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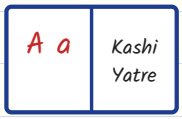
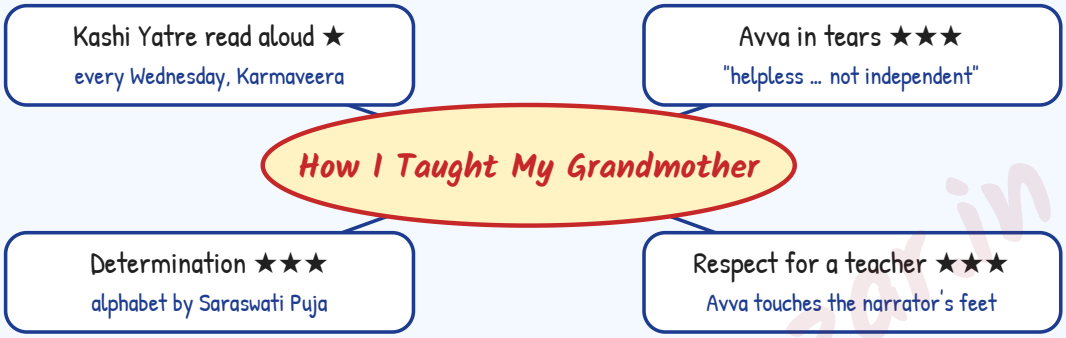
Chapter 1
How I Taught My Grandmother to Read



or learning there is no age bo

Sudha Murty · NCERT Kaveri, Textbook of English for Grade 9 (2026) · CBSE 2026-27

Chapter map (★ = most important for the exam)



About the author

Sudha Murty (born 1950) is a well-known writer in Kannada and English, an engineer, teacher of Computer Science and social worker. This true story from her childhood in **north Karnataka** shows how she, at twelve, became the first teacher of her **sixty-two-year-old grandmother, Krishtakka**.

What is inside

1. Concept notes: story in brief, themes, characters, key lines
2. NCERT (Kaveri) exercises, fully solved
3. **Important exam questions, fully solved**: extracts, 2-mark and 5-mark answers in the 2026-27 pattern
4. Quick-reference sheet, 3 extract sets; practice A-G, 20 MCQs, 6 A-R, answers, summary

Colour code used

red = key term green = definition
purple = sub-heading black = explanation
"purple Kalam" = a line quoted from the text

★ **Exam tip:** The 2026-27 Class 9 paper tests literature through a 5-mark extract, 2-mark answers (40-50 words) and 5-mark answers (120-150 words) on theme, character and "beyond the text" questions. Learn Avva's character, the reason for her tears and the ending.

Theme in one line: education gives independence and dignity, and it is never too late to learn.

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1.1 The story in brief ★★

A. A village, a serial and a listener (Part I)

- At about **twelve**, the narrator lived with her grandparents in a **village in north Karnataka**. Transport was poor: the morning paper came in the **afternoon**, the weekly magazine **a day late**. Everyone waited eagerly for the bus.
- **Triveni**, a popular Kannada writer, wrote easy, convincing stories about the psychological problems of ordinary people; she died young. Her novel **Kashi Yatre** came out as a serial in the weekly **Karmaveera**.
- In it, an old lady longs to go to **Kashi**, but gives all her savings for the wedding of a poor **orphan girl**: *"The happiness of this orphan girl is more important than worshipping Lord Vishweshwara at Kashi."*
- The narrator's grandmother, **Krishtakka**, had **never gone to school** and could not read. Every Wednesday the narrator read her the next episode. Avva listened with the greatest concentration, could repeat it **by heart**, and **identified herself with the protagonist** (she too had never gone to Kashi). She then discussed it with friends at the temple courtyard.

B. Tears on the narrator's return

- The narrator went to a wedding in a neighbouring village for a couple of days but stayed **a week**. On her return she found Avva **in tears**, though she had never seen her cry even in the most difficult situations.
- That night, on the open terrace under a **full moon**, Avva told her life story: she lost her mother young; her father remarried; girls were not educated then; she married young and was always busy. She had often **regretted not going to school**, so she made sure her children and grandchildren studied.

