

A LETTER TO GOD

About the Author

Fuentes was born at Lanzarote in the Canary Islands. He first went to sea as a deck boy with his father when he was 10. As a teenager, he worked on cargo ships out of the Canary Islands to Trinidad and Puerto Rico, and from the Spanish ports of Valencia and Sevilla to South America. He migrated permanently to Cuba when he was 22. He died from cancer in Cojimar in 2002, at the age of 104.

Theme

'A letter to God' is a story of extreme faith in God. Through this story, the writer, G.L. Fuentes has tried to depict the invincible and insurmountable faith in God of a simple poor farmer, Lencho. He was a poor, honest and hard-working farmer. Hence, he wrote a letter to God and asked God to send him money.

Summary

Lencho was a dedicated agriculturist. He was expecting a decent harvest, yet sadly, an unexpected hail storm, that accompanied the much-wanted rainfall, came and destroyed his harvest totally. Lencho was very sad, but being a very strong devout, he had strong belief in God and His ways. He was sure that God would definitely help him. Upon seeing a destroyed corn field, he decided to correspond directly with God, and in all his innocence, decided to write a letter to Him. In the letter, he requests God to send him one hundred pesos. After that, he went to the post office and put the letter into the post box.

The postman removed the letter from the letter-box. He read the address on it and laughed out loud, then he rushed to the postmaster and presented to him the strange letter. The postmaster also chuckled in the same way, when he saw the letter addressed to God. But as he began reading the letter, he got very serious. He lauded this man and his extraordinary confidence in God. He decided to help him. He asked the employees of the post office to give money. He, too, gave a part of his salary. But they were able to collect only a little more than half the money requested by Lencho. The postmaster put the money in an envelope and addressed it to Lencho. Next Sunday, Lencho came again to the post office. He asked if there was any letter for him. The postmaster took out the letter and gave it to Lencho who was not surprised at seeing the money. But when he counted the money, he became angry. He thought that God could not have made the mistake. He took paper and ink, and wrote another letter to God. Then, he furiously pasted a stamp on it and dropped it into the letter-box.

After Lencho had gone, the postmaster and the employees read the letter. Lencho had complained to God that he had received only seventy pesos. This time, he requested God to send the rest of the money directly to him, and suggested that it should not be sent through

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mail. He wrote that the post-office employees were a bunch of crooks who might have stolen the money.

ANSWERS TO NCERT QUESTIONS

ORAL COMPREHENSION CHECK

1. What did Lencho hope for?

Ans. Lencho hoped for rains as the only thing his field of ripe corn needed was a shower.

2. Why did Lencho say that the raindrops were like 'new coins'?

Ans. Lencho's crops were ready for harvest. Raindrops would have helped in getting a better harvest, resulting in more prosperity, so Lencho compared them with 'new coins'.

3. How did rain change? What happened to Lencho's fields?

Ans. The rain was pouring down. But suddenly, a strong wind began to blow and very large hailstones began to fall along with the rain, destroying Lencho's cornfields completely.

4. What were Lencho's feelings when the hail stopped?

Ans. After the hail stopped, Lencho's soul was filled with sadness. He could see a bleak future for himself and his family. He was worried about the lack of food in the coming year.

5. Who or what did Lencho have faith in? What did he do?

Ans. Lencho had complete faith in God. He believed that God's eyes can see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience. So, he wrote a letter to God, saying that he needed a hundred pesos to sow his field again and to live until the crop comes.

6. Who read the letter?

Ans. The postmaster read the letter.

7. What did the postmaster do then?

Ans. The postmaster laughed at first. But as Lencho read the letter, he became serious. He was deeply moved by the farmer's faith in God. He did not want to shake his faith. So, he decided to collect the money and send it to Lencho.

8. Was Lencho surprised to find a letter for him with money in it?

Ans. No, Lencho was not at all surprised to see the letter from God with money inside it. His confidence and faith in God was such that he had expected a reply from God.

9. What made him angry?

Ans. When he finished counting the money, Lencho found that there were only seventy pesos, when he had requested for a hundred pesos. He was confident that God could neither make a mistake nor deny him what he had requested for. Therefore, he concluded that the post office employees must have taken the remaining thirty pesos. This made Lencho angry.

THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. Who does Lencho have complete faith in? Which sentences in the story tell you this?

