

Unit 7

What You Do is What You Are Nickie McWhirter

Synonyms

Paragraph 1

Define: Describe, Characterize
Validate: Confirm, Affirm
Reject: Dismiss, Refuse
Evaluate: Assess, Judge
Worth: Value, Significance
Laid off: Unemployed, Jobless
Former: Previous, Ex
Limbo: Uncertainty, In-between state

Paragraph 2

Peculiar: Strange, Unusual
Cast in bronze: Immortalized, Honored
Apparently: Seemingly, Evidently
Privilege: Advantage, Special right
Steadily: Regularly, Consistently

Paragraph 3

Category: Group, Class
Recognized: Acknowledged, Accepted
Discounted: Undervalued, Ignored
Rear: Raise, Bring up
Bum: Vagrant, Loafer
Bag lady: Homeless woman

Paragraph 4

Classless: Low class
Titled nobility: Aristocracy, Royal class
Dynastic: privilege: inherited advantage
Separated: Divide, Distinguish
Valued: Respected, Appreciated
Anthropologist: One who studies human, A
researcher of human societies

Un- catalogued: Undocumented, Unlisted
Deference: Respect, Regard
Public consciousness: Public awareness,
Common opinion
Earn diddly dot: Earn very little
Esteem: Respect, Admiration

Paragraph 5

Arguing: Debating, Questioning
Rationally: Logically, Reasonably
Silly: Foolish, Senseless
System: Structure, Arrangement
Apart from: Besides, Other than
Earnings potential: Income possibility
Privilege: Benefit, favor

Paragraph 6

Decide: Determine,
Entrepreneur: Businessperson, Founder
Contractor: Builder, Developer
Phenomenon: Occurrence, Trend

Paragraph 7

Tempted: Inclined, Lured
Fawn over: Flatter, Excessive praise
Stranger: Unknown person
Discounting: Undervaluing, Dismissing

Question Answers

1. Why do you think the author finds this way of labeling people “peculiar”?

Ans. The author finds this way of labeling people “peculiar” because it’s strange that we judge a person’s worth based only on their job, even though a job doesn’t fully show who someone is or how valuable they are. It’s odd that society gives respect to people just because of what they do for work.

2. What does the writer suggest about the use of the word “just” before job titles or roles?

Ans. The writer suggests that using the word “just” before job titles (like “just a janitor” or “just a housewife”) is dismissive and disrespectful. It makes important roles seem small or unimportant, even though these jobs often involve hard work and bring real value to society.

3. What contrast is being made between the roles of cowboy and cattle breeder, or nurse and doctor? What point is the author trying to make?

Ans. The contrast between roles like cowboy and cattle breeder or nurse and doctor shows how society gives more respect and status to some jobs over others, even if both are important and require skill. The author’s point is that this difference is often based on social perceptions, not real value or effort, and it unfairly affects how we treat people in different roles.

4. Why does the author describe the way society defines people by their jobs as peculiar?

Ans. The author finds it **peculiar** because society assigns **personal worth and value** to individuals based on their jobs, rather than their **character or contributions**. He thinks it is irrational that someone's job title can determine how much respect or recognition they receive, regardless of who they are as a person.

5. Provide two examples the author uses to show how individuals are judged based on their employment status or past jobs.

Ans. A **retired teacher** who volunteers and helps others is still referred to only as a "retired teacher," regardless of his current contributions. A laid-off auto worker may be doing other work like pumping gas or selling encyclopedias, but he's still referred to as a "laid-off auto worker," as if his current efforts or identity don't matter.

6. What does the phrase "cast in bronze" symbolize in the context of the text?

Ans. "Cast in bronze" symbolizes permanent honor or glorification. The author uses it to highlight how society treats certain job identities as fixed or prestigious symbols of human worth, even though a person's identity goes far beyond a job title.

7. The author mentions certain professions like "just a housewife" or "just a janitor." What is the critique behind these labels, and what point is the author trying to make?

Ans. The author criticizes how people say things like "just a housewife" or "just a janitor." He believes using the word "just" makes it sound like these jobs aren't important. The author's point is that society often looks down on jobs that don't seem fancy or don't pay a

lot, even though these roles matter greatly. Calling someone “just” something takes away their respect and makes their work seem less valuable than it really is.

8. In what way does the author suggest that children should be taught to understand respect and job roles in society?

Ans. The author believes children should understand how society values jobs, not just in terms of income but also in terms of social status and respect. He emphasizes that while children can aspire to any job, they should be aware that some roles (like being a doctor) carry more social privilege than others (like being a nurse), regardless of personal effort or value.

9. What is McWhirter’s tone? Illustrate it with few words and phrases that establish the tone.

Ans. McWhirter’s tone is critical, reflective, and slightly sarcastic.

Phrases that show this include:

- “It is no use arguing...”
- “That apparently doesn’t count.”
- “Nobody is ever ‘just’ a vice-president.”

These show a critical attitude toward societal norms and a thought-provoking reflection on how we value people.

10. Why does the author state that no one is ever described as “Just” a vice-president? What does this reveal about how society values certain jobs?

Ans. The author points out that the phrase “just a vice-president” is never used because roles like that are automatically respected and seen as important. This highlights how

society assigns higher value and prestige to certain titles, often without considering the actual person or their actions.

11. Do you agree with the writer's view that society unfairly defines people by their jobs or employment status? Why or why not?

Ans. Yes, I agree with the writer. Society often judges people based on their job titles, ignoring their personal qualities or contributions outside of work. For example, a homemaker or a retired individual may do meaningful work or have strong character, but they are often seen as less valuable just because they are not earning a salary or hold a prestigious position. This approach is both unfair and shallow.

12. What is the writer's main argument?

Ans. The writer believes that society tends to respect people with high-status jobs more than others. Some individuals are labeled as “just” a certain profession, suggesting that their work is less important or valued. The writer argues that this attitude is unfair because every person and every job play an important role in society.

13. What evidence or examples does the writer provide to support this argument?

Ans. The writer uses examples such as “just a housewife,” “just a kid,” and “just a janitor” to illustrate how certain people are undervalued. He also compares professions like doctors and nurses to show that society often gives more respect to some jobs than others, even though all roles are important.

14. How does the writer feel about the way society judges people based on their jobs?

Ans. The writer feels it is wrong to judge people by their jobs. He thinks everyone deserves respect, no matter what work they do. He believes this attitude is unfair and unkind.

15. Who do you think is the intended audience for this text?

Ans. The text is for everyone, especially students and adults. It teaches people not to judge others by their jobs. It also helps children learn that every job is important and deserves respect.

16. What is the main theme of the text? Can you identify the main idea of the text in one sentence?

Ans. The theme highlights how society unfairly judges individuals based on job status rather than their true value or contributions.

