

# The Solitary Reaper

## Extract Based Questions (3 Marks each)

Q.1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions/complete the sentences that follow:

'Behold her, single in the field,

Yon solitary highland lass !

Reaping and singing by herself;

Stop here or gently pass!' (Board Term 12014, MZPD310)

(a) Why does a speaker ask to stop or gently pass ?

(b) To whom does the poet say 'stop here or gently pass'!

(c) What does 'behold her' mean ?

Ans. (a) The speaker says so lest the girl should be disturbed and stop singing?

(b) To the passers-by

(c) look at her

Q. 2. "Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow.

For old, unhappy, far off things."

(a) What do the 'plaintive numbers' refer to ?

(b) Why does the poet use the word 'perhaps' here ?

(c) Pick out a word similar in meaning to 'to move continuously'. (Board Term 12013, EWAJ2JM)

Ans. (a) The plaintive numbers' refer to, the highland gtrl's

(b) The poet uses the word 'perhaps' here because he doesn't know her language.

(c) Flow.

Q. 3. "I listened motionless and still And, as I mounted up the hill,

The music in my heart I bore,

Long after it was heard no more."

(a) What music is the poet talking about in these lines ?

(b) What effect does the music have on the poet ?

(c) How is the poet able to hear this music even after the maiden has stopped singing?

(Board Term 12012, Set 39)

Ans. (a) The poet is talking about the music of the maiden's song in these lines.

(b) The music mesmerizes the poet and he stops to listen to it. He carries the memories of the song in his heart long after he moves away from the scene.

(c) The poet carries the music as a cherished memory in his heart. (1×3=3)

**Q. 4. 'A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard  
In spring time from the cuckoo bird;  
Breaking the silence of the seas .....  
Among the farthest Hebrides"**

- (a) Why does the poet compare the reaper's voice to the song of the cuckoo bird ?**  
**(b) Name the poet of the poem.**  
**(c) Name the literary device used in the third line. (Board Term 12012, Set 41,47)**

**Ans.** (a) The poet feels that the girl's voice is sweeter than the sweet voice of the cuckoo, that is why; he makes this comparison.  
(b) William Wordsworth.  
(c) Alliteration/personification. (1×3=3)

**Q. 5. "Or is it some more humble lay, .  
Familiar matter of today ?  
Some natural sorrow loss or pain,  
That has been and may be again ?"**

- (a) Who is singing and where ?**  
**(b) What is the poet trying to guess ?**  
**(c) What does 'humble lay' stand for ? (Board Term 12012, Set 46)**

**Ans.** (a) The Solitary Reaper is singing in the field. 'r  
(b) The poet is trying to guess the theme of the song.  
(c) 'Humble lay' stands for common man of the song and the song may be about the common, simple people or situations. (1×3=3)

**Q. 6. "Alone she cuts and binds the grain;  
And sings a melancholy strain;  
Listen for the vale profound v ;  
Is overflowing with the sound."**

- (a) Who is 'she' in the above lines ?**  
**And sings a melancholy strain;  
Listen for the vale profound v ;  
Is overflowing with the sound."**  
**(a) Who is 'she' in the above lines ?**  
**(b) What kind of a song is she singing ?**  
**(c) What does the expression 'vale profound' mean ? (Board Term L2013, Set 53)**

**Ans.** (a) 'She' in the above lines refer to the solitary reaper.  
(b) She is singing a sad and melancholic song.  
(c) 'Vale profound' means the deep valley. (1×3=3)

**Q. 7. "No nightingales did ever chant, ;  
More welcome notes to weary bands,  
Of travellers in some shady haunt,  
Among Arabian Sands."**

- (a) Who are the weary bands ? What welcome notes do they hear ?**  
**(b) Why are the notes of the nightingale welcome ?**  
**(c) What are "Arabian Sands" ? (Board Term 12012, Set 54)**

**Ans.** (a) The weary bands are the travellers. They hear the welcome notes of the nightingale.  
(b) The notes of the nightingale are welcome because they are sweet and soothing.  
(c) Deserts signifying weariness are the 'Arabian Sands'. (1×3=3)

**Short Answer Type Questions (30-40 Words) (2 Marks)**

## each)

**Q.1. How was the poet affected by the song of the Solitary Reaper ?**

**(Board Term 12014, NCT-R/ZEZDXJX; 2012, Set A1)**

Or

**What is the effect of Solitary Reaper's song on die poet William Wordsworth ? (Board Term 12012, Set 58)**

**Ans.** The poet was spellbound by the sweetness of the song of the Solitary Reaper. Though, he could not understand the language of the song, he stood there motionless and captivated enjoying the melodious song. It fascinated him so much that he carried its sweet melody in his heart for a long time.