Ans. Lencho had complete faith in God. The sentences in the story that show this are as follows:

- (i) But in the hearts of all who lived in that solitary house in the middle of the valley, there was a single hope: help from God.
- (ii) All through the night, Lencho thought only of his one hope: the help of God, whose

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eyes, as he had been instructed, see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience.

- (iii) "God," he wrote, "if you don't help me, my family and I will go hungry this year".
- (iv) He wrote 'To God' on the envelope, put the letter inside, and still troubled, went to town.
- (v) God could not have made a mistake, nor could he have denied Lencho what he had requested.
- (vi) It said: "God: of the money that I asked for, only seventy pesos reached me. Send me the rest, since I need it very much".

2. Why does the postmaster send money to Lencho? Why does he sign the letter 'God'?

Ans. The postmaster was moved by Lencho's complete faith in God. So, he decided to send money to Lencho. Moreover, the postmaster did not want to shake Lencho's faith in God. So, he signed the letter 'God'. It was a good ploy to make Lencho believe that God had himself written the letter.

3. Did Lencho try to find out who had sent the money to him? Why/Why not?

Ans. No, Lencho did not try to find out who had sent the money to him. This was because he had great confidence in God and never suspected that it could be someone else other than God who would send him the money. He was convinced that God had answered the prayers of a devout human being.

4. Who does Lencho think has taken the rest of the money? What is the irony in the situation? (Remember that the irony of the situation is an unexpected aspect of it. An ironic situation is strange or amusing because it is the opposite of what is expected.)

Ans. Lencho thinks that the post office employees have taken the money. But in reality, it was the post office people who send the money to Lencho. Accusing them of theft, he calls them crooks. Thus, there is an element of irony in this situation.

5. Are there people like Lencho in the real world? What kind of a person would you say he is? You may select appropriate words from the box to answer the question.

| | | | |
|---------|---------|---------------|------------|
| greedy | naïve | stupid | ungrateful |
| selfish | comical | unquestioning | |

Ans. I don't think there can be any such people in the real world. Lencho is literate and yet, he doesn't know how his letter will reach God without any address.
I would probably deem him naïve and unquestioning.

6. There are two kinds of conflicts in the story: between humans and nature, and between humans themselves. How are these conflicts illustrated?

Ans. The first conflict between humans and nature is aptly depicted by the destruction of Lencho's crops by the hailstorm. As the crops fail, Lencho started feeling sad and gloomy. This appropriately projects the conflict between humans and nature.

The second conflict depicted in the story is between humans themselves. Being a noble soul, the postmaster, along with the help of the other post office employees, sent Lencho all the money that they had managed to collect. Despite not being related to Lencho, or knowing him personally, they had acted kindly and selflessly. Unfortunately, Lencho who lived a very solitary life, seemed to have little or no faith in human beings and their ways. He blamed the postal employees and assumed that they had taken away some amount of money, that God had sent him. This is a typical example of conflict between humans themselves.

THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

I. There are different names in different parts of the world for storms, depending on their nature. Can you match the names in the box with their descriptions below, and fill in the blanks? You may use a dictionary to help you.

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|---------|
| gale | whirlwind | cyclone |
| hurricane | tornado | typhoon |

1. A violent tropical storm in which strong winds move in a circle: _ _ c _ _ _ .
2. An extremely strong wind: _ a _ _ .
3. A violent tropical storm with very strong winds: _ _ p _ _ _ .
4. A violent storm whose centre is a cloud in the shape of a funnel: _ _ _ _ n _ _ _ .
5. A violent storm with very strong winds, especially in the western Atlantic Ocean: _ _ r _ _ _ .
6. A very strong wind that moves very fast in a spinning movement and causes a lot of damage: _ _ _ _ l _ _ _ .

- Ans.
1. A violent tropical storm in which strong winds move in a circle: cyclone.
 2. An extremely strong wind: gale.
 3. A violent tropical storm with very strong winds: typhoon.
 4. A violent storm whose centre is a cloud in the shape of a funnel: tornado.
 5. A violent storm with very strong winds, especially in the western Atlantic Ocean: hurricane.
 6. A very strong wind that moves very fast in a spinning movement and causes a lot of damage: whirlwind.

