



Class 12 English Flamingo NCERT Solutions Chapter 5 Indigo

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1. Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meanings from the context.

Urge the departure: insist on the going away of the British from India
conflict of duties: clash of obligation or responsibility
harbor a man like me: give shelter to an advocate of home-rule
seek a prop: try to find support or assistance

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Think As you Read

1. Strike out what is not true in the following.

a. Raj Kumar Shukla was

- (i) a sharecropper.
- (ii) a politician.
- (iii) a delegate.
- (iv) a landlord.

Answer

- (i) a sharecropper.
- ~~(ii) a politician.~~
- ~~(iii) a delegate.~~
- ~~(iv) a landlord.~~

b. Rajkumar Shukla was

- (i) poor.
- (ii) physically strong.
- (iii) illiterate.

Answer

- (i) poor.
- ~~(ii) physically strong.~~
- (iii) illiterate.

2. Why is Rajkumar Shukla described as being ‘resolute’?

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Answer

Raj Kumar Shukla is described as being ‘resolute’ because even after being told about the prior engagements of Gandhi at Cawnpore and other parts across the country, he does not quit. He continues to accompany Gandhi everywhere. Furthermore, he persistently asks Gandhi to fix a date for his visit to his native district of Champaran. His resolution and determination finally impresses Gandhi and the latter complies with his request.

3. Why do you think the servants thought Gandhi to be another peasant?

Answer

Gandhi was a simple and humble man dressed in a plain ‘dhoti’ (loincloth). To the servants, he must have looked like just another poor farmer in this country. Moreover, he was accompanied by Raj Kumar Shukla whom they knew to be a poor indigo sharecropper. Thus, when the servants saw them both together, they mistook Gandhi to be another peasant.

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1. List the places that Gandhi visited between his first meeting with Shukla and his arrival at Champaran.

Answer

Gandhi first met Shukla at Lucknow. Then he was in Cawnpore and other parts of India. He returned to his ashram near Ahmedabad. Later he visited Calcutta, Patna and Muzaffarpur before arriving at Champaran.

2. What did the peasants pay the British landlords as rent? What did the British now want instead and why? What would be the impact of synthetic indigo on the prices of natural indigo?

Answer

The peasants used to pay indigo as rent to the British landlords. Germany had now developed synthetic indigo. So the British landlords wanted money as compensation for being released from natural arrangement. The prices of natural Indigo would go down due to the synthetic indigo.

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1. The events in this part of the text illustrate Gandhi’s method of working. Can you identify some instances of this method and link them to his ideas of satyagraha and non-violence?

Answer

There are many instances in the narrative that can be linked to Gandhi’s idea of non-cooperation and Satyagraha. One such instance is Gandhi’s refusal to obey the court order asking him to leave Champaran immediately. Besides that, Gandhi’s protest against the delay of the court proceedings is also an instance of his belief in civil disobedience.

Furthermore, Gandhi does not falter to plead guilty in front of the court. He accepts his guilt but presents a rational case as to what made him disobey the law. For him, truth is above everything

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and, thus, he decides to follow the voice of conscience and obey the “higher law of our being”.

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1. Why did Gandhi agree to a settlement of 25 per cent refund to the farmers?

Answer

For Gandhi the amount of the refund was less important than the fact that the landlords had been forced to return part of the money and with it, part of their prestige. So he agreed to the settlement of 25 percent refund to the farmers.

2. How did the episode change the plight of the peasants?

Answer

The episode of Champaran brought more than one change in the plight of the peasants of that district. These peasants gained confidence which was evident in their spontaneous demonstration on the morning of Gandhi's trial. After the successful refund of the compensation, the peasants, for the first time, realised their own rights and were liberated from the fear that had plagued them. This episode brought an end to the fifteen percent arrangement of sharecropping. However, the most radical change that the episode brought about was in their social and cultural standard. Gandhi opened schools in six villages. His wife took pains to make the peasants aware of the importance of general sanitation and personal hygiene. He even appointed a doctor.

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Understanding the Text

1. Why do you think Gandhi considered the Champaran episode to be a turning-point in his life?

Answer

The Champaran episode began as an attempt to ease the sufferings of large number of poor peasants. He got the whole hearted support of thousands of people. Gandhiji admitted that he had done a very ordinary thing. He declared that the British could not order him about in his own country. Hence he considered the Champaran episode as a turning point in his life.

2. How was Gandhi able to influence lawyers? Give instances.

Answer

Gandhi was able to influence the lawyers through his conviction, earnestness and pertinent questioning. Gandhi reproached the lawyers of Muzzafarpur for charging a large sum of money as fee from the peasants. Later, the lawyers from Bihar opined that they would return to their own places in the event of his imprisonment. But, Gandhi made them realise that it would be impudent for them, being lawyers from a neighboring place, to return when a stranger was ready to get himself imprisoned for the peasants. So, they agreed to follow him to jail. Gandhi also convinced the

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lawyers not to seek support from an Englishman and be self-reliant.

