

Comprehension Check

1. Where did the ceremonies take place? Can you name any public buildings in India that are made of sandstone?

Answer

The ceremonies took place in the campus of the Union Building of Pretoria.

The Parliament House in New Delhi, the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, the Supreme Court of India in New Delhi and Madras High Court in Chennai are some examples of Indian public buildings that are made of sandstone.

2. Can you say how 10 May is an 'autumn day' in South Africa?

Answer

10 May is an 'autumn day' in South Africa because on this day there was the largest gathering of international leaders on South African soil for the installation of South Africa's first democratic, non-racial government.

3. At the beginning of his speech, Mandela mentions "an extraordinary human disaster". What does he mean by this? What is the "glorious ... human achievement" he speaks of at the end?

Answer

By human disaster Mandela means to say that coloured people have suffered a lot due to discrimination in the hands of whites. He considered it as great glorious human achievement that a black person became the president of a country where the blacks are not considered as human being and are treated badly.

4. What does Mandela thank the international leaders for?

Answer

Mandela felt privileged to be the host to the nations of the world because not too long ago, the South Africans were considered outlaws. He thus thanked all the international leaders for having come to witness his investiture as President since this event could be considered as a common victory for justice, peace and human dignity.

5. What ideals does he set out for the future of South Africa?

Answer

Mandela set out the ideals of poverty alleviation, removal of suffering of people. He also set the ideal for a society where there would be no discrimination based on gender or racial origins.

Oral Comprehension Check

1. What do the military generals do? How has their attitude changed, and why?

Answer

The highest military generals of the South African defence force and police saluted Mandela and pledged their loyalty.

Their attitude towards blacks had taken great change. Instead of arresting a black they saluted him.

2. Why were two national anthems sung?

Answer

On the day of the inauguration, two national anthems were sung, one by the whites, and the other by the blacks. This symbolized the equality of blacks and whites.

3. How does Mandela describe the systems of government in his country (i) in the first decade, and (ii) in the final decade, of the twentieth century?

Answer

(i) In the first decade of the twentieth century, the white-skinned people of South Africa patched up their differences and erected a system of racial domination against the dark-skinned people of their own land, thus creating the basis of one of the harshest and most inhumane societies the world had ever known.

(ii) In the last decade of the twentieth century, the previous system had been overturned forever and replaced by one that recognized the rights and freedoms of all peoples, regardless of the colour of their skin.

4. What does courage mean to Mandela?

Answer

For Mandela courage does not mean the absence of fear but a victory over fear. According to him brave men need not be fearless but should be able to conquer fear.

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

Answer

For Mandela, love comes more naturally to the human heart than hate.

Oral Comprehension Check

1. What “twin obligations” does Mandela mention?

Answer

Mandela mentions that every man has twin obligations. The first is to his family, parents, wife and children; the second obligation is to his people, his community and his country.

2. What did being free mean to Mandela as a boy, and as a student? How does he contrast these “transitory freedoms” with “the basic and honourable freedoms”?

Answer

Like any other kid for Mandela also the freedom meant a freedom to make merry and enjoy the blissful life. Once anybody becomes an adult then antics of childhood looks like transitory because most of the childish activity is wasteful from an adult’s perspective. Once you are adult then someday you have to earn a livelihood to bring the bacon home, then only you get an honourable existence in the family and in the society.

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

Answer

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

Thinking about the Text

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

Answer

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

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

Answer

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

3. Would you agree that the “depths of oppression” create “heights of character”? How does Mandela illustrate this? Can you add your own examples to this argument?

Answer

Yes, I agree that the “depths of oppression” create “heights of character”. Nelson Mandela illustrates this by giving examples of great heroes of South Africa who sacrificed their lives in the long freedom struggle. India is full of such examples. During our freedom struggle there was a galaxy of leaders of great characters. Probably the oppression of British rule created so many men of such characters. If we compare this with the quality of political leaders India is having today, then Nelson Mandela seems to be absolutely right.

