

This is the Night Mail crossing the Border,

Bringing the cheque and postal order,

Letters for the rich, letters for the poor,

The shop at the corner, the girl next door.

Pulling up Beattock, a steady climb;

The gradient's against her, but she's on time.

Past cotton-grass and moorland boulder,

Shoveling white steam over her shoulder,

Snorting noisily, she passes

Silent miles of wind-bent grasses.

Birds turn their heads as she approaches.

Stare from bushes at her blank-faced coaches.

Sheepdogs cannot turn her course;

They slumber on with paws across.

In the farm she passes; no one wakes,

But a jug in a bedroom gently shakes.

یہ ہے رات کی پست، مہل جو سرحد کو عبور کر رہی ہے،

یہ چیک اور پوسٹل آرڈر لے رہی ہے،

امراء کیلئے خطوط، غریبوں کیلئے خطوط،

کنڑ والی دکان کیلئے اور پڑوسن لڑکی کیلئے۔

بلندی پر چڑھتے ہوئے اس کا توازن برقرار رہتا ہے

راستے کی اونچ نیچ کے باوجود یہ وقت پر آتی ہے

لمبی نرم گھاس اور بیابانوں میں چٹانی ٹیلے کے قریب سے،

اپنے شانوں سے سفید دھواں چھوڑتے ہوئے

تیز شور مچاتے ہوئے گزرتی ہے

بھلکے ہوئے خاموش میلوں پر محیط گھاس کے قریب سے

جو نہی قریب آتی ہے، پرندے مڑ کر

تاثرات سے خالی ہو گئیں دیکھتے ہیں۔

بھیڑوں کے رکھوالے کتے اس کا راستہ نہیں بدل سکتے۔

وہ پاؤں پھیلانے آرام سے سوتے رہتے ہیں

کوئی نہیں جاگتا جب یہ فارم ہاؤس کے پاس سے گزرتی ہے،

لیکن خوابگاہ میں رکھا جگ ذرا سا لرز جاتا ہے۔

WORDS	URDU	SYNONYMS	WORDS	URDU	SYNONYMS
<u>steady</u>	متوازن	<u>continuous</u> , stable, balanced	<u>gradient</u>	ڈھلوان	<u>hurdle</u> , slope, hill
<u>shoveling</u>	باہر نکالنا	<u>throwing</u> , exhaling, scooping out	<u>snorting</u>	خراٹے بھرنی ہوئی	<u>whistling</u> , breathing loudly, exhaling
<u>approaches</u>	نزدیک آنا	<u>comes near</u> , reaches, arrives	<u>moorland</u>	ویران علاقہ	grassland, highland, plain
<u>slumber</u>	سونا	<u>sleep</u> , <u>keep sleeping</u> , doze	<u>paws</u>	پاؤں	feet, pads, hoofs
<u>boulder</u>	چٹان	<u>large rock</u> , big stone	<u>course</u>	راستہ	path, way, track
<u>blank-faced</u>	بے تاثر	<u>passionless</u> , dull, inexpressive	<u>gently</u>	آہستہ سے	softly, lightly, mildly

EXPLANATION WITH REFERENCE TO THE CONTEXT**LINES 1-4**

*This is the Night Mail crossing the Border,
Bringing the cheque and the postal order,
Letters for the rich, letters for the poor,
The shop at the corner, the girl next door.*

(2 Times)

REFERENCE:

These lines have been taken from the poem "Night Mail" by W.H. Auden.

CONTEXT:

The poet personifies a crude object like Night Mail as a vibrant horse. It establishes communication between different segments of society. It maintains its steadiness despite the difficulties in its way.

EXPLANATION:

It travels from one country to another, from place to place and brings the posts such as letters, cheques, and postal orders for people. The border mentioned in the poem is the border of England and Scotland. By crossing all boundaries, it hands over the mail to all sorts of people. It does not know racial distinctions and other prejudices.

