

# Chapter 11

## The Rime of Ancient Mariner

### NCERT Question Answers

1.1. Look at the picture carefully and answer the questions given below:



What can you see in the picture? Does the man look happy? Give reasons for your answer.

#### **Answer**

There is a distressed man standing in the company of a few other men, who seem to be on board a ship. The man, definitely, doesn't look happy. He seems to be deep in sorrow, because his neck is hung low and his hand slapped on his forehead.

1.2. Why does he have the bird hanging around his neck?

#### **Answer**

The bird hanging around his neck might symbolize the memory of his committing a terrible

error.

1.3. Have you heard of the expression- 'having an albatross around your neck'? What do you think it means? Does it mean:

- a. Something that you can always be proud of
- b. Something that you have to do because you have no choice
- c. Something that is with you all the time as a reminder that you have done something wrong?

**Answer**

c. Something that is with you all the time as a reminder that you have done something wrong.

1.4. What is an albatross?

**Answer**

An albatross is a large sea-bird with a wing span of about 4m.

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**4. Here are some of the archaic words used in the poem; can you match them with the words used in Modern English Language that mean the same? The first one has been done for you as an example:**

Stoppeth-	Stopped
Thy	entered
Wherefore	why
Stopp'st	you
Thou	lunatic
May'st	at once
Quoth	fainting fit
Loon	has
Eftsoons	can't you
Dropt	stopping

Hath	church
Spake	enemy
Kirk	yes
Paced	see
Foe	call
Aye	trouble
Ken	looking
Swound	your
Hollo	said
Plague	dropped
Look'st	spoke

**Answer**

Stoppeth-	Stopped
Thy	your
Wherefore	why
Stopp'st	stopping
Thou	you
May'st	can't you
Quoth	said
Loon	lunatic
Eftsoons	at once
Dropt	dropped
Hath	has

Spake	spoke
Kirk	church
Paced	entered
Foe	enemy
Aye	yes
Ken	see
Swound	fainting fit
Hollo	call
Plague	trouble
Look'st	looking

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**5. Using the words given above rewrite Part 1 of the poem in your own words. The first stanza has been done as an example:**

It is an ancient Mariner,  
And he stoppeth one of three.

'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,  
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

An old sailor stopped one of the three people passing by, who asked: "Old man, with your long grey beard and glittering eye, why are you stopping me?"

**Answer**

An old sailor stopped one of the three people passing by, who asked: "Old man, with your long grey beard and glittering eye, why are you stopping me? The bridegroom's doors are open and I am one of the next family members. The guests have arrived, the feast is set. Can't you hear the merriment?"

The sailor held him with his skinny hand and said: "There was a ship." The wedding guest, disgustingly said, "Let go of me, you lunatic person," and dropped his hand.

However, the sailor captivated his attention with his glittering eye; the wedding guest stood

still. He was all ears to the old sailor, just like a three years old child, because now the mariner had his will.

The wedding guest was left with no choice but to listen to the ancient sailor. Thus began the narration of the ancient mariner. "There was a loud cheer on board, and the harbor has clear, for the sun to rise above the church, the hill, the lighthouse.

The sun came up upon the left and shone bright all day, and set on the right, going down the sea. The sun rose higher and higher everyday till it touched the mast on noon."

The Wedding Guest beat his breast in impatience because he could hear the loud musical instrument being played.

The bride had started walking down the hall. She was as red as the rose. Before her went a merry procession of singers and musicians.

The wedding guest didn't have a choice but to hear. Thus continued the mariner: "Then came the storm, severe and strong. The storm overtook them, and chased the ship southwards.

The cruel torturous ways of the storm is described here. The storm blew harsh, yelled and chased them towards south. The ship's steer hung low.

They witnessed both mist and snow. The weather became wondrous cold with ice everywhere as bright and clear as emerald.

The floating ice and steep sides of the ice-bergs formed a dismayed sheen, that is, a smooth bright surface of ice.

There was ice all around them. The ice cracked, growled, roared and howled, like noises of a person in a fainting fit.

Then, the albatross arrived through the fog. It was hailed in God's name, as a Christian soul.

It ate the food it had never eaten and flew round the ship. Then, a miracle occurred, when the ice cracked and the helmsman could steer the ship through the ice.

Throughout their journey down south, the albatross followed them, and everyday, came for food or play, at the call of the mariners. The nights turned to become "glimmered" like "the white moonshine."

