

MCQs on The Portrait of a Lady

1. For how many years had the author known his grandmother to be old and wrinkled?
 - A) Twenty years
 - B) Fifteen years
 - C) Ten years
 - D) Five years
2. What was hard for the author to believe about his grandmother's past?
 - A) That she had once been young or pretty, or had a husband
 - B) That she had lived in a big city
 - C) That she had travelled extensively
 - D) That she was a talented artist
3. How did the author initially perceive his grandmother's stories of her childhood games?
 - A) As charming and delightful
 - B) As historically accurate and factual
 - C) As quite absurd and undignified, like fables of the Prophets
 - D) As inspiring tales of adventure
4. What was a consistent physical characteristic of the grandmother as described by the author?
 - A) Tall and thin with an upright posture
 - B) Average height with a strong build
 - C) Short and fat and slightly bent with a criss-cross of wrinkles
 - D) Lean and agile, moving swiftly
5. What did the grandmother's lips constantly moving in inaudible prayer signify?
 - A) It reflected her deep religious faith and constant devotion
 - B) It meant she was silently scolding the author
 - C) It indicated she was planning her daily tasks
 - D) It was a habit she developed due to nervousness
6. To what was the grandmother often compared, signifying her inner beauty and serenity?
 - A) A winter landscape in the mountains, an expanse of pure white serenity
 - B) A blossoming flower in spring, full of vibrant life
 - C) A calm ocean on a summer day, reflecting tranquility
 - D) A vibrant cityscape at night, full of energy
7. What did the grandmother use to balance her stoop while hobbling about the house?
 - A) A walking stick for support
 - B) Both hands clasped behind her back
 - C) One hand resting on her waist
 - D) A shoulder bag to offset her weight

8. What was the typical breakfast of the author and grandmother in the village?

- A) Fresh fruit and milk
- B) Cooked lentils and rice
- C) A thick, stale chapatti with a little butter and sugar
- D) Bread and jam

9. What did the grandmother carry for the village dogs on their way to school?

- A) Several stale chapattis
- B) Small pieces of meat
- C) Leftover rice
- D) Fresh bread crumbs

10. Why did the grandmother always go to school with the author in the village?

- A) She was his teacher
- B) Because the school was attached to the temple
- C) She enjoyed interacting with other children
- D) The path was unsafe for him alone

11. What event marked a "turning-point" in the author's friendship with his grandmother?

- A) When the author went to university
- B) When the author went abroad for studies
- C) When they moved to the city
- D) When the grandmother fell ill

12. What was the primary reason the grandmother was unhappy with the author's English school education in the city?

- A) She found the school too modern
- B) She disapproved of the school's location
- C) She found the curriculum too challenging
- D) It did not teach about God and the scriptures

13. How did the grandmother react to the news of the author taking music lessons?

- A) She was very disturbed, believing music had "lewd associations" and was the "monopoly of harlots and beggars"
- B) She encouraged him to pursue it as a hobby
- C) She offered to teach him traditional Indian music
- D) She bought him a new musical instrument

14. What did the grandmother's silence signify when the author told her about music lessons?

- A) Amusement
- B) Disapproval
- C) Indifference
- D) Confusion

15. What happened to the "common link of friendship" when the author went to university?

- A) It strengthened significantly due to maturity
- B) It remained unchanged despite the distance

C) It was snapped
D) It evolved into a new form of communication

16. How did the grandmother cope with her increased seclusion after the author went to university?
A) She became very depressed and isolated herself further
B) She started visiting neighbours frequently to fill her time
C) She developed new hobbies and social interests
D) She accepted it with resignation, focusing on her routines

17. What was the grandmother's primary activity from sunrise to sunset in the city after the author went to university?
A) Sitting by her spinning-wheel, spinning and reciting prayers
B) Reading books and writing letters
C) Cooking and cleaning for the household
D) Engaging in long conversations with family members

18. What was the "happiest half-hour of the day" for the grandmother in the city?
A) When she recited her evening prayers
B) When she fed the sparrows
C) When she talked to her neighbours
D) When the author returned from university

19. What specific sound did hundreds of sparrows create around the grandmother during feeding time?
A) A melodious symphony
B) A loud cacophony of squawks
C) A veritable bedlam of chirrupings
D) A quiet, peaceful murmur

20. How did the grandmother bid farewell to the author when he went abroad for five years?
A) She cried uncontrollably and expressed her sorrow
B) She gave him a long, sentimental speech
C) She showed great excitement for his future
D) She was not sentimental, showing no emotion, with lips moving in prayer and a silent kiss on his forehead

21. What did the author cherish as the "last sign of physical contact" from his grandmother before going abroad?
A) The moist imprint of her silent kiss on his forehead
B) Her warm hug
C) Her gentle touch on his hand
D) Her blessing hand on his head

22. What unusual behavior did the grandmother exhibit the evening before she fell ill?
A) She spent the entire evening in quiet meditation
B) She did not pray; instead, she collected women, got a dilapidated drum, and sang songs of

warriors' homecoming

- C) She meticulously cleaned the entire house
- D) She wrote long letters to distant relatives

23. Why did the family try to persuade the grandmother to stop singing the night before she fell ill?

- A) They found her singing too loud
- B) They disliked the songs she chose
- C) To avoid overstraining
- D) They wanted her to go to bed early

