

Chapter 2: Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom

Oral Comprehension Check

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Question: 1

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

Answer:

The ceremonies took place in the campus of the Union Building of Pretoria, which were attended by dignitaries and leaders of many nations. In India; Rashtrapati Bhavan and Red Fort are buildings made of red sandstone.

Question: 2

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

Answer:

As South Africa is in the Southern Hemisphere, may falls in the autumn season. Thus 10th May is an 'autumn day'.

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:

By 'an extraordinary human disaster' Mandela means to state the practice of apartheid in South Africa. During this there was a racial segregation based on colour and the blacks suffered a lot. They were not allowed to demand freedom or any right. Mandela himself did spend many years on infamous 'Robben Island' as a prisoner where he was beaten mercilessly. He considered it as great glorious human achievement that a black person became the President of a country where the blacks were not even considered human beings and were treated badly.

Question: 4

What does Mandela thank the international leaders for ?

Answer:

Mandela felt very privileged to welcome the international leaders at the swearing – in ceremony because not too long ago, the South Africans were considered outlaws. He thus thanks all of them for having come to witness the historical ceremony. This was a gesture of international recognition to a newly born free democratic nation and it could be considered as a common victory for justice, peace and human dignity.

Question: 5

What ideals does Nelson Mandela set for the future of South Africa?

Answer:

Nelson Mandela set the ideals of liberating people from bondage of poverty, deprivation and suffering. He also set the ideal for a society where there would be no discrimination based on gender or racial origins.

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Question: 1

What did the military generals do ? How did their attitude change and why?

Answer:

The highest military generals of South African defence force saluted Mandela and pledged their loyalty which was of great significance as during apartheid era they would have arrested him. The change in their attitude was because of struggle and sacrifices put in by many heroes of South Africa. This struggle not only ensured the freedom of a nation struggling with apartheid, but brought a change in mindsets of many. He believed that love can also be taught and human being is naturally inclined towards love rather than hate.

Question: 2

Why were two national anthems sung?

Answer:

On the auspicious occasion of the inauguration two national anthems: one by the Whites and the other by the Blacks symbolising the equality of the Blacks and the Whites were sung.

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 century, the whites erected a system of racial domination against the blacks, thus creating the basis of one of the harshest and most inhumane societies the world had ever known.

(ii) In the final decade of the 20th century, the . previous system had been overturned and replaced by one which recognised rights and freedom of all people regardless of color of their skin.

Question: 4

What does courage mean to Mandela?

Answer:

For Mandela courage does not mean the absence of fear but a victory over fear. According to him brave men need not be fearless but should be able to conquer fear.

Question: 5

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

Answer:

For Mandela, love comes more naturally to the human heart than hate.

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Question: 1

What "twin obligations" does Mandela mention?

Answer:

Mandela mentions that every man has twin obligations. The first is to his family, parents, wife and children; the second obligation is 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, for Mandela freedom meant to make merry and enjoy the blissful life. Once one becomes an adult, antics of childhood looks like transitory because most of the childish activities are wasteful from an adult's perspective. Once you are adult, you have to earn a livelihood to bring the bacon home. Its only then when you get an honourable existence in the family and in the society.

Question: 3

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

Answer:

Mandela does not think that the oppressor is free because according to him an oppressor is a victim of hatred who is behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. He realises that both the oppressor and the oppressed are robbed of their humanity and peace.

Thinking about the Text

Question: 1

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

Answer:

To be the part of the inauguration, international leaders showed a gesture of solidarity from international community to the idea of end of apartheid. It was the significance of the victory of good over evil and triumph of a tolerant society without any discrimination.

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 wants to pay his tribute to all the people who have sacrificed their lives for the sake of freedom. He says that he is grateful to those who had gone before him because those heroes of past had paved the path of co-operation and unity for him. Therefore, he could try to come to power to bring equality for his people with their support.