II. Match the sentences in Column A with the meanings of 'hope' in Column B.

| A | B |
|--|--|
| 1. Will you get the subjects you want to study in college? I <i>hope</i> so. | — a feeling that something good will probably happen |
| 2. I <i>hope</i> you don't mind my saying this, but I don't like the way you are arguing. | — thinking that this would happen (It may or may not have happened.) |
| 3. This discovery will give new <i>hope</i> to HIV/AIDS sufferers. | — stopped believing that this good thing would happen |
| 4. We are <i>hoping against hope</i> that the judges would not notice our mistakes. | — wanting something to happen (and thinking it quite possible) |
| 5. I called early in the <i>hope</i> of speaking to her before she went to school. | — showing concern that what you say should not offend or disturb the other person: a way of being polite |
| 6. Just when everybody had <i>given up hope</i> , the fishermen came back, seven days after the cyclone. | — wishing for something to happen, although this is very unlikely |

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Ans.

| A | B |
|--|--|
| 1. Will you get the subjects you want to study in college? I <i>hope</i> so. | — wanting something to happen (and thinking it quite possible) |
| 2. I <i>hope</i> you don't mind my saying this, but I don't like the way you are arguing. | — showing concern that what you say should not offend or disturb the other person: a way of being polite |
| 3. This discovery will give new <i>hope</i> to HIV/AIDS sufferers. | — a feeling that something good will probably happen |
| 4. We are <i>hoping against hope</i> that the judges would not notice our mistakes. | — wishing for something to happen, although this is very unlikely |
| 5. I called early in the <i>hope</i> of speaking to her before she went to school. | — thinking that this would happen (It may or may not have happened.) |
| 6. Just when everybody had <i>given up hope</i> , the fishermen came back, seven days after the cyclone. | — stopped believing that this good thing would happen |

III. Join the sentences given below using *who, whom, whose, which* as suggested.

1. I often go to Mumbai. Mumbai is the commercial capital of India. (*which*)
2. My mother is going to host a TV show on cooking. She cooks very well. (*who*)
3. These sportspersons are going to meet the President. Their performance has been excellent. (*whose*)
4. Lencho prayed to God. His eyes see into our minds. (*whose*)
5. This man cheated me. I trusted him. (*whom*)

- Ans.
1. I often go to Mumbai, which is the commercial capital of India.
 2. My mother, who cooks well, is going to host a TV show on cooking.
 3. These sportspersons, whose performance has been excellent, are going to meet the President.
 4. Lencho prayed to God, whose eyes see into our minds.
 5. This man, whom I trusted, cheated me.

IV. Find sentences in the story with negative words, which express the following ideas emphatically.

1. The trees lost all their leaves.
2. The letter was addressed to God himself.
3. The postman saw this address for the first time in his career.

- Ans.
1. Not a leaf remained on the trees.
 2. It was nothing less than a letter to God.
 3. Never in his career as a postman had he seen that address.

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V. In pairs, find metaphors in the story to complete the table below. Try to say what qualities are being compared. One has been done for you.

| Object | Metaphor | Quality or Feature Compared |
|------------|--------------------------|---|
| Cloud | Huge mountains of clouds | The mass or 'hugeness' of mountains |
| Raindrops | | |
| Hailstones | | |
| Locusts | | |
| | | An epidemic (a disease) that spreads very rapidly and leaves many people dead |
| | An ox of a man | |

Ans.

| Object | Metaphor | Quality or Feature Compared |
|------------|--------------------------|---|
| Cloud | Huge mountains of clouds | The mass or 'hugeness' of mountains |
| Raindrops | A curtain of rain | The draping or covering of an area by a curtain |
| Hailstones | The frozen pearls | The resemblance in colour and hardness of a pearl |
| Locusts | A plague of locusts | The consequences (destruction) of plague |
| Locusts | A plague of locusts | An epidemic (a disease) that spreads very rapidly and leaves many people dead |
| Man | An ox of a man | The working of an ox in the fields (hard work) |

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Extract-Based Questions

(5 Marks each)

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. The house—the only one in the entire valley—sat on the crest of a low hill. From this height one could see the river and the field of ripe corn dotted with the flowers that always promised a good harvest. The only thing the earth needed was a downpour or at least a shower. Throughout the morning Lencho—who knew his fields intimately—had done nothing else but see the sky towards the north-east. (CBSE Question Bank)

(a) Based on the detail of the house's location, how can it best be described? (1)

(b) Lencho wished for a downpour or a heavy shower. Pick the option that correctly lists the correct match of the kinds of rain. (1)

