

# CHAPTER - 7

## EVANS TRIES ON AN O-LEVEL

### QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

#### READ AND FIND OUT

##### Q1. What kind of a person was Evans?

**Ans.** James Roderick Evans was a jail bird. The prison officers called him 'Evans the Break' as he had escaped from prison three times. At present he was in a solitary cell in Oxford Prison. He was quite a pleasant sort of chap—an amusing person who was good at imitations. He was not at all violent. He was just a congenital kleptomaniac. It meant he suffered from the disease of involuntarily stealing things. This was disease with which he was born.

##### Q2. What were the precautions taken for the smooth conduct of the examination?

**Ans.** The solitary cell of Evans was turned into examination room by placing two small tables and two chairs in it. Reverend Stuart McLeery, a parson from St. Mary Mags was to work as invigilator. The cell was to be kept locked from outside and a prison officer would observe Evans from a peep-hole after every minute or so. All potential weapons such as knife, scissors, nail-file and razor had been taken away. Even the contents of the suitcase of the invigilator were thoroughly searched, the paper knife was taken away by a prison officer. The Governor himself was to listen-in the conversation in the cell during the examination. The cell was in the D-Wing which had two heavy gates—outer and inner. Both were locked securely. Mr Jackson, the prison officer, was in constant contact with the Governor on the phone.

##### Q3. Will the exam now go as scheduled?

**Ans.** The two-hour examination in O-Level German was scheduled to begin at 9.15 a.m. on Tuesday, 8 June. However, it started a bit late. At 9.20 a.m. Evans objected to the presence of Stephens, a prison officer, in the examination room, as it disturbed his concentration. Under the orders of the Governor, Stephens was got out of the cell.

At 9.40 a.m. a correction slip was dictated to the candidate. At 10.50 a.m. Evans complained of bitter chill and made a request for putting a blanket round his shoulders. At 11.20 a.m. McLeery informed Evans that only five minutes remained. At 11.22 a.m. Jackson called Stephens to the phone. The Governor was on line. Stephens was given orders to escort McLeery to the main prison gates. The examination was over at 11.25 a.m. The door of the cell was locked on Evans after McLeery had left the cell. Thus, the examination went on smoothly as scheduled.

##### Q4. Did the Governor and his staff finally heave a sigh of relief?

**Ans.** The Governor heard the door of the cell clang for the last time. The examination was over. Stephens escorted McLeery to the main gates. His Scots accent seemed broader and he seemed to have grown slimmer under his long black overcoat. Stephens was happy that the morning had gone pretty well. In short, the Governor and his staff finally heaved a sigh of relief.

Their relief was, however, shortlived. On returning to the cell of Evans, Stephens found a person sprawling back in a chair. Blood dripped from his closely cropped front part of head on to his small black beard and over the white clerical collar down into the black clerical front. Stephens shouted wildly for Jackson. It was suspected that Evans had hit McLeery and walked out impersonating him. A search began for Evans dressed as a parson.

**Q5. Will the injured McLeery be able to help the prison officers track Evans?**

**Ans.** Injured McLeery spoke slowly and in broken phrases that he knew where Evans was. He asked the prison officers to get the police and not to worry about the ambulance. He found the German question paper on the table. He told Jackson to get the Governor. He drew the attention of the Governor to the German text on photocopied sheet on the last page. The Governor slowly translated it. The words 'From Elsfied Way drive to the Headington roundabout' caught his attention. The Examination Board was in Elsfied Way. Meanwhile, the police arrived. Before the Governor could explain anything, McLeery told the officer to go Elsfied Way. The Governor told Detective Superintendent Carter to take injured McLeery with him. McLeery was helped inside the car. He helped the police to follow the direction indicated in the German text.

**Q6. Will the clues left behind on the question paper, put Evans back in prison again?**

**Ans.** The text on the last page of German question paper contained the plan of escape. It had important clues of the route. From Elsfied Way the person had to drive to the Headington roundabout and from there to Newbury.

After sometime, Superintendent Carter informed the Governor on phone that McLeery had spotted Evans driving off along Elsfied Way. They had got the number of the car all right and given chase at opce. But they had lost him at the Headington roundabout. Since McLeery felt quite weak when they got to the Examination offices, they rang Radcliffe for the ambulances from there. They left McLeery on Elsfied Way. Thus, the injured McLeery, who had posed to help the authorities, disappeared and Evans remained untraced.

The other clues: Index number 313; Centre number 271 and 'Golden Lion' also had a deep meaning. The Governor took help of an Ordnance Survey Map for Oxfordshire. The six figure reference 313/271 brought him in the middle of Chipping Norton. He found Evans in the Golden Lion in Chipping Norton.

