

1.1 Where the Mind is Without Fear...

Glossary

Words	Meanings
dead habit	old traditional rituals and customs that are harmful
dreary (<i>adj</i>)	dull
ever-widening	forever broadening one's outlook
fragments (<i>n</i>)	small parts broken off or separated from something
heaven of freedom	condition of total freedom of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, while respecting those of others
narrow domestic walls	division on the basis of religion, caste, class and colour in societies and between countries of the world
stream (<i>n</i>)	a small narrow river
stretches its arm	aims at achieving a goal
thee (<i>pronoun</i>)	you (old English form)
tireless striving	continuous efforts and struggle

About the Author

Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941) was born in Calcutta (now Kolkata). He was not only a writer, but also a painter, a philosopher and a composer. The poem 'Where the Mind is Without Fear...' has been taken from his Nobel-winning collection of poems 'Gitanjali', a profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse. It was originally written in Bengali and subsequently translated into English by Rabindranath Tagore himself. He was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913.

Paraphrase

The poem, 'Where the Mind is Without Fear...', has been written by the poet in the form of a prayer to God for the true freedom of his country. The poet wishes for his country to be free from the oppressive rule of the colonisers. Once the country is free, everybody would live fearlessly and have confidence in themselves. The poet visualises a nation where knowledge is accessible to one and all, since knowledge and education alone will lead the people from darkness to light. The poet wishes for a nation where people are not divided on the basis of caste,

colour, creed, class, etc. The people of such a nation would be truthful and would speak from the depth of their hearts. In such a country, the people would give their best and work hard, which would ultimately make them achieve their goal of perfection. It is the dream of the poet that he wants his countrymen to have the power of reason and not to give in to age-old superstitious beliefs. He prays to God to help his countrymen progress, so that they become individuals who are logical, progressive and have a broad-minded outlook. He requests God to guide his countrymen into a heaven of freedom, where all that he has prayed for comes true.

Tagore thus sketches out the ideal form of freedom and not merely political freedom that he desires for his country. He aspires to bring about an awakening in a country that is enslaved both, politically and intellectually.

Warming Up!

*1. Pair up with your partner and match the terms with their given meanings.

	Column 'A'		Column 'B'
i.	Humanism	a.	Concern about an action aimed at protecting the environment.
ii.	Patriotism	b.	Holding liberal views.
iii.	Internationalism	c.	Quality of being patriotic: vigorous support for one's country.
iv.	Liberalism	d.	State or process of being international.
v.	Environmentalism	e.	A rationalistic outlook towards humans rather than a divine or supernatural one.

Ans: (i – e), (ii – c), (iii – d), (iv – b), (v – a)

*2. Poems in English are of different types.

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| i. Sonnet | ii. Limerick |
| iii. Ballad | iv. Elegy |
| v. Free verse | vi. Epic |
| vii. Lyric | viii. Humorous |
| ix. Idyll | |



Taking the help of a dictionary / internet, guess and write the type of poem against its description.

- A long story-poem, often mythical _____.
- A short story poem with a message _____.
- A poem of 14 lines _____.
- A song-like poem _____.
- A poem with no uniformity of rhyme, rhythm etc. _____.
- A poem set in picturesque, rustic background _____.
- A sad poem, lamenting the death of a loved one _____.
- A 5-line short funny poem with a rhyme-scheme aabba.
- A poem written, just to create humour.

- Ans:**
- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| i. Epic | ii. Ballad |
| iii. Sonnet | iv. Lyric |
| v. Free verse | vi. Idyll |
| vii. Elegy | viii. Limerick |
| ix. Humorous | |

Extract

Read the extract from line 1 to 11 on page 3 of your textbook and answer the following questions.

["Where the mind
..... let my country awake."]

A1. Simple Factual

***1. Write down lines from the poem as a proof for the following:**

- Tagore wishes for a nation where people are truthful.
- The poet would like everyone to work hard to reach their goal and in the long run to reach perfection.
- The poet wishes that everyone in his country holds his head high in dignity.
- The poet dreams of a nation where knowledge should be free to all.
- The poem is a 'prayer'.

- Ans:**
- "Where words come out from the depth of truth."
 - "Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection."
 - "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high."
 - "Where knowledge is free."
 - "Into that heaven of freedom, my father, let my country awake."

