

## Unit 5 – Quality

1. How had the narrator been introduced to Gessler? What was unique about his shoes?

The narrator knew Gessler from the days of his extreme youth as Gessler made the narrator's father's boots. The unique thing about Gessler's shoes was that he made only what was ordered, and what he made never failed to fit.

2. The process of getting Gessler to make shoes was as meticulous as his creation. Do you agree with this statement? Give reason for your answer.

The process of getting Gessler to make shoes was as meticulous as his creation. Unlike buying a pair of readymade shoes, this was a long-drawn procedure. The buyer had to first choose the leather, give his fit and wait for around a fortnight for the boots to be ready.

3. How did Gessler react when he learnt that the boots had creaked? What does it tell you about him?

On hearing that the boots had creaked, Gessler was shocked. He asked the narrator to send the boots back and said that if he could not fix them, he would take them off the narrator's bill. This shows that Gessler took full accountability of his work. He was an honest and fair man. It also tells us that his work was his passion and that he poured his heart and soul into his work.

4. What did Gessler feel about the big firms?

Gessler was of the opinion that the big firms did not have any self-respect. He thought that the big firms got all the business by advertisement and not by doing good work. He felt that they took business away from honest boot-makers like him, who actually loved their boots and treated their work like an art.

5. Why did the narrator not visit the shop for a long time?

The narrator did not visit the shop for a long time because he went abroad and it was over a year before he was again in London.

6. Why did the author order so many pairs of boots? Did he really need them?

No, the narrator did not actually need all the boots he ordered. He ordered so many boots because he was touched by how the old man had aged so quickly and how worn out he looked. The narrator was also aware that Gessler was running out of business. Gessler's eagerness to sell boots to the narrator and his

mention of it being a slack time for work also touched the narrator and he thought that he could help Gessler by buying as many boots as he could.

## Reading 2

1. How do you understand that Gessler was passionate about his job?

Gessler was passionate about his job. He considered making boots to be an art. He only used the best quality leather and spent a great amount of time and effort on each pair of boots he created. His work was so meticulous that he turned out very high-quality boots. He had sound knowledge of the work and took full responsibility for his work.

2. What had Gessler died of? What does it reflect about industrialization?

Gessler had died of slow starvation. He used to work on his boots day and night. He never gave himself time to eat. He did not even have any money because all of it went in rent and leather. This tells us how industrialization has taken away from small tradesmen, their means of livelihood. Even though they possess great skills and their products are far superior in quality compared to factory-made goods, they are reduced to a state of poverty and are robbed of their business because of industrialization and the competition it offers, especially by advertising and making products available much faster.

3. Is the title 'Quality' appropriate? why? If you were to give this story another title, what would it be?

Yes, the title 'Quality' is appropriate. Gessler strove for quality in his work all his life. He took pains and spent a lot of time over each pair of boots to ensure the best quality. Even when he could not afford it, he used only the best quality leather to make boots. But even after this, he lost his business and was reduced to poverty by big firms whose products were of much inferior quality than Gessler's.

4 & 5 – write answers on your own.