

aglasem.com

Class 12 English (Flamingo) Notes

KEEPING QUIET

Key Notes and Important Questions with Answers

Keeping Quiet

Poet. Pablo Neruda explores the impact of silence. Silence gives a way to stop, think and act. Introspection and meditation refresh us all to do the best for humanity and nature.

–Pablo Neruda

Points to Remember

- According to the poet, keeping still and quiet will facilitate introspection and a feeling of universal harmony.
- The use of number twelve can be associated with twelve hours of the clock or number of months in a year.
- The poet says that silence will be exotic, because it will be a blissful moment, a near-divine experience when we all will be together.
- In that exotic moment, even the fishermen (who represent the people who kill and harm other creatures) would not harm the whales. Salt gatherers represent poor strata of the society.
- By green wars the poet means waging war against our green zone i.e., exploitation of nature by human beings.
- By 'wars with gas, wars with fire', the poet means new weapons of mass destructions like wars with atomic or nuclear bombs or wars with chemicals.
- The poet believes in life so he is against total inactivity. He only wants to interrupt the sad and cruel activities of the world.
- Inactivity is death and activity is the essence of life, so whatever is emphasised upon by him is connected with life not death.
- We can learn a lot from nature. The poet involves the symbol of mother earth to reinforce his idea that there is wisdom in tranquility and peace.
- The earth is calm and soothing. Things appear to be dormant but actually are constantly active.
- The poet states that we must try to understand what life means in terms of activities i.e., which actions are worthy of being done, and which are not.

1. Those who prepare green wars
war with gas, wars with fire,
victory with no survivors,
would put on clean clothes
and walk about with their brothers
in the shade, doing nothing

Questions

(a) What are the kinds of wars mentioned here?

Ans. Green wars, wars with gas, wars with fire are mentioned here.

(b) What are green wars'?

Ans. Wars against nature by causing environmental degradation are green wars.

(c) Explain : 'Victory with no survivors'.

Ans. Another war will destroy all life. There will be no survivors to enjoy the victory.

(d) What could be the ideal situation?

Ans. Happy people walking in hand, under shady trees, relaxing for few moments would be the ideal situation.

2. What I want should not be confused

with total inactivity

Life is what it is about

I want no truck with death

if we were not so single minded

about keeping our lives moving

and for once could do nothing.

Questions

(a) What does the poet mean by inactivity?

Ans. The poet suggests a calm, peaceful moment of introspection. It should be totally carefree.

(b) How is inactivity different from death?

Ans. The poet describes inactivity as a moment of peace and introspection whereas death is the end of the life.

(c) What does the poet mean by 'to have no truck with death'?

Ans. The poet wants a safe existence which is possible only if the man understands the basic truth of peaceful coexistence of man and nature.

(d) What are we single minded about?

Ans. We are single minded as we think only about keeping our moving and achieving program that is meaningless.

Questions for Practice

1. Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still.
For once on the face of the Earth
Let's not speak in any language,
Let's stop for one second,
and not move our aims so much.

Questions

(a) Why does the poet ask his readers to "keep still"?

(b) What changes does the poet expect on the face of the Earth?

(c) How could we all be together?

(d) Explain "not moving our arms so much".

2. Perhaps the Earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead
and later proves to be alive.
Now I'll count up to twelve
and you keep quiet and I will go.

Questions

(a) What should the man learn from Earth?

(b) When does nature seem to come alive?

(c) What feelings does the poet express in this stanza?

(d) How does Earth continue its journey?

Answer the following questions in about 30-40 words each:

1. Why does the poet want, everyone to keep quiet and count upto twelve?
2. What change does the poet expect on the face of the Earth?
3. In what ways does man cause harm to mankind and nature?
4. How can a few moments of introspection affect our lives?
5. How can there be victory with no survivors ?