Verma
Cultural Secretary

# 2. Invitation Writing

### **Types**

- **Formal Invitations** Used for official, public, or social functions (card format).
- **Informal Invitations** Personal letters to friends/relatives.
- **Replies to Invitations** Accepting or declining, in polite language.

# Formal Invitation (Card Style)

#### Mr. & Mrs. Sharma

request the pleasure of your company on the auspicious occasion of the

Wedding of their Daughter Priya

with

Rahul (Son of Mr. & Mrs. Mehta)

on Sunday, 16 March 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

at Golden Palace Banquet Hall, New Delhi

R.S.V.P.

Mr. Sharma – 98765xxxxx

#### Informal Invitation

Dear Riya,

We are delighted to invite you to the housewarming ceremony of our new home at *Greenwood Apartments* on **15 March 2025 at 6:00 p.m.** Your presence will make the occasion memorable.

With love, *Ananya* 

# Reply – Accepting (Formal)

Mr. and Mrs. Kapoor thank Mr. and Mrs. Sharma for their kind invitation to the wedding of their daughter Priya with Rahul on 16 March 2025 at Golden Palace Banquet Hall, New Delhi.

They are pleased to accept it.

### Reply - Declining (Formal)

Mr. and Mrs. Kapoor thank Mr. and Mrs. Sharma for their gracious invitation to the wedding of their daughter Priya with Rahul on 16 March 2025 at Golden Palace Banquet Hall, New Delhi.

However, they regret their inability to attend due to prior commitments.

# **©** Final Recap of Mega Study Guide

- Section A Flamingo Prose (Last Lesson, Lost Spring, Deep Water, Indigo)
- Section B Flamingo Poetry (My Mother at 66, Keeping Quiet, A Thing of Beauty, Aunt Jennifer's Tigers)
- **Section C Vistas** (The Third Level, The Tiger King, The Enemy, Journey to the End of the Earth, The Rattrap)
- Section D Writing Skills (Notice, Invitation + Replies)