C. "I want to be independent" (Part II)

- When *Karmaveera* came in the narrator's absence, Avva saw the picture but **could not read a word**. She rubbed her hands over the pages, wishing they could understand. She was **too embarrassed** to ask anyone else and felt *"very dependent and helpless. We are well-off, but what use is money when I cannot be independent?"*
- She decided to learn the **Kannada alphabet** from the next day, with **Saraswati Puja day during Dassara** as her deadline to read a novel on her own.
- The narrator **laughed** childishly: grey hair, wrinkled hands, spectacles, kitchen work. Avva only smiled: *"For a good cause if you are determined, you can overcome any obstacle... For learning there is no age bar."*

D. The teacher honoured

- Avva was a **wonderful student**: she read, repeated, wrote and recited, and did amazing amounts of homework. The narrator was her only teacher; Avva was her first student. (The narrator later became a **teacher of Computer Science**.)
- At Dassara, the narrator secretly bought *Kashi Yatre* (now a novel). Avva gave her **frock material** and then **touched her feet**: *"I am touching the feet of a teacher, not my granddaughter..."* A teacher must be respected **"irrespective of the gender and age"**.

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- The narrator returned the namaskara and gave her gift. Avva at once read the title and the publisher's name: *"my student had passed with flying colours."*

Setting and narration. Place: a village in north Karnataka (and a neighbouring village for the wedding). Time: about forty years before the writing, over a few months up to Dassara. Narrator: first person, the author as a twelve-year-old girl, looking back as an adult. "Avva" = mother, in the Kannada of north Karnataka.

I.2 Themes, title and characters ★★★

Themes

1. **Literacy and independence.** Avva is well-off, yet feels "dependent and helpless" because she cannot read. Literacy gives her freedom and self-respect.
2. **No age bar for learning.** At sixty-two she learns the alphabet in a few months; determination matters more than age.
3. **Determination and hard work.** She sets a deadline (Saraswati Puja), works "harder than anybody" and succeeds.
4. **Respect for teachers.** Avva touches her granddaughter's feet, honouring the teacher "irrespective of the gender and age".
5. **Bond between generations.** Love between grandmother and granddaughter turns into a teacher–student relationship.
6. **Women's education.** Avva was denied school because girls' education was not thought essential; the story shows what that cost her.
7. **Story within a story.** In *Kashi Yatre*, an old woman gives up her dream for an orphan's happiness; Avva too has never gone to Kashi, and reading becomes her own "pilgrimage".

Significance of the title

The title states the event exactly: a granddaughter teaches her grandmother. The **reversal of roles** (a child teaching an elder) makes it unusual and catchy, and it points to the theme that learning has no age bar.

Characters

Krishtakka (Avva), the grandmother

Strong-willed (she never cried even in the most difficult situations), **eager and attentive** (listened "with the greatest concentration", could repeat the text by heart), **sensitive and self-respecting** (too embarrassed to ask others; wanted independence), **determined and hard-working** (set a deadline, did "amazing" homework), **humble and wise** (touched her teacher's feet, quoted the scriptures). She values education: she made sure her children and grandchildren studied.

The narrator (Sudha Murty as a girl)

Loving and caring ("I loved her immensely"; held her hand), **childish** at first (she laughed at Avva's wish), then a **patient, affectionate teacher**. She is thoughtful: she secretly buys *Kashi Yatre* as a gift. She learns the lesson of determination and respect, and later becomes a teacher herself.

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Triveni

A popular Kannada writer whose easy, convincing stories dealt with the psychological problems of ordinary people; she died young.

★ **Exam tip:** For a character sketch, give 3–4 qualities, each with a **proof from the text**: "determined: 'I will keep Saraswati Puja day … as the deadline'".

1.3 Key lines explained, words and devices ★★

Lines to know

"The happiness of this orphan girl is more important than worshipping Lord Vishweshwara at Kashi." The old lady of the novel puts human kindness above personal religious merit; it explains why Avva admired her.

"…she identified herself with the novel's protagonist." Avva, like the old lady, had never gone to Kashi, so she felt the story was about her.

"Many times I rubbed my hands over the pages wishing they could understand what was written." A touching image of her helplessness: she can touch the words but not read them.

"We are well-off, but what use is money when I cannot be independent?" Money cannot buy independence; education can.

"For a good cause if you are determined, you can overcome any obstacle." The central message of the story.

"I was her only teacher and she was my first student." A neat reversal; it hints at the narrator's future as a teacher.

"I am touching the feet of a teacher, not my granddaughter…" Respect is due to the role of teacher, not to age.

"…my student had passed with flying colours." Avva reads the title and publisher at once: she has succeeded brilliantly.

Words and expressions

word	meaning in the story
ardent	keen, passionate (her "ardent desire to go to Kashi")
punya	religious merit gained by good deeds
protagonist	the main character
episode	a part of a story told in instalments
savouring	enjoying to the fullest
immensely	extremely
taken aback	surprised by something unexpected
by heart	from memory
flying colours	great success (idiom)
namaskara	a respectful greeting with folded hands

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Devices and language

- **Story within a story**: *Kashi Yatre* mirrors Avva's life.
- **Flashback**: Avva's life story told on the terrace.
- **Reversal of roles**: the child teaches the elder; the elder touches the child's feet.
- **Idiom**: "passed with flying colours"; **binomial**: "hide and seek".
- **Past perfect** for the earlier action: "Kashi Yatre, which **had been published** as a novel by that time".

