Two Stories about Flying:

Summary, Class 10 Questions and Answers, NCERT Solutions

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Two Stories About Flying

I. His First Flight by Liam O' Flaherty

The young seagull was alone on his ledge. His two brothers and his sister had already flown away the day before. He had been afraid to fly with them. Somehow when he had taken a little run forward to the brink of the ledge and attempted to flap his wings he became afraid. The great expanse of sea stretched down beneath, and it was such a long way down – miles down. He felt certain that his wings would never support him; so he bent his head and ran away back to the little hole under the ledge where he slept at night. Even when each of his brothers and his little sister, whose wings were far shorter than his own, ran to the brink, flapped their

wings, and flew away, he failed to muster up courage to take that plunge which appeared to him so desperate. His father and mother had come around calling him shrilly, upbraiding him, threatening to let him starve on his ledge unless he flew away. But for the life of him he could not move.

The was twenty-four hours ago. Since then nobody had come near him. The day before, all day long, he had watched his parents flying about with his brothers and sister, perfecting them in the art of flight, teaching them how to skim the waves and how to dive for fish. He had, in fact, seen his older brother catch his first herring and devour it, standing on a rock, while his parents circled around raising a proud cackle. And all the morning the whole family had walked about on the big plateau midway down the opposite cliff taunting him with his cowardice.

The sun was now ascending the sky, blazing on his ledge that faced the south. He felt the heat because he had not eaten since the previous nightfall.

He stepped slowly out to the brink of the ledge, and standing on one leg with the other leg hidden under his wing, he closed on eye, then the other, and pretended to be falling asleep. Still they took no notice of him. He saw his two brothers and his sister lying on the plateau dozing with their heads sunk into their necks. His father was preening the feathers of his white back. Only his mother was looking at him. She was standing on a little high hump on the plateau, her white breast thrust froward. Now and again, she tore at a piece of fish that lay at her feet and then scrapped each side

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of her beak on the rock. The sight of the food maddened him. How he loved to tear food that way, scrapping his beak now and again to whet it.

"Ga, ga, ga," he cried begging her to bring him some food. "Gaw-col-ah," she screamed back derisively. But he kept calling plaintively, and after a minute or so he uttered a joyful scream. His mother had picked up a piece of the fish and was flying across to him with it. He leaned out eagerly, tapping the rock with his feet, trying to get nearer to her as she flew across. But when she was just opposite to him, she halted, her wings motionless, the piece of fish in her beak almost within reach of his beak. He waited a moment in surprise, wondering why she did not come nearer, and then, maddened by hunger, he dived at the fish. With a loud scream he fell outwards and downwards into space. Then a monstrous terror seized him and his heart stood still. He could hear nothing. But it only lasted a minute. The next moment he felt his wings spread outwards. The wind rushed against his breast feathers, then under his stomach, and against his wings. He could feel the tips of his wings cutting through the air. He was not falling headlong now. He was soaring gradually downwards and outwards. He was no longer afraid. He just felt a bit dizzy. Then he flapped his wings once and he soared upwards. "Ga, ga, ga, Ga, ga, fa, Gaw-col-ah," his mother swooped past him, her wings making a loud noise. He answered her with another scream. Then his father flew over him screaming. He saw his two brothers and his sister flying around him curveting and banking and soaring and diving.

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Then he completely forgot that he had not always been able to fly, and commended himself to dive and soar and curve, shrieking shrilly.

He was near the sea now, flying straight over it, facing straight out over the ocean. He saw a vast green sea beneath him, with little ridges moving over it and he turned his beak sideways and cawed amusedly.

His parents and his brothers and sister had landed on this green flooring ahead of him. They were beckoning to him, calling shrilly. He dropped his legs to stand on the green sea. His legs sank into it. He screamed with fright and attempted to rise again flapping his wings. But he was tried and weak with hunger and he could not rise, exhausted by the strange exercise. 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 their beaks were offering him scraps of dog-fish.