**Q7. Where did Evans go?**

**Ans.** Evans left the prison disguised as parson McLeery who had been injured by the examinee Evans. He pretended to guide the authorities to help them track Evans. When the police car reached the Examination offices on Elsfied Way, McLeery (Evans in disguise) grogged. An ambulance was called in from the Radcliffe and he was left there.

Evans got into a car as arranged beforehand. It had soap, water, clothes and a map. He removed blood stains from hair, peeled the false beard, changed clothes, put on a smart new hat. Then he drove to the Golden Lion in the middle of Clipping Norton.

He was traced in this hotel by the Governor of Oxford Prison following the clues in the German text on the German question paper.

## READING WITH INSIGHT

### Q1. Reflecting on the story, what did you feel about Evans' having the last laugh?

**Ans.** It is Evans who has the last laugh. The play makes a fun of the routine procedure followed by prison authorities and police. It depicts how the criminals are one step ahead of the jail authorities.

All precautions have been made by the Governor of Oxford Prison to see that the O-Level German examination, held in prison for the prisoner Evans, does not provide him means to escape. The examination passes off peacefully. Mr Stephens, a prison officer, sees off McLeery, the invigilator and on returning to the cell finds injured "McLeery" sprawling in Evans's chair.

It is easy for Evans impersonating as McLeery to leave the prison along with police officer. He claims to have spotted Evans driving off along Elsfield Way but loses track at the Headington roundabout. He grogs off near the Examination offices. Then he disappears. He is located in the Golden Lion in Chipping Norton by the Governor of Oxford Prison. Instead of bringing Evans securely back to prison, the Governor lets him come in a prison van guarded by a prison officer. It is just what Evans had planned. The driver and the 'prison officer' are his friends and Evans escapes from prison once again.

In fact, Evans has made elaborate arrangements. He joins the night classes in September. The German teacher is one of his friends. He has his friends in the Examination Board as well. He waits patiently till June. Two of his friends bind and gag Reverend Stuart McLeery in his Broad Street flat. One of them personates him. He is dressed up as a minister. He has two collars and two black fronts on his person. Evans fiddles about under the blanket with the black front and the stud at the back of the collar. His friends also arrange a car where he can change his make up as well as clothes. He successfully deceives the police as well as the prison authorities.

### Q2. When Stephens comes back to the cell he jumps to a conclusion and the whole machinery blindly goes by his assumption without even checking the identity of the injured 'McLeery'. Does this show how hasty conjectures can prevent one from seeing the obvious? How is the criminal able to predict such negligence?

**Ans.** On his return to the cell of Evans, Stephens saw a man sprawling back in Evans' chair. For a semi-second Stephens thought it must be Evans. But the small black beard, white clerical collar and black clerical front and red blood dripping from the front of his head, made Stephens jump to a conclusion—Evans impersonating McLeery, had walked out.

Almost immediately the whole machinery jumped into action. No one bothered to check the identity of the injured "McLeery." The assumption of Stephens prevailed. It was reinforced by the broader Scots accent and slimmer body of the parson he had seen off and the blood coming out of wound and dress of the "parson" in the cell.

The hasty conjecture prevents one from seeing the obvious. The jail breaker might have played a trick again. Even the Governor is deceived. He believes what his staff says. The man who doubted everything and cross checked it, does not even examine the victim. Due to their long sojourn in prison the criminals become familiar with the temperaments of prison officers as well as the routine they follow. A criminal is always disbelieved. On the other hand, an officer's word is always accepted. The criminals are sure that negligence of the prison authorities is their only passport to freedom. They doubt the remotest possibility and doubt genuine telephone calls as fake ones, yet an assumption is accepted as truth and the obvious is ignored. Hence, the criminal is able to predict such negligence on the part of prison authorities.

### Q3. What could the Governor have done to securely bring back Evans to prison when he caught him at the Golden Lion? Does that final act of foolishness really prove that "he was just another good-for-a-giggle, gullible governor, that was all".

**Ans.** The Governor should have escorted Evans himself to the Oxford Prison. He had only two persons with him, and later it turned out that these two persons were associates of Evans. One of them, who posed to be the silent prison officer instructed the driver to move on faster. The driver, who spoke in a broad Scots accent, was the person who acted as the Reverend S. McLeery. The Governor should have at least checked the identity of the staff to whom he was entrusting the prisoner.

Secondly, he should have contacted Mr Jackson and Mr Stephens, the two prison officers, Detective Superintendent Carter and Detective Chief Inspector Bell, who were all searching Evans.

