

Nelson Mandela - Long Walk to Freedom

Activity (Page 17)

Question:

In Column A are some expressions you will find in the text. Make a guess and match each expression with an appropriate meaning from Column B.

A	B
(i) A rainbow gathering of different colours and nations	– A great ability (almost unimaginable) to remain unchanged by suffering (not losing hope, goodness or courage)
(ii) The seat of white supremacy	– A half-secret life, like a life lived in the fading light between sunset and darkness
(iii) Be overwhelmed with a sense of history	– A sign of human feeling (goodness, kindness, pity, justice, etc.)
(iv) Resilience that defies the imagination	– A beautiful coming together of various peoples, like the colours in a rainbow
(v) A glimmer of humanity	– The centre of racial superiority
(vi) A twilight existence	– Feel deeply emotional, remembering and understanding all the past events that have led up to the moment

Answer:

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Oral Comprehension Check (Page 18-19)

Question 1:

Where did the ceremonies take place? Can you name any public buildings in India that are made of sandstone?

Answer:

The ceremonies took place in the lovely sandstone amphitheatre formed by the Union Buildings in Pretoria, which were attended by dignitaries and world leaders of several nations. In India, the Rashtrapati Bhavan and Red Fort are two public buildings that are made of red sandstone.

Question 2:

Can you say how 10 May is an 'autumn day' in South Africa?

Answer:

Generally, autumn season signifies the harvest season that is associated with abundance and prosperity. 10 May is an 'autumn day' in South Africa because on this auspicious day, the installation of South Africa's first democratic, non-racial government took place in the presence of the largest gathering ever of international leaders on the South African soil.

Question 3:

At the beginning of his speech, Mandela mentions "an extraordinary human disaster". What does he mean by this? What is the "glorious ... human achievement" he speaks of at the end?

Answer:

In Mandela's speech 'an extraordinary human disaster', he wanted to express the practice of Apartheid in South Africa. During this practice, there was a racial segregation of people based on colour and the Black people suffered the most as they were discriminated by the rest. They could not enjoy the right to freedom. Mandela was jailed as a prisoner for 18 years on the infamous 'Robben Island' where he was mistreated by the authorities. He considered it as "great glorious human achievement" that he became the first Black President of South Africa where the Blacks were deprived of basic needs and suffered different kinds of discrimination and were treated badly.

Question 4:

What does Mandela thank the international leaders for?

Answer:

Mandela felt extremely privileged to welcome the dignitaries and international leaders at the swearing-in ceremony because it was not too long ago when the South Africans were considered outlaws. He therefore, thanked all of them for having come from far and wide to witness the historical oath-taking ceremony of the first Black President of South Africa. This was a wonderful gesture of international recognition to a newly born free democratic nation. This event could be considered as a common victory for justice, peace and human dignity.

Question 5:

What ideals does he set out for the future of South Africa?

Answer:

Mandela set the ideals of liberating the people of South Africa from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination. He wanted the people of the country to enjoy the right to freedom from all forms of bondage and prejudice.

Oral Comprehension Check (Page 21)

Question 1:

What do the military generals do? How has their attitude changed and why?

Answer:

The highest military generals of South African defence force and police saluted and pledged their loyalty to Mandela. This was of great significance as otherwise during the Apartheid era they would have arrested him and put him behind bars. Their attitude changed towards Blacks due to the struggles and sacrifices that were put in by many heroes of South Africa. This struggle for freedom was not just a struggle with Apartheid, but brought a massive change in mindsets of many people. Mandela believed that love is something that could be taught and human beings are naturally inclined towards love more, rather than hate.

Question 2:

Why were two national anthems sung?

Answer:

On the auspicious occasion of the inauguration ceremony, two national anthems were sung – the Whites sang ‘Nkosi Sikelel –iAfrika’ and the Blacks sang ‘Die Stem’ that was the old anthem of the Republic. Both the anthems symbolized the equality of rights between Whites and Blacks.

Question 3:

How does Mandela describe the systems of government in his country -
(i) in the first decade, and (ii) in the final decade, of the twentieth century?

