

**Q1. What do you think is the colour of 'sour cream'? Why do you think the poet has used this expression to describe the classroom walls?**

Ans. The colour of 'sour cream' is off-white. The poet has used this expression to suggest the decaying aspect of all around. Actually the dull and dirty walls symbolise the pathetic conditions of the lives of these children. There is no hope or brightness in their lives.

**Q2. The walls of the classroom are decorated with the pictures of 'Shakespeare' 'buildings with domes', 'world maps' and beautiful valleys. How do these contrast with the world of these children?**

Ans. The pictures hung on the wall beautifully contrast with the world of the Slum children. These pictures mean art, progress, prosperity and well-being. But the present conditions of these children are quite pathetic. They are underneath, poor and live in grim poverty.

**Q3. What does the poet want for the children of the slums? How can their lives be made to change?**

Ans. The poet wants the people in authority to realise their responsibility towards the children of the slums. All sort of social injustice and class inequalities must be ended by eliminating the obstacles that confine the slum children to their ugly and filthy surroundings. Let them study and learn to express themselves freely. Then they will share the fruit of progress and prosperity and their lives will change for the better.

**Q4. What should governors, teachers, inspectors and other important and powerful persons do to improve the lot of children living in slums?**

Ans. There are two worlds which exist. The gap between them must be abridged. Governors, teachers and powerful persons must help in removing social injustice and class inequalities. They must bring slum children out of their ugly and dirty surroundings. Their world must extend to the open sea and green fields.

**Q5. How does the poet describe the classroom walls?**

Ans. According to the poet, the walls of the classroom are discoloured and have a faded look which looks like sour cream. The poet compares the faded walls to that of the faces of the children who look pale.

**Q6. What message does Stephen Spender convey through the poem, 'An Elementary School Classroom in a Slum'?**

Ans. The need is to free these children, liberate them and bring them into the mainstream by bringing meaningful changes to improve the standard of life and education in the slums. The poet deals with the theme of social injustice and class inequalities. There are two different worlds. Art, culture and literature have no relevance to the slum children. They live in dark, narrow, cramped

holes and lanes. Unless the gap between the two worlds is abridged, there can't be any real progress or development. The children will have to be made mentally and physically free to lead happy lives.

## Multiple Choice Question Read the given extract and answer the questions from 1 to 9.

Far far from gusty waves these children's faces.

Like rootless weeds, the hair torn round their pallor:

The tall girl with her weighed-down head. The paper-seeming boy, with rat's eyes. The stunted, unlucky heir

Of twisted bones, reciting a father's gnarled disease,

His lesson, from his desk. At back of the dim class

One unnoted, sweet and young. His eyes live in a dream

Of squirrel's game, in tree room, other than this.

**Q1. The given extract is taken from the poem**

- A. keeping Quiet
- B. My Mother at Sixty-six
- C. A Thing of Beauty
- D. An Elementary School Classroom In A Slum

**Q2. The paper-seeming boy with rat's eyes' means the boy is**

- A. sly and secretive
- B. short and lean
- C. thin, hungry and weak
- D. sad and depressed

**Q3. Identify the literary device in 'like rootless weeds'.**

- A. simile
- B. metaphor
- C. alliteration
- D. personification

On sour cream walls, donations. Shakespeare's head,

Cloudless at dawn, civilized dome riding all cities.

Belled, flowery, Tyrolese valley. Open-handed map

Awarding the world its world. And yet, for these

Children, these windows, not this map, their world,

Where all their future's painted with a fog,

A narrow street sealed in with a lead sky

Far far from rivers, capes, and stars of words.

**Q4. The classroom walls have**

- A. pictures of Shakespeare, buildings with domes, world maps and beautiful valleys

- B. pictures of Shakespeare, rivers, valleys and world maps
- C. pictures of Shakespeare and Wordsworth, rivers buildings and world maps
- D. pictures of Shakespeare, buildings, rivers, mountains and valleys

**Q5. The colour of sour cream is**

- A. white
- B. yellow
- C. off-white
- D. pale

**Q6. What does the expression "Open -handed map " show ?**

- A. power of the poor
- B. the poor are powerful
- C. the poor are powerless
- D. maps are drawn at the orders of the powerful people like Hitler

Surely, Shakespeare is wicked, the map a bad example.

With ships and sun and love tempting them to steal —

For lives that slyly turn in their cramped holes

From fog to endless night? On their slag heap, these children

Wear skins peeped through by bones and spectacles of steel

With mended glass, like bottle bits on stones.

All of their time and space are foggy slum.

So blot their maps with slums as big as doom.

**Q7. What do the words 'From fog to endless night ' mean?**

- A. bright light outside
- B. bright future
- C. hopelessness
- D. Dark and uncertain future of slum children from birth to death

**Q8. What blots the maps of the slum children?**

- A. garbage
- B. blockage
- C. stones in the streets
- D. Dirty slums

**Q9. Where do their lives 'slyly turn'?**

- A. in their cramped holes
- B. towards the sun
- C. towards the school
- D. towards the windows

**Q10. What is the meaning of 'The paper seeming boy, with rat eyes'?**

- A) rich people
- B) rich children
- C) powerful people and their influence
- D) weak and malnourished boy

**Q11. What kind of future do the slum children have?**

- A) very hopeful
- B) bright
- C) clear like water
- D) hopeless and uncertain

**Q12. Who has written the poem Elementary School Classroom in a Slum?**

- A) Stephen Spender
- B) Wordsworth
- C) Kamlanath
- D) Kipling

**Q13. What do the faces of children in the slum areas show?**

- (a) their wisdom
- (b) their aspirations
- (c) sadness and lack of enthusiasm
- (d) their happiness

**Q14. Shakespeare is wicked because of he \_\_\_\_ the children:**

- (a) educates
- (b) tempts
- (c) loves
- (d) hates

**Q15. The word catacombs imply of the slum children.**

- (a) diseased existence
- (b) secure
- (c) near death existence
- (d) poverty ridden

**Q16. The lives of slum children are confined in**

- (a) elementary school
- (b) Shakespeare's world
- (c) narrow streets of slums
- (d) Tyrolean Valley

**Q17. The night is endless as there is no \_\_\_\_ for them.**

- (a) future
- (b) education
- (c) wealth
- (d) support

**Q18. What do the 'governor', inspector, visitor in the poem depict?**

- (a) higher officials
- (b) Government officials
- (c) Political people
- (d) Powerful and influential people

**Q19. What do the words "Their future is painted with fog" convey?**

- (a) no love and care
- (b) no hope of improvement
- (c) no hardwork
- (d) no warmth

## ANSWERS KEY

1.-D, 2.-C, 3.-A, 4.-A, 5.-C, 6.-D, 7.-D, 8.-D, 9.-A, 10.-D, 11.-D, 12.-A, 13.-C, 14.-B, 15.-C, 16.-C, 17.-A, 18.-D, 19.-B