Chapter 8: Follow That Dream

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Exercise 8.1 — Check Your Understanding — Follow That Dream

Q1 State whether the following sentence is true or false: Reaching the peak of skill in a field typically demands a focused and intense dedication for about a decade.

SOLUTION

The letter states: 'to reach world-class standard in any field, one has to be singularly and intensively pursuing the subject for at least ten years.'

A decade equals ten years, and the mother explicitly says 'at least ten years' of singular, intensive pursuit.

Answer: True

Q2 State whether the following sentence is true or false: The mother believes that significant effort and personal sacrifices are essential for turning aspirations into reality.

SOLUTION

The mother writes: 'What differentiates greatness from the ordinary is how much effort and sacrifice people invest to realise their dream.'

She also asks Ming to 'Count the cost in years of effort, financial investments and sacrifice' before committing.

Effort and sacrifice are central to her advice — clearly affirming this statement.

Answer: True

Q3 State whether the following sentence is true or false: The path to achieving the deepest desires has very little difficulty or a few obstacles.

SOLUTION

The mother says 'The road may be uphill most of the way' and the dream 'will take a much longer time to realise' and requires negotiating 'a path through a maze of hurdles'.

The text consistently presents the path to dreams as difficult, not easy.

Answer: False

Q4 State whether the following sentence is true or false: The mother is of the opinion that a person's life goals and hopes can evolve over time.

SOLUTION

The mother says: 'From my own experience, life itself may change a person's dreams. These hopes and aspirations are no less than the original dream of younger days.'

She uses her own example — publishing a book — which was not her original youthful dream but one that evolved over years.

She clearly believes dreams change and evolve.

Answer: True

Q5 State whether the following sentence is true or false: Having a strong network of individuals can be a hurdle in pursuing one's ambition.

SOLUTION

The mother cites Academy Award winners who 'always thanks a host of people that formed his/her support network', saying 'for one winner, there is a group of people who stood by him/her.'

A support network is presented as a help, not a hurdle.

Answer: False

Q6 State whether the following sentence is true or false: The mother feels that pursuing a major life goal will not involve any financial expense or sacrifice.

SOLUTION

The mother explicitly tells Ming to 'Count the cost in years of effort, financial investments and sacrifice.'

She acknowledges financial cost is part of the price of pursuing a dream.

Answer: False

Q7 State whether the following sentence is true or false: For many individuals, their aspirations remain just wishes because they don't move beyond mere daydreaming.

SOLUTION

The mother writes: 'for a lot of people, dreams remain dreams. Although everyone at one time or other has wistfully said to oneself, "I wish I could be this or the other," they have never got beyond just wishful thinking.'

This directly confirms the statement.

Answer: True

Exercise 8.2 — Critical Reflection I — Extract Questions (Follow That Dream)

Q1 Read the extract: 'It starts with a passion for a particular interest, then comes the conviction that it is imperative to realise it. Count the cost in years of effort, financial investments and sacrifice. Then if it is still burning in your blood and you are ready to commit yourself to the task, plunge. It could be in any field—sports, science, arts, business, or design. The road may be uphill most of the way and often you are buoyed up only by the knowledge that you are doing what you love best and are doing the right thing. When stamina is running out, the prospect of success will keep you on track.'

(i) Complete the analogy with a suitable word from the extract: enthusiasm : passion :: belief : _____

(ii) The author says that a realistic assessment of effort, investment and sacrifice is crucial for preventing _____. (A) the need for external support network (B) an early abandonment of the dream (C) initial excitement from fading over time (D) others from questioning one's commitment

(iii) The word 'plunge' as used in the extract indicates a _____ (complete/gradual) involvement in a task.

(iv) Complete the sentence with an appropriate reason: The author's emphasis on 'when you are doing what you love best and are doing the right thing' works as a form of intrinsic motivation because _____.

(v) Mention one motivating factor besides 'prospect of success', that might keep a person on track, despite running out of stamina.

SOLUTION

(i) The analogy pairs synonyms. 'Enthusiasm' and 'passion' are synonyms; 'belief' must be paired with its synonym from the extract. The extract uses 'conviction' to mean belief or firm certainty.

(ii) The mother asks Ming to count the cost first — if the dream survives that realistic assessment, she may commit. The purpose is to prevent someone who has not truly weighed the sacrifice from giving up too soon once difficulties arise, i.e., an early abandonment of the dream.

(iii) 'Plunge' means to throw oneself completely into something (as glossed in the text: 'throw oneself into the activity'). It signals total, immediate immersion — a complete involvement.

