Class 11 English Snapshots Chapter 3: Mother's Day - Notes, Summary, NCERT Answers and MCQs (2026-27)

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These Class 11 English Mother's Day notes help you revise this play quickly. You get a summary, characters, themes and NCERT answers. You also get 10 MCQs, a body-swap table and a revision box.

What is Mother's Day about?

> Mother's Day is a humorous one-act play by J.B. Priestley in Class 11 English Snapshots. Mrs Pearson's husband and grown-up children treat her like a servant. Her bold neighbour, Mrs Fitzgerald, swaps bodies with her. As "Mrs Pearson," she shocks the family into respect. Then the two women change back.

The play is short, funny and full of quick dialogue. Use this table for quick facts.

Fact	Detail (from the NCERT text)
Chapter number	Chapter 3 in the NCERT Snapshots Reprint 2026-27; Chapter 5 in older editions
Author	J.B. Priestley
Type	One-act comic play; written in the 1950s (NCERT)
Main characters	Mrs Annie Pearson, Mrs Fitzgerald, George, Doris and Cyril Pearson
Setting	The Pearsons' living room, in a London suburb
Time	An afternoon in early autumn
Key device	A magic body swap using the spell "Arshtatta dum"
Central conflict	A loving mother who is taken for granted by her family
Ending	The family agrees to a game of rummy and to cook supper

You can read the full play free on the official NCERT textbook site.

What happens in Mother's Day? (Summary)

> In this Class 11 English Snapshots play, Mrs Pearson cannot face her selfish family. Mrs Fitzgerald swaps bodies with her. In Mrs Pearson's body, she refuses tea, smokes, drinks stout and scolds everyone. The shocked family becomes humble. The women swap back, and the family finally offers help.

1. The fortune-teller next door

Mrs Fitzgerald has just read Mrs Pearson's fortune with cards. She learned this "out East" over twelve years. She urges Mrs Pearson to be the boss of her own house.

2. Mrs Pearson's problem

Mrs Pearson loves her family. But they are thoughtless and selfish. She hates unpleasantness and does not know how to begin.

3. The swap

Mrs Fitzgerald offers to do it for her, as her. She takes Mrs Pearson's hands and mutters a spell. Their personalities change bodies. Mrs Pearson, nervous, goes next door in Mrs Fitzgerald's body.

4. Doris gets a shock

Doris rushes in wanting her yellow silk ironed. She finds "Mother" smoking and playing cards. Mother refuses to iron it. She mocks Doris's date, Charlie Spence. Doris runs off in tears.

5. Cyril gets a shock

Cyril wants tea and his clothes laid out. Mother says she couldn't bother. She compares herself to a worker who has joined the union. She plans a forty-hour week with weekends off.

6. George gets a shock

George finds his wife drinking stout. Mother tells him the club laughs at him. They call him "Pompy-ompy Pearson." Cyril admits it is true. George is stunned.

7. The real Mrs Pearson returns

The real Mrs Pearson, still in her neighbour's body, comes to check. She is upset to see her family so unhappy. "Mother" even threatens to slap George. The family thinks she has gone mad.

8. Changing back

The real Mrs Pearson insists they swap back. They do. Mrs Fitzgerald warns her not to explain or apologise. She must stay firm.

9. A new family evening

Mrs Pearson proposes a family game of rummy. Then the children will make supper while she talks to George. Everyone agrees at once. The family gathers around her as the curtain falls.

Who are the characters in Mother's Day?

> Mother's Day, a Class 11 English Snapshots play, has five characters. Mrs Annie Pearson is a kind but timid mother. Mrs Fitzgerald is her bold neighbour. George is her pompous husband. Doris and Cyril are her spoilt grown-up children. Charlie Spence, Doris's date, is only mentioned.

Character	Who they are	Key traits (with proof)
Mrs Annie Pearson	Mother, in her forties	Pleasant, worried, loving. Hates unpleasantness. Lets the family order her about.
Mrs Fitzgerald	Neighbour; fortune-teller	Older, heavier, bold, deep-voiced. Smokes. Learned magic "out East."
George Pearson	Husband, about fifty	Decent but solemn and pompous. Spends evenings at the club.
Doris Pearson	Daughter, early twenties	Pretty but spoilt. Expects her clothes ironed and tea ready.
Cyril Pearson	Son	Doris's male "counterpart." Selfish; loves races and ice shows.
Charlie Spence	Doris's date (only mentioned)	Mocked by "Mother" for buck teeth.

Character sketch of Mrs Pearson

Mrs Pearson is a gentle, loving mother. She works all day for her family. Yet she gets no thanks.

