

Mijbil The Otter

Answers to NCERT Questions

ORAL COMPREHENSION CHECK

1. What 'experiment' did Maxwell think Camusfearna would be suitable for?

Ans: Maxwell thought that he would keep an otter instead of a dog. Camusfearna, ringed by water a very short distance from its door, would be an eminently suitable spot for the experiment.

2. Why does he go to Basra? How long does he wait there, and why?

Ans: He went to Basra, to the Consulate-General, to collect and answer his mail from Europe. He had had to wait there for five days. To start with, his mail didn't reach on time. Then he tried to make a telephone call. This incident is of those days when one had to book an international call 24 hrs in advance. The telephone line was not working properly on the first day. Next day, it was some public holiday, so it was not working. Finally, after a torturous wait of five days, his mail arrived.

3. How does he get the otter? Does he like it? Pick up the words that tell you this.

Ans: When he received his mail, he carried it to his bedroom to read. There he saw two Arabs and beside them was a sack that twisted from time to time. They handed him a note from his friend saying that he has sent him an otter.

Yes, he liked it. We know this because he uses the term 'otter fixation' to refer to his feeling towards the otter. He felt that his otter fixation or this strong attachment towards otters was something that was shared by most other people who had ever owned one.

4. Why was the otter named 'Maxwell's' otter?

Ans: The otter was a race previously unknown to science and was at length named by zoologists Lutrogale Perspicillata Maxwell or Maxwell's otter.

5. Tick the right answer. In the beginning, the otter was

aloof and indifferent

friendly

hostile

Ans: In the beginning, otter was aloof and indifferent.

6. What happened when Maxwell took Mijbil to the bathroom? What did it do two days after that?

Ans: When Maxwell took Mijbil to the bathroom, it went wild with joy in the water for half an hour. It was plunging and rolling in it, shooting up and down the length of the bathtub under water, and making enough slosh and splash for a hippo.

Two days after that, it escaped from his bedroom. By the time he got there, Mijbil was up on the end of the bathtub and fumbling at the chromium taps with its paws. In less than a minute, it had turned the tap far enough to produce some water and after a moment, achieved the full flow.

7. How was Mij to be transported to England?

Ans: Maxwell booked a flight to Paris and from there, he would go on to London. The airline insisted that Mij should be packed in a box (not more than eighteen inches square) that was to be placed on the floor, near his feet.

8. What did Mij do to the box?

Ans: The box was lined with metal sheet. Mij didn't find it comfortable to be there, so he tried to escape. In its attempt to escape, Mij tore into the metal lining of the box. As a result, it hurt itself and started bleeding.

9. Why does Maxwell say the air-hostess was "the very queen of her kind"?

Ans: Maxwell said that the air-hostess was "the very queen of her kind because she was extremely kind and helpful. He took her into his confidence about the incident with the box. She suggested that he might prefer to have his pet on his knee. Hearing this, he developed a profound admiration for her, for she understood the pain of both the otter and its owner.

10. What happened when the box was opened?

Ans: When the box was opened, Mij went out of the box. He disappeared at a high speed down the aircraft. There were cries all around. A woman stood up on her seat screaming that there was a rat. He saw Mij's tail disappearing beneath the legs of an Indian passenger. He dived for it but missed. The air-hostess suggested him to be seated and that she would find the otter. After a while, Mij returned to him. It climbed on his knees and began to rub its nose, his face and neck.

11. What game had Mij invented?

Ans: Mij had invented a game with ping-pong ball. He would put the ball at one end of the sloping lid of a suitcase and then grab it as it ran to the other end.

12. What are 'compulsive habits'? What does Maxwell say are the compulsive habits of

- i. school children?
- ii. Mij?

Ans: Compulsive habits are usually strange act of behaviour which a person does without clear reason.

On their way to and from school, children make it a habit to place their feet exactly on the centre of each paving block. Similarly, Mij had made it a habit to jump on to the school wall and go galloping all along its length of thirty yards.

13. What group of animals do otters belong to?

Ans: Otters belong to a comparatively small group of animals called Mustellines, shared by the badger, mongoose, weasel, stoat, mink and others.