(iv) The mother says you are 'buoyed up only by the knowledge that you are doing what you love best and are doing the right thing.' This inner alignment between one's work and one's values provides self-generated satisfaction

independent of external rewards — intrinsic motivation comes from within when the activity itself feels right and meaningful.

(v) One motivating factor from the extract itself is the inner knowledge that you are 'doing what you love best and are doing the right thing.' Beyond the text, support from family and friends (one's support network) can also keep a person going when personal stamina runs low.

Answer: (i) conviction (ii) B (iii) complete (iv) the activity itself aligns with one's deepest values and passion, generating inner satisfaction without needing external reward (v) The knowledge that one is doing what one loves best and is doing the right thing

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Q2 Read the extract: 'From my own experience, life itself may change a person's dreams. These hopes and aspirations are no less than the original dream of younger days. To fulfil them you will need to negotiate a path through a maze of hurdles. The dream will take a much longer time to realise, and the people who are participants in your dreamscape would be many more.'

(i) Complete the sentence appropriately: The phrase 'life itself may change a person's dreams' suggests that dreams are not static but rather _____. (evolving/dynamic)

(ii) What does the author mean by, 'hopes and aspirations are no less than the original dream of younger days'?

(iii) Identify the phrase from the extract that indicates a complex and challenging journey.

(iv) Complete the sentence with an appropriate reason: The author says, 'people who are participants in your dreamscape would be many more' because _____.

(v) What is the tone of the author in this extract? (A) appreciative and celebratory (B) excited and cheerful (C) optimistic and encouraging (D) eager and inquisitive

SOLUTION

(i) Both 'evolving' and 'dynamic' are close in meaning, but 'dynamic' (constantly active and changing) best captures how life reshapes dreams rather than them simply maturing step by step.

(ii) The mother means that the newer hopes and aspirations a person develops as life changes their original dream are just as worthy and meaningful as the dream they started with in youth. She illustrates this with her own example: publishing a

book was not her youthful dream, yet it is no less valuable or exciting to her.

(iii) The phrase 'negotiate a path through a maze of hurdles' indicates a complex and challenging journey — 'maze' suggests confusion and complexity, and 'hurdles' signals repeated obstacles.

(iv) As life changes and a dream evolves over a longer span of time, a person naturally involves more people — family, colleagues, mentors, collaborators — who become part of the extended journey or 'dreamscape' that the updated dream requires.

(v) The tone is optimistic and encouraging. The mother reassures Ming that evolving dreams are equally valid and worth pursuing, even if they take longer and involve more people.

Answer: (i) dynamic (ii) Evolved aspirations are as meaningful and worthy of pursuit as one's original youthful dream (iii) 'negotiate a path through a maze of hurdles' (iv) as a dream evolves over more years, it draws in more people — family, friends, collaborators — as participants (v) C

Exercise 8.3 — Critical Reflection II — Answer Questions (Follow That Dream)

Q1 The letter begins thus, 'By all means follow that dream'. What do you think Ming must have written to her mother about?

SOLUTION

The mother's opening line — 'By all means follow that dream' — is a direct response to something Ming shared.

Given the letter's content (weighing passion against effort, sacrifice, years of commitment, and the possibility of societal or parental doubt), Ming most likely wrote about a specific dream or ambition she wished to pursue — perhaps an unconventional career or passion.

She probably expressed uncertainty or sought her mother's permission/support, which prompted the mother to respond with both encouragement and realistic caution.

Answer: Ming most likely wrote to her mother about a dream or ambition she wanted to pursue, possibly seeking approval or guidance, which prompted her mother's encouraging yet realistic response.

Q2 How can one attain an international level of skill in any field? Mention any two ways.

SOLUTION

According to the letter, two ways to attain world-class (international) skill are:

1. Singular and intensive pursuit for at least ten years — 'to reach world-class standard in any field, one has to be singularly and intensively pursuing the subject for at least ten years.'
2. Starting with a burning passion and then building conviction — 'It starts with a passion for a particular interest, then comes the conviction that it is imperative to realise it.' Passion drives the sustained effort needed.

Answer: 1. Singularly and intensively pursuing the field for at least ten years. 2. Beginning with a deep passion and strong conviction that make the sustained effort feel worthwhile.

Q3 What differentiates the mere dreamers from actual achievers?

SOLUTION

The mother identifies a clear difference: 'for a lot of people, dreams remain dreams' because they never move beyond 'wishful thinking.'

Mere dreamers say 'I wish I could be this or the other' but take no concrete action.

Actual achievers, by contrast, count the real cost (years of effort, financial investment, sacrifice) and then, if the dream still burns in their blood, commit fully and 'plunge' — taking decisive action.

