

Chapter 2

We're Not Afraid to Die...if We Can All Be Together

Solutions of Questions on Page No 13:

Question 1:

Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meaning from the context.

- *honing our seafaring skills*
- *ominous silence*
- *Mayday calls*
- *pinpricks in the vast ocean*
- *a tousled head*

Answer:

- **honing our seafaring skills:** this refers to the efforts made by the author and his wife, to perfect or sharpen their seafaring skills.
- **ominous silence:** the silence here refers to an impending danger.
- **Mayday calls:** Mayday calls are radio-telephonic words which signal aircrafts or ships stuck in a disastrous situation.
- **pinpricks in the vast ocean:** this phrase expresses the search for two small islands in the vast ocean.
- **a tousled head:** this refers to hair in disarray or the disarranged hair of the author's son, Jonathan

Solutions of Questions on Page No 18:

Question 1:

List the steps taken by the captain

(i) to protect the ship when rough weather began.

(ii) to check the flooding of the water in the ship.

Answer:

(i) When the rough weather began, the captain slowed down the boat by dropping the storm jib. He lashed heavy mooring rope in a loop across the stern. They prepared themselves for the worst case scenario by double lashing everything, going through life-raft drill, attaching lifelines and donning life jackets and oilskins. Later, the narrator managed to stretch canvas and secure waterproof hatch covers across the gaping holes.

(ii) To check the flooding of water in the ship, he put waterproof hatch covers across the gaping holes which diverted the water to the side. When the hand pump got blocked, he connected a spare electric pump to an out-pipe in order to drain out the water. After 36 hours of continuous pumping, they reached the last few centimetres of water.

Question 2:

Describe the mental condition of the voyagers on 4 and 5 January.

Answer:

On January 4 and 5, the voyagers were completely tired after rigorous practice of continuous pumping. It was on the January 4 that they ate their first meal in almost two days. After a short respite, they continued to face bad weather conditions and by the morning of January 5, the situation grew desperate.

The narrator tried to comfort the children. But it is worth noting that in spite of so many difficulties, the children displayed immense fearlessness. Jonathan confessed that they are not afraid to die as long as they all are together. Though this inspired the narrator to fight the sea, by that evening he was sure that their end was fast approaching. It was only because of the moral support of his children that he continued to

make efforts.

Question 3:

Describe the shifts in the narration of the events as indicated in the three sections of the text. Give a subtitle to each section.

Answer:

The first section: The first section opens on a cheerful note. The narrator and his family are all set for their ultimate dream- to take up an around-the-world voyage like Captain James Cook did. They have perfected their seafaring skills. They begin the voyage and despite of the bad weather, they celebrate Christmas on the 'Wavewalker'.

The second section: This part of narration covers the hazards faced by the voyagers. There is a shift in the narration from cheerful to intense. They find themselves in an extremely fatal and disastrous situation. A huge wave hits their boat and the narrator is thrown overboard. Despite getting injured, he maintains his composure and applies every possible way to tackle the critical situation. They manage to pump out maximum amount of water out of the boat in about 36 hours. But as they continue to face bad weather conditions the narrator loses hope. The children remain fearless, courageous and optimistic throughout.

The third section: The children provide moral support to the narrator and he continues with his efforts. Under the captaincy of the narrator, they manage to reach Ile Amsterdam. The narrator proves his seamanship and receives the title of "the best daddy" and "the best captain" from his children.

The above three sections can be titled as follows: a) **The first section:** Round-the-world voyage begins b) **The second section:** The attack of the big wave c) **The third section:** Ultimate victory

Question 1:

What difference did you notice between the reaction of the adults and the children when faced with danger?

Answer:

The adults exhibit immense courage. The narrator acts as the true captain of the ship and works out every possible way to handle the sudden crisis. It's mainly because of his undeterred efforts that they survive. Mary supports her husband in the navigation of the ship. Larry and Herb too work endlessly to pump out the water.

However, when things still do not seem to work out, the adults lose hope and wait for their end with a heavy heart. At this point, they are motivated by the children. The children offer moral support to the adults. They display maturity and tolerance. Jonathan expresses his fearlessness and courage when he says that they are not afraid of dying if they all can be together. Sue expresses her love and gratitude for her parents by making a greeting card. She is strong enough to not let her parents know about her serious injuries. She did not want to bother her parents in the times of crisis.

Question 2:

How does the story suggest that optimism helps to endure “the direst stress”?

Answer:

Optimism is a determination to overcome difficulties. It raises one's spirits and helps one overcome stress and difficulty with ease. The story displays courage and optimism throughout. Survival happens only because of the optimistic struggle that the family carries on with.

The level of perseverance in the author rises when Jonathan says, “we're not afraid of dying if we can all be together. Besides, the caricatures of him and Mary, drawn by Sue, helps his determination and optimism to grow many folds. The positive outlook of the children infuses positivity in the narrator. He rigorously calculates their position and finally asks Larry to steer a course of 185 degrees. Though he had lost all hope by then, he did not show it and optimistically told Larry that they would spot the island by about 5 P.M. Fortunately, their struggle and optimism pays

off and they manage to find Ile Amsterdam by evening.

Question 3:

What lessons do we learn from such hazardous experiences when we are face-to-face with death?

Answer:

Such experiences teach us the potential that courage, perseverance and tolerance hold. It explains how one must react in the direst of the situations. It teaches us that one must never lose hope and try to find reasons to stay positive in the face of adversity. In such situations one must try his/her best to remain calm and composed and understand the power of unity and team work. Moreover, the importance of common sense, putting continuous efforts to overcome the catastrophe and the significance of being extra cautious and careful are learnt from such hazardous experiences.