1. heavy rain
2. thunderstorm
3. drizzle
4. torrential rain

- I. light rain that falls in very fine drops
- II. very heavy rain, tropical rain
- III. it's coming down quite strong and you get very wet very quickly
- IV. really heavy rain that comes very suddenly

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5. downpour

- (i) 1-(II), 2-(IV), 3-(V), 4-(I), 5-(III)
(iii) 1-(V), 2-(III), 3-(IV), 4-(II), 5-(I)

V. a violent, short-lived weather disturbance associated with lightning, thunder and strong, gusty winds

- (ii) 1-(IV), 2-(I), 3-(III), 4-(V), 5-(II)
(iv) 1-(III), 2-(V), 3-(I), 4-(II), 5-(IV)

- (c) Based on the given extract, what is Lencho likely to think while looking at his field? (2)
(d) Which quote supports the idea in the given extract? (1)
- (i) 'Farming is a profession of hope.'
(ii) 'I would rather be on my farm than be emperor of the world.'
(iii) 'Farming looks mighty easy when your plough is a pencil, and you're a thousand times from the corn field.'
(iv) 'Those too lazy to plough in the right season will have no food at the harvest.'

- Ans.** (a) Based on the detail of the house's location, it can be described as 'solitary'.
(b) (iv) 1-(III), 2-(V), 3-(I), 4-(II), 5-(IV)
(c) While looking at the field, Lencho is most likely to think - "All set for the grand harvest. I'm going to be rich!"
(d) (i) 'Farming is a profession of hope.'

2. Lencho showed not the slightest surprise on seeing the money; such was his confidence—but he became angry when he counted the money. God could not have made a mistake, nor could he have denied Lencho what he had requested.

- (a) Why did Lencho get angry? (2)
(b) Why was Lencho not surprised? (1)
- (i) Because Lencho had utmost confidence in God
(ii) Because Lencho knew that it was the postmaster who arranged the money
(iii) Because Lencho had faith in humanity and knew someone would help
(iv) Because Lencho was stupid
- (c) Who could not have made a mistake in Lencho's eyes? (1)
(d) Which word means the same as 'faith'? (1)
- (i) Confidence (ii) Angry
(iii) Requested (iv) Surprise

- Ans.** (a) Lencho got angry because there was less money than he asked for in the letter. He had asked for hundred pesos but received only seventy pesos.
(b) (i) Because Lencho had utmost confidence in God
(c) God could have not made a mistake in Lencho's eyes.
(d) (i) Confidence

3. The moment the letter fell into the mailbox the postmaster went to open it. It said: "God: Of the money that I asked for, only seventy pesos reached me. Send me the rest, since I need it very much. But don't send it to me through the mail because the post office employees are a bunch of crooks. Lencho".

- (a) Why did the postmaster open the mailbox immediately after Lencho had posted his letter? (1)

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- (i) Because he wanted to hide that letter from his staff
- (ii) Because the postmaster wanted to check Lencho's response
- (iii) Because Lencho had given him a stink-eye
- (iv) Because Lencho had asked him to open

(b) Why did Lencho not want God to send the rest of the money through mail? (2)

(c) What help had Lencho asked for? (1)

- (i) He had asked for a new bag of corn seeds.
- (ii) He had asked for blessings.
- (iii) He had asked for food ration for the year.
- (iv) He had asked for a hundred pesos to sow his field.

(d) Why did no leaf remain on the trees? (1)

- Ans.** (a) (ii) Because the postmaster wanted to check Lencho's response
- (b) Lencho didn't want God to send the rest of the money through mail because he believed that the post-office employees were all cheats.
- (c) (iv) He had asked for a hundred pesos to sow his field.
- (d) No leaf remained on the trees because the hailstorm left the field bare.

4. In the north-east huge mountains of clouds could be seen approaching. The air was fresh and sweet. The man went out for no other reason than to have the pleasure of feeling the rain on his body, and when he returned he exclaimed, "These aren't raindrops falling from the sky, they are new coins. The big drops are ten cent pieces and the little ones are fives."

(a) Why were the raindrops like 'new coins' for Lencho? (2)

(b) How did these new coins ultimately bring disaster to his cornfield? (1)

- (i) They over-watered his crops.
- (ii) They blocked the irrigation canals.
- (iii) They turned into hailstones and destroyed all his crops.
- (iv) They flooded the roads, halting any transportation.

