

Chapter 7: Reach for the Top Poem: On Killing a Tree

NCERT · Class 9 · English · Beehive

Thinking about the Text

Question 1

Why was the 'holy man' who gave Santosh's mother his blessings surprised? (1)

Solution

Answer: The 'holy man' who gave Santosh's mother his blessings was surprised because Santosh's grandmother sought that Santosh's mother be blessed with a daughter. This was quite astonishing for the holy man because people mostly seek blessings for having a son.

Question 2

Give an example to show that even as a young girl, Santosh was not ready to accept anything unreasonable. (2)

Solution

Answer: Even as a young girl, Santosh was not ready to accept anything unreasonable. She was not content with her place in the traditional way of life and began living life on her own terms from the start. While other girls wore traditional Indian dresses, Santosh used to wear shorts.

Question 3

Why was Santosh sent to the local school? (3)

Solution

Answer: Although Santosh's parents were rich landowners and could have sent her to the best schools, Santosh was sent to the local school because of the prevailing custom in the family.

Question 4

When did she leave home for Delhi, and why? (4)

Solution

Answer: She left home for Delhi when she was sixteen because she wanted to get a proper education.

Question 5

Why did Santosh's parents agree to pay for her schooling in Delhi? What mental qualities of Santosh are brought to light by this incident? (4)

Solution

Answer: Santosh's parents agreed to pay for her schooling in Delhi when she informed them about her plans to earn money by working part-time to pay for her education.

Through this incident, we get to know that Santosh had a very clear goal of getting properly educated no matter what.

II. Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (about 30 words)

Question 1

How did Santosh begin to climb mountains?

Solution

Answer: Kasturba Hostel, where Santosh used to stay during her college days, faced Aravalli Hills. She used to watch the villagers go up the hill and vanish after a while. She decided to check out the mountains herself. She asked the villagers if she could join them, to which they agreed. This is how Santosh began to climb mountains.

Question 2

What incidents during the Everest expedition show Santosh's concern for her team-mates?

Solution

Answer: During the Everest expedition in 1992, Santosh provided special care to a climber who was dying at the South Col. She could not save him, but she managed to save another climber, Mohan Singh, by sharing her oxygen with him.

Question 3

What shows her concern for the environment?

Solution

Answer: Santosh collected and brought down 500 kilograms of garbage from the Himalayas on her way back from the 1992 Everest expedition. This shows her concern for the environment.

Question 4

How does she describe her feelings at the summit of Everest?

Solution

Answer: She says that it took her some time for the enormity of the moment to sink in. She unfurled the Indian tricolor and held it aloft on the roof of the world.

She tells that the feeling is indescribable to watch the Indian flag flying on top of the world. She felt proud as an Indian.

Question 5

Santosh Yadav got into the record books both times she scaled Mt Everest. What were the reasons for this?

Solution

Answer: Santosh Yadav got into the record books both times she scaled Mt Everest. The first time she climbed Mt Everest, she got the record of the youngest woman in the world to achieve the feat. The second time she climbed Mt Everest, she became the only woman to climb Everest twice.

III. Complete the following statements.

1. From her room in Kasturba Hostel, Santosh used to _____.
 2. When she finished college, Santosh had to write a letter of apology to her father because _____.
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Question 3 (2)

3. During the Everest expedition, her seniors in the team admired her _____ while _____ endeared her to fellow climbers.

Solution

1. From her room in Kasturba Hostel, Santosh used to watch villagers from her room, going up the hill and suddenly vanishing after a while.
2. When she finished college, Santosh had to write a letter of apology to her father because she had got herself enrolled at Uttarkashi without his permission.
3. During the Everest expedition, her seniors in the team admired her climbing skills, physical fitness and mental strength, while her concern for others and desire to work together with them endeared her to fellow climbers.

IV. Pick out words from the text that mean the same as the following words or expressions. (Look in the paragraphs indicated.)