**Q. 2. Why was William Wordsworth fascinated by the Solitary Reaper's song ?**

**(Board Term 12013, AGRO-91; 2012, Set 34)**

**Ans.** The poet was spellbound when he heard the melancholic song of a Solitary Reaper in Scotland. She was alone, reaping the harvest. The melodious song fascinated him so much that he compared it with the song of a nightingale and a cuckoo.

**Q. 3. Why does the poet want the passers-by to "stop here or gently pass" ?**

**(Board Term 12012, Set 35,37,60)**

**Ans.** The poet was fascinated by the melodious song of the Solitary Reaper. The musk of her song and the melodious voice made him spellbound. The girl was busy in her work. So, the poet wishes the passers-by to "stop here or gently pass" so as to not disturb her.

**Q.4. Why is the nightingale's song a welcome song ? (Board Term 12012, Set 42)**

**Ans.** The poet feels that the weary travellers would forget their tiredness and they would feel refreshed when they , listened to the melodious notes of the nightingale's song. The soothing song would give relief to the travellers from fatigue and exhaustion, that is why he compares it to a 'welcome song'.

**Q. 5. Why has William Wordsworth compared the Solitary Reaper's song with the song of a nightingale and a cuckoo bird ? (Board Term 12012, Set 48)**

**Ans.** William Wordsworth has compared the Solitary Reaper's song with the song of a nightingale and a cuckoo bird to emphasize the sweetness of the girl's song. He himself is spellbound and the song resounds in his ears long . afterwards.

**Q.6. What are the probable themes of the song sung by the Solitary Reaper ? (Board Term 12012, Set 49,71)**

**Ans.** The probable themes of the songs sung by the Solitary Reaper which the poet presumes are a tale of some far off happening, or of a natural sorrow, or of a loss or of a parting from some dear ones.

**Q. 7. Why does the poet call the reaper 'Solitary' ?(Board Term 12012, Set 50)**

**Ans.** The poet calls the reaper 'Solitary' because she is all alone in the field, reaping the crop and singing a sad song all to herself.

**Q. 8. How does the poet bring out the beauty of the song of the Solitary Reaper ? (Board Term 12012, Set 72)**

**Ans.** He compares her song to the sweet notes of the nightingale and the cuckoo, both birds that sing in romantic surroundings. The song of the nightingale is a very welcome sound to the tired travellers as it signifies that they are approaching an oasis. The song of the cuckoo bird brings joy to the listeners as it is a harbinger of spring after the long, cold winter. The song of

the reaper arouses the same feelings of pleasure and joy in the poet's heart. It also lends a feeling of romance to the poem.

**Q. 9. How was the poet affected by the song of the Solitary Reaper ? (Board Term 12010, Set A1)**

**Ans.** The poet was held spellbound by the sweetness of the song. He stood motionless and still so that he could listen to her song. The melodious song fascinated him so much that he carried its sweet melody in his heart for a long time.

**Q. 10. The poet could not understand the theme of the song ? Why ? What were the guesses made by him ?(Board Term 12010, Set B1)**

**Ans.** The poet could not understand the theme of the song because the dialect used by the reaper was unfamiliar to him. He presumed that she might be singing about some battles fought long ago or some personal sorrow due to some tragic incidents in the past . .

**Q. 11. Where was the Solitary Reaper ? How did the poet hear her ? (Board Term 12010, Set B2)**

**Ans.** The Solitary Reaper belonged to Scotland. She was alone in the fields. The poet was passing that way when he heard the girl singing while reaping the harvest. The whole valley was resounding with her melodious voice. The poet stood motionless to listen to her song.

