Chapter 1: Learning Together

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Exercise 1.1 — Let us discuss — The Day the River Spoke (Part I)

Q1 What was Jahnavi's dream? Was it important to her? Why?

SOLUTION

Jahnavi's dream was to go to school and learn to read, write, and do sums — just like her brothers Ettan (Gopi) and Meena.

Yes, it was deeply important to her. She was curious about the world around her — why spiders are yellow in yellow flowers, why bamboo trees rustle, why the moon always comes from behind the hills, why fish in the field water become frogs. She wanted answers to all her 'whys', and she knew only school could give them to her.

She had been denied school because of household duties (minding her younger siblings), making her longing even stronger. Her dream was not just about literacy but about fulfilling her natural curiosity and having the same opportunities as her brothers.

Answer: Jahnavi's dream was to go to school and learn to read, write, and understand the world around her. It was very important to her because she was deeply curious and felt she was being denied the same opportunities as her brothers.

Q2 Do you think the river can help her in fulfilling her dream? How?

SOLUTION

Yes, the River can help Jahnavi in fulfilling her dream, not physically but by giving her encouragement and practical advice.

The River tells Jahnavi that little girls can do as much as little boys — they swim as fast as little boys. It advises her to simply 'slip along one morning and sit there in the school and listen to what's going on', hoping the teacher will let her stay.

This advice gives Jahnavi the courage and confidence she needed. Though the River cannot carry her to school (she would get her feet wet!), it motivates her to take action herself.

Answer: Yes. The River encourages Jahnavi by telling her that girls are as capable as boys and advising her to go quietly to school and sit with the students so the teacher might let her stay — giving her the courage to act.

Exercise 1.2 — Let us discuss — The Day the River Spoke (Part II, Table)

Q1 Complete the table below with Jahnavi's questions in Column 1 and the River's answers in Column 2.

Column 1 (Jahnavi's questions) | Column 2 (River's answers)
...why the moon always comes from behind the hills…? | [River's answer]
[Jahnavi's question about girls and boys] | … little girls can do as much as little boys.
[Jahnavi's question about ships] | Big boats, so big that they can take hundreds of people, and they sail along the sea with lights that shine all night.
[Jahnavi's question: Will they come here?] | [River's answer]

SOLUTION

Column 1 (Jahnavi's questions) → Column 2 (River's answers):

Q: ...why the moon always comes from behind the hills…?
A: 'It goes down towards the sea. I've seen; it always takes the same way — over the mountains and down to the sea, like me!'

Q: Can I do something?
A: '...little girls can do as much as little boys — they swim as fast as little boys.'

Q: What are ships?
A: 'Big boats, so big that they can take hundreds of people, and they sail along the sea with lights that shine all night.'

Q: Will they (ships) come here?
A: 'I'm afraid not. Too large, you know. Chandu's catamaran is good enough for me. Chandu can take you to see a ship, someday.'

Answer: Moon question → The moon goes over the mountains and down to the sea, like the river. Girls/boys question → Little girls can do as much as little boys. Ships question → Big boats that can take hundreds of people, sailing the sea with lights. Will they come here? → No, they are too large; Chandu's catamaran is good enough.

Exercise 1.3 — Let us think and reflect — The Day the River Spoke

Q1 Read the extract below and answer the questions that follow.

"You shouldn't cry, you know," the voice went on. "And you really shouldn't be scared, when you have been coming here to see me every day, well, almost every day." She was puzzled. It was such a voice, like the river. It couldn't be the river! "Well, tell me all about it," said the River, for it was the River. "I've got to hurry to reach the sea, you know."

(i) Complete the sentence with the correct option from those given in the brackets.
The tone of the River in the given extract is _____.
(assuring/sympathising)

(ii) Select a phrase from the extract which shows that Jahnavi was a frequent visitor to the spot.

(iii) Choose the correct option to complete the sentence.
The use of an exclamation mark at the end of the line, 'It couldn't be the river!' expresses _____.
A. excitement B. hesitation C. irritation D. disbelief

(iv) Choose three qualities of the River highlighted in the extract from the words in the box given below.
affectionate forgiving thoughtful impatient kind-hearted

SOLUTION

(i) The tone of the River in the given extract is assuring.
The River gently tells Jahnavi not to cry and not to be scared, and offers to listen — this is reassuring, not merely sympathising.

(ii) The phrase that shows Jahnavi was a frequent visitor to the spot: 'you have been coming here to see me every day, well, almost every day.'

(iii) D. disbelief
The exclamation mark after 'It couldn't be the river!' shows Jahnavi's shock and disbelief — she cannot believe the River is actually speaking.

(iv) Three qualities of the River highlighted in the extract: affectionate, thoughtful, kind-hearted.

The River is affectionate (speaks warmly, calls Jahnavi 'dear'), thoughtful (notices her distress and offers to listen), and kind-hearted (reassures her and shows concern). 'Forgiving' and 'impatient' are not shown in this extract.

Answer: (i) assuring (ii) 'you have been coming here to see me every day, well, almost every day' (iii) D. disbelief (iv) affectionate, thoughtful, kind-hearted

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Q2 Read the extract below and answer the questions that follow.

"Can I do something?" asked Jahnavi. "Well, it's up to you," said the River. "Seems to me little girls can do as much as little boys — they swim as fast as little boys. You just slip along one morning and sit there in the school and listen to what's going on, and maybe the teacher will let you stay."
"I couldn't," gasped Jahnavi. "I couldn't! They'd scare me! They'd chase me out."

(i) Complete the sentence with an appropriate reason.
According to the River, there was no difference between girls and boys because _____.

(ii) Identify whether the following statement is true or false.
The River encourages Jahnavi to have faith in herself and fulfill her desire to go to school.

(iii) Choose the correct option to complete the sentence.
When the River suggests that Jahnavi should 'slip along', it means that she should move _____.
A. quickly B. casually C. quietly D. confidently

(iv) What does the repetition of the phrase 'I couldn't' tell us?

SOLUTION

(i) According to the River, there was no difference between girls and boys because little girls can do as much as little boys — they swim as fast as little boys.

(ii) True. The River tells Jahnavi it is 'up to her', gives her a practical plan (go to school and sit in the class), and points out she is just as capable as boys — all of which encourage her to have faith in herself.

(iii) C. quietly
'Slip along' means to move quietly and unobtrusively, so as not to draw attention while entering the school.

(iv) The repetition of 'I couldn't, I couldn't!' tells us that Jahnavi was deeply frightened and overwhelmed by the idea of going to school on her own. She was not just hesitant — she felt it was completely impossible. The repetition shows the depth of her fear and self-doubt.

Answer: (i) ...little girls can do as much as little boys — they swim as fast as little boys (ii) True (iii) C. quietly (iv) The repetition shows Jahnavi's extreme fear and self-doubt — she felt it was utterly impossible for her to go to school alone.

Q3 Why does the writer describe different aspects of nature in great detail at the beginning of the story? Why do you think the writer does this?

SOLUTION

At the beginning of the story, the writer describes a kingfisher sweeping down with 'wings an arrow of blue in the sunlight', a green lizard slithering to the river's edge, and the 'sleepy, murmuring voice' of the River.

The writer does this to establish the natural setting and create a vivid, peaceful atmosphere by the river. This description also introduces the idea that nature is alive and observant — preparing the reader to accept that the River itself will speak.

It sets a magical, dreamlike tone which makes Jahnavi's conversation with the River feel natural and believable within the story's world. It also shows that nature is Jahnavi's true companion — she visits this spot daily.

Answer: The writer describes nature in detail at the beginning to establish a vivid, peaceful setting and to create the magical atmosphere that makes the River speaking believable. It also shows that nature is Jahnavi's daily companion.

Q4 How did the River know so much about Jahnavi?

SOLUTION

The River knew so much about Jahnavi because she had been visiting the river almost every day. As the River itself says: 'you have been coming here to see me every day, well, almost every day.'

Being her regular companion, the River had observed her over time — it knew she was not afraid of the green lizard, the snake in the bamboo clump, or the big trains rattling past the bridge. Through these daily visits, the River had quietly watched her and understood her nature and her fears.

Answer: The River knew so much about Jahnavi because she had been visiting the river almost every day. Through these regular visits, the River had observed her — her fears, her courage, and her character — over time.

Q5 Jahnavi says, "And I'm so old now, they'll never let me go." What can you infer about Jahnavi and the school from this line?

SOLUTION

From this line, we can infer that Jahnavi is around ten years old and has missed the usual age for starting school. She feels that because she is older than the other beginning students, she will not be accepted — either by her family or by the school.

It shows that Jahnavi has a very low opinion of her own chances. She has internalized the idea that her opportunity has already passed.

We can also infer that at the time and place of the story, children were expected to start school very young, and there was no common practice of admitting older beginners. The school had no formal system of enrolling late-starters, or at least Jahnavi feared this.

Answer: Jahnavi believes she is too old to be admitted to school now, showing her deep insecurity. It also reveals that in her social context, starting school late was unusual, and she feared rejection both from family and the school.

Q6 Why did the River laugh when Jahnavi said she would be scared at school?

SOLUTION

The River laughed because it found Jahnavi's fear of school amusing and slightly illogical, given how brave she already was in other situations.

The River pointed out that Jahnavi was not afraid of the green lizard, the snake in the bamboo clump, or the big trains rattling past the bridge — all things that would frighten many people. If she could face those fearlessly, the River found it funny that she was scared of going to school.

The River's laugh was not mocking — it was fond and encouraging, meant to show Jahnavi that she already had the bravery needed.

Answer: The River laughed because Jahnavi was unafraid of lizards, snakes, and trains, yet claimed to be scared of school. The laughter was affectionate and meant to show her she already had the courage she needed.

Q7 Why should Jahnavi follow the River's advice?

SOLUTION

Jahnavi should follow the River's advice because the River has observed her closely over time and understands her true capabilities. The River knows she is brave, curious, and determined.

The River's advice is practical and realistic: simply go to school, sit quietly, listen, and let the teacher notice her. This is a low-risk plan that requires only courage — which Jahnavi already has.

Moreover, the River reminds her that 'it's up to you' — taking responsibility for her own future. Following this advice is the only way Jahnavi can make her dream of education come true, since waiting for permission may mean waiting forever.

Answer: Jahnavi should follow the River's advice because it is practical (just go and sit in class), reflects the River's deep understanding of her courage, and is the only way she can take charge of her own future and fulfill her dream.

Q8 How does the conversation between Jahnavi and the River make the story more appealing?

SOLUTION

The conversation between Jahnavi and the River makes the story more appealing in several ways.

First, it uses personification — giving the River a voice and personality (sleepy, warm, gently humorous) — which makes the natural world feel alive and magical. This is a literary device called fantasy or personification.

Second, it allows Jahnavi's inner feelings and dreams to be expressed naturally through dialogue rather than narration. The reader understands her longing, fear, and courage through what she says to the River.

Third, the River serves as a wise counsellor who gently pushes Jahnavi to act. This makes the conversation the heart of the story — the turning point from helplessness to action.

Finally, the river-as-friend idea resonates with how children often confide in nature, making the story emotionally relatable.

Answer: The conversation makes the story appealing by using personification to bring nature alive, allowing Jahnavi's feelings to emerge through dialogue, and making the River the wise counsellor whose advice becomes the story's turning point.

Q9 What is the main message that the writer intends to convey?

SOLUTION

The main message of the story is that every child — girl or boy — has an equal right to education, and that courage and self-belief can overcome social barriers.

The writer shows through Jahnavi's journey that a girl denied school due to family obligations can still achieve her dream if she gathers the courage to act. The River's words — 'it's up to you' and 'little girls can do as much as little boys' — directly state the theme.

The writer also conveys that education is not just about learning facts but about satisfying curiosity, understanding the world, and becoming someone who can empower others (Jahnavi promises to become a teacher and bring all the village girls to school).

Answer: The main message is that every child, regardless of gender, has an equal right to education, and that self-belief and courage can overcome social barriers. Education fulfills curiosity and empowers one to empower others.

Exercise 1.4 — Let us learn — The Day the River Spoke

Q1 You have learnt that naming words are called nouns and only proper nouns begin with a capital letter. Why has the author used a capital letter for the 'River' even when it is a common noun?
(Clue: Has the River been given qualities of a human being?)

SOLUTION

The author has used a capital letter for 'River' because in this story the River has been personified — it has been given human qualities such as the ability to speak, to feel, to observe, and to give advice.

When a common noun is given a personality and treated as a character (like a person), authors often capitalise it to show it is being used as a proper noun — the name of a specific character in the story.

Just as characters like 'the King' or 'the Queen' may be capitalised when referring to a specific individual character, here 'the River' is capitalised because it acts as a named character with its own voice and personality.

Answer: The River is capitalised because the author has personified it — given it human qualities like speech, emotion, and wisdom — treating it as a character in the story, not merely a body of water.

Q2 There are a few words related to sound in the text. Pick the words from the text and write them next to the correct definition.

1. made a high-pitched piercing sound
2. to cause liquid to strike or fall on something
3. a low continuous background noise
4. cry with loud uncontrollable gasps
5. to make a soft dry sound, like paper or leaves moving
6. took a short quick breath through the mouth due to surprise, pain or shock
7. shaking rapidly to make continuous short, sharp sounds
8. making a lot of noise
9. made a long, high cry, usually because of pain or sadness

SOLUTION

1. made a high-pitched piercing sound → shrieked
2. to cause liquid to strike or fall on something → splashed

3. a low continuous background noise → murmuring
4. cry with loud uncontrollable gasps → wailed
5. to make a soft dry sound, like paper or leaves moving → rustle
6. took a short quick breath through the mouth due to surprise, pain or shock → gasped
7. shaking rapidly to make continuous short, sharp sounds → rattling
8. making a lot of noise → noisy
9. made a long, high cry, usually because of pain or sadness → wailed

Answer: 1. shrieked 2. splashed 3. murmuring 4. wailed 5. rustle 6. gasped 7. rattling 8. noisy 9. wailed

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Q3 Now, fill in the blanks with suitable sound words from the exercise above.

The classroom grew (i) _____ as the students noticed the teacher carrying the answer papers. As the teacher turned the pages with a (ii) _____, the children (iii) _____, wondering what comments awaited. Someone (iv) _____ in frustration, and the (v) _____ of the students steadily increased. Finally, when the teacher praised the students for their excellent performance, the students (vi) _____ with excitement.

SOLUTION

(i) noisy — the classroom grew noisy as students noticed the teacher.
(ii) rustle — the teacher turned pages with a rustle.
(iii) murmuring — the children murmuring, wondering what comments awaited.
(iv) wailed — someone wailed in frustration.
(v) murmuring — the murmuring of the students steadily increased.
(vi) shrieked — the students shrieked with excitement.

Answer: (i) noisy (ii) rustle (iii) murmuring (iv) wailed (v) murmuring (vi) shrieked

Q4 The word 'catamaran' is used in the text. The word originates from Tamil language 'kattu maram' meaning 'tied wood'. Find out the meanings of these words and from which Indian language they were borrowed.

1. karma (Sanskrit)
2. sahib
3. chutney
4. guru
5. verandah
6. jungle
7. areca
8. palanquin

SOLUTION

1. karma — Sanskrit: means 'action' or 'deed'; the sum of a person's actions believed to determine their future fate.
2. sahib — Arabic/Urdu: means 'master', 'lord', or 'gentleman'; used as a title of respect.
3. chutney — Hindi: a spiced condiment or sauce made with fruits, vegetables, and spices.
4. guru — Sanskrit: means 'teacher' or 'spiritual guide'; a person with knowledge and wisdom.
5. verandah — Hindi/Portuguese (via Hindi): a roofed platform or porch along the outside of a house.
6. jungle — Hindi (from Sanskrit 'jangala'): a dense tropical forest.
7. areca — Malayalam/Portuguese (via Malayalam): a type of palm tree (Areca catechu) whose nut (betel nut) is widely used.
8. palanquin — Hindi/Portuguese (via Hindi, from Sanskrit 'palyanka'): an enclosed chair or bed carried on poles by bearers.

Answer: karma (Sanskrit, action/deed), sahib (Arabic/Urdu, master/gentleman), chutney (Hindi, spiced condiment), guru (Sanskrit, teacher), verandah (Hindi, roofed porch), jungle (Hindi from Sanskrit jangala, dense forest), areca (Malayalam, type of palm), palanquin (Hindi from Sanskrit, enclosed chair carried on poles)

Q5 Given below are some boats used in different parts of our country: canoe, catamaran, coracle, shikara.

(i) Which one would you like to travel in?

SOLUTION

(i) This is a personal preference question. A model answer:
I would like to travel in a shikara, because shikaras are the beautifully decorated wooden boats of Dal Lake in Kashmir. I imagine it would be a peaceful and scenic experience, gliding across the calm lake surrounded by mountains.

(A student may choose any of the four boats and give a personal reason. The question tests opinion and preference, not a fixed correct answer.)

Answer: Personal preference — any of the four boats (canoe, catamaran, coracle, shikara) is a valid choice, supported by a personal reason. Model answer: shikara, because of the serene experience on Dal Lake, Kashmir.

Q6 Now, fill in the blanks with suitable prepositions given within the brackets.

Jahnavi takes the River's advice and goes to school. On her first day 1. _____ (at/in/on) school, Jahnavi stood nervously 2. _____ (in/outside/above) the gate, clutching her bag close to her. The bell rang and she hurried 3. _____ (outside/through/inside) the bustling classroom. She found a seat 4. _____ (among/between/from) two friendly classmates. The teacher greeted them warmly and started the lesson 5. _____ (about/in/for) numbers. Jahnavi listened attentively, feeling excited 6. _____ (at/about/for) the new adventure ahead.

SOLUTION

1. at — 'On her first day at school' (correct collocation: 'at school')
2. outside — 'Jahnavi stood nervously outside the gate' (she had not yet entered)
3. inside — 'she hurried inside the bustling classroom' (entering the classroom)
4. between — 'She found a seat between two friendly classmates' (between = in the middle of two specific people)
5. about — 'the teacher started the lesson about numbers' ('about' introduces the subject of the lesson)
6. about — 'feeling excited about the new adventure ahead' (correct collocation: 'excited about')

Answer: 1. at 2. outside 3. inside 4. between 5. about 6. about

Q7 Read the highlighted words in the following sentence from the text: 'A kingfisher swept down, its wings an arrow of blue in the sunlight.'

Words like on, off, up, down can function both as preposition and as adverb.

Fill in the blanks with prepositions or adverbs.
1. The cat jumped _____ the table. (preposition)
2. The children played _____ until dark. (adverb)
3. She quickly ran _____ the park. (preposition)
4. The helicopter was hovering _____. (adverb)
5. We were just walking _____, chatting. (adverb)
6. After thoroughly wiping his shoes, he stepped _____. (adverb)
7. She drove slowly _____ the sharp curve. (preposition)
8. He placed the keys _____ the mat before leaving. (preposition)

SOLUTION

1. on — 'The cat jumped on the table.' (preposition: 'on' followed by object 'the table')
2. on — 'The children played on until dark.' (adverb: 'on' tells us about the action, no object follows)
3. through / across — 'She quickly ran through the park.' (preposition: followed by object 'the park')
4. above / overhead — 'The helicopter was hovering above.' (adverb: no object, tells where it hovered)
5. along — 'We were just walking along, chatting.' (adverb: no object, describes the manner of walking)
6. in — 'After thoroughly wiping his shoes, he stepped in.' (adverb: no object, indicates entering)
7. around — 'She drove slowly around the sharp curve.' (preposition: followed by object 'the sharp curve')
8. under / on — 'He placed the keys under the mat before leaving.' (preposition: followed by object 'the mat')

Answer: 1. on (preposition) 2. on (adverb) 3. through (preposition) 4. above (adverb) 5. along (adverb) 6. in (adverb) 7. around (preposition) 8. under (preposition)

Exercise 1.5 — Let us explore — The Day the River Spoke

Q1 Discuss why rivers in India are considered to be sacred and most of them are referred to as female. Some rivers are referred to as male, for example, the Brahmaputra and the Sone.

SOLUTION

Rivers in India are considered sacred for several reasons rooted in culture, religion, and ecology:

1. Life-giving role: Rivers provide water for drinking, agriculture, and daily life. Ancient civilizations grew on river banks (e.g., the Indus Valley Civilisation on the Indus). This dependence led to reverence.

2. Religious significance: In Hinduism, rivers are worshipped as goddesses. The Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, and Kaveri are considered the seven sacred rivers. They are believed to have the power to cleanse sins — hence pilgrims take ritual baths in them.

3. Female symbolism: Most rivers are referred to as female because they are seen as nurturing, life-sustaining, and motherly — like a mother who nourishes her children. The words 'Ganga Ma' (Mother Ganga) reflect this.

4. Male rivers: A few rivers, like the Brahmaputra ('son of Brahma') and the Sone ('gold'), carry masculine names in Sanskrit mythology, often associated with power and force.

In the story, the River speaks with a gentle, nurturing voice — consistent with the traditional image of rivers as motherly and caring.

Answer: Rivers in India are considered sacred because they sustain life and are associated with purification in Hinduism. Most are called female because they are seen as nurturing mothers. A few, like Brahmaputra ('son of Brahma') and Sone, are male in Sanskrit tradition, associated with power.

Exercise 1.6 — Let us discuss — Try Again

Q1 Complete the summary of the poem by filling in the blanks with suitable words from the text given in the box below.
(tried, conquered, mounted, low, despair, strive, attempts, great)

The poem, written in a narrative style, tells the story of King Bruce of Scotland, who was feeling 1. _____ after failing multiple times to achieve something 2. _____ for his people. In a moment of 3. _____, he observed a spider trying to reach its web high above. The spider 4. _____ every time it fell after getting close to its goal. It made nine 5. _____ and finally succeeded. The king said that the spider had 6. _____ and so would he. Inspired by the spider's determination, King Bruce decided to 7. _____. When he 8. _____ this time, he ultimately succeeded.

SOLUTION

1. low — 'He flung himself down in low despair'
2. great — 'to do a great deed'
3. despair — 'As grieved as man could be'
4. mounted — 'But again it quickly mounted'
5. attempts — 'Nine brave attempts were counted'
6. conquered — '"Bravo, bravo!" the King cried out... The spider up there, defied despair; He conquered'
7. strive — 'All honour to those who try'
8. tried — 'That he tried once more as he tried before, And that time did not fail'

Answer: 1. low 2. great 3. despair 4. mounted 5. attempts 6. conquered 7. strive 8. tried

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Q2 Complete the following sentences suitably.
1. We can say that the poet uses the narrative style because _____.
2. The central idea of the poem is _____.

SOLUTION

1. We can say that the poet uses the narrative style because the poem tells a story with a beginning, middle, and end — it follows the sequence of events: the King's despair, the appearance of the spider, the spider's repeated attempts and final success, and the King's renewed determination. It has characters (King

Bruce, the spider), a plot, and a resolution.

2. The central idea of the poem is that perseverance and determination lead to success — one should never give up in the face of failure. Just as the spider fell repeatedly but finally reached its web on its tenth attempt, human beings too can succeed if they keep trying.

Answer: 1. the poem tells a story with characters, events, and a resolution — it follows King Bruce's despair, his observation of the spider, and his renewed determination. 2. Perseverance and determination lead to success; one should never give up despite repeated failure.

Q3 Pick three examples from the poem for each of the following:
1. lines that describe the spider's efforts
2. alliteration (the repetition of the same consonant sounds at the beginning of closely connected words)

SOLUTION

1. Lines that describe the spider's efforts:
(i) 'It soon began to cling and crawl / Straight up with strong endeavour'
(ii) 'Up, up it ran, not a second to stay, / To utter the least complaint'
(iii) 'Steadily, steadily, inch by inch, / Higher and higher he got'

2. Alliteration examples from the poem:
(i) 'silken, filmy' — repeated 'f' sound (or note the 's' in 'silken') though this is mild; a clearer example:
(ii) 'Straight up with strong' — repeated 's' sound
(iii) 'steadily, steadily' — repeated 'st' sound
(iv) 'tried and tried' — repetition (also an example of alliteration with the 't' sound)

Three clear alliteration examples: 'Straight up with Strong' (s), 'Steadily, Steadily' (st), 'silken, filmy clue' (note the soft 'f' sounds).

Answer: Spider's efforts: (i) 'It soon began to cling and crawl / Straight up with strong endeavour' (ii) 'Up, up it ran, not a second to stay' (iii) 'Steadily, steadily, inch by inch, / Higher and higher he got'. Alliteration: (i) 'Straight up with Strong' (s) (ii) 'Steadily, Steadily' (st) (iii) 'silken, filmy' (f/s)

Q4 Why does the poet repeat the following words or phrases in the poem?
tried and tried; steadily, steadily; up, up

SOLUTION

'tried and tried' — The repetition emphasises the spider's (and later the King's) repeated efforts. It shows that trying was not a single act but a continuous, determined process. It also reflects the rhythm of effort — try, fail, try again.

'steadily, steadily' — The repetition conveys the slow, careful, deliberate nature of the spider's movement as it makes its final successful climb. It slows down the pace of the poem at this critical moment, building suspense and showing the spider's focused determination.

'up, up' — The repetition conveys the spider's upward drive and energy. It makes the reader feel the spider's eagerness and its single-minded goal of reaching its web. The rhythm of 'up, up' mimics the quick, relentless movement.

Answer: 'tried and tried' — emphasises repeated, persistent effort. 'steadily, steadily' — conveys slow, deliberate, focused movement at the critical final climb. 'up, up' — captures the spider's eager, relentless upward drive.

Q5 Fill in the blanks by choosing the correct answer from within the brackets.
1. The rhyme scheme of the poem is _____. (AABB/ABBA/ABAB)
2. 'Bravo' is an example of _____. (conjunction/interjection/adjective)
3. The poet uses 'twas and 'tis for the sake of _____.
(rhythm/rhyme/contraction)

SOLUTION

1. The rhyme scheme of the poem is ABAB.
For example, in the first stanza: 'down' (A), 'think' (B), 'crown' (A), 'sink' (B). Every alternate line rhymes.

2. 'Bravo' is an example of interjection.
'Bravo' is an exclamation used to express approval or admiration — it is an interjection that stands apart from the grammar of the surrounding sentence.

3. The poet uses 'twas and 'tis for the sake of rhythm.
'Twas' (= It was) and "tis' (= It is) are contractions that reduce two syllables to one, helping the poet maintain the regular rhythmic pattern of the poem.

Answer: 1. ABAB 2. interjection 3. rhythm

Q6 The spider's climbing is compared to King Bruce's own struggles. This poetic device is called metaphor. It strengthens the poem's message about perseverance.

Read the following sentences and identify metaphors and similes. Write M for metaphor and S for simile.
(i) He ran as fast as a cheetah.
(ii) The world is a stage.
(iii) The night was as dark as coal.
(iv) He sang like an angel.
(v) Her voice was music to his ears.
(vi) The classroom was a zoo.
(vii) The baby slept like a log.
(viii) Her smile was as bright as the sun.
(ix) The lake was a mirror, reflecting the sky.

SOLUTION

(i) He ran as fast as a cheetah. → S (simile: uses 'as ... as')
(ii) The world is a stage. → M (metaphor: direct comparison, 'is')
(iii) The night was as dark as coal. → S (simile: uses 'as ... as')
(iv) He sang like an angel. → S (simile: uses 'like')
(v) Her voice was music to his ears. → M (metaphor: direct implied comparison, no 'like' or 'as')
(vi) The classroom was a zoo. → M (metaphor: direct comparison, 'was')
(vii) The baby slept like a log. → S (simile: uses 'like')
(viii) Her smile was as bright as the sun. → S (simile: uses 'as ... as')
(ix) The lake was a mirror, reflecting the sky. → M (metaphor: the lake is called a mirror directly)

Answer: (i) S (ii) M (iii) S (iv) S (v) M (vi) M (vii) S (viii) S (ix) M

Q7 Read the following sentences and transform the similes to metaphors and metaphors to similes. Two examples have been given.

(iii) The book was a treasure chest, filled with endless adventures.
(iv) Her laughter was a melody that brightened the darkest days.
(v) The mountain stood as a guard, watching over the valley below.
(vi) The night was like a velvet cloak, wrapping the world in mystery.
(vii) Her thoughts were like butterflies in a summer meadow.

SOLUTION

(iii) Metaphor → Simile:
'The book was like a treasure chest, filled with endless adventures.'
OR: 'The book was as rich as a treasure chest, filled with endless adventures.'

(iv) Metaphor → Simile:
'Her laughter was like a melody that brightened the darkest days.'
OR: 'Her laughter was as sweet as a melody that brightened the darkest days.'

(v) Metaphor → Simile (already contains 'as a guard', which functions like a simile):
'The mountain was like a guard, watching over the valley below.'

(vi) Simile → Metaphor:
'The night was a velvet cloak, wrapping the world in mystery.'

(vii) Simile → Metaphor:
'Her thoughts were butterflies in a summer meadow.'

Answer: (iii) simile: 'The book was like a treasure chest...' (iv) simile: 'Her laughter was like a melody...' (v) simile: 'The mountain was like a guard...' (vi) metaphor: 'The night was a velvet cloak, wrapping the world in mystery.' (vii) metaphor: 'Her thoughts were butterflies in a summer meadow.'

Exercise 1.7 — Let us think and reflect — Try Again

Q1 Read the extract below and answer the questions that follow.

He flung himself down in low despair,
As grieved as man could be;
And after a while he pondered there,
"I'll give it all up," said he.
Now just at that moment a spider dropped,
With its silken, filmy clue;

(i) Select the phrase which shows the physical expression of the King's emotional state.

(ii) Why does the poet use the word 'low' before despair?