1. took to be true without proof (1):
2. based on reason; sensible; reasonable (2):
3. the usual way of doing things (3):
4. a strong desire arising from within (5):

Question 5 (2)

5. the power to endure, without falling ill (7):

Solution

1. took to be true without proof: assumed
2. based on reason; sensible; reasonable: rational
3. the usual way of doing things: custom
4. a strong desire arising from within: urge
5. the power to endure, without falling ill: resistance

Part II

Maria Sharapova

Thinking about Language

Question 4

Little Maria had not yet celebrated her tenth birthday when she was packed off to train in the United States. (Tells us when Maria was sent to the U.S.)

Solution

1. Where other girls wore traditional Indian dresses, Santosh preferred shorts. (Contrasts her dress with that of others)
2. She left home and got herself enrolled in a school in Delhi. (Tells us what happened after the first action.)
3. She decided to fight the system when the right moment arrived. (Tells us when she was going to fight the system.)
4. Little Maria had not yet celebrated her tenth birthday when she was packed off to train in the United States. (Tells us when Maria was sent to the U.S.)

II. Now rewrite the pairs of sentences given below as one sentence.

1. Grandfather told me about the old days. All books were printed on paper then.
2. What do you do after you finish the book? Perhaps you just throw it away.
3. He gave the little girl an apple. He took the computer apart.
4. You have nothing. That makes you very determined.

Question 5

I never thought of quitting. I knew what I wanted.

Solution

1. Grandfather told me about the old days when all books were printed on paper.
2. After you finish the book, perhaps you just throw it away.
3. He gave the little girl an apple and took the computer apart.
4. When you have nothing, that makes you very determined.
5. I never thought of quitting as I knew what I wanted.

Dictation

Read the passage once. Then close your books. Your teacher will dictate the story to you. Write it down with the correct punctuation and paragraphing.

The Raincoat

After four years of drought in a small town in the Northeast, the Vicar gathered everyone together for a pilgrimage to the mountain, where they would pray together and ask for the rain to return.

The priest noticed a boy in the group wearing a raincoat.

“Have you gone mad?” he asked. “It hasn’t rained in this region for five years, the heat will kill you climbing the mountain.”

“I have a cold, father. If we are going to ask God for rain, can you imagine the way back from the mountain? It’s going to be such a downpour that I need to be prepared.”

At that moment a great crash was heard in the sky and the first drops began to fall. A boy’s faith was enough to bring about a miracle that not even those most prepared truly believed in.

(translated by JAMES MULHOLLAND)

Answer: Do it yourself.

Speaking

Imagine that you are Santosh Yadav, or Maria Sharapova. You have been invited to speak at an All India Girls’ Athletic Meet, as chief guest. Prepare a short speech to motivate the girls to think and dream big and make an effort to fulfil their dreams, not allowing difficulties or defeat to discourage them. The following words and phrases may help you.

- self confident/confidence/sure of yourself
- self assured/assurance/belief in yourself
- morale/boost morale/raise morale
- giving somebody a boost/fillip/lift
- demoralising/unsure of yourself/insecure/lack confidence

Good Morning Girls!

It is an honor to address you all from this stage. You definitely have sheer will and determination. That is what has brought you this far. As you proceed with the same passion, I want to iterate that everything you have and all that you will achieve in life will solely depend on your confidence. Believe in yourself and your dreams. Do whatever it takes to accomplish your goals. Never ever doubt your skills. Never let the difficulties discourage you. Never lose trust in yourself just because you had to face a defeat. Whenever you fail, remember to rise and chase your passion.

Thank you.

Writing

Working in pairs, go through the table below that gives you information about the top women tennis players since 1975. Write a short article for your school magazine comparing and contrasting the players in terms of their duration at the top. Mention some qualities that you think may be responsible for their brief or long stay at the top spot.

Top-Ranked Women Players

I. The roll of honour of women who enjoyed life at the summit since everybody's favourite player, Chris Evert, took her place in 1975.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Ranked on</i>	<i>Weeks as No. 1</i>
Maria Sharapova (Russia)	22 August 2005	1
Lindsay Davenport (U.S.)	October 2004	82
Amelie Mauresmo (France)	13 September 2004	5
Justine Henin-Hardenne (Belgium)	20 October 2003	45
Kim Clijsters (Belgium)	11 August 2003	12
Serena Williams (U.S.)	8 July 2002	57
Venus Williams (U.S.)	25 February 2002	11
Jennifer Capriati (U.S.)	15 October 2001	17
Lindsay Davenport (U.S.)	12 October 1998	82
Martina Hingis (Switzerland)	31 March 1997	209
Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario (Spain)	6 February 1995	12
Monica Seles (U.S.)	11 March 1991	178
Steffi Graf (Germany)	17 August 1987	377
Tracy Austin (U.S.)	7 April 1980	22
Martina Navratilova (U.S.)	10 July 1978	331
Chris Evert (U.S.)	3 November 1975	362

Do it yourself.