**Q. 12. The 'Solitary Reaper' describes a memorable experience of William Wordsworth. Describe.(Board Term 12010, Set A1)**

**Ans.** The poet describes the memorable experience which he had a long time ago. A young girl was standing all alone in a Scotland valley and was singing a song. The song was so enchanting that the poet compared it to the song of a nightingale or a cuckoo. He was spellbound and stood there for a long time. Even now he remembers her song as he carried the memory of the young girl's song in his heart. '

**Q. 13. The Solitary Reaper sings a melancholy strain. How does it affect the poet ? (Board Term 12010, Set C2)**

**Ans.** The poet was very much moved by the song of the reaper, because even though he could not understand the language he could understand well that it was a sad song.

**Q. 14. When and where does the cuckoo sing ? ' (Board Term T2010, Set C2)**

**Ans.** The cuckoo sings in spring time, in the most remote group of Islands (Hebrides) that lie to the north west of Scotland.

**Q. 15. Discuss the comparison of the Solitary Reaper's song with the other birds as given in the poem.(Board Term 12010, Set C1)**

**Ans.** The Solitary Reaper's song was sweeter than the song sung by the nightingale or the cuckoo bird. The poet compares the Solitary Reaper's song to that of a nightingale or a cuckoo bird. He says that the solitary reaper's song is as much welcoming to the heart as that of a nightingale's song to a weary traveller. He says that it induces as much thrill in the atmosphere as that of a cuckoo bird announcing the arrival of the spring time.

**Q. 16. At the end how did the poet react to the reaper's song in the poem 'The Solitary Reaper' ?(Board Term I 2010, Set C2)**

**Ans.** The poet was very much touched by the song of the reaper even though he could not understand the language, he could understand well that it was a sad song.

**Q. 17. How could the poet hear the song of the Solitary Reaper ? When could it be heard no**

**more ? .(Board Term 12010, Set B)**

**Ans.** The poet could hear the song as he carried the music in his heart. He remembered the music even after he could not hear the song any more.

**Q. 18. Does the title 'The Solitary Reaper' suit the poem ? Comment. (Board Term 12010, Set B)**

**Ans.** The title 'The Solitary Reaper' is quite significant. The girl was all alone in the field, reaping and binding the grains. She was quite engrossed in her work and singing. She was unaware of the presence of the poet or other passers-by, the whole valley was echoing with her sad song which equally specifies that the reaper was all alone.

**Q. 19. How has the poet made use of the comparisons in 'The Solitary Reaper' ? (Board Term 12010, Set A)**

**Ans.** 'The Solitary Reaper' is a poem in which beautiful comparisons have been made. The girl is compared to the talented singers of nature like the nightingale and the cuckoo bird. But her song is even more melodious than theirs. The song mesmerizes the poet who stands still just to listen to the melodious song of the reaper.

**Q. 20. How is an aura of mystery and magic created in the poem ?(HOTS)**

**Ans.** The song sung by the Solitary Reaper is melodious and magical/It is sweeter than the songs of the nightingale and the cuckoo bird. Her melodious voice cast a spell on the poet who is mesmerized by the melody of the song. The song haunts him for a long time and leaves an everlasting impression on his mind,

**Q. 21. Why do you think Wordsworth has chosen the song of the nightingale and the cuckoo for comparison with the Solitary Reaper's song ?**

**Ans.** Wordsworth has compared her song with the songs of the cuckoo and the nightingale because both are very melodious and have a very sweet voice.

Their songs always have a thrilling effect. They are liked by many poets and travellers.

The poet himself is spellbound as the solitary reaper's song resounds in his ears long afterwards.

**Q.22. In the first stanza, some words or phrases have been used to show that the girl working in the fields is alone. Which are those words and phrases? What effect do they create in the mind of the reader?**

**Ans.** The words-'single', 'solitary' and 'singing by herself' emphasize that the solitary reaper was working all alone and in a lonely place.

The reader is forced to feel that she has experienced something tragic in the past and these phrases relate to her. tragedy, they also create a picture of romance and isolation.

## **Long Answer Type Questions (80-100 Words) (4 Marks each)**

**Q. 1. William Wordsworth describes the scene of the solitary reaper to his sister Dorothy in a letter. As Wordsworth write the letter. (Board Term 12012, Set 72)**

**Ans.** 667 Maple Road

25th December, 20 xx Dear Dorothy,

I want to share my experience with you when I was in Scotland during the summer season. I had such a memorable experience that I could not restrain myself from writing to you.

I have had a wonderful time walking in the countryside and feel the need to share my feelings with you. While walking, my feet were arrested by a musical voice which was filling the valley.

