

# ISWARAN THE STORYTELLER

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM-ORIENTED STUDY MATERIAL | LATEST CBSE SYLLABUS & PATTERN

## A. Chapter Overview

**Author:** R. K. Laxman (Famous Indian cartoonist and writer)

**Main Theme:** The power of storytelling – how a skilled narrator can make even fiction seem utterly believable. It deeply explores human imagination, psychological fear, and companionship.

### Important Character: Iswaran

- Mahendra's incredibly loyal and resourceful asset.
- A gifted narrator heavily inspired by Tamil thriller novels.
- Possesses the unique artistic ability to transform ordinary, mundane incidents into gripping, suspenseful epics.

### Core Moral / Message:

Over-imagination and unchecked belief in the supernatural can breed irrational, paralyzing fear. While stories provide rich entertainment, one must maintain a sharp boundary between reality and fiction.

### Important Character: Mahendra

- A junior supervisor working for a construction firm.
- Simple, practical, and highly rational by nature.
- Serves as the captive, appreciative audience for Iswaran's daily culinary and theatrical skills, though ultimately vulnerable to psychological suggestion.

## B. Very Short Answer Questions (1 Mark)

### 1. Who is the author of "Iswaran the Storyteller"?

→ R. K. Laxman.

### 2. Who was Iswaran?

→ He was Mahendra's deeply loyal cook, domestic help, and a masterfully gifted storyteller.

### 3. What was Mahendra's job?

→ He was a junior supervisor in a construction firm that posted him to remote, transient sites like bridges and mines.

### 4. What did Iswaran carry with him always?

→ A small metal trunk containing his minimalist personal belongings.

### 5. What was Iswaran's special skill?

→ Dramatic storytelling – he could elevate ordinary events into thrilling, suspense-laden adventures.

**6. How did Iswaran describe the elephants in his stories?**

→ He portrayed them as massive, untamable beasts when wild, yet capable of being controlled by an expert mahout.

**7. What did Iswaran claim to have done to a mad elephant?**

→ He claimed he used a rod to strike its third toenail, paralyzing its nervous system and causing it to collapse unconscious.

**8. What ghost story did Iswaran tell Mahendra?**

→ The spine-chilling tale of an ugly female ghost carrying an unborn fetus in her arms under the full moon.

**9. Where did Iswaran say the ghost appeared?**

→ Directly near the factory area, which had previously been a burial ground.

**10. What did Mahendra see one night outside his window?**

→ He saw a dark, ambiguous, skeletal silhouette clutching a bundle or shroud.

**11. How did Mahendra react to seeing the figure?**

→ He was utterly terrified, broke out into a cold sweat, and collapsed heavily back onto his pillow.

**12. What decision did Mahendra take the next morning?**

→ He resolved to hand in his resignation papers and abandon the haunted site immediately.

**13. What did Iswaran do when Mahendra announced his departure?**

→ He remained remarkably calm and unbothered, grinning knowingly as he packed his metal trunk.

**14. What does the story suggest about Iswaran's ghost story?**

→ It was entirely a figment of Iswaran's creative fiction, which subconsciously primed Mahendra's mind to project his own fears into a vivid hallucination.

**15. What is the one-word literary term for Iswaran's storytelling style?**

→ Hyperbole (or Exaggeration).

## **C. Short Answer Questions (2–3 Marks)**

**1. How did Iswaran entertain Mahendra every day?**

→ Iswaran acted as a complete entertainment unit for Mahendra. After finishing his household chores like washing clothes and cooking delicious meals, he would weave elaborate, thrilling narratives while Mahendra ate dinner. These customized bedtime stories filled the void of a television, offering suspense, horror, and high adventure.

## **2. Describe Iswaran's daily routine.**

→ Iswaran woke up early to cook breakfast for Mahendra. After his master left for work, he would wash clothes, clean the makeshift shed, take a leisurely bath while chanting prayers, and eat his lunch. He would then read popular Tamil pulp thrillers to indulge his imagination before preparing a grand dinner and launching into his nightly storytelling session.

## **3. What did Iswaran say about wild elephants?**

→ Iswaran introduced his elephant anecdote by establishing that even the most experienced mahouts fail to control a wild elephant when it goes mad. He emphasized their colossal size, describing them as mountain-like beasts that could easily crush everything in their path when driven by insanity.