> ✗ **Don't do this:** Avva was **sixty-two**, the narrator **twelve**. The magazine was **Karmaveera**; the novel **Kashi Yatre** by **Triveni**; the deadline **Saraswati Puja day during Dassara**.

NCERT exercises, fully solved

Reflect and Respond

I. Why is it important to learn how to read and write? (word web)

> **Ans.** To be independent and not depend on others · to read letters, newspapers, signboards and forms · to get jobs and handle money and bank work safely · to know one's rights · to enjoy stories and books · to use mobile phones and digital services · to help one's children study · to gain self-respect and confidence.

II. (Discuss) Languages of grandparents; how they spend time; a favourite experience; something they cannot do easily but enjoy watching you do.

> **Ans.** Model: My grandparents speak Hindi and Bhojpuri. They spend their time gardening, praying and watching the news; I play carrom and read the newspaper to them. My favourite memory is grandfather teaching me to fly a kite. They cannot use a smartphone easily, but enjoy watching me make video calls to our relatives for them.

III. Match the highlighted words with their meanings.

> **Ans.** (i) protagonist – 7. main character · (ii) debate – 4. discussion · (iii) episode – 5. a part of a story · (iv) community – 3. people living in one particular area · (v) concentration – 6. focus · (vi) eagerly – 1. excitedly · (vii) convincing – 2. believable · (viii) guided – 8. directed.

Check Your Understanding (Part I)

I. Complete the cause and effect table.

> **Ans.** (i) Cause 1: the transport system was not very good → effect: papers came in the afternoon, magazines a day late. (ii) 2. Krishtakka never went to school → she could not read. (iii) 3. The narrator read Kashi Yatre to her every week / she identified with the protagonist → she was deeply interested and discussed it with friends. (iv) 4. The narrator went to a wedding for a week → there was nobody to read Kashi Yatre to Avva, and she was found in tears. (v) 5. She lost her mother young, her father was busy and girls' education was not thought essential → she never went to school. (vi) 6. She regretted not going to school → she made sure her children and grandchildren studied well.

II. Did the narrator expect to see her grandmother in tears? Why?

> **Ans.** No. She "had never seen her cry even in the most difficult situations". Avva was a strong, cheerful woman, and the narrator had only been away enjoying a wedding, so she had no idea anything was wrong.

III. How might the narrator help her grandmother to read and write?

> **Ans.** She could teach her the Kannada alphabet daily, help her join letters into words, give her homework, and let her practise by reading familiar stories like Kashi Yatre, the newspaper and signboards.

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Check Your Understanding (Part II): true or false

Ans. 1. True. 2. False: she was too embarrassed to ask anyone. 3. True. 4. True. 5. True. 6. False: she was delighted; Avva "passed with flying colours".

Critical Reflection: extracts

Extract 1 ("When I came back to my village...")

Ans. (i) **A. strong-willed**. (ii) **emotional**: she was too upset to speak. (iii) Calling her grandmother "Avva" (the Kannada of north Karnataka) and sleeping on the open terrace of the house on a summer night. (iv) "It was a summer night and there was a full moon. Avva came and sat next to me. Her affectionate hands touched my forehead." (v) **C.** the grandmother's regret over her lack of education (it comes later, not in this extract).

Extract 2 ("I have decided I want to learn...")

Ans. (i) **B. She desires self-sufficiency.** (ii) **age limit**. (iii) she thought Avva was too old (sixty-two, grey hair, wrinkled hands, spectacles) and too busy in the kitchen to learn. (iv) determination, self-confidence (also: hard-working, optimistic, calm). (v) The narrator judges only by outward signs (age, grey hair, spectacles, kitchen work) and assumes Avva cannot learn, without considering her will and intelligence.

Critical Reflection: answer the questions

1. Why did the grandmother feel embarrassed to ask someone else to read to her?

Ans. She was a respected, well-off elder of the village. Asking others would reveal that she could not read and make her feel small and dependent; her self-respect stopped her.

2. Why does the narrator initially laugh?

Ans. As a child, she thought learning was only for the young. Avva's age, grey hair, wrinkled hands, spectacles and kitchen work made the idea seem funny and impossible.

3. Significance of Kashi Yatre?

Ans. In Avva's life, it is the story she loves and identifies with; being unable to read it makes her feel helpless and inspires her to learn. In the story, it frames the plot: it begins the reading sessions, causes the crisis and becomes the gift at the end, proving her success. Its message (kindness above personal merit) also mirrors Avva's goodness.

