

FORM 1: Poem *'THE RIVER'* By Valerie Bloom

THE RIVER

The River's a wanderer,
A nomad, a tramp,
He doesn't choose one place
To set up his camp.

The River's a winder,
Through valley and hill
He twists and he turns,
He just cannot be still.

The River's a hoarder,
And he buries down deep
Those little treasures
That he wants to keep.

The River's a baby,
He gurgles and hums,
And sounds like he's happily
Sucking his thumbs.

The River's a singer,
As he dances along,
The countryside echoes
The notes of his song.

The River's a monster
Hungry and vexed,
He's gobbled up trees
And he'll swallow you next



Valerie Bloom

ELEMENTS OF THE POEM :

STRUCTURE, STYLES AND LANGUAGE

- The poem has a rhyme scheme of 'a, b, c, b' and it consists of 6 stanzas.
- The style is simple and direct. It is written as a descriptive account of the movements of a river.
- The language is simple and easy to understand.

POETIC DEVICE:

- Personification : The river is personified as a man as he travels through life. The use of capital letter in 'River' emphasizes this.
- Imagery : The main image that is that of the river and its movements.
- Metaphor : The river is said to be a wanderer, a winder, a collector, a baby, a dancer and singer and a destroyer.
- Repetition : The words, The River is repeated and this gives emphasis to the subject.
- Simile : The river is like a baby happily sucking his thumb

SETTING

The poem is set in the countryside as the persona talks about the river and its features and movements. The river winds its way through the countryside happily. But, the river can cause erosion and flood.

THEMES

The main theme of the poem is man and life. Man can choose to lead a stable life and stay put in one place or move around in search of his dreams. As he travels around, man may choose the straight path or the road less traveled. During his travels, man collects mementos and souvenirs. Contentment brings happiness and man moves with a light step of heart. Man may face challenges in life and this can prompt him to destruction.

MORAL VALUES

- We must strive for stability in life.
- Do not take the wrong road to reach one's goal.
- Value and appreciate life's experiences.
- Keep good memories of life and people close to our heart.
- Show and express gratitude when necessary.
- Spread happiness to people we know or meet along the way.
- Face our problems positively.
- Do not destroy other people in the process.
- Greed can lead to destruction.
- Take care of the environment by not cutting down trees and polluting the river.

TONE AND MOOD

The tone is conversational, contemplative and carefree. The river brings joy and the persona feels joyous when she looks at the river. The tone is reflective as the persona reflects on the mood of the river as it journeys through hills and valleys. There is a note of regret in the last stanza when the persona thinks of the destructive side of the river as it can destroy nature and man.

Exercise 1

Read the poem "**The River**" by Valerie Bloom and identify keywords that show human qualities in each stanza.

Stanza 1	Stanza 2	<i>The River's a wanderer, A nomad, a tramp. He doesn't choose one place To set up his camp.</i>
Stanza 3	Stanza 4	<i>The River's a winder, Through valley and hill. He twists and he turns, He just cannot be still.</i>
Stanza 5	Stanza 6	<i>The River's a hoarder, And he buries down deep Those little treasures That he wants to keep.</i>
		<i>The River's a baby, He gurgles and hums, And sounds like he's happily sucking his thumbs.</i>
		<i>The River's a singer, As he dances along, The countryside echoes The notes of his song.</i>
		<i>The River's a monster Hungry and vexed, He's gobbled up trees And he'll swallow you next.</i>

EXERCISE 2

Write **TRUE** or **FALSE** for each statement below.

1. The river is personified in the poem. _____
2. The river does not stay in the same place. _____
3. The hill is a winder. _____
4. Hoarders always throw away their things. _____
5. The river stops flowing every night. _____
6. The river flows away the treasure it buries. _____
7. Like a baby, the river gurgles. _____
8. The river makes unhappy sounds when humming. _____
9. The river can sing notes of its songs. _____
10. If one is vexed, one is annoyed. _____

EXERCISE 3

Choose the words given to fit the numbered blank.

