

UNIT 2**Somebody's Mother****Summary**

The poem "Somebody's Mother" is a touching poem about kindness, empathy and respect for the elderly. On a cold winter day, an old, poorly dressed woman stands helplessly at a busy street crossing. The road is wet and slippery because of the recent snow. She is weak, slow and afraid to cross the street. Although many people pass by, no one pays attention to her anxious eyes or offers to help her.

A group of cheerful schoolboys comes down the street after school. Most of them hurry past the old woman, but one boy notices her difficulty. He stops and kindly offers to help her cross. The woman places her aged hand on his strong arm, and he carefully guides her across the street without harm.

After helping her, the boy returns to his friends feeling happy and satisfied. He tells them that the old woman is somebody's mother. He hopes that if his own mother ever becomes old and helpless while he is away, someone will also lend her a helping hand. That night, the grateful woman prays to God to bless the noble boy, remembering that he too is somebody's beloved son.

The poem teaches us that a small act of kindness can make a great difference in someone's life. We should be compassionate, helpful and respectful towards elderly people and anyone who needs our support.

New Words

Word	Meaning
• Ragged	- Wearing old, torn clothes; shabby
• Grey	- Referring to old age or having grey hair
• Bent	- Stooped due to age or cold
• Chill	- Cold weather
• Throng	- A large crowd of people
• Heeded	- Paid attention to
• Meek	- Quiet, gentle, and submissive
• Timid	- Shy and lacking courage
• Lest	- To avoid the risk of something happening; so that... not
• Carriage	- A horse-drawn vehicle
• Trembling	- Shaking due to weakness
• Firm	- Strong and steady
• Well content	- Fully satisfied or happy
• Noble	- Showing fine moral qualities
• Laddie	- A Scottish word meaning "boy", used affectionately
• Hailing	- Greeting or calling out loudly
• Whispered	- Spoke in a very soft voice
• Aged	- Very old

Let us do these activities before we read.

I. Recall a time you helped someone. Write two words describing:

1. What were your feelings after you did so?

Ans. I felt happy and satisfied after helping someone.

2. What might have been the feelings of the person whom you helped?

Share your answers with your classmates and teacher.

Ans. The person might have felt grateful and relieved after receiving my help.

II. Work in pairs. Read the words given below. Circle the words you would associate with an elderly person and underline the words you would associate with a school student. Share the reasons for your choices with your classmates and teacher.

strong	worried	trembling	hastening
firm	bent	merry	grey
slow	guide	helpful	

Ans. Classify the given words.

- **Words associated with an elderly person:** worried, trembling, bent, grey, slow
- **Words associated with a school student:** strong, hastening, firm, merry, helpful
- **Word that can be associated with both:** guide
- **Reason:** An elderly person may be slow, worried or physically weak, while a school student may be energetic, cheerful and helpful. However, people of any age can guide others.

III. Read the lines.

The woman was old and ragged and grey
And bent with the chill of the Winter's day.

Select the suitable meaning of 'ragged' as used in these lines. There are other four meanings given below. Discuss with your classmates and teacher.

1. (of clothes) old and torn; synonym: shabby
 - a ragged jacket
2. Having an outline, an edge, or a surface that is not straight or even
 - a ragged coastline
3. Not smooth or regular; not showing control or careful preparation
 - I could hear the sound of his ragged breathing.
 - Their performance was still very ragged.
4. (Informal) very tired, especially after physical effort
 - The elderly man was ragged after climbing the stairs.

Ans. 1. (of clothes) old and torn; shabby.

Here, "ragged" describes the old woman's worn and torn clothing.

Let us discuss

I. Arrange the events of the poem in the correct order of occurrence. Share your answers with your classmates and teacher.

1. The boy returned to his friends, feeling proud of what he had done.
2. The old woman stood alone at the crossing, hesitant to move.
3. A group of schoolboys passed by, playing, and laughing.
4. The boy offered to help the old woman cross the street.
5. The woman prayed for the boy who helped her.

6. The children hurried past the old woman without offering help.
7. The woman placed her hand on the boy's arm, and he guided her safely across the street.
8. The boy thought about his own mother and hoped someone would help her one day.

Ans.

1. The old woman stood alone at the crossing, hesitant to move.
2. A group of schoolboys passed by, playing and laughing.
3. The children hurried past the old woman without offering help.
4. The boy offered to help the old woman cross the street.
5. The woman placed her hand on the boy's arm, and he guided her safely across the street.
6. The boy returned to his friends, feeling proud of what he had done.
7. The boy thought about his own mother and hoped someone would help her one day.
8. The woman prayed for the boy who helped her.

Correct sequence: 2 → 3 → 6 → 4 → 7 → 1 → 8 → 5

II. Fill in the blanks by choosing the correct answer from the options given in the brackets.

1. The central theme of the poem is _____. (kindness and empathy/ adventure and courage)
2. The tone of the poem is _____. (humorous and playful/ sympathetic and hopeful)
3. The poem is written in couplets with _____ lines in each stanza. (four/two)
4. The structure of the poem gives a rhythmic flow that reflects both the _____. (narrative and emotions/story's pace and message)
5. The poem follows a rhyme scheme of _____. (AABB/ABAB)

Ans.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| 1. kindness and empathy. | 2. sympathetic and hopeful. | 3. two |
| 4. narrative and emotions. | 5. AABB. | |

III. Pick examples from the poem for the following poetic devices.

1. **Simile:** "Came the boys like a flock of sheep."
The group of boys is compared to a flock of sheep using "like".
2. **Alliteration:** "firm and strong"
The consonant sound is repeated.
3. **Repetition:** "Somebody's mother"
The phrase is repeated to emphasise empathy and concern for the elderly woman.

IV. Complete the following sentences appropriately explaining the imagery.

1. The poem uses imagery to describe scenes of a bustling street. We know this by the phrase _____.
2. The line 'The street was wet with a recent snow' suggests a cold and _____ weather, emphasising the woman's helplessness.

Ans.

1. The poem uses imagery to describe scenes of a bustling street. We know this by the phrase "amid the throng of human beings."
2. The line "The street was wet with a recent snow" suggests a cold and slippery weather, emphasising the woman's helplessness.

V. Complete the following sentence with a suitable reason.

- The poet repeats the phrase Somebody's mother because it _____.

Ans. The poet repeats the phrase "Somebody's mother" because it reminds us that every elderly person deserves care, respect and kindness.

VI Complete the analogy:

- The old woman: vulnerable and neglected :: The young boy: _____.

Ans. The old woman: vulnerable and neglected :: The young boy: compassionate and helpful.

Let us think and reflect

I. Read the given extracts and answer the questions that follow.

1. The woman was old and ragged and grey
And bent with the chill of the Winter's day.
The street was wet with a recent snow
And the woman's feet were aged and slow.

(i) What does the phrase 'ragged and grey' refer to ?

- A. the woman's emotional state that day
- B. the woman's old and worn-out appearance
- C. the weather conditions of the particular day
- D. the colour of the street and the surroundings

Ans. B. the woman's old and worn-out appearance

(ii) Complete the following sentence with a suitable reason:

- The woman was 'bent' with the chill of the Winter's day because she was _____.

Ans. The woman was 'bent' with the chill of the Winter's day because she was old and affected by the severe cold.

(iii) Identify the fact and opinion from the following sentences:

- A. The street was wet with recent snow. fact
- B. The woman was too weak to cross the street on her own. Opinion

(iv) Why do you think the woman's feet were described as 'aged and slow'?

Ans. Her feet were described as 'aged and slow' because old age had made her weak and unable to walk quickly.

2. He guided the trembling feet along,
Proud that his own were firm and strong.
Then back again to his friends he went,
His young heart happy and well content.

(i) What does the contrast between the 'trembling feet' of the old woman and the 'firm and strong' feet of the boy emphasise?

Ans. It emphasises the contrast between the woman's old age and weakness and the boy's youth and strength.

(ii) Fill in the blank given below by selecting the correct option from the brackets.

- The poem tells us that the boy was 'proud' that his feet were strong.
- This tells us that the boy was _____. (arrogant about being strong/grateful for his ability to help)

Ans. The boy was grateful for his ability to help.

(iii) What is the boy most likely to tell his friends on getting back?

- A. I'm so glad I could help her.
- B. I'm worried about her safety.
- C. I'm surprised she forgot to thank me.
- D. I'm thankful for all your support.

Ans. A. I'm so glad I could help her.

(iv) Rectify the false sentence given below.

- The young boy's actions were driven by a logical decision.

Ans. The young boy's actions were driven by kindness, empathy and compassion rather than a logical decision.