4. What does her desire to learn the alphabet reflect?

Ans. Her self-respect and longing for independence, her determination and courage, and her belief that learning has no age limit.

5. Lessons from Avva touching the narrator's feet?

Ans. A teacher deserves respect regardless of age or gender; humility is a sign of greatness; gratitude should be expressed openly; knowledge, not age, earns respect.

6. What does "For a good cause if you are determined, you can overcome any obstacle" tell us about the theme?

Ans. It sums up the theme: willpower overcomes obstacles such as age and circumstance. Avva overcomes her age and busy life to become literate within months.

7. How effectively does the story show education supporting independence?

Ans. Very effectively. Avva is wealthy and respected, yet feels "dependent and helpless" because she cannot read a magazine. Once she learns, she says, "Now I am independent." The contrast shows that literacy, not money, gives true freedom.

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Vocabulary and Structures

I. Binomials: match.

Ans. 1. sink or swim – (vii) succeed or fail without help · 2. on and off – (v) sometimes, occasionally · 3. mix and match – (i) put different things together to get a range of possibilities · 4. all or nothing – (viii) something to be done completely or not at all · 5. part and parcel – (ii) complete part of or belong to · 6. pick and choose – (iii) choose only the best · 7. sooner or later – (iv) at some time in the future · 8. leaps and bounds – (vi) increase or develop very quickly. *Sentences:* Her English improved by leaps and bounds. Hard work is part and parcel of success. Sooner or later he will realise his mistake. On the first day at the new school, it was sink or swim for me. We visit our village on and off.

II. Prefixes.

Ans. 2. disbelief · 3. unimportant · 4. disrespect · 5. incorrect · 6. discontinue · 7. misunderstand · 8. extraordinary · 9. uninteresting · 10. impossible.

III. Five prefixed words from the story with sentences.

Ans. unhappy: The child looked unhappy after losing the match. · unusual: It was unusual to see snow in March. · unfortunately: Unfortunately, the train was late. · independent: She became financially independent after getting a job. · irrespective: Everyone may join, irrespective of age.

IV. Idioms of learning.

Ans. 1. hit the books – (iii) to study seriously · 2. draw a blank – (v) to be unable to remember · 3. learn the ropes – (vi) to understand how to do an activity · 4. rack one's brain – (ii) to think very hard · 5. learn by heart – (i) to memorise something · 6. burn the midnight oil – (iv) to study or work late into the night. *Sentences:* Exams are near, so I must hit the books. I drew a blank when asked his name. The new clerk took a week to learn the ropes. I racked my brain over the puzzle. We learnt the poem by heart. She burnt the midnight oil before the test.

V (i). Simple past and past perfect.

Ans. A. arrived, had already begun · B. had learnt (learned), started · C. started, had ensured · D. recognised, had exhausted · E. logged in, had already discussed. *Rule: the earlier action takes the past perfect.*

V (ii). Correct forms in the paragraph.

Ans. A. took · B. reviewed · C. had spent · D. had discussed · E. opened · F. set · G. had already introduced · H. hurried · I. had completed · J. enjoyed.

Listen and Respond (transcript in the textbook appendix)

Ans. 1. digital tools (effectively and responsibly) · 2. personal data · 3. stay connected · 4. misinformation, scams (and cyber threats) · 5. IT training.

Speaking activity: turncoat (model points)

Ans. **Topic 1, for:** a new language opens jobs, travel and friendships; it helps us understand other cultures; it sharpens the brain. **Against:** the mother tongue must come first; learning many languages may confuse young learners; time could go to other skills. **Topic 2, for:** the young learn fast and remember easily. **Against:** Avva learnt at sixty-two; motivation matters more than age; adults learn new skills every day.

Writing Task: letter to the editor (model)

Ans.

Ananya Rao
14, Gandhi Nagar
Hubballi

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15 July 2026

The Editor
Karnataka Times
Hubballi

Subject: Students Can Spread Adult Literacy

Sir/Madam
As a concerned citizen, I would like to draw attention to the large number of adults in our district who still cannot read or write, and to the role students can play in changing this.
Many organisations run adult literacy camps, but they lack volunteers. Students have time during holidays and the patience to teach. By teaching an elder to sign their name, read a bus board or check a bank slip, they make that person independent. Students also gain confidence, communication skills and a sense of responsibility, and society moves towards full literacy.
Schools could give credit for such service, and NGOs could visit schools to invite volunteers. Posters, social media and talks in the morning assembly would spread awareness. I hope this letter gets published in the columns of your esteemed daily.
Yours truly
Ananya Rao

Extra questions from the text (exam-style)

1. Why did everyone in the village wait eagerly for the bus?

Ans. The bus brought the newspapers, weekly magazines and the post. Because transport was poor, this was the villagers' only link with news and stories from outside, so its arrival was an event.