24. What did the grandmother tell her family about her illness, despite the doctor's prognosis?

- A) She felt much better than she let on
- B) She needed more rest and quiet
- C) She believed she would recover quickly
- D) That her end was near

25. What reason did the grandmother give for not wanting to waste time talking before her death?

- A) She had omitted to pray the previous evening
- B) She was too weak to speak effectively
- C) She wished for quiet reflection in her last moments
- D) She believed she had already said everything important

26. What happened to the grandmother's rosary as she lay dying peacefully in bed?

- A) She tightly clutched it in her hand
- B) It fell from her lifeless fingers
- C) She placed it under her pillow
- D) She handed it to her grandson

27. What appeared on the grandmother's face after her death?

- A) A vibrant glow of youth
- B) A worried and troubled expression
- C) A peaceful pallor
- D) A faint smile of contentment

28. How was the grandmother's body prepared for cremation, as was customary?

- A) Dressed in her finest clothes and laid on a bed
- B) Placed in a wooden coffin for procession
- C) Covered with a white sheet and adorned with flowers
- D) Laid on the ground and covered with a red shroud

29. How did thousands of sparrows react around the grandmother's dead body?

- A) They sat scattered on the floor with "no chirruping"
- B) They chirped loudly in distress
- C) They flew around frantically, causing a commotion
- D) They pecked gently at her body as a sign of respect

30. What was the sparrows' reaction to the bread crumbs offered by the author's mother after the grandmother's death?

- A) They eagerly consumed all the crumbs
- B) They took no notice of the bread
- C) They fought amongst themselves for the crumbs
- D) They carried the crumbs away to their nests

31. What did the sparrows do after the grandmother's body was carried away for cremation?

- A) They continued to wait for more food
- B) They flew to the roof and chirped sadly
- C) They flew away quietly
- D) They stayed in the room until morning

32. According to the study guide, what does the grandmother's character symbolize?

- A) Rebellion and modern progress
- B) Youthful energy and spontaneity
- C) Economic prosperity and social status
- D) Tradition, resilience, and inner beauty

33. What is the main theme highlighted by the grandmother's disapproval of Western science and music lessons?

- A) Tradition vs. Modernity
- B) The importance of education
- C) The generation gap in families
- D) The conflict between urban and rural life

34. What distinction does the author make about his grandmother regarding her appearance?

- A) She was initially pretty but became less so with age
- B) She could never have been "pretty" but was always "beautiful"
- C) She was beautiful when young but not when old
- D) She valued outer prettiness over inner beauty

35. What literary device is used in the phrase "The common link of friendship was snapped"?

- A) Simile
- B) Hyperbole
- C) Metaphor
- D) Personification

36. What literary device is exemplified by "frivolous rebukes" when describing the grandmother's gentle scolding of sparrows?

- A) Onomatopoeia
- B) Hyperbole
- C) Antithesis
- D) Personification

37. What did the grandfather's portrait show him wearing?

- A) A big turban and loose-fitting clothes

B) A small cap and a tight suit
C) A crown and royal robes
D) A simple dhoti and kurta

38. What specific term describes the short, sharp, high-pitched sounds of birds, as associated with the sparrows?
A) Squawking
B) Chirruping
C) Hooting
D) Warbling

39. What type of comparison uses "like" or "as", as seen in "She was like the winter landscape in the mountains"?
A) Metaphor
B) Personification
C) Simile
D) Hyperbole

40. What is a key characteristic of the grandmother, defined as "a state of happiness and satisfaction"?
A) Ambition
B) Loneliness
C) Disturbance
D) Contentment

Answer Key

1-a) Twenty years
2-a) That she had once been young or pretty, or had a husband
3-c) As quite absurd and undignified, like fables of the Prophets
4-c) Short and fat and slightly bent with a criss-cross of wrinkles
5-a) It reflected her deep religious faith and constant devotion
6-a) A winter landscape in the mountains, an expanse of pure white serenity
7-b) Both hands clasped behind her back
8-c) A thick, stale chapatti with a little butter and sugar
9-a) Several stale chapattis
10-b) Because the school was attached to the temple
11-c) When they moved to the city
12-d) It did not teach about God and the scriptures
13-a) She was very disturbed, believing music had "lewd associations" and was the "monopoly of harlots and beggars"
14-b) Disapproval
15-c) It was snapped
16-d) She accepted it with resignation, focusing on her routines
17-a) Sitting by her spinning-wheel, spinning and reciting prayers
18-b) When she fed the sparrows
19-c) A veritable bedlam of chirruping
20-d) She was not sentimental, showing no emotion, with lips moving in prayer and a silent kiss on his forehead
21-a) The moist imprint of her silent kiss on his forehead
22-b) She did not pray; instead, she collected women, got a dilapidated drum, and sang songs of warriors' homecoming
23-c) To avoid overstraining
24-d) That her end was near
25-a) She had omitted to pray the previous evening
26-b) It fell from her lifeless fingers
27-c) A peaceful pallor
28-c) Covered with a white sheet and adorned with flowers
29-a) They sat scattered on the floor with "no chirruping"
30-b) They took no notice of the bread
31-c) They flew away quietly
32-d) Tradition, resilience, and inner beauty
33-a) Tradition vs. Modernity
34-b) She could never have been "pretty" but was always "beautiful"
35-c) Metaphor
36-d) Personification
37-a) A big turban and loose-fitting clothes
38-b) Chirruping
39-c) Simile
40-d) Contentment