It carries different sorts of letters having different messages to various classes of people. It carries formal as well as informal letters. Thus, it is a source of satisfaction and comfort for the poor and the rich, for the business men and the common people. It does not know any sort of discrimination. It satisfies the need of all sorts of the people.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION:

The rhyme scheme in these lines is a, and this poetic structure is known as end rhyme. The poet personifies Night Mail as he gives human qualities to it by using the pronoun 'she' for the train. The rhyme scheme in these lines is AA

*Pulling up Beattock, a steady climb;
The gradient's against her, but she's on time*

(1 Time)

LINES 5-6**EXPLANATION:**

Its journey is very arduous. Sometimes it runs up Beattock, a hilly place, along the steep slope, overcomes the sheer ascent and reaches its destination on time. Although it is difficult to move along a sharp rise, it does not get late and is always on time. It crosses all the hurdles and obstacles on its way. Human weakness such as laziness and lethargy are unknown to it.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION:

In the phrase 'her shoulder', the poet personifies Night Mail as he gives human qualities to it by talking about the train as though it were a woman. Shoulder is a part of human body, not a part of train. The visual images like 'white steam' and 'moorland boulder' give the readers a visual in part of the train's journey. The rhyme scheme in these lines is AA

*Past cotton-grass and moorland boulder,
Shoveling white steam over her shoulder,*

(1 Time)

LINES 7-8**EXPLANATION:**

The train goes past the cotton fields and uncultivated rocky land without taking any notice of them. It covers long distances. The poet personifies the Night Mail in this verse and compares it to a lady who is scooping and shoveling steam over her shoulders while racing to reach her destination. The train rushes past and, overloads every thing. It seems that it is concerned only with conveyance and transportation of correspondence. She moves on and never stops.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION:

The poet personifies Night Mail as he gives human qualities to it by using the pronoun 'she' for the train. The rhyme scheme in these lines is AA

LINES 9-12

*Snorting noisily, she passes
Silent miles of wind-bent grasses.
Birds turn their heads as she approaches,
Stare from bushes at her blank-faced coaches.*

(1 Time)

EXPLANATION:

Roaring and creating loud snorting sound, the train moves on and passes on from one point to another. It covers the long distances and passes by the grassy fields. When it passes near the grassy fields, the pressure of the air causes the grass to bend and down. There is silence in the grassy field and miles are not silent. Thus, the poet transfers the epithet 'silent' from the proper word 'wind-bent grasses' to 'miles'.

The noise of the coming train makes the birds look at it from their bushes. They look at it more from a routine than from surprise or interest. They can see no human faces and find the carriages expressionless. The poet describes the reaction of the birds, which are used to the dull, moving body that pass by, creating no disturbance.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION:

By using the word ‘silent miles’ the poet uses a figure of speech called ‘**Transferred epithet**’. In this figure of speech an epithet (adjective) is transferred from its proper word to another word closely connected with it. The rhyme scheme in these lines is AA

LINES 13-16

*Sheepdogs cannot turn her course;
They slumber on with paws across.
In the turn she passes; no one wakes,
But a jug in a bedroom gently shakes.*

(2 Times)

EXPLANATION:

Sheep dogs are very sensitive. They get up whenever some intruder tries to get nearer the herd. But on the arrival of the train they do not awake. The train is no more a subject of curiosity for them. They know it is harmless. They are also aware of the fact that they are unable to affect the journey of the train. Realizing the reality, they do not move and remain in the same posture, cross-legged and relaxed.

The people living along the railway track have become habitual to its arrival and they do not feel any disturbance. They know it is always in service of human beings. They know it is harmless. It does not cause any change while crossing the fields and farms except a little vibration. Petty things, like a jug in a bed room shakes and vibrates as the train passes by the farms and countryside.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION:

The closing lines of the poem show the end of the journey of the train. The phrases “no one wakes” and “gently shakes” employ the quiet, rhythmic moment of the train that disturbs nobody. The rhyme scheme in these lines is AA

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM PAST PAPERS

- Q.1** What does the ‘Night Mail’ bring? OR (8 Times)
 Give the central idea of the poem “Night Mail” OR (3 Times)
 Write a brief note on Night Mail. OR (1 Time)
 What kind of train “Night Mail” is? OR (1 Time)
 What function does the Night Mail perform? OR (1 Time)
 For whom does the “Night Mail” bring mail? (1 Time)

Night Mail Brings News

Ans. Night Mail brings important news, messages and documents to different people. It establishes communication between different segments of society. It carries cheques, postal orders and letters for everyone. The rich and the poor, the shopkeeper at the corner and the girl next door all wait for it. Night Mail overcomes all hurdles in its way and is always on time.

