ANSWER WITH REFERENCE TO THE CONTEXT

Ref 1. “King Lear had three daughters named Goneril, Regan and Cordelia, and he decided to divide the kingdom among all three of them. So he called them in turn to find out how much each of them loved him, for he greatly loved them all.”

Q.1. Who was King Lear? Why did King Lear decide to give up his kingdom?
Ans. King Lear was the King of Britain, a fine looking old man, tall and thin with a long beard. He had reigned for a long time and he was growing tired of the cares of his kingdom. Hence, he decided to give up his kingdom and spend the rest of his life in peace and quiet.

2. Who was the King’s best loved child?
A. Cordelia was the King’s best loved child.

3. What did he decide to give his three daughters?
A. King Lear decided to divide his kingdom among his three daughters, Goneril, Regan and Cordelia.

4.a) What did Lear ask his three daughters?
A. When King Lear decided to divide his kingdom among his daughters; he called them in turn to find out how much each of them loved him, for he greatly loved them all.

4.b) What did each of them answer?
A. In response to King Lear’s question Goneril, his eldest daughter who was the wife of the Duke of Albany said that she loved her father more than she could say, as much as her own life; in fact as much as any daughter could love her father.

Regan, his second daughter, the wife of the Duke of Cornwall seeing what her older sister replied, said that she loved him still more and that she is happy only when she is loving her father.
Contrary to her other two sisters, Cordelia, the youngest knew that her sisters had lied to the king. She truly loved her father and when asked replied ‘Nothing,’ as she had been sickened by the words of her sisters and knew her sisters’ words were not true at all and that words did not show true love at all.

Ref 2. “Nothing will come of nothing,” he answered angrily.

Q.1 What made King Lear say the above words?
A. King Lear called his three daughters and asked them how much they loved him, because he wanted to divide his kingdom among the three of them. The youngest and best loved daughter Cordelia replied ‘Nothing.’ King Lear was extremely surprised and said, “Nothing will come of nothing,” as he expected an answer from Cordelia and got nothing from her and that if she had no feelings for her father, she would get nothing from him.

2. Give a detailed account of Cordelia’s response to this?
A. When King Lear angrily said, “Nothing will come out of nothing,” Cordelia replied saying that she loved her father with all the love that was due to him and that she could love him no more and no less.

3. How was Cordelia different from her older sisters?
A. Cordelia was different from her older sisters as she was very sincere and could not speak of her love like her sisters. She told the King that she was his child for her. That same loving care she gave in return. She said she obeyed, loved and honoured him but could not say like Goneril and Regan that she could always love him more than anyone else. For if she had a husband, he would have much of her love, and she could not give it all to her father as her sisters, who were married already and said that they could give theirs. She was sincere, honest and truthful in her reply to her father.

4. Why did King Lear not give Cordelia one third of his kingdom? What did he do with it?
A. King Lear did not give Cordelia one third of the kingdom because he was quick to anger and what Cordelia said made him extremely angry. He could not tell the difference between what was true and what was false. Hence he disinherited Cordelia and said that she should no longer call herself a daughter of his. The third part of his kingdom which he had set aside for her, he divided instead between Goneril and Regan. Later he sent for the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall (the husbands of Goneril and Regan) and gave over to them each, one – half of his Kingdom.
5. What did he decide to keep for himself?

A. For himself, he decided to keep the name and royal state of a King and a hundreds knights to attend him. He would live in turn with his two daughters but Albany and Cornwall would rule his kingdom between them; and as a sign that he was giving up his power he took off his crown and gave it to the two dukes.

Ref 3. “When the courtiers saw the old king disinherit the daughter who loved him dearly and divide up the kingdom between the other two, they were astonished. But only one of them dared to speak in favour of Cordelia.”

Q.1. Who spoke in favour of Cordelia? Why?

A. The Earl of Kent, a nobleman of a plain and honest character spoke in favour of Cordelia as he understood at once how insincerely the elder sisters had spoken.

2. What did he tell the King when he heard the King speak angry words to her?

A. When he heard the king speak angry words to Cordelia, who loved him most, he bravely came forward and warned the old man that he had rewarded those who honoured him only with their lips, and had punished the most loving and truthful of his daughters. He also said that a wise and just King, would have done the opposite.

3. What does King Lear do in turn to Kent?

A. Kent’s words made King Lear extremely angry and he sent him from his country for ever and warned him that if after sixteen days Kent was found there, he would suffer death.

4. What did Kent do before leaving?

A. Before leaving, Kent asked heaven to protect Cordelia and said that he hoped that the other sisters would show the King all the love they had promised.

Ref 4. “King Lear then asked these royal men whether they still wished to marry Cordelia, for she now had no money.”

Q.1. Who were these royal men?

A. These royal men were the Duke of Burgundy and the King of France who had asked the king’s permission to marry Cordelia.

2. Who agreed to marry Cordelia? Why?

A. The King of France agreed to marry Cordelia for herself, and said no one should buy her from him because he had listened to Cordelia’s words and he had admired her for her truthfulness and courage. He liked her and said that he could not believe that the daughter the king used to love had suddenly become so unworthy.
3a) What did Cordelia do before leaving?
A. Before leaving, Cordelia said good-bye to her sisters with tears and begged them to take good care of their father.

3b) What did her sisters reply?
A. Her sisters told her that she need not try and teach them to do their duty; she should look after her husband and not trouble about them.

Ref 5. “What she feared soon came true.”
Q.1. What had Cordelia feared?
A. Cordelia feared that the sisters would be unkind to the old King.