It was perhaps his over excitement and childish enthusiasm at his arm-chair reasoning in locating the hide-out of Evans and catching him at the Golden Lion, that he threw all cautions to wind and acted foolishly by reposing confidence in wrong persons. Evans and his associates had befooled him earlier as well. The German teacher and the invigilator were friends of Evans. The correction slip sent from Examination Branch was a clever device to convey the route of escape and the hide-out. The Governor's last act of foolishness really proved that he was only worth being laughed at as he was too credulous and trustful.

#### **Q4. While we condemn the crime, we are sympathetic to the criminal. Is this the reason why prison staff often develop a soft corner for those in custody?**

**Ans.** People condemn the crime as it is an evil act against law and society. In the past, punishment was the only way to treat the criminals. The greater the crime, the harsher and harder the punishment, which could go to the extent of life-imprisonment or death sentence. In the modern age, efforts are on to reform the criminals, even the hard core, and bring them back to the mainstream. Hence police, prison officers, judges and other law-enforcing agencies develop a soft corner for the people in custody. While the sufferer should get justice, the innocent must not be punished. This idea too helps the prison staff often develop a soft corner for the prisoners.

The behaviour of prison officer Jackson amply illustrates the above point. He is very strict in enforcing the rules and regulations of prison as well as the Governor's orders. Yet somewhere in him we find a tiny core of compassion. Even Evans knew it. Mr Jackson has asked Evans to remove that filthy bobble hat. Evans requested him to allow it to wear it during exam as it brought luck to him. It was kind of lucky charm for him. Jackson agreed.

#### **Q5. Do you agree that between crime and punishment it is mainly a battle of wits?**

**Ans.** Crime and punishment are like two sides of the coin. Punishment follows crime. It is only after a crime has been committed that the law-enforcing agencies become active and try to nab the offenders and bring them to book. If efforts of the police are successful, suitable punishment is awarded to the criminals.

Since the location, time and victim of a crime cannot be predicted in advance, preventive action to check the crime is not possible. Even tight security fails when hardened criminals or suicide-minded human bombs come into play.

Criminals are always one step ahead of the police. It is always a battle of wits between the two. The police tries to trace the clues left by the criminals and apprehend them on the basis of these. On the other hand, the criminals devise a foolproof plan and try to leave no clues which might help in identification later on. Since the legal system is based on evidence—both human and material—police as well as criminals and their lawyers, use their wits to turn the case in their favour and win it.

## **MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED**

### **SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS**

**Q1. What request did the Secretary of the Examination Board receive from the Governor of**

### **Oxford Prison?**

**Ans.** The request was to create an examination centre in the prison for one candidate named James Roderick Evans. He had started night classes in O-Level German last September. He was the only one in the class and said that he was keen to get some sort of academic qualification. The Secretary agreed to give him a chance and promised to send all the forms and stuff.

### **Q2. What enquiry did the Secretary of the Examination Board make about Evans? What did the Governor tell him about Evans?**

**Ans.** The Secretary wanted to know if Evans was a violent sort of person. The Governor told him that there was no record of violence. He was informed that Evans was quite a pleasant fellow—an amusing person. He was good at imitation and hence he star at the Christmas concert. He suffered from the desire to steal. He had this disease from birth.

### **Q3. What facts about Evans did the Governor of Oxford Prison not reveal to the Secretary of the Examination Board?**

**Ans.** Evans was called 'Evans the Break' by the prison officers. He had escaped from prison three times already. He would have done so from Oxford Prison as well if there had not been unrest in the maximum security establishments up north.

### **Q4. What issue regarding conducting the examination did the Secretary of Examination Board raise? What was he told?**

**Ans.** The Secretary wanted to know whether a room could be arranged for holding examination. The Governor told him that Evans had a cell on his own. He could sit the exam in there. Secondly, they could easily get one of the parsons from St. Mary Mags to invigilate. The Secretary hoped that they would not have much trouble in keeping Evans without communicating with others.

### **Q5. Who met Evans on the eve of the examination? What does this brief interview reveal?**

**Ans.** It was Evans' German teacher who shook him by the hand at 8.30 p.m. on Monday, 7 June. They met in the heavily guarded Recreational Block, just across from D Wing. The teacher wished him good luck in German, which Evans failed to understand. The teacher observed that he had a remote chance of getting through. Evans remarked that he might surprise everybody. These remarks prove quite meaningful and prophetic.

### **Q6. Who visited Evans on the morning of the Examination? What did they visit him for?**

**Ans.** Mr Jackson and Mr Stephens visited Evans. Jackson was the senior prison officer on D Wing and Stephens was a burly, surly-looking, new recruit. They visited him to ensure that he did not retain any potential weapon with him. Mr Stephens was asked to take away the razor after Evans had shaved himself.

