

You will need your exam paper for the text.

Comments : The author has an Asian Indian name and the passage seems to relate an Indian boy's life and particularly his education. The use of 'he' and 'him' shows it's a third person narrative. The action is in the past (verbs are essentially in the past).

Cultural references : Education in the USA (NB College (US) = University), line 5: Ivy League (see Wikipedia).

Help : Underline all the names of people then of places (use 2 different colours), then pick out the references to time. This should help you decipher the timeline and different people involved in the story. You will be able to see the main character very easily and the different events, which are **not** mentioned in chronological order.

The use of had + en (past perfect) also helps to determine what happened when.

Comprehension :

1. The main character is an 'Indian' boy or student called Amit. (line 22)
2. He was born in the USA, lines 3-24, '*people assumed that he'd been born and raised in that country (India) and not in Massechusetts*', Massechusetts is in the USA but people thought he wasn't of American birth because of his Indian looks.
3. a) He went to Langford school when he was 15 (line 24).
b) He lived in Winchester before moving to Delhi. (Line 6)
c) He had family in Calcutta and had often visited them there. (Line 13) (NB : **RELATIVES = family**)
d) He visited his parents in Delhi when his father went to work there. (lines 10-11)
e) He was born and had lived in Massechusetts. (Line 22)
4. His parents were of Indian origin and had relatives (family) in Calcutta (line 13), his father was probably an ophthalmologist as he had developed a laser treatment for astigmatism (line 18) and could work and teach in different countries (line 19). They must have been well off because they could afford to send their son to a good school and later to University, in addition they had many servants in Delhi (line 11 'flat full of servants')
5. They often had to move to different countries, for example Delhi and Saudi Arabia (line 21) and it also meant that their son had to go to boarding school (Langford). However he was well paid so could afford to have servants.
6. He went to Langford after attending a school in Winchester where he'd been used to getting good marks (line 27 'star student'). At Langford he had to work harder to reach higher standards (line 27 'suddenly he'd had to work doggedly to maintain his grades'). In addition Langford was a formal school with rules and traditions, (line 27, 'He had to wear a jacket', 'call his teachers « masters »' and attend 'chapel on Sundays', also 'jeans were not allowed' on line 37.) Also it was a boarding school and he missed his parents. (lines 30 - 32). Finally when he compared his parents' wealth to the others at Langford he realized they weren't the most wealthy in this school, line 29. There is a contrast between his old state school and Langford boarding school.
7. (Lines 35-36.) He did his best to gradually adapt to his new school even though it was difficult as he had to learn new rules and traditions and work harder. He tried to fit in by practising sports (line 36) and behaving like the other boys (line 36-37)
8. They had chosen this school because it had a good reputation, line 4 'far superior to the school he had been attending', it got good results, line 4 'the percentage of Langford graduates who went on to Ivy League colleges' and they didn't want him to go to school in Delhi as he would be going to an American University after that (line 8) Besides he wasn't used to studying in India

and he probably didn't even speak the language very well (line 12 'his broken Bengali').

9. This shows that even though Amit was aware of his parents' good intentions it was hard for him to accept their decision. In fact he suffered from loneliness and homesickness at the school, missing his parents dreadfully, line 32, 'tears often filled his eyes'. Indeed he was only fifteen and they only called him at the weekend (line 31). Even when he visited them during the holidays he was lonely and bored as he had no friends, line 12 'He never enjoyed his visits to Delhi', and the many servants didn't compensate. Finally, although in the end he began to like his school, line 38 'even to enjoy it', he still bore a grudge against his parents, probably because they didn't realize how much he had suffered from the separation.

10. *Suggested translation of lines 10 to 14:*

A Noël et à la fin de chaque année scolaire, Amit quittait Langford et allait à Delhi pour passer du temps avec ses parents, dans leur appartement grouillant de domestiques à Chittaranjan Park, dans sa chambre vide spécialement préparée pour ses séjours. Il n'avait jamais aimé ses visites à Delhi, son bengali approximatif ne lui étant d'aucune utilité dans cette ville. Cela lui faisait regretter Calcutta où vivaient toute sa famille, et où il avait l'habitude d'aller.

EXPRESSION :

UN sujet seulement !!!

1. A letter to his parents so you must be able to understand the document and the character very well. It must seem authentic !
2. A general subject which needs to be well constructed.