

**NCERT Book Notes**  
**Class 10<sup>th</sup> English (First Flight)**

**Chapter 9 – Madam Rides the Bus**

**Oral Comprehension Check (119)**

**1. What was Valli’s favourite pastime?**

**Ans:** Valli was a girl of about eight and she was very curious about things. Her favourite pastime was to stand in the front doorway and watch the happenings on the street.

**2. What was a source of unending joy for Valli? What was her strongest desire?**

**Ans:** Valli loved to stand in the front doorway and watch what was happening. It gave her many new unusual experiences and the most fascinating thing for her was to watch the bus, filled with a new set of passengers. The bus travelled between her village and the nearest town. Her strongest desire was to ride on the bus.

**3. What did Valli find out about the bus journey? How did she find out these details?**

**Ans:** Valli was a young girl of curious temperament. Her strongest desire was to travel by bus and so she started investigating further about it. She overheard the bus travellers talk about the fare. They mentioned that it was thirty paise one way and the trip took around forty-five minutes. If she stayed on her seat and paid thirty paise again, she could return home via the same bus. She also asked them a few questions further to confirm the facts.

**4. What do you think Valli was planning to do?**

**Ans:** Valli was planning to travel on the bus and explore the places nearby her further.

**Oral Comprehension Check (122)**

**1. Why does the conductor call Valli ‘madam’?**

**Ans:** Valli stopped the bus when it arrived on one fine spring day, in the afternoon. She tried to behave maturely and when the conductor let out his hand to help her climb the bus she refused. It was a big achievement for her to get on the bus alone and she felt like a grown-up. The conductor was a jolly sort and called her madam.

**2. Why does Valli stand up on the seat? What does she see now?**

**Ans:** Valli was overly excited about the bus ride. It was something she wanted to do deeply and when she got the chance to do it, she wanted to make the most out of it. She stood up because the canvas was obstructing her view that covered the lower part of the window. When she peeped out, she saw the narrow road with the canal on one side and palm trees, grassland, mountains, and blue sky beyond that. On the other side, there was a deep ditch with vast green fields.

**3. What does Valli tell the elderly man when he calls her a child?**

**Ans:** Since Valli was only eight years, the elderly referred to her as a child. She defended herself saying that she was not one since she paid thirty paise like everyone else on the bus and hence must be treated equally.

**4. Why didn't Valli want to make friends with the elderly woman?**

**Ans:** The elderly lady was chewing betel nut and the juice was about to seep out of her mouth. She had the vibes of an unrefined lady and had big earlobes with even bigger holes. Valli did not like her and was not interested to be friends with her.

**Oral Comprehension Check (125)**

**1. How did Valli save up money for her first journey? Was it easy for her?**

**Ans:** Valli was a young girl and was very curious about things around her. The bus was the most fascinating thing she saw on the streets and wanted to travel by it one day. She saved every coin that she was given, and she controlled her urge of buying candies, toys, and joyrides. It was difficult for her but her desire to travel in a bus outweighed all these desires.

**2. What did Valli see on her way that made her laugh?**

**Ans:** It was exciting for Valli to observe the world outside her window. One particular incident on the road made her laugh. There was a young cow whose tail was high in the air and was running right in the middle of the road. The honk from the bus frightened the animal further and it started running faster right in front of the bus. Valli found it extremely amusing and funny and even had tears in her eyes while laughing at the absurdness of the cow.

**3. Why didn't she get off the bus at the bus station?**

**Ans:** Valli planned to go back by the same bus. She did not get off the bus since she heard the bus travellers talk about it. She handed another thirty paise to the conductor. She had no work in the town and just wanted to ride the bus and have fun.

**4. Why didn't Valli want to go to the stall and have a drink? What does this tell you about her?**

**Ans:** Valli had self-esteem and pride. When she entered the bus, she refused help from the conductor and acted like an adult. Even though she was thirsty and wanted to get a drink from the stall, she did not because she was short of the amount. She just had enough for the ride and did not want a stranger to help her.

**Thinking about the Text**

**1. What was Valli's deepest desire? Find the words and phrases in the story that tell you this.**

**Ans:** Valli's deepest desire as an eight-year-old was to travel by bus she saw every day. The sentences in the story which depict this are as follows:

“Day after day she watched the bus, and gradually a tiny wish crept into her head and grew there: she wanted to ride on that bus, even if just once. This wish became stronger and stronger, until it was an overwhelming desire.”

**2. How did Valli plan her bus ride? What did she find out about the bus, and how did she save up the fare?**

**Ans:** Valli was determined to take the bus ride. She listened carefully to the conversations of the people who extensively used the bus and got details of the journey. She required thirty paise for each side of the journey and the town was six miles from the village. She collected every coin she found and did not spend it on candies, peppermints, toys and joyrides. After a lot of hustle, she finally saved sixty paise.

**3. What kind of a person is Valli? To answer this question, pick out the following sentences from the text and fill in the blanks. The words you fill in are the clues to your answer.**

(i) “Stop the bus! Stop the bus!” And a tiny hand was raised \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ans:** “Stop the bus! Stop the bus!” And a tiny hand was raised commandingly.

(ii) “Yes, I \_\_\_\_\_ go to town,” said Valli, still standing outside the bus.

**Ans:** “Yes, I simply have to go to town,” said Valli, still standing outside the bus.

(iii) “There's nobody here \_\_\_\_\_,” she said haughtily. “I've paid my thirty paise like everyone else.”

