



Compiled, Designed & Circulated by:  
*Mr. Milan Mondal, Assistant Professor (English)*  
**Narajole Raj College, Narjole, Paschim Medinipur**  
**Model question-answer**

WAITING FOR GODOT

1. What is the subtitle of *Waiting for Godot*? Is it an appropriate one?

Ans:- The subtitle of the play is *A Tragi-Comedy in Two Acts*.

The theme of this absurd play is, no doubt, the tragic situation of man in this world. The characters presented in the play are prototype of human suffering and man's measurable condition in the labyrinthine world. But the way it is represented by the playwright is comical; the characters are presented as the circus-fools. Hence the subtitle is apt one.

2. What is the significance of the tree in *Waiting for Godot*?

Ans:- The tree in the play is very symbolic. First of all, it is a part of single and stark setting of the play; its singleness emphasizes the desolation of the location. Second, as Gunter Anders suggests, the tree 'defines the world as a permanent instrument of suicide, or life as non-committing of suicide'. Thus it implies that all the objects of this universe is hostile to man. At another level, the tree represents the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified. Thus it symbolizes the irrelevance of Christian response to man's predicament.

3. What is the significance of the change in Act II relating to four or five leaves growing on the tree?

Ans:- The sprouting of four or five leaves is only the manifestation of a repetitive rather than a hopeful process. Apart from adding to its desolate setting, the sparse leafage is symptomatic of lack of promise and lack of any fulfillment. In fact, it is this futility which governs the basic motif of the play. Finally the leaves serve to reveal the passage of time.

Beckett himself says to Roger Blin, the first director of the play, that this change occurs "not to show hope on inspiration, but only to record the passage of time".

4. Comment on the role of the messenger boy in *Waiting for Godot*.

Ans:- There are two boy-messengers in the two Acts and Vladimir and Estragon confuse the two for each other. Each is a young boy who works for Mr. Godot. Just as Pozzo becomes blind and Lucky becomes dumb, the boy's brother is reported to be sick in Act II confirming Lucky's observation that man is doomed to 'waste and pine'.

Again, Godot's treatment with the two boys brings out his variance with conventional Christianity. In *Matthew 25:31-33* it is said that the Son of God will appear on earth and separate men as a shepherd separates goats from sheep; and that He would keep the goats in his left side and the sheep on his right. Thus, in Christianity it is the sheep who are righteous and goats who are sinful and corrupted. But in stark contrast to Christianity Godot is reported to bit the boy who tends the sheep and to be good with the boy who looks after the goats.

5. What is the significance of the story of the two thieves on the cross in *Waiting for Godot*?

Ans:- At the very outset of the play Vladimir is seen speculating on his and Gogo's chance of having salvation or damnation; hope or despair. Vladimir weighs his chance in the light of the Biblical two thieves. The information that one of the two thieves was saved is found to reassure their hope for salvation. One out of two beings saved is a really a 'reasonable percentage'. But according to the information of another Evangelist both the thieves were damned. In it the last drop of his hope for salvation evaporates.

Thus the Biblical episodes strengthen Vladimir to draw two conclusions from the story: first, that the two thieves have not been saved, and not that therefore, his own salvation is uncertain and precarious. Second, salvation is arbitrary since any of the two thieves may have been saved without any reference to their specific sins.



Compiled, Designed & Circulated by:  
*Mr. Milan Mondal, Assistant Professor (English)*  
**Narajole Raj College, Narjole, Paschim Medinipur**

## WAITING FOR GODOT

6 What is the significance of Pozzo's blindness in Act II.

Ans:- i) Pozzo's blindness signifies, at the most literal level that man's condition can only degenerate and is very much uncertain as is also exemplified by the dumbness of Lucky and the sickness of the Boy messenger. [The future of man being oblique and blank or void, the ability to look into it can be represented only by blindness, which signifies absence of light].

ii) It conforms to Lucky's observation that man is doomed to 'waste and pine'.

iii) At another level, Pozzo's remark that he is 'as blind as Fortune' indicates that man's fate operates in a blind and unjust manner.

iv) With the loss of the notion of time, Pozzo gains an insight into the absurdity of measuring time with clocks and calendars.

v) Pozzo's blindness may be due to his dependence on Lucky.