Answer:

(i) In the first decade of the twentieth century, the white-skinned people of South Africa patched up their differences and erected a system of racial domination against the dark-skinned peoples of their own land. This created the basis of one of the harshest, most inhumane, societies the world has ever seen or known.
(ii) In the final decade of the twentieth century, the previous system of government had been overturned forever and replaced by one that recognised the rights and freedoms of all peoples, regardless of the colour of their skin.

Question 4:

What does courage mean to Mandela?

Answer:

According to Mandela, courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. A brave man is not one who does not feel afraid, but one who conquers that fear.

Question 5:

Which does he think is natural, to love or to hate?

Answer:

Mandela thought that love comes more naturally to the human heart rather than hate.

Oral Comprehension Check (Page 24)

Question 1:

What “twin obligations” does Mandela mention?

Answer:

Mandela mentions two obligations that every man has in life – (i) obligations to his family, to his parents, to his wife and children; and (ii) he has an obligation to his people, his community and his country.

Question 2:

What did being free mean to Mandela as a boy, and as a student? How does he contrast these “transitory freedoms” with “the basic and honourable freedoms”?

Answer:

Like any other kid, Mandela felt freedom meant to be happy, make merry and enjoy the blissful life in his childhood years. However, when a young fellow becomes an adult, the antics of childhood look transitory because all the childish activities are worthless from an adult’s perspective. When a person becomes an adult, he learns to earn a livelihood and earn his own bread and butter. In such a scenario, he understands the basic and honourable freedom in his family and the society that he lives in.

Question 3:

Does Mandela think the oppressor is free? Why/Why not?

Answer:

Mandela does not feel that the oppressor is free because in his opinion, an oppressor is like a victim of hatred who is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. He perceives that both the oppressor and the oppressed are robbed of their humanity and peace of mind.

Thinking about the Text (Page 24)

Question 1:

Why did such a large number of international leaders attend the inauguration? What did it signify the triumph of?

Answer:

Being a part of the inauguration ceremony, the international leaders showed a gesture of solidarity from the international community to the concept of end of Apartheid. This signified the victory of good over evil and the triumph of a tolerant society without any prejudice and discrimination of caste, colour or creed.

Question 2:

What does Mandela mean when he says he is “simply the sum of all those African patriots” who had gone before him?

Answer:

By saying that he is “simply the sum of all those African patriots”, Mandela offers his tribute to all the people who had sacrificed their lives in favour of the struggle for freedom. He says that he shall always remain grateful and thankful to those who had gone before him because those freedom fighters had paved the path of co-operation and unity for him. Therefore, Mandela felt that when he comes to power, he would bring equality among his people along with their support and co-operation.

Question 3:

Would you agree that the “depths of oppression” create “heights of character”? How does Mandela illustrate this? Can you add your own examples to this argument?

Answer:

Yes, I agree with the statement that “depths of oppression” do create ‘heights of character’. Nelson Mandela illustrates this by citing examples of great heroes of South Africa such as Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Chief Luthulis, Yusuf Dadoos, Bram Fischers, Robert Sobukwes among others who inspired other people by sacrificing their lives in the long struggle for freedom.

In India’s pre-Independence era, there was a galaxy of great leaders who didn’t give up to the oppression of British rule such as Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Lala Lajpat Rai, Chandra Shekhar Ajud, Bhagat Singh and many more. Nelson Mandela seems to be absolutely right, if we compare them with the quality of political leaders that India is having today.

Question 4:

How did Mandela’s understanding of freedom change with age and experience?

Answer:

With age and rich experience, Mandela understood the essence of freedom in everyone’s life. As a young boy, he always thought that he was born free and could do anything that he wanted. He strongly believed that as long as he obeyed his father and abided by the customs of his tribe, he was free in every possible way. However, as he grew older, he started feeling that freedom was required to raise a family and to earn livelihood, this started dominating his thoughts and views. In due course of time, he realised that he was selfish and was leading an illusionary life during his boyhood. He slowly understood that it was not just his freedom alone that was being curtailed, but the freedom of all the Black people was retrenched. Mandela understood that his people were being deprived and discriminated and this led him to develop a hunger for the freedom of his people.

