

PARISHRAM



2026

The Third Level

ENGLISH

LECTURE-2

(Part - 02)

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Topics to be covered

1

Warm-up Game

2

The Third Level (Part 02)

3

NCERT Questions and Quiz

4



Game time!



Solve the riddles!

1. I have a face but no
eyes to see,
A strong back but no
legs to flee.
In the sun, I often
gleam,
Reflecting light with a
silver sheen.
What am I?

Mirror



2. What comes once
in a minute, twice in a
moment, but never in
a thousand years?

letter 'm'

3. I can fly without
wings. I can cry
without eyes.
Wherever I go,
darkness follows me.
What am I?

Cloud

From the given options, select the one which can replace the given expression:

One who is new and inexperienced in a certain job -

(A) Versatile-

(A) Veteran

(A) Namesake

☒ (A) Novice

Three levels at Grand Central Station

- the narrator feels there are three levels at Grand Central Railway Station, New York
- there are, in fact, only two levels
- his psychiatrist friend tells him it is a wakingdream wish fulfillment
- says that modern man is full of insecurity; wants an escape

6 —
- 1 —
- 2 —
- 3 —

Narrator's hobby of stamp collection

- according to the psychiatrist it was a 'temporary refuge from reality'
- the narrator finds it hard to believe
- argues that grandfather needed no refuge from reality; was contented, yet he pursued philately
- there was no insecurity in good old days as we know it today

Charley loses his way and reaches the third level

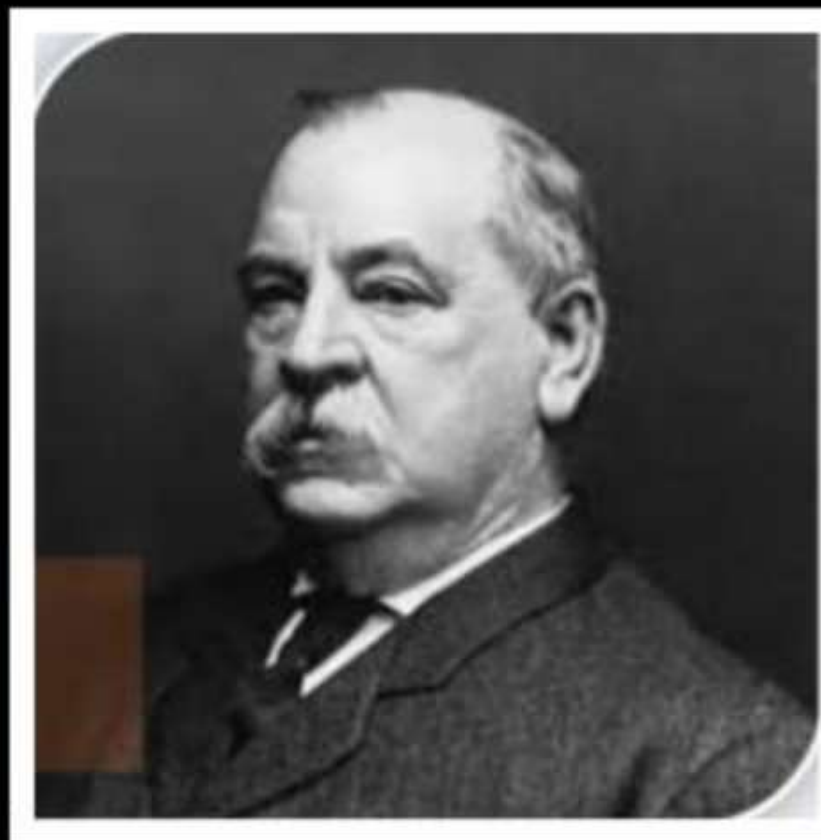
- Charley works late one summer night in office
- keen to get back home to his wife Louisa
- in a hurry to board a train goes down to the second level
- crosses the arched doorway for the subway
- loses his way
- feels Grand Central grows like a tree and pushes out new corridors and stairsnarrator walks down a corridor
- hears empty sound of his own footsteps
- finds himself on the third level at Grand Central Station



1950s



Newsboy
pile



1885-89

1893-97

To make sure, I walked over to a newsboy and looked at the pile of papers at

his feet. It was The World; and The World hasn't been published for years. The lead
front page news story said something about President Cleveland. I've found that front page since, in
the Public Library files, and it was printed June 11, 1894.