Character sketch of Mrs Fitzgerald

Mrs Fitzgerald is the opposite of Mrs Pearson. She is bold, loud and sure of herself. She smokes and speaks bluntly.

She drives the play's action. She sees the problem and fixes it with magic. She also enjoys the chaos. "I enjoyed that," she says afterwards.

Character sketch of George Pearson

George is a decent man but very self-important. He likes things steady and predictable. He spends many evenings at his club.

He believes the club members respect him. Learning they mock him wounds his pride. By the end, he humbly agrees to whatever "Mother" wants.

Character sketch of Doris and Cyril

Doris and Cyril are adult children who behave like spoilt kids. They treat their mother as a servant. They think only of their own outings.

Shock and a little fear change them. They agree to stay in and cook supper.

Who is really speaking in each part of Mother's Day?

> The body swap in Mother's Day, Class 11 English Snapshots, confuses many students. After the spell, the name on the page shows the body, not the mind. So "Mrs Pearson" is really Mrs Fitzgerald for most of the play. Use this table to keep the speakers straight in every answer you write.

Part of the play	Body seen on stage	Personality inside
Opening scene	Mrs Pearson	Mrs Pearson (timid)
After the first spell	"Mrs Pearson"	Mrs Fitzgerald (bold, smoking)
After the first spell	"Mrs Fitzgerald"	Mrs Pearson (nervous, fluttering)
Scenes with Doris, Cyril and George	"Mrs Pearson"	Mrs Fitzgerald
After the second spell	Both women	Each back in her own body
Final rummy scene	Mrs Pearson	Mrs Pearson, now firm but smiling

What are the main themes of Mother's Day?

> Mother's Day, a Class 11 English Snapshots play, has four main themes. They are the undervalued homemaker, self-respect, family relationships and gender roles. Through comedy, the play shows that housework is real work. It suggests that respect within a family must be earned and also demanded.

Theme	Where you see it in the play
Undervalued mothers	Mrs Pearson works more hours than anyone but gets "no wages nor thanks."
Self-respect	Mrs Fitzgerald tells her to be the mistress of her own house.

Theme	Where you see it in the play
Work and rights	"Mother" demands an eight-hour day and weekends off, like the others.
Selfish families	Doris, Cyril and George give orders and go out every night.
Gender roles	Housework is assumed to be the mother's job alone.
Humour and satire	The magic swap, the stout and "Pompy-ompy Pearson."

Is the title Mother's Day suitable?

Yes, and it is ironic. The play is not about a holiday. It is about the one day a mother gets her due. The title also hints that mothers deserve respect every day.

What do the difficult words in Mother's Day mean?

> Hard words in Mother's Day, Class 11 English Snapshots, are mostly British everyday words. Stout is a dark beer. A piecan is a fool. Tiddly means slightly drunk. Barmy means crazy. Learning about twenty of these words makes the play's quick jokes much easier to follow.

Word	Simple meaning
Suburb / suburban	An area on the edge of a city
Semi-detached villa	A house joined to one other house
Settee	A sofa
Sinister	Seeming a little threatening
Flurried	Nervous and in a rush
Cockney	A working-class London accent
Lieutenant Quartermaster	An army officer in charge of supplies
Dubiously	With doubt
Complacently	In a calm, self-satisfied way
Patience	A card game for one player
Incisive	Sharp and direct
Off-colour	Slightly unwell
Laconic	Using very few words
Stout	A strong dark beer
Clot / fathead / piecan	Rude words for a foolish person
Barmy	Crazy
Concussion	A brain injury from a blow to the head
Pompous	Self-important and serious
Snooker	A table game played with cues and balls
Tiddly	Slightly drunk
At sixes and sevens	In a state of confusion
Rummy	A card game for several players

What are the NCERT answers for Mother's Day?

> The NCERT exercise for Mother's Day, Class 11 English Snapshots, has five questions. The first asks about the issues, whether they are genuine and how they are resolved. Others ask about today's examples and drama as a medium. The last two are activities. Our own model answers and tips follow below.

Questions are from the NCERT text. Answers are written by Nextoper.

Q1. This play, written in the 1950s, is a humorous and satirical depiction of the status of the mother in the family. (i) What are the issues it raises? (ii) Do you think it caricatures these issues or do you think that the problems it raises are genuine? How does the play resolve the issues? Do you agree with the resolution?

(i) Issues: The play shows a mother treated like an unpaid servant. Her family gives orders and never thanks her. She has no fixed hours and no free time. It also shows how a gentle person can fail to stand up for herself.

(ii) Caricature or genuine? The characters are exaggerated for comedy. The magic swap is unreal. But the problems are genuine. Many homemakers still face them.

Resolution: A firm "Mother" shocks the family into respect. Then the real Mrs Pearson is advised to stay firm. The family agrees to cook and stay in.

