SECTION A

Read the following poem carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

The Geography of Children

Geography is the room at the top of the stairs where Mr Haugh reigns, waving a yardstick \(^1\)—first stop on the rise to seventh grade. He sizes us up with bulging eyes, rattles his keychain. Already he knows, and so do we, who’ll make trouble, which girls he’ll tease, which boy will taste his simmering rage.

Flexing his gauge, he begins the long slog \(^2\) over a cardboard sea, holding up for us strange creatures who eat dogs or scar themselves or stalk their prey with poisoned darts. Meanwhile, Carl Rudy perfects the art of rolling his eyes back in his head like Caesar. Carolyn Adams and Susie Breidenthal agree they won’t walk to school with me anymore.

“This is the Amazon,” says Mr Haugh. We chew paper, toy with the rubber bands on our new braces’ till they pop or fly off like tropical bees. He crosses the equator and stalks north along the seventy-eighth meridian \(^4\). We study each other’s necks and knees, the clock, the cracks, the scratches on our desks which truly, truly show us the way.

Jane Flanders

---

1. a measuring stick
2. to move with difficulty
3. a pair of straps of leather to support trousers
4. one of the vertical lines that run from north to south pole found on maps or on globes
1 Underline the best answer.
The poem shows:

i. the teacher’s journeys to the North Pole.
ii. how a child experiences teaching.
iii. how a child communicates with classmates.
iv. how children are always attentive to Mr Haugh’s lesson.

(1 mark)

2 Quote one word and one phrase in the first stanza that make Mr Haugh appear as a person of authority.

a) ___________________________________________________ ________________

b) ________________________________________________ ________________

(2 marks)

3 The phrases ‘bulging eyes’ (line 4) and ‘simmering rage’ (line 7) are used to describe Mr Haugh. What impression of the teacher do these words help you form?

___________________________________________________ __________________

___________________________________________________ __________________

(2 marks)

4 In the second stanza, ‘long slog’ (line 8) and ‘cardboard sea’ (line 9) give the impression that the lesson is uninteresting. Comment on the effect they achieve.

a) ‘long slog’:

___________________________________________________ _____________

___________________________________________________ _____________

b) ‘cardboard sea’:

___________________________________________________ _____________

___________________________________________________ _____________

(4 marks)

5 Lines 8 – 11 (‘Flexing his gauge…poisoned darts’) continue from one line to another without punctuation at the end of every line.

a) What is this literary device called?

___________________________________________________ _____________

b) Why does the poet use this device?

___________________________________________________ _____________

___________________________________________________ _____________

(3 marks)
6 a) Give an example of a simile found in the third stanza.

___________________________________________________

b) Comment on the effect this simile creates.

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

(3 marks)

7 a) In the last sentence (lines 21 – 23) the poet uses a series of commas. How do these communicate the sense of boredom the children experience during the lesson?

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

(4 marks)

b) What effect do the /k/ and /s/ sounds have in the last sentence?

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

(4 marks)

8 Why does the poet emphasise the word ‘truly’ (line 23) through repetition in the last line?

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

(2 marks)

9 Describe some of the ways in which the poet brings out the differences between the children’s experience of the lesson and the teacher’s experience of the lesson.

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

(4 marks)
In the afternoon the chairs came, a whole big cart full of little gold ones with their legs in the air. And then the flowers came. When you stared down from the balcony at the people carrying them, the flower pots looked like funny awfully nice hats nodding up the path.

Moon thought they were hats. She said: “Look. There's a man wearing a palm on his head.” But she never knew the difference between real things and not real ones.

There was nobody to look after Sun and Moon. Nurse was helping Annie alter Mother's dress which was much-too-long-and-tight-under-the-arms and Mother was running all over the house and telephoning Father to be sure not to forget things. She only had time to say: “Out of my way, children!”