**Ans:** “There's nobody here who's a child,” she said haughtily. I've paid thirty paise like everyone else.”

(iv) “Never mind,” she said, “I can \_\_\_\_\_ . You do not have to help me. “I’m not a child, I tell you,” she said,.

**Ans:** “Never mind,” she said, “I can get on by myself. You do not have to help me. “I’m not a child, I tell you,” she said, irritably.

(v) “You needn’t bother about me. I \_\_\_\_\_,” Valli said, turning her face toward the window and staring out.

**Ans:** “You needn’t bother about me. I can take care of myself,” Valli said, turning her face toward the window and staring out.

(vi) Then she turned to the conductor and said, “Well, sir, I hope \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Ans:** Then she turned to the conductor and said, “Well, sir, I hope to see you again.”

For Valli, as a child entering her teenage years, the journey symbolizes adulthood. She as a young girl collected the money for the ride. It would have felt like an achievement for her and provided her satisfaction. Since she collected the money and did not borrow it, she wanted to be treated as an adult and receive respect from everyone around her. She felt that she could take care of herself, and it irritated her when everyone treated her as a child.

#### **4. Why does the conductor refer to Valli as ‘madam’?**

**Ans:** Valli refused the conductor’s help when she climbed the bus. She arranged the money herself and did not ask any adult to help her. She wanted to be treated equally. On the bus, she tried to maintain her composure and act like an adult and not like a child. When an elderly man referred to her as a child and asked her to sit down, she said that there was no child on the bus, and she was a grown-up girl. Because of her wish to be referred to as a grown-up and the conductor being a jolly one, he referred to her as ‘madam.’

#### **5. Find the lines in the text which tell you that Valli was enjoying her ride on the bus.**

**Ans:** The following lines in the text show that Valli was enjoying her ride on the bus:

(i) “Valli devoured everything with her eyes.”

(ii) “On the one side there was the canal and, beyond it, palm trees, grassland, distant mountains, and the blue, blue sky. On the other side was a deep ditch and then acres and acres of green fields – green, green, green, as far as the eye could see. Oh, it was all so wonderful!”

(iii) “Everyone laughed, and gradually Valli too joined in the laughter. Suddenly, Valli clapped her hands with glee.”

(iv) “Somehow this was very funny to Valli. She laughed and laughed until there were tears in her eyes.”

(v) “Valli wasn’t bored to the slightest and greeted everything with the same excitement she’d felt the first time.”

**6. Why does Valli refuse to look out of the window on her way back?**

**Ans:** While returning back, the cow who was running around on the road was hit by some fast-moving vehicle. She died on the spot and lay dead on the roadside. She was filled with sadness and grief to see this, and it turned her jolly mood into a sad one. The memory of the dead cow pained her, and she did not want to witness that again.

**7. What does Valli mean when she says, “I was just agreeing with what you said about things happening without our knowledge.”**

**Ans:** Valli took the bus ride without the knowledge of her mother. She collected the money herself and then rode the bus in the afternoon when she was asleep. Her mother said that we are unaware of many things that happen around us and she agreed with her mother, remembering the bus ride she took.

**8. The author describes the things that Valli sees from an eight-year-old’s point of view. Can you find evidence from the text for this statement?**

**Ans:** Valli tried to act like a grown-up but her perspective about the world remained the same. She viewed the world from the lens of eight years old. She was fascinated by the trivial things around her home and watched the world in awe. She wanted to explore the world further. It was a source of joy for her. Her strongest wish as eight years old was to ride the bus and travel to the town. She resisted all the temptation to save the money which made her proud of her achievement. When the author described the bus, he talked about the intricate details like it was a ‘new bus,’ painted a ‘gleaming white.’ The overhead bars ‘shone like silver’ and the seats were ‘soft and luxurious.’ Even these trivial details were so important for Valli as a child, something which adults do not do. Valli clapped her hands happily when she saw everything around her and found the cow incident so funny that even tears rolled down her eyes. Her heart was clouded with sadness when she saw the cow dead and it ‘looked so horrible.’ She was haunted to even look out of the window.

## Writing

Write a page — about three paragraphs — on one of the following topics.

1. Have you ever planned something entirely on your own, without taking grownups into confidence? What did you plan, and how? Did you carry out your plan?
2. Have you made a journey that was unforgettable in some way? What made it memorable?
3. Are you concerned about traffic and road safety? What are your concerns? How would you make road travel safer and more enjoyable?

**Ans:**

1. Yes, me and my younger sister once planned a trip together on our own. We were asked to travel to our grandmother's place on our own. We were given money by our parents and were asked to do the rest on our own. We were scared since it was our first time travelling alone. We planned our clothes, bare minimum since we did not want to carry lots of stuff on the bus ride. We packed lots of snacks and did not want to get down when the bus stopped. It would put the stuff we were carrying at the risk of being lost. We were supposed to leave within a week, and we were scared as well as excited about our trip.

We were dropped at the bus stop by our parents, and we boarded the bus, extremely anxious. We looked for our seats and made ourselves comfortable. At the beginning of the journey, we were a bit worried and more alert than required. As the journey progressed, we relaxed a bit and made ourselves comfortable. The weather was pleasant and the greenery outside made the journey more pleasurable. We enjoyed our snacks and reached our grandmother's home. It's a journey we both will remember for a long time.