

CBSE Class –VIII English
NCERT Solutions
Chapter - 10
The Comet-II

Comprehension Check

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1: "For a moment James wondered if he had done his sums right." Why was James doubtful about his sums and calculations?

Ans: James was doubtful about his sums and calculations when he looked up from his window and saw a star-studded night sky. He knew that somewhere amongst those stars was Comet Dutta, which was heading for a collision with the earth. It was hard for him to believe the calamity of the future on such a peaceful night.

2: What did the scientists at the conference say about James's 'sums'?

Ans: After rechecking James' sum for the umpteenth time the scientist arrived at the horrifying conclusion that James was right. There was just a feeble chance of the comet scraping through the earth's atmosphere. Even then also it would cause great damage.

3: Immediate action was needed, the scientists decided. Give one example each of 'defensive' and 'offensive' action mentioned in the text.

Ans: The defensive action discussed by the scientists was to live in underground bunkers. The offensive action was to marginally deflect Comet Dutta from its path by giving it a push. This could be done by placing nuclear payload in a spaceship, sending it to intercept the approaching comet and detonating it by remote control.

4: "I am not buying any Christmas presents till December 15." What did Sir John mean by that?

Ans: When Sir John said he was not buying any Christmas presents, he meant that he was not very sure about their success in the operation. December 15 was the date of the operation and if the experiment failed, the comet would hit the earth.

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1: What was Duttada expected to do on his return from London?

Ans: Duttada was expected to perform a shanti yajna arranged by his wife, Indrani Devi, on his return from London. This yajna was to be performed to pacify the supposed evil spirit behind the comet.

2: What is his reaction to the proposal?

Ans: Duttada reacted very angrily to the proposal and said that it was all superstition. So he refused to participate in the yajna as he does not believe in such superstitions.

3: (i) What does 'Project Light Brigade' refer to?

(ii) What did Sir John say about the Project in his letter to Duttada in October?

Ans: (i) When the scientist got confirmed that the comet is going to collide with our earth, they joined their hand to save the earth. 'Project Light Brigade' refers to the plans to deflect the comet's path by nuclear explosion.

(ii) In his letter to Duttada in October, Sir John said that the charge of the Light Brigade had begun and that they hoped for the best. It meant that the spaceship with the payload had been launched on time.

4: Did Sir John buy Christmas presents on December 15? How did Duttada get to know about it?

Ans: Yes, Sir John bought Christmas presents on December 15.

Duttada got to know about it in the letter that Sir John had written to him. It said that he was confident of buying Christmas presents on December 15, indicating that the project was successful.

5: Why, according to Indrani Debi, had the comet not been disastrous? Do you agree with her?

Ans: According to Indrani Debi, the comet had not proved to be disastrous because of the yajna that had been performed in their house. No, the yajna had no impact upon the comet.

The project undertaken by the scientists prevented the comet from colliding with the earth, thereby saving the earth and all its inhabitants from destruction.

6: Is Duttada's general outlook

(i) rational?

(ii) moral?

(iii) traditional?

Choose the right word. Say why you think it right.

Ans: Duttada's general outlook is rational. He is a scientist and he has a scientific outlook. He knows what the Comets are. He knows that there is no connection between the appearance of comets and misfortunes of the earth. He proved his point by not performing the yajna.