7. What is the difference between Pozzo and Lucky's first entry and the last?

Ans:- First entry : Lucky is tied with a rope around his neck and Pozzo has the other end of the rope. Lucky carries a folding stool, a great bag, a picnic basket and a coat in his hand. Pozzo carries a whip.

Second entry: Lucky is tied but the rope is shorter this time. Lucky wears a different hat. Pozzo turns blind.

8. Name at least three characters other than the two tramps in *Waiting for Godot*.

Ans:- Pozzo, Lucky, Godot's messenger boy are the three characters other than Vladimir and Estragon.

9. What are the different attributes of God made by Lucky?

Ans:- The three different attributes of God are:-

i) *Divine Apathia* (lack of feelings): God's insensibility to suffering.

ii) *Divine Athambia*: God's imperturbability.

iii) *Divine Aphasias*: God's inability to communicate or speechlessness.

10. "Vladimir: well? Shall we go?

Estragon: Yes, let's go

They do not move"---

--- This is the ending of both the Acts of *Waiting for Godot*. How do you justify it?

Ans:- Vladimir and Estragon's immobility emphasize the idea of being trapped in a static and circular situation where every end is also the beginning of the same process (or experience) all over again. Thus the end of first Act is actually the beginning of the second Act or in a wider sense end of the journey is the beginning of another one.

Beckett's plays usually end in this kind of silent immobility, which according to Duckworth, is the only dignified response to what Lucky calls "divine apathia, divine athambia, divine aphasia" (*Angels of Darkness*)

11. Mention at least one literary precedent for the name of Godot.

Ans:- The name 'Godot' may have something to do with a character Monsieur Godeau in Balzac's *Le Faiseur* for whom the characters wait thinking that he would save them from bankruptcy and ruin. (Though Beckett himself has denied this suggestion saying that he was not familiar with Balzac's work when he wrote the play.) One thing is to be noted here that in Beckett's play Godot does not arrive, while in Balzac's Godeau does turn up at last. According to these theories, then, the name 'Godot' either suggests the intervention of a supernatural agency or stands for a mythical human being whose arrival is expected to change the situation.





Compiled, Designed & Circulated by:  
*Mr. Milan Mondal, Assistant Professor (English)*  
**Narajole Raj College, Narjole, Paschim Medinipur**

## WAITING FOR GODOT

12. What could be the possible meaning of 'Godot' in *Waiting for Godot*?

Ans:- The word Godot may have diverse associations for it has varied implication for English, French and Irish – the three languages with which Beckett was familiar. *Godillot* in French means "shapeless old shoe." *Goddam* is a slang for 'an Englishman' and *Godier* is a slang for 'having an erection'. The Irish term for God is Godó. The term 'Godot' may have arrived by adding the French diminutive to the English word God, because the belittlement of God is one of the main themes of the play. Perhaps the most pertinent observation is that of Colin Duckworth who suggests that *Godets* are small receptacles and Godot is a receptacle which can hold any meaning put into it.

13. Who is Godot?

Ans:- "I know who is Godot than I should tell you" – Beckett.

Beckett himself admitted that he did not know who Godot was. Godot has been interpreted variously, as God, love, hope, eternal life, death, silence, De Gaulle, future, a famous French cyclist, a Paris street notorious for its prostitutes etc. He is someone who is supposed to bring the characters salvation. The immediate link between *Godot* and *God* may be arrived at from the fact that while Lucky describes God as having white beard, the boy informs Vladimir and Estragon that Mr. Godot has white beard. Some critics believe that Beckett derived the title from Balzac's play *Le Faiseur* in which the characters wait for one Monsieur Godot in the hope that he would save them from ruins.

14. What is the significance of Lucky's tirades?

Ans:- Lucky's demented harangue presents three of the play's most crucial themes – 1) The indifference of God to human suffering, 2) the diminution of man and 3) the impossibility of a meaningful communication in an absurd word.

The speech parodies and satirizes rational, scholarly discourse. It denies the presence of logic in the world by subverting the logical order of language itself. This is evident in the distortion of words and sentence structures. Further, its incomplete and repetitive character also subverts the notion of economy of utterance which is the measure of rationality in language. By mocking at the belief of God, faith in learning and notion of progress, it captures and demonstrates, as some critics have pointed out the utter break down and disintegration of 300 years of Western intellectual history.

In theatrical terms, Lucky's tirades are a brilliant piece of writing.