II. Answer the following questions.**1. What might be the old woman's fears as she waited for a long time at the crossing?**

Ans. The old woman might have feared slipping on the snowy street or being knocked down by the carriage wheels or horses' feet while trying to cross.

2. How does the poet show the helplessness of the old woman? Support your answer with evidence from the poem.

Ans. The poet describes the woman as old, bent, timid and slow, with trembling feet. She waits anxiously at the crossing, afraid to move because the slippery street and passing traffic make crossing dangerous for her.

3. Why does the boy decide to help the old woman? What does this tell us about him?

Ans. The boy notices that the old woman is afraid and unable to cross the street safely. He decides to help her out of kindness and concern. This shows that he is compassionate, thoughtful and helpful.

4. How was the boy's approach towards the old woman different from that of the other boys in the group?

Ans. The other boys hurried past the old woman without offering help, while one boy noticed her difficulty, stopped and helped her cross safely. His behaviour shows empathy and concern for others.

5. Justify the appropriateness of the title of the poem.

Ans. The title "Somebody's Mother" is appropriate because the boy sees the elderly woman not merely as a stranger but as someone's mother who deserves care and respect. He hopes that someone would similarly help his own mother if she ever needed assistance.

6. What does the poem suggest about the role of empathy and humanity in society?

Ans. The poem suggests that empathy and humanity make society kinder and more caring. By understanding others' difficulties and offering help when needed, even a small act of kindness can bring comfort and inspire compassion.

Let us learn

I. The grid given below has the antonyms of the words from the text. Locate these words in the grid horizontally, vertically, and diagonally. One example has been done for you. You may refer to a dictionary.

firm meek merry kind anxious bent

R	D	T	C	J	A	B	R	N
G	M	F	R	A	G	I	L	E
C	A	P	U	K	N	D	F	H
A	E	B	D	R	F	S	S	C
L	A	O	E	W	E	T	A	A
M	L	L	W	C	F	L	D	S
G	X	D	P	O	R	D	A	R
P	E	A	S	E	F	U	L	F
Q	S	N	O	I	V	E	E	T
S	T	R	A	I	G	H	T	L

Ans.

R	D	T	C	J	A	B	R	N
G	M	F	R	A	G	I	L	E
C	A	P	U	K	N	D	F	H
A	E	B	D	R	F	S	S	C
L	A	O	E	W	E	T	A	A
M	L	L	W	C	F	L	D	S
G	X	D	P	O	R	D	A	R
P	E	A	S	E	F	U	L	F
Q	S	N	O	I	V	E	E	T
S	T	R	A	I	G	H	T	L

Word from the Poem	Antonym found in the Grid
• firm	- fragile
• meek	- bold
• merry	- sad
• kind	- cruel
• anxious	- peaceful
• bent	- straight

II. Match the words from the text given in Column 1 with the underlined phrases in Column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
1. hastened	(i) The mother heard the baby <u>move slightly</u> in the cradle at night.
2. heeded	(ii) It is our duty to <u>give support</u> to the poor.
3. stir	(iii) The students <u>worked quickly</u> to complete the project and submit it on time.
4. lend	(iv) All the boxes were <u>kept in a heap</u> at one place.
5. piled	(v) They <u>came forward</u> to help us when we were in need.
6. offered	(vi) The stranded people were brought to safety because they <u>paid attention</u> to our advice.

Ans.

Column 1	Column 2
1. hastened	- (iii) The students worked quickly to complete the project and submit it on time.
2. heeded	- (vi) The stranded people were brought to safety because they paid attention to our advice.
3. stir	- (i) The mother heard the baby move slightly in the cradle at night.
4. lend	- (ii) It is our duty to give support to the poor.
5. piled	- (iv) All the boxes were kept in a heap at one place.
6. offered	- (v) They came forward to help us when we were in need.

III. In the poem, the poet uses the idiom 'lend a hand' which means 'help somebody'. Some more idioms using 'hand' are given in Column 1. Match these idioms with their meanings in Column 2. You may refer to a dictionary.

Column 1	Column 2
1. get out of hand	(i) do something new
2. try your hand at something	(ii) applaud somebody
3. give somebody a free hand	(iii) work together
4. give somebody a big hand	(iv) become difficult to control
5. work hand in hand	(v) be very busy
6. have your hands full	(vi) allow somebody to do something with full freedom

Ans.

