

NCERT Class 10 English Chapter 2 Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom

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 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.

2. Why were two national anthems sung?

Ans: Nelson Mandela wanted to make Africa a safe and equal country for everyone and promote universal brotherhood. So, on the day of the inauguration one national anthem was sung by whites and the other by blacks.

3. How does Mandela describe the systems of government in his country (i) in the first decade

Ans: In the first decade the racial discrimination between the blacks and white, the whites set themselves on higher pedestal and created grounds for one of the gravest racial discrimination the world had ever known. The dark skinned were treated as inferior in their own land and were denied even basic human rights.

(ii) in the final decade of the twentieth century?

Ans: In the final decade of twentieth century the racial discrimination was eradicated and was replaced by equal rights for all, irrespective of their colour.

4. What does courage mean to Mandela?

Ans: Mandela's definition of courage did not mean absence of fear but victory over fear. A man should not be fearless. He should acknowledge the fear and gather courage to fight against it.

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

Ans: It is natural for the human heart to love than to hate, according to Mandela.

Oral Comprehension Check (pg. 24)

1. What "twin obligations" does Mandela mention?

Ans: Mandela mentions that every man shoulders responsibility first towards his family, wife, children, and parents and towards his nation and community.

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”?

Ans: Like any other kid for Mandela also the freedom meant the freedom to make merry and enjoy a blissful life. He was allowed everything till the time he followed the rules laid out by his father and the tribe. After growing up he realized freedom had a more deeper meaning and value than he actually thought. It meant equality and honour for all. As an adult you will have to make sure there is food for the family and honour of the family is held high.

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

Solution : Mandela does not feel that the oppressor is free because according to him an oppressor is a prisoner of hatred, who is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. He feels that both the oppressor and the oppressed are robbed of their humanity.

Thinking about the Text

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

Solution : The presence of large number of international leaders was a gesture of solidarity from international community to the idea of the end of apartheid. It signified the triumph of good over evil, the triumph of the idea of a tolerant society without any discrimination.

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

Solution : Mandela wants to pay his tribute to all the people who had sacrificed their lives for the sake of freedom. He feels that he is the sum of all those African patriots who had gone before him because those heroes of yesterday years had paved the path of co-operation and unity for him. Therefore, he got the support of his people to be able to come to power to bring equality for his own people.

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?

Solution : Yes, I agree that the “depths of oppression” create “heights of character”. Nelson Mandela illustrates this by giving examples of great heroes of South Africa who sacrificed 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. Probably the oppression of British rule created so many men of such characters. If we compare this with the quality of political leaders India is having today, then Nelson Mandela seems to be absolutely right.

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

Solution : With age Nelson Mandela realised that he had a lot of responsibilities of his people, his community and his country. As a boy, Mandela did not have a hunger for freedom because he thought that he was born free. He believed that as long as he obeyed his father and abided by the customs of his tribe, he was free in every possible manner. He had certain needs as a teenager and certain needs as a young man. Gradually, he realized that he was selfish during his boyhood. He slowly understands that it is not just his freedom that is being curtailed, but the freedom of all blacks. It is after attaining this understanding that he develops a hunger for the freedom of his people.

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

Solution : Mandela realized in his youth that it was not just his freedom that was being curtailed, but the freedom of all blacks. The hunger for his own freedom became the hunger for the freedom of his people. This desire of a non-racial society transformed him into a virtuous and self-sacrificing man. Thus, he joined the African National Congress and this changed him from a frightened young man into a bold man.

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.*

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

Ans: It was the site of a rainbow gathering of different colours and nations.

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 _____

Ans: but arrested me.

3. Although that day neither group knew the lyrics of the anthem ..., they would soon _____

Ans: know the words by heart.

4. My country is rich in the minerals and gems that lie beneath its soil, _____

Ans: 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 _____

Ans: 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 _____ into a bold one, that drove _____ to become a criminal, that turned _____ into a man without a home.

Ans: 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 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'.

Ans: Yes, there is colour prejudice in my country. I belong to an Asian country where pale skin isn't that common. But I have seen a lot of people judge and stereotype people based on their colour. Pale individuals are considered better looking and more attractive than those who have darker skin tones. Society conditions the younger individuals in such a way that they should be ashamed of their skin tone if they are on the brown side of the palette. They are casually made fun of and taunted by their friends and family about it, accompanied by their advice to use skin lightening products. This reduces the self-confidence of an individual and makes them feel unacceptable and unworthy of any human affection. I believe this is a very shallow way to judge or form an opinion about someone.