## **4. Narrate the story of the mad elephant as told by Iswaran.**

→ An elephant escaped from a timber yard, went wild, smashed fences, and stormed into Iswaran's school ground, sending children and teachers scrambling in terror. Seeing the chaos, a young Iswaran grabbed a cane from a teacher, boldly confronted the charging beast, and struck its third toenail. The beast collapsed from a secret nervous system vulnerability, or so Iswaran claimed.

## **5. How did Mahendra react to Iswaran's stories?**

→ Mahendra was an uncritical and thoroughly engaged listener. He would listen to Iswaran's dramatic sagas without correcting obvious logical flaws or exaggerations, enjoying the sheer theatricality of the presentation. However, the ghost stories ultimately began to unsettle his rational mind, making him anxious.

## **6. Why did Iswaran call himself a “master storyteller”?**

→ Though he didn't explicitly use the title, his actions spoke for themselves. He could transform a simple sight, like a dry fallen tree trunk on a deserted highway, into a dramatic scene featuring a giant, sprawled beast. His mastery lay in his command over suspense, body language, vocal modulations, and cliffhangers.

## **7. What was Mahendra's attitude towards supernatural stories?**

→ Mahendra initially adopted a strictly scientific, practical attitude. When Iswaran first brought up the female ghost, Mahendra berated him, calling him crazy and asserting that ghosts and spirits were merely products of a faulty digestive tract or hyperactive imagination.

## **8. What did Mahendra see outside his window one night?**

→ Woken up by a low, mournful moaning sound close to his window sill, Mahendra resisted looking out at first. When he finally peered out into the bright moonlight, he saw a dark, amorphous, low-lying cloud-like figure holding what appeared to be a bundle or a shroud, exactly mirroring Iswaran's description.

### **9. Why did Mahendra decide to leave the place?**

→ The morning after his terrifying night vision, Iswaran casually mentioned hearing the same moans and seeing Mahendra look out the window. This cross-verification shattered Mahendra's coping mechanism of dismissing the vision as a dream. Overcome by chilling psychological fear, he decided to flee the place immediately.

### **10. Did Iswaran show any surprise when Mahendra decided to leave?**

→ No, Iswaran showed absolutely no surprise. Instead, he greeted Mahendra with a knowing, triumphant smile, reminding him that he had previously scoffed at the ghost stories but had now witnessed the truth himself. He calmly accepted the news and began packing.

### **11. What kind of books did Iswaran read?**

→ Iswaran avidly read hundreds of pages of popular Tamil thriller novels. These books were known for their highly imaginative plots, dramatic descriptions, intricate suspense, and shocking twists, which heavily influenced and structured his own storytelling format.

### **12. How did Iswaran's stories affect Mahendra's sleep?**

→ Following the description of the burial ground ghost, Mahendra's nightly peace was ruined. Before sleeping, instead of looking out into the beautiful, star-lit night landscape, he would anxiously peer into the dark void outside, terrified that a supernatural entity might appear.

### **13. What does the story tell us about the power of imagination?**

→ The story highlights that human imagination is a double-edged sword. While it serves as an excellent tool for creative art and entertainment, if left unchecked by logic, it can construct convincing illusions, turning ordinary shadows or anxieties into terrifying, tangible realities.

### **14. Why did Mahendra employ Iswaran?**

→ Iswaran was an invaluable asset for a supervisor working in harsh, remote construction zones. He was incredibly adaptable, could whip up fine culinary meals out of nowhere in temporary canvas tents, washed clothes diligently, and provided vital human companionship in isolated areas.

### **15. What is ironic about Iswaran's ghost story?**

→ The irony lies in the fact that Mahendra, who loudly prided himself on his modern scientific temper and mockingly dismissed Iswaran's "superstitious nonsense," became the sole victim of that very story, driving him to frantically resign and flee his workplace.

## D. Long Answer Questions (4–6 Marks)

### 1. Describe Iswaran's character as a storyteller. How did he make his stories effective?

→ Iswaran was an absolute master of performance art. He did not merely speak a story; he lived it physically and vocally. To make his narratives impactful, he deployed a sophisticated array of techniques: dramatic pauses, subtle hints, unexpected cliffhangers, and heavy emotional buildup. He would throw himself onto the floor, mimicking the thrashing of an animal, or wilden his eyes to depict horror. Inspired by the narrative structures of popular Tamil thrillers, he paid immense attention to world-building and descriptive details, making sure even the simplest event felt like a major survival epic. This complete immersion forced his audience, like Mahendra, to fully suspend disbelief and experience the story as an absolute truth.