15. In the title of *Waiting for Godot* where does the emphasis fall on 'waiting' or 'Godot' – justify.

Ans: The emphasis should fall on the verb 'waiting'. The fact that the tramps are waiting and they are quite exhausted in waiting is quite certain. But what they are waiting for? Or has he any existence at all whom they wait for? These questions can have no definite answer, for the unknown Godot never turns up. It remains a mystery throughout the play. Hence, the original French version *En attendant Godot* also puts the emphasis on the verb rather than on the noun.

16. What does Lucky's speechlessness signify?

Ans: Pozzo and Lucky signify time's twin qualities of change and changelessness. They are the only ones in the play who change. Pozzo changes from his 'wonderful sight' to complete blindness, while Lucky changes from speaking animal to a dumb automation who cannot even groan. These changes signify concrete human time on the level of individual existence and experience. This time moves, Beckett thinks, towards loss, devitalization and death. This human time is perceived as a devitalizing process in which man continues to 'waste and pine'.



Compiled, Designed & Circulated by:  
*Mr. Milan Mondal, Assistant Professor (English)*  
**Narajole Raj College, Narjole, Paschim Medinipur**

## WAITING FOR GODOT

17. *What does the setting of *Waiting for Godot* with its bare landscape suggest?*

Ans: Unlike realist dramas, where the locales are clearly established through solid sets and physical objects, the place where the tramps wait for Godot is not fixed. Beckett's stage direction identifies it as a 'country road', but, barring a rather surrealistic tree, there is no other physical feature to evoke that identification in performance. The setting is as if in a vacuum sans any societal links. It rather suggests man's position in a world is almost alienated. The setting enables Beckett to isolate his characters from any social reality that might deflect attention from the generalized human situation he is portraying. The frequently arbitrary and irrational behavior of the characters point to the abstract quality of this setting.

The play's spatio-temporal location comes across, in Kenner's interesting phrase, as 'nowhere-nowhen'. Such non-specific settings are a common feature of Beckett's drama.

18. *What are the characteristic features of absurd drama revealed in *Waiting for Godot*?*

Ans: The characteristic features of absurd drama are a philosophical belief in the meaninglessness of human life, the expression of feeling of boredom and disgust, the failure of communication and a clownish theatricality on the stage itself. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is set in a vacant land where the vagabond characters try to find the meanings of a meaningless life through some incoherent gibberish. The plot lacks the chronological order of a well knit play.

19. *What does 'acacacademy' and 'anthropopometry' mean?*

Ans: 'Acacacademy' parodies 'academy' the highest institution of learning by the repetition of 'caca' which is the childish French word for 'excrement'.

'Anthropopometry' parodies the scientific term 'anthropometry' by inserting 'popo' which is a childish French word for 'chamberpot'.

20. *How many times the concept of waiting brought forth through the action of the play?*

Ans: The concept of waiting has been brought forth at least fifteen times.

21. *What is the function of Estragon and Vladimir?*

Ans: Estragon and Vladimir function both as friends, as a couple and as also the sensual and intellectual, pessimistic and optimistic counterparts.

22. *Why are the characters in pair?*

Ans: The most obvious reason for why the characters are in pair is that from the point of view of metatheatre, they are each other's spectator. Further, they are complementary to each other.

23. *Which four countries do the four characters belong to?*

Ans: Estragon – French  
Vladimir – Russian  
Lucky – English  
Pozzo – Italian

24. *What form of sentence do we get in Lucky's speech?*

Ans: Lucky's speech involves incoherent, distorted, illogical, incomplete and repetitive sentences. These reflect the illogical and repetitive nature of man's life.





Compiled, Designed & Circulated by:  
*Mr. Milan Mondal, Assistant Professor (English)*  
**Narajole Raj College, Narjole, Paschim Medinipur**

## WAITING FOR GODOT

25. *What does Lucky's speech mean?*

Ans: Lucky's speech has three parts. The first part means that heaven and divinities are indifferent. Thus it is the unfinished protest of a theological or philosophical argument.

The second part is an incomplete fragment of a rational argument. It means that man is constantly dwindling rather than progressing.

The third part means that the earth is an abode of stone and skulls.

26. *Where does Lucky's speech end?*

Ans: Lucky's speech ends, significantly with the word 'unfinished'.

