

NCERT Book Notes
Class 10th English (First Flight)

Chapter 3 – Two Stories about Flying

I. His First Flight by Liam O’ Flaherty

Thinking about Text (pg. 36)

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 timider than others? Do you think a human baby also finds it a challenge to take its first steps?

Ans: Since it was the young seagull’s first flight, he was afraid to fly. Yes, I think all young birds are afraid before they take their first flight since they are doing it for the first time, and it must be challenging for them. Human babies would similarly find it difficult to start walking. The first steps are abrupt, and they fall multiple times but then they master the skill.

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

Ans: The young seagull was reluctant to overcome his fear of flying. His family was stubborn about giving him the flight lesson. So, after continuous rounds of motivation, when he did not take off, his mother used his hunger as bait. He was extremely hungry and when he saw his mother tearing a piece of fish, he cried and asked her to share it with him but instead of addressing the cries, she took a piece of food in her beak and stopped midway while flying towards the young seagull. Not able to resist the pangs of hunger further, he rushed at the food and plunged towards it, and took his first flight.

3. “They were beckoning to him, calling shrilly.” Why did the seagull’s father and mother threaten him and cajole him to fly?

Ans: The young seagull was about to attempt his first flight and was filled with anticipation and anxiety. He saw his family flying in the sky and enjoying themselves. His parents were teaching the younger ones to fly and were motivating and mocking him for not being able to. They also threatened to leave him on the ledge and feed him no food if he does not try. They wanted him to get over his fear and learn to fly and enjoy this blessing as a bird. It’s also a survival skill and hence was important to learn.

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.

Ans: While growing up everyone has multiple experiences where their parents encourage them to do something we are afraid to try as a child. I loved watching kids skating in the park. I was young at that time, around 6-7 years. Since I always begged about getting skates and learning them, my parents got them for me. I happily wore them but fell soon after I stood up. After that, I was a mess. I refused to try skating, no matter how hard my parents tried to convince me. After many years I came across them again. I was still skeptical about trying it but eventually gathered courage and put them on. I fell multiple times, but I still tried and then eventually learned how to skate. After that, I enjoyed skating a lot.

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 question, was your success guaranteed, or was it important for you to try, regardless of a possibility of failure

Ans: We are made to believe as individuals that we must exceed at everything we try. This toxic positivity does affect us in the long run, and it becomes difficult for us to accept failures. My success in skating was not guaranteed but seeing other kids skate so well did put pressure on me to ace in it. I believe it was the frustration of not being able to succeed on the first try that made me give it up so fast. But later when I tried, regardless of the possibility of failure, I succeeded and that feeling was fulfilling.

Writing

Write a short composition on your initial attempts at learning a skill. You could describe the challenges of learning to ride a bicycle or learning to swim. Make it as humorous as possible.

Ans: When I first started learning to ride a bicycle it was an absolute mess. I got a new bicycle when I was 6 years old. It had training wheels, so it wasn't much trouble to learn to pedal it but when the wheels were removed, it became a hustle and nuisance for me. I fell down multiple times, got hurt lord knows how many times and then left, being irritated with it. I begged my parents to attach the wheels back again and they refused. It was my elder sister who taught me how to cycle. She held me from behind, encouraged me to keep my balance and just kept looking forward. It is one of the sweetest memories I have with her.

II. The Black Aeroplane by Fredrick Forsyth

Thinking about the Text

1. "I'll take the risk." What is the risk? Why does the narrator take it?

Ans: The pilot took the risk of flying through the harsh weather. The sky was overcast with clouds. He took this risk because he was excited to fly his old Dakota aeroplane over France to England, to celebrate Christmas with his family.

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

Ans: The pilot took the risk of flying in the severe weather but as soon as he flew into the storm his surroundings turned completely black. Along with his other devices like radio, his compass also stopped working and it turned round and round. He felt his end was near, but then he saw another aeroplane that guided him to safety. He was happy to find a helper and with enough fuel for five or ten minutes, he safely landed his plane.

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

Ans: The narrator was excited to fly the old Dakota aeroplane to England, to celebrate Christmas with family. But he got caught in a storm and was saved by a guide plane. He was delighted to be out of the storm and safely land and hence was not sad about moving away from the old plane.

4. What made the woman in the control centre look at the narrator strangely?

Ans: The narrator was concerned about the other pilot who saved his life because after landing he could not see any other plane on the runway. He was worried about the fellow pilot and wanted to express his gratitude but when he asked the woman in the control room, she was surprised because the radar did not show any other plane.

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

Ans: The narrator got worried and anxious when he realized his death was near as the plane was caught in the storm and had enough fuel only for five or ten minutes. It must have been his subconscious that would have guided him through this trouble as there was no other plane in the storm, as told by the woman in the control room. It can also be a strand of his imagination or hallucination that would have shown up because of the panic his brain was in.

Thinking about the Language:

I. 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.

1. Go and have a bath; your hands and face are absolutely black._____

Ans: The meaning of ‘black’ in this sentence is that the face and hands are dark with dust and heat.

2. The taxi driver gave Ratan a black look as he crossed the road when the traffic light was green. _____

Ans: Here, ‘black’ refers to an angry look.

3. The bombardment of Hiroshima is one of the blackest crimes against humanity. _____

Ans: Here, ‘blackest’ refers to the darkest and cruellest crime against humanity.

4. Very few people enjoy Harold Pinter’s black comedy. _____

Ans: Here, ‘black’ refers to dark and gloomy comedy.

5. Sometimes shopkeepers store essential goods to create false scarcity and then sell these in black. _____

Ans: The meaning of ‘black’ in this sentence is that the shopkeepers sell the described goods ‘at a higher price.’

6. Villagers had beaten the criminal black and blue. _____

Ans: Here, ‘black’ means that the criminal suffered excessive beating at the hands of the villagers.

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

A	B
Fly a flag	Move quickly/suddenly
Fly into rage	Be successful
Fly along	Display a flag on a long pole
Fly high	Escape from a place
Fly the coop	Become suddenly very angry

Ans:

A	B
Fly a flag	Display a flag on a long pole

Fly into rage	Become suddenly very angry
Fly along	Move quickly/suddenly
Fly high	Be successful
Fly the coop	Escape from a place

III. We know that the word ‘fly’ (of birds/insects) means to move through the air using wings. Tick the words which have the same or nearly the same meaning.

Swoop flit paddle flutter
ascend float ride skim
sink dart hover glide
descend soar shoot spring
stay fall sail flap

Ans: The words which have the same or nearly the same meaning as ‘fly’ are swoop, flit, float, dart, soar, hover, sail, skim, glide, and flutter. Swoop means to move quickly down through the air, flit means to move abruptly, float means to hover lightly, dart means to move rapidly, soar means to fly about, hover means to stay at a place in the air, sail means to move smoothly, skim means to move lightly, glide means to have a smooth continuous motion and flutter means to hover.

Writing

Have you ever been alone or away from home during a thunderstorm? Narrate your experience in a paragraph.

Ans: Yes, I was once away from home during a thunderstorm. I was at my grandparent’s home when the weather suddenly changed, and clouds spread across the sky. My grandparents had to leave because of some emergency, and I was inevitably bound to stay home, alone. I am fond of rain and thunder, so it isn't much of a problem for me. But that night staying alone at home was scary. Even a slight thunder scared me, and I just tossed over in my bed the whole night.