

The Hundred Dresses – I

Answers to NCERT Questions

ORAL COMPREHENSION CHECK

1. Where in the classroom does Wanda sit and why?

Ans: Wanda used to sit on the seat next to the last seat, in the last row, in Room Thirteen. She sat there because her feet were normally caked with dry mud which were very dirty. So in order to avoid being laughed at her by her classmates, she sat there to hide her dirty feet.

2. Where does Wanda live? What kind of place do you think it is?

Ans: Wanda lived at Boggins Heights. It seems that it was a place far away from the school and also, where there was a lot of dry mud, thereby, indicating that it was not a very rich locality.

3. When and why do Peggy and Maddie notice Wanda's absence?

Ans: Peggy and Maddie notice Wanda's absence after three days, i.e., on Wednesday because they wanted to be with her for a lot of fun. They waited for her for a long time, but she didn't turn up. Wanda was a quiet and shy girl who was ashamed of dust laden feet. The girls used to make fun of her. This gave them a lot of pleasure, therefore, they wanted to have fun with her.

4. What do you think "to have fun with her" means?

Ans: Wanda was a quiet and shy girl who was ashamed of dust laden feet. The girls used to make fun of her. This gave them a lot of pleasure, therefore, they wanted to have fun with her.

5. In what way was Wanda different from the other children?

Ans: Wanda was different from other children. She did not have any friends. She came to school alone and went home alone. She always wore a faded blue dress that did not fit her properly. Unlike other children, she did not talk to anybody.

6. Did Wanda have a hundred dresses? Why do you think she said she did?

Ans: No, Wanda did not have a hundred dresses because she was poor and wore the same faded dress to school every day. She had an inferiority complex. In order to hide the complex and impress the other girls, she always said that she had a hundred dresses.

7. Why is Maddie embarrassed by the questions Peggy asks Wanda? Is she also like Wanda, or is she different?

Ans: Maddie was embarrassed by the questions Peggy asked Wanda because she was poor herself. She usually wore old clothes, which were handed down by someone else. She did not feel sorry for Wanda. She was worried that perhaps later, everyone would start teasing her too. She thought she was different from Wanda in the sense that she would never claim that she had a hundred dresses. She was not as poor as Wanda. Yet she was afraid that the others might mock her too.

8. Why didn't Maddie ask Peggy to stop teasing Wanda? What was she afraid of?

Ans: Maddie couldn't ask Peggy to stop teasing Wanda because Peggy was her best friend and she had faith in Peggy that she would not do anything wrong. She was afraid of being laughed at for her poor dresses.

9. Who did Maddie think would win the drawing contest? Why?

Ans: Maddie thought that Peggy would win the contest because Peggy drew better than anyone else. She could copy a picture in a magazine, or some filmstar's face so well that one could tell who it was.

10. Who won the drawing contest? What had the winner drawn?

Ans: Wanda had won the drawing contest. The winner of the drawing contest was appreciated by the judges and applauded by her fellow classmates.

THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. How is Wanda seen as different by the other girls? How do they treat her?

Ans: Wanda is seen as different by other girls because she is poor and lonely. The girls made fun of her poverty and teased her by commenting on her dress.

2. How does Wanda feel about the dresses game? Why does she say that she has a hundred dresses?

Ans: Wanda did not show any feelings regarding the dresses game. It is most likely that she was deeply hurt. It could have been one of the reasons why her family left the place and moved to the city.

She was a poor girl who travelled a long distance which made her feet dirty. Wanting to draw the attention of her friends, she felt very happy whenever she told her friends that she had a hundred dresses without realising that they were making fun of her.

3. Why does Maddie stand by and not do anything? How is she different from Peggy? (Was Peggy's friendship important to Maddie? Why? Which lines in the text tell you this?)

Ans: Maddie always stood by Peggy and never did anything as she was afraid that if she did, she would be the next target of the students. She herself was poor and

therefore, felt that if she spoke against others, they would target her next. Unlike her, Peggy was a rich girl. This was also the reason why Maddie could see from Wanda's viewpoint, but Peggy could not. Maddie was Peggy's best friend. It seems as if she was in awe of Peggy. She admired her quite a lot as she said that Peggy was the most liked girl in the room and she drew better than anyone else. She did not have the courage to go against her. Some of the lines from the text which show that Peggy's friendship was important to Maddie are as follows:

- (i) Peggy, who had thought up this game, and Maddie, her inseparable friend, were always the last to leave.
- (ii) She was Peggy's best friend, and Peggy was the best liked girl in the whole room.
- (iii) Peggy could not possibly do anything that was really wrong, she thought.
- (iv) Oh, Maddie was sure Peggy would win.