The key differentiator is the willingness to convert passion and conviction into real, sustained sacrifice and commitment.

Answer: Mere dreamers stop at wishful thinking; achievers count the real cost, and if the dream still burns in them, they commit fully and act on it.

Q4 How does Ming's mother use critical questions and personal anecdotes to persuade Ming and convey her message effectively?

SOLUTION

Critical questions: The mother implicitly challenges Ming to weigh the dream against its cost — 'Count the cost in years of effort, financial investments and sacrifice. Then if it is still burning in your blood...' This asks Ming to interrogate her own commitment honestly.

Personal anecdotes: She draws on real stories — people whose dreams were thwarted by the Japanese invasion during World War II, or who had to leave school to support siblings. These examples make abstract warnings concrete and relatable.

She also uses her own personal anecdote: 'publishing this book is a dream I have chased in the last ten years... it was not the dream I had in my youth.' This shows that she is not preaching from the outside; she has lived the very experience she is describing.

Together, these strategies make her advice credible, emotionally resonant, and persuasive without being dismissive of Ming's dream.

Answer: She uses pointed questions to prompt honest self-assessment, and real-life anecdotes (wartime disruptions, her own book-writing journey) to make abstract advice concrete and credible.

Q5 How does Ming's mother balance encouragement with caution in her advice?

SOLUTION

Encouragement: She opens powerfully — 'By all means follow that dream' — and closes with 'I wish at least one of your dreams comes true too.' She cites great men and women who became great by pursuing their dreams, and assures Ming that a support network exists for dreamers.

Caution: She reminds Ming that world-class achievement demands at least ten years of singular effort, financial sacrifice, and personal cost. She gives examples of people whose dreams were derailed by circumstances. She warns that many dreams remain mere wishes.

Balance: She explicitly says 'No, I am not going to put a wet blanket on your dreams…but you will also have to consider the years you need to chase your dream.' This sentence encapsulates her balanced stance — full support, but eyes open.

The balance makes her advice realistic yet loving.

Answer: She opens with wholehearted encouragement ('By all means follow that dream') and closes warmly, but asks Ming to honestly count the cost in years, money, and sacrifice — all without dampening the dream.

Q6 In the letter, Ming's mother specifically addresses the challenges people face in pursuing their dreams. Do you think this advice is still relevant in contemporary society? If yes, why? If no, why not?

SOLUTION

Yes, this advice is still relevant in contemporary society.

First, the core insight — that world-class skill requires at least ten years of intensive practice — aligns with what researchers today call 'deliberate practice.' This principle applies across modern fields from technology to sports to the arts.

Second, financial and sacrificial costs of pursuing unconventional dreams remain real. Many young people today face parental pressure to choose 'secure' careers over passions.

Third, the role of a support network is as important today as ever, perhaps more so, given the competitive and often isolating nature of modern professional life.

The specific references (Raffles College, Japanese invasion) are dated, but the underlying truths about passion, sacrifice, persistence, and evolving dreams are timeless.

Answer: Yes, very relevant. The ten-year mastery principle, the reality of financial sacrifice, and the value of a support network apply just as strongly in today's competitive, fast-changing world.

Q7 What 'costs' in terms of effort, sacrifice, and time are you willing or unwilling to invest to pursue your goals?

SOLUTION

This question invites personal reflection grounded in the letter's framework.

The mother identifies three types of costs: years of effort (at least a decade of intensive, focused pursuit), financial investments (money spent on training, education, or resources), and personal sacrifice (giving up security, immediate rewards, or other opportunities).

A student might reflect: they are willing to invest effort through daily practice and long study hours; they are willing to sacrifice leisure time and entertainment. They may be less willing to sacrifice family time or financial security.

The letter's point is not that one must be willing to pay every cost, but that one must honestly know which costs one is ready to bear before committing — so the decision is made with open eyes.

Answer: Personal response. Based on the letter's framework, reflect honestly on your readiness for years of effort, financial investment, and personal sacrifice — the letter asks for eyes-open commitment, not blind enthusiasm.

Exercise 8.4 — Vocabulary and Structures in Context I–VI (Follow That Dream)

Q1 The word 'dreamscape' is a compound word where '-scape' means 'a view or scene of'. Refer to a dictionary and find out the meaning of: mindscape, seascape, landscape, cityscape. Then fill in the blanks in the following dialogue with these words:
(i) 'Your Goa pictures were beautiful! That _____ was dreamy.'
(ii) 'It was way better than our usual _____, so peaceful.'
(iii) Kiran: 'True, but I'm craving a quiet (iii) _____. Forests, hills—something real.'
(iv) 'Yes, nature clears the (iv)_____, doesn't it?'