14. What guesses did the Londoners make about what Mij was?

Ans: According to Maxwell, the average Londoner does not recognise otter. The Londoners who saw Mij made different guesses about who Mij was. They guessed, among other things, that it was a baby seal, a squirrel, a walrus, a hippo, a beaver, a bear cub, a leopard and a brontosaur.

THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. What things does Mij do which tell you that he is an intelligent, friendly and fun-loving animal who needs love?

Ans: Mij was an intelligent animal. It invented its own games out of the ping-pong ball. It screwed the tap till the water began to flow and then it would play and splash in the water. Though it was aloof and indifferent in the beginning, it soon became very friendly. It formed a special attachment with Maxwell. It responded when Maxwell called out his name. It grew desperate when Maxwell left it in a box and it got hurt while trying to come out of it. After Maxwell took it out, it clung to its feet. It was a fun-loving animal. It enjoyed playing all kinds of games. It would play with a selection of toys, ping-pong balls, marbles, rubber fruit, and a terrapin shell. It required love and affection from Maxwell and it got that readily.

2. What are some of the things we got to know about otters from the text?

Ans: Otters belong to a comparatively small group of animals called Mustellines, shared by the badgers, mongoose, weasel, stoat, mink and others. Maxwell's otter was a race previously unknown to science and was at length named by zoologists *Lutrogale Perspicillata Maxwelli* or Maxwell's otter. They are found in large number in marshes. They are often tamed by the Arabs. It is the characteristic of otters that every drop of water must be extended and spread about the place; a bowl must at once be overturned, or, if it could not be overturned, be sat in and splashed in until overflowed. For them, water must be kept on the move. Otters love playing various games, especially with a ball.

3. Why is Mij's species now known to the world as Maxwell's otter?

Ans: Maxwell's otter was of a race previously unknown to science and was at length named by zoologists *Lutrogale Perspicillata Maxwelli* or Maxwell's otter.

4. Maxwell in the story speaks for the otter, Mij. He tells us what the otter feels and thinks on different occasions. Given below are some things otter does. Complete the column on the right to say what Maxwell says about what Mij feels and thinks.

What Mij does	How Mij feels or thinks
Plunges, rolls in the water and makes the water splosh and splash	
Screws the tap in the wrong way	
Nuzzles Maxwell's face and neck in the aeroplane	

Ans:

What Mij does	How Mij feels or thinks
Plunges, rolls in the water and makes the water splosh and splash	went wild with joy
Screws the tap in the wrong way	irritated and disappointed
Nuzzles Maxwell's face and neck in the aeroplane	distressed chitter of recognition and welcome

5. Read the story and find the sentences where Maxwell describes his pet otter. Then choose and arrange your sentences to illustrate those statements below that you think are true.

Maxwell's description

- i. makes Mij seem almost human, like a small boy.
- ii. shows that he is often irritated with what Mij does.
- iii. shows that he is often surprised by what Mij does.
- iv. of Mij's antics is comical.
- v. shows that he observes the antics of Mij very carefully.
- vi. shows that he thinks Mij is a very ordinary otter.
- vii. shows that he thinks the otter is very unusual.

Ans:

(i) He spent most of his time in play.

(ii) Watched, amazed; in less than a minute he had turned the tap far enough to produce a trickle of water, and after a moment or two, achieved a full flow.

(v) A suitcase that I had taken to Iraq had become damaged on the journey home, so that the lid, when closed, remained at a slope from one end to the other. Mij discovered that if he placed the ball on the high end, it would run down the length of the suitcase. He would dash around to the other end to ambush its arrival, hide from it, crouching, to spring up and take it by surprise, grab it and trot off with it to the high end once more.

(vii) It is not, I suppose, in any way strange that the average Londoner should not recognise an otter, but the variety of guesses as to what kind of animal might be as a surprise to me. Mij was anything but an otter.

THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

From the table below, make as many correct sentences as you can using *would* and/or *used to*, as appropriate. (Hint: First decide whether the words in italics show an action, or a statement or situation, in the past.) Then add two or three sentences of your own to it.