(iii) Choose the correct option to complete the sentence.
In the line, 'And after a while he pondered there', the word 'pondered' means _____.
A. paused B. thought C. noticed D. rested

(iv) Choose the correct option from the words given in the brackets.
The phrase 'silken filmy clue' creates an image of something that is _____ (long and light/very delicate and soft).

SOLUTION

(i) The phrase that shows the physical expression of the King's emotional state: 'He flung himself down'.
The act of flinging himself down shows his exhaustion and despair — he has completely given up and throws himself on the ground in defeat.

(ii) The poet uses the word 'low' before 'despair' to intensify the depth of the King's hopelessness. 'Low despair' suggests that the King had sunk to the lowest point of his spirit — his dejection was absolute. 'Low' also carries the physical sense of lying down (having flung himself down), combining physical and emotional defeat.

(iii) B. thought
'Pondered' means to think deeply and carefully about something. The King lay

there lost in deep thought about his situation.

(iv) very delicate and soft
'Silken' means smooth and soft like silk; 'filmy' means thin and delicate, like a fine film or membrane. Together, 'silken filmy clue' creates the image of a very delicate, fine, almost invisible thread — the spider's silk.

Answer: (i) 'He flung himself down' (ii) 'Low' intensifies the depth of his despair — he had sunk to the absolute lowest point of hopelessness. (iii) B. thought (iv) very delicate and soft

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Q2 Read the extract below and answer the questions that follow.

"...when it toils so hard to reach and cling, And tumbles every time."
But up the insect went once more,
Ah me! 'tis an anxious minute;
He's only a foot from his cobweb door,
Oh say, will he lose or win it?

(i) Choose the correct option to complete the analogy.
toil: hard::_____: _____
A. roll: tumble B. tumble: circle C. compress: roll D. jump: tumble

(ii) List any two characteristics of the spider highlighted in the line, 'But up the insect went once more'.

(iii) Choose the correct option to complete the sentence.
The expression 'Ah me!' in the extract indicates a sense of _____.
A. happiness B. stress C. relief D. loneliness

(iv) Complete the sentence with an appropriate reason.
Readers are able to relate to this extract because _____.

SOLUTION

(i) A. roll: tumble
The pattern is: 'toil' goes with 'hard' (toil hard = work very hard). Similarly, 'roll' goes with 'tumble' — both describe physical movement/falling. The analogy tests the pairing of a verb with a manner or related verb.

(ii) Two characteristics of the spider highlighted in 'But up the insect went once more':
1. Perseverance / determination — despite falling repeatedly, the spider goes up again without giving up.
2. Resilience / courage — it does not allow failure to stop it; it immediately tries again.

(iii) B. stress
'Ah me!' is an exclamation of anxiety and suspense. The narrator is tense and worried about whether the spider will succeed this time. It indicates stress and concern.

(iv) Readers are able to relate to this extract because it captures the universal experience of being very close to a goal and feeling anxious about whether one will succeed or fail. The spider's situation — failing many times and being just one foot from success — mirrors how human beings often feel when they are on the verge of achieving something after great effort.

Answer: (i) A. roll: tumble (ii) Perseverance (keeps trying) and resilience (immediately goes up again after falling) (iii) B. stress (iv) Because the experience of being close to a goal but unsure of success is universal — readers have all felt the anxiety of trying repeatedly and being on the verge of either winning or failing.

Q3 How does the first stanza help in setting the mood of the poem?

SOLUTION

The first stanza sets a mood of sadness, hopelessness, and failure. King Bruce has been trying to do a 'great deed' for his people — he has 'tried and tried, but couldn't succeed', and 'his heart was beginning to sink'.

Words like 'lonely mood', 'heart was beginning to sink', 'tried and tried', and 'couldn't succeed' create an atmosphere of despair from the very beginning.

This mood of failure and dejection is important because it makes the spider's lesson — and the King's eventual turnaround — all the more powerful. The reader is drawn into the King's sense of hopelessness so that the final triumph feels meaningful.

Answer: The first stanza sets a mood of sadness and hopelessness through words like 'lonely mood', 'heart was beginning to sink', 'tried and tried, but couldn't succeed'. This atmosphere of despair makes the eventual transformation through the spider's example all the more impactful.

Q4 Describe how King Bruce's attitude changes from the beginning towards the end of the poem.

SOLUTION

At the beginning of the poem, King Bruce is in a state of complete despair. He is feeling low, sad, and ready to give up: 'He flung himself down in low despair' and 'I'll give it all up,' said he. He is defeated and hopeless.

In the middle of the poem, his mood shifts to curious observation. He watches the spider fall and try again — nine times — and begins to think about the spider's determination.

By the end of the poem, King Bruce is inspired and re-energised. He cries 'Bravo, bravo!' for the spider, recognises the spider 'defied despair' and 'conquered', and asks himself 'why shouldn't I?'

He 'braced his mind' (prepared himself mentally) and tried once more — and this time he succeeded. His attitude transforms from hopeless resignation to determined action and ultimately to triumph.

Answer: At the beginning, King Bruce is in deep despair, ready to give up. Watching the spider's perseverance shifts him to curious observation. By the end, he is inspired, braces himself, tries once more, and succeeds — transforming from hopeless resignation to determined triumph.

Q5 The poet describes every action of the spider in great detail. What does this tell us about his attitude towards the spider?

SOLUTION

The poet's detailed description of the spider's every move — crawling up, slipping and falling, lying 'a little dizzy and faint', steadying its head, climbing half a yard higher, falling again, mounting again, until finally reaching its cobweb — shows that the poet has deep admiration and respect for the spider.

The poet does not dismiss the spider as a small, insignificant creature. Instead,

by describing its struggle in such detail, the poet elevates the spider to the status of a hero. Phrases like 'brave attempts', 'a bold little run at the very last pinch', and the King's own 'Bravo, bravo!' reflect the poet's view that the spider's determination deserves celebration.

The detailed description also serves to build suspense — making the reader as invested in the spider's success as the King is.

Answer: The poet's detailed attention to every action of the spider shows deep admiration and respect. The poet elevates the spider to heroic status — calling its attempts 'brave', building suspense, and culminating in the King's own 'Bravo!' The spider is not trivial; it is the poem's true hero.

Q6 How does the spider inspire us to overcome despair and not give up?

SOLUTION

The spider inspires us by demonstrating through action — not words — that persistence pays off.

The spider fell nine times. Each time it fell, it did not stop to complain ('not a second to stay, / To utter the least complaint'). It simply went back up. Even when it was 'a little dizzy and faint', it steadied itself and climbed again.

The spider's example shows that failure is not the end — it is a step on the way to success. Each failure brought it closer to its web. The tenth attempt succeeded because it had not given up on the nine earlier ones.

For us, the spider is a reminder that whenever we feel like giving up, we should ask: has the spider given up? If it can try a tenth time after nine falls, so can we.

Answer: The spider inspires by showing through action — not words — that persistence pays. It fell nine times without complaining, each time immediately going back up. Its final success on the tenth attempt shows that failure is a step towards success, not a reason to quit.

Q7 The poem teaches us that failures are stepping stones to success. Explain.

SOLUTION

A stepping stone is a stone you step on to cross a stream — each stone brings you closer to the other bank. The poem uses the spider's journey to show that each failure is like one of these stones: necessary, not to be feared, and part of

the path to success.

The spider fell not once, not twice, but nine times. Each fall was a failure. Yet each fall was also a learning — the spider steadied its head, gained a higher position, took 'a bold little run at the very last pinch', and finally made it.

Without those nine failures, the tenth successful attempt would not have been possible. The spider built up the ability to reach its web precisely through all those attempts.