4. What does Miss Mason think of Wanda's drawings? What do the children think of them? How do you know?

Ans: Miss Mason appreciated the paintings of Wanda. She was impressed at the creativity of the girl because she had painted a hundred paintings which consisted of a wide range. The children also admired the drawings. Everybody stopped and whistled or murmured admiringly. After Miss Mason had announced that Wanda was the winner, they burst into applause, and even the boys were glad to have a chance to stamp on the floor and whistle. Also, just as Peggy and Maddie entered the room, they stopped short and gasped. Later, they recognised the designs as those which Wanda had described to them. And in the end, Peggy exclaimed, "... and I thought I could draw". This shows that she also realised how good Wanda's drawings were.

THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

Combine the following to make sentences.

1. This is the bus (what kind of bus?) It goes to Agra. (use which or that)

Ans: This is the bus which goes to Agra.

2. I would like to buy (a) shirt (which shirt?). (The) shirt is in the shop window. (use which or that)

Ans: I would like to buy the shirt that is in the shop window.

3. You must break your fast at a particular time (when?). You see the moon in the sky. (use when)

Ans: You must break your fast when you see the moon in the sky.

4. Find a word (what kind of word?). It begins with the letter Z. (use which or that)

Ans: Find a word which begins with the letter Z.

5. Now find a person (what kind of person?). His or her name begins with the letter Z. (use whose)

Ans: Now find a person whose name starts with the letter Z.

6. Then go to the place (what place?). There are no people whose name begins with Z in that place. (use where)

Ans: Then go to the place where there are no people whose name begins with Z.

Can you say whose point of view the italicised words express?

(i) But on Wednesday, Peggy and Maddie, *who sat down in front with other children, who got good marks and who didn't track in a whole lot of mud*, did notice that Wanda wasn't there.

Ans: In the given sentence, the italicised words express the point of view of Peggy and Maddie.

(ii) Wanda Petronski. *Most of the children in Room Thirteen didn't have names like that. They had names easy to say, like Thomas, Smith or Allen.*

Ans: In the given sentence, the italicised words express the point of view of the narrator.

Look at this sentence. The italicised adverb expresses an opinion or point of view.

Obviously, the only dress Wanda had was the blue one she wore every day. (This was obvious to the speaker.)

Other such adverbs are apparently, evidently, surprisingly, possibly, hopefully, incredibly, luckily. Use these words appropriately in the blanks in the sentences below. (You may use a word more than once and more than one word may be appropriate for a given blank.)

1. _____, he finished his work on time.

Ans: Surprisingly, he finished his work on time.

2. _____, it will not rain on the day of the match.

Ans: Hopefully, it will not rain on the day of the match.

3. _____, he had been stealing money from his employer.

Ans: Evidently, he had been stealing money from his employer.

4. Television is _____ to blame for the increase in violence in society.

Ans: Television is evidently to blame for the increase in violence in society.

5. The children will _____ learn from their mistakes.

Ans: The children will hopefully learn from their mistakes.

6. I can't _____ lend you that much money.

Ans: I can't possibly lend you that much money.

7. The thief had _____ been watching the house for many days.

Ans: The thief had apparently been watching the house for many days.

8. The thief _____ escaped by bribing the jailor.

Ans: The thief possibly escaped by bribing the jailor.

9. _____, no one had suggested this before.

Ans: Surprisingly, no one had suggested this before.

10. The water was _____ hot.

Ans: The water was incredibly hot.

Additional Questions

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow: (4 Marks each)

1. Today, Monday, Wanda Petronski was not in her seat. But nobody, not even Peggy and Madeline, the girls who started all the fun, noticed her absence. Usually Wanda sat in the seat next to the last seat in the last row in Room Thirteen. She sat in the corner of the room where the rough boys who did not make good marks sat, the corner of the room where there was most scuffling of feet, most roars of laughter when anything funny was said, and most mud and dirt on the floor.

Wanda did not sit there because she was rough and noisy. On the contrary, she was very quiet and rarely said anything at all. And nobody had ever heard her laugh out loud. Sometimes she twisted her mouth into a crooked sort of smile, but that was all.

- Where did Wanda Petronski usually sit?
- Did Peggy and Madeline notice Wanda's absence?
- How did most of the boys create fun in the classroom?
- What kind of a girl was Wanda?

Ans:

- a) She usually sat in the corner next to the last seat in the last row.
- b) No, Peggy and Madeline did not notice Wanda's absence.
- c) They created fun by scuffling their feet on the ground and laughing loudly.
- d) Wanda was a quiet and calm girl.