II. Which of these words would you use to describe Santosh Yadav? Find reasons in the text to support your choices, and write a couple of paragraphs describing Santosh's character.

contented, determined, resourceful, polite, adventurous, considerate, weak-willed, fearful, independent, pessimistic, patient, persevering

Answer: Santosh Yadav is determined and polite. She is adventurous as she gets fascinated by the mountaineers climbing Everest and approaches them to ask if she could join them. She is a considerate person who helps her fellow climbers in their journey. She has determination and a strong will to achieve her goals. She is a patriot and says that the feeling of watching the Indian flag on top of the world is an indescribable feeling.

Access Answers to NCERT Solutions for Class 9 English Chapter 8 Poem On Killing a Tree [here](#)

Thinking about the Poem

Question 1

Can a “simple jab of the knife” kill a tree? Why not?

Solution

Answer: No, a simple jab of the knife cannot kill a tree because the tree grows with a lot of nutrients and resources. Even if one cuts it, it will sprout again.

Question 2

How has the tree grown to its full size? List the words suggestive of its life and activity.

Solution

Answer: The tree has grown to its full size by consuming the earth, feeding upon its crust, absorbing years of sunlight, air and water.

The words suggestive of its life and activity are: absorbing, feeding, rising, consuming and sprouting.

Question 3

What is the meaning of “bleeding bark”? What makes it bleed?

Solution

Answer: The “bleeding bark” indicates the idea that the tree has been cut. Just like humans bleed blood when they get wounded, trees release a liquid at the place where they are cut. So, the tree bleeds.

Question 4

The poet says “No” in the beginning of the third stanza. What does he mean by this?

Solution

Answer: The poet says “No” in the beginning of the third stanza. It emphasizes that only cutting or chopping the tree will not cease its existence.

Question 5

What is the meaning of “anchoring earth” and “earth cave”?

Solution

Answer: The “anchoring earth” means that the earth works as an anchor to protect the tree and saves it from getting uprooted.

“Earth cave” implies the depth of the mother earth where the tree spreads its roots and gets nurtured.

Question 6

What does he mean by “the strength of the tree exposed”?

Solution

Answer: He means to say that when one tries to pull out the tree along with its roots which are spread deep inside the earth, one will understand the strength of the tree.

Question 7

What finally kills the tree?

Solution

Answer: When the tree is pulled out along with its roots and separated from mother earth, one has to subject it to the scorching sun and let it wither. This will finally kill the tree.

Students can find links to the NCERT Solutions of the Chapter “Reach for the Top” and the Poem “On Killing a Tree”. The solutions to this chapter have been prepared with utmost care. Students can download the **NCERT Solutions** PDF from the given links. The solutions to these exercises provided by experts at BYJU’S are easy to understand, useful for school exam preparation, and accurate.

Reach for the Top (Prose)

The chapter presents the students with the life and achievements of two inspirational ladies- Santosh Yadav and Maria Sharapova. Santosh Yadav, the only woman in the world to have climbed the mighty Mount Everest twice, hails from India. A patriot and an environmentalist at heart, she tells how she developed the dream of reaching the top of the world – the summit of Mount Everest.

We also are taken through Maria Sharapova's journey of becoming the world's number one tennis player. The chapter talks about her struggles and how she never let anything come in between her and her goal.

You can download these NCERT Solutions for Class 9 English in PDF format for free through the link provided below:

On Killing a Tree (Poem)

The poem 'On Killing a Tree' says that even when one cuts a tree, after a few years, it will come back to life. The poet says that one cannot kill a tree simply because it has fed on years of sunlight, air and water. The tree has been nourished by mother earth, and it will take a lot of hard work to actually 'kill a tree'.

You can download the solutions in PDF format for free, through the link provided below:
