Chapter 8: A Homage to Our Brave Soldiers

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Exercise 8.1 — Comprehension Check (Letter I)

Q1 Where is the National War Memorial located and what is its significance?

SOLUTION

The National War Memorial is located near the iconic India Gate in New Delhi, spread over 40 acres of land.
It was envisioned and inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in February 2019.
Its significance: it is a tribute to the brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives defending India in various wars after independence — from the Indo-China conflict of 1962 to the Kargil War of 1999. It ensures the nation never forgets the cost of freedom.
There are 29,000 tablets on which more than 26,000 names of fallen soldiers are etched in golden letters.

Answer: The National War Memorial is located near India Gate in New Delhi, spread over 40 acres. It is a tribute to over 26,000 fallen soldiers who defended India in wars after independence (1947 to date). It ensures the nation remembers the sacrifice of its brave soldiers and never forgets the cost of freedom.

Q2 What is the nation's highest gallantry award?

SOLUTION

The text states: 'Our teacher told us about the 21 bravehearts who were awarded the Param Vir Chakra (PVC), India's highest wartime gallantry medal, for their service to the nation.'
Major Somnath Sharma was posthumously awarded India's first PVC in the Battle of Badgam in 1947.

Answer: The nation's highest gallantry award is the Param Vir Chakra (PVC). It is India's highest wartime gallantry medal, awarded for the most conspicuous bravery in the presence of the enemy. Twenty-one bravehearts have been awarded this honour.

Q3 What do the walls of Chakras portray?

SOLUTION

The National War Memorial has four concentric circles — Amar Chakra, Veerta Chakra, Tyag Chakra, and Raksha Chakra.

The Veerta Chakra (Circle of Bravery) has a covered gallery with six murals crafted in bronze depicting valiant battle actions of the Armed Forces.

The Tyag Chakra (Circle of Sacrifice) has circular concentric walls of honour symbolising the ancient war formation Chakravyuh. The walls are covered with granite tablets, each dedicated to one fallen hero, with names etched in golden letters.

The Raksha Chakra (Circle of Protection) has a row of trees representing soldiers who ensure the territorial integrity of the nation.

Answer: The walls of the Chakras portray the valour and sacrifice of India's soldiers. The Veerta Chakra walls exhibit six bronze murals showing valiant battle actions. The Tyag Chakra walls are covered with granite tablets bearing the names of fallen heroes in golden letters, symbolising the ancient war formation Chakravyuh.

Q4 Find in the lesson the paragraph/s and the sentence that evoke the feelings given below.

(i) feeling of wonder
(ii) heartening
(iii) sense of motivation
(iv) pride
(v) visually inspiring
(vi) sadness
(vii) gratitude
(viii) inspiration

SOLUTION

(i) Feeling of wonder: 'It is spread over 40 acres of land near the iconic India Gate... it is a tribute to some of the bravest Indians.' / 'Isn't it amazing!' (para on the four Chakras).

(ii) Heartening: 'It was heartening to know that our government has recognised the sacrifice of brave soldiers.'

(iii) Sense of motivation: 'Then the teacher shared with us the citation of Param Vir Chakra awardee Lance Naik Albert Ekka. It touched my heart and also motivated me... I aspire to be courageous like him when I join the army!'

(iv) Pride: 'It truly is a majestic site that filled me with pride for our nation.'

(v) Visually inspiring: 'The overall environment created an emotive experience that was visually inspiring.'

(vi) Sadness: 'It was sad to think about the massive devastation and loss of life caused by wars.'

(vii) Gratitude: 'the freedom and security we enjoy today is because of the many brave men and women who have served in the Indian Armed Forces over decades.'

(viii) Inspiration: 'It motivated me to live a life worthy of the sacrifices of our heroes.'