2. What kind of writer was Triveni?

Ans. She was a very popular Kannada writer with an easy, convincing style. Her stories dealt with complex psychological problems in the lives of ordinary people and were always interesting. She died young, but people still appreciate her novels forty years later.

3. How did Avva spend her time after hearing each episode?

Ans. She joined her friends at the temple courtyard and discussed the latest episode with them, while the children played hide and seek nearby.

4. How did the narrator show her love when Avva was upset on the terrace?

Ans. She asked gently, "Avva, don't cry. What is the matter? Can I help you in any way?", leaned forward and held her hand.

5. Why did the narrator feel it "was not correct" for Avva to touch her feet?

Ans. By tradition, youngsters touch the feet of God, elders and teachers as a mark of respect. An elder touching a child's feet reversed this custom.

6. Which scripture-based belief did Avva quote at the end?

Ans. That a teacher should be respected irrespective of gender and age.

7. Why did the narrator gift her grandmother Kashi Yatre?

Ans. It was the novel Avva loved most, and it was the reason she had wanted to learn. Reading it on her own would be the perfect test and reward for her success.

8. How does the narrator's later career add meaning to the story?

Ans. She became a teacher of Computer Science and taught hundreds of students. Teaching Avva was her first experience of teaching, so the story also shows where her calling began.

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Important exam questions, fully solved

New questions in the 2026-27 Class 9 pattern: extract (5 marks), short answer (2 marks, 40–50 words), long answer (5 marks, 120–150 words).

A. Extract-based questions (5 marks)

Extract · 5 marks

> My grandmother, Krishtakka, never went to school so she could not read. Every Wednesday the magazine would come and I would read the next episode of this story to her. During that time she would forget all her work and listen with the greatest concentration. Later, she could repeat the entire text by heart.

(i) Why could Krishtakka not read? (ii) Complete: She could repeat the entire text by heart, which shows her _____. (iii) Choose the correct option: "the greatest concentration" suggests that she was (A) bored (B) deeply absorbed (C) confused (D) sleepy. (iv) Find a word from the extract that means "a part of a story published in instalments". (v) Which day did the magazine arrive? [5]

> **Ans.** (i) She had never gone to school. (ii) sharp memory and deep interest in the story. (iii) **(B) deeply absorbed**. (iv) **episode**. (v) Wednesday.

Extract · 5 marks

> She said, 'I am touching the feet of a teacher, not my granddaughter; a teacher who taught me so well, with so much of affection that I can read any novel confidently in such a short period. Now I am independent. It is my duty to respect a teacher.'

(i) Why did the grandmother touch the narrator's feet? (ii) Fill in the blank with the correct option: The grandmother's action shows her _____ (humility / pride). (iii) What does "Now I am independent" mean here? (iv) Which quality of the narrator as a teacher is mentioned? (v) Choose the option NOT true of the extract: (A) the grandmother is grateful (B) she reads confidently (C) she is ashamed of learning late (D) she values teachers. [5]

> **Ans.** (i) To honour her as a teacher who had taught her to read. (ii) **humility**. (iii) She no longer needs anyone to read for her. (iv) She taught with great affection (and well). (v) **(C)**.

B. Short answer questions (2 marks, 40–50 words)

Short answer · 2 marks Why did Avva identify herself with the protagonist of Kashi Yatre? [2]

> **Ans.** The protagonist was an old lady who longed to go to Kashi but never went, giving her savings for an orphan girl's wedding. Avva too was old, had never been to Kashi and was kind-hearted. So she felt the story was about her, and listened with deep emotion.

Short answer · 2 marks "What use is money when I cannot be independent?" Explain. [2]

> **Ans.** Avva's family was well-off, yet she depended on her granddaughter to read a magazine. Money could not give her the ability to read on her own. She realised that true independence comes from education, not wealth.

Short answer · 2 marks How did the narrator react to Avva's decision, and how did Avva respond? [2]

> **Ans.** The narrator laughed childishly, pointing to Avva's age, grey hair, wrinkled hands, spectacles and kitchen work. Avva only smiled and calmly said that with determination one can overcome any obstacle, and that there is no age bar for learning.

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Short answer · 2 marks What deadline did Avva set, and why is it significant? [2]

Ans. She chose Saraswati Puja day during Dassara to read a novel on her own. Saraswati is the goddess of learning, so the date was symbolic, and a fixed deadline showed her seriousness and gave her a clear goal to work towards.

Short answer · 2 marks Why was the narrator "taken aback" at Dassara? [2]

Ans. Avva bent down and touched her feet. Elders never touch the feet of youngsters, so the narrator was surprised and felt it was not correct, until Avva explained she was honouring her teacher.