#2. Complete the following statements based on the extract.

- The world is broken into fragments by _____.

- The poet compares reason to _____.
- Dead habits in the poem are compared to _____.
- The 'Thee' in the poem refers to _____.

- Ans:**
- narrow domestic walls
 - a clear stream
 - the dreary desert
 - the Almighty

A2. Complex Factual

***1. Read the columns carefully and match the expressions with their meanings.**

	Column A		Column B
i.	The head is held high	a.	A fearless person
ii.	Narrow domestic walls	b.	Sincerity of heart
iii.	Knowledge is free	c.	A person with self respect and proud of possessing it
iv.	Depth of Truth	d.	Narrow mindedness
v.	Mind is without fear	e.	Education is given to all
vi.	Stretches its arms	f.	Dried, infertile land of sands
vii.	Clear stream of reason	g.	Clear thinking
viii.	Dead habits	h.	Aim at perfection
ix.	Ever widening thought and action	i.	Broadening the outlook and attitude

- Ans:** (i – c), (ii – d), (iii – e), (iv – b), (v – a), (vi – h), (vii – g), (viii – f), (ix – i)

#2. Complete the following statements based on the extract.

- The poet appeals to 'Thee' to _____.
- The poet prays to the Almighty for _____.

- Ans:**
- guide his countrymen so that they can develop a broad outlook
 - his country to awaken and experience the exhilarating air of freedom

3. Explain the following phrases / lines from the poem.

i. 'narrow domestic walls'

- Ans:** The phrase 'narrow domestic walls' means the conservative or narrow-minded divisions on the basis of caste, colour, class and creed existent in the society.

#ii. 'Where words come out from the depth of truth.'

- Ans:** The line 'Where words come out from the depth of truth' means that –
- people must be honest in thought, word and deed.



- b. they should stand by the truth even when they face the most difficult of situations.

#iii. 'tireless striving'

Ans: The phrase 'tireless striving' means making an effort to keep on trying without giving up, irrespective of the obstacles and difficulties.

iv. 'dead habits'

Ans: The phrase 'dead habits' means the rituals and customs of the olden days which are followed without thought and logic.

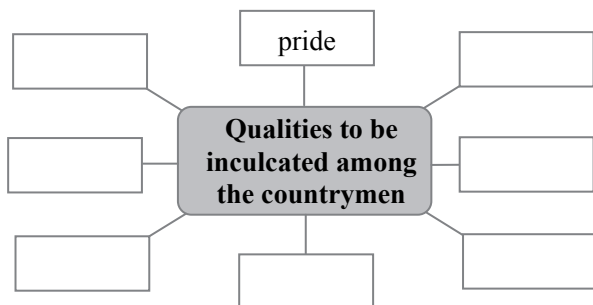
#4. State the context in which the poet uses the word 'widening'. Suggest ways in which it can be made possible.

Ans: The poet uses the word 'widening' for the thoughts and actions of the citizens of the nation. He advocates that the Almighty can lead the people forward in life by broadening their outlook.

#5. 'Our nation should awaken from the darkness of the night'. Explain.

Ans: 'Our nation should awaken from the darkness of the night', means that the people of the nation should break free from the shackles of the oppressive colonial rule which was like a dark, long night and breathe in the fresh air of freedom.

#6. Complete the web-diagram to highlight the qualities that the poet wishes to inculcate in his countrymen.



Ans: fearlessness, indiscrimination, truthfulness, hard work, perfection, logic, broad-mindedness

#7. The poem is not meant for India alone. Justify.

Ans: The poem is not meant for India alone because of the following reasons:

- It concerns all the countries which are under an oppressive rule.
- It talks about freedom for all such countries.

#8. The words we speak should reflect the truth. Justify.

Ans: The poet wants a world for his countrymen where they can speak the truth without any

hesitation. He wants them to be free in every sense of the word, so that their words reflect nothing but the truth.

#9. Elaborate on the effect the word 'where' creates at the beginning of each line of this poem.

Ans: The use of the word 'where' at the beginning of each line creates emphasis on the fact that the poet is describing an ideal country. It creates a continuity of thought and links each of the factors that the poet describes into the whole idea of a heavenly country.