Answer: (i) Wonder — 'Isn't it amazing!' / the description of 40 acres near India Gate. (ii) Heartening — 'It was heartening to know that our government has recognised the sacrifice of brave soldiers.' (iii) Motivation — 'It touched my heart and also motivated me.' (iv) Pride — 'It truly is a majestic site that filled me with pride for our nation.' (v) Visually inspiring — 'The overall environment created an emotive experience that was visually inspiring.' (vi) Sadness — 'It was sad to think about the massive devastation and loss of life caused by wars.' (vii) Gratitude — 'the freedom and security we enjoy today is because of the many brave men and women who have served in the Indian Armed Forces.' (viii) Inspiration — 'It motivated me to live a life worthy of the sacrifices of our heroes.'

Exercise 8.2 — Comprehension Check (Letter II)

Q1 Which book does Ananda want to read and why?

SOLUTION

Ananda read in the newspaper about Captain Anuj Nayyar, MVC, who was posthumously awarded the Maha Vir Chakra for exemplary valour during the Kargil War in 1999.

She learnt that his mother Meena Nayyar wrote a memoir titled 'Tiger of Drass – Capt. Anuj Nayyar – 23 – Kargil Hero'.

Ananda says: 'I shall certainly go through' the book, because she wants to learn more about Captain Anuj Nayyar and his sacrifice.

Answer: Ananda wants to read 'Tiger of Drass – Capt. Anuj Nayyar – 23 – Kargil Hero', a memoir written by Meena Nayyar, the mother of Captain Anuj Nayyar. She wants to read it to learn more about his exemplary valour during the Kargil War of 1999, for which he was posthumously awarded the Maha Vir Chakra.

Q2 How did Ananda feel after reading about the National War Memorial?

SOLUTION

Ananda felt motivated and inspired after reading Soumya's letter about the National War Memorial.

She says: 'I feel motivated and I am seriously thinking of joining the Armed Forces for serving my motherland.'

She also felt it was a duty to periodically visit such places to honour valiant soldiers whose sacrifices enable citizens to walk freely without fear.

Answer: After reading Soumya's letter, Ananda felt deeply motivated and inspired. She was moved by the stories of courage and sacrifice and said she was seriously thinking of joining the Armed Forces to serve her motherland. She also felt it was every citizen's duty to visit such memorials and honour valiant soldiers.

Q3 Why was she reminded of the poem Pushp ki Abhilasha?

SOLUTION

Ananda visited the war memorial in Chandigarh on National Martyrs Day, where she saw people offering flowers and prayers at the War Memorial in the Bougainvillea Garden, Sector 3.

The sight of people dedicating flowers as a mark of respect to soldiers reminded her of the poem 'Pushp ki Abhilasha' by Makhanlal Chaturvedi.

The poem expresses the wish of a flower to be thrown on the path taken by brave soldiers going to sacrifice their lives for the motherland — a perfect parallel to the act of offering flowers at a war memorial.

Answer: Ananda was reminded of the poem because at the Chandigarh War Memorial, she saw people offering flowers as a mark of respect to soldiers. The poem 'Pushp ki Abhilasha' by Makhanlal Chaturvedi is about a flower that wishes to be thrown on the path taken by brave soldiers going to sacrifice themselves for the motherland — directly mirroring the act of flower-offering at the memorial.

Q4 Reading the letter from Soumya, Ananda is inspired to act. What actions does she intend to take up? Fill in the table citing the sentences from the text.
(i) visit
(ii) mobile app
(iii) sharing ideas
(iv) creating a collage
(v) joining the army
(vi) website

SOLUTION

(i) Visit: 'We all wish to visit the National War Memorial, Delhi.'
(ii) Mobile app: 'We have found out a mobile app 'National War Memorial and Museum'. This app is very interactive and provides answers to our queries in 21 languages.'
(iii) Sharing ideas: 'Next week, I am going to share this idea with my classmates and my teacher.'
(iv) Creating a collage: 'I think it would be great to create a collage capturing the lives and stories of people that can inspire us each day.'
(v) Joining the army: 'I feel motivated and I am seriously thinking of joining the Armed Forces for serving my motherland.'
(vi) Website: She shares the website link https://nationalwarmemorial.gov.in/ to explore more about the Memorial.