Do you agree? Partly. Firmness and honest talk are needed. But real change needs regular sharing of work, not one evening of shock.

Q2. If you were to write about these issues today what are some of the incidents, examples and problems that you would think of as relevant?

Many mothers today work outside the home too. Yet they still do most of the housework. This is often called a "double shift."

Useful examples include a working mother who cooks after office hours. Or children who never help with chores. Or the mental load of planning meals and bills. These would make the play's message fresh today.

Q3. Is drama a good medium for conveying a social message? Discuss.

Yes. Drama shows a problem through living characters. The audience sees and feels it, instead of only reading about it.

Humour, as in this play, makes a serious message easy to accept. People laugh at George and Doris, then see themselves in them. Drama can also reach people who do not read much.

Q4. Read the play out in parts. Enact the play on a suitable occasion.

This is a class activity. Assign the five roles. Practise the contrast between the two women's voices. The stage note says this contrast is very important. Mother's Day itself, or Annual Day, would suit a performance.

Q5. Discuss in groups plays or films with a strong message of social reform that you have watched.

This is a group activity. Choose a play or film you have actually seen. Discuss three things. What is the problem? How is it shown? Is the ending realistic? Compare it with how Mother's Day uses humour.

What MCQs come from Mother's Day?

> Here are 10 practice MCQs on Mother's Day, Class 11 English Snapshots. Nextoper wrote them. Each answer has a one-line reason from the NCERT text. They test facts, characters and meaning. Cover the answers, try each question yourself, and then check how you did.

1. Who wrote Mother's Day?
(a) Marga Minco (b) J.B. Priestley (c) Patrick Pringle (d) William Saroyan
Answer: (b) J.B. Priestley wrote this one-act play.

2. Where is the play set?
(a) Dublin (b) A London suburb (c) Paris (d) New York
Answer: (b) The Pearsons' living room in a London suburb.

3. Where did Mrs Fitzgerald learn fortune-telling?
(a) In Ireland (b) Out East (c) In London (d) From a book
Answer: (b) Out East, over twelve years.

4. What did Doris want ironed?
(a) Her blue dress (b) Her yellow silk (c) Her white blouse (d) Her coat
Answer: (b) Her yellow silk, for her date.

5. Who was Doris going out with?
(a) Cyril (b) George (c) Charlie Spence (d) The Clarendon manager
Answer: (c) Charlie Spence, whom "Mother" mocks.

6. What did "Mother" drink in front of the family?
(a) Tea (b) Milk (c) Stout (d) Coffee
Answer: (c) Stout, which shocks George.

7. What do the club members call George?
(a) Slow George (b) Pompy-ompy Pearson (c) Mr Snooker (d) Old Pearson
Answer: (b) Pompy-ompy Pearson, for being slow and pompous.

8. What working pattern does "Mother" demand?
(a) Six-hour day (b) Forty-hour week (c) Half day on Fridays (d) No change
Answer: (b) A forty-hour week, with weekends off.

9. Why does the real Mrs Pearson want to swap back?
(a) She is bored (b) She cannot bear her family's misery (c) The spell fades (d) George asks her
Answer: (b) She says she cannot bear to see them miserable.

10. What game does Mrs Pearson suggest at the end?
(a) Patience (b) Snooker (c) Rummy (d) Chess
Answer: (c) A family game of rummy.

What should you revise the night before the exam?

To revise Mother's Day, Class 11 English Snapshots, fast, learn three ages and four numbers. Then remember the swap and one big idea. The big idea is simple. A mother's work deserves the same respect as anyone's job. Firmness, not anger, earns that respect.

Ages: 40s - 50 - early 20s

- 40s - Mrs Pearson
- About 50 - George
- Early 20s - Doris

Number trail: 12 - 8 - 40 - 2

- 12 - years Mrs Fitzgerald spent "out East"
- 8 - hour day the children boast about
- 40 - hour week "Mother" now demands
- 2 - days off she wants at the weekend

The swap, in one line: Spell once, bodies swap; spell twice, back home.

Three shocks, three targets: Doris loses her ironing. Cyril loses his tea. George loses his pride.

One big idea: Respect the person who runs the home.

Self-check: can you answer these in one line?

Question	Tick when you can answer
Why can't Mrs Pearson stand up to her family?	[ ]
How does the body swap happen?	[ ]
How does "Mother" upset Doris?	[ ]
What does "Mother" tell Cyril about working hours?	[ ]
What secret does George learn about the club?	[ ]
What advice does Mrs Fitzgerald give at the end?	[ ]
How does the play end?	[ ]

What practice questions can you try on Mother's Day?

