

A Letter to God

Answers to NCERT Questions

ORAL COMPREHENSION CHECK

1. What did Lencho hope for?

Ans: Lencho hoped for rains as the only thing his field of ripe corn needed was a shower.

2. Why did Lencho say that the raindrops were like 'new coins'?

Ans: Lencho's crops were ready for harvest. As raindrops would have helped in getting a better harvest, resulting in more prosperity, so Lencho compared them with 'new coins'.

3. How did rain change? What happened to Lencho's fields?

Ans: The rain was pouring down. But suddenly, a strong wind began to blow and very large hailstones began to fall along with the rain. All the crops in Lencho's fields destroyed.

4. What were Lencho's feelings when the hail stopped?

Ans: After the hail stopped, Lencho's soul was filled with sadness. He could see a bleak future for himself and his family. He was worried about the lack of food in the coming year.

5. Who or what did Lencho have faith in? What did he do?

Ans: Lencho had complete faith in God. He believed that God's eyes see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience. So, he wrote a letter to God saying that he needed a hundred pesos to sow his field again.

6. Who read the letter?

Ans: The postmaster read the letter.

7. What did the postmaster do then?

Ans: The postmaster first laughed. But as he read the letter, he became serious. He was deeply moved by the farmer's faith in God. He did not want to shake his faith. So, he decided to collect the money and send it to Lencho.

8. Was Lencho surprised to find a letter for him with money in it?

Ans: No, Lencho was not at all surprised to see the letter from God with money inside it. His confidence and faith in God was such that he had expected that reply from God.

9. What made him angry?

Ans: When he finished counting the money, he found only seventy pesos. But he had demanded a hundred pesos. He was confident that God could neither make a mistake nor deny him what he had requested for. Therefore, he concluded that the post office employees must have taken the remaining thirty pesos.

THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. Who does Lencho have complete faith in? Which sentences in the story tell you this?

Ans: Lencho had complete faith in God. The sentences in the story that show this are as follows:

1. But in the hearts of all who lived in that solitary house in the middle of the valley, there was a single hope: help from God.
2. All through the night, Lencho thought only of his one hope: the help of God, whose eyes, as he had been instructed, see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience.
3. "God," he wrote, "if you don't help me, my family and I will go hungry this year".
4. He wrote 'To God' on the envelope, put the letter inside and, still troubled, and went to town.
5. God could not have made a mistake, nor could he have denied Lencho what he had requested.
6. It said: "God: of the money that I asked for, only seventy pesos reached me. Send me the rest, since I need it very much".

2. Why does the postmaster send money to Lencho? Why does he sign the letter 'God'?

Ans: Postmaster was moved by Lencho's complete faith in God. So, he decided to send money to Lencho. Moreover, the postmaster did not want to shake Lencho's faith in God. So, he signed the letter 'God'. It was a good ploy to convey a message that God had himself written the letter.

3. Did Lencho try to find out who had sent the money to him? Why/Why not?

Ans: No, Lencho did not try to find out who had sent the money to him. This was because he had great confidence in God and never suspected that it could be someone else other than God who would send him the money. His faith in God was so strong that he believed that God had sent him the money.

4. Who does Lencho think has taken the rest of the money? What is the irony in the situation? (Remember that the irony of the situation is an unexpected aspect of it. An ironic situation is strange or amusing because it is the opposite of what is expected.)

Ans: Lencho thinks that the post office employees have taken the money. But in reality, it was the post office people who send the money to Lencho. But, on the other hand, Lencho thinks that they have stolen his money. He calls them crooks. Thus, there is an element of irony in this situation.

5. Are there people like Lencho in the real world? What kind of a person would you say he is? You may select appropriate words from the box to answer the question.

greedy selfish naïve comical stupid unquestioning ungrateful

Ans: I don't think there can be any such people in the real world. Lencho is literate and yet, he doesn't know how his letter will reach God without any address.

I would probably deem him naïve and unquestioning.

6. There are two kinds of conflicts in the story: between humans and nature, and between humans themselves. How are these conflicts illustrated?

Ans: The first conflict between humans and nature is aptly depicted by the destruction of Lencho's crops by the hailstorm. As the crops fail, Lencho started feeling sad and gloomy. This appropriately projects the conflict between humans and nature.

The second conflict depicted in the story is between humans themselves. As a noble soul, the postmaster, along with the help of the other post office employees, sent Lencho the money that they could manage to collect. Though they were not related to Lencho or knew him personally, they acted kindly and selflessly. Even though they did a good deed, Lencho blamed them for taking away some amount of money. This shows that man does not trust his fellow humans, thereby, giving rise to the conflict between humans themselves.

THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

There are different names in different parts of the world for storms, depending on their nature. Can you match the names in the box with their descriptions below, and fill in the blanks? You may use a dictionary to help you.

gale	whirlwind	cyclone
hurricane	tornado	typhoon

1. A violent tropical storm in which strong winds move in a circle: __ c __ _ _ .

Ans: A violent tropical storm in which strong winds move in a circle: cyclone.

2. An extremely strong wind: __ a __ _ .

Ans: An extremely strong wind: gale.

3. A violent tropical storm with very strong winds: _ _ p _ _ _ _ .

Ans: A violent tropical storm with very strong winds: typhoon.

4. A violent storm whose centre is a cloud in the shape of a funnel: _ _ _ n _ _ _ .

Ans: A violent storm whose centre is a cloud in the shape of a funnel: tornado.

5. A violent storm with very strong winds, especially in the western Atlantic Ocean: _ _ r
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ .

Ans: A violent storm with very strong winds, especially in the western Atlantic Ocean:
hurricane.

6. A very strong wind that moves very fast in a spinning movement and causes a lot of
damage: _ _ _ _ _ l _ _ _ _ _ .

Ans: A very strong wind that moves very fast in a spinning movement and causes a lot
of damage: whirlwind.

Match the sentences in Column A with the meanings of 'hope' in Column B.

A	B
1. Will you get the subjects you want to study in college? I <i>hope</i> so.	— a feeling that something good will probably happen
2. I <i>hope</i> you don't mind my saying this, but I don't like the way you are arguing.	— thinking that this would happen (It may or may not have happened.)
3. This discovery will give new <i>hope</i> to HIV/AIDS sufferers.	— stopped believing that this good thing would happen
4. We are <i>hoping against hope</i> that the judges would not notice our mistakes.	— wanting something to happen (and thinking it quite possible)
5. I called early in the <i>hope</i> of speaking to her before she went to school.	— showing concern that what you say should not offend or disturb the other person: a way of being polite
6. Just when everybody had <i>given up hope</i> , the fishermen came back, seven days after the cyclone.	— wishing for something to happen, although this is very unlikely

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Join the sentences given below using who, whom, which as suggested.

1. I often go to Mumbai. Mumbai is the commercial capital of India. (which)

Ans: I often go to Mumbai, which is the commercial capital of India.

2. My mother is going to host a TV show on cooking. She cooks very well. (who)

Ans: My mother, who cooks well, is going to host a TV show on cooking.

3. These sportspersons are going to meet the President. Their performance has been excellent. (whose)

Ans: These sports persons, whose performance has been excellent, are going to meet the President.

4. Lencho prayed to God. His eyes see into our minds. (whose)

Ans: Lencho prayed to God, whose eyes see into our minds.

5. This man cheated me. I trusted him. (whom)

Ans: This man, whom I trusted, cheated me.

Find sentences in the story with negative words, which express the following ideas emphatically.

1. The trees lost all their leaves.

Ans: Not a leaf remained on the trees.

2. The letter was addressed to God himself.

Ans: It was nothing less than a letter to God.

3. The postman saw this address for the first time in his career.

Ans: Never in his career as a postman had he seen that address.

In pairs, find metaphors in the story to complete the table below. Try to say what qualities are being compared. One has been done for you.

Object	Metaphor	Quality or Feature Compared
Cloud	Huge mountains of clouds	The mass or 'hugeness' of mountains
Raindrops		
Hailstones		
Locusts		
		An epidemic (a disease) that spreads very rapidly and leaves many people dead
	An ox of a man	

Ans:

Object	Metaphor	Quality or Feature Compared
Cloud	Huge mountains of clouds	The mass or 'hugeness' of mountains
Raindrops	A curtain of rain	The draping or covering of an area by a curtain
Hailstones	The frozen pearls	The resemblance in colour and hardness of a pearl
Locusts	A plague of locusts	The consequences (destruction) of plague

Locusts	A plague of locusts	An epidemic (a disease) that spreads very rapidly and leaves many people dead
Man	An ox of a man	The working of an ox in the fields (hard work)

Additional Questions

Short Answer Questions (30-40 words: 2 Marks each)

1. What were Lencho's feelings when he found the letter with money in it? What did he do after opening the letter?

Ans: Lencho was not at all surprised to see the money in the letter as he was fully confident about it. He knew that God will send money to him. On opening the letter, he found seventy pesos instead of a hundred. So, he wrote another letter to God to send the rest of the amount too, but now not through the mail as the post office employees were crooks.