Part 1 of the poem concludes with the ancient mariner possessing an ill omen about the albatross. This part of the narration gave the ancient mariner a troubled look. When asked the reason for the same by the wedding guest, the mariner let it out and revealed the terrible truth that he shot the albatross.

**6. Answer the following by choosing the right option from those given below:**

(a) The Ancient Mariner stopped one of the three wedding guests because.....

- i. he wanted to attend the wedding with him
- ii. he wanted him to sit with him
- iii. he wanted him to listen to his story
- iv. he wanted to stop him from going to the wedding

**Answer**

iii. he wanted him to listen to his story.

(b) The wedding guest remarked that he was 'next of kin' which means that .....

- i. he was a close relation of the bridegroom
- ii. he was a close relation of the bride
- iii. he was next in line to get married
- iv. he had to stand next to the bridegroom during the wedding

**Answer**

i. he was a close relation of the bridegroom

(c) 'He cannot choose but hear' means.....

- i. the mariner was forced to hear the story of the wedding guest
- ii. the wedding guest was forced to hear the story of the mariner
- iii. the mariner had the choice of not listening to the story of the wedding guest
- iv. the wedding guest had the choice of not listening to the story of the mariner

**Answer**

ii. the wedding guest was forced to hear the story of the mariner

(d) 'The sun came up upon the left, /Out of the sea came he ;'This line tells us that the ship.....

- i. was moving in the northern direction
- ii. was moving eastwards
- iii. was moving in the western direction
- iv. was moving towards the south

**Answer**

iv. was moving towards the south

(e) The Wedding-Guest beat his breast because.....

- i. he could hear the sound of the bassoon
- ii. he was forced to listen to the Mariner's tale when he wanted to attend the wedding
- iii. the sound of the bassoon meant that the bride had arrived and the wedding ceremony was about to begin and he could not attend it.
- iv. the sound of the bassoon announced the arrival of the bride and the start of the wedding ceremony

**Answer**

iii. the sound of the bassoon meant that the bride had arrived and the wedding ceremony was about to begin and he could not attend it.

(f) The storm blast has been described as being tyrannous because.....

- i. it was so fierce that it frightened the sailors
- ii. it took complete control of the ship
- iii. the storm was very powerful
- iv. the sailors were at its mercy

**Answer**

iv. the sailors were at its mercy

(g) The sailors felt depressed on reaching the land of mist and snow because.....

- i. there was no sign of any living creature
- ii. they felt they would die in that cold weather
- iii. they were surrounded by icebergs and there seemed to be no sign of life
- iv. everything was grey in colour and they felt very cold

**Answer**

iii. they were surrounded by icebergs and there seemed to be no sign of life

(h) The sailors were happy to see the albatross because.....

- i. it was the first sign of life and therefore gave them hope that they might survive
- ii. it split the icebergs around the ship and helped the ship move forward.
- iii. it was a messenger from God and it lifted the fog and mist.
- iv. it gave them hope of survival by splitting the icebergs.

**Answer**

ii. it split the icebergs around the ship and helped the ship move forward.

(i) The two things that happened after the arrival of the albatross were .....

- i. the icebergs split and the albatross became friendly with the sailors
- ii. the icebergs split and a strong breeze started blowing
- iii. the ship was pushed out of the land of mist and the ice melted.

iv. the albatross started playing with the mariners and ate the food they offered.

**Answer**

ii. the icebergs split and a strong breeze started blowing

(j) 'It perched for vespers nine' means.....

i. the ship stopped sailing at nine o'clock every day

ii. the albatross would appear at a fixed time everyday.

iii. the albatross would sit on the sail or the mast everyday

iv. the albatross was a holy creature

**Answer**

ii. the albatross would appear at a fixed time every day.

(k) 'God save thee, ancient Mariner, /From the fiends that plague thee thus!- Why look'st thou so?' means.....

i. the mariner wanted to know why the wedding guest was looking so tormented

ii. the wedding guest wanted to know why the mariner was looking so tormented

iii. the wedding guest wanted to know whether some creatures were troubling the ancient mariner

iv. the ancient mariner wanted to know whether something was troubling the wedding guest

**Answer**

ii. the wedding guest wanted to know why the mariner was looking so tormented

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**7. Answer the following questions briefly**

(a) How did the ancient mariner stop the wedding guest?

