

NCERT QUESTIONS WITH SOLUTIONS

Oral Comprehension Check

1. What was Valli's favourite pastime?

Ans. Valli's favourite pastime was standing in the front doorway of her house, watching what was happening in the street outside. It was every bit as enjoyable as any of the elaborate games other children played. It gave her many unusual new experiences.

2. What was a source of unending joy for Valli? What was her strongest desire?

Ans. A source of unending joy for Valli was the sight of the bus, filled each time with a new set of passengers. Her strongest desire was to ride the bus once.

3. What did Valli find out about the bus journey? How did she find out these details?

Ans. About the bus journey, Valli found out that the town was six miles from her village, the fare was thirty paise one way, the trip to the town took forty-five minutes, and she could return home on the same bus. She found out these details by carefully listening to the conversations between her neighbours and the people who regularly used the bus. She also asked a few discreet questions here and there.

4. What do you think Valli was planning to do?

Ans. Valli was planning to undertake her first bus ride. She planned to take the one o'clock afternoon bus. It would reach the town at one forty-five. And she would be back by about two forty-five while her mother was asleep.

5. Why does the conductor call Valli 'madam'?

Ans. The conductor called Valli 'madam' because of her commanding behaviour and curt replies. She shouted, 'Stop the bus! Stop the bus!' The conductor stretched out a hand to help her in getting on the bus. Then she curtly replied, 'Never mind, I can get on by myself.' There are such other instances while on the journey where she behaved very maturely.

6. Why does Valli stand up on the seat? What does she see now?

Ans. Valli stood up on the seat because when she started to look outside, she found her view cut off by a canvas blind that covered the lower part of the window. So, she stood up to peer over the blind. On one side, Valli was able to see the canal, the palm trees, the grassland, the distant mountains and the blue sky. On the other side, she saw a deep ditch and then acres and acres of green fields.

7. What does Valli tell the elderly man when he calls her a child?

Ans. When the elderly man called Valli a child, she told him that there was no one here who is a child. She haughtily told him that she had paid her thirty paise like everyone else. She made it clear to him that she didn't like to be called a child.

8. Why didn't Valli want to make friends with the elderly woman?

Ans. Valli didn't want to make friends with the elderly woman because she found her absolutely repulsive. She had very big holes in her ear lobes and ugly earrings in them. The way she was chewing the betel nut, the juice of which was threatening to spill over her lips at any moment resisted Valli to be sociable with her.

9. How did Valli save up money for her first journey? Was it easy for her?

Ans. Valli saved up money for her first journey by resisting every temptation to buy peppermints, toys, balloons and the like. She saved every coin that came her way. On the day of the village fair, she resolutely stifled a strong desire to ride the merry-go-round. As a kid, it was not an easy task for her to save money as she had to sacrifice all her strong desires.

10. What did Valli see on her way that made her laugh?

Ans. When Valli saw a young cow, tail high in the air, running very fast in the middle of the road to save her life, right in front of the bus, she clapped her hands with glee. The more the bus driver honked, the more frightened the cow became and ran even faster, right in front of the bus.

11. Why didn't she get off the bus at the bus station?

Ans. She didn't get off the bus at the bus station because she was too afraid to go all by herself and didn't know anything about the city. She wanted only to ride the bus. Moreover, she didn't have any money, she had enough money to buy the tickets only.

12. Why didn't Valli want to go to the stall and have a drink? What does this tell you about her?

Ans. Valli didn't want to go to the stall and have a drink because she didn't have enough money. She even refused to take the cold drink offered by the conductor. This tells us that she was self-respecting with power to resist temptations. Possibly, she did not want to take the obligation, particularly from a stranger.

Thinking About the Text

1. What was Valli's deepest desire? Find the words and phrases in the story that tell you this.

Ans. Valli's deepest desire was to ride on the bus, even if just once. The following words and phrases in the story tell us this.

- '..... gradually tiny wish crept into her head and grew there.'
- 'Valli would stare wistfully at the people who got on or off the bus
- Overwhelming desire
- She wanted to ride on that bus, even if just once.

2. How did Valli plan her bus ride? What did she find out about the bus, and how did she save up the fare?

Ans. Valli planned to use the hours of napping of her mother from one to four or so for her first bus ride. She would take the one o'clock afternoon bus, reach the town at one forty-five and be back home by about two forty-five.

About the bus she found out that the town was six miles from her village and the fare was 30 paise one way. The trip to the town took 45 minutes. She could return home on the same bus. She saved every coin that came her way by resisting every temptation for peppermints, toys, balloons, a ride of the merry-go-round, the village fair and finally she saved sixty paise that she needed for the bus fare.

3. What kind of a person is Valli? To answer this question, pick out the following sentences from the text and fill in the blanks. The words you fill in are the clues to your answer.

(i) "Stop the bus! Stop the bus!" And a tiny hand was raised _____.

(ii) "Yes, I _____ go to town", said Valli, still standing outside the bus.

(iii) "There's nobody here _____", she said haughtily. "I've paid my thirty paise like everyone else."

(iv) "Never mind", she said, "I can _____ You don't have to help me." "I'm not a child, I tell you", she said,'

(v) "You needn't bother about me. I _____", Valli said, turning her face toward the window and staring out.

(vi) Then she turned to the conductor and said, "Well, sir, I hope _____"

Ans. (i) commandingly (ii) simply have to (iii) who's a child
(iv) get on by myself; irritably (v) can take care of myself (vi) to see you again

4. Why does the conductor refer to Valli as 'madam'?

Ans. Valli seems to be a much confident girl who doesn't like to be treated as a kid. She wants to lead her life like adults do. This might be the reason she decided to go alone on the bus ride. She is having a great sense of self-respect which prevents her from taking anyone's obligation. She feels that she is able to take care of herself and gets irritated when anyone treats her as a child.

5. Find the lines in the text which tell you that Valli was enjoying her ride on the bus.

Ans. (i) "Oh, it was all so wonderful!"

(ii) 'Suddenly Valli clapped her hands with glee. A young cow, tail high in the air, was running very fast, right in the middle of the road, right in front of the bus.'

(iii) 'She laughed and laughed until there were tears in her eyes.'

(iv) 'Valli wasn't bored in the slightest and greeted everything with the same excitement she'd felt the first time.'

6. Why does Valli refuse to look out of the window on her way back?

Ans. On her way back, Valli saw a cow lying dead. That was the same cow which ran in front of the bus on her trip to the town. The memory of the dead cow haunted her and dampened her enthusiasm. So she refused to look out.

7. What does Valli mean when she says, "I was just agreeing with what you said about things happening without our knowledge."

Ans. When Valli says so, she means things do happen without our knowledge. There are so many things happening in this world and we can't be aware about everything. Valli made her first bus ride to the town and came back home without her mother's knowledge so she completely agrees with the fact.

8. The author describes the things that Valli sees from an eight-year old's point of view. Can you find evidence from the text for this statement?

Ans. Following lines substantiate the above statement-

(i) 'The bus was now going along the bank of a canal. The road was very narrow.'

(ii) 'Suddenly Valli clapped her hands with glee. A young cow, tail high in the air, was running very fast, right in the middle of the road, right in front of the bus.'

(iii) 'A speck of a train could be seen in the distance, growing bigger and bigger as it drew near.'

(iv) 'Such big, bright-looking shops! What glittering displays of clothes and other merchandise! Such big crowds!'

Like a typical young child, Valli found the cow running in front of the bus so funny that she could not control her daughter. Also, on her way back she refused to even look out of the window after watching that cow lying dead on the roadside. This describes the reaction of an immature kiddish mind.