

Chapter 7: A Visit to Cambridge

Comprehension Check

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Question 1: Which is the right sentence?

"Cambridge was my metaphor for England." To the writer,

- (i) Cambridge was a reputed university in England.
- (ii) England was famous for Cambridge.
- (iii) Cambridge was the real England.

Answer: (iii) To the writer, Cambridge was the real England.**Question 2:** Which is the right sentence?

The writer phoned Stephen Hawking's house

- (i) from the nearest phone booth.
- (ii) from outside a phone booth.
- (iii) from inside a phone booth.

Answer: (ii) The writer phoned Stephen Hawking's house from outside a phone booth.**Question 3:** Which is the right sentence?

Every time he spoke to the scientist, the writer felt guilty because

- (i) he wasn't sure what he wanted to ask.
- (ii) he forced the scientist to use his voice synthesiser.
- (iii) he was face to face with a legend.

Answer: (ii) Every time he spoke to the scientist, the writer felt guilty because he forced the scientist to use his voice synthesiser.**Question 4:** "I felt a huge relief... in the possibilities of my body." In the given context, the highlighted words refer to

- (i) shifting in the wheelchair, turning the wrist.
- (ii) standing up, walking,
- (iii) speaking, writing

Answer: (i) In the given context, the highlighted words refer to shifting in the wheelchair, turning the wrist.

Working with Text

Question 1: Answer the following questions.

- (i) Did the prospect of meeting Stephen Hawking make the writer nervous? If so, why?
- (ii) Did he at the same time feel very excited? If so, why?

Answer:

(i) Yes, the prospect of meeting Stephen Hawking made the writer nervous. He was to meet a great personality and that too one who had achieved greatness despite his disabilities. Clearly, it was a big moment, a great honour for the writer. So it is not surprising that he was nervous at the prospect of meeting Stephen Hawking.

(ii) Yes, he felt excited at the same time because it made him stronger to see somebody like him achieving something huge. This made him aware of the many possibilities present before him, thereby helping him to reach out further than he ever thought he could.

Question 2: Guess the first question put to the scientist by the writer.

Answer: The writer might have asked the scientist if he had been brave to reach where he had.

Question 3: Stephen Hawking said, "I've had no choice." Does the writer think there was a choice? What was it?

Answer: The writer thought that there was a choice. Stephen Hawking could have chosen to leave everything, and be sad and depressed. He could have sulked. However, he chose to live creatively knowing the reality of his disintegrating body.

Question 4: "I could feel his anguish." What could be the anguish?

Answer: Stephen Hawking's mind was active with many thoughts that he wanted to express. However, his thoughts came out in phrases, without reflecting his feelings or emotions. His sentences were mere lines, without any sentiment. The writer felt he could understand his anguish and frustration at that.

Question 5: What endeared the scientist to the writer so that he said he was looking at one of the most beautiful men in the world?

Answer: The writer asked Stephen Hawking if he found it annoying that someone like him came and disturbed him in his work. To this query, the scientist replied in the affirmative, frankly and honestly. Then, he smiled his one way smile and this was what endeared him to the writer. The writer felt that he was looking at one of the most beautiful men in the world.

Question 6: Read aloud the description of 'the beautiful' man. Which is the most beautiful sentence in the description?

Answer: The most beautiful sentence in the description is, "...you look at his eyes which can speak, still, and they are saying something huge and urgent..."

Question 7:

(i) If 'the lantern' is the man, what would its 'walls' be?

(ii) What is housed within the thin walls?

(iii) What general conclusion does the writer draw from this comparison?

Answer:

(i) If 'the lantern' is the man, its 'walls' would be the man's body.

(ii) The incandescence or the inner glow of the man is housed within the thin walls.

(iii) The conclusion that the writer drew from this comparison was that the body exists only like a case made of shadows. It is just an accessory. It is the soul that matters. Each individual is what he is from his heart and soul, and not from the body.

Question 8: What is the scientist's message for the disabled?

Answer: The message that he gave to the disabled was that they should concentrate on what they were good at.

Question 9: Why does the writer refer to the guitar incident? Which idea does it support?

Answer: When Stephen Hawking said that things such as disabled Olympics were a waste of time, the writer agreed with him. He remembered the years which he spent trying to play a Spanish guitar that was considerably larger than he was. He was very happy when he unstrung it one night. It supports Stephen Hawking's idea that the disabled should only concentrate on what they are good at, and not take up things unnecessarily.