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

Answer

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

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

Answer

Mandela realized in his youth that it was not just his freedom that was being curtailed, but the freedom of all blacks. The hunger for his own freedom became the hunger for the

freedom of his people. This desire of a non-racial society transformed him into a virtuous and self-sacrificing man. Thus, he joined the African National Congress and this changed him from a frightened young man into a bold man.

Thinking about Language

I. There are nouns in the text (*formation, government*) which are formed from the corresponding verbs (*form, govern*) by suffixing – (*at*)ion or *ment*. There may be change in the spelling of some verb – noun pairs: such as *rebel, rebellion; constitute, constitution*.

1. Make a list of such pairs of nouns and verbs in the text.

Noun	Verb
rebellion	rebel
constitution	constitute

Answer

Noun	Verb
Rebellion	Rebel
Constitution	Constitute
Formation	Form
Government	Govern
Obligation	Oblige
Transformation	Transform
Discrimination	Discriminate
Deprivation	Deprive
Demonstration	Demonstrate
Oppression	Oppress
Imagination	Imagine

2. Read the paragraph below. Fill in the blanks with the noun forms of the verbs in brackets.

Martin Luther King's _____ (contribute) to our history as an outstanding leader began when he came to the _____ (assist) of Rosa Parks, a seamstress who refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger. In those days American Blacks were confined to positions of second class citizenship by restrictive laws and customs. To break these laws would mean _____ (subjugate) and _____ (humiliate) by the police and the legal system. Beatings, _____ (imprison) and sometimes death awaited those who defied the System. Martin Luther King's tactics of protest involved non-violent _____ (resist) to racial injustice.

Answer

Martin Luther King's **contribution** (contribute) to our history as an outstanding leader began when he came to the **assistance** (assist) of Rosa Parks, a seamstress who refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger. In those days American Blacks were confined to positions of second class citizenship by restrictive laws and customs. To break these laws would mean **subjugation** (subjugate) and **humiliation** (humiliate) by the police and the legal system. Beatings, **imprisonment** (imprison) and sometimes death awaited those who defied the System. Martin Luther King's tactics of protest involved non-violent **resistance** (resist) to racial injustice.

II. Here are some more examples of 'the' used with proper names. Try to say what these sentences mean. (You may consult a dictionary if you wish. Look at the entry for 'the')

1. Mr Singh regularly invites the Amitabh Bachchans and the Shah Rukh Khans to his parties.
2. Many people think that Madhuri Dixit is the Madhubala of our times.
3. History is not only the story of the Alexanders, the Napoleons and the Hitlers, but of ordinary people as well.

Answer

1. This means that Mr Singh regularly invites famous personalities such as Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan to his parties.
2. This means that Madhuri Dixit is compared to a landmark in acting in the form of legendary actress Madhubala.
3. This means that history is not only the story of the great fighters and leaders such as Alexander, Napoleon and Hitler, but also of ordinary people.

III. Match, the italicised phrases in Column A with the phrase nearest meaning in Column B. (Hint: First look for the sentence in the text which the phrase in column A occurs.)

A	B
1. I was not unmindful of the fact.	(i) had not forgotten: was aware of the fact
	(ii) was not careful about the fact
	(iii) forgot or was not aware of the fact

2. When my comrades and I were pushed (i) pushed by the guards to the wall
to our limits

(ii) took more than our share of beatings

(iii) felt that we could not endure the
suffering any longer

3. To reassure me and keep me going (i) make me go on walking

(ii) help me continue to live in hope in this
very difficult situation

(iii) make me remain without complaining

4. The basic and honourable freedoms of (i) earning enough money to live on
... earning my keep...

(ii) keeping what I earned

(iii) getting a good salary

Answer

A

B

1. I was *not unmindful of* the fact (i) had not forgotten; was aware of the
fact

2. When my comrades and I *were pushed* (iii) felt that we could not endure the
to our limits suffering any longer

3. To reassure me and *keep me going* (ii) help me continue to live in hope in this
very difficult situation

4. The basic and honourable freedoms of (i) earning enough money to live on
...earning my keep...