

**SUMMARY OF THE LESSON**

Major Ahluwalia was a member of the first team conquering Mount Everest in 1965. In this extract he tells about his feelings standing on the highest peak of the world.

His first feeling was of humility. He thanked God because the expedition had ended successfully. He was both happy and sad. He felt aggrieved because he had reached the summit and after that there would be nothing higher to climb.

Climbing Mount Everest gives a deep sense of joy which lasts for lifetime. The experience changes one completely. It was a conquest of a high mountain. But the writer felt that climbing or getting over the summit of the mind was no less difficult.

While climbing down from the top, he asked himself why he had chosen to climb. This achievement became a thing of the past. It would fade with the passing of time. He questioned himself as to why people wish to climb high mountains. The simplest answer is that it is a difficult task, and man feels great in overcoming difficulties. Climbing a mountain is a tough task because it tests one's physical strength and will power.

The writer then proceeds to answer the personal question. Mountains had an attraction for him since his childhood. He missed them while he was away from them. Their beauty and grandeur presented a challenge. Above all, mountains are a way to feel close to God.

But why Everest? He chose it because it was the highest and the most challenging task. It was a hard struggle with rocks and ice. When he stood on the summit, he felt the joy of having done something great, of achieving great victory. The call of Everest draws him to it. It is difficult to tell the reason

for climbing. It is like answering why one breathes or why you do good acts. The success is followed by a sense of fulfilment or satisfaction. It is a proof of man's love for adventure. The experience is not just physical but spiritual. You make all your effort to go up. Breathing is difficult. There are moments when you feel like going back. But something in you checks you from giving up.

When you reach the top, you tell yourself that it was a rewarding effort. Below you see vast valleys. You bow down to God for your worship.

The writer left a picture of Guru Nanak and his companion Rawat left a picture of goddess Durga on Everest. Phu Dorji left a relic of the Buddha. Edmund Hillary buried a Cross under the rocks in the snow. These are symbols of respect to God.

There is another summit to climb. It is within yourself, your own mind. The most difficult task is to know oneself. One has to do it alone and himself. The writer's experience as an Everester inspired him to face life boldly.

## TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

### COMPREHENSION CHECK

(Page 80)

1. *Standing on Everest, the writer was*

- (i) *overjoyed.*
- (ii) *very sad.*
- (iii) *jubilant and sad.*

**Choose the right item.**

**Ans.** (iii) *jubilant and sad.*

2. *The emotion that gripped him was one of*

- (i) *victory over hurdles.*
- (ii) *humility and a sense of smallness.*
- (iii) *greatness and self importance.*
- (iv) *joy of discovery.*

**Choose the right item.**

**Ans.** (ii) *humility and a sense of smallness.*

3. *"The summit of the mind" refers to*

- (i) *great intellectual achievements.*
- (ii) *the process of maturing mentally and spiritually.*
- (iii) *Overcoming personal ambition for common welfare.*
- (iv) *living in the world of thought and imagination.*
- (v) *the triumph of mind over worldly pleasures for a noble cause.*
- (vi) *a fuller knowledge of oneself.*

**Mark the item(s) not relevant.**

**Ans.** (vi) *a fuller knowledge of oneself.*

### WORKING WITH THE TEXT

(Page 81)

1. **Answer the following questions.**

(i) **What are the three qualities that played a major role in the author's climb?**

**Ans.** The three qualities that ensured the success of the author were 'endurance, persistence and will power'.

(ii) **Why is adventure, which is risky, also pleasurable?**

**Ans.** Mountain climbing is a great adventure but is also risky. It is a great challenge and a doing challenging job is in itself pleasurable. It gives immense joy to the doers.

(iii) **What was it about Mount Everest that the author found irresistible?**

**Ans.** Mount Everest attracted the author because it is the highest, the mightiest and has defied many previous attempts. It takes the last ounce of one's energy.