Short answer · 2 marks What does "my student had passed with flying colours" show? [2]

Ans. When given Kashi Yatre, Avva immediately read the title, author and publisher's name. This proved she had learnt to read within the deadline; "flying colours" shows her outstanding success and the narrator's pride.

C. Long answer questions (5 marks, 120–150 words)

Long answer · character Sketch the character of Krishtakka with examples from the story. [5]

Ans. Krishtakka is the heart of the story. She is strong-willed: the narrator had "never seen her cry even in the most difficult situations". She is curious and attentive, listening to Kashi Yatre "with the greatest concentration" and repeating it by heart. She is sensitive and self-respecting: she feels "dependent and helpless" and is too embarrassed to ask others to read for her. Above all, she is determined. At sixty-two she decides to learn the alphabet, sets Saraswati Puja as her deadline and works "harder than anybody", reading, repeating, writing and reciting. She is calm and confident when laughed at, believing that "for learning there is no age bar". Finally, she is humble and wise, touching her granddaughter's feet to honour her teacher. Krishtakka inspires us to value education at any age.

Long answer · theme How does the story show the relationship between education and self-respect? [5]

Ans. The story shows that education is closely tied to self-respect. Avva is wealthy and respected, yet when the narrator is away she cannot read her favourite serial. She rubs her hands over the pages and feels "very dependent and helpless"; she is even too embarrassed to ask someone else. Her inability to read hurts her dignity. Learning restores it. Once literate, she proudly says, "Now I am independent," and can read any novel confidently. Education also teaches her humility and gratitude: she touches her teacher's feet. Thus the story suggests that literacy is not just a skill but a source of confidence and dignity, which money cannot buy. It also reminds us that denying girls education, as happened to Avva, denies them this self-respect.

Long answer · beyond the text "For learning there is no age bar." Write an article for your school magazine on lifelong learning, with reference to Avva. [5]

Ans. **Never Too Late to Learn** (by Rohan, IX-B)

Many people believe learning ends with school. Avva in Sudha Murty's story proves otherwise: at sixty-two she learnt to read Kannada in a few months because she wanted to be independent. Around us, too, we see retired people learning computers, mothers learning to drive and grandparents making video calls. Lifelong learning keeps the mind active, builds confidence and helps people keep up with a changing world. It also brings independence: an elder who can use online banking need not depend on others. What is needed is motivation, patience and encouragement from the young. As students, we can teach our

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> elders to use smartphones or read, just as the narrator taught Avva. Learning is a journey, not a race, and every age is the right age to begin.

Quick-reference sheet

point	remember
author, genre	Sudha Murty; autobiographical story, first person
setting	village in north Karnataka; about forty years ago
novel	Kashi Yatre by Triveni, serial in the weekly Karmaveera
the novel's story	old lady gives her Kashi savings for an orphan girl's wedding
Avva	Krishtakka, 62, never went to school, read to every Wednesday
crisis	narrator at a wedding for a week; Avva cannot read the serial, cries
life story	lost mother young; father remarried; married young; regretted no school
resolve	learn Kannada alphabet; deadline Saraswati Puja (Dassara)
motto	"For learning there is no age bar."
ending	gift of frock material; touches teacher's feet; reads Kashi Yatre's title
narrator later	a teacher of Computer Science

Extract-based practice

Set 1.

> After hearing what happened next in Kashi Yatre, she would join her friends at the temple courtyard where we children would also gather to play hide and seek. She would discuss the latest episode with her friends. At that time, I never understood why there was so much of debate about the story.

(i) Where did Avva meet her friends? (ii) Pick a binomial from the extract. (iii) What did Avva discuss with her friends? (iv) Choose the correct option: The narrator "never understood" the debate because she was (a) uninterested (b) a child (c) angry (d) absent.

Set 2.

> 'Yes, I need your help. You know when you were away, Karmaveera came as usual. I opened the magazine. I saw the picture that accompanies the story of Kashi Yatre and I could not understand anything that was written. Many times I rubbed my hands over the pages wishing they could understand what was written.'

(i) Who is the speaker? (ii) What could she understand and what could she not? (iii) What does rubbing her hands over the pages show? (iv) Fill in: The speaker feels _____ (helpless / proud).

Set 3.

> The next day onwards I started my tuition. Avva was a wonderful student. The amount of homework she did was amazing. She would read, repeat, write, and recite. I was her only teacher and she was my first student.

(i) Why is Avva called "a wonderful student"? (ii) Name the four things she did. (iii) What is unusual about the last sentence? (iv) Find a word meaning "astonishing".

