

Canvas of Soil — Higher Order Thinking (HOTS) MCQs

Class 9 CBSE | English (Kaveri) — Poem 3 | Competency-Based Assessment

Q1. The poet builds the poem entirely on an extended metaphor comparing gardening to painting. What is the deeper purpose of sustaining this single metaphor across the whole poem, rather than using several different comparisons?

- (a) To make the poem easier to memorise for young readers
- (b) To show that ordinary, repetitive garden labour can be reframed as a deliberate, meaningful creative act, just like painting
- (c) To prove that gardening requires the same tools as painting
- (d) To criticise painters for not appreciating nature enough

Q2. "Brushstrokes of seeds, planted true, / Awaiting spring's vibrant hue." What does the word 'true' most likely suggest about the gardener's action, beyond simple accuracy of planting?

- (a) The seeds are made of real, genuine material
- (b) The gardener plants with sincerity, faith, and intention, much as an artist commits truthfully to the first strokes of a painting
- (c) The seeds will definitely grow without any care needed
- (d) The poet is comparing seeds to honest people

Q3. The poem mentions the shades of green, red, and blue. Given the poem's central theme, what is the most likely reason the poet chose to mention specific colours rather than simply saying the garden was 'colourful'?

- (a) Specific colours make the imagery vivid and concrete, letting readers visually experience the garden as a real painting rather than an abstract idea
- (b) The poet wanted to teach students the names of colours
- (c) Green, red, and blue are the only colours found in nature
- (d) These colours have no connection to the poem's theme

Q4. Which statement best evaluates the poem's underlying message about the relationship between nature and human effort?

- (a) Nature alone creates beauty; human effort is unnecessary
- (b) Human effort alone creates beauty; nature merely provides raw material
- (c) Beauty emerges from a partnership — nature provides the potential (soil, seasons, growth) while human care and patience shape it into something meaningful
- (d) The poem suggests nature and human effort are always in conflict with each other

Q5. If a classmate argued, "Calling a garden a 'canvas' is misleading because a canvas is fixed and unchanging, while a garden constantly grows and changes," how would the poem's imagery best counter this argument?

- (a) The poem never claims the garden changes, so the argument is irrelevant
- (b) The poem presents the garden as a 'living' or 'still-life' painting that is created gradually over time through seasons, meaning the 'canvas' is not static but an evolving work-in-progress, much like a painting built up in layers
- (c) The argument is correct, and the poem's title is a mistake
- (d) A canvas and a garden have no meaningful similarities at all

Q6. What competency does the poem most directly encourage a reader to develop through its central metaphor?

- (a) Memorising scientific names of plants
- (b) The ability to perceive artistic or creative value in everyday, ordinary activities that might otherwise seem mundane
- (c) Learning professional painting techniques
- (d) Understanding the chemical composition of soil

Q7. The poem describes the garden 'in the light of morning.' Why is morning light a fitting time detail for the poem's message, rather than, say, night or noon?

- (a) Morning light is purely decorative and carries no meaning
- (b) Morning conventionally symbolises freshness, new beginnings, and renewal, reinforcing the poem's theme of seeds/dreams growing into new creations
- (c) Flowers only bloom at night, so morning is scientifically inaccurate
- (d) The poet simply needed a word that rhymed

Q8. Based on the poem's overall tone and message, which real-life situation would the poet most likely see as an example of 'creating art from soil'?

- (a) A person mowing a lawn quickly just to finish a chore
- (b) A farmer or gardener who patiently tends crops season after season, taking pride in nurturing growth despite slow, invisible progress
- (c) A person buying artificial plastic flowers to decorate a room instantly
- (d) A construction company paving over a garden to build a parking lot

Answer Key with Explanations

Q1. Correct Answer: (b)

A sustained single metaphor (soil-as-palette, seeds-as-brushstrokes, garden-as-canvas) lets the poet build one coherent idea: that patient, humble labour is itself a form of art. Using several unrelated comparisons would dilute this central insight.

Q2. Correct Answer: (b)

In the painting metaphor, a 'true' brushstroke reflects the artist's honest intent and skill. Applied to gardening, it implies the gardener plants with sincerity and purposeful care, not just mechanical placement.

Q3. Correct Answer: (a)

Naming precise colours strengthens the painting metaphor by giving readers a tangible visual image, reinforcing the idea of the garden as an actual, vivid artwork rather than a vague description.

Q4. Correct Answer: (c)

The poem repeatedly shows gardeners' 'dreams' merging with soil and seasons — beauty results from collaboration between natural growth and human nurturing, not from either acting alone.

Q5. Correct Answer: (b)

The poem frames the garden as artwork that develops over time — from seed to bloom — much like a painting builds up through stages, so the 'canvas' metaphor accommodates gradual change rather than contradicting it.

Q6. Correct Answer: (b)

By elevating gardening to the status of art, the poem trains readers to look at ordinary, routine tasks with a fresh, appreciative, creative perspective — a transferable habit of mind, not a technical skill.

Q7. Correct Answer: (b)

Morning is traditionally associated with beginnings and renewal, which mirrors the poem's theme of dreams/seeds growing into a finished, blooming 'painting' — reinforcing rather than merely decorating the message.

Q8. Correct Answer: (b)

The poem values patience, care, and creative dedication over time — qualities embodied by someone who nurtures growth slowly, not by quick, careless, or destructive actions toward nature.