(c) How did these new silver coins bring disaster to Lencho? (1)

- (i) By making him too rich
- (ii) By destroying his entire field
- (iii) By bringing him bad luck
- (iv) None of these

(d) How did Lencho feel after the storm? (1)

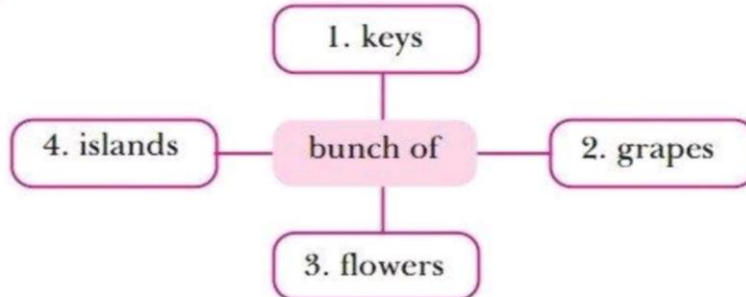
- Ans.** (a) For Lencho, the raindrops were like new coins because he thought that the rain will yield a good harvest.
- (b) (iii) They turned into hailstones and destroyed all his crops.
- (c) (ii) These new silver coins brought disaster to Lencho by destroying his entire fields.
- (d) After the storm, Lencho was utterly unhappy and distressed.

5. When he finished, he went to the window to buy a stamp which he licked and then affixed to the envelope with a blow of his fist. The moment the letter fell into the mailbox the postmaster went to open it. It said: "God: Of the money that I asked for, only seventy pesos reached me. Send me the rest, since I need it very much. But don't send it to me through the mail because the post office employees are a bunch of crooks. Lencho."

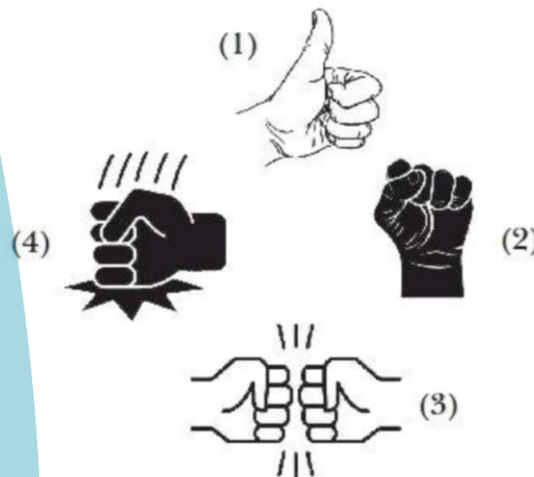
(CBSE Question Bank)

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(a) '...bunch of crooks.' Pick the option that DOES NOT collate with 'bunch of' correctly. (1)



- (i) Option (1)
 - (ii) Option (2)
 - (iii) Option (3)
 - (iv) Option (4)
- (b) What was the most likely response that the postmaster expected in Lencho's second letter? (2)
- (c) Pick the option that lists the option corresponding to - 'with a blow of his fist.' (1)



- (i) Option (1)
 - (ii) Option (2)
 - (iii) Option (3)
 - (iv) Option (4)
- (d) "It is easier to fool people than to convince them that they have been fooled" - Mark Twain
 The above given quote best suits the extract. (True/False) (1)

- Ans.** (a) (iv) Option (4)
- (b) In Lencho's second letter, the postmaster expected gratitude and an elated response from Lencho.
- (c) (iv) Option (4)
- (d) True

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 words: 3 Marks each)

1. What were Lencho's feelings when he found the letter with money in it? What did he do after opening the letter?

Ans. Lencho was not at all surprised to see the money in the letter, as he was fully confident about it. He knew that God will send money to him. On opening the letter, he found seventy pesos instead of a hundred. So, he wrote another letter to God asking him to

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send the rest of the amount too, but this time not through the mail as the post office employees were crooks.

2. How far would you agree that one's positivity can bring in a spark of brightness even in adverse circumstances? *(Competency-based Question)*

Ans. It is absolutely true that optimism can bring about a spark of brightness even in adverse situations. It was Lencho's innocent optimism that eventually led to him getting seventy pesos. In fact, it was his positivity, despite the hailstorm that he even wrote a letter to God in the first place. His hope finally triumphed.