The river is given human qualities in the poem. As a wanderer, it _____ (1) from place to place. Sometimes it can be a _____ (2) and has to beg as it flows along. As it does not stay long in the same place, it does not set its _____ (3) anywhere. While flowing, it twists and _____ (4) through hills and valleys. Like any hoarder, it _____ (5) whatever treasures it comes across. It sometimes gurgles like a baby. When it does this, it makes _____ (6) sounds. However, the river can be a _____ (7) too for it _____ (8) people who fall into it.

beggar	monster	travels	camp
happy	turns	drowns	hides

Exercise 4

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. The persona in the poem describes a
A. river B. monster C. nomad D. singer

2. The river is compared to a human being. This is called
A. simile B. metaphor C. synonym D. personification

3. In the first stanza, the river is being described as a
A. camp B. place C. tramp D. dancer

4. The word 'turns' rhymes with
A. fields B. tools C. ferns D. purrs

5. A hoarder is likely to
A. buy a lot of things B. keep a lot of things C. give away his things D. sell goods

6. The word 'gurgles' in the poem is an example of a
A. rhyme B. simile C. antonym D. noun

7. In stanza 5, the 'notes' refer to
A. a dance B. a play C. a song D. a speech

8. When a sound echoes, it
A. is loud B. is soft C. hurts our ears D. travels away and comes back

9. By gobbling trees, the river is being
A. productive B. destructive C. fruitful D. healthy

10. The word 'swallow' can be replaced with
A. pull B. swim C. drown D. bury

MODEL QUESTION

PAPER 2 - SECTION B : LITERATURE COMPONENT

Read the poem '*The River*' and answer the questions that follow.

SET 1

1. Find one pair of rhyming words in Stanza 2.

_____ (1 mark)

2. What is the river compared to in Stanza 3? How is it described?

_____ (2 marks)

SET 2

1. Name two actions performed by the river in Stanza 5.

_____ (2 marks)

2. What does the river hide in Stanza 3 ?

_____ (1 mark)

SET 3

1. What is the mood of the River in Stanza 4 and 5?

_____ (1 mark)

2. The line 'He just cannot be still' in Stanza 2 means that the River

_____ (2 mark)

SET 4

1. What are the main themes of the poem?

i) _____

ii) _____ (2 mark)

2. What does the pronoun '*you*' in Line 4, Stanza 6 refer to?

_____ (1 mark)

Mr. Nobody

I know a funny little man,
As quiet as a mouse,
Who does the mischief that is done
In everybody's house!
There's no one ever sees his face,
And yet we all agree
That every plate we break was cracked
By Mr. Nobody.

'Tis he who always tears our books,
Who leaves the door ajar,
He pulls the buttons from our shirts,
And scatters pins afar;
That squeaking door will always squeak,
For, prithee, don't you see,
We leave the oiling to be done
By Mr. Nobody.

He puts damp wood upon the fire,
That kettles cannot boil;
His are the feet that bring in mud,
And all the carpets soil.
The papers always are mislaid,
Who had them last but he?
There's no one tosses them about
But Mr. Nobody.

The finger marks upon the door
By none of us are made;
We never leave the blinds unclosed,
To let the curtains fade;
The ink we never spill; the boots
That lying round you see
Are not our boots – they all belong
To Mr. Nobody.



Author Unknown

ELEMENTS OF THE POEM :

TYPE OF POEM

A poem on life.

SUBJECT

Behaving badly and not owning up.

TITLE

A suitable title because the purpose is to blame nobody. Nobody is a non-person so he is the best person to push the blame to.

SETTING

The poem is set in the house as the persona talks about the situation in the house. Things get broken, misplaced and thrown around by an unseen person. His behavior messes up the house.

PERSONA

It is the poet's voice. The poet is also the persona. There is one voice but several character are involved – I, we, Mr. Nobody.

TONE

The topic is serious but the tone is casual.

THEME

- ◆ Responsibility for one's action. Very few people own up when they create a problem. They tend to put the blame on others.
- ◆ Truth and honesty.
- ◆ Respect for family members.
- ◆ Cultivate a good habit.

MORAL VALUE

- ◆ We must work together to look after the family home.
- ◆ Have respect for other's property.
- ◆ Value and appreciate things at home
- ◆ Practice discipline wherever and whenever necessary.
- ◆ We must be tidy all the time.
- ◆ -Appreciate the person who has to clean up after us.

PERSONA

It is the poet's voice. The poet is also the persona. There is one voice but several character are involved – I, we, Mr. Nobody.

LANGUAGE

Simple and direct. Every stanza ends with Mr. Nobody. Old expressions are used – *prithae*. Double meaning is used to create humor such as **Mr. Nobody** refers to a person and a non-person. **Lying** means not telling the truth or being found all over. We can see contrast or irony **no one ever sees his face...yet we all** agree that he is the mischief maker. This is used to express sarcasm

DEVICES

A limited rhyming pattern – only lines 2 and 4 of each stanza rhyme.