**Answer**

The ancient mariner held the wedding guest with his skinny hand, and forced him into listening to him, capturing his attention with his glittering eyes. His gaze was so strong and intense, that even though the wedding guest did not want to listen to the story, he was forced to, much against his will.

(b) Was the wedding guest happy to be stopped? Give reasons for your answer.



**Answer**

No, the wedding guest was not happy because he was forcibly detained by the ancient mariner whereas he being a close relative of the bridegroom, was expected to reach there well in time. The guests had already arrived there. The feast was set. The loud sound of bassoon could be heard.

(c) Describe the ancient mariner.

**Answer**

The ancient mariner looks like a lunatic with his grey long beard with glittering eyes, His hands were rough and skinny and he had a mesmerising gaze. The mariner was badly ridden with a sense of guilt and remorse after the wanton act of killing the Albatross. He is cursed to be haunted indefinitely by his dead shipmates, and to be compelled to tell the tale of his downfall at random times.

(d) How does the mariner describe the movement of the ship as it sails away from the land?

**Answer**

The mariner described the movement of the ship as it sailed away from the land in a very animated and interesting way. His description was so realistic that the wedding guest was mesmerised. As the ship moved southward, the weather was pleasant. But soon the weather started changing for the worst. First, a storm broke. It later turned to mist and snow, due to which their ship was stuck in ice.

(e) What kind of weather did the sailors enjoy at the beginning of their journey? How has it been expressed in the poem?

**Answer**

The weather was pleasant and sunny at the beginning of the journey. The sun came as if appearing from the innards of the sea. The sun was bright day after day during the initial phase of the journey.

(f) How did the sailors reach the land of mist and snow?

**Answer**

The sailor started their journey happily. But after a very short spell of smooth journey a very turbulent and violent sea-storm rose. The storm was so powerful that it completely overtook the ship and drove the ship to the extreme South. In this way, the sailors reached the land of mist and snow.

(g) How does the mariner express the fact that the ship was completely surrounded by icebergs?

**Answer**

The words “the ice was here, the ice was there, the ice was all around,” gives us the picture of the ship surrounded, or rather, caught completely by the icebergs.

(h) How do we know that the albatross was not afraid of the humans? Why did the sailors hail it in God’s name?

**Answer**

Albatross didn't fear humans because it followed the mariners day and night and ate and played with them as well. The sailors hailed it in God’s name because it was a messenger from God which lifted the fog and mist.

(i) What was the terrible deed done by the Mariner? Why do you think he did it?

**Answer**

The terrible deed done by the Mariner was that he shot the albatross. I think he did it because he considered its presence to be a bad omen.

**8. There are a number of literary device used in the poem. Some of them have been listed below. Choose the right ones and write them down in the table as shown in the example. In each of the cases explain what they mean.**

Simile, metaphor, alliteration, personification, hyperbole, repetition		
1.	The Wedding-Guest stood still, And listens like a three years' child:	Simile; the wedding guest was completely under the control of the mariner
2.	Below the kirk, below the hill, Below the lighthouse top	

3.	The sun came up upon the left, Out of the sea came he	
4.	The bride hath paced into the hall, Red as a rose is she	
5.	And now the storm-blast came, and he was tyrannous and strong:	
6.	With sloping masts and dipping prow, As who pursued with yell and blow Still treads the shadow of his foe	
7.	The ice was here, the ice was there, The ice was all around	

**Answer**

1.	The Wedding-Guest stood still, And listens like a three years' child:	Simile; the wedding guest was completely under the control of the mariner
2.	Below the kirk, below the hill, Below the lighthouse top	Alliteration; the alphabet 'b' is repeated several times
3.	The sun came up upon the left, Out of the sea came he	Personification; the sun is personified as someone
4.	The bride hath paced into the hall, Red as a rose is she	Simile; the bride is compared to a red rose
5.	And now the storm-blast came, and he was tyrannous and strong:	Hyperbole; the extremity of brutality of the storm is portrayed.
6.	With sloping masts and dipping prow, As who pursued with yell and blow Still treads the shadow of his foe	Personification; 'of his foe' implies reference to the image as an individual
7.	The ice was here, the ice was there, The ice was all around	Repetition; the word 'ice' is repeated several times in the reference.

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**11. Answer the following questions briefly**

(a) In which direction did the ship start moving? How can you say?

**Answer**

The ship started moving northwards. This can be said because the line in the poem says: "the sun now rose upon the right."