He had made his first flight.

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Chapter Highlights

1. Seagull family consists of 6 members.
2. The young seagull is afraid of flying and family has concern of his food and fear of flying.

3. Cajoling (entrap) and provoking him by family.
4. Family leaves him alone at the rock, so he cries because of heat and hunger.
5. No one looks at him except the mothers who tries to tempt him for a piece of fish.
6. Everybody taunts him for his cowardice, so the young seagull dives to catch a fish to feed himself.
7. He tries to spread his winds outwards and begins to fly slowly downwards and upwards.
8. He is not no longer afraid of flying and falling down in the sea. He soars with a joyous scream.
9. Seagull family came near to him and encourage him.
10. He had made his first flight successfully.

Word Meanings

ledge : a narrow horizontal shelf

brink : edge

attempted : tried

flap : to move wings up and down

muster up : gather

plunge : dive

shrilly : sharply

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upbraiding : rebuking

starve : die of hunger

skim : moving lightly over an area, surface

dive : plunge

herring : a kind of fish

devour : eat at a great speed

cackle : cackling sound

taunting : jeering

cowardice : lack of courage

blazing : shining with great heat, burning

dozing : feeling sleepy

preening : smoothing feathers with beak

scrapped : rubbed

maddened : was made mad

whet : sharpening

derisively : mockingly

plaintively : sorrowfully

leaned out : knelt

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tapping : beating lightly

halted : stopped

monstrous : very fearful

seized : caught

headlong : head downwards

soaring : flying upwards

dizzy : confused, spinning

swooped : pounced

curveting : moving with an action resembling a horse's leap

banking : flying with one wing higher than the other

commended : praised

ridges : wavy edges

cawed : made a cawing sound

beckoning : signalling

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II. Black Aeroplane by Frederick Forsyth

The moon was coming up in the east, behind me, and stars were shinning in the clear sky above me. There wasn't a cloud in the sky. I was happy to be alone high up above the sleeping countryside. I was flying my old Dakota aeroplane over France back to England. I was dreaming of my holiday and looking forward to being with my family. I looked at my watch: one thirty in the morning.

'I should call Paris Control soon,' I thought. As I looked down past the nose of the aeroplane, I saw the lights of a big city in front of me. I switched on the radio and said, "Paris Control, Dakota DS 088 here. Can you hear me? I'm on my way to England. Over."

The voice from the radio answered me immediately: "DS 088, I can hear you. You ought to turn twelve degrees west now, DS o88. Over."

I checked the map and the compass, switched over to my second and last fuel tank, and turned the Dakota twelve degrees west towards England.

'I'll be in time for breakfast,' I thought. A good big English breakfast! Everything was going well – it was an easy flight.

Paris was about 150 kilometers behind me when I saw the clouds. Storm clouds. They were huge. They looked like black mountains standing in front of me across the sky. I

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knew I could not fly up and over them, and I did not have enough fuel to fly around them to the north or south.

"I ought to go back to Paris," I thought, but I wanted to get home. I wanted that breakfast.

'I'll take the risk,' I thought, and flew that old Dakota straight into the storm.

Inside the clouds, everything was suddenly black. It was impossible to see anything outside the aeroplane. The old aeroplane jumped and twisted in the air. I looked at the compass. I couldn't believe my eyes: the compass was turning round and round and round. It was dead. It would not work! The other instruments were suddenly dead, too. I tried the radio.

"Paris Control? Paris Control? Can you hear me?"

There was no answer. The radio was dead too. I had no radio, no compass, and I could not see where I was. I was lost in the storm. Then, in the black clouds quite near me, I saw another aeroplane. It had no lights on its wings, but I could see it flying next to me through the storm. I could see the pilot's face – turned towards me. I was very glad to see another person. He lifted one hand and waved.

"Follow me," he was saying. "Follow me."