Simile : As quiet as a mouse.

Imagery : Images of mess - mud, carpets soiled, papers mislaid, finger marks upon the door, ink...spilled, boots lying around.

Metaphor : the *door ajar* is like saying Mr. Nobody moves in and out like a thief unseen. The squeaking door will always squeak as though it is a mouse.

The uses of senses

- ◆ See – mud, marks, curtains fade, books, door ajar
- ◆ Hear – quiet, break, cracked, tears, squeak
- ◆ Touch – damp

Exercise 1

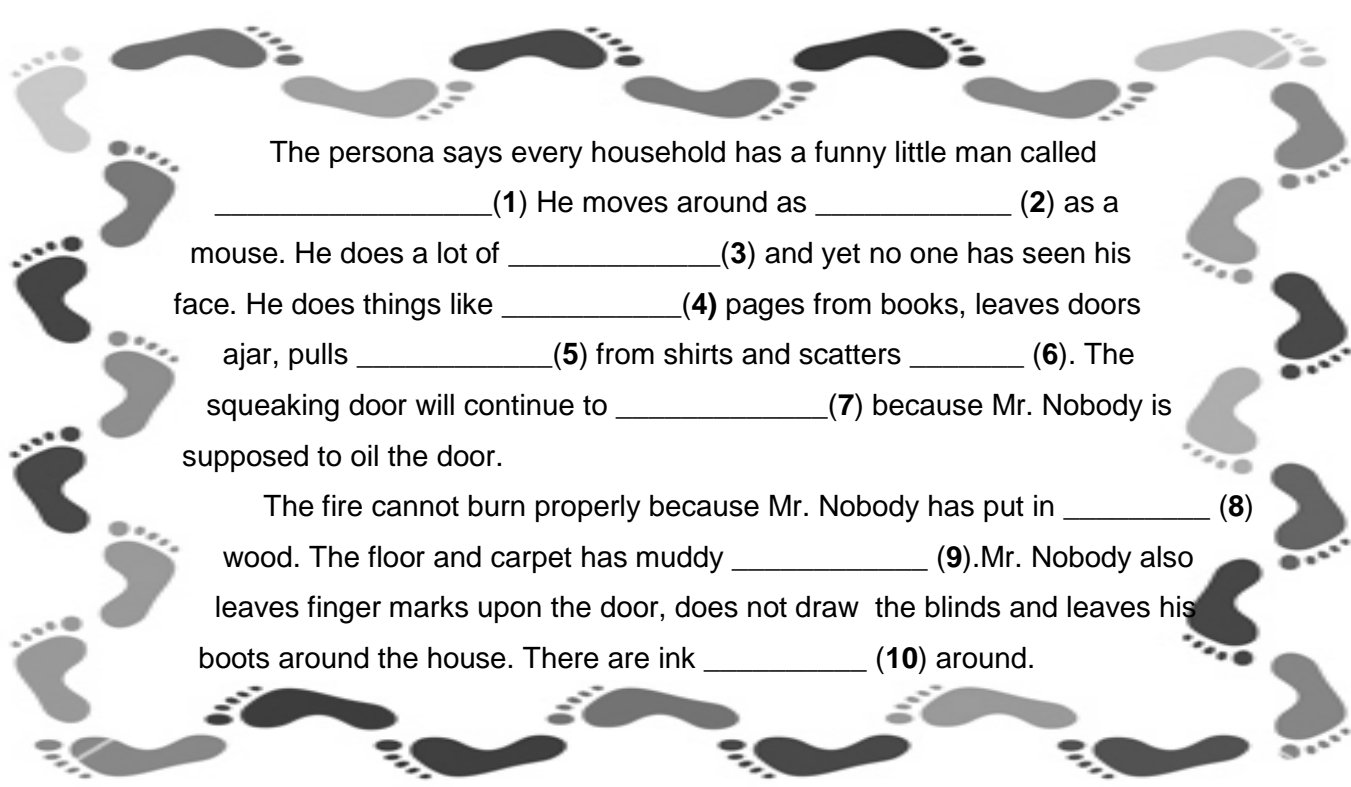
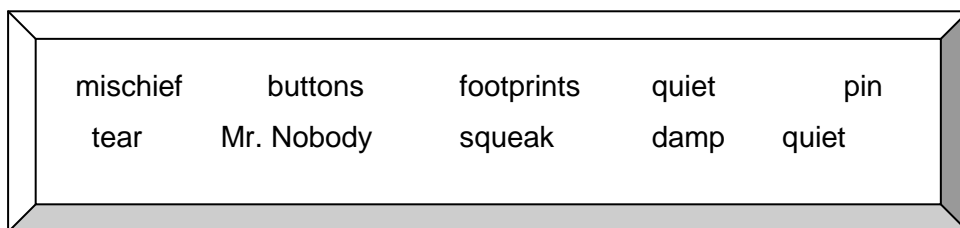
Read the poem "**Mr. Nobody**". Write **TRUE** or **FALSE** for each statement below.