27. *What do you mean by PUNCHER?*

Ans: It is merely a fictitious name.

28. *What do you mean by quaquaquaqu?*

Ans: In Lucky's tirade, God is implied to be producing the sound *quaquaquaqu* which despite its apparent religious link with the word 'quaquaversal' meaning 'pointing in all direction'; actually imitates the sound of a duck – the lowliest and most insensitive of creatures. It thus parodies God and religion on the one hand and shows God's insensate nature towards human suffering on the other.

29. *Who has white beard in Lucky's speech?*

Ans: God has white beard in Lucky's speech.

30. *From which book has the phrase 'divine Miranda' been taken?*

Ans: The phrase has been taken from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

31. *What does 'Essy-in-posse' mean?*

Ans: Essy and Posse are terms from medieval scholasticism, meaning 'to be' and 'to be able' respectively.

32. *What do Testew, Cunard, Fartov, Belches mean?*

Ans: These are invented names derived from the bodily functions.

33. *Give the meanings of 'conating' and 'suceddenac'?*

Ans: In philosophy 'conating' means 'endeavouring'. 'Suceddenac' implies 'remedies'.

34. *Comment on Vladimir- Estragon relationship.*

Ans: Vladimir and Estragon are foil to each other. They are at once contraries and complementaries, pessimistic and optimistic, ignorant and intellectual. Together they constitute the entire essential human characters.

35. *Comment on Pozzo- Lucky relationship.*

Ans: Their relationship is one of exploitation. They are also the antithetical pair – Pozzo the master, Lucky the servant; Pozzo the ring- master, Lucky the animal; Pozzo the sadist, Lucky the masochist.



Compiled, Designed & Circulated by:  
*Mr. Milan Mondal, Assistant Professor (English)*  
**Narajole Raj College, Narjole, Paschim Medinipur**

*36. Significance of Silence.*

Ans: The silence, pause, dote suggest the lack of true meaningful communication. It is a world strict of the meaningfulness of a so-called society, a world where one cannot find any possible communication; a world where one can only connect not 'something with something' but 'nothing with nothing'.

*37. More about Godot.*

Ans: In many ways Godot is a parody of God, one who offers a reversal of all the traditional notions held by religion in general and Christianity in particular. Godot is rather an anti-traditional God.

Another important concept of Christianity which is flouted in *Waiting for Godot* is that of the paradox finding freedom bondage. In Bible (Hebrew 13:5) the disciple is exhorted to "remember them that they are in bond, as bound with them". In Matthew (26:19) also there is reference to bondage on earth and bounding in heaven.

But in this play although Pozzo and Lucky are bound to each other by rope, it is Estragon & Vladimir who rebel against the idea of being tied to each other.

The third difference from traditional concept of religiously is that in this play God neither come nor does give a hint of his arrival. In *A Passage to India* Godbole's imploring an waiting for God is rewarded by the symbolic rains and Eliot's *The Wasteland* the approach of the rain giving suggests a possibility of redemption. But *Waiting for Godot* rules out all such possibility: 'Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful'. (P- 71)

*Waiting for Godot* parodies God's power and roles on atleast 2 occasions. The first is when Vladimir and Estragon discuss hoe Godot would think over the request of them and how he would consult his family, friend, agent and even bank's account before taking his decision. The second is the famous speech of Lucky where he refers to refers to an apathetic nature of God.

*38. Element of futility.*

Ans: Excersing futility is one of the governing motifs of the play. Vladimir and Estragon's endeavour to commit suicide proves futile in both the acts. Not only that their very expectation to meet Mr. Godot is repeatedly frustrated by his non-arrival. And yet the characters perpetuate their waiting, thereby projecting their futile exercise and exercise and existence. Bckett had successfully assimilated Shakespeare vision of the basic human situation with the existentialist vision of man's suffering and faitiure in the context of post war hollowcast in terms of the idiom of the theatre. Even the images-broken bones, fallen leaves, ashes, dead voices, skeletons, skull, the decrescent moon etc contribute to the basic motif of futility.

*39. Comment on the time factor used in the play*

Ans: The play as if seems to defy the movement of time, time in this play has no progress as such. As Vladimir says in Act I if Time has stopped. (P- 66)

In contrast with traditional drama where time plays an important role, either to emphasize the tragic progression or to create an atmosphere of suspense for the approach of