

**ANNUAL PREPARATORY PROGRAMME FOR ENHANCEMENT IN
ACADEMICS AND REVISION (APPEAR)
CLASS XII, ENGLISH CORE - 301
MODULE – XIII THE RATTRAP (PART-I)**

Module Detail	
Subject Name	English Core
Course Name	Annual Preparatory Programme for Enhancement in Academics and Revision (APPEAR) in English for Class XII
Module Name/Title	The Rattrap (Part I)
Module Id	lefl_10401
Pre-requisite	Students should be aware that human beings are a social being and loneliness kills them, so they long for companionship.
Objectives	<p>After carefully reading this chapter and doing the suggested activities, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the story The Rattrap, • Understand the themes like - Loneliness and companionship; Polarity of trust and cynicism; correlation of poverty and pessimism, • Analyse whether happiness is directly proportional to economic strata in society.
Keywords	Loneliness, Companionship, Polarity, Trust, Cynicism, Pessimism, Metaphor, Impenetrable, Plodding.

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INTRODUCTION

The Rattrap is a story about human kindness and its power to change people's lives. It was written by a Swedish author and teacher Selma Lagerlof. She published her first novel when she was 33 and was the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1909. Her works have been translated into more than 30 languages. A universal theme runs through all her stories - that the essential goodness in a human being can be awakened through understanding and love.

[*The Rattrap* – NCERT, p.32]

Maslow's pyramid of needs is a theory in psychology and is considered by many as a formula to attain happiness. Watch this video to learn what it is and answer the questions that follow: [Not for evaluation]

Maslow's Pyramid - The Hierarchy of Needs

1. Do you agree with this theory?
 - a) Agree
 - b) Disagree
2. If you do agree, it means that people, whose basic physiological needs (like food and shelter) aren't met, wouldn't have needs from the higher levels like esteem or a sense of belonging.
 - a) Yes, that's right.
 - b) No, it's not.

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO AND ANSWER THE QUESTION THAT FOLLOWS:

Once upon a time ...around the bait. [*The Rattrap* – NCERT, p.32-33]



Chapter 4- The Rattrap.mp3

Audio Book <https://ciet.nic.in/pages.php?id=flamingo&ln=en>

1. Do you think the peddler's anger at the world was justified? Explain in your own words in not more than 150 – 200 words.

[Not for evaluation]

READING AND UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Text Book PDF <https://ncert.nic.in/textbook.php?lefl1=4-14>

Section 1

Once upon a time ...around the bait. [*The Rattrap* – NCERT, p.32-33]

Once upon a time, there lived a poor man who sold rattraps for a living. He made the rattraps himself using scraps he found. The business was not especially profitable, so he had to resort to both begging and petty thievery to survive. He wore rags for clothes, his face was gaunt and his hunger was evident on his face. His life was monotonous, he was miserable and it pleased him to think that the world was a terrible place. He thought of the world as a rattrap which offers comforts and materialistic joy as bait and once you fell in the trap, you would get caught and everything came to an end.

1. Pick out the word closest in meaning to ‘unwonted’?
 - a) Habitual
 - b) Abnormal
 - c) Unparalleled
 - d) None of the above
2. What is the literary device used here? “...the whole world with its lands and seas, its cities and villages, was nothing but a big rattrap.”
 - a) Metaphor
 - b) Simile
 - c) Alliteration
 - d) Paradox
3. What does the phrase ‘dreary ploddings’ mean?
 - a) Wandering around listlessly
 - b) Skipping around cheerfully
 - c) Walking
 - d) Hopping on one foot
4. Do you know anybody in your life who has a worldview to that of the peddler’s? Was their worldview, a result of their life experiences? Write about them in your own words.

[Not for evaluation]

Section 2

One dark evening...went away. [*The Rattrap* – NCERT, p.33-34]

One night when the peddler spotted a gray cottage and knocked on the door looking for shelter, he met an old crofter who was kind enough to let him inside. In addition to food and shelter, he shared his tobacco with the peddler and played mjolis with him. He told the peddler about how he relies on his cow to support him now that he could no longer work. The crofter showed his guest where he kept the money he had earned last month. He was a gracious host and a trusting man. The next morning, the peddler waited until the crofter had left the cottage, smashed a window pane, stole the thirty kronor and ran.