Similarly, King Bruce's earlier failures were not wasted — they were stepping stones. When he finally tried again after being inspired by the spider, he succeeded. The poem tells us: every failure you survive makes the eventual success possible.

Answer: Each of the spider's nine falls was a failure, yet each brought it closer — building experience and resilience until the tenth attempt succeeded. Similarly, King Bruce's earlier failures were not wasted; they were steps on the path to success. Failures are not dead ends but necessary stages on the way.

Q8 The spider's journey tells us that anyone can be a source of inspiration in our lives. Elaborate.

SOLUTION

We often think inspiration must come from great human beings — teachers, leaders, or heroes. But the poem shows that a tiny spider, by simply doing what it must do (reach its web), inspired a king to get back up and change the course of his life.

This tells us that inspiration is all around us — in a bird building a nest in the wind, in an ant carrying a load, in a child learning to walk. Anyone and anything can inspire us if we observe with open eyes and an open mind.

The key is to be attentive. King Bruce was lying in despair — he could have ignored the spider. Instead, he stopped and watched. That attentiveness allowed a small creature to teach him the biggest lesson of perseverance.

The poem encourages us not to limit our sources of inspiration to famous people or great events. Everyday beings — even a spider — can show us the way forward.

Answer: The poem shows that a tiny spider inspired a king — proving that inspiration can come from anyone and anything, not only great human figures. If we observe attentively, everyday creatures and events can teach us the most important lessons about perseverance and courage.

Exercise 1.8 — Let us learn — Try Again

Q1 Write the opposites of the following words taken from the poem.

1. up ×
2. fast ×
3. glad ×
4. win ×
5. succeed ×

SOLUTION

1. up × down
2. fast × slow
3. glad × sad
4. win × lose
5. succeed × fail

Answer: 1. down 2. slow 3. sad 4. lose 5. fail

Q2 Choose the correct meaning of the underlined words in the following sentences from the box given below. Frame sentences of your own for these words.

Meanings:

1. work very hard and/or for a long time
2. prepared themselves for something difficult
3. an attempt to do something new or difficult
4. to try very hard to achieve something

Sentences:

(i) Please make every endeavour to arrive on time.
(ii) Ants toil tirelessly to save food for rainy season.
(iii) We encourage all students to strive to do their best.
(iv) The sailors braced themselves against the strong wind.

SOLUTION

(i) endeavour — meaning 3: an attempt to do something new or difficult
Model sentence: 'She made every endeavour to finish the project before the deadline.'

(ii) toil — meaning 1: work very hard and/or for a long time

Model sentence: 'The farmers toil in the fields from dawn to dusk during harvest season.'

(iii) strive — meaning 4: to try very hard to achieve something
Model sentence: 'We should always strive to be better than we were yesterday.'

(iv) braced — meaning 2: prepared themselves for something difficult
Model sentence: 'The team braced themselves for the tough final round of the competition.'

Answer: (i) endeavour = meaning 3 (attempt to do something difficult). Model: 'She made every endeavour to finish before the deadline.' (ii) toil = meaning 1 (work very hard). Model: 'Farmers toil in the fields from dawn to dusk.' (iii) strive = meaning 4 (try very hard). Model: 'We should strive to be better every day.' (iv) braced = meaning 2 (prepared for difficulty). Model: 'The team braced themselves for the tough final round.'

Q3 The poem uses words that show distance. Classify the words or phrases in the box given below based on the distance (far or near).

Words: proximity, remoteness, light year, middle of nowhere, yonder, hairline, vicinity, afar, farther, adjacent, a stone's throw

SOLUTION

FAR (indicating great distance):
- remoteness (far away, isolated)
- light year (an astronomical unit of distance — extremely far)
- middle of nowhere (a very remote, isolated place)
- yonder (at some distance in the indicated direction — relatively far)
- afar (at or from a great distance)
- farther (at a greater distance)

NEAR (indicating close distance):
- proximity (nearness in space)
- hairline (a very thin, very close margin)
- vicinity (the area near or surrounding a particular place)
- adjacent (next to or adjoining something)
- a stone's throw (a very short distance)

Answer: Far: remoteness, light year, middle of nowhere, yonder, afar, farther. Near: proximity, hairline, vicinity, adjacent, a stone's throw.

Exercise 1.9 — Let us discuss — Three Days to See

Q1 Work in pairs. Identify the statements that are true from the ones given below.
1. The author expresses a deep longing to experience the world through the sense of hearing.
2. The author would like exploring the city only to observe how people are suffering.
3. The author would spend the first day seeing the people whose kind-heartedness and friendship have enriched her life.
4. The author acknowledges that even in three days, she would not be able to see everything.
5. The author feels that everyone can find the greatest joy merely by the sense of touch.
6. The author advises those who can see to appreciate every moment as if they might lose their senses tomorrow.
7. On the third day, the author would like to observe people in their daily lives and understand their experiences.

SOLUTION

True statements: 3, 4, 6, 7.

Explanation of each:
1. FALSE — The author's deep longing is to see, not to hear. She says 'I am sure that sight must be the most delightful' of all senses.
2. FALSE — The author wants to explore the city to see smiles, determination, and suffering — a full picture of human life, not only suffering.
3. TRUE — The text says: 'On the first day, I should want to see the people whose kindness and companionship have made my life worth living.'
4. TRUE — The text says: 'Only when darkness had again descended upon me should I realise how much I had left unseen.'
5. FALSE — The author says sight is the most delightful sense. Touch is wonderful but not the greatest joy.
6. TRUE — The text says: 'use your eyes as if tomorrow you would be stricken blind... Make the most of every sense.'
7. TRUE — The text says: 'Today, this third day, I shall spend in the workaday world, amid the haunts of men going about the business of life. The city becomes my destination. First, I stand at a busy corner, merely looking at people, trying by sight of them to understand something of their daily lives.'

Answer: True statements: 3, 4, 6, 7. Statements 1, 2, and 5 are false.

Q2 Complete the table below with what Helen Keller wanted to do on the three days if she had sight.

Day 1: see the people, know her friends from the feel of their faces, …
Day 2: arise with the dawn, …
Day 3: [complete]

SOLUTION

Day 1: See the people whose kindness and companionship have made her life worth living; see into the heart of a friend through the 'window of the soul', the eye; see the faces of friends she knows only through touch.

Day 2: Arise with the dawn and see the thrilling miracle by which night is transformed into day; behold with awe the magnificent panorama of light with which the sun awakens the sleeping earth; visit museums to see the condensed history of the earth — animals, races of men in their native environment, dinosaurs, mastodons, and the pageant of man's progress.

Day 3: Greet the dawn, anxious to discover new delights and revelations of beauty; spend the day in the workaday world among people going about the business of life; stand at a busy corner looking at people, trying to understand their daily lives; observe smiles, determination, and suffering.

Answer: Day 1: See friends and loved ones, look into their eyes ('window of the soul'), see the faces she knows only through touch. Day 2: Watch the sunrise, visit museums to see the history of the earth and man's progress. Day 3: Greet the dawn, explore the city, observe people at a busy corner — their smiles, determination, and suffering.

Q3 The author says that you need eyes to be able to 'see' the true self of a person. Therefore, she refers to the eye as 'window of the soul'. How is the narrator able to understand the feelings of a person?

SOLUTION

Though the narrator (Helen Keller) is blind, she is able to understand the feelings of a person through touch — specifically through feeling the face.

She says: 'I can only "see" through my fingertips the outline of a face. I can detect laughter, sorrow and other obvious emotions. I know my friends from the feel of their faces.'

