

Note: The transactional processes suggested in CISCE curriculum are highlighted in grey.

**Learning Outcomes**

- To develop appreciation for a day well spent
- To identify the metaphors used in the poem
- To help identify figures of speech in the poem

**Summary:** The poem “Count That Day Lost” by George Eliot describes the process of deciding whether our day has been wisely spent or completely wasted. The poem conveys to its readers that a day spent helping people can be considered a day well-spent. Even one small gesture, to help someone in a small way, makes the day meaningful. However, if at the end of your day, you can remember nothing that you did that was helpful or comforting or compassionate towards another person, then consider the day lost because you had lost a chance to make it worthwhile.

**Pre-reading**

*Individual Work*

Replicate this chart on the board, and ask students which of these activities/deeds make them feel like they had a good day and

which ones make them feel like they had a bad day. Alternately you can call out the words and ask students to answer.

| Activity / Deed                | Good Day | Bad Day |
|--------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Met your best friend           |          |         |
| Got scolded                    |          |         |
| Made someone smile             |          |         |
| Completed your homework        |          |         |
| Lost your pocket money         |          |         |
| Made someone sad               |          |         |
| Helped someone                 |          |         |
| Did not help anyone            |          |         |
| Ate your favourite food        |          |         |
| Were unwell                    |          |         |
| Helped an elder                |          |         |
| Took care of a younger sibling |          |         |
| Went for a morning jog /walk   |          |         |
| Obedied an elder               |          |         |

Now ask students what the poem is about.

## READING

*Students read to predict, comprehend and paraphrase*

Play the audio track and let students listen to the poem. Ask a student to read the poem aloud.

Explain the poem and then check comprehension.

Ask students to list

- the essentials of a good day according to the poem.
- the things by which the poet considers the entire day wasted.

| Worthwhile Day | Worthless Day |
|----------------|---------------|
|                |               |

**Theme:** It talks about cause and effect: If you do good deeds then your day is well spent. If you do not do anything good then your day is lost.

**Setting:** ‘*at set of sun*’ alludes to the end of a day, the end of a period and signifies a time of reflection and self-examination.

### Poetic devices

Rhyme scheme: *a, a, b, c, c, b, d, d*

Images: *sit down and count, bring sunshine, eased/cheered the heart*

Metaphors: *set of sun: evening*

Simile: *that fell like sunshine*

Repetition: *count* reinforces the message of the poem, adds to the poem’s force and strengthens its meaning.

Alliteration: (A few examples) *If you sit down at set of sun; self-denying deed; heart of him who heard*

### Post reading

*Pair work*

- List out things that you can do during the week which will make worthwhile-days.
- List out the qualities that compare and contrast the two stanzas. (*Note:* Let students fill in the list. Provide the questions in the columns.)

| Stanza 1  | Stanza 2  |
|---|---|
| What makes a day well spent? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● give a glance most kind</li> <li>● do a self-denying deed</li> <li>● say a kind word</li> </ul> | What makes a day seem wasted? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● bring cheer no heart</li> <li>● helped no one</li> <li>● nothing done to help someone</li> </ul> |

## STUDENTS’ BOOK ANSWER KEY

### Count That Day Lost

#### Comprehension

1. The speaker wants the reader to sit down at the end of each day and think about everything they have done that day, to find out if they have been kind and helpful or not.
2. A self-denying deed is some act or gesture or work that is done not for one’s own interests but for the sake of someone else—not to help oneself but someone else. The speaker recommends it because such a deed can help someone else and make them feel better.