I turned toward the ticket windows knowing that here — on the third level at Grand Central — I could buy tickets that would take Louisa and me anywhere¹⁸⁹⁴ in the United States we wanted to go. In the year 1894. And I wanted two tickets to Galesburg, Illinois.

Have you ever been there? It's a wonderful town still, with big old frame houses, huge lawns, and tremendous trees whose branches ^{31711 211} meet overhead and roof the

streets

huge

above head



1914 (20y)
1939 (40y)

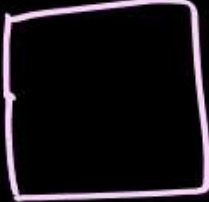
And in 1894 summer evenings were twice as long, and people sat out on their lawns, the men smoking cigars and talking quietly, the women waving palm-leaf fans, with insects the fire-flies all around, in a peaceful world. To be back there with the First World War still twenty years away off, and World War II over forty years in the future... I wanted two tickets for that.



O → G

Calculated

The clerk figured the fare — he glanced at my fancy hatband, but he figured the fare — and I had enough for two coach tickets, one way. But when I counted out the money and looked up, the clerk was staring at me. He noded at the ^{*notes*} bills. "That ^{*isn't*} ain't money, mister," he said, "and if you're trying to skin me, you won't get very far," and he glanced at the cash drawer ^{*next to*} beside him. ^{*cheat*} ^{*successful*}

 1894
  1950



Of course the money was old-style bills, (half again as big as the money we use nowadays) and different-looking. I turned away and got out fast. There's nothing nice about jail, even in 1894.

And that was that. I left the same way I came, I suppose.



300 \$
↓
200 \$

100 \$



withdraw

1 \$ = 100 cents

13 cents = 12 eggs

Next day, during lunch hour, I drew three hundred dollars out of the bank, nearly all we had, and bought old-style currency (that really worried my psychiatrist friend).

You can buy old money at almost any coin dealer's, but you have to pay a premium. ^{charge}

My three hundred dollars bought less than two hundred in old-style bills, but I didn't care; eggs were thirteen cents a dozen¹² in 1894.

#Q. Why does the narrator mention 'The World' newspaper?

- ☐ A To illustrate the difference in newspaper quality between now and the past.
- ☒ B To indicate the ¹⁸⁹⁴time period he has found himself in.
- ☐ C To show his disinterest in current events.
- ☐ D To compare it with other newspapers from the same era.

#Q. What reaction does the ticket clerk have when he sees the narrator's money?

- ☐ **A** He immediately accepts it without question.
- ☐ **B** He calls the police.
- ☒ **C** He informs the narrator that the money is not valid.
- ☐ **D** He asks for more money.



#Q. What is implied by the narrator's decision to buy old-style currency?

- ☒ **A** He is committed to making another attempt to travel to 1894.
- ☐ **B** He wants to start a collection of old money.
- ☐ **C** He plans to frame the old bills as a keepsake.
- ☐ **D** He is trying to deceive his psychiatrist.



But I've never again found the corridor that leads to the third level at Grand Central Station, ^{हालांकि} although I've tried often enough. Louisa was ^{very} pretty worried when I told her all this and didn't want me to look for the third level anymore, and after a ^{Sometime} while I stopped; I went back to my stamps. But now we're both ^{searching} looking, every weekend, because now we have proof that the third level is still there. My friend Sam Weiner ^{जानिये} disappeared!