Emperor Akbar	would used to	<i>be fond of musical evenings.</i>
Every evening we		<i>take long walks on the beach.</i>
Fifty years ago, very few people		<i>own cars.</i>
Till the 1980s, Shanghai		<i>have very dirty streets.</i>
My uncle		<i>spend his holidays by the sea.</i>

Ans:

- i. Emperor Akbar used to be fond of musical evenings.
- ii. Every evening we used to take long walks on the beach.
- iii. Fifty years ago, very few people used to own cars.
- iv. Till the 1980s, Shanghai used to have very dirty streets.
- v. My uncle would spend his holidays by the sea.

Look at these examples from the text, and say the modifiers (in italics) are nouns, proper nouns, or adjective plus noun.

(i) An otter fixation

Ans: Noun

(ii) The iron railings

Ans: Noun

(iii) The Tigris marshes

Ans: Proper noun

(iv) The London streets

Ans: Proper noun

(v) Soft velvet fur

Ans: Adjective plus noun

(vi) A four-footed soccer player

Ans: Adjective plus noun

Given below are some nouns, and a set of modifiers (in the box). Combine the nouns and modifiers to make as many phrases as you can. (Hint: The nouns and modifiers are all from the texts in this book.)

temple	girls	triangle	dresses
person	thoughts	boys	roar
gifts	scream	farewell	expression
time	subject	landscape	handkerchief
crossing	flight	chatterbox	profession
physique	coffee	view	celebration

college	uncomfortable	tremendous	heartbreaking	three
love	railroad	panoramic	first	
bare	invigorating	loud	ordinary	
plump	ridiculous	stone	slack	
incorrigible	hundred	slang	marriage	
rough	white	family	birthday	

Ans:

temple	–	white temple, stone temple, first temple
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person	–	incorrigible person, ridiculous person
gifts	–	hundred gifts, ordinary gifts, birthday gifts
time	–	college time, rough time, first time
crossing	–	railroad crossin, first crossing
physique	–	plump physique, ordinary physique
three girls	–	first three girls, incorrigible three girls
thoughts	–	incorrigible thoughts, uncomfortable thoughts, ridiculous thoughts, heartbreaking thoughts, first thoughts, ordinary thoughts
scream	–	tremendous scream, loud scream
subject	–	college subject, ordinary subject
flight	–	rough flight, first flight
coffee	–	invigorating coffee, ordinary coffee
triangle	–	love triangle
boys	–	college boys, incorrigible boys, rough boys, hundred boys
farewell	–	college farewell, heartbreaking farewell
landscape	–	bare landscape, rough landscape, white landscape
chatterbox	–	incorrigible chatterbox
view	–	tremendous view, panoramic view, ordinary view
dresses	–	hundred dresses, ordinary dresses, birthday dresses, marriage dresses
roar	–	tremendous roar, loud roar
expression	–	bare expression, slang expression, slack expression
handkerchief	–	white handkerchief, ordinary handkerchief
profession	–	family profession, first profession, ordinary profession
celebration	–	tremendous celebration, family celebration, birthday celebration

Match the words on the left with the word on the right. Some words on the left can go with more than one word on the right.

(i)	a portion of	–	blood
(ii)	a pool of	–	cotton
(iii)	flakes of	–	stones
(iv)	a huge heap of	–	gold
(v)	a gust of	–	fried fish
(vi)	little drops of	–	snow

(vii)	a piece of	–	water
(viii)	a pot of	–	wind

Ans:

(i)	a portion of	–	fried fish
(ii)	a pool of	–	blood
(iii)	flakes of	–	snow
(iv)	a huge heap of	–	stones
(v)	a gust of	–	wind
(vi)	little drops of	–	water
(vii)	a piece of	–	cotton
(viii)	a pot of	–	gold

Use a bit of/ a piece of/a bunch of/ a cloud of/ a lump of with the italicised nouns in the following sentences. The first has been done for you as an example.