Answer: (i) Visit — 'We all wish to visit the National War Memorial, Delhi.' (ii) Mobile app — 'We have found out a mobile app 'National War Memorial and Museum'.' (iii) Sharing ideas — 'Next week, I am going to share this idea with my classmates and my teacher.' (iv) Creating a collage — 'I think it would be great to create a collage capturing the lives and stories of people that can inspire us each day.' (v) Joining the army — 'I feel motivated and I am seriously thinking of joining the Armed Forces for serving my motherland.' (vi) Website — She refers to https://nationalwarmemorial.gov.in/ to learn more.

Exercise 8.3 — Working with the Text

Q1 Why are war memorials built?

SOLUTION

The teacher explains: 'war always takes its toll, and therefore, many brave soldiers have had to sacrifice their lives for the country even after our independence in 1947. This is what makes monuments like the National War Memorial extremely important so that we should never forget the cost of freedom.'

Ananda adds that some see a war memorial as 'an expression of deep gratitude for the supreme sacrifice made by our brave soldiers defending the sovereignty and integrity of the country.'

Answer: War memorials are built to honour the soldiers who sacrificed their lives defending the nation, so that we never forget the cost of freedom. They are expressions of deep gratitude for the supreme sacrifice of brave soldiers who defended the sovereignty and integrity of the country.

Q2 Why is it our duty to pay homage to our brave soldiers?

SOLUTION

Ananda writes: 'Their sacrifices enable us to walk freely in our country without fear of enemy threats.'

The freedom and security that citizens enjoy is because of brave men and women who served in the Indian Armed Forces.

Ananda says: 'I also feel it is our duty to periodically visit such places to honour our valiant soldiers, who have made great sacrifices for us.'

Answer: It is our duty to pay homage to brave soldiers because the freedom and security we enjoy is built on their sacrifices. Their courage and dedication enable us to walk freely without fear. Paying homage ensures we remember and honour their supreme sacrifice, and motivates future generations to serve the nation.

Q3 Why is it a good idea to make a presentation in front of the whole school?

SOLUTION

Soumya says: 'I am delighted that all the students of our school will get to know about the National War Memorial and the soldiers it commemorates.'

Ananda says the idea is 'wonderful' because it makes everyone a part of the experience and could 'motivate the school students to join the Indian Armed Forces.'

It spreads awareness about India's heroes and their sacrifices to the whole school community.

Answer: Making a presentation in front of the whole school is a good idea because it spreads awareness about the National War Memorial and the brave soldiers it commemorates to all students. It motivates the whole school community to honour the sacrifices of India's heroes and may inspire students to serve the nation.

Q4 Why were the students awestruck and humbled — explain in your own words?

SOLUTION

The teacher shared the citation of Param Vir Chakra awardee Lance Naik Albert Ekka with the students.

The citation described how Lance Naik Ekka, despite being seriously wounded, kept fighting — charging enemy bunkers alone, bayoneting enemy soldiers, silencing machine guns, and finally scaling a wall and entering a bunker to silence the last machine gun, even as he succumbed to his injuries.

His complete disregard for personal safety, undaunted courage, and selfless sacrifice for his comrades and country left the students in awe.

They felt humbled because such extraordinary bravery made their own everyday concerns seem small and trivial.

Answer: The students were awestruck and humbled after hearing the citation of Lance Naik Albert Ekka, who despite being seriously wounded, kept fighting single-handedly — silencing enemy machine guns, clearing bunkers, and finally making the supreme sacrifice. His extraordinary courage and total disregard for personal safety were deeply moving. The students felt humbled because such selfless bravery reminded them of how much was sacrificed for the freedom they enjoy.

Q5 Complete the table given below. You may have to find the information from the Internet.

Names of Wars: Indo-China War / India-Pakistan Wars / Kargil War

Dates: ?

Soldiers Associated: ?

SOLUTION

The lesson itself mentions: Indo-China conflict of 1962; Indo-Pak Wars in 1965 and 1971; Kargil War in 1999.

Soldiers mentioned in the text: Indo-China War (1962) — PVCs awarded; India-Pakistan Wars — 1965 (PVCs awarded), 1971 (Lance Naik Albert Ekka PVC, Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon PVC, Second Lieutenant Arun Khetarpal PVC, Major Hoshiar Singh PVC, Captain Mahendra Nath Mulla MVC); Kargil War 1999 — Major Padmapani Acharya MVC, Captain Anuj Nayyar MVC.