SOLUTION

Meanings (from '-scape' = a view or scene of):
- seascape: a view or scene of the sea
- cityscape: a view or scene of a city
- landscape: a view or scene of land, usually natural countryside
- mindscape: the inner landscape of one's mind or imagination

Applying to the dialogue:
(i) In Goa — pictures of the sea being 'dreamy' → seascape
(ii) 'Our usual ___' that is contrasted with the Goa seascape, described as not as peaceful → cityscape
(iii) Craving 'forests, hills—something real' → landscape
(iv) Nature clears the ___ (internal/mental) → mindscape

Answer: (i) seascape (ii) cityscape (iii) landscape (iv) mindscape

Q2 Read each sentence carefully and choose the best meaning for the underlined expression. Then, use that expression in a sentence of your own.

1. She had a dream that seemed to burn in her blood, and she wasn't going to give up on it easily. (i) make her angry (ii) have a passionate desire (iii) cause physical pain (iv) become violent
2. Preparing for the final exam without proper notes felt like an uphill task. (i) a tough challenge (ii) a slow progress (iii) a hard routine (iv) a difficult choice
3. The team was buoyed up by their recent victory and felt confident about the next game. (i) energised by success (ii) encouraged by the result (iii) motivated to improve (iv) lifted in spirit
4. He thought he could ace the exam without studying, but that was just wishful thinking. (i) a clever shortcut but no real effort behind it (ii) a confident guess but lacking proper knowledge (iii) a hopeful belief but unlikely to be true (iv) a strong desire but based on facts and planning
5. Don't be a wet blanket—we're trying to have fun! (i) spoil-sport (ii) latecomer (iii) rule-breaker (iv) daydreamer
6. Excitement was coursing through her veins as she stepped onto the stage for the first time. (i) hiding deep inside (ii) flowing through her body (iii) lingering in her thoughts (iv) causing numbness

SOLUTION

1. 'burn in her blood' = (ii) have a passionate desire. Example: His desire to become a pilot burns in his blood — nothing could change his mind.

2. 'uphill task' = (i) a tough challenge. Example: Learning a new language is an uphill task, but consistent practice makes it possible.

3. 'buoyed up' = (iv) lifted in spirit. (The team was emotionally lifted — 'lifted in spirit' captures the emotional uplift most precisely, as the glossary says 'kept afloat/lifted'.) Example: She was buoyed up by her teacher's kind words and practised even harder.

4. 'wishful thinking' = (iii) a hopeful belief but unlikely to be true. Example: Expecting a prize without putting in any effort is just wishful thinking.

5. 'wet blanket' = (i) spoil-sport. Example: Don't be a wet blanket — everyone is enjoying the game, so join in!

6. 'coursing through her veins' = (ii) flowing through her body. Example: Nervousness was coursing through his veins as he waited for the results.

Answer: 1-(ii), 2-(i), 3-(iv), 4-(iii), 5-(i), 6-(ii)

Q3 The text uses the first conditional with an imperative in the main clause (e.g., 'if the burning conviction is still coursing through your veins, then go ahead and do something about it'). Complete the following sentences using your own words (imperatives):

1. If the idea excites you, _____.
2. If you hear strange noises,_____.
3. If this seems too hard, _____.
4. If you care about the issue, _____.
5. If you finish early, _____.

SOLUTION

Model answers using imperatives in the main clause:

1. If the idea excites you, act on it immediately before the excitement fades.
2. If you hear strange noises, stay calm and call for help.
3. If this seems too hard, break the task into smaller steps and tackle one at a time.
4. If you care about the issue, raise your voice and take action.
5. If you finish early, review your work carefully before submitting.

Answer: Model: 1. act on it immediately 2. stay calm and call for help 3. break it into smaller steps 4. raise your voice and take action 5. review your work carefully

Q4 Analyse the usage of 'could' and match the sentences with their functions: Past ability or purpose | Possibility | Past possibility or speculation | Unreal or hypothetical situation

1. It could be in any field—sports, science, arts, business or design.
2. 'I wish I could be this or the other,' they have never got beyond just wishful thinking.
3. They could have preferred to trade their dream for security.
4. I know too, of people who had wished to finish secondary school but they had to go out to work so that they could support their siblings through school.

SOLUTION

1. 'It could be in any field' — 'could' indicates that the dream has the potential to exist in any of those domains: Possibility.

2. 'I wish I could be this or the other' — the speaker is imagining being something different from reality; 'could' is used in a wish, referring to an impossible or unreal situation: Unreal or hypothetical situation.

3. 'They could have preferred to trade their dream for security' — this speculates about a past choice that was possible but not confirmed: Past possibility or speculation.