2. Nobody knew exactly why Wanda sat in that seat, unless it was because she came all the way from Boggins Heights and her feet were usually caked with dry mud. But no one really thought much about Wanda Petronski, once she sat in the corner of the room.

The time when they thought about Wanda was outside of school hours — at noon-time when they were coming back to school or in the morning early before school began, when groups of two or three, or even more, would be talking and laughing on their way to the school yard.

Then, sometimes, they waited for Wanda — to have fun with her.

- a) Where did Wanda come from?
- b) What happened after Wanda sat in the corner of the room?
- c) When did classmates think of Wanda?
- d) Why did they wait for Wanda?

Ans:

- a) Wanda came from Boggins Heights.
- b) After she sat in the corner of the room, nobody thought much of her.
- c) They thought of her outside of school hours.
- d) They waited for her to have fun with her.

3. The next day, Tuesday, Wanda was not in school, either. And nobody noticed her absence again.

But on Wednesday, Peggy and Maddie, who sat down front with other children who got good marks and who didn't track in a whole lot of mud, did notice that Wanda wasn't there. Peggy was the most popular girl in school. She was pretty, she had many pretty clothes and her hair was curly. Maddie was her closest friend. The reason Peggy and Maddie noticed Wanda's absence was because Wanda had made them late to school.

They had waited and waited for Wanda, to have some fun with her, and she just hadn't come.

They often waited for Wanda Petronski — to have fun with her.

- a) Did Wanda come to school on Tuesday?
- b) Where did Peggy and Maddie sit?
- c) Who was the most popular girl in the school?
- d) Why did Peggy and Maddie think of Wanda?

Ans:

- a) No, Wanda did not come to school on Tuesday.
- b) Peggy and Maddie sat in the front where other children, who got good marks, sat.
- c) Peggy was the most popular girl in the school.
- d) They thought of Wanda because she had made them late for school.

4. Wanda didn't have any friends. She came to school alone and went home alone. She always wore a faded blue dress that didn't hang right. It was clean, but it looked as though it had never been ironed properly. She didn't have any friends, but a lot of girls talked to her. Sometimes, they surrounded her in the school yard as she stood watching the little girls play hopscotch on the worn hard ground.

"Wanda," Peggy would say in a most courteous manner as though she were talking to Miss Mason. "Wanda", she'd say, giving one of her friends a nudge, "tell us. How many dresses did you say you had hanging up in your closet ?"

"A hundred," Wanda would say.

"A hundred!" exclaimed all the little girls incredulously, and the little ones would stop playing hopscotch and listen.

- a) What kind of dress did Wanda wear?
- b) How did Peggy make fun of Wanda?
- c) Did Wanda have any friends?
- d) What would Wanda say when Peggy questioned her about dresses?

Ans:

- a) She wore a faded blue dress.
- b) Peggy made fun of Wanda by asking a question about how many dresses she had at home.
- c) No, Wanda did not have any friends.
- d) Wanda would say that she had a hundred dresses lined up in her closet.

5. Peggy was not really cruel. She protected small children from bullies. And she cried for hours if she saw an animal mistreated. If anybody had said to her, "Don't you think that is a cruel way to treat Wanda?" she would have been very surprised. Cruel? Why did the girl say she had a hundred dresses? Anybody could tell that that was a lie. Why did she want to lie? And she wasn't just an ordinary person, else why did she have a name like that? Anyway, they never made her cry.

As for Maddie, this business of asking Wanda every day how many dresses and how many hats, and how many this and that she had was bothering her. Maddie was poor herself. She usually wore somebody's hand-me-down clothes. Thank goodness, she didn't live up on Boggins Heights or have a funny name.

- a) How did Peggy react when she saw an animal mistreated?
- b) How would Peggy react if someone said that she was cruel towards Wanda?
- c) What did Peggy and Maddie think of Wanda?
- d) How do you know that Maddie was also poor?

Ans:

- a) When she saw an animal mistreated, she would cry for hours.
- b) She would be surprised.
- c) She thought that Wanda wasn't just an ordinary person.
- d) Maddie wore somebody's hand-me-down clothes. This shows that she was also poor.

Short Answer Questions (30-40 words: 2 Marks each)

1. How did Peggy and Maddie try to amend their behaviour towards Wanda?

Ans: Both Peggy and Maddie felt guilty for their behaviour towards Wanda. Maddie felt very sad to know that Wanda and her family were leaving the town. Both of them wrote a friendly letter to Wanda telling her that she had won the contest. They asked her if she liked the place where she was living. They wanted to say sorry to her.