1. Everyone knows who Mr. Nobody is. _____
2. We agree that every house has a Mr. Nobody. _____
3. Mr. Nobody likes to read books. _____
4. Mr. Nobody is not responsible for the cracks of the plates in the house. _____
5. Mr. Nobody is expected to oil the squeaking door. _____

- 6. The fire is burning properly and the water is boiling. _____
- 7. There are dirty finger marks on the door. _____
- 8. The carpet is soiled by Mr. Nobody. _____
- 9. The curtains fade due to sunlight. _____
- 10. The boots do not belong to Mr. Nobody. _____

Exercise 2

Choose the words given to fit the numbered blank.



The persona says every household has a funny little man called _____ (1) He moves around as _____ (2) as a mouse. He does a lot of _____ (3) and yet no one has seen his face. He does things like _____ (4) pages from books, leaves doors ajar, pulls _____ (5) from shirts and scatters _____ (6). The squeaking door will continue to _____ (7) because Mr. Nobody is supposed to oil the door.

The fire cannot burn properly because Mr. Nobody has put in _____ (8) wood. The floor and carpet has muddy _____ (9). Mr. Nobody also leaves finger marks upon the door, does not draw the blinds and leaves his boots around the house. There are ink _____ (10) around.

Exercise 3

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. The persona calls Mr Nobody a funny little man. This means that Mr. Nobody is someone who
 - A is fun to be with
 - B makes people laugh
 - C has a lot of jokes to tell
 - D acts in strange manner

'That squeaking door will always squeak'

2. What is the poetic used in the line above?
 - A Simile
 - B Personification
 - C Symbol
 - D Onomatopoeia
3. The simile 'as quiet as a mouse' means
 - A doing things quietly and secretly.
 - B moves around noisily.
 - C making scatching sounds.
 - D behaves disoderly.
4. In the poem, the persona is
 - A advising Mr. Nobody.
 - B protecting Mr. Nobody.
 - C blaming a non-existent person.
 - D reprimanding the mischief maker.

5. When someone breaks a plate, Mr. Nobody is blamed for
- A hiding it.
 - B cracking it.
 - C dropping it.
 - D covering up
6. What will happen if the blinds are not closed?
- A The carpet will be soiled.
 - B There will be marks on the door.
 - C There will be ink stains on the floor.
 - D The colour of the curtains will fade.
7. The fires are not burning properly because the wood is
- A damp
 - B brittle
 - C too dry
 - D too thick
8. Based on the poem, we can say that Mr. Nobody likes to
- A play outside
 - B do housework
 - C clean his boots
 - D walk on carpets
9. The tone of the poem is
- A accusing
 - B praising
 - C scolding
 - D understanding
10. What word can be replaced by 'misaid' ?
- A Mistaken
 - B Misplaced
 - C Hidden
 - D Destroyed

MODEL QUESTION

PAPER 2 - SECTION B : LITERATURE COMPONENT

Read the poem '*Mr. Nobody*' and answer the questions that follow.

SET 1

1. What is Mr. Nobody compared to?

_____ (1 mark)

2. In stanza 2, give two examples of mischief done by Mr. Nobody.

i) _____

ii) _____ (2 marks)

SET 2

1. Why are the papers missing?

_____ (2 marks)

2. Give a reason why the water in the kettle cannot boil?

_____ (1 mark)

SET 3

1. What does Mr. Nobody leave on the door?

_____ (1 mark)

2. Why is Mr. Nobody as quiet as a mouse?

_____ (2 marks)

SET 4

1. What is the tone of the poem?

_____ (1 mark)

2. What are the possible themes for the poem?

i) _____

ii) _____ (2 marks)

SET 5

1. What causes the curtain to fade?

_____ (1 mark)

2. Why does the writer say everyone agrees that 'every plate we break was cracked by Mr. Nobody'?

_____ (2 marks)