### **Q7. What evidence do you get from the text to show that Mr Jackson and Evans "had already become warm enemies" ?**

**Ans.** Jackson nodded curtly. He addressed Evans as "little Einstein" and mockingly enquired about him. He felt annoyed as Evans pointed out his ignorance about Einstein. Jackson genuinely loathed about the long, wavy hair of Evans. He had taken away the nail-scissors and nail-file of Evans. He used the word 'bloody' too often while addressing Evans.

### **Q8. How was the Reverend Stuart McLeery dressed and why ?**

**Ans.** He had put on a long black overcoat and a shallow-crowned clerical hat. His spectacles had thick lenses. It was a chilly day for early June and the steady drizzle, which had set in half an hour earlier still continued. In his right hand he was carrying a small brown suitcase.

**Q9. What were the contents of the small brown suitcase that McLeery carried?**

**Ans.** It had a sealed question paper envelope, a yellow invigilation form, a special 'authentication' card from the Examination Board, a paper knife, a Bible, and a current copy of 'The Church Times'. Except the last two articles, the rest were related to his morning duties as invigilator.

**Q10. What was the object found in McLeery's suitcase that puzzled Mr Jackson? How did McLeery react to Mr Jackson's query?**

**Ans.** There was a smallish semi-inflated rubber ring. Even a young child with a waist of about twelve inches might have to struggle into it. Jackson asked McLeery if he was thinking of going for a swim. McLeery's amiable demeanour was slightly ruffled by this tasteless pleasantry. He answered Jackson somewhat sourly and told him he suffered from piles.

**Q11. What instructions did the invigilator issue to the examiner before the examination?**

**Ans.** He asked the examinee if he had got a watch. He would tell him when to start and again when he had five minutes left. He asked him to write the name of the paper, 021-1, in the top left-hand corner, and his index number-313 in the top right-hand corner. Just below that he was to write his centre number-271.

**Q12. How did the Governor, who was listening-in, react to these numbers at that time and later on after the escape of Evans?**

**Ans.** Initially, the Governor took them as innocuous, routine information and did not pay much attention. Later on, when Evans had escaped, he consulted the Ordnance Survey Map for Oxfordshire. He found that the six-figure reference 313/271 pointed to the middle of Chipping Norton—the place of hiding for run away Evans.

**Q13. What was the import of the two phone calls the Governor received after a quarter of an hour of the start of the examination?**

**Ans.** The first phone call was from the Assistant Secretary of the Examination Board. It was about a correction slip in the O-Level German paper. The word 'Golden Lion' was to replace 'Golden Lowe'. The second call was from the Magistrate's Court. They needed a prison van and a couple of prison officers for a remand case.

**Q14. How did the Governor react to the two phone calls he received in quick succession?**

**Ans.** When the Governor received the first call, he checked it immediately by dialling the number of the Examination Board. He wanted to ascertain whether it was a fake phone call or some signal or secret message. He found the line engaged. After the second phone call, the Governor was wondering whether that could be a hoax. Then he told himself not to be so silly. His imagination was beginning to run riot.

**Q15. What did Stephens notice on looking through the peep-hole of Evans' cell?**

**Ans.** He found Evans sitting with his pen between his lips. He was staring straight in front of him towards the door. Opposite him sat McLeery. His hair was amateurishly clipped pretty closely to the scalp. His eyes were fixed at 'The Church Times'. His right index finger was hooked beneath the narrow clerical collar. The fingers of the left hand were slowly stroking the short black beard.

**Q16. What request did Evans make about half an hour before the end of the examination? How did McLeery and Stephens react to it?**

**Ans.** Evans made a polite request if he could put a blanket round his shoulders as it was a bit chilly there. McLeery told Evans to be quick about it. A minute later, Stephens was surprised to see a grey blanket draped round Evans shoulders.

**Q17. Who was the phone call three minutes before the end of the examination meant for?**

**How important did it prove?**

**Ans.** The phone call was meant for Stephens. Jackson told him that the Governor wanted to speak to him. Stephens listened to the rapidly spoken orders. The phone call was important. Stephens had to accompany McLeery to the main prison gates. He was to see the door locked on Evans after McLeery had left the cell. It was also important for Evans. He could make swift changes and adjustments, in his dress and make-up.

**Q18. What did\* Stephens notice on coming back to the cell of Evans? What did he assume?**

**Ans.** Stephens saw a man sprawling in Evans' chair. The front of his closely cropped, irregularly tufted hair was covered with red blood. It had dripped already through the small black beard. It was now spreading over the white clerical collar and down into the black clerical front. He assumed that Evans had hit McLeery and left the prison impersonating McLeery.

**Q19. How did the Prison machinery swing to action? What point was overlooked?**

**Ans.** Sirens were sounded. Prison officers shouted orders. Puzzled prisoners pushed their way along the corridors. Doors were banged and bolted. Phones were ringing everywhere. Jackson and Stephens supported McLeery on either side and brought him to the prison yard. The identity of the injured "McLeery" remained unchecked. Thus, hasty conjectures prevented them from seeing the obvious.

**Q20. How did the injured "McLeery" behave? What, do you think, did he achieve by this sort of behaviour?**

**Ans.** The injured "McLeery" claimed to know where Evans was. He showed more interest in arrival of police than of ambulance. He drew the Governor's attention to the German question paper. The photocopied sheet in German contained the route of escape. He diverted the attention of the prison officers and the police to the person (Evans) who had already left the prison.

**Q21. What did the Governor tell Detective Superintendent Carter when he enquired about the injured "McLeery"?**

**Ans.** Carter wondered who had hit "McLeery". Before the Governor could explain anything, McLeery told the officer to go to Elsfield Way, where Evans... The Governor told Carter to take "McLeery" with him if he thought he would be all right. He was the only one who seemed to know what was happening. Thus, injured "McLeery" left the prison in police car as a witness.

**Q22. What conclusion did the Governor arrive at after reading the German text on the question paper?**

**Ans.** The text advised Evans to drive to the Headington roundabout from Elsfield Way. The Examinations Board was in Elsfield Way. Someone from the Board must have been involved in the escape plan from the very beginning. It was clear from the question paper and the correction slip.

**Q23. What did the Governor's questioning of Stephens reveal?**

**Ans.** It was Stephens who had taken "Evans" to the main gates. Stephens claimed that he had acted as he had been told by the Governor on phone at about twenty past eleven just before the paper was over. The Governor said that he had not rung him. He had used the telephone at that time, unsuccessfully, to get through to the Examinations Board.

**Q24. Why was the Governor angry with Jackson?**

**Ans.** Jackson had spent two hours in Evans's cell the previous evening. He had confidently reported that there was nothing hidden away there. Yet Evans had concealed a false beard, a



pair of spectacles, a dogcollar and other material of a priest. He also had a weapon with which he hit McLeery across the head.

**Q25. What did the Governor think of Evans and his plan after ringing up Detective Chief Inspector Bell?**

**Ans.** The Governor admired clever Evans and his beautifully laid plan. He called it careless of him to leave the question paper behind. He observed that all criminals made mistakes somewhere. That is why they were nabbed. He hoped that very shortly Mr clever-clever Evans would be back inside the prison.

**Q26. What did Detective Superintendent Carter inform the Governor about Evans?**

**Ans.** Superintendent Carter informed the Governor that McLeery had spotted Evans driving off along Elsfield Way. They had got the number of the car all right. They had given chase immediately, but they had lost him at the Headington roundabout. He assumed that Evans must have doubled back into the city.

**Q27. Where, according to the Governor, was Evans likely to be found and why? What did he think about himself after this episode?**

**Ans.** The Governor said that Evans was on his way to Newbury. He explained his reasons for believing so. The clues in the German text pointed to this. It was now a police job to arrest him. He thought he was merely a laughing stock, a credulous governor.

**Q28. What truth did the enquiries about injured "McLeery" from (i) Carter and (ii) the Radcliffe reveal?**

**Ans.** Carter said that he was in the Radcliffe. He was really groggy near the Examination offices. They rang for the ambulance from there. The accident department of the Radcliffe informed him that there was no parson named McLeery there. They had sent an ambulance to Elsfield Way, but the fellow had vanished from there by then.

**Q29. Where did they find the Reverend S. McLeery and in what condition? What can you deduce from it?**

**Ans.** A quarter of an hour later they found the Reverend S. McLeery in his study in Broad Street. He was bound and gagged securely. He said that he had been there since 8.15 a.m. when two men had called and... It is obvious that the two men were helpers of Evans and one of them acted as the Reverend S. McLeery during the Exam.

**Q30. What did the inmates of the prison come to know by tea-time?**

**Ans.** They came to know what had really happened. Earlier, it was presumed that Evans had impersonated McLeery and walked out of the prison. The truth was that Evans, impersonating McLeery, had stayed in.

**Q31. What sort of hair did Evans have? How then did he personate McLeery?**

**Ans.** Evans had long, wavy hair, whereas the hair of McLeery had been amateurishly clipped pretty closely to the scalp. Jackson had pinched Evans's scissors. So, he had to remove his hair off his head with his only razor. Then he kept his head covered with a bobble hat to prevent detection.

**Q32. Jackson had thoroughly searched Evans's cell for two hours the previous evening. How then was Evans able to disguise himself as a parson?**

**Ans.** Evans had really nothing hidden in the cell. It was McLeery who had worn two black fronts and two collars. Evidently, Evans put on one set of these. He used the blanket to cover his act. The parson suddenly seemed to have grown slimmer when he left the Oxford Prison.



**Q33. "It was that bloody correction slip, I s'pose". Who said this, when and why?**

**Ans.** Evans said this when he found the Governor of Oxford Prison in his room in Hotel Golden Lion in Chipping Norton. He knew he was beaten. The details of the escape plan were there on the correction slip and he had left it there on the table.

**Q34. What two purposes did the correction slip serve? Which of them did Evans consider more important?**

**Ans.** The correction slip provided Evans the name of the hotel and its location. Secondly, it contained the exact time the exam started. The really important thing for Evans was that the phone rang just before the exam finished. Thus, he was able to get the prison officers out of the way for a couple of minutes.

**Q35. "How did you know which Golden Lion it was? There's imdreds of 'em," said Evans. How did the Governor of Oxford Prison locate the hiding place of Evans?**

**Ans.** The Governor told Evans that he used the same method as Evans had done. The six-figure reference 313/271 was formed by two hints—Index number 313 and Centre number 271. If one takes an Ordnance Survey Map for Oxfordshire, this number lands one bang in the middle of Chipping Norton.

**Q36. "Tell me one thing before we go. How on earth did you get all that blood to pour over your head?" asks the Governor. How does Evans react to this question?**

**Ans.** Evans looked a little happier. He said it was very clever to get a couple of pints of blood into a cell. There was none there to start off with. The "invigilator" got searched before he came in. Evans refused to disclose it as he might use that trick again. Governor then enquired if it was anything to do with a little rubber ring for piles. Evans grinned and asked if it wasn't clever.

**Q37. "Must have been a tricky job sticking a couple of pints." "Nah! you've got it wrong, sir. No problem about that." In the light of the above remarks, explain what problem regarding blood Evans faced and howjt was solved?**

**Ans.** Storing blood in the rubber ring was not the problem. It was clotting that was the big problem. They got pig's blood from slaughter house in Kidlington. But to stop it clotting actual blood has to be mixed with one-tenth of its volume of 3.8 per cent trisodium citrate.

**Q38. How did Evans manage to plan the escape from, prison?**

**Ans.** The Governor had taken enough precautions. Evans had no visitors. He had no letters. Evans told the Governor that he had got lots of friends. He gave the example of his German teacher. The Governor said he was from the Technical College. Evans seemed to enjoy all this and asked if he had checked it. Reluctantly, the Governor had to admit that far more was going on than he thought or imagined.

**Q39. What suggestion did the handcuffed Evans make while clambering to van?**

**Ans.** Evans observed that the Governor's German was pretty good and asked if he knew any more of the modern languages. When the Governor said, "Not very well," Evans grinned happily. He said that he had noticed that they had got some O-Level Italian classes coming up next September. The Governor said that perhaps he wouldn't be with them next September. Evans pondered over these words and said that he wouldn't.

**Q40. Who, do you think, has the last laugh—the Governor or Evans? How?**

**Ans.** The Governor is complacent that he has nabbed the run away prisoner and soon the police van will land him in prison. However, facts prove otherwise. As the van turns to the Oxford road, the silent prison officer unlocks the handcuffs and asks the driver to move on fast. The driver enquires in broad Scots accent where they should make for. Evans suggests

Newbury. It is crystal clear that the two persons are accomplices of Evans. He has escaped from prison once again. Hence, it is Evans who has the last laugh.

### **LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS**

**Q1. Should criminals in prison be given the opportunity of learning and education ? Give reasons in support of your answer.**

**Ans.** Modern prisons are no longer the dark dungeons of the middle ages where even the rays of the sun could not penetrate. Human rights are observed scrupulously in all civilised countries even in jails. These prisons are gradually becoming reform houses. Under the prevailing conditions criminals are given the opportunity of self improvement. Provision is made for learning and education. The light of knowledge, it is hoped, will reform the criminals, change their thoughts and make them responsible citizens. They will join the mainstream, give up crime and contribute to the well-being of society and nation. Instead of physical torture and mental agony, love and sympathy be used to transform the bitterness, cruelty and evil bent of mind. Let us hate sin and crime, not the sinner and criminals. Hence, the criminals should be given opportunity of learning and education in prison.

**Q2. What precautions were taken for the smooth conduct of the O-Level German examination in prison and why ?**

**Ans.** James Roderick Evans was a smart fellow. He was known as 'Evans the Break' among the prison officers. He had escaped from prison three times. Now he was taking O-Level German Examination in prison. His solitary cell was located in D-Wing, which had two heavy gates—outer and inner. Both were locked securely. Evans's cell was kept under strict observation. Prison officer Mr Stephens watched his activities every minute through the peep-hole. Mr Jackson, the incharge of D-Wing, was in constant touch with the Governor on phone. The Governor himself listened in to the conversation in the cell. During his stay in prison, Evans was not allowed to have any visitor or letters.

All potential weapons such as knife, scissors, nail-file and razor had been removed from the cell of Evans. The contents of the suitcase of the invigilator, Reverend S. McLeery were also thoroughly searched. Even the paper-knife was taken away. In short, all precautions had been taken to see that Evans did not get a means to escape.

**Q3. How was Evans able to devise foolproof plan for escape from prison as well as items for disguise in spite of severe restrictions and strict observation ?**

**Ans.** First, Evans joined the O-Level German night classes in last September. He was the only student. The Governor had appointed a teacher from the Technical College. Since Governor did not check on the person, a friend of Evans joined as German teacher. He was in contact with him everyday and visited him even on the eve of the examination to say good luck. The plan was devised slowly—from September to June.

Reverend S. McLeery, who was to invigilate, was bound and gagged in his flat. A friend of Evans replaced him as invigilator. McLeery put on double clerical collar, two black clerical fronts. He carried a pair of reading glasses and the semi-inflated rubber ring for piles in his suitcase.

Evans had friends in the Examination Board as well. The correction slip fixed the hotel and provided exact time of start of paper. Two more telephone calls proved handy—One asking for prison-van for court and the other for giving instructions to Stephens. It was near the Examination Board that Evans as "injured McLeery" got a car to change his make-up and clothes and escape to Golden Lion. Here, it is worth-mentioning that the silent prison officer and the driver, who drove the prison van from the Golden Lion and helped Evans escape, were his friends.

**Q4. What factors, other than friends, do you think, contributed to the success of the plan of**

### **the escape devised by Evans?**

**Ans.** Evans's calm, pleasant, amusing temperament and his insight into the working of the minds of prison authorities helped him a lot. He devised everything carefully and executed the plan skilfully. Every detail was worked out beforehand. For example, he knew that Mr Jackson who used rough tone, had some compassion for him deep inside. He granted Evans's request to keep the filthy looking red and white bobble hat on his head during the examination. It was, in fact, a device to hide his recently closely cropped hairs. Secondly, he knew that the whole prison machinery blindly goes by assumption. He impersonated McLeery and posed to be injured. No one checked the injured "McLeery". The hasty conjecture was that Evans, impersonating McLeery, had hit the parson and escaped. It prevailed. The police was after run away Evans while the real Evans left the prison with the police as the only witness. He claimed to have seen Evans driving. When they reached Examination Board he acted as if he was quite weak. The police officer phoned for an ambulance and left Evans there. He got into the car his friends had kept for him and disappeared from the scene. Thus, his ingenuity, presence of mind and theatricality also helped him.

### **Q5. What lapses on the part of the police and prison authorities helped Evans to escape from the prison?**

**Ans.** In spite of elaborate precautions and careful arrangements, Evans succeeds in slipping away. Certain lapses on the part of the police and prison authorities contribute to it. The Governor, who smells a rat in every call and tries to cross check it, fails at vital moments. For example, no one tries to verify the identity of the German teacher, the invigilator, the "injured" McLeery, the driver of prison-van and the "silent" prison officer who handcuffs Evans at the Golden Lion hotel. Sometimes, appearance—the outward form and dress— deceives as it is accepted to be genuine. The criminals impersonate even the prison officer and driver. The Detective Superintendent too acts hastily. He does not drive to the Rad-cliffe and get the "injured" McLeery admitted there. This provides him God-sent opportunity to disappear. The greatest lapse is on the part of the Governor who nabs Evans at Golden Lion hotel and fails to bring him to jail as he gets tricked by the prison-van, "silent" prison officer and driver. Had he waited for police escort, Evans would not have escaped yet again.

### **Q6. What estimate do you form of the Governor of Oxford Prison ?**

**OR**

### **How far do you agree with the observation: "He was just another good-for-a-giggle, gullible governor, that was all" ?**

**Ans.** The Governor was a fussy sort of person. He would carry things to the extreme and in his enthusiasm, sometimes overdid them and ignored the obvious. His imagination seemed to run riot. He was apprehensive that Evans might try to take advantage of the examination and escape. He was filled with doubts. Evans might take advantage of the invigilator and hi-jack-knife him.

The Governor was duty-conscious. He did not run away from responsibility. He listened-in to the conversation in the cell himself. In spite of all his virtues, the Governor had a serious flaw. He was too credulous. He had full faith in his officers and the law-enforcing machinery. He believed the injured "McLeery" and let him accompany Superintendent Carter to help him trace Evans. Actually, he let Evans leave the prison.

The final act of foolishness was when he let Evans be carried in a prison-van, without sufficient police escort. He had used his intelligence to locate the hide-out of Evans and nab him. His gullible nature deprived him of all credit. In the end, he appeared as "another good-for-a-giggle, gullible governor."

