



INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT
SENIOR SECTION
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
CLASS IX
WORKSHEET



PACKING-JEROME K. JEROME

SUMMARY

Jerome, Harris and George are three friends who are about to set out on a journey. The story begins with the important task of packing stuff for this journey. Jerome, the narrator, overestimates his packing skills and tells his friends to let him handle it all by himself. However, his real intention is to make George and Harris do the packing under his supervision and guidance. But his friends take his advice seriously and to his great shock, stretch themselves comfortably, leaving him with all the running around. Though irritated with their attitude, Jerome straight away gets busy with packing. After a long-drawn packing session, he finally straps up the bag.

Both his friends watch him quietly and when he is done with packing, Harris declares that the shoes have been left unpacked. The bag has to be reopened again to accommodate the shoes. An irritated Jerome is just done with packing the shoes when he is reminded of his toothbrush.

Unsure about having packed his toothbrush, Jerome has to empty the bag and hunt through all its contents to locate the brush. After a lot of efforts, he finds the brush in one of the boots! Anyhow the bag is packed again.

The next query comes from George regarding the soap. Jerome is so irritated by this time that he does not even bother about this query and straps up the bag. But, the very next moment he has to unpack it again as he had packed in his spectacles by mistake. Eventually, it is past ten when the packing is finally done.

Keeping in mind the amount of time taken by Jerome to pack the bag, George and Harris decide to pack the hampers themselves and show Jerome the real art of packing. However, they are equally clumsy and break a cup at the very outset. This is followed by squashing a tomato, treading on the butter and smashing the pies by putting heavy things on them. Salt flies all over while they are packing.

After peeling the butter off George's slipper, they try unsuccessfully to squeeze it into the kettle. They finally scrape it and put it down on the chair. Harris sits on it and the butter gets stuck to his back. Then both these men go about searching for the butter all over the room. Later, George locates it behind Harris's back and it is packed in the teapot.

Montmorency, their pet dog, contributes his bit to this exercise of packing by sitting on things, climbing into the jam and crushing lemons as though they were rats.

Finally, the packing is done by 12.50 at night. This is followed by a discussion on the 'wake up' time and George is so tired that he sleeps off even before the time is decided upon. Jerome and Harris decide that 6.30 in morning would be the right time to get up and then they too go off to sleep.

MESSAGE

The chapter humorously describes the do's and don'ts of packing. Packing should not be treated as a frivolous activity but as a serious task that involves concentration and deftness. Another message the account gives is that if we have a pet, it should be well-trained.

I. Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

1. Their taking it in the way they did irritated me. There is nothing does irritate me more than seeing other people sitting about doing nothing when I'm working.

- a) Who is the speaker here and whom is he talking about?
- b) What does the speaker mean by 'it'?
- c) What irritates the speaker the most?
- d) What work did the speaker have to do?

2. However, I did not say anything, but started the packing. It seemed a longer job than I had thought it was going to be...

- (a) Whom does 'I' stand for?
- (b) Why didn't 'I' say anything?
- (c) How did the job not match his expectation?
- (d) Why did the job take longer than he had expected?

3. Harris said that we should be wanting to start in less than twelve hours' time and thought that he and George had better do the rest; and I agreed and sat down, and they had to go.

- (a) What was 'the rest' that Harris and George offered to do?
- (b) Why did Harris and George offer to do 'the rest'?
- (c) Why did Harris particularly mention that they had less than twelve hours' time to start?
- (d) Who does 'I' refer to? Why did 'I' agree to the proposal?

4. I made no comment; I only waited. With the exception of George, Harris is the worst packer in this world; and I looked at the piles of plates and cups, and kettles, and bottles, and jars, and pies, and stoves, and cakes, and tomatoes, etc., and felt that the thing would soon become exciting.

- (a) Who does 'I' stand for? What did he wait for?
- (b) Why has 'and' been used eight times in the sentence?
- (c) Which 'thing' would become exciting for the speaker?
- (d) Why was 'the thing' expected to become 'exciting'?

5. If he can squirm in anywhere where he particularly is not wanted, and be a perfect nuisance, and make people mad, and have things thrown at his head, then he feels his day has not been wasted.

- (a) Whom does 'he' stand for in these lines?
- (b) How did he become a perfect nuisance?
- (c) How would 'he' make people mad?
- (d) When did 'he' feel that his day was not wasted?

II. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words.

1. What kind of a man was the person with whom the author once lived?
2. Do you think the author packed better than George and Harris? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Describe the butter incident.
4. How did George and Harris react to Jerome's offer to do the packing? Did Jerome like their reaction?
5. Why did Jerome have to reopen the packed bag?

III. Answer the following question in 120-150 words.

1. Do you find this story funny? What are the humorous elements in it?
2. Describe how the author packed the bag for going on a trip?