'He knows that I am lost,' I thought. 'He's trying to help me.'

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He turned his aeroplane slowly to the north, in front of my Dakota, so that it would be easier for me to follow him. I was very happy to go behind the strange aeroplane like an obedient child.

After half an hour the strange black aeroplane was still there in front of me in the clouds. Now there was only enough fuel in the old Dakota's last tank to fly for five or ten minutes more. I was starting to feel frightened again. But then he started to go down and I followed through the storm.

Suddenly I came out of the clouds and saw two long straight lines of lights in front of me. It was a runway! An airport! I was safe! I turned to look for my friend in the black aeroplane, but the sky was empty. There was nothing there. The black aeroplane was gone. I could not see it anywhere.

I landed and was not sorry to walk away from the old Dakota near the control tower. I went and asked a woman in the control centre where I was and who the other pilot was. I wanted to say 'Thank you'.

She looked at me very strangely, and then laughed.

"Another aeroplane? Up there in this storm? No other aeroplanes were flying tonight. Yours was the only one I could see on the radar."

So who helped me arrive there safely without a compass or a radio, and without any more fuel in my tanks? Who was the pilot on the strange black aeroplane, flying in the storm, without lights?

Chapter Highlights

1. The sky was clear with shining stars and the narrator was about to meet his family at breakfast.
2. At 1:30 in the morning, the narrator flew in his Dakota aeroplane and he was instructed by Paris Control to turn 12 degrees West.
3. He was about 150 Kilometers away from Paris. Suddenly the cloud storm approached him. He decided to enter the storm.
4. Due to his willingness to see his family, the narrator took this risky decision but he lost the way in the storm.
5. All the instruments of his plane stopped working.
6. A black aeroplane appeared by the narrator's side in the storm and he was instructed to follow the black plane.
7. Without much fuel, he flew for half an hour and he landed safely on the runway.
8. He went out from his aeroplane to thank the pilot of the black aeroplane, but he got surprised not to find anyone there in the aeroplane.
9. The narrator asked the woman of Control Tower about the black aeroplane, but she laughed and replied in negative about such a plane.

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10. It was miracle with no explanation for the narrator which saved his life.

Word Meanings

countryside : rural side

immediately : at once

twisted : moved sideways

strange : unusual or surprising

obedient : one who is ready to follow order or request

frightened : afraid

landed : came down

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Questions and Answers

NCERT Solutions

His First Flight : NCERT Solutions

Thinking about the Text (Page 36)

Question 1 : Why was the young seagull afraid to fly? Do you think all young birds are afraid to make their fist flight? Do you think a human baby also finds it a challenge to take its first step?

Answer : The young seagull was afraid to fly because it was his first flight and he feared of falling and hurting himself. He thought would not support him while flying.

Yes, it is natural that doing something for the first time is a bit challenging and fearful. Similarly, a human baby is also afraid of taking the first step and finds it challenging when he learns to crawl or stand up without support.

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

Answer : The young seagull was very hungry. It was his hunger that ultimately compelled him to fly. His hunger intensified when he saw his mother tearing at a piece of fish that lay at her feet. He cried to her, begging her to get some food. When his mother came towards him with food in her beak, he screamed with joy and anticipation. However, she stopped mid-way. He wondered why she did not come nearer. Not being able to resist or control his hunger any longer, he dived at the food in his 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 his body, i.e. to fly.

Question 3 : "They were beckoning to him, calling shrilly." Why did the seagull's father and mother threaten him and cajole him to fly?

Answer : 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.

Question 4 : Have you ever had a similar experience, where you parents encouraged you to do something that you were too scared to try? Discuss this in pairs or groups.

Answer : Yes, I had a similar experience while leaning to ride a bicycle in class VI. In my initial attempts, I fell down

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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. This, I overcame my fear of cycling and started riding a cycle after a few practice sessions.

Question 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?

Answer : We face some problems in the initial stage while learning new skills. 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.