So she is able to sense laughter, sorrow, and other clear emotions through the touch of her fingertips on a person's face. However, she acknowledges that this is limited — she cannot 'see into the heart of a friend through that window of the soul, the eye.' Deep, subtle emotions are revealed by the eyes, which she cannot access.

The narrator's ability to understand people through touch is remarkable, but she recognises it as incomplete compared to what sight would allow.

Answer: Helen Keller understands people's feelings through touch — feeling the outline of a face with her fingertips allows her to detect laughter, sorrow, and other obvious emotions. However, she acknowledges this is limited compared to sight, which would reveal deeper emotions through the eyes ('window of the soul').

Exercise 1.10 — Let us think and reflect — Three Days to See

Q1 Read the extract below and answer the questions that follow.

I feel the delicate symmetry of a leaf. I pass my hands lovingly about the smooth skin of a silver birch, or the rough, shaggy bark of a pine. In spring, I touch the branches of trees hopefully in search of a bud, the first sign of awakening Nature after her winter's sleep. Occasionally, I am very fortunate; I place my hand gently on a small tree and feel the happy quiver of a bird in full song.

(i) What does the 'delicate symmetry of a leaf' symbolise?
(ii) List two phrases from the extract that describe the texture of objects in nature.
(iii) Complete the sentence appropriately.
The phrase 'awakening Nature after her winter's sleep' refers to _____.
(iv) What is the tone of the writer in this extract?
A. nostalgic B. proud C. admiring D. celebratory

SOLUTION

(i) The 'delicate symmetry of a leaf' symbolises the precision and beauty of nature — the perfect balance and fine detail that the natural world contains. For someone who cannot see, being able to feel this symmetry through touch shows that beauty and wonder can be perceived even without sight. It also symbolises the richness of experience that touch alone can provide.

(ii) Two phrases from the extract that describe the texture of objects in nature:
1. 'the smooth skin of a silver birch'
2. 'the rough, shaggy bark of a pine'

(iii) The phrase 'awakening Nature after her winter's sleep' refers to the arrival of spring — the season when nature comes back to life after the dormancy of winter. The buds appearing on branches are the first signs of this renewal.

(iv) C. admiring
The writer describes nature with wonder, tenderness, and deep appreciation — 'I pass my hands lovingly', 'I am very fortunate', 'feel the happy quiver of a bird'. The tone is one of admiration for the beauty and richness of nature.

Answer: (i) The perfection and beauty of nature — even touch reveals its fine detail and balance. (ii) 'the smooth skin of a silver birch' and 'the rough, shaggy bark of a pine'. (iii) The arrival of spring — nature coming back to life after winter. (iv) C. admiring

Q2 Read the extract below and answer the questions that follow.

The next day I should arise with the dawn and see the thrilling miracle by which night is transformed into day. I should behold with awe the magnificent panorama of light with which the sun awakens the sleeping earth. This day I should devote to a hasty glimpse of the world, past and present. I should want to see the pageant of man's progress, and so I should go to the museums.

(i) The word 'thrilling' has been used with 'miracle'. Which of the following words does not match with the word 'thrilling'?
A. experience B. tale C. knowledge D. adventure

(ii) Why does the writer refer to the earth as 'sleeping earth'?

(iii) Complete the sentence with an appropriate reason.
The writer wishes to dedicate the day to a brief look at the present and past world because _____.

(iv) Why does the writer use 'should' multiple times in the extract?

SOLUTION

(i) C. knowledge
'Thrilling experience', 'thrilling tale', and 'thrilling adventure' all work naturally. 'Thrilling knowledge' does not — knowledge is usually described as 'vast', 'deep', or 'profound', not 'thrilling'.

(ii) The writer refers to the earth as 'sleeping earth' because just before dawn the world is dark and still — as if it were asleep. The metaphor of the earth 'sleeping' and the sun 'awakening' it is a personification that captures the transition from night to day beautifully. It also conveys the sense of a world about to come alive with light.

(iii) The writer wishes to dedicate the day to a brief look at the present and past

world because she wants to understand the journey of humanity — from prehistoric creatures to modern civilisation — and appreciate how far human beings have come. She has never been able to see this progression, so she wants to use this precious day of sight to witness the whole story of the earth and man.

(iv) The writer uses 'should' multiple times because she is speaking of wishes and hypothetical plans — she does not actually have the ability to see. 'Should' here expresses what she would do if she had sight ('I should want to', 'I should go'). It keeps the entire passage in the realm of imagination and desire, reminding the reader that this is a dream, not a reality.

Answer: (i) C. knowledge (ii) The earth before dawn is dark and still — the metaphor captures the world as if asleep, about to be awakened by the sun's light. (iii) Because she wants to understand the entire journey of humanity — from prehistory to the present — in the brief time she would have sight. (iv) 'Should' expresses hypothetical wishes — she is imagining what she would do if she had sight; she does not actually have it.

Q3 The sense of touch makes up for the loss of sight and hearing. Explain this statement with reference to the text.

SOLUTION

Helen Keller is both blind and deaf, yet she finds 'hundreds of things to interest' her through mere touch. Through her fingertips she can feel the delicate symmetry of a leaf, the smooth skin of a silver birch, the rough shaggy bark of a pine, the quiver of a bird in full song, and the outlines of her friends' faces.

Touch gives her information about texture (smooth vs. rough), shape (symmetry of a leaf), life (the quiver of a singing bird), and emotion (laughter or sorrow on a face).

So while touch cannot fully replace sight or hearing — she herself says she can only detect 'obvious emotions' and wonders how much more beauty sight must reveal — it goes a long way in compensating for the loss. It allows her to experience nature, people, and the world meaningfully.

However, Helen Keller does not claim touch fully compensates — she says 'if I can get so much pleasure from mere touch, how much more beauty must be revealed by sight.' Touch makes up for much, but not all.

Answer: Helen Keller uses touch to feel textures, shapes, life (a bird's quiver), and even emotions (on a friend's face), gaining rich experience of the world. But she herself acknowledges touch is not complete compensation — it gives pleasure, but sight would reveal far more beauty.

Q4 Why does the author believe that the sense of sight is the most wonderful?

SOLUTION

Helen Keller believes that sight is the most wonderful sense because it reveals beauty directly, instantly, and in full — something no other sense can replicate.

She herself can experience the world richly through touch, but she can feel only 'the outline of a face' and detect 'obvious emotions' — not the depth of what the eye reveals. She refers to the eye as the 'window of the soul', suggesting that only through sight can one truly see another person's inner self.

Moreover, sight allows one to witness grand panoramas (the sunrise), the history of the world (in museums), and the full range of human life at a busy street corner — all of which other senses cannot capture.

She concludes the text: 'But of all the senses, I am sure that sight must be the most delightful.' Being deprived of it has made her appreciate how vast and irreplaceable its gift is.

Answer: Helen Keller believes sight is the most wonderful because it reveals the full depth of beauty, emotion, nature, and human life — things other senses can only partly access. Having been deprived of it, she understands its incomparable richness, and calls the eye 'the window of the soul'.

Q5 How might the author's opinion on making the most of our senses guide us to be kinder towards people with special abilities?

SOLUTION

Helen Keller urges those who can see to 'use your eyes as if tomorrow you would be stricken blind' — to appreciate each sense as a precious gift that could be lost at any moment.

When we truly imagine losing a sense, we begin to understand what life is like for someone who has already lost it. This builds empathy — the ability to feel what another person experiences.

Understanding how much effort people with visual or other impairments put into experiencing the world (as Helen herself does through touch) can make us more patient, respectful, and supportive towards them.

If we appreciate our own senses, we will naturally be moved to ensure that those without those senses are given every possible tool and opportunity — whether Braille, screen readers, sign language, or simply our time and attention.

