

THE BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT IN THE WORLD

CLASS VIII

LESSON 1

THEME OF THE LESSON

- No one wants war to happen. Nobody likes war. Soldiers too are human beings and do not want fights among the race. One should try to find out other sources and solutions to solve differences between two nations instead of wars. This is a story about Jim McPherson who was the officer of British Army. He wrote about experiences to his wife he had with the German army on the Christmas morning.

WORD MEANING

Word	Meaning
1. Junk	Waste material
2. Clumsily	Awkwardly
3. Scorch	marks Burn marks
4. Veneer	A thin layer of plastic
5. Stuck fast	Shut tight
6. Scruples	Feelings that make you hesitate to do something wrong
7. Trenches	Long deep holes in the ground where soldier hide from enemy

8. Parapet High wall

9. Huddles Heap

10. Stamping Producing sound from your feet by
patting on the ground

11. Orphan Parentless Child

12. Muddle-headed Confused

13. Conservatory Greenhouse

14. Suffused with Glow of happiness

15. Mingling Mixing

VERY SHORT QUESTIONS

Ques.1 What did the author find in a junk shop?

Ans. The author found a roll- top desk for sale in a junk shop. It was made of oak wood, but it was in a very bad condition.

Ques.2 Who had written the letter, to whom, and when?

Ans. John Macpherson, a captain in the British army, had written that letter, dated Dec. 26, 1914, to his wife Connie.

Ques.3 What jobs did Hans Wolf and Jim Macpherson have when they were not soldiers?

Ans. before joining the army, Hans played the cello in the orchestra and Jim was a teacher.

Ques.4 Why did the author go to Bradford?

Ans. The author went to Bradford to meet Mrs. Jim Macpherson and deliver to her Jim's letter.

Ques.5 How old was Mrs. Macpherson now? Where was she?

Ans. Mrs. Macpherson was 101 years old. She was in nursing home

. Ques.6 Who did Connie Macpherson think her visitor was?

Ans. Connie thought that the visitor was her own husband, Jim Macpherson

. Ques.7 Why do you think the desk had been sold, and when?

Ans. The desk must have been sold when Connie's house had burnt. The table had been damaged by fire as well as water. SHORT QUESTIONS

Ques.1 What did he find in a secret drawer? Who do you think had put it in there?

Ans. In the secret drawer of the desk, the author found a small tin box. It had a letter in it. I think the owner of the roll-top desk might have put it there. Ques.2 Why was the letter written-what was the wonderful things that had

Ques.2 Why was the letter written-what was the wonderful things that had happened?

Ans. The letter described a wonderful event. The two armies-the British and the German fighting against each other celebrated Christmas together.

Ques.3 Had Hans Wolf ever been to Dorset? Why did he say he knew it? Ans. No, Hans had never been to Dorset. He had only read about Dorset in Hardy's novel 'Far from the Madding Crowd'

. Ques.4 Do you think Jim Macpherson came back from the war? How do you know this?

Ans. No, Jim Macpherson never came back home from the war. Perhaps therefore his wife Connie had preserved his letters. Ques.5 Which sentence in the text shows that the visitor did not try to hide his identity?

Ans. The sentence is, "you told me you'd come home by Christmas dearest," she said, "And here you are, the best Christmas present in the world. Come closer, Jim dear, sit down. Ques

.6 For how long do you think Connie had kept Jim's letter? Give reasons for you're answer?

Ans. Connie must have kept Jim's letter for almost 70 to 75 years the reasons for that are: a. When the author bought the roll top desk. The junk seller said that the desk was of early 19th century. b. The letter dated 26th Dec. 1914 that is during the First World War. c. Now Mrs. McPherson was 101 years old.

Ques.7 Why do Jim and Hans think that games or sports are good ways of resolving conflicts? Do you agree?

Ans. Both Jim and Hans were soldiers. Both were warm hearted. They had seen the sufferings of war. So it was natural for them to hate war. They favoured a peaceful solution to settle disputes. Games or sports, they said, were good ways of resolving conflicts. I also quite agree with them

. Ques.8 Do you think the soldiers of the two armies are like each other, or different from each other? Find evidence from the story to support your answer.

Ans. All human beings are alike in many ways. They love peace and hate war. They want to live together. Examples from the story: "Then they were calling out to us from a cross no man's land. "Happy Christmas, Tommy! Happy Christmas! "When we had got over the surprise some of us shouted back." Same to you, Fritz! Same to you!"

Ques.9 Mention the various ways in which the British and the German soldiers become friends and find things in common at Christmas.

Ans. The British and the German soldiers belonged to different camps. They were enemies in war time. But after all they were human beings and therefore they had similar feelings. They shared the festive spirit of the Christmas. They got over hatred and played games, feasted and drank like good friends. Both hated war. Both were anxious to go back to their families at the end of war.

Ques.10 What is Connie's Christmas present? Why is it the best Christmas present in the world?

Ans. Connie thought that Jim had come back home from war. She mistook the author for Jim. She had been waiting for her husband Jim. So the coming home of Jim was the best Christmas present in the world for her.

Ques.11 Do you think the title of the story is suitable for it? Can you think of any other title(s)?

Ans. Decidedly the title of the story is most suitable. For the old Connie, no other present could have given her such joy as the coming home of Jim, her husband. Her presumption might be wrong, but she got the greatest happiness of her life. Since the story revolves around Christmas, the alternate title of the story could be 'War and Peace' or 'Christmas Gift'. But neither can be a match to the present title.

LONG QUESTION

Ques.1 Imagine that you are Jim. You have returned to your town after that war. In your diary record how you feel about the changes you see and the events that occur in your town. You could begin like this: 25 December, 1919 it's Christmas today but the town looks ?

Ans. 25th December its Christmas today But the town looks changed. Everything has changed. The buildings, the houses, the shops that were standing a year back have no traces now. Instead there is only debris, rocks and soil. I can't find my family, my neighbors my friends. Have they become the prey of this war? Today on Christmas I have no one to share my happiness. My family my wife my son is dead. The war destroys not only the family's religion, society but also humanity. Man has become so mean that he finds no importance to life in front of his profits and selfishness why do we have wars? why do we have wars? why do we have wars?

CCT BASED QUESTIONS

- What did the narrator do to restore the desk?
- How did Hans Wolf and Jim become friends?
- What was peculiar about the Christmas that Jim celebrated while he was on war?
- Why was Mrs in the hospital?
- Write the significance of Jim's last letter to Connie?
- What were authors' view on war? Why do you think war's should be stopped?.