Answer: Indo-China War: 1962; PVC awardees for exceptional gallantry. India-Pakistan Wars: 1965 and 1971; notable 1971 awardees — Lance Naik Albert Ekka (PVC), Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon (PVC), Second Lieutenant Arun Khetarpal (PVC), Major Hoshiar Singh (PVC), Captain Mahendra Nath Mulla (MVC). Kargil War: 1999; Major Padmapani Acharya (MVC, posthumous), Captain Anuj Nayyar (MVC, posthumous). [Note: Complete dates and full soldier lists require Internet research as directed by the textbook.]

Exercise 8.4 — Working with Language

Q1 Find the odd one out from the words given in the box.
Row 1: valiant, martyr, brave, heroic, courageous
Row 2: memorial, monument, statue, cenotaph, victory
Row 3: gratitude, thankfulness, appreciation, respect, gratefulness
Row 4: unique, simple, matchless, exclusive, one-off

SOLUTION

Row 1: valiant, brave, heroic, courageous all mean showing courage. 'Martyr' means one who dies for a cause — not a synonym for courage. Odd one out: martyr.
Row 2: memorial, monument, statue, cenotaph are all structures built to remember someone. 'Victory' means a win in a contest or war, not a structure. Odd one out: victory.
Row 3: gratitude, thankfulness, appreciation, gratefulness all mean being thankful. 'Respect' means admiration, not necessarily thankfulness. Odd one out: respect.
Row 4: unique, matchless, exclusive, one-off all mean one of a kind. 'Simple' means easy or plain. Odd one out: simple.

Answer: Row 1: martyr (others all mean courageous). Row 2: victory (others are all structures/monuments). Row 3: respect (others all mean thankfulness/gratitude). Row 4: simple (others all mean unique/one of a kind).

Q2 Fill in the blanks with appropriate form of the word given in brackets.
The Param Vir Chakra signifies the 'Wheel of the Ultimate Brave'... The medal was _____ (institute) as a Gallantry Medal... The Medal was _____ (design) by Mrs. Savitri Khanolkar. The designer _____ (draw) inspiration from Sage Dadhichi, a vedic rishi who _____ (make) the ultimate sacrifice by giving up his body so that the gods _____ (can) make a deadly weapon _____ (call) Vajra or Thunderbolt from his spine. The medal is cast in bronze. In the centre, on a raised circle, is the state emblem, _____ (surround) by four replicas of Indra's Vajra are _____ (flank).

SOLUTION

instituted — past tense, the medal was instituted (established officially)
designed — past tense passive
drew — past tense of draw
made — past tense of make
could — past form of can
called — past participle (adjective)
surrounded — past participle (adjective modifying state emblem)
flanked — past participle (adjective)

Answer: instituted; designed; drew; made; could; called; surrounded; flanked.

Q3 Match the following words with their meanings.
(i) territorial integrity
(ii) iconic
(iii) envisioned
(iv) etched
(v) posthumously
(vi) awestruck
(vii) obelisk
(viii) majestic
(ix) interminable flame
(x) valiant

SOLUTION

The matching pairs as given in the textbook:
(i) territorial integrity — (x) safeguarding nation's borders
(ii) iconic — (i) celebrated
(iii) envisioned — (iv) visualised
(iv) etched — (ii) engraved
(v) posthumously — (vi) after death
(vi) awestruck — (vii) amazed
(vii) obelisk — (v) a tapering stone piller
(viii) majestic — (iii) grand
(ix) interminable flame — (viii) never dying flame
(x) valiant — (ix) very brave

Answer: (i) territorial integrity — safeguarding nation's borders; (ii) iconic — celebrated; (iii) envisioned — visualised; (iv) etched — engraved; (v) posthumously — after death; (vi) awestruck — amazed; (vii) obelisk — a tapering stone piller; (viii) majestic — grand; (ix) interminable flame — never dying flame; (x) valiant — very brave.

