

JINENDER SONI
Founder, MISSION GYAN

Poem-5 | The Ball

Worksheet-1

Multiple Choice Questions

1. **Why does the poet decide not to condole the boy? (The Ball)**
(a) He is indifferent (b) He is busy
(c) He is happy (d) It will be of no use
2. **Who would not intrude on the boy? (The Ball)**
(a) The Poet (b) The Gloves
(c) The Pad (d) The Ball
3. **I would not intrude on him; A dime, another ball is worthless. What does the poet mean by dime?**
(a) A shilling (b) A ten cent coin
(c) A penny (d) A five cent coin
4. **What does a ball cost?**
(a) 1 dime (b) 10 dimes
(c) 4 dimes (d) 5 dimes
5. **Where does the ball go?**
(a) House (b) Drain
(c) Well (d) Water
6. **What does the poet say about money? (The Ball)**
(a) Useless (b) Internal
(c) External (d) All of these
7. **What happened to the ball in The Ball Poem.**
(a) The ball was stolen. (b) The ball fell into the well.
(c) The ball fell into the water. (d) The narrator took the ball.
8. **What is the tone of The Ball Poem towards the end?**
(a) Happy (b) Depressing
(c) Encouraging (d) Sad

9. **How does the boy react to the loss of his ball in "The Ball Poem".**
- (a) The boy cries in despair. (b) The boy asks people for help.
(c) The boy stands rigid with grief. (d) The boy runs after the ball.
10. **What does the ball in the poem The Ball Poem symbolize?**
- (a) Poet's childhood (b) All of these
(c) Materialistic thing (d) Prized possession

Fill in the blanks :

11. The lesson John Berryman tries to convey through his poem is that _____.
12. The poet says that 'money is external' as it cannot buy back _____.

True / False

13. The boy stands rigid with grief after losing his ball.
14. The poem adheres to a strict rhyme scheme.

Very Short Type Questions

15. Does the lost ball stand as a metaphor for the boy's lost childhood? How? Answer in the context of the poem The Ball Poem.
16. Why does the poet not offer the boy money to buy another ball?

Short Type Questions

17. Why does the poet say Money is external in The Ball Poem?
18. Suggest a suitable by-line for The Ball Poem with a reason for your choice.

Essay Type Questions

19. Read the passages given below and answer the questions that follow them: (4 marks)
- He is learning, well behind his desperate eyes,
This epistemology of loss, how to stand up
Knowing what every man must one day know
And most know many days, how to stand up.
- a. What does the boy learn after losing the ball?
b. Why does the boy become desperate?
c. Who is the poet of this poem?
d. What do you mean by 'epistemology of loss'?

20. How is the lost ball a metaphor of the lost childhood of the boy? Why doesn't the poet want to intrude on the boy by offering him money to buy another ball? (The Ball Poem)

HOTS

21. **Assertion (A)** : The ball in the poem symbolizes both possessions and memories.

Reason (R) : The boy mourns not just the ball, but the memories it held.

- (a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true, but R is false
- (d) A is false, but R is true

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Answer & Solution

1. (d) It will be of no use
2. (a) The Poet
3. (b)
A dime is a ten cent coin.
4. (a) 1 dime
5. (d) Water
6. (c) External
7. (c)
The ball bounced, went down the street and fell into the water, out of the reach of the child.
8. (c) Encouraging
9. (c)
The boy is very upset at the loss of his ball. He stands rigid and is trembling due to extreme grief.
10. (a) Poet's childhood
11. Everyone must learn to bear the pain associated with loss.
12. Both are correct.
13. True
14. False
15. It can be said that the lost ball stands as a metaphor for the boy's lost childhood. The boy was saddened by the loss of the ball as it will never be found again. This loss also symbolises the loss of his childhood memories. From here he learns to take responsibility. The boy will now understand that loss is a part of life and one must move on from it. This realisation would bring a change in the boy as he would be grown up now.
16. The boy was really troubled at the loss of his ball and plunged into grief. He stood stiff and trembling while staring at his ball. He was upset and looked gloomily into the water because it had been with him for a long time. When the ball bounced into the water, all his memories of his childhood days flashed in front of him. The poet could have given him some money to buy another ball. But he didn't do so because he thought that the money might bring a new ball but would not bring the memories and feelings attached to it. According to him, it was the right time for the boy to learn his responsibilities. The boy would learn the toughest lesson of life. The lesson of accepting the harsh realities of life that one day we will lose our loved ones and our loved things.
17. In "The Ball Poem" the poet describes money as external because it lacks the power to heal the boy's emotional wounds caused by losing his ball. While money can purchase material goods, it cannot restore the sentimental value or memories attached to the lost item. Moreover, it cannot provide the necessary emotional support or teach the boy how to cope with his loss; highlighting its limitations in addressing inner feelings and experiences.

18. The byline can be 'Loss, Growing up, and Transformation; This is something of a coming of age that is seen through the lens of loss and suffering. The child comes to understand the world better when he understands that he is never going to get his lost ball back. It is gone for good and there is nothing anyone can do about it. The child undergoes a transformation.

19.

- a. After losing the ball, the boy is learning to cope up with the loss.
- b. The boy becomes desperate because he loves his ball very much and is in grief because of his loss.
- c. John Berryman is the poet of this poem.
- d. 'Epistemology of loss' means to understand the nature of loss.

20. The boy has been keeping this ball for a long time since his childhood. It is obvious that he must have created numerous memories with the ball. One day suddenly he loses that ball forever. With the ball, gone are those childhood memories associated with it. This indeed serves as a metaphor for the lost childhood of the boy. The poet does not want to intrude because he doesn't want to sermonise on this issue. He did not offer him any money to get a new ball because he thinks that the money may bring a new ball but will not bring the memories and feelings attached to the lost ball. He leaves the boy unattended so that he (the boy) can get a chance to learn the real truth of life. He has to learn to accept the loss. The loss here means the most important thing or relationship.

21. (a)

The boy's grief is clearly about emotional attachment—not just the physical object—so R correctly explains A.

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