### 2. Explain the mad elephant incident in detail. What does it reveal about Iswaran?

→ According to Iswaran, a rogue elephant broke free from its timber-logging duties, went completely wild, and created total chaos across the town by tearing down fences, destroying vendor stalls, and uprooting trees. It finally shattered a school brick wall and entered the courtyard where children were playing. While teachers and students locked themselves upstairs in absolute panic, a young Iswaran allegedly grabbed a cane, calmly stepped into the path of the roaring elephant, and struck its third toenail with precise force, triggering a temporary nervous collapse that knocked the beast cold.

This absurd yet entertaining tale reveals that Iswaran possessed a hyperactive, cinematic imagination. He loved centering himself as the heroic protagonist of his own myths, showcasing his psychological need to appear brave, commanding, and profoundly wise in front of his master.

### 3. How did Iswaran's ghost story affect Mahendra? Trace the change in his behaviour.

→ The transformation of Mahendra from a practical, modern rationalist to a paranoid, terrified wreck is gradual and psychological. Initially, Mahendra treated Iswaran's stories as mere background entertainment, even reprimanding him sharply when he brought up the gruesome female ghost of the burial ground. However, the vivid imagery of a skeletal apparition holding a fetus subtly planted a seed of suggestion in Mahendra's subconscious mind.

Over the following days, his carefree routine vanished. He began examining the dark window panes every night before sleeping. His rational defenses slowly crumbled under the weight of isolation, until a routine nocturnal sound (a cat's purr or a low wind) morphed in his mind into the ghost's mournful wail, culminating in a full-blown visual hallucination that broke his spirit and forced his midnight resignation.

#### 4. Do you think the ghost Mahendra saw was real? Give reasons for your answer.

→ No, the ghost was absolutely not real; it was a pure psychological projection born of suggestive priming. Several key factors support this conclusion:

**First**, Mahendra's mind had been deeply primed by Iswaran's detailed, terrifying description of the exact location, time, and look of the apparition.

**Second**, Mahendra was experiencing severe anxiety and sleep deprivation, which naturally lowers logical reasoning and triggers optical illusions in dim lighting. The "skeletal figure" was likely nothing more than a combination of shifting moonlight, tree shadows, and a stray animal near his window sill.

**Finally**, Iswaran's mischievous morning comment proves he was closely monitoring Mahendra's nighttime panic, suggesting that Iswaran may have either orchestrated a minor prank or simply capitalized on Mahendra's natural nighttime fright to claim narrative victory.

## 5. Compare and contrast Iswaran and Mahendra.

→ The two characters serve as perfect foils to one another, balancing the narrative dynamics of the story:

Aspect	Iswaran	Mahendra
<b>Primary Role</b>	Dependent cook, domestic caretaker, and creative entertainer.	Professional employer, educated civil supervisor, and audience.
<b>Nature &amp; Mindset</b>	Artistic, highly imaginative, dramatic, and emotionally fluid.	Pragmatic, linear, analytical, and dependent on modern logic.
<b>Belief System</b>	Deeply immersed in the supernatural, folklore, and fictional thrillers.	Publicly professes science and logic; dismisses ghosts as mental errors.
<b>Reaction to Crisis</b>	Remains utterly unbothered, calm, amused, and ready to move on.	Becomes deeply anxious, panics under fear, and flees the location.

## 6. What role does suspense play in Iswaran's storytelling? Give examples.

→ Suspense is the core mechanism that Iswaran uses to capture and hold attention. He understands that a story delivered linearly is boring, so he uses pacing and pauses strategically. For instance, during the mad elephant tale, he builds up the terrifying nature of the rampaging beast, places himself directly in harm's way, raises his stick, and right when the elephant is about to charge—he suddenly stops talking, stands up, and walks away to tend to the dinner stove. Leave the climax hanging forces Mahendra to eagerly beg for the ending. By intentionally delaying gratification and letting the listener's mind run wild, Iswaran ensures his audience remains utterly spellbound.

## 7. Why is Iswaran called a “master storyteller”? Justify with evidence from the chapter.

→ Iswaran earns this title because he possesses the rare gift of creating something out of absolutely nothing. A less skilled person would see an uprooted bush on a road and report it as a traffic minor inconvenience. Iswaran, however, sets a dramatic atmosphere: a dark, completely lonely desert highway, a creeping feeling of isolation, and an enormous, hairy monster lying flat across the lane. Only upon closer inspection does the monster reveal itself to be a tree. His mastery lies in his brilliant use of sensory details, pitch perfect voice acting, and physical theater. He can make a listener's heart race over a non-event, which is the ultimate hallmark of a legendary fiction artist.

## 8. What is the significance of the metal trunk in the story?

→ The small metal trunk is a powerful symbol of Iswaran's simple, nomadic, and detached lifestyle. As a working-class cook following his master from one remote, desolate outpost to another, he owns no permanent property or roots. Everything essential to him—his clothes, his tools, and his beloved Tamil thriller books—fits neatly inside that single box. It shows his extreme resilience and adaptability. The ease and calm with which he locks and lifts his metal trunk at the end of the story contrasts beautifully with Mahendra's chaotic, panicked flight, proving that Iswaran is always emotionally and physically ready to face whatever comes next.

## 9. How does R. K. Laxman use humour in the story despite the horror elements?

→ The author masterfully balances grim gothic elements with sharp, subtle irony and humor. The humor stems heavily from the absurdity of Iswaran's straight-faced claims—such as a schoolboy effortlessly knocking out a multi-ton rogue elephant by poking its little toe. Furthermore, there is wonderful comedy in the contrast between Mahendra's arrogant, pseudo-intellectual lectures on logic and how incredibly fast he folds into a trembling, terrified child beneath his bedsheets. Iswaran's calm, unbothered attitude while packing his bags while his master is practically hyperventilating provides a perfect, lighthearted comic resolution to an otherwise terrifying ghost story.

## 10. What message does the story convey about believing everything we hear?

→ The core message of the story is an urgent warning against blind belief and lack of skepticism. It shows how words have the profound power to alter our psychological state and physical behavior. If we absorb sensationalist rumors, ghost stories, or unverified fear-mongering without passing them through a filter of logic and evidence, our minds will betray us. Mahendra allowed Iswaran's fiction to breach his rational defenses, proving that fear is almost always self-created. The text teaches us to enjoy creative arts for entertainment, but to anchor our real-world decisions firmly in facts and objective reality.

## E. Character Sketches

### 1. Iswaran (The Enigmatic Narrator)

Iswaran is a multi-talented, fiercely loyal, and deeply eccentric domestic cook who transcends his formal duties to become Mahendra's complete emotional support system. He possesses a brilliant, cinematic mind that draws heavy inspiration from Tamil sensationalist literature. He is incredibly resourceful, capable of producing elaborate multi-course meals in isolated, desolate outposts with ease. His primary flaw is an addiction to hyperbole and dramatic exaggeration, sometimes blurring the line between harmless entertainment and psychological manipulation. He remains entirely unfazed by crises, displaying an enigmatic, calm, and almost omniscient personality when things unravel.

### 2. Mahendra (The Fragile Rationalist)

Mahendra is a hard-working, simple, and educated junior construction supervisor. Due to the nature of his career, he leads an isolated, transient life, making him deeply dependent on Iswaran for physical comfort and social interaction. He prides himself on his modern, scientific mindset and initially scoffs at superstitions and ghost stories, viewing them as signs of ignorance. However, his hidden flaw is a highly suggestible mind wrapped in a veneer of bravery. He lacks deep emotional resilience, and when his rational defenses are bypassed by fear, he easily falls prey to panic, choosing to flee problems rather than investigate and confront them logically.

## F. Theme-Based Questions

### 1. The Art and Power of Storytelling:

The text serves as a brilliant commentary on storytelling as an interactive art form. Iswaran demonstrates that the impact of a narrative relies very little on actual truth, and almost entirely on performance, timing, and sensory engagement. A master storyteller can dictate the emotional state of their audience, turning a calm room into an arena of high suspense or absolute horror.

### 2. The Mechanics of Imagination:

Imagination is framed as an incredibly powerful internal projector. In Iswaran's case, it serves as a creative release and a source of joy. In Mahendra's case, however, it acts as a psychological trap. Once a terrifying concept is accepted by the subconscious, the imagination active manipulates sensory input, transforming harmless ambient sounds and normal shadows into terrifying supernatural entities.

### 3. Fear, Isolation, and Superstition:

The story highlights that superstition thrives in isolation. Mahendra's logical mind works perfectly well in a busy city, but in a lonely, desolate construction site under a vast night sky, his isolation amplifies his inner anxieties. The text shows that fear is fundamentally a psychological trick; once logic is abandoned, superstition takes complete control.