Q4 Complete the story of an unknown soldier. Replace the underlined words with words from the box: touched everyone's heart, territorial integrity, inspired, fallen soldiers, posthumously, valour, exemplary courage, awestruck.
He was posted at the Indian border to safeguard our national boundary. He had been motivated by the hundreds of stories of the soldiers who had died in action and were celebrated after their deaths for bravery. He displayed outstanding bravery and led from the front. All the fellow soldiers were amazed at his courage. He too was awarded after he died in the war. His action affected everyone very deeply.

SOLUTION

national boundary → territorial integrity
motivated → inspired
soldiers who had died in action → fallen soldiers
celebrated after their deaths → posthumously (awarded)

bravery → valour
outstanding bravery → exemplary courage
amazed → awestruck
affected everyone very deeply → touched everyone's heart

Answer: He was posted at the Indian border to safeguard our territorial integrity. He had been inspired by the hundreds of stories of the fallen soldiers who were celebrated posthumously for their valour. He displayed exemplary courage and led from the front. All the fellow soldiers were awestruck at his courage. He too was awarded after he died in the war. His action touched everyone's heart.

Exercise 8.5 — Working with the Poem (Meadow Surprises)

Q1 Read the lines in which the following phrases occur. Then discuss with your partner the meaning of each phrase in its context.
(i) velvet grass
(ii) drinking straws
(iii) meadow houses
(iv) amazing mound
(v) fuzzy head

SOLUTION

(i) 'Walk softly through the velvet grass' — velvet is a soft, smooth fabric. Velvet grass means the meadow grass is so soft, smooth, and lush that it feels like velvet under your feet.
(ii) 'And unfold its drinking straws / To sip the nectar up.' — A butterfly's proboscis (long, thin, tube-like tongue) is compared to drinking straws. Just as we use straws to sip drinks, the butterfly unfurls its proboscis to sip nectar from flowers.
(iii) 'Explore the meadow houses' — Meadow houses refers to the small shelters and homes of creatures living in the meadow: burrows in the ground (rabbit/mole holes), nests beneath tall grasses (birds/insects), and ant mounds.
(iv) 'The ant's amazing mound' — An ant mound or anthill is an intricate structure built by ants underground. It is 'amazing' because despite the tiny size of ants, they build remarkably complex, well-organised mounds.
(v) 'A dandelion whose fuzzy head' — The dandelion's seed head, when its golden flower has turned into a cluster of white, airy seed-parachutes, looks soft and fluffy like a fuzzy/blurry ball. 'Fuzzy head' describes this white, feathery, cottony appearance.

Answer: (i) velvet grass — grass so soft and smooth it feels like velvet fabric. (ii) drinking straws — the butterfly's thin, tube-like proboscis used to sip nectar, compared to a drinking straw. (iii) meadow houses — shelters of meadow creatures: burrows, grass-nests, and ant mounds. (iv) amazing mound — the anthill, remarkably complex for such tiny builders. (v) fuzzy head — the soft, fluffy white seed-ball of a dandelion after its golden flower has gone.

Q2 Which line in the poem suggests that you need a keen eye and a sharp ear to enjoy a meadow? Read aloud the stanza that contains this line.

SOLUTION

The line is: 'You can find them if you look' (from the first stanza).
The introduction also states: 'What are some of the surprises a meadow has for someone with a keen eye and a sharp ear?' — though this is the prose intro, not the poem itself.
In the poem, the first stanza and the last stanza both suggest careful observation: 'You may discover these yourself, / If you look and listen well.'
The most direct line is the last one: 'If you look and listen well' — it explicitly states that both sight (keen eye) and hearing (sharp ear) are needed.
The stanza containing this line: 'Oh! Meadows have surprises / And many things to tell; / You

may discover these yourself, / If you look and listen well.'

Answer: The line is: 'If you look and listen well' (last stanza). It directly suggests that a keen eye (look) and a sharp ear (listen) are needed to enjoy a meadow's surprises. Stanza to read aloud: 'Oh! Meadows have surprises / And many things to tell; / You may discover these yourself, / If you look and listen well.'