2a) Who received the King’s first visit?
A. The eldest daughter, Goneril received the King’s first visit.

3a) What did the king realize?
A. The king soon realized that Goneril’s words of love towards him were insincere.

3b) How did his eldest daughter treat him?
A. Goneril never tried to attend to her father’s wants. She said that he was always finding fault, that he never stopped ordering people about and his knights behaved badly. She even told her servants to treat the King and his Knights coldly. They therefore took no notice of his orders and even pretended not to hear him.

4. Who came to the King during dinner? What did he say?
A. While King Lear was a guest in Goneril’s palace; a stranger came to the King one day as he was sitting down to dinner and begged to be taken into his service.

5. What did he want to prove to the King? How did he do it?
A. The stranger wanted to prove to the king that he was worth something to the king. When he saw that one of Goneril’s servants who was serving the king’s dinner, answered some of the king’s questions in a very rude way, he at once threw the servant out of the room which delighted the king. The King gave him some money and took him into his service.

6a) Who was the stranger actually?
A. The stranger was actually the Earl of Kent.
6b) Why did he dress himself as a servant?

A. The Earl of Kent dressed himself as a servant because although he had been sent abroad by the king he preferred to stay with him and be of service to him. He had always been loyal to the king and now that the king had begun to act foolishly in his old age, he still tried to serve him faithfully.

6c) What did he tell the king was his name?

A. He told the king that his name was Caius.

7a) Who was the other friend King Lear had besides Caius?

A. Besides Caius, King Lear had another friend who was the court fool, for it was the custom of Kings in those times to keep in their courts men called fools or jesters whose duty was to say funny things and amuse the King.

7b) What did he laughingly tell the King about his daughters?

A. He laughingly told the king daughters nowadays wanted obedient fathers; and that the cart was now drawing the horse.

Ref 6. “When Lear heard his daughter’s words, he began to see that his daughter meant to be his ruler.”

Q.1. What made King Lear feel so?

A. King Lear felt so as Goneril’s behaviour to her father grew worse. She decided to drive him away from the castle by her unkindness and also told him that his knights said that the King did not know how to behave properly.

2. What did King Lear tell Goneril for her insincere and cruel behaviour?

A. For Goneril’s insincere and cruel behaviour, King Lear cursed her for being so ungrateful, prayed that she might never have a child, or that if she had one, her child might make her as unhappy as she had made her father.

3. Where did he decide to go from Goneril’s castle?

A. From Goneril’s castle, he decided to go to Regan’s castle, the Duke of Cornwall’s castle.

4. What did Goneril do when King Lear left her castle?

A. When King Lear left Goneril’s castle, she wrote a letter to Regan that the King was coming.
5. How did Regan welcome the King?

A. Regan and her husband the Duke of Cornwall were not present to welcome the King. When they read Goneril’s letter, they decided to leave their own castle instead of staying there to receive the king.

6. How did the King feel when his two daughters, Goneril and Regan were unwilling to receive him?

A. When the poor old King’s two daughters were unwilling to receive him, he felt so unhappy and angry that he could scarcely speak. He cursed them both bitterly and cried out that one day they would be punished.

Ref 7. “Nothing, he said, could separate him from the daughter he had once driven away from him in anger.”

Q.1. How did Cordelia learn of her father’s condition? What did she do then? Describe the reunion between the father and the daughter.

A. Cordelia, Queen of France came to know of her father’s condition through the Earl of Kent who sailed across to France and told her, how shamefully King Lear had been treated by his daughters, Goneril and Regan.

After she came to know about her father’s condition, she persuaded her husband, King of France to send an army to England to help King Lear and with this army she herself landed at Dover, where the old King was safely kept by Kent.

When Cordelia reached Dover, the doctors advised her not to see her father immediately. But when they finally allowed her, she was pained by his changed appearance. At first he couldn’t recognize his daughter; he seemed to be living in another world and to be seeing not Cordelia, but a spirit. Slowly when his senses came back to him, he told her that he was a foolish old man of more than eighty years. He feared his mind was not perfect. Although he could scarcely make out anything, he recognized Cordelia to be his child, which made Cordelia glad. But King Lear thought that Cordelia did not love him anymore to which Cordelia said that she had no cause for not loving him. She only wished to bring him peace of mind once more. He told Cordelia, “Forgive and Forget; I am old and foolish.”
2. Why did Edmund kill Cordelia? In turn, what did King Lear do?

A. Edmund, the son of the Earl of Gloucester killed Cordelia because he wished to become the King of England and was determined not to let Cordelia, the daughter of the rightful King, live.

In turn, King Lear killed the man who killed Cordelia. For a while he stayed by her dead body; then with a bitter cry, he fell dead beside her.

3. How did Regan and Goneril meet their end?

A. About this time, the Duke of Cornwall, Regan’s husband died. Goneril poisoned Regan as she was extremely angry as she expressed her desire to marry Edmund whom Regan loved. When the Duke of Albany discovered Goneril’s crime and unfaithfulness, he put her in prison, where in fierce anger and disappointment, she killed herself. Thus, by their own wickedness and quarrelling, Goneril and Regan ended their lives.

4. Finally, who becomes the King? Who helped him to make Britain peaceful and happy again?

A. Finally, the Duke of Albany became the King. He had never approved of his wife’s treatment of the old king. Edmund’s plot to seize the kingdom failed for he was killed in a fight with his elder brother, Edgar. Edgar, Earl of Gloucester, and the good Earl of Kent helped him to make Britain peaceful and happy again.