

ENGLISH LITERATURE (FIRST FLIGHT)
CHAPTER 02: NELSON MANDELA - A LONG WALK TO FREEDOM
(Textbook Q&A)

- 1. Where did the ceremonies take place? Can you name any public buildings in India that are made of sandstone?**
The ceremonies took place in the Amphitheatre of the Union Building of Pretoria. The Parliament House, the Supreme Court and the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, 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?**
Yes, it is clearly mentioned in the chapter that it was a lovely autumn day with bright and clear sky when Mandela was accompanied by her daughter Zenani to the inauguration ceremony.
- 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?**
By “an extraordinary human disaster” Mandela meant Apartheid system in which blacks were racially discriminated by whites for long. By the end of his speech, the “so glorious...human achievement” indicates that time is changed and a black person has now become the President of country and the country has now accepted an equal status for all its citizens.
- 4. What does Mandela thank the international leaders for?**
He thanked all the international leaders for coming to witness his swearing in ceremony as the first non-racial President of independent South Africa as it was a common victory of justice, peace and human dignity.
- 5. What ideals does he set out for the future of South Africa?**
He pledged to liberate all people from poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discriminations. Further, he promised that there would be no further discrimination based on gender or racial origins.
- 6. What do the military generals do? How has their attitude changed, and why?**
The saluted Nelson Mandela and pledged their loyalty to him which was quite significant as they were among those who arrested Mandela during Apartheid era. The change in their attitude was because of the long driven struggles and sacrifices of many to put an end to Apartheid and accept a black person as their President. This brought a change in the mindset of many people including military generals.
- 7. Why were two national anthems sung?**
To symbolize the equality of blacks and whites and the end of apartheid, two national anthems were sung on the day of the inauguration. One was sung by the whites and the other was sung by the blacks.
- 8. 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?**
 - (i) In the first decade of the twentieth century, Whites of South Africa established a system of Apartheid for the racial discrimination of blacks. According to that system, Blacks were suppressed by the Whites for long.
 - (ii) In the last decade of the twentieth century, the Apartheid system had been removed forever by the struggles of Whites and was replaced by establishing a non-racial democratic

government in the independent South Africa. Whites and Blacks were then given equal rights then onwards.

9. What does courage mean to Mandela?

For Mandela courage means victory over fear and not the absence of fear. According to him brave men need not be fearless but should be able to conquer fear by standing against the unfair practices and injustice without breaking.

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

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

11. What “twin obligations” does Mandela mention?

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

12. 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”?

As a boy, freedom for Mandela was running freely in the fields, freely swimming in stream, riding on the backs of slow-moving bulls. During that time he was entirely free to do whatever he wanted to. While as a student, he wanted freedom for himself and considered those as temporary freedom to stay out at night as well as read and go as per choice. By “basic honourable freedoms”, he meant freedom of achieving his potential of earning his living and of marrying and having a family.

He builds the contrast between these two freedoms by stating that the transitory freedoms he wanted were limited to him or are more individualistic, whereas the honourable freedoms had to do more with his and his people’s position in the society.

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

Mandela does not feel that the oppressor is free because according to him an oppressor is bound by his own thoughts full of hatred and is inhuman. Therefore, he is considered as imprisoned by prejudice and narrow-mindedness.

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

After a long struggle against Apartheid, South Africa became independent. The presence of large number of international leaders was a gesture of their acceptance of South Africa as a democratic nation. It signified the triumph of democracy to build a society without any discrimination, justice, peace and human dignity.

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

By saying “simply the sum of all African patriots”, Mandela remembers and pay tribute to the invaluable sacrifices of many Africans whom fought for the collective freedom because of whom the nation has now become free and democratic. By saying so Mandela gives the credit of this success to all those freedom fighters who are not there to see the outcome of their sacrifices.

16. 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?

Yes, I agree that more deep is the exploitation, more will be peak of characters because people act according to the situation. According to Mandela, decades of brutality and oppression had a deep impact on the minds of people which created many African patriots with unimaginable heights of character. They sustained their fight for democracy for long without been broken. Similar is the

example of Indian freedom fighter Bhagat Singh who remained courageous while facing utmost cruelty at the hands of British.

17. How did Mandela's understanding of freedom change with age and experience?

As a boy, Mandela did not have a hunger for freedom because he thought that he was born free and could do anything according to his wish. During the teenage, he wanted freedom for himself such as to stay out at night as well as read and go as per choice but considered them as temporary freedoms. It was so because when he further grew up, he realized that many other people are not free as far as their basic rights are concerned. At that time, he attained a mature understanding about the freedom.

18. How did Mandela's 'hunger for freedom' change his life?

When Mandela realized that his freedom and the freedom of fellow blacks are also curtailed, his desire, for a democratic nation without any racial discrimination, reached a high level. He along with many others decided to raise voice against the system of Apartheid. This decision transformed him from a frightened man to a bold one, family man into a man without home, law abiding person into a criminal and a life-loving man to live like a monk. These changes finally paved the way for a democratic South African nation.