***10. Read the poem carefully and complete the table after discussing in pairs. One is done for you.**

	Concepts in the poem	Present situation	Expected / ideal situation
i.	mind	mind is full of fear	fearless mind
ii.	head		
iii.	knowledge		
iv.	words		
v.	habit		
vi.	thought and action		

Ans:

	Concepts in the poem	Present situation	Expected / ideal situation
i.	mind	mind is full of fear	fearless mind
ii.	head	head is lowered due to shame	head is held high with pride
iii.	knowledge	knowledge is expensive and not accessible to all	knowledge is free and accessible to all
iv.	words	words are shallow and include flattery and lies	words are truthful, meaningful, and come from a pure heart
v.	habit	habits are irrational and based on myths and superstitions	habits are progressive and built on rational thinking
vi.	thought and action	thought and action are based on superstitious beliefs	thought and action are of a progressive nature as they are based on rationality



#11. State the attributes of Rabindranath Tagore that the poem (prayer) reflects and give reasons for your answer.

Ans: The poem reflects the following attributes of Rabindranath Tagore:

i. Religious –

When he realises that his countrymen are in a deep slumber of ignorance, the poet composes a prayer to the Almighty in the hope that his intervention will awaken them.

ii. Hopeful and optimistic –

Rabindranath Tagore is aware that the situation in the nation is bleak today, but he is hopeful for a better future.

iii. Concerned –

The poet is concerned about the well-being of the people of his country. He wants them to gain knowledge and progress in life.

iv. Composes freely and from the heart –

Tagore uses free verse to write this poem, which indicates that he is an individual who loves freedom – be it for himself, his thought or his nation. The words flow from the depths of his heart and possess the ability to touch the heart of the reader and transform it.

A3. Vocabulary / Poetic Devices

1. Identify the Figures of Speech used in the extract.

i. “Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high”

Ans: a. Alliteration – The sound of the letters ‘w’ and ‘h’ are repeated for poetic effect.

b. Synecdoche – Here, ‘mind’ and ‘head’ (a part) stand for the ‘citizen’ (whole).

ii. “Where the world has not been broken up into fragments”

Ans: a. Alliteration – The sound of the letters ‘w’ and ‘b’ are repeated for poetic effect.

iii. “By narrow domestic walls”

Ans: a. Metaphor – An indirect comparison has been made between ‘narrow domestic walls’ and the ‘narrow-minded divisions in the society’.

iv. “Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection”

Ans: a. Personification – An inanimate object ‘striving’ has been given the human qualities of being ‘tireless’ and ‘stretching its arms’

v. “Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way.”

Ans: a. Personification – An inanimate object like the ‘stream’ has been given the human quality of ‘losing its way’.

b. Metaphor – An indirect comparison has been made between the ‘clarity of a stream’ and ‘reason’.

vi. “Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit”

Ans: a. Alliteration – The sound of the letter ‘d’ is repeated for poetic effect.

b. Metaphor – An indirect comparison has been made between ‘habit’ and ‘desert sand’.

vii. “Where the mind is led forward by Thee”

Ans: a. Synecdoche – Here, ‘mind’ (a part) stands for the ‘citizen’ (whole).

viii. “Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”

Ans: a. Personification – An inanimate object ‘country’ has been given the human quality of ‘waking up’.

b. Apostrophe – A direct address has been made to ‘Father (God)’ who is not present there.

***2. Find out the examples of ‘Metaphor’ from the poem.**

[Note: Refer A3 Q.1 (iii a, v b, vi b) from the extract for this answer.]

Appreciation of the Poem

***1. Write an appreciation of the poem in about 12 to 15 sentences with the help of the following points.**

i. Title

ii. Poet

iii. Rhyme scheme

iv. Favourite line

v. Theme / Central idea

vi. Figures of Speech

vii. Special features – Type of the poem, language, tone, implied meaning etc.

viii. Why I like / dislike the poem

Ans: The title of the poem is ‘Where the Mind is Without Fear...’ It is composed by the great Rabindranath Tagore.



There is no fixed rhyme scheme in the poem as it is written in a free verse format. My favourite line from the poem is, “Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake”, because it is not only a prayer to the Almighty, but also a message to the countrymen to awaken from the bondages of colonial rule. The central idea of the poem is about the poet’s vision of freedom for his country. He desires and prays for an overall awakening of the people of the nation and not just for political freedom.