### 4. Companionship and Loyalty:

Beyond the ghost stories, there is a touching depiction of a traditional master-servant relationship built on absolute loyalty and deep mutual dependence. Iswaran follows Mahendra into hazardous, uncomfortable living conditions without a single complaint, while Mahendra values Iswaran's presence so highly that he views him as irreplaceable. Their bond forms a warm, comforting domestic core within a cold, changing world.

## G. Extract-Based / Reference-to-Context Questions

*“Iswaran would launch into a story... His stories were a strange mixture of fact and fiction and he always introduced dramatic elements into the simplest of incidents...”*

### Q1. What allowed Iswaran to masterfully mix fact and fiction?

→ His extensive reading of highly descriptive and suspenseful Tamil thriller novels provided him with templates to embellish real-life facts with dramatic fiction.

### Q2. How did this narrative style affect his primary listener, Mahendra?

→ It thoroughly captivated Mahendra, allowing him to enjoy a television-like entertainment experience despite being stationed at isolated construction sites.

*“He hit the third toenail of the elephant with a rod... The elephant collapsed like a house of cards, its giant frame shuddering before falling still.”*

**Q1. What context led up to this extraordinary, heroic action by Iswaran?**

→ A rogue elephant had broken out of a timber yard, destroyed public property, and stormed a school yard, terrifying all the students and teachers.

**Q2. Give reasons why this specific claim is highly unbelievable.**

→ Physiologically, it is impossible for a small stick blow to a single toenail to instantly knock out a five-ton rampaging elephant. It is a clear case of hyperbole.

*“Mahendra looked out his window and saw a dark, skeletal figure holding a shroud. He broke out into a cold sweat and collapsed heavily onto his bed.”*

**Q1. What was the underlying psychological reason behind Mahendra seeing this figure?**

→ He had been intensely primed by Iswaran's vivid ghost stories, causing his panicked mind to mistake a regular night shadow or cat for a supernatural being.

**Q2. What major real-world consequence followed this terrifying night vision?**

→ Mahendra lost his logical composure entirely, resigned from his professional post, and fled the site the very next morning.

## **H. Competency-Based / Analytical Questions**

**1. If you were in Mahendra's position, how would you verify whether the ghost was real or imagined?**

→ I would approach the situation using objective, modern scientific methods. Instead of retreating under my blankets in panic, I would turn on a powerful flashlight to inspect the window, step outside with a protective rod, or review security footage if available. I could also invite another colleague to stay over to ensure independent verification, separating real external facts from internal psychological projections.

**2. Do you think Iswaran intentionally scared Mahendra away from the site? Why or why not?**

→ No, Iswaran did not have any malicious intent to drive Mahendra away. His primary goal was always to entertain and showcase his dramatic storytelling talents. However, he was highly irresponsible; he failed to realize that his stories were causing psychological distress to his master in such an isolated, vulnerable environment. His final knowing smile was simply a proud artist's satisfaction at having successfully convinced a skeptic.

### 3. How can we distinguish between fact and fiction in someone's highly engaging story?

→ We can filter stories by checking them against established laws of science, logical consistency, and empirical evidence. If a story features massive exaggerations (like neutralizing an elephant via its toenail) or lacks any verifiable physical proof (like ghosts), it should immediately be categorized as entertaining fiction rather than objective fact.

## I. CBSE Pattern Previous-Year Style Questions

### 1. How did Iswaran describe the elephant's attack to build maximum tension? (2 Marks)

→ Iswaran began by using sweeping gestures and widening his eyes. He described the beast tearing up wild bushes, shattering fences like matchsticks, and stomping on houses. He painted a vivid picture of absolute societal panic to make his eventual personal intervention sound incredibly heroic.

### 2. Why did Mahendra decide to leave the construction outpost so abruptly? (3 Marks)

→ Mahendra was deeply shaken after hallucinating a skeletal shroud-bearing ghost right outside his bedroom window. When Iswaran independently confirmed hearing the ghost's cries the next morning, Mahendra's rational defenses collapsed completely. Terrified for his safety, he resigned and fled the site.

### 3. Write a comprehensive character sketch of Iswaran highlighting his dual role. (5 Marks / 80 Words)

→ Iswaran was Mahendra's highly efficient cook and an exceptionally brilliant storyteller. He was incredibly dedicated, capable of transforming simple rations into gourmet meals under tough conditions. His mind was deeply influenced by dramatic Tamil thriller novels. He used voice modulation, dramatic pauses, and intense physical gestures to turn ordinary events into terrifying epics. While he was a deeply loyal companion, his habit of extreme exaggeration proved problematic, as his vivid ghost stories ultimately triggered a deep psychological fear in his master.

