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Question Bank

WBBSE Class 9 English (Second Language) | Bliss

Lesson 10: The Price of Bananas

by Mulk Raj Anand

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Textbook comprehension and grammar exercises, writing tasks, and additional Seen-style questions

Lesson Summary

The narrator is travelling by train from Faizabad railway station to Lucknow. While he waits on the platform, he watches young monkeys sitting on the boughs of neem and tamarind trees and picking up food. After he boards the train, a monkey snatches away the loin cloth of a pious man who is taking a bath under the water pump, and returns it only after much coaxing. Then a rich businessman, Sethji, arrives at the compartment with a porter carrying his luggage. A monkey snatches Sethji's fine embroidered cap and climbs up a tree with it. Sethji shouts in anger, and the passengers laugh at his helplessness.

A fruit vendor comes forward to help. He offers the monkey bananas, and the monkey accepts the bargain: it takes the bananas with its right hand and releases the slightly crumpled cap with its left hand. The crowd cheers the vendor. But when the vendor politely asks Sethji for two annas, the price of the bananas, Sethji shouts at him in disgust and throws only one anna towards him on the platform. The passengers protest and side with the vendor. The narrator draws a cartoon of Sethji, which amuses the fellow passengers. A funny incident thus ends in a bitter feeling of disgust at Sethji's meanness and unkindness towards a poor man.

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Key Points

Author	Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004), a well known Indian writer in English, known for his writings about ordinary working people.
Setting	A railway platform at Faizabad station, and a train compartment on the journey to Lucknow.
Theme	Humour on the surface, and underneath it a satire on the selfishness and unkindness of a rich man towards a poor man. Kindness and cleverness win sympathy; meanness earns contempt.
Characters	The narrator (the author himself); Sethji, the rich businessman; the fruit vendor; the porter; the pious man bathing under the pump; the monkeys; the fellow passengers.
The bargain	Bananas for the cap. The monkey takes the bananas with its right hand and gives back the cap with its left hand.

The price	Two annas for the bananas. Sethji pays only one anna to the vendor, though he gives four annas to the porter.
Grammar topics in this lesson	Articles and prepositions; voice (active and passive); tense (verb forms); narration (direct and indirect speech).

About the sources in this bank. No school paper in the collection used for this bank sets a Seen question on Lesson 10. This lesson is therefore covered by its textbook exercises, with additional Seen-style questions added to fill the gap. Every question carries an honest tag: **[textbook exercise]** for textbook items and **[Additional]** for the fresh questions. No source, year or mark has been invented.

Omission, honestly recorded. Textbook Exercise 4 items (c) and (d) are partially illegible in the source copy and are OMITTED here, not guessed. Verify them against the printed book. The blank positions in Exercise 6 item (c) are also unclear in the source copy; the item is given as printed, with the verb "finish", and flagged below.

Part A: Seen Questions

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Comprehension questions from the textbook, followed by additional questions in the school-paper Seen style.

Sourced Seen questions: 12 (Exercises 1 to 3). Additional Seen-style questions: 10. Total in Part A: 22.

Exercise 1 [textbook exercise] : Tick the correct alternative

1. The author was on his way from Faizabad railway station to (a) Delhi (b) Kolkata (c) Lucknow (d) Ahmedabad.

Answer: (c) Lucknow.

2. From the water pump the passengers were filling up their (a) water bottles (b) earthen pitchers (c) brass jugs (d) steel buckets.

Answer: (b) earthen pitchers.

3. The gentleman who came up to the author's compartment looked like a (a) businessman (b) doctor (c) teacher (d) postman.

Answer: (a) businessman.

4. The price the vendor asked for the bananas was (a) two annas (b) four annas (c) six annas (d) eight annas.

Answer: (a) two annas. Note: Sethji gave four annas to the porter, not to the vendor; the vendor asked for two annas only.

5. The author drew the cartoon of (a) fruit vendor (b) monkey (c) porter (d) Sethji.

Answer: (d) Sethji.

Exercise 2 [textbook exercise] : Answer within fifteen words

1. Where did the young monkeys sit?

Answer: On the boughs of neem and tamarind trees.

2. What did the monkey do to the loin cloth of the pious person?

Answer: It snatched it away while he was taking a bath under the pump.

3. What did Sethji's luggage include?

Answer: A big steel trunk, several small baskets, and a brass jug.

4. Why, according to the fruit vendor, were the monkeys disturbing the passengers?

Answer: Because they were hungry.

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Exercise 3 [textbook exercise] : Answer within twenty-five words

1. What was the businessman wearing?

Answer: He was wearing a white muslin dhoti, a tunic and an embroidered cap.

2. What did the monkey do after accepting the fruit vendor's bargain?

Answer: It took over the bananas with its right hand and released the embroidered cap, slightly crumpled, with its left hand.

3. How did the whole amusing episode end?

Answer: Sethji refused the vendor's fair demand of two annas and threw only one anna at him. The passengers sided with the vendor, and the narrator drew a cartoon of Sethji which amused them.

Additional Seen-Style Questions [Additional]

Fresh questions in the school-paper Seen style (MCQ, short answers, complete the sentence, True or False with supporting statement), added because no school paper in this collection sets a Seen question on this lesson. No source tag is claimed for these.

1. The monkey first snatched the loin cloth of a man who was (a) sleeping on the platform (b) taking a bath under the water pump (c) eating bananas (d) selling fruit. [Additional]

Answer: (b) taking a bath under the water pump.