4. 'they had to go out to work so that they could support their siblings' — 'could' describes their purpose/ability in the past to earn and support siblings: Past ability or purpose.

Answer: 1 — Possibility | 2 — Unreal or hypothetical situation | 3 — Past possibility or speculation | 4 — Past ability or purpose

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Q5 Complete the following sentences using 'could' with the functions mentioned within brackets:

1. I wish _____ without worrying about money. (unreal or hypothetical)
2. They _____ the shorter route, but they didn't know about it. (past possibility or speculative)
3. When I was younger, I _____ without stopping. (past ability)
4. She _____ the library right now—she had mentioned it. (possibility)
5. _____ repeat the question? I didn't hear it clearly. (formal/polite request)

SOLUTION

1. (unreal/hypothetical) 'I wish I could travel the world without worrying about money.'
2. (past possibility/speculative) 'They could have taken the shorter route, but they didn't know about it.'
3. (past ability) 'When I was younger, I could run for hours without stopping.'
4. (possibility) 'She could be at the library right now — she had mentioned it.'
5. (formal/polite request) 'Could you repeat the question? I didn't hear it clearly.'

Answer: 1. I could travel the world 2. could have taken 3. could run for hours 4. could be at 5. Could you

Q6 Fill in the blanks with suitable grammatical forms of the words given in brackets:

Experiential learning is an approach to education that focuses on learning through experience, action and reflection. It 1. _____ (help) students gain practical knowledge and develop real-world skills. Traditionally, students 2. _____ (learn) by listening to lectures and memorising facts, but experiential learning has changed this process. In an experiential setting, students 3. _____ (work) on projects, solve problems, and take part in activities that reflect real-life challenges. They 4. _____ (apply) what they have learned in class to new and unfamiliar situations. For example, a student studying science 5. _____ (conduct) experiments to test a theory, while a business student 6. _____ (analyse) a case study to understand market trends. Reflection is key to this process. After completing a task, learners 7. _____ (must/reflect) on what went well and what could be improved. This reflection 8. _____ (help) them build a deeper understanding of the topic. Educators believe that experiential learning 9. _____ (be) more effective than passive learning methods because it is engaging and meaningful. In the future, more schools and universities 10. _____ (incorporate) experiential learning into their curriculum to prepare students for the real world.

SOLUTION

1. 'help' — general truth / habitual present → helps
2. 'learn' — past habitual (contrast with present) → learned / used to learn
3. 'work' — present habitual in an experiential setting → work
4. 'apply' — present habitual → apply
5. 'conduct' — present habitual (example) → conducts
6. 'analyse' — present habitual (example) → analyses
7. 'must/reflect' — obligation → must reflect
8. 'help' — general truth → helps
9. 'be' — belief/opinion → is
10. 'incorporate' — future prediction → will incorporate

Answer: 1. helps 2. learned (used to learn) 3. work 4. apply 5. conducts 6. analyses 7. must reflect 8. helps 9. is 10. will incorporate

Exercise 8.5 — Check Your Understanding — Believe in Yourself (Poem)

Q1 Based on your understanding of the poem 'Step up to the challenge', select the correct central idea for each stanza from the options given.
Stanza 1: (i) Facing challenges requires personal responsibility and a clear focus on one's future. (ii) Facing challenges is a journey best taken with support and guidance from others.
Stanza 2: (i) Fear and uncertainty make it difficult to make choices as the future approaches. (ii) Facing the future with confidence makes choices easier and more straightforward.
Stanza 3: (i) Personal growth involves finding balance between comfort and change. (ii) Personal growth requires leaving behind comfort and embracing change.
Stanza 4: (i) The first step towards change may feel easy if you place your trust in others to guide you and provide support. (ii) The first step towards change is difficult, but having self-belief and confidence helps you stay on track.

SOLUTION

Stanza 1 ('There is no crowd to see, / It's just you and the future / And where you want to be'): The stanza emphasises that facing a challenge is a solo, personal endeavour — no external crowd or guide, only you and your future. Central idea: personal responsibility and focus. → (i)

Stanza 2 ('Will it pull you forward / Or push you back in fear? / Difficult are choices / When the future is getting near'): These lines stress that fear and uncertainty make choosing difficult as the future draws closer. → (i)

Stanza 3 ('There is such ease in comfort / To maintain the status quo, / But this isn't what we are made for / This isn't how we grow'): The poet rejects comfortable stagnation and insists growth requires stepping away from comfort. → (ii)

Stanza 4 ('The first step is the hardest / There is no turning back, / You just need to believe in yourself / For your future to be on track'): Self-belief is the key — the first step is hard but self-confidence keeps you on track. → (ii)

Answer: Stanza 1: (i) | Stanza 2: (i) | Stanza 3: (ii) | Stanza 4: (ii)

Q2 Rhyme Scheme: Fill in the blank to complete the following sentence: The poem follows a simple, yet effective rhyme scheme _____ that flows steadily through each stanza.