(A model answer has been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer based on their own experience and understanding.)

Question 4:

Why do you think people undertake such adventurous expeditions in spite of the risk involved?

Answer:

The spirit to experience unique elements of nature, undaunted passion and willingness to accept challenges drive people to take up adventurous expeditions. The people who involve themselves in such activities are very well aware of the risk involved in them. But due to their passion and enthusiasm to do something unique and great, they willingly accept such challenges. Also, their desire to be in the lap of nature and experience its beauty pushes them to such expeditions.

Question 1:

We have come across words like 'gale' and 'storm' in the account. Here are two more words for 'storm': typhoon, cyclone. How many words does your language have for 'storm'?

Answer:

In Hindi, 'storm' is known as 'aandhi', 'toofan', etc.

Solutions of Questions on Page No 19:**Question 2:**

Here are the terms of different kinds of vessels: yacht, boat, canoe, ship, steamer, schooner. Think of similar terms in your language.

Answer:

'Naav', 'Nauka', 'Jahaaz' and 'Kishti' are some of the various words used in Hindi for the word 'boat'.

Question 2:

Here is some information downloaded from the Internet on Ile Amsterdam. You can view images of the isle if you go online.

Location	South Indian Ocean, between southern most parts of Australia and South Africa
Latitude and longitude	37 92 S, 77 67 E
Sovereignty	France
Political status notes	Part of French Southern and Antarctic Lands

Population	35
Census notes	Meteorological station staff
Land area in square kilometres	86

Answer:

(Students may view images of the isle if they search it online.)

Question 3:

‘Catamaran’ is a kind of a boat. Do you know which Indian language this word is derived from? Check the dictionary.

Answer:

The word ‘Catamaran’ is derived from Tamil word ‘Kattumaram’.

Question 3:

Locate Ile Amsterdam on the world map.

Answer:

(The above question is to be attempted by the students on their own.)

Question 1:

The following words used in the text as ship terminology are also commonly used in another sense. In what contexts would you use the other meaning?

Knot	stern	boom	hatch	anchor
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Answer:

Knot: a) interlacing, twining, looping, etc. b) a group of persons.

Stern: firm, strict, uncompromising, harsh, hard etc.

Boom: a) deep, prolonged, resonant sound b) to progress or flourish c) to hit hard

Hatch: a) to bring forth, produce. b) derive, concoct c) to draw, cut, or engrave lines

Anchor: a) a person or thing that can be relied upon for support b) host of an event.

Question 2:

The following three compound words end in-ship. What does each of them mean?

airship	flagship	lightship
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Answer:

Airship: It is a self-propelled lighter-than-air aircraft with the means of controlling the direction of the flight.

Flagship: It is a ship carrying the flag officer or the commander of a fleet, squadron. It displays the officer's flag.

Lightship: It refers to a ship anchored in a specific location flashing a very bright light for the guidance of ships, as in avoiding dangerous areas.

Question 3:

The following are the meanings listed in the dictionary against the phrase 'take on'. In which meaning is it used in the third paragraph of the account:

Take on sth:	to begin to have a particular quality or appearance; to assume sth
take sb on:	to employ sb; to engage sb to accept sb as one's opponent in a game, contest or conflict
Take sb/sth on:	to decide to do sth; to allow sth/sb to enter e.g. a bus, plane or ship; to take sth/sb on board

Answer:

In the third paragraph, in lines: "... we took on two crewman to help us tackle ... roughest seas...", the word "took on" suggests to take somebody on i.e., to employ or engage somebody.

Question 4:

Have you heard any boatmen's songs? What kind of emotions do these songs usually express?

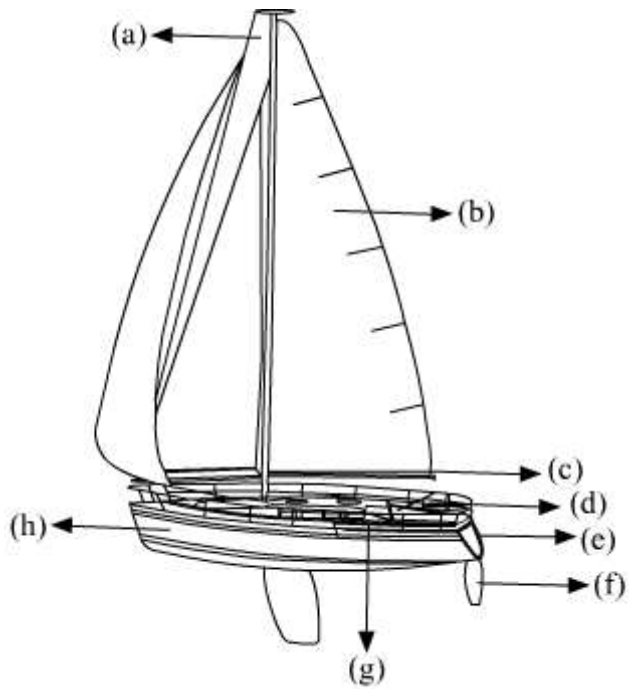
Answer:

Boatmen's songs usually express love and nostalgia. It revolves around the longing to meet a loved one. It may also express their love for the sea.

Question 1:

Given on the next page is a picture of a yacht. Label the parts of the yacht using the terms given in the box

Bow	cabin	rudder	cockpit
stern	boom	mainsail	mast



Answer:

a) mast

b) mainsail

c) boom

d) cockpit

e) stern

f) rudder

g) cabin

h) bow