

The Accidental Tourist - Bill Bryson

Answers to NCERT Questions

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Bill Bryson says, "I am, in short, easily confused. What examples has he given to justify this?"

Ans: Bill Bryson cannot do a simple day-to-day activity without being clumsy. He often forgets the way to the lavatory. He finds it difficult to remember his hotel room number. He can forget almost everything that is essential to carry out one's routine activity. Most of us carry out our routine activities effortlessly as it is all wired up in our brains. But some people, like Bill Bryson find it difficult and almost impossible to carry out mundane activities.

2. What happens when the zip on his carry-on bag gives way?

Ans: His finger gets cut by the zip and begins bleeding profusely. All the belongings in his bag are flying across the floor of the waiting hall of the airport. He seems to be making a mockery of himself. His conduct in a public place was nothing short of appalling.

3. Why is his finger bleeding? What is his wife's reaction?

Ans: His finger was bleeding because it had got injured while he was trying to open the zip of his bag. His wife was astonished because of the mess he had created in a public place and says in utmost wonder, "I can't believe you do this for a living."

4. How does Bill Bryson end up in a "crash position in the aircraft?"

Ans: Bill Bryson leans down to tie his shoelaces. At that time, the person on the seat ahead of him, pushes back his seat to full recline. As a result, he gets pinned down helplessly in a crash position.

5. Why are his teeth and gums navy blue?

Ans: It was while pondering and writing important thoughts in a notebook that he was unconsciously chewing the back of his pen. He was so careless that he did not notice the ink getting into his mouth. He fell into a conversation with an attractive lady, sitting next to him. He kept talking to her for a while. It was when, he went to the lavatory that he noticed the impact of the blue liquid on his teeth and gums.

Q. 6. Bill Bryson "ached to be suave. Is he successful in his mission? List his "unsuave ways."

Ans: Bill could never be suave in his ways. He would rise from a dinner table without looking, as if he had experienced an extremely localised seismic event. He would get in

a car and close the door leaving part of his coat outside, he would sit on chewing gum, ice-cream, cough syrup, and motor oil, while wearing light coloured trousers. He try as hard as he could, but fails to succeed in his mission.

7. Why do you think Bill Bryson’s wife says to the children, “Take the lids off the food for Daddy?”

Ans: She says so because when he begins to eat, or cut his meat, Bill is so clumsy that everything including the dishes would be flying all around. He could not complete even **a normal task, such as eating his food without making a mess.**

8. What is the significance of the title?

Ans: The title, “The Accidental Tourist, deals with the story of the author, Bill Bryson, a frequent flyer, who would get into mishaps regularly. He has successfully landed himself in a mess during every travel of his. It would involve spilling juice on a lady traveller, getting injured on the zip of his bag, spilling all his stuff in the airport, smearing his face with ink, getting pinned down between seats, sitting on stuff without checking and dirtying his trousers, sending his food flying all over the aircraft, and the list would go on. He would forget his room number in a hotel, or get lost in an alley while on his way back from a lavatory. It was so difficult for him to do things normally. His life was laced with accidents and therefore, the title is very significant and appropriate for the story.

Additional Questions

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

1. What had happened to his bag? What were the things that fell out of his bag?

Ans: The zip on his bag had got jammed. He tried to open it forcefully and pulled and yanked on it. There was no use, it refused to budge. Eventually, it gave way, and everything fell out of the bag. He had newspaper cuttings, loose papers, a 14 ounce tin of pipe tobacco, magazines, passport, money, films, and important documents, all falling out of his bag.

2. Why did his hair go into a panic mode?

Ans: Bill had injured his finger while trying to rip open the zip of his bag. He was bleeding profusely, and he says that he is not comfortable while seeing blood. He therefore, goes into a panic mode, with his hair standing on its edges, as he was confused and in a state of justified hysteria, as it was his own blood that was all around him.

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

1. Describe the problems, the co-passengers faced when Bill Bryson was travelling on the same flight?

Ans: Bill was so prone to accidents that along with himself, he would inevitably put his co-passengers into discomfort. Once, he had to literally claw the leg of his co-passenger, who had reclined his seat. Bill who had bent down to tie his shoe lace got stuck under the seat. It was a struggle for him and a disturbance for the other traveller. On another occasion, he managed to spill juice on a lady passenger twice because of his clumsiness, and curiously he had no clue how he managed to do so. In absolute disgust, the lady abused him, despite being a nun. His family was not spared when they travelled together because while eating, he would send all the food flying in different directions. Unfortunately, despite making attempts to become suave and elegant in his behaviour, especially in public, his efforts were in vain.

Self- Assessment Test

Short Answer Questions

1. What is your impression about the author?
 2. As a frequent traveller, what suggestions would you give to Bill to help him travel peacefully?
 3. Why did Bill not get his "air miles"?
 4. Why doesn't he get his frequent flyer miles?
 5. What does the author do, when he travels alone?
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Long Answer Questions

1. Write a character sketch of Bill Bryson.
2. As the nun, make a diary entry on the experience you had on the flight.
3. Write a paragraph on any place that you have visited.