i	My teacher gave me <i>some advice</i> .	My teacher gave me a bit of advice.
ii	Can you give me <i>some clay</i> please?	_____
iii	The <i>information</i> you gave me was very useful.	_____
iv	Because of these factories, <i>smoke</i> hangs over the city.	_____
v	Two <i>stones</i> rubbed together can produce sparks of fire.	_____
vi	He gave me <i>some flowers</i> on my birthday.	_____

Ans:

(i)	My teacher gave me <i>some advice</i> .	<u>My teacher gave me a bit of advice.</u>
(ii)	Can you give me <i>some clay</i> please?	<u>Can you give me a lump of clay please?</u>
(iii)	The <i>information</i> you gave me was <u>very useful</u> .	<u>The piece of information you gave was very useful.</u>
(iv)	Because of these factories <i>smoke</i> <u>hangs over the city</u> .	<u>Because of these factories, a cloud of hangs over the city.</u>
(v)	Two <i>stones</i> rubbed together can <u>produce sparks of fire</u> .	<u>Two pieces of stones rubbed together can produce sparks of fire.</u>

(vi)	He gave me <i>some flowers</i> on <u>birthday</u> .	<u>He gave me a bunch of flowers on my</u> my birthday.
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Additional Questions

Extract Based Questions

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

1. Two days later, Mijbil escaped from my bedroom as I entered it, and I turned to see his tail disappearing round the bend of the corridor that led to the bathroom. By the time I got there he was up on the end of the bathtub and fumbling at the chromium taps with his paws. I watched, amazed; in less than a minute he had turned the tap far enough to produce a trickle of water, and after a moment or two achieved the full flow.

- a. Who was Mijbil?
- b. What was the cause of the narrator's surprise?
- c. What do you know about Mijbil?
- d. Where did Mijbil go?

Ans:

- a. Mijbil was the otter.
- b. The narrator was surprised to find otter turning the tap on to play with water.
- c. Mijbil was an otter that the narrator had kept as a pet.
- d. Mijbil went to the narrator's bathroom.

2. With the opening of that sack began a phase of my life that has not yet ended, and may, for all I know, not end before I do. It is, in effect, a thralldom to otters, an otter fixation, that I have since found to be shared by most other people, who have ever owned one.

- a. Which creature emerged from the sack?
- b. With what was the otter coated?
- c. What was the new phase of the author's life?
- d. Why was the otter named 'Maxwell's otter'?

Ans:

- a. An otter emerged from the sack.
- b. The otter was coated with symmetrical pointed scales of mud armour.
- c. It was a thralldom to otters. It was a strong attachment and feeling for the otter.
- d. The otter was of a race previously unknown to science and was at length christened by zoologists as Maxwell's otter.

3. But the real play of an otter is when he lies on his back and juggles with small objects between his paws. Marbles were Mij's favourite toys for this pastime: he would lie on his back rolling two or more of them up and down his wide, flat belly without ever dropping one to the floor.

- a. What is the real play of an otter?
- b. What are Mij's favourite toys?
- c. How did he conduct with them?
- d. What do you know about Mij?

Ans:

- a. He lies on his back and juggles with small toys between his paws.
- b. Marbles are Mij's favourite toys.
- c. He would lie on his back rolling two or more of them up and down his wide, flat belly without ever dropping one to the floor.
- d. Mij is an otter that the author had kept as a pet.

4. Early in the New Year of 1956 I travelled to Southern Iraq. By then it had crossed my mind that I should like to keep an otter instead of a dog and that Camusfearna, ringed by water a stone's throw from its door, would be an eminently suitable spot for this experiment. When I casually mentioned this to a friend, he as casually replied that I had better get one in the Tigris marshes, for there they were as common as mosquitoes, and were often tamed by the Arabs.

- a. Where did the narrator go?
- b. What did he want as a pet?
- c. What 'experiment' did Maxwell think Camusfearna would be suitable for?
- d. Why did the narrator think of keeping an otter in place of a dog as a pet?

Ans:

- a. The narrator went to Southern Iraq.
- b. He wanted an otter as a pet.
- c. Maxwell thought of buying an otter instead of a dog and thought Camusfearna ringed with water would be suitable for keeping an otter.
- d. The narrator's pet dog had died, he was too sad to think of keeping a dog again.