SOLUTION

Looking at the end words of each stanza:
Stanza 1: see / future / be — 'see' and 'be' rhyme; 'future' does not → ABAB (see=A, future=B, be=A, near-equivalent) — more precisely ABAB.
Stanza 2: forward / fear / choices / near — 'fear' and 'near' rhyme (lines 2 & 4) → ABCB
Stanza 3: comfort / quo / for / grow — 'quo' and 'grow' rhyme → ABCB
Stanza 4: hardest / back / yourself / track — 'back' and 'track' rhyme → ABCB
The consistent pattern across stanzas is ABCB (the 2nd and 4th lines of each stanza rhyme).

Answer: ABCB

Q3 Tone: State whether the following statements are true or false.
1. The overall tone of the poem is motivational and encouraging.
2. The tone shifts from thoughtful in the beginning to one of determination by the end of the poem.

SOLUTION

1. The poem consistently urges the reader to step up, believe in themselves, and not be held back by comfort or fear. The tone is motivational and encouraging throughout. → True

2. The first stanzas acknowledge fear, uncertainty, and the difficulty of choices (thoughtful/reflective), while the final stanza firmly urges self-belief and forward movement ('You just need to believe in yourself') — signalling determination. The shift is genuine. → True

Answer: 1. True 2. True

Q4 Speaker: Fill in the blanks with the correct options from those given in the brackets.
The speaker in this poem is not distant; rather, he/she comes across as a _____ (stranger/guide) who understands the struggle and is encouraging the reader to take _____ (interest in/control of) his/her own future. The use of direct address 'You' creates a close connection, as though the speaker is _____. (talking directly to the reader/addressing the reader from a distance)

SOLUTION

The speaker gives advice, understands the struggle personally, and encourages forward action — the role of a guide, not a stranger.

The speaker urges the reader to take charge of ('control of') their future, not merely show interest in it.

The repeated 'You' in 'You just need to believe in yourself' and 'where you want to be' creates intimacy — as though the speaker is talking directly to the reader.

Answer: guide | control of | talking directly to the reader

Q5 Imagery: Match the phrases from the poem in Column 1 with the imagery they represent in Column 2 (an extra representation is given).
Column 1: 1. 'There is no crowd to see...' | 2. 'push you back in fear?'
Column 2: (i) Represents the difficulty of beginning a new challenge or change. (ii) Suggests a solitary journey, stressing individual effort. (iii) Evokes the mental barrier that prevents growth.

SOLUTION

1. 'There is no crowd to see...' — the absence of spectators creates imagery of isolation and a solitary journey. → (ii) Suggests a solitary journey, stressing individual effort.

2. 'push you back in fear?' — being pushed back by fear evokes an invisible mental barrier that holds one back. → (iii) Evokes the mental barrier that prevents growth.

(i) 'Represents the difficulty of beginning a new challenge or change' — this represents the extra/unused option, aligning with 'The first step is the hardest' which is not in Column 1 here.

Answer: 1 → (ii) | 2 → (iii)

Q6 Symbolism: Select the words/phrases from the box below to complete the given sentences.
[unknown | self-improvement | leap of faith | stagnation | courage]
1. Comfort and the status quo represent _____ and fear of change, symbolising the comfort zone that holds one back.
2. The future symbolises the _____, the potential for change and success that lies ahead but requires _____to step into.
3. The first step symbolises the initial _____ required to begin the journey of _____ or personal development.

SOLUTION

1. 'Comfort and the status quo' = remaining unchanged = stagnation (and fear of change).
2. 'The future' = what is not yet known = unknown; stepping into it requires courage.
3. 'The first step' = the initial daring act = leap of faith; it begins the journey of self-improvement.

Answer: 1. stagnation 2. unknown / courage 3. leap of faith / self-improvement

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Q7 Metaphor: The poet uses a metaphor in the line, 'The first step is the hardest'. Explain why this is metaphorical.

SOLUTION

'The first step is the hardest' is a metaphor because 'step' here does not literally mean a physical footstep — it stands for any initial action or decision to begin a challenge or change.

'Hardest' is also metaphorical: beginning something is not literally the most physically demanding moment but the most psychologically difficult — requiring the most courage, self-belief, and willingness to overcome inertia.