3. What was the attitude of the average Indian in smaller localities towards advocates of 'home rule'?

Answer

The average Indians in smaller localities were afraid to show sympathy for the advocates of home-rule. Gandhi stayed at Muzaffarpur for two days in the home of professor Malkani, a teacher in a government school. It was an extraordinary thing in those days for a government professor to give shelter to one who opposed the government.

4. How do we know that ordinary people too contributed to the freedom movement?

Answer

Professor J.B. Kriplani received Gandhi at Muzaffarpur railway station at midnight. He had a large body of students with him. Sharecroppers from Champaran came on foot and by conveyance to see Gandhi. Muzaffarpur lawyers too called on him. A vast multitude greeted Gandhi when he reached Motihari railway station. Thousands of people demonstrated around the court room. This shows that ordinary people too contributed to the freedom movement.

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Talking about the Text

Discuss the following.

- 1. "Freedom from fear is more important than legal justice for the poor."**
Do you think that the poor of India are free from fear after Independence?

- 2. The qualities of a good leader.**

Answer

1. In the story, Gandhi makes it possible for the sharecroppers of Champaran to shed their fear of the British landlords. According to Gandhi, freedom from fear is the first step towards self-reliance. However, it is unfortunate that the poor of the country are not free from fear, even decades after the independence. Their actions, work, etc. are still under pressure; they are under the mercy of the bureaucratic system. Furthermore, the poor live in a continual fear of the police, who instead of taking care, often end up maltreating them. The already poor farmers are becoming poorer, because of globalisation and the craze for the foreign products. This leaves them in the fear of further destitution.

2. A leader is someone who leads the minds of others and convinces them into following his set of ideas and beliefs. As such, there are some qualities inherent in the persona of the leader that sets him apart from the rest. One of these qualities includes dedication to one's work. His enthusiasm is evident in his work and life, and this inspires others to follow him. A good leader is courageous in the face of adversity and is never a quitter. He motivates and encourages others, bringing out the best in

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them. He appreciates the efforts of others and is not biased or impartial.

Thinking about Language

1. Notice the sentences in the text which are in ‘direct speech’.

Why does the author use quotations in his narration?

Answer

Below are some sentences in the text which are in ‘direct speech’:

“I will tell you how it happened that I decided to urge the departure of the British. It was in 1917.”
‘I am Raj Kumar Shukla. I am from Champaran, and I want you to come to my district’!”
“Speak to Gandhi.”
“Fix a date,”
“I have to be in Calcutta on such-and-such a date. Come and meet me and take me from there.”
“It was an extraordinary thing ... for a government professor to harbour a man like me”.
“The commissioner ... to bully me and advised me forthwith to leave Tirhoot.”
“conflict of duties”
“humanitarian and national service”
“not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience to the higher law of our being, the voice of conscience”
“But how much must we pay?”
“Look, there is no box or cupboard here for clothes. The sari I am wearing is the only one I have.”
“What I did,” he explained, “was a very ordinary thing. I declared that the British could not order me about in my own country.”
“He had read our minds correctly,” Rajendra Prasad comments, “and we had no reply... Gandhi in this way taught us a lesson in self-reliance”.

The author uses quotations to indicate the actual words of a speaker. Usually a quotation is used when a particular passage or sentence is well-written or memorable or is especially relevant in the context under discussion. In ‘Indigo,’ the author uses quotations when he mentions important commentary or observation, or any pertinent utterance by Gandhi, or for that matter, by any other character.

2. Notice the use or non-use of the comma in the following sentences.

When I first visited Gandhi in 1942 at his ashram in Sevagram, he told me what happened in Champaran.

He had not proceeded far when the police superintendent’s messenger overtook him.

When the court reconvened, the judge said he would not deliver the judgment for several days.

Answer

In this sentence, the comma is used after a long introductory phrase.

Essential clauses do not require commas. In this sentence, the clause ‘when the police superintendent’s messenger overtook him’ is an essential clause because it provides essential information. Hence, a comma is not required in this sentence.

In this sentence again we have an introductory clause which provides extra information. The second



half of the sentence can stand alone and, therefore, is separated from the introductory clause with a comma.

Working with Words

- List the words used in the text that are related to legal procedures.

For example: deposition

- List other words that you know that fall into this category.

Answer

Deposition	Notice	Summon	Lawyer
Court	Cases	Fee	Agreement
Compensation	Order	Courthouse	Judge
Prosecutor	Statement	Guilty	Trial
Penalty	Law	Magistrate	Sentence
Bail	Judgement	Inquiry	Evidence
Documents	Imprison	Appeal	Rights
Investigation	Reconvene	Appear	Pleading

Witness	Accused	Proceedings	Adjourn
Verdict	Decree	Accusation	Defense
Impeachment	Charge	Affidavit	Indictment
Opposition	Prosecution	Offence	Crime