Class 9 English Kaveri – Chapter 2

The Pot Maker & Gifts of Grace: Honouring Our Vocations

IMPORTANT QUESTION ANSWERS • 2026–27

Exam-focused answers based directly on the uploaded textbook questions and themes.

A. The Pot Maker – Textbook & Critical Reflection

Q. Why does Arenla want Sentila to learn weaving?

Answer: Arenla wants Sentila to learn weaving because she considers pot making physically tiring, time-consuming and poorly paid. Weaving can be done indoors in all seasons, takes less time for a shawl and gives a better financial return. It can also provide enough cloth for the family.

Q. State one advantage that weaving has over pot making, as given in the extract.

Answer: Weaving can be done indoors in all seasons and takes less time than pot making. Arenla also believes it gives a better financial return.

Q. What is the significance of the question 'And the reward?' in the extract?

Answer: The question draws attention to the small financial reward received after a great deal of labour. It highlights the contrast between the effort involved in pot making and the income earned from it.

Q. Describe the process of pot making followed by the expert potters, as observed by Sentila.

Answer: The clay is mixed with water and pounded until it becomes soft. The potter places a hand into the clay, rotates it and shapes it with a spatula. The pots are given a final touch-up and checked for consistency. They are then dried in the sun, arranged in a kiln on hay and dried bamboo, covered with another layer and fired carefully. Over-firing or under-firing can ruin the entire batch.

Q. What warning was given to Mesoba by the village council?

Answer: The elders told Mesoba to remind Arenla that it was her duty to teach Sentila the pottery skill that had been handed down through generations. They explained that skills such as pot making, which serve the community and represent its tradition and history, do not belong to one individual. Experts should pass them on to their children and to anyone who wishes to learn.

Q. How did Sentila feel when she failed at pot making even after a year of training with her mother?

Answer: Sentila felt ashamed, frustrated and disappointed. Despite repeated attempts for almost a year, she could not successfully shape the clay into pots. Her failure made her lose confidence in her ability, although she did not give up her interest in pottery.

Q. How did Onula help Sentila?

Answer: Onula noticed that Sentila was too tense while trying to make a pot. She encouraged her, demonstrated the process and asked her to try again. Her support gave Sentila confidence. Onula then advised her to observe Arenla carefully while shaping the mouth of the pot, which helped Sentila improve.

Q. 'Onula stood there for a long time as if trying to absorb a new phenomenon.' Explain.

Answer: Onula was amazed by what she saw in the work shed: two neat rows of newly made pots that were so similar that she could not distinguish one person's work from the other. She realised that Sentila had developed the skill of an expert pot maker. This was a significant moment of discovery for her.

Q. What does the statement 'The tradition and history of the people did not belong to any individual' symbolise?

Answer: It symbolises that traditional skills and cultural knowledge belong to the community as a whole. They are passed from one generation to another and should be preserved and shared rather than kept as the private possession of one person.

Q. What is the significance of the concluding line, 'A new pot maker was born'?

Answer: The line marks Sentila's successful transformation from an aspiring learner into a skilled pot maker. It confirms that her passion, observation, practice, perseverance and encouragement have enabled her to fulfil her dream. It also suggests the continuation of the pottery tradition into a new generation.

Q. What role does perseverance play in pursuing one's dreams? Explain with reference to Sentila.

Answer: Perseverance helps a person continue despite failure and disappointment. Sentila remains interested in pottery even when her mother discourages her and when she fails repeatedly during a year of training. She observes expert potters, learns from Onula and carefully studies her mother’s technique. Her continued effort finally enables her to make pots skillfully, showing that persistence can help a person develop a talent and pursue a dream.

B. Extract-Based Important Answers

Q. Why is Sentila’s early attempt described as ‘clumsy’?

Answer: Sentila is too tense and lacks confidence while shaping the clay. She cannot handle the lump properly and the clay fails to take the desired shape. Her nervousness affects her ability to work with the material.

Q. What does Onula’s statement, ‘Don’t worry, little one, I shall teach you how to make a perfect pot,’ reveal about her?

Answer: It shows that Onula is supportive, encouraging and willing to share her knowledge. Instead of criticising Sentila’s failure, she gives her confidence and practical guidance.

Q. How might Sentila have felt when the misshapen lump fell flat on the ground?

Answer: She would likely have felt disappointed, frustrated and embarrassed because her attempt had failed. Her reaction is shown through her tiredness and frustration before Onula encourages her.

Q. What does Sentila’s careful observation of her mother tell us about her?

Answer: It shows that Sentila is attentive, determined and eager to learn. She notices small details such as the position of her mother’s hand and spatula, the rhythm used while shaping the mouth and the way the rim is formed.

C. Gifts of Grace: Honouring Our Vocations – Important Answers

Q. Why does the poet say, ‘I hear Bharat celebrating, the varied vocations I hear’?

Answer: The poet presents the different occupations of people as a collective celebration of skill, creativity and work. Craftspersons, artisans, carpenters, electricians, boatmen, shoemakers, cooks, designers and masons all contribute in their own ways. Their varied work becomes part of the cultural and social life of Bharat.

Q. What does the electrician ‘humming’ while getting ready for work suggest?

Answer: It creates auditory imagery and suggests the active, rhythmic nature of the electrician’s work. It also presents the worker as engaged and energetic while preparing to contribute to society.

Q. Explain the significance of the line, ‘The voice of their vocation is the voice of their identity.’

Answer: The line connects a person’s occupation with their identity. A vocation reflects the person’s skills, experience, creativity and contribution. The poet suggests that the work people do can express who they are and what they uniquely contribute to society.

