

Off to Outer Space Tomorrow Morning

- Norman Nicholson

Previous Years' Questions - Solved

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2 Mark Questions - Solved

1. "You can start the Count Down; you can take a last look;
You can cross out my name from the telephone book."

What could be the reason for the space traveller to have such a feeling?

(April 2016)

Answer: There is a note of finality in the given two lines. The speaker seems to be experiencing a feeling of apprehension about going to space and possibly isn't very confident about coming back to Earth.

2. "The poet is off to outer space tomorrow morning." What does he ask the readers to do? (June 2016)

Answer: The poet asks the readers to take a last look at him since he's going away to outer space the next morning. He also tells the readers that they can watch him begin his journey on their television sets and track his movement in space using telescopes. However, the speaker will not have time to think of anyone on Earth.

3. According to the poet 'Norman Nicholson' outer space is solitary confinement for him. Why? (April 2017)

OR

Why does Norman Nicholson call the space flight, 'a solitary confinement'?

(June 2018)

OR

Why does the poet say that he will be in a solitary confinement? (April 2023)

Answer: When the speaker is in Outer Space, he would be isolated from people and wouldn't be in contact with his friends or family. He would only be able to observe the vast expanse of space which could be a lonely experience. Hence, the poet Norman Nicholson calls the time spent on the space flight and in outer space 'a solitary confinement'.

4. Why does Norman Nicholson feel that he is imprisoned in space?

(June 2017)

OR

In the poem "Off to Outer Space Tomorrow Morning," why does the speaker feel that he is imprisoned? (April 2018)

OR

Why does the speaker in the poem 'Off to Outer Space Tomorrow Morning' feel that he would be imprisoned in space? (June 2023)

Answer: When the speaker is in Outer Space, he would be isolated from people and wouldn't be in contact with his friends or family. His movements would be restricted, and he would need to follow a prescribed routine. He also would need to remain confined in his spaceship. Hence poet Norman Nicholson describes the speaker feeling imprisoned in space.

5. The speaker says that "Calendars and clocks are useless in space". What might have been the reason for his opinion? (April 2019)

OR

Why does the speaker in 'Off to Outer Space Tomorrow Morning' not know the time and date or day? (June 2019)

Answer: Calendars and clocks are useful to measure time on Earth, however it wouldn't really have meaning in Outer Space as time would function differently. The speaker would need to make his own routine based on tasks that needed done and there wouldn't be any Earthly night or day in Space. Hence, the speaker says that 'calendars and clocks are useless in space' and he wouldn't be keeping track of the time, date or day.

3 Marks Questions (Extract) - Solved

1. "In solitary confinement as complete as any gaol."

(a) What is referred to as solitary confinement?

(b) Why does the speaker say so?

(April 2015)

Answer:

(a) Being in outer space is referred to as solitary confinement by the speaker.

(b) The speaker would be isolated from people and wouldn't be in contact with his friends or family in outer space. He would only be able to observe the vast expanse of space which could be a lonely experience. Hence, the poet Norman Nicholson calls the time spent on the space flight and in outer space 'a solitary confinement' and compares it to a prison.

**2. "For with nobody to visit me and not a friend in hail,
In solitary confinement as complete as any gaol."**

(a) What feelings do these lines convey?

(b) What two aspects are compared in the second line?

(June 2015)

Answer:

(a) The poet conveys feelings of loneliness and sadness through the given lines.

(b) The experience of being alone in outer space without being able to contact or be contacted by loved ones is an aspect that is compared to being in solitary confinement. Secondly, the speaker also compares his time in space to being in prison. In addition to feeling isolated, his movements would be restricted and confined to the spaceship.

**3. "There won't be any calendar, there won't be any clock;
Day light will be on the switch and winter under lock."**

(a) Who is the speaker here?

(b) Where is the speaker preparing to go?

(c) What does the expression 'winter under lock' mean?

(April 2020)

Answer:

(a) The speaker of the given lines is poet Norman Nicholson who assumes the role of an astronaut.

(b) The speaker is preparing to go on a Space Mission to Outer Space.

(c) Time in outer space would be experienced differently and there wouldn't be any change in weather, climate or seasons. The surroundings would always be cold and gloomy which is described as 'winter under lock'.

**4. "There won't be any calendar,
There won't be any clock."**

(a) Name the poem from which these lines are taken.

(b) What does 'there' stand for?

(c) Why wouldn't there be any calendars and clocks?

(September 2020)

Answer:

(a) The given lines are from the poem 'Off to Outer Space Tomorrow Morning' by Norman Nicholson.

(b) 'There' refers to 'outer space' where the calendars and clocks of Earth would become meaningless.

(c) Calendars and clocks are useful to measure time on Earth, however it wouldn't really have meaning in Outer Space. The speaker would make his own routines, based on tasks that needed to be done and there wouldn't be any Earthly night or

day to keep track of. Hence, the speaker says that there wouldn't be any 'calendars and clocks' in space' and he wouldn't be keeping track of the time, date or day.

5. "I'll be writing no letters; I'll be posting no mail."

(a) Who does 'I' refer to

(b) Why couldn't the speaker write any letter or mails?

(c) With what feelings did the speaker express these words? (April 2024)

Answer:

(a) "I" refers to the poet-speaker Norman Nicholson who assumes the role of an astronaut.

(b) The speaker would be travelling to Outer Space the following morning. Hence, he would not have the time nor access to write letters or post mail.

(c) The speaker expressed these words to show how distant, lonely and disconnected from humanity he would feel.

6. "With the tea cups circling round me like the planets round the Sun, I'll be centre of my gravity, a universe of one,"

(a) Who is the speaker?

(b) Why do tea cups circle round the speaker?

(c) Who does the speaker compare himself to? (June 2024)

Answer:

(a) The poet Norman Nicholson is the speaker assuming the role of an astronaut.

(b) There isn't any gravity in space. Hence, objects like teacups would float around the speaker.

(c) The speaker compared himself to the sun. Just like the planets revolve around the sun, the teacups revolve around the speaker due to the lack of gravity in outer space.

7. "You can cross out my name from the telephone book."

(a) Who is the speaker?

(b) Why did the speaker say?

(c) When did the speaker say? (August 2024)

(a) The speaker is poet Norman Nicholson who assumes the role of an astronaut.

(b) The speaker is an astronaut who would be travelling to Outer Space the following morning. Since he cannot be contacted, he asks to cross his name out from the telephone book.

(c) The speaker said the given statement the day before he was due to leave for Outer Space.