1. Why did the old crofter give the peddler food and let him inside his house?
 - a) He was a foolish old man
 - b) He was a gracious host
 - c) He was a lonely man
 - d) None of the above
2. What did the crofter offer his guest?
 - a) Porridge
 - b) Tobacco
 - c) Shelter for the night
 - d) All of the above
3. Now that the crofter couldn't do manual labor, he relied on his _____ for money.
 - a) Goat
 - b) Sheep
 - c) Cow
 - d) All of the above
4. Complete the table comparing the traits of the peddler vs. the crofter.

Crofter	Peddler

Trusting
Kind	Greedy
.....	Poor
Old

Section 3

As he walked...of the sound. [*The Rattrap* – NCERT, p.34-35]

He wanted to get off the public highway to make sure he didn't get caught, so he slipped into the forest. He walked until nightfall before he realized he was walking in the same part of the forest. He was lost and exhausted. He realized that he had fallen into the rattrap himself. He had gotten tempted by the money and now the forest seemed to close in on him like a prison. It was getting dark and the peddler was bone-tired. He curled up on the ground thinking he was going to die when he heard sounds of hammer strokes. He realized there was a forge nearby.

1. Why did the peddler steal from the old crofter?
 - a) He got tempted
 - b) He felt he needed the money more
 - c) His extreme poverty drove him to it
 - d) All of the above
2. "He had let himself be fooled by a bait" - what was the bait here?
 - a) A warm meal
 - b) Comfortable shelter for the night
 - c) Company of a kind man
 - d) The thirty kronor
3. Pick out the word which is closest in meaning to 'impenetrable'
 - a) Impassable
 - b) Huge

- c) Indomitable
 - d) Scary
4. Have you ever had someone cheat you even when you were perfectly nice to them? Or do you know of a similar incident happening to someone in your life? Pen down in your own words that experience in not more than 150 – 200 words.

[Not for evaluation]

Section 4

The Ramsjo...and sleep. [*The Rattrap* – NCERT, p.35-36]

He mustered up all his remaining strength and started following the sounds. Soon he found the forge, opened the gate and went inside. The master smith and his helper were busy and amidst the various noises in the forge, didn't notice him until he went and stood near the furnace for warmth. Vagabonds regularly took shelter in forges like this, so the blacksmiths didn't mind him even after they noticed his presence. The peddler asked if he could stay and the master blacksmith nodded his consent.

1. Pick out the word closest in meaning to 'haughty'.
 - a) Arrogant
 - b) Angry
 - c) Irritated
 - d) Agitated
2. Why didn't the blacksmiths mind when the peddler asked for permission to stay?
 - a) It was usual for strangers to stay in the forge
 - b) Vagabonds came to stay in the forge because of the warmth
 - c) The owner liked vagabonds
 - d) The master blacksmith liked vagabonds
3. What were the sounds one could hear at the forge?
 - a) Roaring of the waterfall
 - b) Cracking of burning coals
 - c) Groaning of the big bellows

- d) All of the above
4. You watched an explanatory video about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in Introduction. Write an article in about 150 - 200 words juxtaposing this story with Maslow's theory outlining their contradictions and draw up a conclusion.

[Not for evaluation]

Section 5

In those days... to ...his last word. [*The Rattrap* – NCERT, p.36-37]

The ironmaster who owned Ramsjo iron mill at the time was a man who wanted his work to be the best in quality. He had come on one of his regular nighttime inspections when he saw the vagabond. He walked up to him, mistook him for an old friend and invited him up to his house. The peddler was scared that he would get caught and refused the ironmaster's offer. Looking at the tramp's rags, the ironmaster thought his friend had run into some trouble and was embarrassed to come to his house. But despite his persistence, the peddler refused to accept his offer and the ironmaster went away.

1. From the context, what do you think 'inconspicuously' means?
 - a) Unnoticeably
 - b) Quickly
 - c) Early
 - d) Loudly
2. The peddler didn't want to go to the manor house because _____.
 - a) he hated lying to someone
 - b) he was afraid of getting caught for stealing
 - c) he felt he didn't deserve a hot meal
 - d) he didn't want to fool the ironmaster
3. What does the word 'acquaintance' mean?
 - a) A close friend
 - b) Someone you know, but not in a close capacity

- c) An old rival
 - d) A brother
4. The peddler betrayed the old crofter's trust and in the above context he refused the offer of Ironmaster. Was it the crofter's fault for being too trusting or the peddler's fault for being greedy? What does it throw light on the character of the Peddler?