Question 5:

How did Mandela’s ‘hunger for freedom’ change his life?

Answer:

During his youth, Mandela realised that it was not just his freedom alone that was being curtailed, but the freedom of all Black people. The hunger for his own freedom became the hunger for freedom for all his fellow brothers and sisters. In the process, this changed the fearful man to a bold rebel. Mandela sacrificed the comforts of a settled family life to fight for the freedom of his countrymen. He joined the African National Congress and this changed his perspective from a frightened young man into a fearless person who fought against racial prejudice and colour discrimination.

Thinking about Language (Page 24-26)

I. There are nouns in the text (formation, government) which are formed from the corresponding verbs (form, govern) by suffixing -(at)ion or ment. There may be a change in the spelling of some verb – noun pairs: such as rebel, rebellion; constitute, constitution.

Question 1:

Make a list of such pairs of nouns and verbs in the text.

Noun	Verb
rebellion	rebel
constitution	constitute

Answer:

Noun	Verb
rebellion	rebel
constitution	constitute
formation	form
government	govern
obligation	oblige
transformation	transform
discrimination	discriminate

deprivation	deprive
demonstration	demonstrate
oppression	oppress
imagination	imagine

Question 2:

Read the paragraph below. Fill in the blanks with the noun forms of the verbs in brackets.

Martin Luther King's _____ (contribute) to our history as an outstanding leader began when he came to the _____ (assist) of Rosa Parks, a seamstress who refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger. In those days American Blacks were confined to positions of second class citizenship by restrictive laws and customs. To break these laws would mean _____ (subjugate) and _____ (humiliate) by the police and the legal system. Beatings, _____ (imprison) and sometimes death awaited those who defied the System. Martin Luther King's tactics of protest involved non-violent _____ (resist) to racial injustice.

Answer:

Martin Luther King's **contribution** to our history as an outstanding leader began when he came to the **assistance** of Rosa Parks, a seamstress who refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger. In those days American Blacks were confined to positions of second class citizenship by restrictive laws and customs. To break these laws would mean **subjugation** and **humiliation** by the police and the legal system. Beatings, **imprisonment** and sometimes death awaited those who defied the System. Martin Luther King's tactics of protest involved non-violent **resistance** to racial injustice.

II. Using the Definite Article with Names

Question 1:

Here are some more examples of 'the' used with proper names. Try to say what these sentences mean. (You may consult a dictionary if you wish. Look at the entry for 'the'.)

1. Mr Singh regularly invites the Amitabh Bachchans and the Shah Rukh Khans to his parties.
2. Many people think that Madhuri Dixit is the Madhubala of our times.
3. History is not only the story of the Alexanders, the Napoleons and the Hitlers, but of ordinary people as well.

Answer:

1. This implies that Mr. Singh regularly invites prominent personalities of caliber such as Mr. Amitabh Bachchan and Mr. Shah Rukh Khan to his parties.

2. This implies that in the current generation, Madhuri Dixit is compared to the great actress, Madhubala.
3. This means history is not only the story of great fighters such as Alexander, Napoleon or Hitler, but also of other ordinary people.

III. Idiomatic Expressions

Question 1:

Match the italicised phrases in Column A with the phrase nearest in meaning in Column B. (Hint: First look for the sentence in the text in which the phrase in Column A occurs.)