5. I cabled to England, and when, three days later, nothing had happened, I tried to telephone. The call had to be booked twenty-four hours in advance. On the first day the line was out of order; on the second the exchange was closed for a religious holiday. On the third day, there was another breakdown. My friend left, and I arranged to meet him in a week's time. Five days later, my mail arrived. I carried it to my bedroom to read, and there, squatting on the floor, were two Arabs; besides them lay a sack that squirmed from time to time. They handed me a note from my friend: "Here is your otter...."

- a. What was the main problem in getting the mail?
- b. What did the narrator get in the package?
- c. What did he see when he entered his room?
- d. Why did the sack squirm from time-to-time?

Ans:

- a. On the first day, the line was out of order, then exchange was closed for a religious holiday and then another breakdown.
- b. The narrator got a pet — an otter.
- c. He saw two Arabs with an otter in a sack.
- d. The sack squirmed from time-to-time because there was an otter in it.

6. Mijbil, as I called the otter, was, in fact, of a race previously unknown to science, and was at length christened by zoologists *Lutrogale perspicillata* Maxwell, or Maxwell's otter. For the first twenty-four hours Mijbil was neither hostile nor friendly; he was simply aloof and indifferent, choosing to sleep on the floor as far from my bed as possible. The second night Mijbil came on to my bed in the small hours and remained asleep in the crook of my knees until the servant brought tea in the morning, and during the day he began to lose his apathy and take a keen, much too keen, interest in his surroundings.

- a. 'Maxwell's otter'. Why was the otter given this name?
- b. What was his behaviour during the first twenty-four hours?
- c. What shows that the otter tried to be friendly on the second night?
- d. When did Mijbil come to the narrator's bed?

Ans:

- a. The zoologists had christened it as *Lutrogale perspicillata* Maxwell, or Maxwell's otter after the narrator as it was of a race previously unknown to science.
- b. Otter's behaviour during the first twenty-four hours was neither friendly nor hostile.
- c. He came to the narrator's bed and slept in the groove of his knees.
- d. Mijbil came to the narrator's bed in the early hours of the morning.

7. The creature that emerged from this sack on the spacious tiled floor of the Consulate bedroom resembled most of all a very small, mediievally conceived, dragon. From the head to tip of the tail, he was coated with symmetrical pointed scales of mud armour, between whose tips was visible a soft velvet fur like that of a chocolate-brown mole.

- a. Which creature is being talked about here?
- b. What did it resemble?
- c. Why was he covered with mud?
- d. How is the otter described in the above lines?

Ans:

- a. Otter.

- b. It looked like a small medieval-conceived dragon.
- c. He was covered in mud because nobody gave him a bath.
- d. The otter has been described as a soft velvet fur like that of a chocolate-brown mole.

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

1. Describe the havoc created by Mijbil on the aeroplane when it came out of the box.

Ans: When Maxwell opened the box, Mijbil came out and disappeared at a high speed on the aircraft. He caused a great hue and cry in the aircraft. There were sounds of shrieks across the flight.

2. What were the guesses made by the Londoners about Mijbil?

Ans: According to Maxwell, the average Londoner does not recognise otter. Whosoever saw Mijbil, made different guesses about who he was. They would guess him to be a squirrel, a walrus, a hippo, a beaver, a bear cub, a leopard or a brontosaur.

3. How was 'Mijbil' a source of amazement on London streets?

Ans: The otter was a constant source of amazement to Londoners as very few people had seen an animal as strange as an otter. They were filled with surprise on seeing such an animal. They guessed it with different names of animals.

4. Why was the author not allowed to take a flight of British Airways?

Ans: The British Airways did not allow pets on its flight, while the author had to carry his pet otter along with him.

5. Why were Maxwell and his friends going to Basra?

Ans: Maxwell and his friends were going to Basra to the Consulate-General (of Iraq) to collect and answer their mail from Europe.