Practice set: test yourself *Exam-style*

Try every question before looking at the answers. 27 or more out of 34 means you are ready for the exam.

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A. Fill in the blanks (1 mark each)

1. The story is set in a village in north _____.
2. Kashi Yatre was written by _____.
3. The weekly magazine was called _____.
4. The magazine came every _____.
5. "Avva" means _____ in the Kannada of north Karnataka.
6. The grandmother was _____ years old.
7. Her deadline was _____ day during Dassara.
8. Avva gave the narrator _____ material as a gift.

B. True or false? (1 mark each)

1. The newspaper reached the village in the morning.
2. Triveni lived to a very old age.
3. The old lady in the novel finally went to Kashi.
4. The narrator stayed at the wedding for a week.
5. Avva asked a neighbour to read the serial to her.
6. Avva's father got married again.
7. The narrator laughed at Avva's decision.
8. The narrator later became a doctor.

C. Very short answer (1 mark each)

1. Name the grandmother.
2. Where did the old lady in Kashi Yatre wish to go?
3. Whom did she help with her savings?
4. Where did the family sleep on summer nights?
5. Which language did Avva learn to read?
6. What did the narrator buy secretly at Dassara?
7. What did Avva read first in the book?
8. Which idiom shows Avva's success?

D. Short answer (2 marks each, 40–50 words)

1. Describe how the story Kashi Yatre ends and why it moved Avva.
2. What did Avva tell the narrator about her childhood?
3. Why did Avva not ask anyone else to read for her?
4. How did Avva prove to be a "wonderful student"?
5. Why did the narrator think Avva's touching her feet was "not correct"?
6. What did the narrator learn from her grandmother?

My score (fill in after checking the answers)

Section	A /8	B /8	C /8	F /10	G (bonus)	Total /34

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My marks						

Rough work

E. Long answer (5 marks each, 120–150 words)

1. Trace Avva's journey from helplessness to independence.
2. Describe the relationship between the narrator and her grandmother.
3. Imagine you are Avva. Write a diary entry on the day you read Kashi Yatre by yourself.

F. Beyond the text (5 marks each)

1. "Girls in those days were not sent to school." How has the situation changed today? What more needs to be done? Write a speech for the morning assembly.
2. Many elders today cannot use digital tools. Suggest how students can help them become digitally literate.

G. HOTS (higher-order thinking, 2 marks each)

1. Why do you think Avva chose the narrator, a child, as her teacher?
2. Is the narrator's laughter at Avva's decision natural for a twelve-year-old? Give reasons.
3. How is the story of Kashi Yatre a mirror of Avva's own life?

★ **Exam tip:** For long answers: introduce the point, give 3–4 ideas each with a detail from the text, and conclude with the message.

Assertion–Reason (6)

(a) Both true, R explains A. (b) Both true, R does not explain A. (c) A true, R false. (d) A false, R true.

1. A: Avva cried when the narrator returned. R: She had been unable to read Kashi Yatre on her own.
2. A: Avva asked a neighbour to read the serial. R: She was too embarrassed to ask anyone.
3. A: Avva touched her granddaughter's feet. R: She believed a teacher must be respected irrespective of age.
4. A: Avva never went to school. R: Girls' education was not considered essential in those days.
5. A: The narrator laughed at Avva. R: She was jealous of Avva.
6. A: Avva identified with the novel's protagonist. R: Avva too had never been to Kashi.

Key: 1 (a) · 2 (d) · 3 (a) · 4 (a) · 5 (c) · 6 (a)

20 MCQs

1. The narrator was about _____ years old.
   (a) eight (b) sixteen (c) twelve (d) twenty
2. The weekly magazine arrived:
   (a) one day late (b) on time (c) a week late (d) never
3. Triveni wrote in:
   (a) Tamil (b) Marathi (c) Hindi (d) Kannada
4. Her stories dealt with:
   (a) war (b) psychological problems of ordinary people (c) science (d) kings

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5. The old lady in Kashi Yatre wanted to go to:
(a) Mysuru (b) Kashi (c) Puri (d) Madurai

6. She gave her savings for:
(a) a temple (b) her son (c) a school (d) an orphan girl's wedding

7. Avva could repeat the serial:
(a) by heart (b) partly (c) wrongly (d) never

8. The narrator went to the neighbouring village for:
(a) a fair (b) school (c) a wedding (d) a funeral

9. On her return the narrator found Avva:
(a) angry (b) away (c) asleep (d) in tears

10. Avva told her story on:
(a) a rainy evening (b) a full-moon summer night (c) a winter morning (d) Dassara

11. Avva lost her mother:
(a) after marriage (b) at sixty (c) when she was a young girl (d) never

12. Avva felt "dependent and helpless" because:
(a) she could not read (b) she was poor (c) she was ill (d) she was alone