## J. Value-Based Questions

### 1. What crucial ethical value does Iswaran lack in his storytelling art?

→ Iswaran lacks the critical value of **narrative responsibility**. While art is meant for entertainment, an artist must ensure their work does not cause psychological harm, intense anxiety, or panic in their audience, especially when dealing with vulnerable people living in isolated areas.

### 2. What intellectual value should Mahendra have practiced to shield himself from fear?

→ Mahendra should have maintained **unwavering rationalism and critical inquiry**. Instead of letting his unguided subconscious mind accept a scary story, he should have used his intellect to dismiss the nighttime shadows as simple optical illusions, keeping himself grounded in reality.

## K. HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) Questions

1. If Iswaran had told the exact same ghost story to a modern experimental scientist, would the outcome have changed? Why?

→ The outcome would have been entirely different. A modern scientist would appreciate the story purely as creative folklore or performance art. Instead of panicking at night, a scientist would analyze any strange noises or shadows objectively, using tools like flashlights or data to prove there was no ghost, completely neutralizing the psychological fear.

2. Why does the author R. K. Laxman purposefully choose a simple working-class cook as a master storyteller rather than an educated academic?

→ Laxman does this to highlight that true creative genius, imagination, and the art of storytelling are completely universal. They do not depend on expensive university degrees or high social status. A humble cook can possess a far more vivid imagination and greater command over language than an educated professional, democratizing the value of art.

## L. One-Page Quick Revision Notes

### Core Synopsis & Quick Reference

**The Plot Loop:** Mahendra's changing jobs → Isolated outposts → Iswaran's incredible cooking and domestic care → Nightly reading of Tamil thrillers → Transformed dramatic stories → Subconscious priming → The ghost vision → Psychological collapse → Abrupt resignation.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Hyperbole:** The cornerstone of Iswaran's style (e.g., knocking out an elephant with a cane).
- **The Ghost:** Not a real entity, but a psychological illusion created by a highly suggestible mind.
- **Irony:** The loud voice of modern logic (Mahendra) is completely defeated by fictional folklore.

### Essential Keywords for Answer Writing:

Hyperbole

Suspense

Psychological Priming

Rationalism

Nomadic Lifestyle

Tamil Thrillers

Vivid Hallucination

Narrative Mastery

## M. Exam Booster Section: Top 20 High-Probability Questions

Use this tracking index to ensure total mastery over the most frequently asked questions in final school board exams.

No.	Core Question Focus Area	Exam Probability Weight
1	Identity, character background, and multi-faceted role of Iswaran	Very High Probability
2	The mad elephant confrontation and its scientific implausibility	Frequently Asked
3	The detailed anatomy of the female ghost story and the burial ground setting	Frequently Asked
4	Psychological causes behind Mahendra's nighttime visual hallucination	Very High Probability
5	Mahendra's final decision to hand in his resignation and flee	Very High Probability
6	Iswaran's calm, knowing reaction to Mahendra's sudden panic departure	High Probability
7	The deep literary influence of Tamil thriller pulp fiction on Iswaran	High Probability
8	Analysis of structural tools used by Iswaran (pauses, gestures, cliffhangers)	Frequently Asked
9	Comprehensive 5-mark long-form character sketch of Iswaran	Frequently Asked
10	Comprehensive long-form character sketch of Mahendra the rationalist	High Probability
11	Debunking the ghost: Rational arguments proving the apparition was an illusion	Very High Probability
12	The central moral lesson and thematic message of R. K. Laxman's story	Very High Probability
13	Tracing the psychological change in Mahendra's behavior across the chapter	High Probability
14		High (HOTS Topic)

No.	Core Question Focus Area	Exam Probability Weight
	The deep irony embedded in Mahendra's ultimate failure of rational logic	
15	The symbolic meaning of Iswaran's mobile metal trunk	Medium Weight
16	How the author blends lighthearted humor with dark gothic horror elements	Medium Weight
17	Positive life values shown through Iswaran's loyalty and resourcefulness	High (Value-Based)
18	Pragmatic reasons why Mahendra needed Iswaran at his job sites	Medium Weight
19	Competency advice: Alternative logical paths Mahendra could have taken	High (Competency)
20	Comparative study and structural foil analysis of both characters	High Probability