The metaphor compares starting a journey (literal step) to overcoming the greatest internal resistance (metaphorical hardness), making an abstract psychological truth vivid and concrete.

Answer: 'Step' is not a literal footstep but any first action toward change; 'hardest' denotes the greatest psychological barrier, not physical difficulty — making abstract internal struggle concrete through comparison.

Q8 Antithesis: Identify the lines from the poem that show antithesis and explain why it is so.

SOLUTION

Antithesis 1: 'Will it pull you forward / Or push you back in fear?' — 'pull you forward' (progress/movement ahead) is directly contrasted with 'push you back' (regression/movement backward) in a parallel grammatical structure, highlighting the two opposing outcomes of confronting a challenge.

Antithesis 2: 'There is such ease in comfort / To maintain the status quo, / But this isn't what we are made for / This isn't how we grow.' — 'ease in comfort' (passive, unchanging) is contrasted with 'how we grow' (active, changing) using 'But' to signal the opposition, making the tension between stagnation and growth explicit.

Answer: 1. 'pull you forward / push you back in fear' — forward progress vs. backward retreat in parallel structure. 2. 'ease in comfort / this isn't how we grow' — stagnation vs. growth contrasted with 'But'.

Exercise 8.6 — Critical Reflection — Poem (Believe in Yourself)

Q1 Read the extract: 'Step up to the challenge / There is no crowd to see, / It's just you and the future / And where you want to be.'
(i) What does the line, 'There is no crowd to see' suggest about facing challenges?
(ii) Complete the following suitably: The line 'It's just you and the future' suggests that _____.
(iii) Fill in the blank with the appropriate word/phrase from the extract: Latha will _____ her efforts to improve her vocal performance by practicing harder each day.
(iv) Select the most suitable title for the extract. A. The Struggles of Change B. Facing the Future Alone C. A Journey of Growth D. The Power of Fear
(v) Complete the analogy by using a word from the extract: achieve : goal :: face : _____

SOLUTION

(i) 'There is no crowd to see' suggests that facing a challenge is a deeply personal and solitary experience — there are no spectators to validate, judge, or guide you. The responsibility rests entirely on the individual.

(ii) 'It's just you and the future' suggests that the journey toward one's goals is fundamentally a personal undertaking; no one else can walk it for you — the only true companion is the future you are shaping.

(iii) The appropriate word/phrase from the extract that fits 'Latha will _____ her efforts' is 'step up' — she will step up her efforts. ('Step up to the challenge' is the key phrase; 'step up' means to increase effort.)

(iv) The stanza is about a lone individual confronting their future with full personal responsibility — not about others, not about fear being dominant, not just 'struggles.' The most fitting title is C. A Journey of Growth.

(v) 'achieve' relates to 'goal' (the object of achieving). 'face' relates to its object — in the extract, what one faces is 'the challenge.' achieve : goal :: face : challenge.

Answer: (i) Challenges are faced alone — no crowd validates or guides you; responsibility is personal. (ii) the journey toward one's goals is a personal undertaking that only the individual can make. (iii) step up (iv) C (v) challenge

Q2 Answer the following questions.

1. What is the significance of the metaphor, 'The first step is the hardest' in the context of personal growth?
2. What message does the antithesis in the poem convey about the nature of personal development?
3. Do you think the poet's message is realistic in the context of real-world struggles? (Clue: Evaluate whether simply 'believing in yourself' is enough to overcome obstacles or other factors are also necessary.)
4. Consider a situation where you or someone you know had to take a difficult first step towards a goal. How does the poem's message about the importance of self-belief apply to this situation?

SOLUTION

1. The metaphor 'The first step is the hardest' captures the psychological truth that beginning is the most difficult part of any personal growth journey. Once the initial inertia and fear are overcome, momentum builds. In the context of personal growth, this reminds us that the greatest barrier is often internal — the reluctance to begin — not any external obstacle. The metaphor encourages people to take that first step, trusting that subsequent ones will feel progressively more natural.

2. The antithesis ('Will it pull you forward / Or push you back in fear'; 'ease in comfort…but this isn't how we grow') conveys that personal development is defined by choosing between two opposing paths: comfort/stagnation versus challenge/growth. The sharp contrast between these opposites emphasises that the two cannot coexist — growth is only possible when one chooses to leave comfort behind.

3. The poet's message — 'you just need to believe in yourself' — is inspiring but only partially realistic. Self-belief is a necessary foundation, but it alone is rarely sufficient. Real-world success also requires access to resources, mentors, opportunities, and sustained effort. Structural inequalities (poverty, discrimination) can prevent self-belief from translating into achievement without external support. The poem is best read as a motivational starting point, not a complete roadmap.