[Not for evaluation]

LET US SUM UP

This story is about a poor rattrap seller who often has to resort to stealing or begging in order to survive. The hardships that he had undergone had made him a miserable person. He was all alone in the world and had only his thoughts to keep him company. One of them is that the whole world is a rattrap. The world offers us various types of bait in the form of comforts of life and leads us to various types of miseries. This rattrap metaphor accurately sums up the peddler's worldview and provides an explanation for his behaviour throughout the story.

One night, the peddler knocked on the door of a cottage asking for shelter. Surprisingly instead of shooing him away, an old crofter invited him into his home, gave him food and a place to stay. The next morning, the peddler stole this crofter's money and ran away. He tried to hide in the forest, walked around in circles and realized that he was lost. He also realized that he had fallen into the rattrap himself. Just then, he heard hammer sounds and figured that there must be a forge nearby. He went into a forge and curled up in front of the furnace for warmth. The ironmaster looked at him and mistook him for an old friend. He invited the peddler home but the peddler refused, worrying if he would be caught.

ANSWERS

Question No.	Section - 1	Section - 2	Section - 3	Section - 4	Section - 5
1	b	b	d	a	a
2	a	d	d	b	b
3	a	c	a	d	b
4	generous	haughty	beggar		

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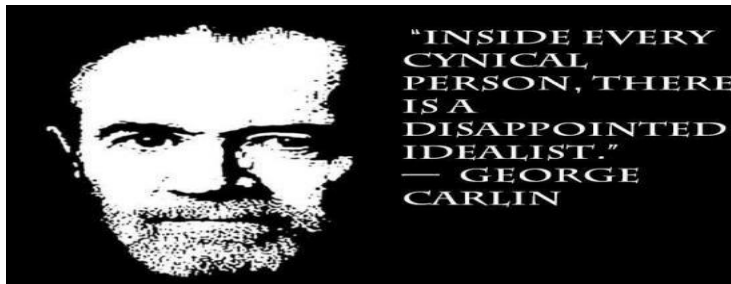
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PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Despite his rattrap metaphor, the peddler got greedy and stole the money from the old man. According to his metaphor, we're constantly going in search of material things, a bigger salary, better clothes, bigger house or a fancier car. And in our pursuit, we forget more important things in life. Based on your experience do you agree? Do you think the world is a rattrap? Discuss.

2. Read the Quotation and answer the question that follows:



[Source: <https://www.truthinsideofyou.org/7-cynical-george-carlin-quotes/>]

In the current political and social climate, people and more importantly students are becoming increasingly cynical. Debate “Trust vs. Cynicism: What makes your life easier”.

3. Here is the link for an article in The New Yorker

<https://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/do-the-poor-have-more-meaningful-lives>

Go through the article and answer the question that follows:

Contrary to what we saw in the peddler's behavior, research indicates that poor people have more meaningful lives. From your personal experience, which arguments do you

think has more merit? Justify with your first-hand experiences.

4. In the story we see the crofter and the peddler, two lonely people sharing an evening of warm and pleasant companionship. Studies indicate that loneliness is a growing epidemic and is now considered as a health risk. Here is a link for an article in WebMD.

<https://www.webmd.com/balance/news/20180504/loneliness-rivals-obesity-smoking-as-health-risk>

The study quoted in the article was conducted by an American health insurer Cigna.

How do you think India would perform in a similar survey? From your interactions with your friends at school and outside, would you concur that the ‘social media paradox’ is a real thing? Explain and justify your answer.

5. *“We’ve learned how to make a living, not a life. We’ve added years to life, not life to years.” - George Carlin*

The peddler’s life is described as monotonous, miserable and lonely. He led a life with no meaning. How would you describe meaning in your life? Write an honest letter to your 28 year old self about everything you hope to achieve by then and about where you imagine yourself to be 10 years from now. How many of those milestones are quantitative and how many of them are qualitative?