

Today and Tomorrow

by J.E. Carpenter

Pre-reading Task

1. Have you ever been punished for not doing your homework? Yes/No
2. Do you know anyone who is always regular in their work? Talk to them and find out the secret of their regularity.
3. If you are half asleep and your mother tells you to pack your bag before sleeping, will you—
 - (i) get up and pack it immediately?
 - (ii) tell her to wait for ten minutes?
 - (iii) tell her that you will pack it in the morning?

Now read the poem.

Don't tell me of tomorrow;
Give me the man who'll say,
That when a good deed's to be done
"Let's do the deed today."

We may all command the present,
If we act and never wait,
But repentance is the phantom
Of a past that comes too late!

Don't tell me of tomorrow
There is much to do today,
That can never be accomplished,
If we throw the hours away,
Every moment has its duty,
Who the future can foretell?
Then why put off till tomorrow
What today can do as well?



I Understanding the Poem

A. The poem 'Today and Tomorrow' highlights the importance of time. Can you find some famous proverbs based on the same idea? One has been given below.

1. Time and tide wait for none.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

B. Answer the following questions briefly:

1. What sort of man does the poet like?
2. How can we 'command the present'?
3. What happens if we throw the hours away?
4. Why should we not put off any work/good deed till tomorrow?
5. Find out the four pairs of rhyming words in the poem.
6. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?

II HOTS

Yesterday is dead, tomorrow is unborn but today is a gift. That's why it is called 'present'. How can one make one's present a worthy gift?

III Life Skills

Kushal is a bit lazy and keeps delaying his work. He also gets scolded by his parents and almost all the teachers for being so disorganised. What suggestions can you give him to manage his time?

IV Values

What according to you is the best way of spending time out of the given options? Give reasons for your choice.

- (a) grooming yourself
- (b) gaining knowledge
- (c) entertaining yourself
- (d) teaching someone
- (e) helping the needy

V Writing Skills

- A. Write a letter to your brother living in a hostel to maintain a balance between playing games and studying so as to make the most productive use of his time.
- B. Write a short story to illustrate the proverb—
'A stitch in time saves nine.'

About the Author

J.E. Carpenter has written only a few poems but they are mostly on the importance of making the best use of the present moment. It is a great irony that we are always complaining about the shortage of time. Yet we waste it as if we had an inexhaustible store of it.