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:

I agree with the statement that depths of oppression create heights of character. Nelson Mandela illustrates this by giving examples of great heroes of South Africa like Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and others who were inspired to sacrifice their lives in the long freedom struggle.

India is full of such examples, during our freedom struggle there was a galaxy of leaders of great characters and the oppression of British rule created and encouraged people of noble characters like Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, JL Nehru, Chandra Shekhar Ajud, Sardar Bhagat Singh and many more. If we compare them with the quality of political leaders India is having today, then Nelson Mandela seems to be absolutely right;

Question: 4

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

Answer:

With age and experience, Mandela understood the real meaning of freedom. As a young boy, he thought that he was born free and believed that as long as he obeyed his father and abided by the customs of his tribe, he was free in every possible manner. As he grew older, freedom to raise a family and freedom to earn livelihood started dominating his thoughts. Gradually he realised that he was selfish during his boyhood. He slowly understood that it was not just his freedom that was being curtailed, but the freedom of all blacks. It was the freedom from fear and prejudice. Age and experience widened his perspective of freedom.

Question: 5

How did Mandela's 'hunger for freedom' change his life?

Answer:

Mandela realised in his youth that it was not just his freedom that was being curtailed, but the freedom of all blacks. This changed the fearful man to a fearless rebel.

He sacrificed the comforts of a settled family life to fight for a greater cause. He joined the African National

Congress and this changed him from a frightened young man into a bold one who fought against racial prejudice.

Thinking about the Language

Questions:

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 change in the spelling of some verb – noun pairs ; such as rebel, rebellion; constitute, constitution.

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

Noun	Verb
Rebellion	Rebel
Constitution	Constitute

1. 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

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

Martin Luther King's __contribution__(contribute) to our history as an outstanding leader began when he came to the __assistance__(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 __subjugation (subjugate) and __humiliation (humiliate) by the police and the legal system. Beatings, __imprisonment (imprison) and sometimes death awaited those who defied the System. Martin Luther King's tactics of protest involved non-violent –resistance (resist) to racial injustice.

II. 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')

(i) Mr Singh regularly invites the Amitabh Bachchans and the Shah Rukh Khans to his parties.

(ii) Many people think that Madhuri Dixit is the Madhubala of our times.

(in) History is not only the story of the Alexanders, the Napoleons and the Hitlers, but of ordinary people as well.

Answer:

(i) : This means that Mr Singh regularly invites famous personalities as of the calibre of Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan to his parties.

(ii) This means that Madhuri Dixit is compared to a landmark in acting in the form of legendary actress Madhubala.

(iii) This means that history is not only the story of the great fighters and leaders such as Alexander, Napoleon and Hitler, but also of ordinary people.

III. Match, the italicised phrases in Column A with the phrase nearest meaning in Column B.

(Hint: First look for the sentence in the text which the phrase in column A occurs.)

	A		B
1.	I was not unmindful of the fact.	(i)	had not forgotten : was aware of the fact
		(ii)	thinking that this would happen (it may or may not have happened.)
		(iii)	stopped believing that this good thing would happen.
2.	When my comrades and I were pushed to our limits	(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 keep me going	(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... earning my keep...	(i)	earning enough money to live on
		(ii)	keeping what I earned
		(iii)	getting a good salary

Answers:

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

Writing

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 to create such heights of character.
2. Courage was not the absence of fear but the triumph over it.
3. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid but he who conquers that fear.
4. If people can learn to hate they can be taught to love.
5. I was not born with a hunger to be free. I was born free.

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.

Answers:

2. but arrested me.
3. know the words by heart.
4. but I have always known that its greatest wealth is its people, finer and truer than the purest diamonds.
5. but a demonstration of the military's loyalty to democracy, to a new government that had been freely and fairly elected.
6. frightened young man, a law-abiding attorney, a family-loving husband

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 2020-21 this. You have the option of making your paragraph a humorous one. (Read the short verse given below.)

Answer: to be self attempted