3. 'Yea or nay', that is, yes and no are small words, but they can be important as saying yes or no wisely and thoughtfully can help us take the correct decisions. It is part of knowing the right thing to say at the right time.
  4. According to the speaker, a day during which one does not do anything at all that helps someone else or makes them feel better at least a little, is a day that is worse than lost.
- B.**
1.
    - a. A day well spent is a day that was useful and productive and during which something good and worthwhile was done.
    - b. We can consider a day well spent if we have been helpful to another person that day by some act or gesture, no matter how small; or by saying something nice; or by paying attention to something or someone.
  2.
    - a. 'That' refers to any small act.
    - b. 'Nothing cost' means that one did not have to take any trouble or face any inconvenience to perform the act (which was helpful to someone else).
- C.**
1. The poem talks about every day. This is because what the speaker advises—being helpful and kind to others in different ways—is true for every day of our lives, not just special occasions.
  2.
    - a. A kind glance can be helpful if it shows that we have noticed someone or paid attention to them when they needed it. For example, perhaps they were struggling with something, and even if we cannot say or do anything to help them, simply knowing that we have noticed their difficulty and struggle may help them feel better.
    - b. A glance is a small thing to do.
    - c. The other ways to help people mentioned in the poem are also mostly small. For example, 'one self-denying deed', 'one word', or some act 'most small'. None of these is big or difficult. This is because the speaker is trying to tell us that it is easy to be helpful, kind and supportive if only we are a little thoughtful and sensitive.

### **Appreciating the Poem**

1.
  - a.
    - i. If we think of everything we have done in a day and find some deed, word or glance that helped someone,
    - ii. then we can consider that our day was well spent.
  - b.
    - i. If we spend a day without doing anything at all that was helpful to another person,
    - ii. then we can think of that day as worse than lost.
2. The reader is addressed in the poem. No, the poem does not use 'we' or 'I'. Yes, the poem can still be read as a note to oneself, because the speaker may be writing these lines down in her diary or journal, and telling or reminding herself how to spend her time or what to always keep in mind.
3. The rhyme scheme of this poem is *abccbdd eefggfhh*.

### **Vocabulary**

- |                                    |                           |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. a. selfless                     | b. selfish                |
| 2. a. good-natured / compassionate | b. cruel                  |
| 3. b. wasted / useless             | 4. b. big / important     |
| 5. b. better                       | 6. b. useful / productive |

### **Going Further**

*Free response*

## QUESTION BANK

### Count That Day Lost

#### A. Answer in brief.

What message does the poem *Count That Day Lost* convey?

**Ans:** We should spend each day doing selfless acts to make people around us happy. This brings meaning to our life. This not only makes our lives better but also helps others feel better.

#### B. Answer in detail.

Write the summary of the poem *Count That Day Lost*.

**Ans:** The poem *Count That Day Lost* asks us to decide whether our day has been wisely spent or completely wasted. If we recount the activities of the day, and find that we have done at least one good and unselfish deed, or made a day of another person better, then we can say that we have managed to spend that day well. The poem emphasises the importance of these good deeds in the second verse. It says that we might have done many things during that day, but if we have not done at least one good deed for another person, then that day is considered 'worse than lost'.

#### C. Choose the correct answer.

What will *one self-denying deed* achieve?

- You will achieve all other deeds for the day easily.
- You will lose time and miss out on doing useful work.
- You will have made another person happy.

**Ans:** c

#### D. Read the lines and answer the questions.

*You've nothing done that you can trace*

*That brought the sunshine to one face*

- Why does the poet use the word *sunshine* in these lines?
- Does sunshine have a positive or negative connotation here?
- What is the meaning of the lines? What is the figure of speech used?

**Ans:** a. The poet uses the word "sunshine" to show how if you give someone a kind look it can make that person feel happy.

- The word *sunshine* has a positive connotation and your glance can make someone feel warm, good and happy.
- Just like sunshine, a warm day brings warmth and light into someone's day. A metaphor is used here.

#### E. Answer in detail. (Think and answer)

Justify the title of the poem *Count That Day Lost*.

**Suggested answer:** The poet tells us not waste our days, and make sure that we do good things to make other people happy. He states that if we had the opportunity to do good things and if we had missed those opportunities, then we have to count that day worse than lost. The poem contrasts the day well spent with the day worse than lost. The title strongly emphasises this contrast to deliver the message that we should not miss an opportunity to do good deeds.