(b) Why does the mariner say that 'no sweet bird did follow'?

**Answer**

The mariner says that no sweet bird did follow with reference to the albatross which followed them a few days back, and now is dead.

(c) How did the other mariners behave towards the Ancient Mariner at first? How many times did they change their mind about the Ancient Mariner? What does this tell us about their character?

**Answer**

The other mariners rebuked him at first to have killed the albatross. However, they changed their mind immediately after that to praise the ancient mariner who killed the bird which brought in fog and mist. This shows how confused the mariners were, to set up a fixed notion about the ancient sailor.

(d) How did the sailing conditions change after the ship had moved out of the land of mist and snow? What or who did the mariners blame for this change?

**Answer**

The sailing condition changed for the worst after the ship had moved out of the land of mist and snow. Their ship was stuck in the silent sea. The breeze dropped down, making the sails drop down as well. The ship came to a standstill. The mariners blamed the ancient mariner for this change because he had killed the albatross which brought the breeze.

(e) What is indicated by the line 'The bloody sun, at noon,/Right up above the mast did stand,/No bigger than the moon'?

**Answer**

This line indicates the excessive heat of the sun, which shone above the mast at noon. The word

'bloody' shows how unwelcome the sun was.

(f) How does the mariner describe the fact that they were completely motionless in the middle of the sea?

**Answer**

The stanza "Day after day, day after day,/We stuck, nor breath nor motion,/As idle as a painted ship/Upon a painted ocean," portrays a still picture of the sea and the ship.

(g) What is the irony in the ninth stanza? Explain it in your own words.

**Answer**

The ship was surrounded by the water on all sides. The sailors were in the middle of so much water but they did not have single drop of water to drink. The water of the ocean is salty, and thus inappropriate for the sailors to quench their thirst.

(h) What is the narrator trying to convey through the description of the situation in the tenth and eleventh stanza?

**Answer**

In these stanzas, the narrator tries to convey the standstill description of the ocean and the ship. Everything rot because of the motionless sea. Animals from deep within the ocean had come out of their places and crawled in the slimy sea.

At night, the 'death-fires' seemed to dance near them. The narrator refers to the sea water as the witch's oil. Just like a witch's oil has many shades and keeps boiling, the sea water also had 'green, blue and white' colours. However, this was due to the different coloured creatures crawling in the sea.

(i) What or who did the mariners feel was responsible for their suffering?

**Answer**

The mariners feel the absence of the albatross is the reason for their suffering. Thus, they blame the ancient mariner for killing the albatross.

(j) Describe the condition of the mariners as expressed in the thirteenth stanza.

**Answer**

The mariners were feeling thirsty but they didn't have water to quench their thirst. Their tongue had become completely dry at the root. They couldn't speak because they felt if their throats were choked with soot.

(k) Why did the mariners hang the albatross around the neck of the Ancient Mariner?

**Answer**

The mariners hung the albatross around the neck of the Ancient Mariner as a cursed reminder, so that the thought could plague him for the rest of his life.

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**12. Like part one, the second part also has a number of literary devices. List them out in the same way as you had done in question number seven and explain them.**

**Answer**

Out of the sea came he,	personification of the sun.
Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,	Simile
The furrow followed free,	alliteration
Water, water, everywhere, And all the boards did shrink; Water, water, everywhere, Nor any drop to drink.	repetition
As idle as a painted ship Upon a painted ocean,	simile, hyperbole

**13. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?**

**Answer**

In most of the stanzas of four lines the rhyme scheme is abcb.

In the stanzas of six lines the rhyme scheme is ababcb.

**14. Find examples of the use of interesting sounds from the poem and explain their effect on the reader.**

1.	The ice 'cracked and growled and roared and howled'	Coleridge uses onomatopoeic words which use harsh 'ck' sounds to make the ice sound brutal. He also gives the ice animal sounds to give the impression it has come alive and is attacking the ship

**Answer**

1.	The ice 'cracked and growled, Coleridge uses onomatopoeic words which and roared and howled'	Coleridge uses which onomatopoeic words and roared and howled' use harsh 'ck' sounds to make the ice sound brutal. He also gives the ice animal sounds to give the impression it has come alive and is attacking the ship
	The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,	Cnomatopoeic words which give a smooth picture of the breeze blowing.
	O Christ!	This word exclaims the terror and the horror with which the miserable condition of the sailors is expressed.