(iv) **One does not do it (climb a high peak) for fame alone. What does one do it for, really?**

**Ans.** Conquering summit is a great physical achievement. But more than that, it gives the climber the emotional and spiritual satisfaction. It satisfies man's eternal love for adventure.

(v) **"He becomes conscious in a special manner of his own smallness in this large universe". This awareness defines an emotion mentioned in the first paragraph. Which is the emotion?**

**Ans.** That emotion is 'humility'.

(vi) What were the 'symbols of reverence' left by members of the team on Everest?

**Ans.** The author left on Everest a picture of Guru Nanak. Rawat left a picture of Goddess Durga. Phu Doorji left a relic of the Buddha. Edmund Hillary, being a Christian, buried a Cross under the rock. All these were symbols of reverence for God.

(vii) What according to the writer, did his experience as an Everest teach him?

**Ans.** The experience of having conquered Mount Everest changed him completely. It made him realise his own smallness.

**2. Write a sentence against each of the following statements. Your sentence should explain the statement. You can pick out sentences from the text and rewrite them. The first one has been done for you.**

(i) The experience changes you completely.

One who has been to the mountains is never the same again.

(ii) Man takes delight in overcoming obstacles.

(iii) Mountains are nature at its best.

(iv) The going was difficult but the after-effects were satisfying.

(v) The physical conquest of a mountain is really a spiritual experience.

**Ans.** (ii) The obstacles in climbing a mountain are physical. A climb to a summit is a test of endurance and will power. It is a challenge that is difficult to resist.

(iii) Everest is the highest and the mightiest and has defied many previous attempts.

(iv) When the summit is climbed, there is the joy of having done something, one has the feeling of victory and of happiness.

(v) Mountains are a means of communion with God.

## WORKING WITH LANGUAGE

(Page 82)

**1. Look at the italicised phrases and their meanings given in brackets.**

Mountains are nature *at its best*. (nature's best form and appearance)

Your life is *at risk*. (in danger; you run the risk of losing your life.)

He was *at his best/worst* in the last meeting. (it was his best/worst performance.)

**Fill in the blanks in the following dialogues choosing suitable phrases from those given in the box.**

at hand at once at all at a low ebb at first sight

(i) *Teacher*: You were away from school without permission. Go to the Principal \_\_\_\_\_ and submit your explanation.

*Pupil*: Yes, Madam. But would you help me write it first?

(ii) *Arun*: Are you unwell?

*Ila*: No, not \_\_\_\_\_. Why do you ask?

*Arun*: If you were unwell. I would send you to my uncle. He is a doctor.

(iii) *Mary*: Almost every Indian film has an episode of love \_\_\_\_\_.

*David*: Is that what makes them so popular in foreign countries?

(iv) *Asif*: You look depressed. Why are your spirits \_\_\_\_\_ today?

(Use such in the phrase)

*Ashok*: I have to write ten sentences using words that I never heard before.

(v) *Shieba*: Your big moment is close \_\_\_\_\_.

*Jyoti*: How should I welcome it?

*Shieba*: Get up and receive the trophy.

**Ans.** (i) at once (ii) at all (iii) at first sight

(iv) at such a low ebb (v) at hand

2. Write the noun forms of the following words adding **-ance** or **-ence** to each.

- (i) endure \_\_\_\_\_ (ii) persist \_\_\_\_\_  
 (iii) signify \_\_\_\_\_ (iv) confide \_\_\_\_\_  
 (v) maintain \_\_\_\_\_ (vi) abhor \_\_\_\_\_

Ans. (i) endurance (ii) persistence (iii) significance  
 (iv) confidence (v) maintenance (vi) abhorrence

3. (i) Match words under A with their meanings under B.

A	B
remote	difficult to overcome
means	most prominent
dominant	be overcome/overpowered
formidable	method(s)
overwhelmed	far away from

(ii) Fill in the blanks in the sentences below with appropriate words from under A.