शक करना

Nobody knew where, but I sort of suspected because Sam's a city boy, and I used to tell him about Galesburg — I went to school there — and he always said he liked the sound of the place. And that's where he is, all right. In 1894.

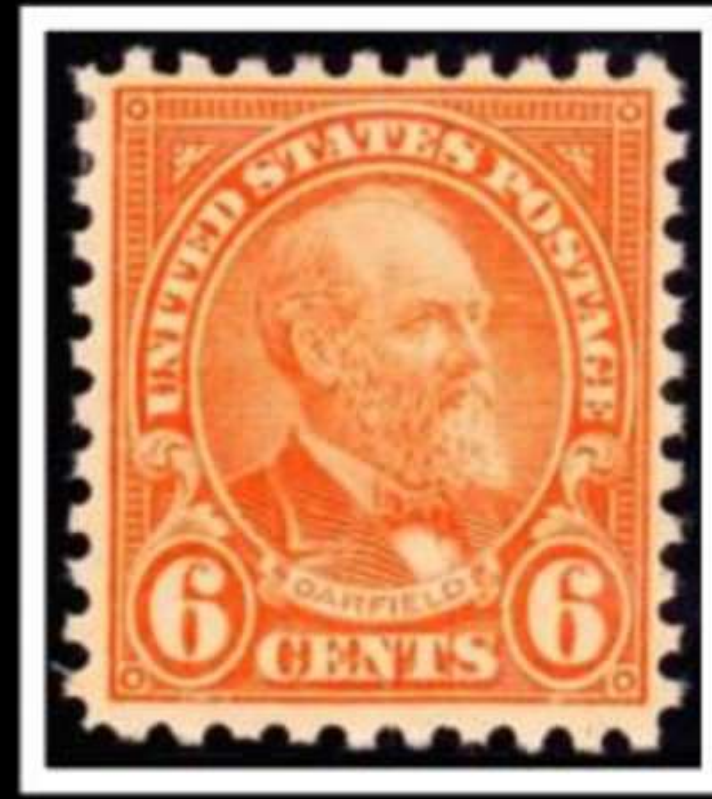




Postmark
(Date, Place)

going over

Because one night, fussing with my stamp collection, I found — Well, do you know what a first-day cover is? When a new stamp is issued, stamp collectors buy some and use them to mail envelopes to themselves on the very first day of sale; Stamp and the postmark proves the date. The envelope is called a first-day cover. They're never opened; you just put blank paper in the envelope.



That night, among my oldest first-day covers, I found one that shouldn't have been there. But there it was. It was there because someone had mailed it to my grandfather at his home in Galesburg; that's what the address on the envelope said. And it had been there since July 18, 1894 — the postmark showed that — yet I didn't remember it at all. The stamp was a six-cent, dull brown, with a picture of President Garfield.



Naturally, when the envelope came to Granddad in the mail, it went right into his collection and stayed there — till I took it out and opened it.

The paper inside wasn't blank. It read:



941 Willard Street

Galesburg, Illinois

July 18, 1894

Charley

I got wishing that you were right. Then I got to believing you were right. And, Charley, it's true; I found the third level! I've been here two weeks, and right now, down the street at the Daly's, someone is playing a piano, and they're all out on the front porch singing 'Seeing Nelly Home.' And I'm invited over for lemonade. Come on back, Charley and Louisa. Keep looking till you find the third level! It's worth it, believe me!

801

At the stamp and coin store I go to, I found out that Sam bought eight hundred dollars' worth of old-style currency.

help him begin

मुसा

31-11-51

That ought to set him up in a nice little hay, feed and grain

business; he always said that's what he really wished he

could do, and he certainly can't go back to his old business.

Not in Galesburg, Illinois, in 1894. His old business? Why, Sam

was my psychiatrist. //





Sam Kleiner $\longleftrightarrow$ Psychiatrist

↓

Grandfather



FIRST DAY COVER



Self - address



Grandfather



Topic : Glossary



- **Stack** : pile
- **Obvious** : clearly notable
- **Refuge** : shelter or protection from danger, trouble etc.
- **Uptown** : in or parts of a town or city that are away from the main area, where most people live
- **Subway** : underground railway/ rail road system
- **Tan** : tawny brown colour
- **Gabardine** : a closely woven fabric



- **Ducked into** : bent down to get in
- **Bumping** : meeting by chance
- **Glint** : a sudden flash of light
- **Snapped open** : opened quickly with a sudden sharp noise
- **Glanced** : looked quickly
- **Suburban trains** : city trains
- **Spittoons** : vessels for spitting into
- **Lapels** : a part of coat-front folded back



- **Derby** : a bowler hat
- **Sideburns** : hair that grows down the sides of a man's face in front of his ears
- **Premium** : excess over original price
- **Fussing with** : paying much attention



Topic : Key Points



Three levels at Grand Central Station

Narrator's hobby of stamp collection

Charley loses his way and reaches the third level

Charley buys old currency

Futile search for the Third Level

Charley seeks Third Level again

What are first-day covers?

Narrator finds a strange first-day cover in his collection

More about Sam's disappearance

Three levels at Grand Central Station

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Charley loses his way and reaches the third level

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- hears empty sound of his own footsteps
- finds himself on the third level at Grand Central Station
- finds smaller rooms, fewer ticket windows and open-flame gaslights
- everybody at the station dressed in 19 th century dresses
- finds lead story about President Cleveland in Paper, 'The World' dated June 11, 1894
- goes to the ticket window and demands two tickets for Galesburg, Illinois
- wants to go there with his wife Louisa



- imagines the town in the year 1894 and thinks First World War still twenty years off and Second World War still forty years ahead
- his currency bills not accepted; the clerk gets angry
- runs away to escape jail



Charley buys old currency

- withdraws three hundred dollars from bank next day
- buys old-style currency
- his psychiatrist friend gets worried
- however, Charley's three hundred dollars fetch less than two hundred in old-style bills
- wants to go back to the third level to travel to Galesburg, Illinois



Futile search for the Third Level

- in his second attempt, narrator fails to find the corridor leading to the third level
- tells everything to his wife who is worried
- she dissuades him and he stops search
- resumes stamp collection as a hobby



Charley seeks Third Level again

- gets proof of the third level's existence owing to his friend Sam Weiner's disappearance
- now both husband and wife look for the third level platforms on weekends
- narrator recalls telling Sam about Galesburg
- the narrator believes that Sam is now in Galesburg. in the year 1894



What are first-day covers?

- stamp collectors affix new stamp on an envelope
- mail the envelope to themselves on the first day of sale
- the postmark gives proof of the day
- envelope never opened, nothing written



Narrator finds a strange first-day cover in his collection

- a strange cover mailed to narrator's grandfather's address in Galesburg
- it is dated July 18, 1894
- the six-cent stamp bears the picture of President Garfield
- the envelope contains letter for Charley by his friend Sam
- Sam confirms presence of the third level
- Sam invites Charley and Louisa to join him in Galesburg
- advises to keep looking for third level till it is found



More about Sam's disappearance

- Sam had bought eight hundred dollars' worth of old-style currency
- money sufficient to set him up in a little hay, feed and grain business
- Sam can't go back to old business since psychiatry was not known as a profession in Galesburg of 1894



Topic : Important Characters



Charley

The protagonist of the story, Charley is a super-sensitive and highly imaginative character who indulges in flights of fancy. He is a true representative of the modern man who is a victim of insecurity as well as indecision and wants to run away from reality.



However, he is a loving husband who likes to rush back home immediately after office to be with his wife, Louisa. He is fond of stamp collection, which his psychiatrist friend Sam calls “a temporary refuge from reality”.



Charley is fascinated with the good old simple days of his grandfather when “things were pretty nice and peaceful.” He is intrigued by the mystery whether the third level exists at the Grand Central Railway Station or not. Having ‘been’ there once he fails to locate it a second time. Even when he and his wife think that they have proof of its existence, they fail to find it despite their best efforts.

In sum, Charley is a true picture of the modern man who is caught in the unwanted pulls and pressures of life and wants to escape the turbulences associated with it.



Sam Weiner, the psychiatrist friend

As a psychiatrist, Sam is perfect in his profession. His diagnosis is precise and terse. He does not believe in mixing up his profession with his friendship. When Charley consults him, he clearly tells him that he is looking for ways to escape since he is not happy.



However, fearing that there might be reaction from Charley's wife, he is wise enough to quickly revise his statement by saying that, like any modern Youngman, Charlie is a victim of insecurity. He dubs the narrator's hobby of stamp collection to be a "temporary refuge from reality." Thus, Sam is a thorough-bred professional and does not mince words where his patients are concerned.



Later in the story, he too, is affected by the pulls and pressures of the modern life and in his sub-conscious mind seeks an escape route, although he understands the truth very well as he is a psychiatrist. Thus, in the end of the story, he too 'discovers' the third level of the Grand Central and 'escapes' to Galesburg of 1894.



Louisa

Louisa is Charley's wife. Like most women, she refuses to accept any criticism, even if it happens to be positive and rational one. The psychiatrist's observation that her husband was 'unhappy' angers her and she challenges it. She takes this comment as a personal attack on wifely care, and she feels 'kind of mad.'



However, she is a simple lady, and it is not difficult to take her in. On being told that the 'modern world is full of insecurity, fear' etc. she feels satisfied with the psychiatrist's explanation, little realising that he is saying the same thing in different words.



She is a loving and caring wife. When Charley talks to her about his predicament regarding the third level, she gets pretty worried and advises him not to look for the third level any-more. However, she is a credulous lady not given to reason out things on her own. When Charley tells her about Sam's disappearance, she joins him in looking for the third level 'every weekend'.



Topic : Summary



The story revolves around a 31-year-old man named Charley, who experienced something weird. One day after work coming from the Subway, he reached the third level of the Grand Central station (which doesn't actually exist). He reminisces the entire experience with his psychiatrist friend Sam. Charley thought he experienced time travel and had reached somewhere in the eighteen-nineties, a time before the world saw two of its most deadliest wars.



As soon as he realised what time he is in, he immediately decided to buy two tickets to Galesburg, Illinois; one for himself and the other for his wife. Unfortunately, the currency used in that century was different. Thus, the next day he withdrew all his savings and got them converted even if it meant bearing losses.



He went looking for the third level but failed to find it. It worried his wife and the psychiatrist Sam who told him that he is hallucinating in order to take refuge from reality and miseries of the modern world which is full of worry. Charley thus resorts to his stamp collection in order to distract himself when suddenly one day he finds a letter from his friend Sam who had gone missing recently. Sam wrote that he always wanted to believe in the idea of third level and now that he is there himself, he encourages Charley and Louisa to never stop looking for it.

Topic : NCERT Questions

#Q. Do you see an intersection of time and space in the story "The Third Level

#Q. Do you think that the third level was a medium of escape for Charley? Why?

#Q. What do you infer from Sam's letter to Charley? ☆ ☆

Or

Sam's letter to Charley is a fine blend of reality and fantasy. Comment.

#Q. "The modern world is full of insecurity, fear, war, worry and stress." What are the ways in which we attempt to overcome them?

#Q. Apparent illogicality sometimes turns out to be a futuristic projection. Discuss.

6 ———] 1950s
- 1 ———
- 2 ———
[- 3 ———] 1894



Topic : NCERT Question

#Q. Do you see an intersection of time and space in the story "The Third Level"?
(Textual)

Ans. There is an obvious intersection of time and space in the story. The narrative moves freely transcending all barriers of time and space. Thus, Charley strays into 1894 at the third level and then gets back to the 20th century. Sam transports himself to Galesburg, Illinois in 1894 and yet communicates with Charley in the 20th century.



