

Compare and contrast the different presentations of school and schooling in 'The English Teacher'

Narayan contrasts the school of order which Krishna teaches at and the school of wild chaos of the Headmaster by using the quotation 'out of the hostel when the second bell of the college sounded' to indicate that the school in which Krishna teaches in follows definite rules and routines which cannot be altered. The 'bell' symbolises the rules which the students must follow. The quotation 'It was a small class, I could easily set up law and order' re-emphasises the fact that students in Krishna's school must follow his 'order'. However, Krishna's school contrasts with the Headmaster's school because the school doesn't follow any definite rules or routines due to the fact that the children were 'running up ladders, swinging, sliding down the slope – all so happy.' Even though the school is shown to be disorder, it still worth it as the children are 'happy'.

Comment [K1]: Nice 'straight in' start

Comment [K2]: Too over the top – the Headmaster's school is free and spontaneous, not wild and chaotic

Comment [K3]: Nice development of this idea and good focus on a particular element of the text

Comment [K4]: Clear comparison between the schools

Additionally, Narayan also contrasts the 'exam based' school with the Headmaster's school full of innocent children. The fact that the students 'mug up' Shakespeare and Milton to secure 'high marks' evokes the idea that students in Krishna's school don't really learn much as they are only 'mugging up' in order to pass the exams, whereas the Headmaster's school has 'glittering alphabets and pictures drawn by children' which emphasizes that the work of the children is worthwhile and impressive compared to that of the students who study only for examinations. The innocence of children is further effectively emphasised by the quotation 'digging into sand'. The digging here reflects their curiosity as if they are hoping to 'dig up' new knowledge.

Comment [K5]: This could be taken further – it still sounds like disorder is negative but in this school it's a good thing because it allows the children to be free, creative and enthusiastic about education

Comment [K6]: Good connectives

Comment [K7]: Good smooth quotations

Comment [K8]: Clear detailed explanations

Comment [K9]: This point is taken further and developed in new and innovative way – very good!

Comment [K10]: Clear connective

Furthermore, the contrast between Krishna's lecturing and the Headmaster's 'free style of teaching' suggests that the teachers in Krishna's school are just trying to get their lessons over with by lecturing students without having any interaction. The fact that the teachers don't care for students here is shown by the blunt, almost aggressive tone in Krishna's comment 'You are very bad in English.' which would discourage the student's eagerness to learn. On the other hand the Headmaster's 'free style' of teaching lets the children play as 'they learn more that way.' This demonstrates the importance of letting children learn at their own pace and in their own style instead of blaming students for not achieving a standard of English which is not even their first language.

Comment [K11]: Good identification of a specific feature

Comment [K12]: Good, well balance paragraphs that enable clear comparisons to be drawn

Moreover, Narayan emphasises the difference between the Headmaster's 'family-like' school and the copied, sports based schools found elsewhere in India. The quotation 'it is all a curse. It is mere copying.' was effectively used by Narayan to suggest the idea that Krishna's school is basically a school 'copied' from the West. The quotation 'You are very bad in English' stresses the idea that the students have to faithfully copy the English language and the quotation that they 'worship sports' strengthens the idea that, for most Indian schools, their purpose is not education which contrasts with the children in Leela's school who are eager to learn and are able to complete tasks on their own without 'mugging up' or 'copying' something that already exists. The fact that when the Headmaster called out 'Story! Story!', 'the children came running in uttering shrieks of joy' shows the children's very natural innocence and their desire to learn in an original environment and school.

Comment [K13]: Clear opening sentences make it obvious what the main point of this paragraph is going to be.

Comment [K14]: Good development of ideas using multiple quotations

Comment [K15]: It would be better to avoid relying too heavily on this quotation – only use it once if possible

Lastly, Narayan portrays most Indian schools as schools where teachers teach children. However, in contrast, at the Headmaster's school the children are actually teaching the adults. The quotation 'Shut up! Don't ask questions' suggests that the teachers in Krishna's school only teach the children and do not pay attention to the comments and questions of students as they do not think that they have anything to learn from them. In contrast, according to the Headmaster, the purpose of school is 'for we elders to learn.' The elders in Leela's school think that children are 'the real Gods of the Earth' and are of a higher status than the adults which contrasts with Krishna's school where the students are often labelled as 'stupid' or 'idiots'. This is most effectively demonstrated when the Headmaster claims that when he has learnt enough from his students he will be 'qualified to enter their lives.'

Comment [K16]: Probably the best point in the essay, so it is well saved until last. It is one of the more subtle ideas in the text and also one of Narayan's main points

Comment [K17]: Nice ending on a quotation for a good sense of resolution and finality