



His First Flight by Liam O'Flaherty Questions & Answers

NCERT Solutions for Class 10 English

First Flight

Chapter 3

Two Stories About Flying

I. His First Fight

**Thinking about the Text
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Q1. 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?

Ans: 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?

Ans: 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?

Ans: 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 cajoled 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.

Ans: (Suggested Answer) Yes, I had a similar experience while leaning to ride a bicycle in class VI. In my initial attempts, I fell down every time 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 question, was your success guaranteed, or was it important for you to try, regardless of a possibility of failure?

Ans: 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 cajoled him to fly. In the example I have given in the answer of previous question, I was cajoled 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.

Extra Questions:

1. Why was the young seagull left alone in the ledge by his family?

Ans: The young seagull was afraid to fly. His father and mother wanted him to go fly with them. But whenever he had taken a little run forward to the extreme edge of the ledge and tried to move his wings he became afraid. He failed to muster up courage to thrust himself forcibly in the space, and started flying. His two brothers and his sister had the wings shorter than him but they started flying. But the young seagull somehow thought that his wings would not support him for it. For this, he was scolded by his parents, who gave a threat to him and he was left alone in the ledge.

2. How did the young seagull learn floating on the sea?

Ans: After flying for some time, the young seagull came near the sea. He was a flying straight over it. He saw, a vast green sea beneath him, with little ridges moving over it. His brothers and sister landed on the sea and they were calling in a shrill voice and beckoning to him. He dropped his legs to stand on the green sea. His legs sank into water. He screamed with fright and attempted to rise again flapping his wings. But he was tired and weak with hunger. He was exhausted due to flying for so long. His feet sank into the green sea, and then his belly touched it and he sank no farther. He was floating on it, and around him his family was screaming, praising him and offering food from their beaks. This is how he learnt floating on the sea.

3. How do you find the seagulls in the beginning and at the end of the lesson?

Ans: in the beginning we find the young seagull too frightened and terrified to fly. He had bigger wings as compared to his two brothers and sister. But still he was afraid to attempt flying. When they flew away, he could not gather courage to thrust himself forcibly in space, which made him scared and desperate. When he was starving for a day, his mother came across to him with a piece of fish in her beak. When she reached near him, she stopped and 'maddened by hunger', he dived at the fish. But his mother had swooped upward. He found his wings spread and was more confident now. In the end we see him flying till he was tired

and dropped himself on the surface of the sea.

4. What methods were used by the seagull's family to help him overcome his fear of flying?

Ans: The young seagull was scared of flying. His brothers and sister had started flying but he could not muster courage to do so. His parents scolded him shrilly and threatened to let him starve on the ledge unless he flew away. When his family left him, he felt the pangs of hunger. Next day, when he saw his mother with a piece of fish in her beak, he begged her for food. She flew across to him, but halted when the piece of fish in her beak was just within reach of the young seagull. The young seagull dived at the fish, but now his mother swooped upwards. Gradually his fear of flying was over and he enjoyed it now.

5. The young seagull was "trying to find some means of reaching his parents without having to fly". Was he successful in doing so?

Ans: After being left alone by his family, the young seagull was hungry. So, he wanted to join his family on the plateau. But he could not do so unless he tried to fly. As he was afraid of flying he was trying to find some other means to reach them but on each side of him the ledge ended in a steep fall in a vertical cliff, with the sea below. Moreover, between him and his parents there was a deep and wide crack in the earth. He could reach them without flying if he could only move towards north along the steep rock. There was no ledge and he could not fly. And above him he could see nothing. The vertical cliff was very steep, and the top of it was perhaps farther away than the sea beneath him. so he was not able to reach them without flying.

6. Do you think hunger as a good motivation for the young seagull in his first flight? Comment.

Ans: Yes, I do think that hunger played a vital role in the young seagull's attempt to start flying. He was left alone on the ledge by his family because he would not try to fly with them. His parents scolded him in a shrill voice and threatened him of starvation, but he still was afraid to fly. Then they left him alone. He was so hungry that he had to live on whatever he could find there. When he saw his mother with a piece of fish in her beak, he begged for food. Then he uttered a joyful scream when he saw his mother flying across to him with a piece of fish in her beak. But she stopped when she came opposite to him. When the young seagull realised that she won't come nearer, and "maddened by hunger", he dived at the fish. This was his first attempt to fly. Gradually when his hesitation and fear were removed, he started flying which he enjoyed very much.

7. “Then he completely forgot that he had not always been able to fly”. Comment on the young seagull’s first flight to this statement.

Ans: The young seagull was suffering from the pangs of hunger after his family left him. Next day when he saw them on the plateau, he tried to draw their attention. Then his mother flew across to him with a piece of fish in her beak. But she stopped opposite him with her motionless wings. He could no more tolerate the hunger and maddened by hunger, he dived at the fish” though terrified, he felt his wings spread outwards. He could feel the tips of his wings cutting through the air. Now he was soaring gradually downwards and outwards. He was no more afraid of flying now. He flapped his wings once and he soared upwards. He screamed to encourage himself and share his happiness. He forgot that previously he was not able to fly.

8. Fear and lack of confidence stop one from learning new things. Do you agree? How did these two traits of the young seagull make him coward? How did he overcome these shortcomings?

Ans: Yes, it is true that fear and lack of confidence stop one from learning new things as in the story, the young seagull lacked the value of courage and confidence in his character. He was too scared of flying. His family tried hard to make him fly but he refused to do so because of his fear of sinking in the seawater. They even scolded him for his cowardice. They tried to tempt him with food but he was not willing to learn to fly. Once he dived, his fear disappeared and he enjoyed his first flight. It is a fact that unless we try for something and overcome our fear, we cannot learn anything. Confidence and motivation are the two most important traits that make any learning possible.

9. “Hunger made the young seagull mad and gave him success”. How can you explain it and justify with the story?

OR

Hunger is a great motivational force. It is true that a person can take any extreme step for food. How far do you agree?

Ans: It is a fact that hunger makes us mad and every person works for food. It is only hunger that encourages and forces us to do work. If it is not in our life, all the foundation of work will automatically be finished. Every person works for food and to satisfy his hunger. No one in this universe can remain hungry. This hunger makes us work day and night. It can change the mentality of a human being as well as any creature. We find that young seagull

did not gather courage to fly; when he first saw fish in the beak of his mother, he gathered courage and flew over the ledge. He could not control himself at the sight of the food and jumped at the fish. He fell from the ledge and tried to flap his wings. Thus he found himself flying in the air.

10. “Mother is the first teacher”. Do you agree with this statement? Explain with reference to the young seagull.

Ans: Yes, it is true that mother is the first teacher. It is a well known point for all. A baby takes birth and first of all sees mother’s face. It is mother who gives him a new life by feeding him. The mother helps a baby to walk his first step. The mother introduces him to this world, gives him knowledge of relations. She teaches him how to speak. She gives him power and strength to face the difficulties of life. The same thing we find in this story, when no one could encourage the young seagull to fly, his mother thought out a plan and took a piece of fish near him, but she did not go nearer and her plan worked

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