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The Black Aeroplane : NCERT Solutions

Thinking about the Text (Page 40)

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

Answer : A huge storm was brewing up and the narrator was keen to reach his home to spend his holiday with his family. So, he decided to fly through the storm as he did not want to miss the chance to meet his family at breakfast. Thus, he took the risk even when the visibility was almost zero in the storm.

Question 2 : Describe the narrator's experience as he flew the aeroplane into the storm.

Answer : As the pilot (narrator) entered the storm, his plane started jumping and twisting. He could not see anything outside the plane as it was black. When he looked at compass and other instruments, they had stopped to function due to storm. This fuel tank was almost empty and he could not fly more than ten minutes.

Then he saw another black aeroplane by his side and the pilot of the plane signalled him to follow. It was a surprise for the narrator as the other black plane was having no light. He followed him without any choice and landed safely on the runway.

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Question 3 : Why does the narrator say, "I landed and was not sorry to walk away from the old Dakota…."?

Answer : The narrator describes his experience of flying in the storm as it was old Dakota which was not very big and sophisticated plane and he had very horrific experience flying it. So, he was very happy rather than being sorry after coming out of the plane and took a sigh of relief when it landed safely.

Question 4 : What made the woman in the control centre look the narrator strangely?

Answer : The woman in the control centre looked at the narrator strangely because the narrator asked her about the black aeroplane and she saw no one except the narrator's in the sky during the storm. Even the radar showed only the narrator's plane that night in the sky.

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

Answer : It is very difficult to say about the unknown pilot who helped the narrator. But probably it was the narrator himself that helped himself to overcome the fear in the storm as no other plane was seen in the radar except the narrator's Dakota plane. In that fearsome situation, he might have been hallucinating. He himself was a good pilot and brave enough who helped himself land safely.

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Thinking about Language (Page 40)

I. Study the sentences given below.

a) They looked like black mountains.

b) Inside the clouds, everything was suddenly black.

c) In the black clouds near me, I saw another aeroplane.

d) The strange black aeroplane was there.

'Black' has a variety of meanings in different contexts. For example:

a) 'I prefer *black* tea' means 'I prefer tea without milk'.
b) 'With increasing pollution the future of the world is *black*' means 'with increasing pollution the future of the world is very depressing/without hope'.
Now 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.

Question 1 : Go and have a bath, your hands and face are absolutely black……..
Answer : The meaning of 'black' in this sentence is that the face and hands are dark because of dust and dirt.

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Question 2 : The taxi-driver gave Rohan a black look a he crossed the road when the traffic light was green.....
Answer : Here, 'black' refers to an angry look.

Question 3 : The bombardment of Hiroshima is on the blackest crimes against humanity.....
Answer : Here, 'blackest' refers to the darkest and cruellest crime against humanity.

Question 4 : Very few people enjoy Harold Pinter's black comdey.....
Answer : Here, 'black' refers to dark and gloomy comedy.

Question 5 : Sometimes shopkeepers store essential goods to create false scarcity and then sell these in black.....
Answer : The meaning of 'black' in this sentence is that the shopkeepers sell the described goods 'at a higher price'.

Question 6 : Villagers had beaten the criminal black and blue.....
Answer : Here, 'black' means that the criminal suffered excessive beating at the hands of the villagers.
II. Look at these sentences taken from the lesson you have just read:

a) I was flying my old Dakota aeroplane.

b) The young seagull had been afraid to fly with them.

In the first sentence, the narrator was controlling an aircraft in the air. In the second sentence, the seagull was afraid to move through the air, using its wings.

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

A	B
1. Fly a flag	a) More quickly/suddenly
2. Fly into rage	b) Be successful
3. Fly along	c) Display a flag on a long pole
4. Fly high	d) Escape from a place
Fly the coop	e) Become suddenly very angry

Answer : 1 – c , 2 – e , 3 – a , 4 – b , 5 – d

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