

English First Flight Chapter 3

Two Stories About Flying

I. His First Fight

Thinking about the Text (Page 36)

Q- 1.

Why was the young seagull afraid to fly? Do you think all young birds are afraid to make their first flight, or are some birds more timid than others? Do you think a human baby also finds it a challenge to take its first step?

Answer:

The young seagull was afraid to fly because it was his first flight and he feared of falling and hurting himself. He thought that his wings would not support him while flying. Yes, it is natural that doing something for the first time is a bit challenging and fearful. All birds must be afraid to make their first flight. Similarly, a human baby is also afraid of taking the first step and find it challenging when he learns to crawl or stand up without support.'

Q- 2.

"The sight of the food maddened him." What does this suggest? What compelled the young seagull to finally fly?

Answer:

The young seagull was very hungry. It was this hunger that ultimately compelled it to fly. Its hunger intensified when it saw its mother tearing at a piece of fish that lay at her feet. It cried to her, begging her to get some food. When its mother came towards it with food in her beak, it screamed with joy and anticipation. However, she stopped midway. It wondered why she did not come nearer. Not being able to resist or controfits hunger any longer, it dived at the food in its mother's beak. At that moment, his hunger overpowered his fear of the great expanse of sea beneath the cliff. Finally, this plunge was followed by the natural reaction of its body, i.e. to fly.

Q- 3.

They were beckoning to him, calling shrilly." Why did the seagull's father and mother threaten him and cajole him to fly?

Answer:

Seagull's parents had tried everything but he was reluctant to fly due to fear of falling down. He looked at his brothers and sister but wouldn't make any efforts. That's why the whole family had left him alone and threatened and coaxed him to come but every effort went in vain.

Q- 4.

Have you ever had a similar experience, where your parents encouraged you to do something that you were too scared to try? Discuss this in pairs or groups.

Answer:

(Suggested Answer) Yes, I had a similar experience while learning to ride a bicycle in class VI. In my initial attempts, I fell down everytime and developed a fear of cycling which was difficult to overcome.

No amount of provoking and cajoling could let me try it again, but my father encouraged me to overcome the fear and helped me as he was adamant on my learning cycling. He took me on a mound near village and made me sit and asked me to put my hands on the handle and feet on the paddle. It sped down and I enjoyed it without fear which developed my confidence.

Thus, I overcame my fear of cycling and started riding a cycle after a few practice

Q- 5.

In the case of a bird flying, it seems a natural act, and a foregone conclusion that it should succeed. In the examples you have given in Answer to the previous Q-, was your success guaranteed, or was it important for you to try, regardless of a possibility of failure?

Answer:

We face some problems in the initial stage while learning new skill. Due to the fear of failure, we hesitate to perform a task or to do something new. In case of the seagull his parents coaxed him to fly. In the example I have given in the answer of previous Q-, I was coaxed by my father to learn cycling. So, at that stage, I was to learn cycling as it was very important for me to overcome my fear.

Yes, my success was guaranteed because if someone is determined to do something then success is assured. Moreover as said, practice, makes a man perfect.

II. The Black Aeroplane

Thinking about the Text

(Page 40)

Q- 1.

“I’ll take the risk”. What is the risk? Why does the narrator take it?

Answer:

A huge storm was brewing up and the author was keen to reach his home to spend his holiday with his family. So, he decided to fly through the storm as he did not want to miss the chance to meet his family at breakfast. Thus he took the risk even when the visibility was almost zero in the storm.

Q- 2.

Describe the narrator’s experience as he flew the aeroplane into the storm.

Answer:

As the pilot (author) entered the storm, his plane started jumping and twisting. He could not see anything outside the plane as it was black. When he looked at compass and other instruments they had stopped to function due to storm. It was a terrible and fearsome experience for him. The fuel tank was almost empty and he could not fly more than ten minutes. Then he saw another black aeroplane by his side and the pilot of the plane signalled him to follow. It was a surprise for the narrator as the other black plane was having no light. He followed him without any choice and landed safely on the runway.

Q- 3.

Why does the narrator say, “I landed and was not sorry to walk away from the old Dakota...”?

Answer:

Seagull’s parents had tried everything but he was reluctant to fly due to fear of falling down. He looked at his brothers and sister but wouldn’t make any efforts. That’s why the whole family had left him alone and threatened and coaxed him to come but every effort went in vain.

Q- 4.

What made the woman in the Control Centre look at the narrator strangely?

Answer:

The woman in the Control Centre looked at the narrator strangely because the narrator asked her about the black aeroplane and she saw no one except the narrator’s in the sky during the storm. Even the radar showed only the narrator’s plane that night in the sky.

Q- 5.

Who do you think helped the narrator to reach safely? Discuss this among yourselves and give reasons for your answer.

Answer:

It is very difficult to say about the unknown pilot who helped the narrator. But probably it was the narrator himself that helped him to overcome the fear in the storm as no other plane was seen in the radar except the narrator's Dakota plane. In that fearsome situation, he might have been hallucinating. He himself was a good pilot and brave enough who helped himself land safely.

Thinking about Language

(Page 40)

Q- 1.

Study the sentences given below.

- (a) They looked like black mountains.
- (b) Inside the clouds, everything was suddenly black.
- (c) In the black clouds near me, I saw another aeroplane.
- (d) The strange black aeroplane was there.

The word 'black' in sentences (a) and (c) refers to the very darkest colour. But in (b) and (d) (here) it means without light/with no light.

'Black' has a variety of meanings in different contexts. For example:

- (a) 'I prefer black tea' means 'I prefer tea without milk'.
- (b) 'With increasing pollution the future of the world is black' means With increasing pollution the future of the world is very depressing/without hope'.

Now, try to guess the meanings of the word 'black' in the sentences given below. Check the meanings in the dictionary and find out whether you have guessed right.

Q-s.

1. Go and have a bath, your hands and face are absolutely black_____.
2. The taxi-driver gave Ratan a black look as he crossed the road when the traffic light was green_____.
3. The bombardment of Hiroshima is one of the blackest crimes against humanity_____.
4. Very few people enjoy Harold Pinter's black comedy_____.
5. Sometimes shopkeepers store essential goods_____.
6. Villagers had beaten the criminal black and blue_____.

Answers:

- 1.A. The meaning of 'black ' in this sentence is that the face and hands are dark because of dust and dirt.
- 2.A. Here, 'black' refers to an angry look.
- 3.A. "Here, 'blackest' refers to the darkest and cruellest crime against humanity.
- 4.A. Here, 'black' refers to dark and gloomy comedy.
- 5.A. The meaning of 'black'in this sentence is that the shopkeepers sell the described goods 'at a higher price'.
- 6.A. Here, 'black'means that the criminal suffered excessive beating at the hands of the villagers.

Q- 2.

Look at these sentences taken from the lesson you have just read:

(a) I was flying my old Dakota aeroplane.

(b) The young seagull had been afraid to fly with them.

In the first sentence the author was controlling an aircraft in the air. In the second sentence the seagull was afraid to move through the air, using its wings.

Match the phrases given under Column A with their meanings given under Column B:

	A		B
1.	Fly a flag	(a)	Move quickly/suddenly
2.	Fly into rage	(b)	Be successful
3.	Fly along	(c)	Display a flag on a long pole
4.	Fly high	(d)	Escape from a place
5.	Fly the coop	(e)	Become suddenly very angry

Answer:

1. (c),
2. (e),
3. (a),
4. (b),
5. (d).