4. Personal response. For example: A student who was afraid to try out for the school debate team had to take the first step of putting their name forward. Before that moment, self-doubt ('I won't be good enough') held them back. The poem's message applies here: believing in oneself gave them the courage to take that difficult first step, and the experience itself built further confidence regardless of

the outcome.

Answer: 1. Signals that beginning is the hardest psychological barrier; overcoming inertia enables all further growth. 2. Growth demands a clear choice between comfort (stagnation) and change — they cannot coexist. 3. Self-belief is necessary but not sufficient; resources, effort, and opportunity also matter. 4. Personal response grounded in an example of overcoming hesitation through self-belief.

Exercise 8.7 — Vocabulary in Context I–II (Believe in Yourself)

Q1 The phrase 'status quo' is a Latin expression meaning 'the existing state of affairs.' Fill in the blanks in the given sentences with the Latin expressions from the table (et cetera / e.g. / ad hoc / in media res / per se / quid pro quo):
(i) I enjoy reading fantasy books, _____ Harry Potter and Magical Paint Brush.
(ii) After helping Tanya with the homework, Ritu asked for a _____ to borrow her notes next time.
(iii) I love all kinds of outdoor activities, such as trekking, hiking, biking, _____.
(iv) The park is not very special _____; it becomes more fun when you visit with friends.
(v) We created an _____ team to organise the school festival.
(vi) The movie started _____, with the hero already fighting the villain in a huge battle.

SOLUTION

(i) 'Harry Potter and Magical Paint Brush' are examples of fantasy books → e.g. (exempli gratia = for example)
(ii) Ritu wants something in return for her help → quid pro quo (a favour in return for something)
(iii) Trekking, hiking, biking — and other outdoor activities → et cetera (etc.) (and other things; and so on)
(iv) The park is not special by itself alone → per se (by itself; fundamentally)
(v) A temporary team created for a specific purpose (the school festival) → ad hoc
(vi) The movie begins in the middle of an action sequence → in media res (into the middle of things)

Answer: (i) e.g. (ii) quid pro quo (iii) et cetera (etc.) (iv) per se (v) ad hoc (vi) in media res

Q2 A rhetorical question is a question that doesn't require an answer but is used to make the reader think or reflect.
1. Read the following rhetorical questions and state what they intend to achieve:
(i) 'Isn't it obvious that we must act now? Don't we all have a responsibility to make a change?'
(ii) 'Will we let fear control us, or will we rise above it?'
2. Match the situations in Column 1 to the rhetorical questions in Column 2:
Column 1: (i) Deciding whether to stand up for what is right | (ii) Owning up to a mistake made in a group project | (iii) Deciding whether to try something challenging, like public speaking | (iv) Choosing between two career paths | (v) Deciding whether to apologise for a mistake | (vi) Trying something new and stepping out of your comfort zone
Column 2: A. How can we ever grow if we never try anything new? | B. Isn't it better to admit our mistakes than to let them define us? | C. If I don't take responsibility now, when will I? | D. Can I really move forward without knowing which path to take? | E. What's the point of playing it safe if it means staying stuck? | F. How can we stay silent when we know what is right?

SOLUTION

1. Rhetorical questions and their intent:
(i) 'Isn't it obvious that we must act now? Don't we all have a responsibility to make a change?' — These questions intend to create urgency and a sense of shared moral responsibility, nudging the listener to agree that action is necessary without waiting for external permission.
(ii) 'Will we let fear control us, or will we rise above it?' — This question intends to inspire courage by presenting two stark options and implying that rising above fear is the only worthy choice.

2. Matching situations to rhetorical questions:
(i) Standing up for what is right → F. 'How can we stay silent when we know what is right?' (appeals to moral conscience)
(ii) Owning up to a mistake in a group project → C. 'If I don't take responsibility now, when will I?' (personal accountability)
(iii) Trying something challenging like public speaking → A. 'How can we ever grow if we never try anything new?' (encourages stepping out of comfort zone)
(iv) Choosing between two career paths → D. 'Can I really move forward without knowing which path to take?' (indecision about the future)
(v) Deciding whether to apologise for a mistake → B. 'Isn't it better to admit our

mistakes than to let them define us?' (encourages honesty)
(vi) Trying something new, stepping out of comfort zone → E. 'What's the point of playing it safe if it means staying stuck?' (challenges comfort zone)

Answer: 1. (i) Creates urgency and shared moral responsibility to act. (ii) Inspires courage by framing the choice between fear and rising above it.
2. (i)→F (ii)→C (iii)→A (iv)→D (v)→B (vi)→E