

**I. Answer these questions in a few words or a couple of sentences each :**

**Q.1. How old are Margie and Tommy ?**

**Ans.** Margie is an eleven year old girl. Tommy is a thirteen year old boy.

**Q.2. What did Margie write in her diary ?**

**Ans.** Margie wrote in her diary, "Today Tommy found a real book !"

**Q.3. Had Margie ever seen a book before ?**

**Ans.** No, Margie had not seen a book before.

**Q.4. What things about the book did she find strange ?**

**Ans.** Margie found it strange that the words in the book stood still instead of moving the way they did in e-books. Also, when they turned back to the previous page, the book had the same words on it that it had when they read it the first time. This she found quite odd. Besides, the fact that someone would write a book about schools was quite strange for Margie.

**Q.5. What do you think a telebook is ?**

**Ans.** I think a telebook is an electronic book which is read on a computer or a television screen. The software containing many books is inserted in it.

**Q.6. Where was Margie's school ? Did she have any classmates ?**

**Ans.** Margie's school was in her home right next to her bedroom. She had no classmates.

**Q.7. What subjects did Margie and Tommy learn ?**

**Ans.** Margie and Tommy used to learn geography, arithmetic and history besides other subjects. Though other subjects are not mentioned, one can assume that a child is being taught all relevant subjects as a computer can be easily geared to teach all the subjects.

**III. Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (about 30 words) :**

**Q.1. What kind of teachers did Margie and Tommy have ?**

**Ans.** The teachers of Margie and Tommy were mechanical or robotic teachers. These teachers were black and ugly and were kept in a room of their house. The mechanical teachers had a large television screen on them which taught the children lessons and gave instructions. They also had a slot, in which the students had to put their homework and test papers so that the mechanical teacher could correct them in no time.

**Q.2. Why did Margie's mother send for the County Inspector ?**

**Ans.** The County Inspector was called by Margie's mother to evaluate Margie's performance. The mechanical teacher had been giving Margie test after test in geography, but the result of each test was worse than the last, so her mother had no choice but to call the county inspector to find out why this was happening.

**Q.3. What did he do ?**

**Ans.** The County Inspector gave Margie an apple and started working on the mechanical teacher. He took it apart to check its condition and the whole time Margie hoped that he wouldn't be able to put it back together. But in an hour, the county inspector had put the teacher back to its original ugly black condition. He had also slowed down the geography sector which had been geared too fast for an average ten-year-old.

**Q.4. Why was Margie doing badly in geography ? What did the County Inspector do to help her ?**

**Ans.** The geography sector in Margie's mechanical teacher was geared a little too quick. That is why, Margie was performing badly in geography. The County Inspector slowed

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it down to the level of an average ten-year old. He told Margie's mother that Margie could not be blamed for her poor performance and that her progress pattern was actually quite satisfactory.

**Q.5. What had once happened to Tommy's teacher ?**

**Ans.** The history sector of Tommy's teacher had once completely blanked out. Its screen was showing nothing. So, Tommy's teacher was taken away for about a month for repairs.

**Q.6. Did Margie have regular days and hours for school ? If so, why ?**

**Ans.** Margie would always attend school regularly at the same time every day except on Saturday and Sunday. It was because Margie's mother thought that, if she learned at regular hours, she would learn better.

**Q.7. How does Tommy describe the old kind of school ?**

**Ans.** Tommy described the old kind of school as different from theirs. Centuries ago, a school was a special building where all the children went together to study and play. They even had a man as a teacher and learned the same things together if they were of the same age.

**Q.8. How does he describe the old kind of teachers ?**

**Ans.** Tommy described the old kind of teachers as real men who taught inside a special building. These teachers would teach and give homework to students and ask them questions. Tommy further said that the teachers were not regular teachers like his mechanical teacher.

**IV. Answer each of these questions in two or three paragraphs (100-150 words) :**

**Q. 1. What are the main features of the mechanical teachers and the school-rooms that Margie and Tommy have in the story ?**

**Ans.** The teachers of Margie and Tommy were different from the teachers of today. They were not men or women. Rather they were mechanical or robotic teachers. Individual students learned their lessons from these teachers that had a black computer or television screen, which flashed with instructions and questions. Thus, the lessons were not learnt from paper books. There were only telebooks or moving e-text. The mechanical teachers were on for a particular time for five days except on Saturday and Sunday. The mechanical teachers calculated the marks of test papers and checked homework written in a punch code by the students, after they put these papers in a slot available on the mechanical teacher.

Margie and Tommy did not go to their schools like the students of the present times. Their schoolrooms were in their own homes. For instance, Margie's schoolroom was right next to her bedroom. She always went there at the same time every day except on Saturday and Sunday. The reason for this pattern was that Margie's mother said that little girls learned better when they learned at regular hours.

**Q. 2. Why did Margie hate school ? Why did she think the old kind of school must have been fun ?**

**Ans.** Margie had always hated school. The main reason being that her mechanical teacher was giving her a lot of tests in geography but she was not faring well in them. Also, Margie's schoolroom was next to her bedroom where she used to go on fixed time

every day except on Saturday and Sunday. Perhaps she found the routine too monotonous and dull. On top of that, her mechanical teacher would teach her on the screen, and reading lessons all the time was too boring.

The part she hated the most was inserting her test papers and homework in the slot on her mechanical teacher and writing her answers in punch code. So, when the County Inspector had come to her house, she had hoped that he would take her teacher away for a while. She was disappointed when the County Inspector successfully reassembled her teacher in perfect condition.

When Tommy had found an old printed book, she came to know about the old kind of schools which existed hundreds of years ago. She thought that the old kind of schools must be quite enjoyable. The children would have been sitting together in the classes and going home together at the end of the school. Students would have been laughing and shouting in the school yard and playing together. The students would have been learning the same things. They could therefore help one another with their homework and could talk about it. The teachers too were human beings unlike the mechanical teachers and it would be more fun learning from them. Therefore, the students must be having a lot of fun in those schools.

**Q.3. Do you agree with Margie that schools today are more fun than the school in the story? Give reasons for your answer.**

**Ans.** Of course, I do agree with Margie that schools today are more fun than the kind of school mentioned in the story. If a school is confined to a room of the house, the teacher is mechanical and there is only one student, how it can be enjoyable. Had I been in Margie's place, I too would have hated such a school.

The schools where we go now have playgrounds, libraries, laboratories and assembly halls where in the morning students pray together. We play in the school, study together, are taught by a human teacher, can discuss various problems with the friends we make there and can help one another in studies as well. Moreover, we go to picnics and study tours where we enjoy together with our classmates and teachers. But poor Margie is deprived of all this fun. So, the schools today are definitely much more enjoyable.