Answer: By imagining the loss of our own senses, we build empathy for those who have lost them. Understanding the effort people with special abilities make to experience the world makes us more patient, respectful, and motivated to support their access to tools and opportunities.

Q6 What is the significance of imagining the loss of a sense, according to the author?

SOLUTION

According to Helen Keller, imagining the loss of a sense makes us truly appreciate what we have. She writes: 'use your eyes as if tomorrow you would be stricken blind... Hear the music of voice, the song of a bird... as if you would be stricken deaf tomorrow.'

The significance is that we take our senses for granted. We pass through life without fully noticing the beauty around us — the colour of a flower, the song of a bird, the taste of a meal. Only when we imagine losing a sense do we realise its true value.

Imagining loss creates urgency and gratitude. It transforms routine experiences into precious ones. Every sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch becomes meaningful.

This is the author's central message: do not wait until something is lost to appreciate it. Live fully in your senses — now.

Answer: Imagining the loss of a sense makes us appreciate what we take for granted. It creates urgency and gratitude, transforming routine experiences into precious ones. The author's message: do not wait until something is lost — appreciate your senses fully, now.

Q7 How does the author encourage people to approach their everyday sensory experiences?

SOLUTION

The author encourages people to approach their everyday sensory experiences with full attention and gratitude — as if each experience might be the last.

She gives specific advice: 'use your eyes as if tomorrow you would be stricken blind. Hear the music of voice, the song of a bird, the mighty strains of an orchestra, as if you would be stricken deaf tomorrow. Touch each object as if tomorrow your tactile sense would fail. Smell the perfume of flowers, taste with relish each morsel, as if tomorrow you could never smell and taste again.'

She urges: 'Make the most of every sense; glory in all the facets of pleasure and beauty, which the world reveals to you through the several means of contact, which Nature provides.'

In short, she encourages mindful, grateful, and passionate engagement with every sensory experience — something she herself can only dream of.

Answer: Helen Keller encourages people to use every sense fully and gratefully — as if it might be lost tomorrow. See, hear, touch, smell, and taste each experience with complete attention: 'Make the most of every sense; glory in all the facets of pleasure and beauty.'

Q8 What do the author's choices for the three days tell us about her values and priorities?

SOLUTION

Helen Keller's choices for the three days reveal that she values people, knowledge, and the full human experience above material things.

Day 1 — People: Her first priority is to see the faces of those who have given her love, kindness, and companionship. This shows that relationships and human connection are her deepest value.

Day 2 — Knowledge and history: She wants to go to museums and understand the journey of life on earth — from dinosaurs to human civilisation. This shows her love of learning and her desire to understand the world's larger story.

Day 3 — Ordinary human life: She wants to stand at a busy city corner and watch ordinary people — not kings or celebrities — going about their daily lives. She

finds meaning in smiles, determination, and even suffering. This shows deep compassion and a democratic, humanistic view of life.

Together, her choices show that her priorities are love, learning, and empathy — not luxury, entertainment, or personal gain.

Answer: Her Day 1 choice (see loved ones) reveals that people and relationships are her deepest value. Day 2 (museums, history) shows her love of learning. Day 3 (watching ordinary people in the city) shows deep compassion and humanistic values. Her priorities are love, learning, and empathy — not luxury or personal gain.

Exercise 1.11 — Let us learn — Three Days to See

Q1 Sensory words are descriptive — they describe how we experience the world: how we see, hear, smell, taste or feel something.

Complete the following table with sensory words from the text in Column 2 for the five senses in Column 1. Add new words in Column 3.

Column 1 (sense) | Column 2 (from text) | Column 3 (new words)
What you see | panorama | ?
What you hear | music | ?
What you smell | perfume | ?
What you taste | relish | ?
What you feel | rough | ?

SOLUTION

Column 2 — additional sensory words from the text:

What you see: panorama, glimpse, light, smooth skin, shaggy bark, symmetry, pageant
What you hear: music (of voice), song (of a bird), strains (of an orchestra)
What you smell: perfume (of flowers)
What you taste: morsel, relish
What you feel (touch): rough, smooth, shaggy, delicate, quiver

Column 3 — new words (student-added examples):
What you see: vivid, glittering, shadow
What you hear: melody, whisper, thunder
What you smell: fragrant, musty, fresh
What you taste: sweet, bitter, savory
What you feel: soft, bumpy, velvety

Answer: Column 2 from text — See: panorama, glimpse, light, pageant. Hear: music, song of a bird, strains of an orchestra. Smell: perfume. Taste: morsel, relish. Feel: rough, smooth, shaggy, delicate, quiver. Column 3: any appropriate sensory words added by the student.

Q2 Identify the modal verbs in the following sentences. Choose the functions they express from those given in the box below.
(possibility, necessity, polite request, ability, moral obligation)

1. You can learn a lot from this experience.
2. They might arrive late due to traffic.
3. She must finish her homework before dinner.
4. They ought to apologise for their mistake.
5. He would like to have some lassi, please.

SOLUTION

1. 'can' — ability (You are able to learn a lot from this experience.)
2. 'might' — possibility (It is possible they will arrive late due to traffic.)
3. 'must' — necessity (It is necessary that she finishes her homework before dinner.)
4. 'ought to' — moral obligation (They have a moral duty to apologise for their mistake.)
5. 'would' — polite request (He is politely requesting to have some lassi.)

Answer: 1. can — ability 2. might — possibility 3. must — necessity 4. ought to — moral obligation 5. would — polite request

Q3 Fill in the blanks with appropriate modal verbs from Column 3. After filling in the blanks, explain the function of each modal verb.

Column 1 (Situation) | Column 2 (Function) | Column 3 (Modal verbs: can, could, may, might, must, ought to, shall, should, will, would)
1. You want to leave work early. | permission | (i) _____ I leave early today if I finish all my tasks?
2. You have an important deadline tomorrow. | obligation | (ii) I _____ finish this report by tomorrow.
3. Your friend is thinking whether to join Art class. | advice | (iii) You _____ consider all the pros and cons before making a decision.
4. There are dark clouds in the sky. | possibility | (iv) It _____ rain later today.
5. Asking someone to pass the salt at the dinner table. | polite request | (v) _____ you pass the salt, please?
6. Advising someone to apologise for a mistake. | moral obligation | (vi) You _____ apologise for the mistake you made.
7. Deciding where to go for picnic. | suggestion | (vii) We _____ go to any park nearby for picnic.

SOLUTION

(i) May / Could — 'May I leave early today if I finish all my tasks?' or 'Could I leave early today if I finish all my tasks?'
Function: permission — asking for permission to leave early.

(ii) must / should — 'I must finish this report by tomorrow.'
Function: obligation — expressing a strong obligation to complete the report.

(iii) should — 'You should consider all the pros and cons before making a decision.'
Function: advice — giving advice about what the friend should do.

(iv) might / may — 'It might rain later today.'
Function: possibility — expressing that there is a chance of rain.

(v) Could / Would — 'Could you pass the salt, please?' or 'Would you pass the salt, please?'
Function: polite request — politely asking someone to pass the salt.

(vi) should / ought to — 'You should apologise for the mistake you made.'
Function: moral obligation — indicating what one morally ought to do.

(vii) could / shall / should — 'We could go to any park nearby for picnic.'
Function: suggestion — proposing an option for the picnic.

Answer: (i) May/Could (permission) (ii) must (obligation) (iii) should (advice) (iv) might/may (possibility) (v) Could/Would (polite request) (vi) should/ought to (moral obligation) (vii) could/shall (suggestion)