A	B
1. I was <i>not unmindful of</i> the fact	(i) had not forgotten; was aware of the fact (ii) was not careful about the fact (iii) forgot or was not aware of the fact
2. when my comrades and I <i>were pushed to our limits</i>	(i) pushed by the guards to the wall (ii) took more than our share of beatings (iii) felt that we could not endure the suffering any longer
3. to reassure me and <i>keep me going</i>	(i) make me go on walking (ii) help me continue to live in hope in this very difficult situation (iii) make me remain without complaining
4. the basic and honourable freedoms of... <i>earning my keep</i> ,...	(i) earning enough money to live on (ii) keeping what I earned (iii) getting a good salary

Answer:

A	B
1. I was <i>not unmindful of</i> the fact	(i) had not forgotten; was aware of the fact
2. when my comrades and I <i>were pushed to our limits</i>	(iii) felt that we could not endure the suffering any longer
3. to reassure me and <i>keep me going</i>	(ii) help me continue to live in hope in this very difficult situation
4. the basic and honourable freedoms of... <i>earning my keep</i> ,...	(i) earning enough money to live on

Speaking (Page 26)

Question:

In groups, discuss the issues suggested in the box below. Then prepare a speech of about two minutes on

the following topic. (First make notes for your speech in writing.)

True liberty is freedom from poverty, deprivation and all forms of discrimination.

- causes of poverty and means of overcoming it
- discrimination based on gender, religion, class, etc.
- constitutionally guaranteed human rights

Answer:

Activity to be done by yourself.

Writing (Page 26-28)

Question I: Looking at Contrasts

Nelson Mandela's writing is marked by balance: many sentences have two parts in balance.

Use the following phrases to complete the sentences given below.

(i) they can be taught to love.	(iv) but he who conquers that fear.
(ii) I was born free.	(v) to create such heights of character.
(iii) but the triumph over it.	

1. It requires such depths of oppression _____
2. Courage was not the absence of fear _____
3. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid _____
4. If people can learn to hate _____
5. I was not born with a hunger to be free. _____

Answer:

1. It requires such depths of oppression **(v) to create such heights of character.**
2. Courage was not the absence of fear **(iii) but the triumph over it.**
3. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid **(iv) but he who conquers that fear.**
4. If people can learn to hate **(i) they can be taught to love.**
5. I was not born with a hunger to be free. **(ii) I was born free.**

Question II:

This text repeatedly contrasts the past with the present or the future. We can use coordinated clauses to contrast two views, for emphasis or effect. Given below are sentences carrying one part of the contrast. Find in the text the second part of the contrast, and complete each item. Identify the words which signal the contrast. This has been done for you in the first item.

1. *For decades* the Union Buildings had been the seat of white supremacy, *and now* ...
2. Only moments before, the highest generals of the South African defence force and police ... saluted me and pledged their loyalty. ... not so many years before they would not have saluted _____
3. Although that day neither group knew the lyrics of the anthem ..., they would soon _____
4. My country is rich in the minerals and gems that lie beneath its soil, _____
5. The Air Show was not only a display of pinpoint precision and military force, but _____
6. It was this desire for the freedom of my people ... that transformed _____ into a bold one, that drove _____ to become a criminal, that turned _____ into a man without a home.

Answer:

1. *For decades* the Union Buildings had been the seat of white supremacy, *and now* it was the site of a rainbow gathering of different colours and nations for the installation of South Africa's first democratic, non-racial government.
2. *Only moments before*, the highest generals of the South African defence force and police ... saluted me and pledged their loyalty. ... *not so many years before* they would not have saluted but arrested me.
3. Although that day *neither group knew the lyrics* of the anthem ..., they would soon know the words by heart.
4. My country is *rich in the minerals and gems* that lie beneath its soil, but I have always known that its greatest wealth is its people, finer and truer than the purest diamonds.
5. The Air Show was not only *a display of pinpoint precision and military force*, but a demonstration of the military's loyalty to democracy, to a new government that had been freely and fairly elected.
6. It was this desire for the freedom of my people ... that transformed a frightened young man into a bold one, that drove a law-abiding attorney to become a criminal, that turned a family-loving husband into a man without a home.

Question III: Expressing Your Opinion

Do you think there is colour prejudice in our own country? Discuss this with your friend and write a paragraph of about 100 to 150 words about this. You have the option of making your paragraph a humorous one. (Read the short verse given below.)

When you were born you were pink
When you grew up you became white

When you are in the sun you are red
When you are sick you are yellow
When you are angry you are purple
When you are shocked you are grey
And you have the cheek to call me 'coloured'.

Answer:

Activity to be done by yourself.