6. Give an example from the text to show that Mijbil is an intelligent animal.

Ans: Mij loved to play. He had invented many games of his own. One was rolling marbles on his flat belly, another was keeping a ball on the high end of the suitcase and waiting at the other end for its arrival.

7. What happened when Maxwell opened the box on the plane?

Ans: When Maxwell opened the box, Mijbil flashed out and disappeared at a high speed down the aircraft. He caused a great hue and cry in the aircraft. There were sounds of shrieks across the flight.

8. Prove that Mijbil loved the water, giving two instances in support of your answer.

Ans: Mij loved to play in the water. Only once did the author lead him to the bathroom. Another time, he went to the bathroom on his own. He went wild in water, plunged and rolled in the water. He shot up and down the bathtub and made enough slosh and splash in it.

9. Why the otter was named 'Maxwell's otter'?

Ans: The otter was of a race previously unknown to science and was at length christened by zoologists as 'Maxwell's otter'.

10. Mijbil, the otter invented a game. What do you think would be the game that he invented?

OR

Describe some of the games Mij liked to play.

Ans: Mij invented his own game with a ping-pong ball. He used to keep the basilica lid of the damaged suitcase which when closed, remained at a slope from one end. He used to play in the water and also liked to jump and gallop the full length of the thirty-yard school well.

11. What is the most common characteristic of an otter?

Ans: Otters belong to a small group of animals called Mussel lines. They are water-loving animals and are generally found in marshy areas. They are intelligent, fun-loving and playful, and are harmless beautiful creatures.

12. What were the 'compulsive habits' of Mijbil?

Ans: Mij on his way home every day used to tug Maxwell to the low wall of a primary school opposite to his flat. Mij would jump on to it, gallop the full length of its thirty yards and cause a hopeless distraction to both pupils and staff within the primary school.

13. Why did Maxwell put the otter back in the box? How do you think he felt when he did this?

Ans: Maxwell was getting late for the flight. There were only ten minutes left for the flight to take off and the airport was five miles away. Hence, he had to put the otter back into the box. He felt bad on doing so, but he had no other option.

14. When and why did Maxwell think of keeping an otter as a pet?

Ans: Maxwell had travelled to Southern Iraq early in the year of 1956. There he thought of keeping an otter as a pet. He thought so because of Camusfearna, surrounded by water, could be a suitable place for this purpose.

15. What are 'compulsive habits'? What does Maxwell say are the compulsive habits of school children?

Ans: Things that one feels compelled to do are 'compulsive habits'. For example, school children try to place their feet on the centre of each paving block on the way. They touch every seventh upright of the iron railings. Or they pass to the outside of every second lamp post.

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

1. Mijbil did things which demonstrated its personality. Which qualities of the narrator are shown in his care for Mijbil?

Ans: Mijbil was an intelligent, fun-loving and playful otter. It was fond of water. When Maxwell took it to the bathroom, for half an hour, it went wild with joy in the water, plunging and rolling in it. Maxwell treated Mijbil like his own son. He took care of him very well. He gave him lots of toys including marbles, rubber balls, rubber fruits and a terrapin shell to play with. He also noticed Mijbil's habits and traits. Maxwell encouraged Mijbil to do whatever he liked to do. He took him out for exercise every day. When Maxwell saw him in blood, he was horrified. He took him out of the box; he jumped all over and then sat on Maxwell's lap quietly.

2. Why did Maxwell want to have an otter for a pet? How did he get one?

Ans: Gavin Maxwell, the narrator, wanted to own a pet. His pet dog had died recently and he was feeling too sad to think of keeping a dog as a pet again. So when he travelled to Southern Iraq, he decided to keep an otter instead of a dog. His friend suggested Maxwell that he could get an otter in the Tigris marshes for they were very common there, like mosquitoes. Moreover, the friend also informed that otters were often trained by the Arabs. Maxwell and his friend went to Basra to the Consulate-General to collect their mail. Later on, i.e., a few days later, the narrator received his mail and took it to his bedroom. There, he found two Arabs squatting on the floor with the sack that contained the otter with a letter from his friend that said, "Here is your otter...."