These are Nextoper practice questions for Mother's Day, Class 11 English Snapshots. They are not previous-year board questions. They follow the usual short-answer, long-answer and extract formats. Write full answers first. Then compare them with the summary, characters and themes on this page.

Practice question These questions are written by Nextoper for practice.

Short answer (about 40-50 words)

1. Why does Mrs Fitzgerald say spoiling the family is "the ruin of them"?
2. Why does Doris think her mother might have concussion?

3. How does "Mother" use the idea of a union against Cyril?
4. Why is George upset that Mrs Fitzgerald calls him "George"?
5. What warning does Mrs Fitzgerald give about apologising?

Long answer (about 120-150 words)

1. Compare Mrs Pearson and Mrs Fitzgerald. How does the play use their contrast?
2. The family in Mother's Day changes in one evening. Is this realistic? Discuss.
3. Write a diary entry by Doris on the night of the body swap.

Extract-based practice

Read: "Don't you start any explaining or apologising — or you're done for."

a) Who says this, and to whom?
b) What has just happened before this line?
c) Why does the speaker give this advice?

What mistakes do students make in Mother's Day?

> Many notes on Mother's Day, Class 11 English Snapshots, contain errors. Students copy them and lose marks. Common slips include misspelling Priestley and mixing up the chapter number. Others misread George's exclamation or give wrong word meanings. Check each fact below against the NCERT text before you write.

We found each of these errors in notes that currently rank online. Every correction is checked against the NCERT chapter.

Common mistake	What the NCERT text actually says
Spelling the author "Priestly"	The correct spelling is J.B. Priestley.
One page calling it Chapter 3 and Chapter 5 at once	It is Chapter 3 in the 2026-27 reprint and Chapter 5 in older books.
"George curses himself" when he says he'll be damned	It is a cry of astonishment, not a curse.
"Doris thinks her mother collided her skull"	Doris wonders if her mother hit her head and has concussion.
"Dubiously" defined as a noun	It is an adverb meaning "with doubt."
"Mrs Pearson despises repairing"	"Mother" says she has decided she doesn't like mending.
"Doris is about twenty or so"	The stage note says Doris is in her early twenties.
Mixing up who is in which body	After the spell, "Mrs Pearson" is really Mrs Fitzgerald. See the swap table.

What is the short answer on Mother's Day?

> Short answer: Mother's Day is a one-act comic play by J.B. Priestley in the Class 11 Snapshots book. Mrs Pearson's husband and children treat her like a servant. Her neighbour, Mrs Fitzgerald, swaps bodies with her by magic. In Mrs Pearson's body, she shocks the family into respect. The women swap back, and the family agrees to help.

What do students ask about Mother's Day?

> Students most often ask who wrote Mother's Day and what its message is. They also ask how the body swap works. Two more common questions are about Mrs Fitzgerald and the meaning of the title. Short, exam-ready answers to all five follow. Each one is based on the NCERT text.

Who wrote Mother's Day?

J.B. Priestley wrote Mother's Day. It is a one-act comic play in Snapshots. Snapshots is the Class 11 English supplementary reader. NCERT notes it was written in the 1950s.

What is the message of Mother's Day?

The message is that mothers deserve respect and help. Housework is real work. A family should share it, and a mother should stand up for herself.

How does the body swap work in Mother's Day?

Mrs Fitzgerald holds Mrs Pearson's hands and mutters a spell. Their personalities change bodies. Later, the same spell swaps them back.

Who is Mrs Fitzgerald in Mother's Day?

Mrs Fitzgerald is Mrs Pearson's bold neighbour and a fortune-teller. She learned magic out East. She swaps bodies with Mrs Pearson to teach the family a lesson.

Why is the play called Mother's Day?

The title is ironic. It is not about the holiday. It shows the one day the mother gets respect. It suggests she deserves it daily.

What is the key takeaway from Mother's Day?

> Mother's Day, a Class 11 English Snapshots play, teaches one key lesson through laughter. Love should not mean being taken for granted. Mrs Pearson learns to be firm, and her family learns to help. The play asks you to notice the unpaid work done in your own home.

Revise the swap table, the 12-8-40-2 trail and the three shocks. With those, you can answer almost any question on this chapter. Next, try the practice questions without looking back.

Related notes

- Class 11 English Snapshots Chapter 2: The Address notes
- Class 11 English Snapshots (older edition): The Ghat of the Only World notes
- All Class 11 English Hornbill and Snapshots notes

Sources

1. NCERT, Snapshots, "Mother's Day" by J.B. Priestley (Reprint 2026-27). ncert.nic.in
2. CBSE Academic, Class 11 English Core (Code 301) curriculum. cbseacademic.nic.in

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