3. Lencho calls the raindrops 'new coins'. Why does he call them so?

Ans. Lencho hoped to get good harvest from his cornfields, as the earth was being blessed with the much-needed shower. When the raindrops began dropping down, he exclaimed that they were new coins falling down from the skies. He suggested that the big drops were ten cent each, and the smaller ones five cents each. The comparison has been made, to suggest to the reader, the significance of rain in the life of a farmer.

4. Why were Lencho and his family in distress? Whom did he ask for help?

Ans. Lencho's crops were completely destroyed by the hailstones. He feared that he and his family would go hungry. He had no one to help him, but he had full faith in God whose eyes, as he believed, see everything. He wrote a letter to God asking for hundred pesos to sow the crop and live until the next harvest.

5. What are the raindrops compared to and why?

(CBSE Question Paper, Code 2/6/1; 2022-23)

Ans. When it started raining, Lencho was very happy. He compared the big drops of rain to ten cent pieces and the little ones to five cent pieces. Lencho needed rain for good harvest. If he had good crops, he will get good money. That is why, he compared the raindrops to coins.

6. Who read the letter sent by Lencho? What did he do then?

(CBSE Question Paper, Code 2/1/2; 2022-23)

Ans. The postmaster read the letter. He was deeply touched by Lencho's faith in God. The postmaster then asked his colleagues to contribute some money, so that they could send it to Lencho. He too added part of his salary, and in the name of God, sent 70 pesos in an envelop to Lencho.

7. 'The field was white, as if covered with salt.' This is how the field is described after the hailstorm. The pelting hailstones could have been easily seen as sugar cubes. Do you think comparing it with sugar would have been more appropriate? Why/Why not?

(Competency-based Question) (CBSE Question Bank)

Ans. No, comparing it with sugar would not have been appropriate because sugar signifies sweetness which can be a metaphor for good things, whereas salt can be a metaphor for bad things. The hailstorm brought a lot of trouble and loss to Lencho. So, it is more appropriate to use salt rather than sugar.

8. Lencho did not bother exploring any other means to resolve his situation but just turned to God. Do you feel that his approach was justified? Why/Why not?

(CBSE Question Bank)

Ans. Lencho thought that God was the only one whom he can trust. But his approach was rather illogical. Sorrow and happiness are two phases of life. We must always prepare ourselves to face the bad phase. Besides praying to God, he should have worked hard again and asked for help from his friends or relatives.

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9. Whom did Lencho write a letter? What did Lencho ask for in his letter?

Ans. When Lencho's annual crop was completely destroyed due to heavy rains and hailstorm, and there was no one to help him during the crisis, at that time, Lencho wrote a letter to God. In his letter, Lencho asked God for hundred pesos, so that he could sow his fields again and survive until the next crop.

10. What impression do you form about the postmaster after reading the story, 'A Letter to God'?

Ans. After reading the story, we learn that the postmaster was a kind, generous, helpful, amiable and God-fearing man. He was generous, as he helped Lencho with seventy pesos. He even signed it as 'God' in order to maintain his faith in God. Though he did laugh at Lencho's letter, but he did not make fun of his faith, which proves that he was a man with a golden heart.

11. What were Lencho's feelings when the hail stopped?

(CBSE Question Paper, 2020; Code no. 2/2/2)

Ans. Lencho was shattered and crushed when the hailstorm stopped. He sees his destroyed field and gets tensed. He was full of sorrow. According to him, even a plague of locust might have left more than the leftover after the hailstorm. He gets tensed for the future thinking his family might starve the whole year if there is no corn. And how they might survive. So he decided to write a letter to God demanding hundred pesos to buy new seeds and sow his fields.

12. Why did the night turn sorrowful for Lencho after the rains?

(CBSE Question Paper, Code 2/4/3; 2022-23)

Ans. The night after the rains turned sorrowful for Lencho because his entire crop had been destroyed in a hailstorm. Lencho was a farmer who had been eagerly waiting for the rains to come, so that his crops could grow. When the rain finally arrived, Lencho was overjoyed and believed that he would have a bountiful harvest. But contrarily, his hopes were shattered when a hailstorm struck his farm and destroyed all his crops.

Long Answer Questions

(100-120 words: 6 Marks each)

1. Lencho received the money and a letter from God but still, he was not happy. Was it not in his attitude to be happy with what he achieved? Did he not know the pleasure of being grateful to others?