3. What did Maxwell do to transport Mijbil to England?

Ans: After the British Airways refused to take a pet on its flight, the narrator booked a flight to Paris by another airline. This airline insisted that the pet should be packed into a box not more than eighteen inches square, to be carried on the floor near his feet. Maxwell had a box made, and an hour before they started, put Mij into the box, so that he would become accustomed to it and then left for a hurried meal. But when he returned, he was terrified. There was an appalling silence. Maxwell found blood had trickled and dried around the air holes of the box. He tore open the box to find Mij exhausted, and blood splattered, and whimpering and he caught hold of Maxwell's leg. However, since he had very little time left to board the flight, Maxwell just put Mij back

into the box, holding down the lid with his hand. On the flight, the air-hostess, on hearing the narrator's tale, permitted him to travel with Mij on his knee. After the initial chaos, Mijbil travelled to London on the narrator's knee.

4. Describe the relationship between the otter and Maxwell in your own words.

Ans: Maxwell and the otter Mijbil shared a lovely relationship. Maxwell treated Mij like his own son. He took very good care of him. He gave him many toys including marbles, rubber bans, rubber fruits and a terrapin shell to play with. He took him to the bathtub to play in the water knowing the fascination of otters with water. He noticed his habits and traits. Mijbil hesitated on the first day, but then became very friendly. Maxwell encouraged Mijbil to do whatever he liked to do. He took him out for exercise every day. When Maxwell saw blood on the box in which Mij was packed, he was horrified. When Mij came out of the box, he jumped all over but then came and sat on Maxwell's knees quietly.

5. How did it come to the mind of the writer that an otter can be substituted for dogs or cats?

Ans: The narrator's pet dog had died, he was too sad to think of keeping a dog again. Maxwell's friend suggested him to get an otter from Tigris marshes for they were as common as mosquitoes over there. Moreover, they were often trained by the Arabs. He had to go to Basra to the Consulate-General to collect and answer his mail. His mail had not arrived yet, so he had to wait. There he received an otter sent by his friend through two Arabs. The author felt a strong attachment and feeling for it. He liked it and kept it.

Self- Assessment Test

Extract Based Questions

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

1. Very soon Mij would follow me without a lead and come to me when I called his name. He spent most of his time in play. He spent hours shuffling a rubber ball around the room like a four-footed soccer player using all four feet to dribble the ball, and he could also throw it, with a powerful flick of the neck, to a surprising height and distance. But the real play of an otter is when he lies on his back and juggles with small objects between his paws. Marbles were Mij's favourite toys for this pastime: he would lie on his back rolling two or more of them up and down his wide, flat belly without ever dropping one to the floor.

- a. How did Mij play with the rubber ball?
- b. What is the real play of the otter?
- c. How did the otter spend most of his time?
- d. What did he look like while playing?

2. When I returned, there was an appalling spectacle. There was complete silence from the box, but from its airholes and chinks around the lid, blood had trickled and dried. I whipped off the lock and tore open the lid, and Mij exhausted and blood-spattered, whimpered and caught at my leg. He had torn the lining of the box to shreds; when I removed the last of it so that there were no cutting edges left, it was just ten minutes until the time of the flight, and the airport was five miles distant. I put the miserable Mij back into the box, holding down the lid with my hand.

- a. Why did the narrator call it an appalling spectacle?
- b. Why was the narrator nervous?
- c. What were the observations of the narrator when he returned?
- d. Why did the narrator put Mij back into the box?

Short Answer Questions

1. 'She was the very queen of her kind'. Explain the reason behind admiration for the air-hostess.
2. What happened when Maxwell opened the box on the plane?
3. How did Maxwell learn of Mijbil's love for water?
4. When and why did Maxwell think of keeping an otter as a pet?
5. What would Mij do on the low wall adjoining the school opposite to Maxwell's flat in London?

Long Answer Questions

1. How did the otter look when the author got it? What name did he get it? How did the otter enjoy being in the bathroom?
2. How did the narrator make arrangements for transporting his otter to London?
3. Describe the narrator's experience with the otter in the aircraft.