

The Ball Poem Previous Year Questions (with model answers)

Q1. You have been chosen to address the student gathering from the nearby schools, to speak on “How to Deal with Loss — Personal or Material”. Prepare the speech draft in not more than 120 words, with reference to the commonality of themes in John Benyman’s ‘The Ball Poem’ and ‘A Sermon at Benaras’.

You may begin this way.

Good Morning everyone. Today, I’d like to discuss two pieces of literature that offer a powerful insight into how we can learn to deal with loss.

You may end in this way —

To conclude, I’d like to say that —

Thank you. [CBSE 2024]

Ans. Good morning, everyone.

Today, I’d like to discuss two pieces of literature that offer a powerful insight into how we can learn to deal with loss. John Berryman’s poems, “The Ball Poem” and “A Sermon at Benares,” both explore themes of loss, whether it’s the loss of innocence, loved ones, or material things.

The young boy loses his ball and watches as it bounces and lands into the stream. He stands frozen because he cannot accept the separation from his possession. The poet comments that slowly, the boy will learn to accept losses and would cope up with the grief.

Kisa Gotami cannot bear the death of her son. When she fails to find a house that has not suffered the pain of losing a beloved to death, she realizes that she had been selfish in her love. Thus, she accepts the temporal nature of human life. She accepts the loss of her son and comes out of the sadness.

To conclude, I’d like to say that embracing these lessons can help us navigate our own losses with courage and wisdom.

Thank you.

Q2. 'The Ball Poem' initially appears simple but it is actually quite impactful and intense. Comment upon the theme of 'The Ball Poem'. [CBSE 2024]

Ans. "The Ball Poem" delves into themes of loss, maturation, and the harsh reality of impermanence. Through the lens of a boy losing his ball, it reflects on the poignant moment of coming to terms with loss and the inevitable process of growing up, teaching a profound lesson on the acceptance of life's transient nature and the inevitability of letting go.

Q3. Why does the poet not offer money to the boy to buy another ball? [CBSE 2020]

Ans. The poet does not offer money to the boy to buy him another ball because he knows the value of the ball which was lost by the boy. This ball contained the sentiments of the boy's youth. The boy's memories and feelings from his younger days attached to the ball will not come back. As a result, the boy now has to learn to take responsibilities. The poet wants the boy to grow up and give up his love for materialistic things in life. He wants the boy to learn that money cannot buy everything in life. Even if you try to buy happiness with money, you will never get the feelings of belongingness. The ball here is personified as the belongings of the boy that he must learn to live without. During the course of life, a lot of our belongings will be lost.

Q4. Why was the boy upset on losing his ball? [CBSE 2019]

Ans. The boy was upset because the ball reminded him of the days passed by when he would play with it. He experienced a sense of responsibility towards his possession and so, he was sad on losing it.

Q5. Why does the poet not offer the boy money to buy another ball? [CBSE 2020]

Ans. The poet does not offer him money to buy another ball because according to him, money or another ball is worthless. The boy was trying to understand his first responsibility as he had lost something, which could not be brought back.

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