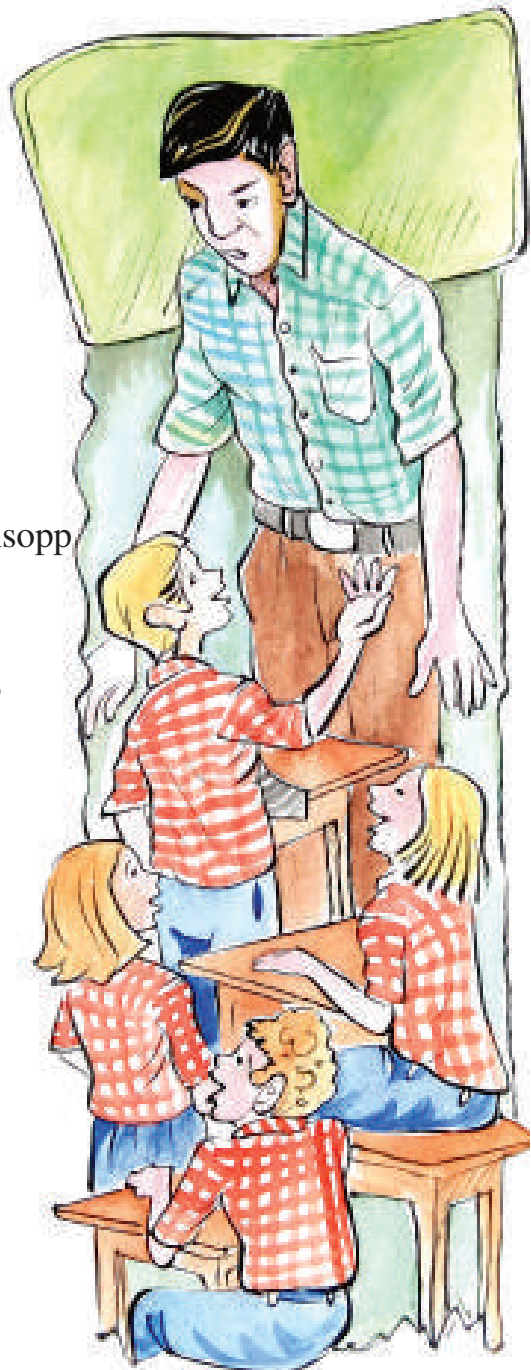


Reading B



Excuses, Excuses and Excuses...

Late again, Beinkensopp?
What's the excuse this time?
Not my fault, sir.
Whose fault is it then?
Grandma's sir
Grandma's? What did she do?
She died sir.
Died?
She's seriously dead alright sir.
That makes four grandmothers this term, Beinkensopp
All on PE days.
I know, it's very upsetting sir
How many grandmas have you got Beinkensopp?
None sir.
You said you had four.
All dead sir
And what about yesterday, Beinkensopp?
What about yesterday, sir?
You were absent yesterday.
That was the dentist, sir
The dentist died?
No sir, my teeth sir.
You missed the maths test, Beinkensopp!
I'd been looking forward to it, sir.
Right, line up for PE
Can't sir.



There is no such word as can't Beinkensopp.
No kit sir.
Where is it?
Home sir.
What is it doing at home?
Not ironed sir.
Couldn't you iron it?
Can't sir.
Why not?
Bad hand sir.
Who usually does it?
Grandma, sir
Why couldn't she do it?
Dead sir.

by Gareth Owen

About the poet



Gareth Owen was born in 1936. He is a poet and writer. He received many awards for his poetry. He lived in England and wrote plays for children and adults.

Meanings in context

- PE : Physical Education
kit : a set of articles or equipment needed for PE
bad hand : when your hand pains due to wound or injury
iron (n) : a strong, hard magnetic silvery-grey metal.
iron (v) : to straighten the creases of a piece of cloth
excuse (n) : reason given to explain your wrong doing
excuse (v) : to pardon or forgive



Comprehension

1. Write against each statement whether it is true or false and give reasons for your opinion.

- i. Beinkensopp had four grandmothers, all of them were dead.
- ii. Beinkensopp's hand was aching and that is why he did not iron the uniform.
- iii. Beinkensopp was afraid of the Maths test so he made an excuse.
- iv. Beinkensopp did not like physical education and that is why he was always late.
- v. The teacher believed that Beinkensopp was telling the truth about his grandmother.

2. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words from the brackets.

- i. As Beinkensopp walked into class, the teacher said, 'Late again, Beinkensopp?' The use of the word 'again' shows that the teacher was _____ (surprised/ annoyed/ disappointed) with Beinkensopp.
- ii. Beinkensopp said that his grandmother was 'seriously dead' when his teacher asked him why he was late to school. This means that he wanted the teacher to _____ (punish/ believe/ excuse) him.
- iii. The teacher remarked, 'that makes four grandmothers this term'. This means that Beinkensopp _____ (had four grandmothers/ had been late four times/ had four excuses)
- iv. Beinkensopp couldn't iron his shirt because he had a bad hand. Bad hand means _____ (he was injured/ he ironed badly/ he had dirty hands)
- v. Beinkensopp's teacher asked him, 'What's your excuse this time?' This means that he believed that Beinkensopp was _____ (telling the truth/ fooling him/ diverting attention).

3. In the table given below write the excuses that Beinkensopp gives and the work that he wants to avoid. Also think why he could be avoiding the work.

Excuses given by Beinkensopp	Why is he giving excuses?

4. Find other words with which you can replace the underlined words in the following lines.

1. Not my fault, sir
2. She's seriously dead alright sir.
3. I know, it's very upsetting sir
4. I'd been looking forward to it, sir.
5. Bad hand sir.

5. Think of some humorous excuses that you may give in the following situations. Here is an example.

Situation

Your mother wants you to go with her to the market but you want to go out and play with your friends, what excuse will you give her?

Excuse

I would love to come to the market with my mother but I have decided to save money.

Now, write some excuses for the given situations

1. Your younger brother is very troublesome, he does not let you talk to your friends. But your mother asked you to look after him. What will you tell her?
2. All the boys have to clean the courtyard after the festival of Holi, because they have played with water, mud and colour in the courtyard. Your mother asks you to clean up the mess. What excuse will you give her?
3. You have a maths test tomorrow and mother wants you to study. But there is nice movie on the TV and you do not want to switch it off. What will you tell her?

Vocabulary

1. 'Upsetting' is a word used by Beinkensopp to explain his situation. Give three more words to describe the feelings of Beinkensopp and his teacher.

2. Read the following lines of the poem

Whose fault is it then?

Grandma's, sir

Grandma's? What did she do?

She died sir.

Died?

The responses in the conversation are rhetoric. for Eg.: The word 'Grandma's' is used instead of 'It is Grandma's fault, sir'. **Find out such other expressions used in the poem.**