2. Whom did Lencho write a letter? What did he ask for?

Ans: When Lencho's annual crop was completely destroyed due to heavy rains and hailstorm, and there was no one to help him during the crisis, at that time, Lencho wrote a letter to God. He wrote the letter requesting Him to send hundred pesos, so that he could sow his fields again till the next crop.

3. How far would you agree that one's positivity can bring in a spark of brightness even in adverse circumstances'?

Ans: It is absolutely true that optimism can bring about a spark of brightness even in adverse situations. It was Lencho's innocent optimism that eventually led to his getting seventy pesos. In fact, it was his positivity, despite the hailstorm that he even wrote a letter to God in the first place. His hope finally triumphed.

4. What impression do you form about the postmaster after reading the story, 'A Letter to God'?

Ans: The postmaster was a kind, generous, helpful, amiable and God-fearing man. He was generous, as he helped Lencho with seventy pesos. He also wrote a reply to Lencho's letter in order to maintain his faith in God.

5. Why was Lencho angry? What did he do?

Ans: Lencho had deep faith in God and hence wrote a letter to God asking for hundred pesos. But when he received seventy pesos instead of hundred, he was angry. He wrote another letter to God asking him to send the rest of the money, but not through the post office as they were a 'bunch of crooks'.

6. Lencho calls the raindrops ‘new coins’. Why does he call them so?

Ans: Lencho hoped to get good crops because of raindrops. He thought that he would earn good money, so he called them new coins. But raindrops soon turned into hailstones which destroyed all his crops and ruined his hopes.

7. Why were Lencho and his family in distress? Whom did he ask for help?

Ans: Lencho’s crops were completely destroyed by the hailstones. He feared that he and his family would go hungry. He had no one to help, but he had full faith in God whose eyes see everything. He wrote a letter to God asking for hundred pesos to sow the crop and live until the next harvest.

8. What are the raindrops compared to and why?

Ans: When it started raining, Lencho was very happy. He compared the big drops of rain to ten-cent pieces and the little ones to five-cent pieces. Lencho needed rain for good harvest. If he had good crops, he will get money. That is why, he compared the raindrops to coins.

9. Did the letter reach God? Why did the postmaster send a reply to Lencho?

Ans: No, the letter did not reach God. The postman saw the letter addressed to God and took the letter to the postmaster. The postmaster did not want to shake Lencho’s faith in God. So he sent a reply to Lencho. He sent seventy pesos to him.

10. Lencho describes the post office employees as “a bunch of crooks.”

(i) Were they a bunch of crooks?

(ii) How would you describe them?

Ans: Lencho thought that the post office employees had cheated him.

So he calls them “a bunch of crooks.” But they were not crooks. They were kind people. They wanted to help Lencho. So they collected seventy pesos and sent the money to Lencho by mail.

Long Answer Questions (100-150 words: 8 Marks each)

1. Lencho received the money and a letter from God but still, he was not happy. Was it not in his attitude to be happy with what he achieved? Did he not know the pleasure of being grateful to others?

Ans: Lencho had full faith in God and hence, had written a letter to God asking for hundred pesos. But when he received the money and the letter from God, he was not happy. It was not his attitude to be happy with what he received, nor was he ungrateful to God. He was angry because he had received seventy pesos instead of hundred. He did not doubt about God for it. He wrote another letter to God asking him to send the

rest of the money but not through the post-office as they were a bunch of crooks. This shows that Lencho had full faith in God and was confident that his desire would be fulfilled. It was Lencho's innocent optimism that eventually led to his getting seventy pesos. Optimism and faith can lead to a happy life.

2. The postmaster represents such people who still believe in helping others. Mention those values of the postmaster which you would like to emulate in yourself.

Ans: The postmaster was a kind, generous, helpful, amiable and God-fearing man. He received a letter from Lencho which was written to God asking for hundred pesos, so that he could sow his fields again. The postman felt sympathetic towards Lencho. He decided to help Lencho. He gave up a part of his salary and asked all other employees to help. Even his friends were made to contribute for a cause of charity and he managed to collect seventy pesos. He sent the money to Lencho along with a reply. He did so in order to preserve the man's faith in God. This shows the postmaster was a nice man at heart.

3. "If you don't help me, my family and I will go hungry this year." Lencho had faith in God but he didn't manage to solve the problem by himself. Did he lack the courage to resolve his matter by himself? What values did he lack?

Ans: Lencho was a hardworking farmer. He was completely dependent upon the crops of his fields. His annual crop was completely destroyed due to heavy rains and hailstorm. In the entire village, there was no one to help him during the time of financial crisis. He had firm belief in God and hence wrote a letter requesting Him to send hundred pesos, so that he could sow his fields again till the next crop. This act did not prove that he lacked the courage to resolve his problem, but shows that he did not have any option left for himself. He had a firm belief in God. He was an ox of a man but lacked money to stand again.