2. To get Sethji's cap back, the fruit vendor offered the monkey (a) a piece of bread (b) a handful of nuts (c) a couple of bananas (d) a brass jug. [Additional]

Answer: (c) a couple of bananas.

3. Sethji gave the porter (a) one anna (b) two annas (c) four annas (d) eight annas. [Additional]

Answer: (c) four annas.

4. The narrator drew the cartoon of Sethji mainly to (a) please Sethji (b) sell it on the platform (c) amuse his fellow passengers (d) teach the monkey a lesson. [Additional]

Answer: (c) amuse his fellow passengers.

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5. Why did the passengers laugh at Sethji? Answer within fifteen words. [Additional]

Answer: A monkey had snatched his embroidered cap and he shouted helplessly at it.

6. What did the vendor ask Sethji to pay for the bananas? Answer within fifteen words. [Additional]

Answer: Two annas, the price of the bananas he had offered to the monkey.

7. How did Sethji treat the fruit vendor in the end? Answer within fifteen words. [Additional]

Answer: He threw only one anna at him and dismissed him rudely.

8. Complete the sentence: The monkey released the cap only after _____. [Additional]

Answer: The monkey released the cap only after it took the bananas from the vendor.

9. Write True or False, with a supporting statement: The fruit vendor was satisfied with the money Sethji gave him. [Additional]

Answer: False. Supporting statement: The vendor persisted, "Sethji, be just, I saved your honourable cap."

10. Write True or False, with a supporting statement: All the passengers had sympathy for the fruit vendor. **[Additional]**

Answer: True. Supporting statement: The passengers said to Sethji, "Please give him the money, Sethji."

Part B: Grammar Exercises

Sourced grammar questions: 14 presented (Exercises 4 to 7). Two items of Exercise 4, (c) and (d), are omitted as illegible; see the note above.

Exercise 4 [textbook exercise] : Fill in the blanks with appropriate articles and prepositions

(a) ____ sun rises in the east.

Answer: The sun rises in the east.

(b) The dog jumped ____ the log.

Answer: The dog jumped over the log.

(c) and (d) omitted. These two items are partially illegible in the source copy and have not been guessed. Verify them against the printed book.

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Exercise 5 [textbook exercise] : Change the voice of the following sentences

(a) Mr. Khan is known to me.

Answer: I know Mr. Khan. (The given sentence is passive; its active form is shown.)

(b) Trina had composed a poem.

Answer: A poem had been composed by Trina.

(c) I will always remember you.

Answer: You will always be remembered by me.

(d) They have made him the President of the club.

Answer: He has been made the President of the club by them.

Exercise 6 [textbook exercise] : Fill in the blanks with the appropriate form of the given verbs in brackets

(a) They ____ their puja vacation in the hills. (spend)

Answer: They spent their puja vacation in the hills.

(b) We ____ in this city for over ten years. (live)

Answer: We have lived in this city for over ten years.

(c) I ____ just ____ reading the book. (finish)

Answer: I have just finished reading the book. Note: the blank positions are unclear in the source copy; the sentence is given with the verb "finish" as printed.

(d) The project ____ by June next year. (complete)

Answer: The project will have been completed by June next year.

Exercise 7 [textbook exercise] : Change the mode of narration in the following sentences

(a) Rahul said, "Alas! Brazil has lost the match."

Answer: Rahul exclaimed with sorrow that Brazil had lost the match.

(b) "Let us go for a walk," said Shabnam to Chandni.

Answer: Shabnam proposed to Chandni that they should go for a walk.

(c) "Good morning, madam," said the students to the teacher.

Answer: The students wished the teacher good morning.

(d) My father said to me, "Do not pluck flowers."

Answer: My father forbade me to pluck flowers.

Part C: Writing

Exercise 8 [textbook exercise] [Also set as a school-paper writing task: 3rd summative 2026, HazarNotes Set-4] : Story writing (about 100 words, give a suitable title)

Write a story in about 100 words using the given hints. Give a suitable title to the story.

Hints: two cats find a piece of bread, fight over it, monkey arrives, decides to settle the dispute, monkey breaks the bread into two, uneven size, eats a portion from the larger share, dispute continues, monkey eats both pieces of bread.

Note: This is the same story set as a school-paper writing task in the 3rd summative 2026 paper, HazarNotes Set-4, with the same hints except that the school version omits "eats a portion from the larger share". It is kept once here, with both tags, and not counted twice.

How to attempt it: Give the story a title such as "The Clever Monkey". Begin with the two cats finding the bread, show the monkey acting as judge, show the bread growing smaller at each weighing, and end with the moral that quarrelling over a small gain can leave both sides with nothing.

Exercise 9 [textbook exercise] : Paragraph writing (about 100 words)

Using the following points write a paragraph in about 100 words on how your locality looks like at dawn:

Points: your place of stay, early morning sky, description of the nature around, sounds that are heard, reasons for enjoyment, conclusion.

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How to attempt it: Open with the hour and the place, describe the sky and the first light, add the sounds of birds and the first stir of people, say why the quiet hour pleases you, and close with one line on how dawn sets the tone for the day.

Question count in this bank: 28 sourced questions presented (12 comprehension, 14 grammar, 2 writing) plus 10 additional Seen-style questions, making 38 question blocks in all. The textbook total for this lesson is 30; the 2 remaining items are Exercise 4 (c) and (d), omitted as illegible and not guessed. No school-paper Seen question on this lesson exists in the collection used.