Ans. Lencho had full faith in God and therefore, written a letter to God asking for hundred pesos. But when he received the money and the letter from God, he was not happy. It was not that he did not have the ability to be happy, but that the amount of money the envelope contained had angered him. He was angry because he had received seventy pesos instead of hundred. He had not for a moment, doubted God or his ways. Contrarily, he was certain that the post office employees had played some mischief. He wrote another letter to God asking him to send the rest of the money but not through the post-office, suggesting that they were a bunch of crooks. This shows that Lencho had full faith in God and was confident that his desire would be fulfilled. In the given situation, it would be unfair to accuse Lencho of being ungrateful, as he was blissfully unaware of the favour showered upon him by the employees in the post office. His life revolved around God and his benevolence.

2. The postmaster represents such people who still believe in helping others. Mention those values of the postmaster which you would like to emulate in yourself.

(Competency-based Question)

Ans. The postmaster received a letter from Lencho which was written to God asking for

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hundred pesos, so that he could sow his fields again and live until next crop comes. The postman felt sympathetic towards Lencho. He decided to help him. He gave up a part of his salary and asked all other employees to help. Even his friends were made to contribute as it was an act of charity and he managed to collect seventy pesos. He sent the money to Lencho along with a reply. He did so in order to preserve the man's faith in God. The postmaster, through his behaviour, has proved that 'humanity' has not lost its significance in our lives. His noble nature, selflessness, generosity, love of one's brethren and respect in God, are some of the characteristics that I would like to emulate in my own life.

3. **"If you don't help me, my family and I will go hungry this year." Lencho had faith in God but he didn't manage to solve the problem by himself. Did he lack the courage to resolve his matter by himself? What values did he lack? (Competency-based Question)**

Ans. Lencho was a hardworking farmer. He was completely dependent upon the crops of his fields. His annual crop was completely destroyed due to heavy rains and hailstorm. In the entire village, there was no one to help him during the time of financial crisis. He had firm belief in God and hence, wrote a letter requesting Him to send hundred pesos, so that he could sow his fields again till the next crop. This act did not prove that he lacked the courage to resolve his problem, but shows that he did not have any option left for himself. He had a firm belief in God. He was an ox of a man but lacked money to stand again.

4. **"I wish I had the faith of the man." Describe Lencho's character in the light of the above statement.**

Ans. Lencho was a hardworking farmer. He had good knowledge of farming and knew his crop needed a downpour to give him good yield. Lencho had great faith in God. Unfortunately, nature played a cruel game on the poor farmer. The hailstones that fell along with the rains, destroyed his entire crop. Lencho was sad, but he never blamed God or nature for what had happened. Even during this desperate moment, his faith in the almighty was pure, strong and deep-rooted. He knew that it was only the all-knowing God, who could help him. He was a simple and innocent farmer who could not reason out things logically, or deal with the situation he found himself and his family in. Lencho was a caring head of the family. He got sad and worried that his family would have to go hungry. Therefore, he wrote a letter to God, seeking financial aid, to help him tide over the crisis. His request was for a small sum of 100 pesos, and not for a fortune, which clarifies the fact that he was not a greedy or selfish man. The devotion of Lencho, made the postmaster wish that he too possessed the same faith in the almighty, as did the farmer.

5. (a) **What did the postmaster need to answer the letter? How did he collect it?**
 (b) **How did Lencho react to the help?**

Ans. (a) Lencho's crop had been destroyed. He needed God's help. So, he wrote a letter to God. He posted the letter. At the post-office, a postman took the letter out of the letter-box. He laughed on reading the address. He showed the letter to the postmaster. The postmaster also laughed. But he praised Lencho's firm faith in God. He did not want to shake this faith. He was very kind. He decided to help Lencho. He and the post-office employees collected some money. The postmaster gave a part of his salary. They put the money into an envelope and addressed it to Lencho.

(b) The next Sunday, Lencho came to the post-office. He asked if there was any letter for him. The postman gave him the envelope. Lencho opened the letter. He found that the money was less than what he had requested for. He thought that God could not have made a mistake. He wrote another letter to God. He asked God to send him the rest of the money. But he should not send it through the mail as the post-office employees were a bunch of crooks.