- (a) There were \_\_\_\_\_ obstacles on the way, but we reached our destination safely.  
 (b) We have no \_\_\_\_\_ of finding out what happened there.  
 (c) Why he lives in a house \_\_\_\_\_ from any town or village is more than I can tell.  
 (d) \_\_\_\_\_ by gratitude, we bowed to the speaker for his valuable advice.  
 (e) The old castle stands in a \_\_\_\_\_ position above the sleepy town.

Ans. (i)

A	B
remote	far away from
means	method (s)
dominant	most prominent
formidable	difficult to overcome
overwhelmed	be overcome/overpowered.

- (ii) (a) formidable (b) means  
 (c) remote (d) Overwhelmed  
 (e) dominant

SPEAKING AND WRITING

(Page 83)

Write a composition describing a visit to the hills, or any place which you found beautiful and inspiring.

Before writing, work in small groups. Discuss the points given below and decide if you want to use some of these points in your composition.

- Consider this Sentence

*Mountains are a means of communion with God.*

- Think of the act of worship or prayer. You believe yourself to be in the presence of the divine power. In a way, you are in communion with that power.
- Imagine the climber on top of the summit—the height attained; limitless sky above; the climber's last ounce of energy spent; feelings of gratitude, humility and peace.
- The majesty of the mountains does bring you close to nature and the spirit and joy that lives there, if you have the ability to feel it.

Some composition may be read aloud to the entire class afterwards.

Ans. Do yourself.

□□□

## ★ The School Boy

*William Blake*

### SUMMARY OF THE POEM

The poem throws light on the mindset of a school boy. He is unhappy. He loves outdoor life. He hears the birds sing. The blowing of horn by the huntsmen pleases him. He wants to enjoy the company of the skylark. But he can find such joy only on a summer morning.

Instead of living like a free bird, the boy is made to go to school. It makes him sad. He hates going to school because of his cruel old teacher. There the small children spend the day from morning to evening and get disappointed.

Sometimes the boy sits for hours with his head hanging down but he is caged. He finds no joy in reading his book. The school is a cheerless place for him. He gets fed up with the shower of words from his teacher.

The boy compares himself to a bird who is born free to fly and enjoy life but he is caged. He cannot sing in a cage. The boy has the feeling of being a prisoner at school. He is all the time afraid of the teacher. As a caged bird he lets his wings droop down and forgets to share the joy of spring.

The poet calls upon the parents not to be so harsh or cruel to the children. School going kids are as delicate as birds and flowers. They need fresh air and free movement to grow healthy and happy. Keeping them under excess cage will make them unhappy.

If a plant is denied air and is kept in dark, it won't grow well and never bear fruit.

## TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

### WORKING WITH THE POEM

(Page 85)

1. Find three or four words/phrases in stanza 1 that reflect the child's happiness and joy.

**Ans.** The words/phrases that reflect the child's happiness are the song of birds and the skylark, and the sound of hunter's horn.

2. In stanza 2, the mood changes. Which words/phrases reflect the changed mood?

**Ans.** The words/phrases reflecting the child's mood are:

- (a) drives all joy away
- (b) cruel eye outworn (of the Teacher)
- (c) sighing and dismay.

3. 'A cruel eye outworn (stanza 2)' refers to

- (i) the classroom which is shabby/noisy
- (ii) the lessons which are difficult/uninteresting
- (iii) The dull/uninspiring life at school with lots of work and no play.

**Mark the answer that you consider right.**

**Ans.** (iii) The dull/uninspiring life at school with lots of work and no play.

4. 'Nor sit in learning's bower worn thro' with the dreary shower'

**Which of the following is a close paraphrase of the lines above?**

- (i) Nor can I sit in a roofless classroom when it is raining.
- (ii) Nor can I learn anything at school though teachers go on lecturing and explaining.
- (iii) Nor can I sit in the school garden for fear of getting wet in the rain.

**Ans.** (ii) Nor can I learn anything at school though teachers go on lecturing and explaining.