Column 1 – Idioms	Column 2 – Meanings
1. get out of hand	- (iv) become difficult to control
2. try your hand at something	- (i) do something new
3. give somebody a free hand	- (vi) allow somebody to do something with full freedom
4. give somebody a big hand	- (ii) applaud somebody
5. work hand in hand	- (iii) work together
6. have your hands full	- (v) be very busy

IV. Complete the following analogy by filling in the blanks with the correct words from the poem.

- _____ : winter :: heat : summer
- hurt : _____ :: old : aged
- whispered : shouted :: humble : _____
- eyes : _____ :: legs : walk
- having a lot of money : wealthy :: densely packed people : _____

Ans. Complete the Analogy – Answers

- chill : winter :: heat : summer
- hurt : harm :: old : aged
- whispered : shouted :: humble : proud
- eyes : glance :: legs : walk
- having a lot of money : wealthy :: densely packed people : throng

Read the lines from the poem given below.

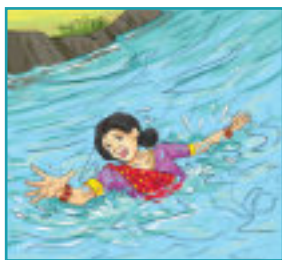
*Lest the carriage wheels or the horses' feet
Should crowd her down in the slippery street.*

'Lest' is a conjunction that means to prevent something bad or unpleasant from happening. To better understand its usage in a sentence, we can replace 'lest' with 'just in case'.

For example, in the sentence '*She showed all the documents **lest** we doubt her*', the word 'lest' can be replaced with 'just in case' to mean that she showed the documents to prevent any doubt.

Let us listen

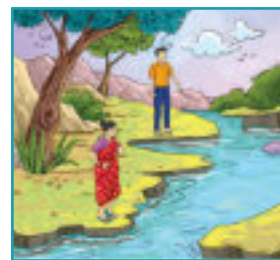
- I. You will listen to a woman read the special broadcast of the news. As you listen, arrange the pictures in the correct sequence of the events that took place. (Transcript for teacher on page 99)



1.



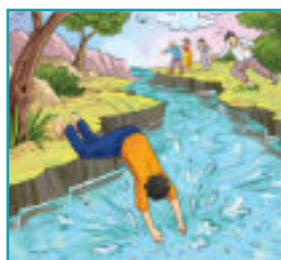
2.



3.



4.



5.

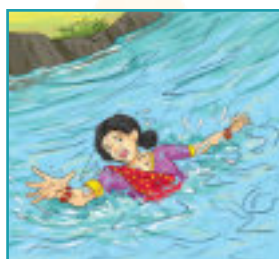


6.

Ans.



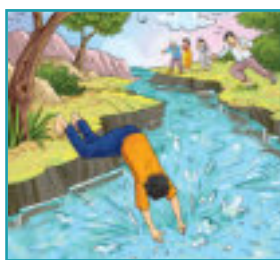
3.



1.



6.



5.



2.



4.

- II. You will once again listen to the special broadcast of the news. As you listen, complete the following sentences with one to three exact words.

1. The woman was having a difficult time staying afloat due to the _____.
2. Rohan leapt into the river to save the woman without any _____.
3. Rohan's act of bravery was witnessed by _____.
4. Rohan was honoured at the Vigyan Bhawan for his incredible courage and _____.
5. Rohan proved that when it comes to saving lives, age is _____.

Ans. Complete the Sentences

1. The woman was having a difficult time staying afloat due to the strong currents.
2. Rohan leapt into the river to save the woman without any hesitation.
3. Rohan's act of bravery was witnessed by onlookers.
4. Rohan was honoured at the Vigyan Bhawan for his incredible courage and bravery.
5. Rohan proved that when it comes to saving lives, age is no barrier.

Let us speak

- I. Read aloud the list of words from the poem that end in ‘-ed’. As you read, focus on the final sound of each word and place them in the appropriate columns. One example has been done for you.

ragged	aged	waited	heeded
offered	paused	guided	whispered

/id/sound	/d/ sound	/t/ sound
ragged	heeded	paused

Note: Adjectives that come before a noun and end with ‘-ed’ have /id/as the final sound.

Ans.

/id/ sound	/d/ sound	/t/ sound
ragged	offered	paused
aged	whispered	—
waited	—	—
heeded	—	—
guided	—	—

- II. Work in pairs. Narrate an incident where you helped someone in the past. Take turns to speak and use the cue cards given below.

at school classmate explaining a concept	in the neighbourhood cleanliness campaign
at the market place elderly carrying bags	in the playground a friend gets injured

You may use the following prompts.