Q. What do quality shoes help with, according to the poet?

Answer: Quality shoes support the feet of people who walk, dance, run and jump. The poet highlights the usefulness and craftsmanship of the shoemaker’s work in everyday life.

Q. What does ‘return home’ symbolise besides the literal act of returning?

Answer: It can symbolise safety, completion and the everyday journey of life. The line suggests that the shoemaker’s work supports people as they move through their daily activities and eventually return home.

Q. Identify the phrase that tells us that every worker’s contribution is distinct.

Answer: The phrase ‘what belongs to them and to none else’ shows that each worker’s contribution is distinct and connected to their particular vocation.

Q. Why is the poet celebrating all the vocations in the poem?

Answer: The poet celebrates them because every vocation contributes to society in a different way. The poem recognises the skill and dignity of workers and shows that diverse forms of work are valuable parts of community life.

Q. How does the poet use sensory imagery to bring out the beauty of everyday work?

Answer: The poet uses sounds and visual details associated with occupations. We hear artisans with lutes, electricians humming, and boatmen singing while they work. We also see colourful crafts, carpenters working with wood, and workers carrying out their tasks. These sensory details make everyday occupations vivid and lively.

D. Poetic Devices – Important Answers

Q. Does ‘Gifts of Grace: Honouring Our Vocations’ strictly follow a rhyme scheme?

Answer: The poem does not strictly follow a regular rhyme scheme and is presented in free verse. Its varying line lengths create a natural, flowing rhythm suited to the celebration of different occupations.

Q. What is the impact of the varying length of lines in the poem?

Answer: The varying line lengths create a natural conversational flow and allow different occupations and their activities to be described freely. They also contribute to the poem’s lively, flexible rhythm.

Q. What is the tone and mood of the poem?

Answer: The tone is reverential and celebratory, showing admiration and respect for artisans and craftspersons. The mood is joyful and captures the richness and vibrancy of cultural traditions and skills.

Q. What is the significance of the repetition of ‘I hear Bharat celebrating, the varied vocations I hear!’?

Answer: The repetition gives the poem a strong beginning and ending and reinforces its central idea. It reminds the reader that the many occupations together form a celebration of the skills, labour and cultural life of Bharat.

Q. How is ‘delicious singing of the cook’ a metaphor?

Answer: The expression compares the cook’s work or its pleasing quality to something delicious. It suggests that the cook’s contribution gives pleasure in a way that can be appreciated like a delicious taste.

Q. How are vocations personified in the poem?

Answer: Vocations are given human-like qualities: they are described as celebrating, having voices and expressing identity. This makes occupations seem like active participants in the cultural life of the country.

Q. What does each vocation symbolise in the poem?

Answer: Each vocation symbolises skill, dignity of work, individual identity and contribution to society. The occupations represent the diverse abilities and efforts that sustain community life.

E. Exam-Focused Long Answers

Q. How does The Pot Maker show that traditional skills should be preserved?

Answer: The story presents pottery as more than a means of earning money. It is a skill handed down from generation to generation and represents the tradition and history of the community. The village elders explain that such skills do not belong to one individual and that experts should pass them on to others who wish to learn. Sentila’s journey eventually ensures that the pottery tradition continues into another generation.

Q. How do Sentila’s passion, observation and perseverance help her achieve her dream?

Answer: Sentila is deeply interested in pottery from an early age and continues visiting expert potters even when her mother prefers that she learn weaving. She observes every stage of the craft carefully. Although she fails during almost a year of training with Arenla, she does not abandon her dream. Onula’s encouragement gives her confidence, and Sentila again observes her mother closely. When given the opportunity to practise independently, her observation and perseverance combine with her natural ability, allowing her to make pots almost as quickly as her mother.

Q. Compare the roles of Arenla and Onula in Sentila’s journey as a pot maker.

Answer: Arenla is the experienced pot maker who ultimately teaches Sentila the basic process and gives her opportunities to practise. However, Sentila initially struggles to learn under her. Onula, in contrast, notices that Sentila’s problem is partly her lack of confidence. She encourages her, demonstrates the skill and teaches her to observe Arenla carefully. Thus, Arenla provides technical knowledge and opportunity, while Onula provides confidence, encouragement and supportive guidance.

Q. How does Gifts of Grace: Honouring Our Vocations celebrate the dignity of work?

Answer: The poem describes many occupations with admiration and respect. It presents craftspersons, artisans, carpenters, electricians, boatmen, shoemakers, cooks, designers and masons as skilled people whose work contributes to everyday life. The poem connects vocation with identity and shows that every occupation has its own value and character. By bringing these different workers together in a celebration, the poet highlights the dignity and social importance of diverse forms of work.

F. Quick Revision – 10 Key Questions

• Why did Arenla prefer weaving for Sentila?

- How did Sentila learn by observing expert potters?
- Why did the village council intervene?
- Why was Sentila unsuccessful during her first year of training?
- How did Onula help Sentila?
- What made Sentila suddenly successful at pottery?
- Why is the ending ‘A new pot maker was born’ important?
- What does the poem say about different vocations?
- What does ‘The voice of their vocation is the voice of their identity’ mean?
- Which poetic devices are important in Gifts of Grace?

Source note: The questions and answers are based on the uploaded Chapter 2 textbook, particularly the Critical Reflection and Check Your Understanding sections for “The Pot Maker” (pp. 42–44) and the appreciation/critical reflection questions for “Gifts of Grace: Honouring Our Vocations” (pp. 60–62). Listening answers have not been invented because the teacher transcript is not included in the uploaded student file.