4. "I wish I had the faith of the man." Describe Lencho's character in the light of the above statement.

Ans: Lencho was a hardworking farmer. He laboured like an ox. He had good knowledge of farming and knew his crop needed a downpour to give him good yield.

Lencho had great faith in God. He knew how to read and write. He wrote a letter to God for help when his crops were totally ruined by hailstones.

He was a simple and innocent farmer. He could not reason out things. He blamed the post-office employees for cheating him of thirty pesos and called them 'a bunch of crooks'.

But Lencho was a caring head of the family. He got sad and worried that his family would have to go hungry.

5. Answer the following questions :

What did the postmaster need to answer the letter? How did he collect it?

How did Lencho react to the help?

Ans: (i) Lencho's crop had been destroyed. He needed God's help. So he wrote a letter to God. He posted the letter. At the post-office, a postman took the letter out of the letter-box. He laughed on reading the address. He showed the letter to the postmaster. The postmaster also laughed. But he praised Lencho's firm faith in God. He did not want to shake this faith. He was very kind. He decided to help Lencho. He and the post-office employees collected some money. The postmaster gave a part of his salary. They put the money into an envelope and addressed it to Lencho.

(ii) The next Sunday, Lencho came to the post-office. He asked if there was any letter for him. The postman gave him the envelope. Lencho opened the letter. He found that the money was less than what he had requested for. He thought that God could not have made a mistake. He wrote another letter to God. He asked God to send him the rest of the money. But he should not send it through the mail as the post-office employees were a bunch of crooks.

6. Write the story of Lencho's faith in God.

Ans: Lencho was a simple farmer. He was very hard-working. But one year, his harvest was completely destroyed by the hailstorm. He had firm faith in God. He wrote a letter to God asking for a hundred pesos. The postmaster saw the letter. He decided to help Lencho. He collected money from his employees. He gave some part of his own salary also. But the money was less than what Lencho had asked for. The postmaster put the money into an envelope and addressed it to Lencho. Next Sunday, Lencho came to collect his letter. When he counted the money, he became angry. He wrote another letter to God. He asked God to send him the rest of the money. But he asked Him not to send the money through the mail as the employees of the postoffice were a bunch of crooks.

7. Why did Lencho need God's help?

Ans: Lencho was a simple farmer. He was very hard-working. His crops had always been good. One year, he wished that there should be some rain, so that his crop would be better. Lencho was sure that the rain would come. In the evening, it started raining. But soon the rain changed into a hailstorm. The hails fell on the house, the garden, the hillside and the corn-field. The field looked white as if it had been covered with salt. No leaves were left on the trees. The flowers were gone from the plants. Lencho's crop was completely destroyed. His heart was filled with sorrow. But he had faith in God. He was sure that God would help him. He wanted God's help for sowing seed and for living until the next harvest.

Self- Assessment Test

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. All through the night, Lencho thought only of his one hope: the help of God, whose eyes, as he had been instructed, see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience. Lencho was an ox of a man, working like an animal in the fields, but still he knew how to write. The following Sunday, at daybreak, he began to write a letter which he himself would carry to town and place in the mail. It was nothing less than a letter to God.

- a) What did Lencho think throughout the night?
- b) What does 'Lencho was an ox of a man' imply?
- c) Which line suggests that Lencho was literate?
- d) What strange action did Lencho take?

2. The postmaster—a fat, amiable fellow—also broke out laughing, but almost immediately he turned serious and, tapping the letter on his desk, commented, "What faith! I wish I had the faith of the man who wrote this letter. Starting up a correspondence with God!"

- a) What was the postmaster's reaction on seeing the letter?
- b) What did the postmaster wish?
- c) What kind of person was the postmaster?
- d) How did the postmaster help Lencho?

Short Answer Questions

- 1. 'Now we're going to get some water woman'. Is Lencho sure that it is going to rain? Give a reason for your answer.
- 2. How do you think the postmaster felt when he received Lencho's second letter?
- 3. Why did the postmaster decide to answer Lencho's letter to God?
- 4. What does Lencho call the post-office employees? Why?
- 5. What was the effect of the rain on the crops?

Long Answer Questions

- 1. Write a brief summary of the story 'A Letter to God'.
- 2. Give the character sketch of Lencho.

3. The postmaster was

- I. kind
- II. generous
- III. fun-loving
- IV. a good worker
- V. hard-working. Give an example in support of your answer.