Question 10: The writer expresses his great gratitude to Stephen Hawking. What is the gratitude for?

Answer: The writer expressed his gratitude to Stephen Hawking because he had been an inspiration for him. He saw him as the embodiment of his bravest self. He felt that if he had been as brave as Stephen, he would have achieved a lot. He felt he was moving towards that embodiment that he had believed in for many years. That is why he expressed his greatest gratitude to him as he had made him realise what great heights he could reach.

Question 11: Complete the following sentences taking their appropriate parts from both the boxes below.

- (i) There was his assistant on the line ...
- (ii) You get fed up with people asking you to be brave, ...
- (iii) There he was, ...
- (iv) You look at his eyes which can speak, ...
- (v) It doesn't do much good to know ...

A

- tapping at a little switch in his hand
- and I told him
- that there are people
- as if you have a courage account
- and they are saying something huge and urgent

B

- trying to find the words on his computer.
- I had come in a wheelchair from India.
- on which you are too lazy to draw a cheque.
- smiling with admiration to see you breathing still.
- it is hard to tell what.

Answer:

- (i) There was his assistant on the line and I told him I had come in a wheelchair from India.
- (ii) You get fed up with people asking you to be brave, as if you have a courage account on which you are too lazy to draw a cheque.
- (iii) There he was, tapping at a little switch in his hand trying to find words on his computer.
- (iv) You look at his eyes which can speak, and they are saying something huge and urgent – it is hard to tell what.
- (v) It doesn't do much good to know that there are people smiling with admiration to see you breathing still.

Working with Language

Question 1: Fill in the blanks in the sentences below using the appropriate forms of the words given in the following box.

guide	succeed	chair	travel	pale	draw	true
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- (i) I met a _____ from an antique land.
- (ii) I need special _____ in mathematics. I can't count the number of times I have failed in the subject.
- (iii) The guide called Stephen Hawking a worthy _____ to Isaac Newton.

- (iv) His other problems _____ into insignificance beside this unforeseen mishap.
 (v) The meeting was _____ by the youngest member of the board.
 (vi) Some people say 'yours _____' when they informally refer to themselves.
 (vii) I wish it had been a _____ match. We would have been spared the noise of celebrations, at least.

Answer:

- (i) I met a traveller from an antique land.
 (ii) I need special guidance in mathematics. I can't count the number of times I have failed in the subject.
 (iii) The guide called Stephen Hawking a worthy successor to Isaac Newton.
 (iv) His other problems paled into insignificance beside this unforeseen mishap.
 (v) The meeting was chaired by the youngest member of the board.
 (vi) Some people say 'yours truly.' when they informally refer to themselves.
 (vii) I wish it had been a drawn match. We would have been spared the noise of celebrations, at least.

Question 2: Make six phrases using the words given in the box.

read/session	smile/face	revolve/chair	
walk/tour	dance/doll	win/chance	

Answer:

- (i) Reading session
 (ii) Smiling face
 (iii) Revolving chair
 (iv) Walking tour
 (v) Dancing doll
 (vi) Winning chance

Question: 3 Use all or both in the blanks. Tell your partner why you chose one or the other.

- (i) He has two brothers. _____ are lawyers.
 (ii) More than ten persons called. _____ of them wanted to see you.
 (iii) They _____ cheered the team.
 (iv) _____ her parents are teachers.
 (v) How much have you got? Give me _____ of it.

Answer:

- (i) He has two brothers. Both are lawyers.
 (ii) More than ten persons called. All of them wanted to see you.
 (iii) They all cheered the team.
 (iv) Both her parents are teachers.
 (v) How much have you got? Give me all of it.

Question 4: Complete each sentence using the right form of the adjective given in brackets.

- (i) My friend has one of the _____ cars on the road. (fast)
 (ii) This is the _____ story I have ever read. (interesting)
 (iii) What you are doing now is _____ than what you did yesterday. (easy)
 (iv) Ramesh and his wife are both _____. (short)
 (v) He arrived _____ as usual. Even the chief guest came _____ than he did. (late, early)

Answer:

- (i) My friend has one of the fastest cars on the road.
 (ii) This is the most interesting story I have ever read.

(iii) What you are doing now is easier than what you did yesterday.

(iv) Ramesh and his wife are both short.

(v) He arrived late as usual. Even the chief guest came earlier than he did.

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