- Q.2** How do the sheepdogs react at the arrival of the Night Mail? (4 Times)
 Why do sheep-dogs continue their sleep on the arrival of the Night Mail? (2 Times)

Continue to Sleep

Ans. The sheepdogs continue to sleep at the arrival of the Night Mail. The sheepdogs know that they cannot change the route of the Night Mail, so they keep sleeping in a relaxed posture. The dogs usually chase the moving vehicles, but here they seem to be used to the arrival of the Night Mail.

- Q.3** What is the effect of the train on the birds? OR (2 Times)
 How do the birds react on the arrival of the Night Mail? (1 Time)

The Effect is Almost Nothing

Ans. The effect of the train on the birds is almost nothing. When Night Mail approaches, the birds in the bush turn their heads to look at it. They see nothing but the dull, blank coaches of Night Mail. The birds are used to the arrival of Night Mail, so they do not react and remain unconcerned.

- Q.4** How does the train, Night Mail, affect the life in the farm? (2 Times)

No One Wakes up

Ans. No one wakes up as the Night Mail passes by a farm. Only a jug in a bedroom gently shakes. It does not disturb peaceful sleep of the people living near the railway track. The people living near the railway track get gradually used to the trains.

- Q.5** The poet calls the coaches of the mail “blank-faced” why? (1 Time)

Dull, Dark and Unattractive

Ans. The poet calls the coaches of the mail “blank-faced” as they are dull, dark and unattractive. Night Mail is unlike an express train which carries passengers and attracts the onlookers for its bright, attractive look.

- Q.6** Where does Night Mail pass? OR (1 Time)
 Describe the journey of the Night Mail to various places. (1 Time)

Hills and Cotton Fields

Ans. Night Mail climbs up hills and passes by cotton fields. It runs silent miles by grasslands, snorting noisily. It approaches the bushes, and the birds look at its blank coaches. It overcomes all hurdles in its way and reaches its destination on time. When it passes by a farmhouse, no one wakes up, but a jug in a bedroom gently shakes.

- Q.7** What are the main characteristics of the Night Mail? (1 Time)

Regularity, Punctuality and Steadiness

Ans. The main characteristics of the Night Mail include its regularity, punctuality and steadiness. It climbs up the hilly areas, but it maintains its steadiness. Whether the railway track is an upward ascent or a sloping descent, it is always on time and follows its schedule.

- Q.8 Why does the jug in the bedroom shake when the train passes? OR (1 Time)**
What happens when the train passes by the farm? (1 Time)

Due to the Vibration Phenomenon

Ans. The jug in the bedroom shakes when the train passes due to the vibration phenomenon. When the train passes, energy is created and pressure is developed in air. As a result, the nearby bodies are affected by the pressure.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

- Q.1 Does the gradient delay the journey of the Night Mail?**

Gradient does not Delay the Journey

Ans. The gradient is against her but it does not delay the journey of the Night Mail. Whether the railway track is an upward ascent or a sloping descent, the Night Mail overcomes all hurdles in its way and is always on time.

- Q.2 How does the Night Mail pass through grassland, cotton fields and moorland?**

Snorting Noisily

Ans. The Night Mail passes through grassland, cotton fields and moorland, snorting noisily and throwing off white steam over her shoulder. It passes silently by the grassy fields, bending down the grass by its pressure.

- Q.3 What happens as the Night Mail passes by a farm?**

No one Wakes up

Ans. No one wakes up as the Night Mail passes by a farm only a jug in a bedroom gently shakes. It does not disturb peaceful sleep of the people living near the railway track.

- Q.4 How does the Night Mail observe punctuality?**

Overcoming All Hurdles in the Way

Ans. The Night Mail observes punctuality whether the railway track is an upward ascent or a sloping descent. It overcomes all hurdles in the way and reaches its destination on time. The poet lends human characteristics to the Night Mail. It maintains its steadiness in spite of the difficulties in its way.

- Q.5 How does the Night Mail establish communication across the country?**

By Crossing the Border

Ans. The words "crossing the border" indicate that the Night Mail connects people living across the country. It brings important news, messages and documents to different people. It establishes communication between different segments of society within and across the country.