2. Why was Maddie sure that Peggy would win the dress designing contest?

Ans: Maddie was sure that Peggy would win the dress designing contest because according to her, and everyone in the class, Peggy was the best artist in class.

3. How did Peggy make fun of Wanda Petronski?

Ans: Peggy would wait to make fun of Wanda at school. She would most courteously ask her, how many dresses she had hanging in her closet. Wanda would reply that there were a hundred. Peggy would then ask about the dress material, and when Wanda walked away, would burst into laughter, sarcastically making fun of her.

4. What kind of girl was Wanda? Where did she usually sit in the class?

Ans: Wanda was a quiet girl who rarely laughed out loud. She didn't have any friend and always come to school, and went home alone. She usually sat in the corner of the room, where those who didn't get good marks sat, and which was the noisiest and the dirtiest area in the room.

5. Why did children make fun of Wanda?

Ans: Children made fun of Wanda because she had a funny name. And also because she came to school wearing the same faded blue dress, although she claimed that she had a hundred dresses—all of different designs, colours and a variety of clothes—silk and velvet.

6. Did Wanda have a hundred dresses? Why did she say so and how did she prove that?

Ans: No, she did not have the actual hundred dresses. She had only the drawings of a hundred dresses on papers. All had different designs and colours. She had lined them up in her closet. She proved herself right by submitting a hundred drawings of dresses in the drawing and painting competition of her school.

7. Why did Maddie write a note to Peggy and then tore it?

Ans: Maddie wanted Peggy to stop teasing Wanda. She thought it was cruel. She could not dare to say all this verbally, so she wrote a note to Peggy. But then she pictured herself as a new target for Peggy and other girls, making fun of her for wearing hand-me-down clothes. So she shuddered and tore the note.

8. Who was Maddie?

Ans: Maddie belonged to a poor family. She wore old clothes which were given by others because her parents were not rich. They lived in a simple house.

9. What was the opinion of the judges about Wanda?

Ans: Wanda had drawn one-hundred designs of dresses, which were all different and all beautiful. In the opinion of the judges, any one of the drawings was worthy of winning the prize. So she was declared the winner of the girl medal.

10. How can you say that Peggy was a soft girl?

Ans: Peggy was not really cruel. She protected smaller children from bullies. If she saw an animal mistreated, she would cry for hours.

11. Maddie wrote a note for Peggy, but she tore it away. Why?

Ans: Maddie wanted that Peggy should stop teasing and making fun of Wanda. So she wrote a note to Peggy. But she lacked the courage to give that note to Peggy, fearing lest she should lose Peggy's friendship. So, she tore the note.

Long Answer Questions (100-150 words: 8 Marks each)

1. Wanda had no friends and nobody liked to talk to her. Do you think such an attitude of children towards Wanda is justified? Is it right to judge people on the basis of their social status? Write your views on this.

Ans: Wanda was a quiet girl who rarely laughed out loud. She didn't have any friend and always came to school and went home alone. Children made fun of her because she had a funny name, and also because she came to school wearing the same faded blue dress. Although she claimed that she had a hundred dresses. This type of attitude is not justified. It is not at all right to judge people on the basis of their social status.

Although Wanda did not have the actual dresses, she had the drawings of the dresses on papers. All of different colours and designs. She proved herself by submitting a hundred drawings of dresses in the drawing and painting competition of her school. People who judge others with their socio-economic background, need to learn that such things are not the parameters to judge a person's capabilities. They should respect others.

2. Maddie loathed the business of asking Wanda about her dresses but she found it difficult to stop Peggy to do so. Why could she not stop Peggy? Was she afraid of losing the friendship of Peggy? Comment.

Ans: Maddie did not approve of Peggy's teasing of Wanda because she was as poor as Wanda. But she could not stop Peggy as she did not have the courage to do so because Peggy was her best friend and thought that if she asked her to do so, she might lose her friendship. Secondly, she thought that once the students stop teasing Wanda, they might ask her similar questions. I think a true friend should stop his/her friend of doing wrong things. She should guide him/her in the right direction.

3. What does this story tell us about Wanda Petronski?

Ans: Wanda Petronski was a Polish girl. Her family had immigrated to America. She studied in a school with other American students. She belonged to a very poor family. Daily she came to school in a faded blue dress. It was clean but not properly ironed. She used to sit in the corner of Room Thirteen in the last row. This was a corner where the rough boys, who did not make good marks, sat. Wanda did not sit there because she was rough and noisy, on the contrary, she was very quiet. But she came on foot from Boggins Heights area and brought a lot of dirt with her shoes. She was a reserved girl and did not speak much in the class. No one had ever heard her laugh.