Ans.

- At School** – Helping a Classmate: I still remember when one of my classmates was having difficulty understanding a Maths concept. At that moment, I realised that I could help. I explained the concept with a simple example and helped them solve a few questions. I was extremely satisfied when my classmate finally understood it. This experience taught me the value of helping and sharing knowledge.
- At the Marketplace** – Helping an Elderly Person: The day began like any other when I went to the market with my parents. I noticed an elderly person struggling to carry heavy bags. I offered to carry the bags and helped them reach their vehicle. A wave of joy washed over me when they thanked me warmly. This memory reminds me to always help people in need.
- In the Neighbourhood** – Cleanliness Campaign: It all started when our neighbourhood organised a cleanliness campaign. I joined my friends and helped collect litter and clean the surroundings. I felt extremely satisfied when I saw the clean streets. From that day on, I decided to keep my surroundings clean and encourage others to do the same.
- In the Playground** – Helping an Injured Friend: I still remember playing with my friends when one of them fell and got injured. I was completely taken by surprise, but I quickly called a teacher and stayed with my friend until help arrived. A wave of relief washed over me when my friend felt better. In the end, I realised that helping someone in difficulty is an important act of kindness.

Let us write

I. Write a diary entry of a day you helped someone in need.

Remember to include the following points while writing it.

- Start with a sentence describing the day.
- Mention whom you helped.
- Explain the situation in which the other person needed help.
- Add the place and time of the day when the situation arose.
- Describe how you helped the other person.
- Describe the reaction of the person you helped.
- Mention how you felt during and after helping the person.
- Conclude by mentioning why you would do something like this again.

You may begin like this:

26 April 20xx, Saturday 8:00 p.m.

Dear Diary,

Today, I feel was a special day...

Ans. Diary Entry – Helping Someone in Need

26 April 20XX, Saturday

8:00 p.m.

Dear Diary,

Today, I feel it was a special day because I got an opportunity to help an elderly woman. In the evening, while returning home from the market, I saw her struggling to carry two heavy bags.

I immediately went up to her and offered my help. I carried the bags and accompanied her safely to her house nearby. She smiled warmly and thanked me for my kindness. Her happiness made me feel proud and satisfied.

This experience taught me that even a small act of kindness can make a big difference in someone's life. I would gladly help someone in need again because helping others brings happiness to both the giver and the receiver.

Good night, Diary!

Let us explore

I. Did you know that even Earth has been referred to as mother in the ancient scriptures of India? In section 12.1.12 of Prthvi-Sūkta (hymn-to-the-earth) of Atharva Veda, Earth is referred to as mother and us as her children by stating:

माता भूमिः पुत्रोऽहं पृथिव्याः ।

It can be translated as 'Earth is my mother and I am her child'.

Ans. In the Prthvi-Sūkta of the Atharva Veda, Earth is described as our mother and human beings as her children. This idea encourages us to respect, protect and care for the Earth as we would care for our mother.

II. Work in groups of four. Find out the names of countries that refer to their country as 'motherland' and a few others as 'fatherland'. Share your findings with your classmates and teacher.

Ans. Different cultures use different parental expressions for their native land. The exact usage depends on language, history and cultural tradition.

Motherland	Fatherland
India – Bharat Mata/Mother India	Germany – Vaterland
Russia – Mother Russia	Netherlands – Vaderland
Philippines – Inang Bayan	Denmark – Fædreland
Myanmar – Ami-myay	Norway – Fedreland

India and Russia have well-known traditions of portraying the nation in maternal terms, while German, Dutch and several Scandinavian languages have expressions corresponding to “fatherland.”

- **Conclusion:** Both motherland and fatherland express a strong sense of belonging and emotional connection to one’s native country.

III. Read the poem and enjoy.

A Nation’s Strength
 Not gold, but only men can make
 A people great and strong...
 Men who for truth and honour’s sake
 Stand fast and suffer long.
 Brave men who work while others sleep,
 Who dare while others fly...
 They build a nation’s pillars deep
 And lift them to the sky.
 Ralph Waldo Emerson

(Note: Here, men refers to both men and women)

Ans. Do your self.

IV. Make a gratitude card for your mother/grandmother to thank her for at least five things that she does for you. Also write two things that you would do regularly to help them. Use recycled material to make and decorate the card.

Ans.