MCQS TEXTBOOK EXERCISE

- 1. The Night Mail is _____.**
- (a) an express train (c) a passenger train
 (b) a train that carries mail (d) a train that carries goods

2. **The Night Mail reaches _____.**
 (a) in time (c) on time
 (b) before time (d) late
3. **On the arrival of Night Mail, the birds _____.**
 (a) are frightened (c) are pleased
 (b) have flown away (d) are unconcerned
4. **Why do the sheepdogs continue to sleep on the arrival of the train? Because they can't _____.**
 (a) attack it (c) bite it
 (b) change her course (d) get into it

ANSWER KEY

1.	B	2.	C	3.	D	4.	B
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MORE MCQS FOR PRACTICE

1. **The _____ is against her but she is on time.**
 (a) grassland (c) moorland
 (b) boulder (d) gradient
2. **Pulling up Beattock, a steady _____.**
 (a) drive (c) climb
 (b) journey (d) traveling
3. **The Night Mail shovels over her shoulder _____.**
 (a) black smoke (c) hot vapours
 (b) white steam (d) hot foam
4. **Snorting _____, she passes / Silent miles of wind-bent grasses.**
 (a) lazily (c) heavily
 (b) steadily (d) noisily
5. **Sheep-dogs cannot turn her _____.**
 (a) root (c) route
 (b) schedule (d) direction
6. **What does gently shake in a bedroom?**
 (a) a glass (c) a jug
 (b) a table (d) a cup
7. **The train passes silent miles of _____.**
 (a) moorland (c) cotton-grass
 (b) wind-bent grasses (d) farmlands
8. **What is the reaction of birds when the train comes?**
 (a) They begin to chirp. (c) They turn their heads
 (b) They fly away. (d) They are scared
9. **Who wakes up when the train passes the farm?**
 (a) everybody (c) no one
 (b) a baby (d) a farmer
10. **Who wrote the poem, 'Night Mail'?**
 (a) A.E. Housman (c) Jan Stallworthy
 (b) W.H. Auden (d) T.S. Eliot

ANSWER KEY

1.	D	2.	C	3.	B	4.	D	5.	C	6.	C	7.	B	8.	C	9.	C	10.	B
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SYNONYMS FROM PAST PAPERS

1. **Snorting** noisily, the train passes. (2 Times)
(a) running (b) whistling (c) creeping (d) playing
2. **Birds turn their heads** as she **approaches**. (2 Times)
(a) paces (b) comes near (c) goes away (d) stops
3. **They slumber on with paws** across. (2 Times)
(a) keep running (b) keep shouting (c) keep sleeping (d) keep watching
(a) bark (b) sleep (c) smell (d) cut
4. **Sheep dogs slumber** without noticing the train. (1 Time)
(a) sleep (b) run about (c) work (d) count
5. **Shoveling** white steam over her shoulder. (1 Time)
(a) throwing (b) paying (c) moving (d) walking
6. **Stare from bushes** at her **blank-faced** couches. (1 Time)
(a) attractive (b) passionless (c) ugly (d) broken
(a) brown (b) passionless (c) empty (d) ugly
7. **The train passes by many a boulder**. (1 Time)
(a) large rocks (b) buildings (c) arm houses (d) railways
8. **The Night Mail snorts**. (1 Time)
(a) starts (b) stops (c) whistles (d) reaches
9. **The gradient's** against her but she's on time. (1 Time)
(a) hurdles (b) saviours (c) friends (d) farmers
10. **Pulling up Beattock, a steady** climb. (1 Time)
(a) continuous (b) slow (c) high (d) simple

ANSWER KEY

1.	B	2.	B	3.	C/B	4.	A	5.	A	6.	B/B	7.	A	8.	C	9.	A	10.	A
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MORE SYNONYMS FOR PRACTICE

1. **Past cotton grass** and **moorland** boulder.
(a) grassland (c) tableland
(b) commercial land (d) residential land
2. **Sheep-dogs cannot turn her course**.
(a) destination (c) path
(b) journey (d) syllabus
3. **They slumber on with paws** across.
(a) feet (c) tails
(b) whiskers (d) claws
4. **But a jug in a bedroom** gently shakes.
(a) mildly (c) swiftly
(b) instantly (d) steadily
5. **Shoveling** white **steam** over her shoulder.
(a) fog (c) fog
(b) damp (d) hiss

ANSWER KEY

1.	A	2.	C	3.	A	4.	A	5.	C
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