13. She chose as her deadline:
(a) Diwali (b) Saraswati Puja day during Dassara (c) Holi (d) her birthday

14. The narrator's first reaction was to:
(a) cry (b) refuse (c) laugh at her (d) tell her parents

15. "For learning there is no _____."
(a) teacher (b) money (c) book (d) age bar

16. Avva's gift to the narrator was:
(a) frock material (b) a book (c) sweets (d) money

17. Avva touched the narrator's feet to honour her as a:
(a) teacher (b) granddaughter (c) goddess (d) guest

18. "Taken aback" means:
(a) pleased (b) bored (c) angry (d) surprised by something unexpected

19. The narrator later became a teacher of:
(a) Kannada (b) Computer Science (c) History (d) Music

20. The central message of the story is:
(a) money is power (b) travel broadens the mind (c) learning has no age bar (d) obey elders

1 (c) · 2 (a) · 3 (d) · 4 (b) · 5 (b) · 6 (d) · 7 (a) · 8 (c) · 9 (d) · 10 (b) · 11 (c) · 12 (a) · 13 (b) · 14 (c) · 15 (d) · 16 (a) · 17 (a) · 18 (d) · 19 (b) · 20 (c)

Answers

Extract sets. Set 1: (i) at the temple courtyard (ii) hide and seek (iii) the latest episode of Kashi Yatre (iv) (b). Set 2: (i) Avva, the grandmother (ii) she understood the picture but not the written words (iii) her longing to read and her helplessness (iv) helpless. Set 3: (i) she worked very hard and did amazing amounts of homework (ii) read, repeat, write and recite (iii) roles are reversed: a child is the teacher and an old woman the student; it also hints at the narrator's future as a teacher (iv) amazing.

A. 1. Karnataka 2. Triveni 3. Karmaveera 4. Wednesday 5. mother 6. sixty-two 7. Saraswati Puja 8. frock

B. 1. F (in the afternoon) 2. F (she died very young) 3. F (she gave away her savings) 4. T 5. F 6. T 7. T 8. F (a teacher of Computer Science)

C. 1. Krishtakka 2. Kashi (Varanasi) 3. a young orphan girl (for her wedding) 4. on the open terrace 5. Kannada 6. the novel Kashi Yatre 7. the title Kashi Yatre by Triveni and the publisher's name 8. "passed with flying colours"

D. 1. the old lady gives all her savings for the orphan girl's wedding, saying the girl's happiness matters more than Kashi; Avva, also never at Kashi and kind, identified with her 2. lost her mother young; father busy and remarried; no school for girls; married young; busy with family; regretted not studying 3. she was a respected elder and felt ashamed

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to reveal she could not read 4. she read, repeated, wrote and recited daily, did amazing homework and could read a novel by the deadline 5. elders never touch the feet of youngsters; it reverses tradition 6. determination overcomes obstacles; learning has no age bar; respect teachers

E. 1. helpless (cannot read, cries, embarrassed) → decision and deadline → hard work → reads the novel's title at Dassara; "Now I am independent" 2. loving (reads to her, holds her hand) → playful teasing → patient teacher and eager student → mutual respect (touching each other's feet) 3. diary: date (Saraswati Puja day); joy at reading the title; pride and gratitude; touching the teacher's feet; resolve to read every day

F. 1. speech: greeting; girls once kept at home (like Avva); today schemes, free education, scholarships, more girls in school and college; still dropouts, early marriage, distance; need safe transport, awareness, toilets, encouragement; close with a call 2. teach in short steps; use large fonts; practise video calls, UPI, online forms; warn about scams; be patient; hold digital-literacy camps

G. 1. she trusted and loved her, felt no embarrassment before her, and the narrator was already reading to her 2. yes: children judge by outward signs and think learning is for the young; she did not yet understand Avva's feelings 3. both are old women who never went to Kashi and put others before themselves; the novel's sacrifice mirrors Avva's life of caring for family; reading it becomes her goal

Last-night summary

- Sudha Murty; north Karnataka village; narrator 12, Avva (Krishtakka) 62.
- Every Wednesday the narrator read Triveni's serial Kashi Yatre (Karmaveera) to Avva, who never went to school.
- Narrator away at a wedding for a week → Avva in tears; life story on a full-moon night.
- "What use is money when I cannot be independent?" → learns Kannada alphabet, deadline Saraswati Puja.
- Narrator laughs; Avva: "For learning there is no age bar."
- Dassara: frock material; Avva touches her teacher's feet; reads the title of Kashi Yatre → "passed with flying colours".
- Themes: literacy and independence, determination, no age bar, respect for teachers, women's education.

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