A highland girl was cutting the grain and singing on her own. She was oblivious of anyone. Her

voice was certainly sweeter than that of the nightingale in the Arabian desert. There was a thrilling quality about her song. I was reminded of the Cuckoo bird's song in the Hebrides island. I couldn't understand the words as she was singing in a strange dialect, but the tone made me feel that it was a sad song. As I continued on my walk, her voice kept reverberating in my ears. I shall never forget it. I really missed you at that time, take care of yourself.

Yours lovingly,  
Wordsworth

**Q. 2. How has the poet brought out that the song sung by the Solitary Reaper was really enchanting and incomparable ? (Board Term 12012, Set 40)**

**Ans.** The song is enchanting and the poet is mesmerized by it. He compares it to the songs sung by the nightingale and the cuckoo. He feels that the song sung by the maiden is better than the songs sung by these birds that are known for enchanting people with their beautiful songs. The song has left a permanent mark in his heart. It has left an everlasting impression on his mind. It has remained a lovely memory with the poet for ever afterwards. The music had a calming effect on him and he has carried the music in his heart.

**Q. 3. "Music is a universal language that binds us all." Write a diary entry describing your experience of listening to the reaper's song. (Board Term 12012, Set 61)**

Or

**Imagine you are William Wordsworth. Write a diary entry in about 150 words describing your experience of listening to the reaper's song. (Board Term 12012, Set 52)**

Or

**Wordsworth had a wonderful experience listening to a highland girl while out for a walk in the countryside. He comes home and pens down his feelings in his diary. Write his diary. (Board Term 12010, Set C2)**

**Ans.** Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November, 20xx 10.30p.m.

Dear Diary,

I had such a wonderful time walking in the countryside and feel the need to record my feelings. While walking, my feet were arrested by a musical voice which was filling the valley. A highland girl was cutting the grain and singing on her own. She was oblivious of anyone. Her voice was certainly sweeter than that of the Nightingales in the Arabian desert. There was a thrilling quality about her song. I was reminded of the Cuckoo bird's song in the Hebrides island. I couldn't understand the words as she was singing in a strange dialect, but the tone made me understand that it was a sad song. As I continued on my walk, her voice kept reverberating in my ears. I shall never forget it.

**Q. 4. Some beautiful experiences amidst nature become sweet memories to us. Reflecting upon William Wordsworth's poem 'The Solitary Reaper' write your memories in the form of a diary entry. (Board Term 12012, Set 68)**

**Ans.** Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 10:00 a.m.

Dear Diary,

Natural experiences that man comes across enhance his inner joy. They bring him closer to God and his creation. They leave an everlasting impact on his mind and heart. I had a similar experience with nature. While passing through the hills of Scotland, a melodious song caught my attention. The song was so enchanting and melodious that it still lingers in my ears. The entire valley seemed to be flooded with the beautiful voice of the Solitary Reaper. The song was so captivating that I stood there motionless so as not to disturb her singing.

The song was sweeter than the sweet notes of both the nightingale and the cuckoo, who sing in romantic surroundings. I couldn't understand the theme of the song as the dialect was unfamiliar to me. Perhaps, she was singing some sad and plaintive note. Whatever the theme,

the music of the song made me spellbound and I stood there motionless listening to the girl's song. It seemed as if the song was never-ending. It touched my heart. The song has left an everlasting impression on my mind. I still bear in my heart the memory of the melodious song. Thank you diary.

**Q. 5. How does the poet bring out the incomparable quality of the reaper's song ? What effect does it have on the poet ? (Board Term 1 DAY 2009)**

**Ans.** The incomparable quality of the reaper's song is brought out by comparing her with the nightingale and the cuckoo bird. These two birds are best known for their remarkable and melodious quality of singing. The poet is impressed by the girl's song and says that she sang better than these two singing birds. The poet is spellbound by the magic of the song. It leaves an everlasting impression on his mind.

**Q. 6. How has Wordsworth admired and idealised the simple rustic life in 'The Solitary Reaper' ? (HOTS)**

**Ans.** Wordsworth was an admirer of simple rustic life. The 'Solitary Reaper' is a Scottish peasant girl who is full of life. She is reaping and binding the grain, but all this time, she is singing all by herself, unaware of the poet's presence. The song is sung in an unfamiliar dialect; hence, the theme of the song is not clear to the poet. Even then the song is melodious and the poet carries its everlasting memory with him.