



पु.ता International School
Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul, Zundal

CLASS - VIII

SUBJECT – ENGLISH

BOOK – 1. HONEYDEW

CH – 1 THE BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT IN THE WORLD

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdkagflUZro>

The Best Christmas Present in the World is a touching story by Michael Morpurgo. The narrator buys an old desk and finds in it a letter written by an English soldier Jim Mcpherson to his wife Connie whom the narrator goes to meet and hand over the letter.

The letter has a touchy account of how the English soldiers and German soldiers wished each other 'Happy Christmas', celebrated the festival with real Christmas spirit where there was no place for conflict, hatred, and violence. The letter was written on 26 December 1914 and Jim wrote in his letter that he would be back by the next Christmas as the incident between the two armies showed how soldiers from both sides wanted peace.

The narrator could not sleep the whole night, it was Christmas Eve, as he had intruded in someone's privacy by reading the letter. In the morning he went to the address mentioned in the letter, finds the house in shatters due to fire, asked a neighbour and reached where Connie was. Connie was 101 years and she mistook the narrator as Jim and talked about her happiness on Jim's arrival. It was the best Christmas present for her in the world.

❖ NEW WORDS

1. Nineteenth
2. Clumsily
3. Drawer
4. Underneath
5. Curiosity
6. Greatcoat
7. Parapet
8. Sausage
9. Outstretched
10. Carols
11. Lopsided



❖ WORD MEANINGS

1. Spotted it – saw it , found it
2. Scorch marks – burn marks
3. Restore – repair
4. Stuck fast – shut tight
5. Scruples – feelings that make you hesitate to do something wrong
6. Trenches – long deep ditches in the ground where soldiers hide from the enemy
7. Cello – A musical instrument like a large violin
8. Marzipan – A sweet covering on a cake made from sugar, eggs and almonds
9. Dugout – A shelter for soldiers made by digging a hole in the ground and covering it
10. Boarded up - Covered with wooden boards
11. Muddle headed – Confused
12. Suffused with – Spread all over her face

❖ **ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS –**

Q 1. What did the author find in a junk shop?

Ans - The author found a nineteenth century roll-top desk in the junk shop. It was made of oak. It was in a very bad condition.

Q 2. What did he find in a secret drawer?

Ans - The author found a small black tin box in the secret drawer.

Q 3. Who do you think had put it in there?

Ans - Most likely, it was put there by Mrs. Jim Macpherson, who was Jim's wife. Her name and address were on the envelope inside the box.

Q 4. Who had written the letter, to whom, and when?

Ans - Jim Macpherson had written the letter to his wife Connie Macpherson on December 26, 1914.

Q 5. How old was Mrs Macpherson now? Where was she?

Ans - Mrs. Macpherson was a hundred and one years old. She was in a nursing home in Burlington House.

Q6 . Why did the author go to Bridport?

Ans - The author went to Bridport because that was the address where Mrs. Macpherson lived. He wanted to give that letter back to her.

Q7 . Who did Connie Macpherson think her visitor was?

Ans - Connie Macpherson thought that her visitor was her husband, Jim.

❖ **ANSWER IN DETAIL –**

Q 1. Why do you think the desk had been sold, and when?

Ans - The desk must have been sold when the house in which Connie Macpherson lived had caught fire. She was taken to a nursing home. All the burnt up things must have been sold by the neighbours after that.

Q 2. What is Connie's Christmas present? Why is it "the best Christmas present in the world"?

Ans - When the narrator came to see Connie and gave her the box, she mistook him for her husband Jim. She thought that Jim had come home for Christmas. This was Connie's Christmas present. It was the best Christmas present in the world for her because Jim had written in the letter that he would come home on Christmas. She had read that letter several times everyday to feel that he was near her. Now that he was finally there with her, she was extremely happy.

Q3 . Why was the letter written—what was the wonderful thing that had happened?

Ans - Jim wrote the letter to tell his wife about a wonderful thing that had happened on Christmas day. The British and the Germans were engaged in a war, yet on this day, both the troops met in no man's land. It was a thing of wonder because right in the middle of a war, the warring soldiers were making peace.

❖ **VALUE BASED QUESTION –**

Why do Jim and Hans think that games or sports are good ways of resolving conflicts? Do you agree?
Ans - Jim and Hans thought that games or sports are good ways of resolving conflicts because nobody dies in matches. No children are orphaned and no wives become widows. Due to these reasons, games are good ways for resolving conflicts. Wars only lead to death and devastation.

Moral:

War brings death and sadness; there are much better ways of resolving differences.

❖ **WORKING WITH GRAMMAR**

Fill in the blanks using the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

My little sister is very naughty. When she came (come) back from school yesterday, she had torn (tear) her dress. We asked (ask) her how it had happened (happen). She said (say) she had quarrelled (have, quarrel) with a boy. She had beaten (have, beat) him in a race and he had tried (have, try) to push her. She had told (have, tell) the teacher and so he had chased (have, chase) her, and she had fallen (have, fall) down and had torn (have, tear) her dress.