### **Q7. Using examples from the play "Evans Tries An O-Level" show how the criminals like Evans turn the tables on the Governor of Oxford Prison and the local police.**

**Ans.** Evans is familiar with the methods of the prison authorities and he anticipates all their moves. Hence, in the battle of wits between himself and the official machinery he employs tricks unknown to them. The new German teacher and the replaced invigilator are merely stooges of Evans. Carrying blood in a rubber ring for piles is a novelty. The device of the correction slip to fix the hide out and the route to it is another piece of ingenuity. The master-stroke is when Evans impersonating wounded "McLeery" stays in prison and misguides the police to trace the parson. The use of modern devices such as prison-van, car, telephone, Ordnance Survey Map for Oxfordshire etc. shows how the criminals can misuse these facilities for their own ends. The whole operation is run by someone in the Examination Board who remains unknown till the end. It is well-planned and skilfully executed escape using the prison-van and prison staff.

**Q8. What impression do you form of 'Evans the Break'?**

**OR**

**Attempt a brief character sketch of James Roderick Evans.**

**Ans.** "Evans the Break" as he was known among the prison officers was a jail-bird. He was a congenital kleptomaniac, but he was non-violent. He was quite a pleasant sort of person— an amusing chap; a star at the Christmas concert good at imitations.

Evans had long wavy hair. When we meet him for the first time his face was unshaven and he wore a filthy looking red and white bobble hat upon his head. He had tucked a grubby string-vest into equally grubby trousers. He smiled cheerfully at the prison officers. "Evans is smart, cunning and resourceful. He makes a request to Mr Jackson to allow him to put on his bobble hat. But he complains to the invigilator against Stephens. Stephens' presence disturbs Evans' concentration. He makes a very polite request to cover himself with blanket as it is chilly. He uses it to put on the clerical collar and black front. He employs the brief absence of prison officers to disguise himself as parson McLeery and spill blood on himself to look injured. He acts the part of injured parson well. He offers to help police and wins their confidence. He becomes groggy and is left there to wait for ambulance.

Evans enjoys the faith, support and active cooperation of his dedicated friends. They plan carefully, working out the minute details and execute it skilfully. He never loses his calm or presence of mind even in the worst circumstances.

**Q9. Comment on the ending of the play 'Evans Tries An O-Level'.**

**Ans.** The ending of the play is quite surprising and unexpected. Only a couple of minutes ago the Governor of Oxford Prison had nabbed Evans from his hide-out at the 'Golden Lion'. A silent prison officer handcuffed the recaptured Evans. Then the two men clambered awkwardly into the back seat of the prison-van.

The Governor bade him farewell but wished to see him soon in his jail. Evans too behaved as if he would remain there for a long time and wanted to know about the O-Level Italian classes coming up next September. The Governor remarked that perhaps Evans might not be with them then. Evans pondered over it and said that he wouldn't. After a couple of minutes Evans implemented what he had predicted. Not only were the handcuffs unlocked, but the van moved on fast towards Newbury.

Evans is once again free. The broad Scots accent leaves us in no doubt who the driver was. Once again Evans scores over the prison authorities.

**Q10. Comment on the aptness of the title 'Evans Tries An O-Level'**

**OR**

**Do you think the title 'Evans Tries An O-Level' is appropriate. Give reasons in support of your answer.**

**Ans.** The title 'Evans Tries An O-Level' is quite apt and suggestive. The action of the play begins with a conversation between the Secretary of the Examination Board and the Governor of the

Oxford Prison about holding the O-Level examination in German at the prison. The play ends with the mention of O-Level Italian classes and Evans's interest in them. The middle portion of the play is devoted to the holding of the O-Level Examination and its consequences—escape of Evans impersonating McLeery, the Invigilator. In short, the title dominates the play and is interwoven in the whole action.

The title indicates how criminals may exploit a facility for their selfish purpose of escaping from prison. It, thus, throws a comment on crime and punishment. The complacent Governor and methodical prison officers are outwitted again by a smart criminal and his friends who help in his adventure. It makes us laugh at the discomfiture of the efficient prison authorities.

**Q11. Describe the precautions taken by the prison officers to prevent Evans from escaping. [Delhi 2014]**

**Ans.** Special precautions were taken by the prison staff to prevent him from escaping during Evans O-level German test. A parson from St. Mary Mags was called to invigilate. Evans "was put in the heavily guarded recreational block. Between the cell and the yard there were two locked doors. The prison officers were on alert. In Evan's cell a microphone was installed while Mr. Stephens kept eye on Evans. Mr. Jackson and Mr. Stephens, the two prison officers checked his cell thoroughly for the possible escape.