They kept out of her way – at any rate Sun did. He did so hate being sent stumping back to the nursery. It didn't matter about Moon. If she got tangled in people's legs, they only threw her up and shook her till she squeaked. But Sun was too heavy for that. He was so heavy that the fat man who came to dinner on Sundays used to say: “Now, young man, let's try to lift you.” And then he'd put his thumbs under Sun's arms and groan and try and give it up at last saying: “He's a perfect little ton of bricks!”

Nearly all the furniture was taken out of the dining-room. The big piano was put in a corner and then there came a row of flower pots and then there came the goldy chairs. That was for the concert. When Sun looked in, a white faced man sat at the piano – not playing, but banging at it and then looking inside. He had a bag of tools on the piano and he had stuck his hat on a statue against the wall. Sometimes he just started to play and then he jumped up again and looked inside. Sun hoped he wasn't the concert.

But of course the place to be in was the kitchen. There was a man helping in a cap like a blancmange, and their real cook, Minnie, was all red in the face and laughing. Not cross at all. She gave them each an almond finger and lifted them up on to the flour bin so that they could watch the wonderful things she and the man were making for supper. Cook brought in the things and he put them on dishes and trimmed them. Whole fishes, with their heads and eyes and tails still on, he sprinkled with red and green and yellow bits; he made squiggles all over the jellies, he stuck a collar on a ham and put a very thin sort of a fork in it; he dotted almonds and tiny round biscuits on the creams. And more and more things kept coming.

The housemaid came in and she seemed all excited.

“It's a picture, Min,” said Nellie. “Come along and have a look.” So they all went into the dining-room. Sun and Moon were almost frightened. They wouldn't go up to the table at first; they just stood at the door and made eyes at it.

It wasn't real night yet but the blinds were down in the dining-room and the lights turned on – and all the lights were red roses. Red ribbons and bunches of roses tied up the table at the corners. In the middle was a lake with rose petals floating on it.

Two silver lions with wings had fruit on their backs, and the salt cellars were tiny birds drinking out of basins.

And all the winking glasses and shining plates and sparkling knives and forks – and all the food. And the little red table napkins made into roses . . . .

“Are people going to eat the food?” asked Sun.

“I should just think they were,” laughed Cook, laughing with Nellie. Moon laughed, too; she always did the same as other people. But Sun didn't want to laugh.
1 Underline the correct answer.
The choice of words in the passage shows that what is happening is mainly being seen through
   i. Minnie’s point of view.
   ii. the Mother’s point of view.
   iii. a child’s point of view.
   iv. the white faced man’s point of view.

(1 mark)

2 A sunny character usually suggests a lively personality but this is not true of Sun. Explain why.

___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

(3 marks)

3 In line 7, a series of words are connected by hyphens, ‘much-too-long-and-tight-under-the-arm’, to refer to ‘Mother’s dress’.
   a) Suggest why the author combines these words.
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

   b) Visually, the hyphens remind you of something connected with the alteration of the dress. What do you think this might be?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

(4 marks)

4 Lines 10 – 15 seem to show that Sun is jealous of the attention Moon receives. Quote one sentence which indicates this.

___________________________________________________

(1 mark)

5 What is humorous about Sun’s observation of the ‘white faced man’ who is tuning the piano in lines 16 – 21?

___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

(2 marks)
In the passage, ‘and then’ is repeated six times; there is also a repeated use of the conjunction ‘and’ in lines 26 – 30. What effect do these create?

___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

(3 marks)

The author describes a picture of beauty in the two phrases listed below. Name the figures of speech and comment on their effect.

a) ‘all the lights were red roses’ (line 36)

___________________________________________________

b) ‘winking glasses’ (line 40)

___________________________________________________

(4 marks)

Why do you think Sun says, “Are people going to eat the food?” (line 42)?

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

(2 marks)

Write about the fairy tale quality of the passage with special reference to the names of the children and the way in which the happenings are described.

___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

(5 marks)