4. Who were Peggy and Maddie? How did they and other girls make fun of Wanda?

Ans: Peggy and Maddie were the two classmates of Wanda. Peggy was the most popular girl in the school. She was pretty and had curly hair. She belonged to a rich family. She had many pretty clothes. Maddie was her closest friend. Peggy and Maddie were not bad girls, but they used to have some fun with Wanda Petronski. The students in Wanda's class found her name funny. Wanda was always alone in her class. Peggy made fun of Wanda and asked her how many dresses she had in her closet. Wanda replied that she had one hundred dresses. Then Peggy would ask her whether the dresses were of silk or velvet. Wanda would reply that she had dresses of velvet as well as silk. The girls would ask her how many pairs of shoes she had. At this, Wanda would tell them that she had sixty pairs of shoes. The girls would suppress their laugh while talking to her. But as soon as Wanda's back was turned, they would burst into peals of laughter.

5. What do you know about Maddie?

Ans: Maddie was one of the classmates of Wanda. She was Peggy's best friend. Maddie herself was a poor girl. She used to wear clothes given by other persons. So she was sympathetic to Wanda. She and Peggy were fast friends. That is why, she never said anything when Peggy made fun of Wanda. But she herself never laughed at Wanda. She did not like Peggy asking Wanda about the dresses. Whenever Peggy mocked at Wanda, Maddie felt bad. She wished that Peggy would stop teasing Wanda Petronski. Maddie decided to write a note for Peggy asking her to stop making fun of Wanda, but she could not muster the courage to give the note to her.

6. When did Peggy and Maddie notice Wanda's absence from school?

Ans: Wanda did not come to school on Monday. But nobody noticed her. She did not come on Tuesday also. But when she missed the school on Wednesday, Peggy and Maddie noted her absence. They wondered why she had not come to school. Maddie remembered Wanda talking about one of her dresses which was pale blue with coloured trimmings. Then Maddie thought about the drawing and the colour contest in the school. The girls were to design dresses and the boys were to design motorboats. Maddie thought that Peggy would win the contest as she was very good at design.

Self- Assessment Test

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. Sometimes, when Peggy was asking Wanda those questions in that mocking polite voice, Maddie felt embarrassed and studied the marbles in the palm of her hand, rolling them around and saying nothing herself. Not that she felt sorry for Wanda, exactly. She would never have paid any attention to Wanda if Peggy hadn't invented the dresses game. But suppose Peggy and all the others started in on her next? She wasn't as poor as Wanda, perhaps, but she was poor. Of course, she would have more sense than to say she had a hundred dresses. Still she would not like for them to begin on her. She wished Peggy would stop teasing Wanda Petronski.

- a) When did Maddie feel embarrassed?
- b) When would Maddie never have paid any attention to Wanda?
- c) What additional benefit did Maddie think she had than Wanda?
- d) What did Maddie wish?

2. Today, even though they had been late to school, Maddie was glad she had not had to make fun of Wanda. She worked her arithmetic problems absent-mindedly. "Eight times eight—let's see ..." She wished she had the nerve to write Peggy a note, because she knew she never would have the courage to speak right out to Peggy, to say, "Hey, Peg, let's stop asking Wanda how many dresses she has." When she finished her arithmetic she did start a note to Peggy. Suddenly she paused and shuddered. She

pictured herself in the school yard, a new target for Peggy and the girls. Peggy might ask her where she got the dress that she had on, and Maddie would have to say it was one of Peggy's old ones that Maddie's mother had tried to disguise with new trimmings so no one in Room Thirteen would recognise it.

- a) Why was Maddie glad?
- b) How did Maddie want to ask Peggy not to make fun of Wanda?
- c) What made Maddie feel 'shuddered'?
- d) How did Maddie think Peggy would humiliate her?

Short Answer Questions

1. How was Wanda treated at school?
2. Why was Wanda announced the winner?
3. Who was Wanda Petronski?
4. What does the story, 'The Hundred Dresses' teach us?
5. What was the drawing contest about?

Long Answer Questions

1. Though Peggy and Maddie were good friends, they differed greatly in their thinking. Substantiate giving references from the story, 'The Hundred Dresses'.
2. Describe the scene where Wanda's dress drawings are displayed. Who won the drawing contest for girls?
3. What made Maddie feel uncomfortable and uneasy when Peggy and other girls made fun of Wanda Petronski?