A LETTER TO GOD

6. Write the story of Lencho's faith in God.

Ans. In 'The Letter to God', the author illustrates the impeccable faith a farmer had in the Almighty. The farmer was waiting eagerly for a few showers to moisten the earth. His prayers were answered, but unfortunately the showers were accompanied by strong winds and hailstones. His field lay in shambles. Lencho, did not blame God, but sought refuge in him. He wrote a letter to God, seeking a small sum of money, to help him pull his family out of the crisis. With absolute faith, the farmer goes to the post office, to receive the gift from God. The benevolent postmaster, acts on God's behalf and hands over an envelope which contained 70 pesos. Lencho's faith in the Lord was so strong, that he refused to believe that God could have sent him less money. He then appeals Him to send the remaining money directly to him, claiming that the post office employees were crooks.

7. Why did Lencho need God's help?

Ans. Lencho was a simple farmer. He was very hard-working. His crops had always been good. One year, he wished that there should be some rain, so that his crop would be better. Lencho was sure that the rain would come. In the evening, it started raining. But soon, the rain changed into a hailstorm. The hails fell on the house, the garden, the hillside and the corn-field. The field looked white as if it had been covered with salt. No leaves were left on the trees. The flowers were gone from the plants. Lencho's crop was completely destroyed. His heart was filled with sorrow. But he had faith in God. He was sure that God would help him. He wanted God's help for sowing his field and for living until the next harvest.

8. The people at the post-office contribute to put together whatever they can manage, for Lencho.

(a) What do you think was the reason behind their help? Would you have done the same if you were one of the employees?

(b) As an employee, write about your perspective and reason(s) for contributing to the fund. The fact that you don't want to say 'no' to a cause initiated by your boss, can also be an equally compelling reason!

(Competency-based Question)
(CBSE Question Bank)

Ans. (a) The main reason behind helping Lencho is to keep his faith in God intact as well as to perform an act of charity. Yes, I would also have done the same if I were one of the employees.

(b) To be kind, charitable and God-fearing, are a few important characteristics that our boss insists that we, his staff, imbibe. When we were informed about the cause for which a collection drive was initiated, we were all taken in, because he never puts a financial burden upon us if the reason is not genuine. Therefore, the perspective and reason being appropriate, there was no reason to say 'no' to the proposition. It was to facilitate the survival of an entire family struck down by nature's wrath, along with protecting a man's undying faith in God.

QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

Extract-Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

- All through the night, Lencho thought only of his one hope: the help of God, whose eyes, as he had been instructed, see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience. Lencho was an ox of a man, working like an animal in the fields, but still he knew how

A LETTER TO GOD

to write. The following Sunday, at daybreak, he began to write a letter which he himself would carry to town and place in the mail. It was nothing less than a letter to God.

(a) **What did Lencho think throughout the night?** (1)

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|----------------------|------------------|
| (i) Help of God | (ii) Love of God |
| (iii) Justice of God | (iv) God's plan |

(b) **What strange action did Lencho take?** (1)

(c) **Lencho was:** (1)

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| (i) a believer | (ii) a delusional man |
| (iii) an ox of a man | (iv) none of these |

(d) **Why did Lencho think of the help from God as his only hope?** (2)

2. The postmaster—a fat, amiable fellow—also broke out laughing, but almost immediately he turned serious and, tapping the letter on his desk, commented, “What faith! I wish I had the faith of the man who wrote this letter. Starting up a correspondence with God!”

(a) **How did the postmaster help Lencho?** (2)

(b) **What did the postmaster wish?** (1)

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| (i) That he had never read that letter. |
| (ii) That he could help Lencho somehow. |
| (iii) That he had faith of a man such as Lencho. |
| (iv) None of these |

(c) **How is the postmaster described in the given lines?** (1)

(d) **Which word from the following means the same as ‘connection’?** (1)

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|----------------------|--------------|
| (i) Amiable | (ii) Faith |
| (iii) Correspondence | (iv) Tapping |

Short Answer Questions

(40–50 words)

1. ‘Now we’re going to get some water woman’. Is Lencho sure that it is going to rain? Give a reason for your answer.
2. How do you think the postmaster felt when he received Lencho’s second letter?
3. What does Lencho call the post-office employees? Why?
4. What was the effect of the rain on the crops?

Long Answer Questions

(100–120 words)

1. Write a brief summary of the story, ‘A Letter to God’.
2. Give the character sketch of Lencho.
3. The postmaster was:

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| (i) kind | (ii) generous |
| (iii) fun-loving | (iv) a good worker |
| (v) hard-working | |

 Give an example in support of your answer.