Topic : NCERT Question

#Q. Do you think that the third level was a medium of escape for Charley? Why?

Ans. War, worry, insecurity and fear keep on gnawing at the modern man's mind all the time. This helplessness and frustration leaves man baffled, and he is at a loss to learn way of facing life. It is then, that he looks for 'a temporary refuge from reality'. Pursuit of hobbies like stamp-collecting diverts his attention temporarily and gives him some comfort.

The fast pace of life, overwork and subconscious apprehensions had made Charley too uneasy and restless. He yearned for peace, tranquility and serenity. Like many others, he too turned to philately but probably, the degree of relief that this hobby provided, was not sufficient to calm him down emotionally. Hence, the redoubled efforts of his subconscious mind for escape resulted in his flight to the third level – a level of existence which he associated with tranquility. His psychiatrist friend, Sam Weiner, also diagnosed Charley's claim to have visited the third level, as 'a waking-dream wish fulfillment'. Hence, the third level was undoubtedly, a medium of escape for Charley.

Topic : NCERT Question

#Q. What do you infer from Sam's letter to Charley?

Or

Sam's letter to Charley is a fine blend of reality and fantasy. Comment.

Ans. Sam's letter, dated 18th July, 1894 written from Galesburg, Illinois is a proof of his having been transported to Galesburg via the third level. The content of the letter indicates that on diagnosing Charley's claim to have visited the third level, Sam had explained it to be an escape mode. But being equally insecure, in the heart of hearts, he had wished the entire episode was true. In fact, inwardly, he too yearned for such an escape. By and by, he believed in the existence of the third level and carried out an intensive search for it and eventually found it.

Galesburg fascinated him and gave him the taste of tension-free life with ample leisure and boundless innocent pleasure. He enjoyed the easy going, peaceful and simple life where people loved music, dance and socialising. He suggested to Charley and Louisa to keep on looking for it till they came across it.

The letter surprises the reader because it is found in a first-day cover addressed to Charley's grandfather. He wonders whether Sam had written it to Charley or Charley's grandfather.

Thus, the letter appears to be a rare but interesting mixture of the real and the fantastic.

Topic : NCERT Question

#Q. “The modern world is full of insecurity, fear, war, worry and stress.” What are the ways in which we attempt to overcome them?

Ans. Insecurity of war, worry, fear and stress rob man of his peace of mind. Thus, our conscious mind constantly forces out the invasion of tension and anxiety. Stripped of all thrill and excitement, modern man rather than living life in the real sense of the world merely goes through the process of existing. In order to get out of this quagmire, he turns to religion, world of fiction, fantasy, hobbies, sports, music and creativity. These things divert man's attention from harsh realities. Thus, man experiences some sort of a relief from his worries. The degree of involvement in these activities ascertains the level of calmness a man attains. The tranquility that he experiences for himself saves him from the psychiatric problems caused by stress, strain and apprehension.



Topic : NCERT Question

#Q. Apparent illogicality sometimes turns out to be a futuristic projection. Discuss.

Ans. The visualisation of something that the world is unfamiliar with, usually seems to be illogical. In fact, a good number of scientific inventions sounded ridiculous when some fertile mind imagined them for the first time. Aeroplane, railway-engine, The telephone, radio, television, mobile phone – all of them must have sounded illogical impossibilities till some brilliant minds gave them a concrete shape. Jules Verne's contraptions – a century before they actually came into shape – must have sounded interesting but possible only in the realm of imagination.

Similarly, the make-believe world of science fiction and all talk about aliens and extra-terrestrial life may sound a bit unlikely and unbelievable today but who knows tomorrow man may be travelling to planets inhabited by aliens and aliens too might come to visit Earth. However, the apparent illogicalities of the past like the submarines did prove to be futuristic projections. The idea of going back in time, as shown in 'The Third Level', is illogical yet some day in future, it may become possible, and one may get transported back in time whenever one may be bored with the present world.



Thank
You