The figures of speech used in the poem are Alliteration, Metaphor, Apostrophe, Personification and Synecdoche.

Among the special features of the poem is the fact that, it is a poem of hope as the poet is not happy with the present condition of the country, but he is hopeful for a better future. The poet uses many metaphors to elaborate the evils existent in the country. Each thought has been connected using the word ‘where’. The poem is full of positive and negative imagery as the poet envisions a better future while facing the bleak reality of today.

I like the poem for its beautiful dream of a free and equal place, where the fellowmen live with each other in peace and harmony. The poem has a universal appeal and is relevant even today.

Additional Questions for Practice

***1. Complete the following sentences using your own interpretation.**

- When the mind is without fear and head unbowed, we enjoy _____ freedom.
- When knowledge is free, every citizen enjoys the right to _____ and _____.
- We can prevent _____ injustice when we pull down discriminatory walls of caste, class, religion etc.
- Constant effort and strife leads to _____.
- Logical thinking and reasoning can put a stop to _____.
- Tagore appeals to God to make his country a _____.

- Ans:**
- absolute
 - literacy and education
 - social
 - success
 - superstitions
 - heaven of freedom

***2. Fill in the Blanks.**

- Students should keep themselves aloof from _____.
- When _____ everyone will be literate.
- It is the social duty of every student of the modern world to uproot _____ from societies.
- Students must develop _____ outlook and attitudes.
- In the world of sycophancy, students must _____.

- Ans:**
- discrimination and narrow-mindedness
 - knowledge is accessible
 - superstitious beliefs
 - broad-minded
 - speak the truth

#3. State the poet’s wish that is expressed through the poem.

Ans: In the poem, the poet wishes that God would guide his country to freedom from the oppressive colonial rule and lead it to an intellectual and moral awakening where its people are broad-minded, rational and proactive.



Activities

Reading

***1. Read the short story written by Rabindranath Tagore ‘The Kabuliwala’ or ‘The Home Coming’.**

Visit the website and collect more information about Rabindranath Tagore’s life and work.

[Students are expected to attempt the above activity on their own.]

Writing

***1. Almost every line of the poem begins with the word ‘Where’ and it expects the idealistic country and countrymen. Now work in a group of six students and compose your poem regarding ‘Ideal School’. Begin your lines with the word ‘Where’...**

Ans: Where the bells always chime
Where projects are submitted on time
Where teachers guide us and make us wise
Where together schoolmates play and rise
Where holidays are not such a pleasant sight
Such is our school, our only delight!

[Note: The above answer is for reference. Students can compose a poem on ‘Ideal School’ on their own by taking cue from the above.]



- *2. **Imagine that you have to deliver a speech on the occasion of ‘Independence Day’ or the ‘Republic Day’ in the school assembly. Prepare a speech to deliver on ‘India of my dreams’.**

Use the following steps:

- i. **Greeting and Salutation**
- ii. **Self Introduction**
- iii. **Introduction of the topic**
- iv. **Elaboration of the topic with examples**
- v. **Conclusion**
- vi. **Thanking audience**

Ans:

India of my dreams

Good morning teachers, chief guests and my fellow students. I’m Purva Shah from Class X ‘B’. Today, I’m going to talk about ‘The India of my dreams’.

“India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend, and the great-grandmother of tradition.” These words by Mark Twain perfectly depict the rich cultural heritage, values and traditions of our nation. There is a harmony in its chaos, which forms a beautiful mosaic like no other country in the world. In the past couple of centuries, our country has gone from being one of the greatest nations of the world, to a nation engulfed in poverty and illiteracy.

However, I do believe that India’s former glory can be restored. I, therefore, have a vision of an ideal India, where the country would redeem its stature as the most prominent nation in the world. It would no longer be bound by the chains of corruption and illiteracy. I wish that each and every citizen would be treated equally, that is, without any distinction on the basis of gender, class, caste or religion. The people would live in harmony and would actively perform their duties toward the nation.

India has the potential to reform itself and I dream that one day, it will pave the way for the world to create a healthy balance between development, humanity, and environment. The India of my dreams would heal the world from its present situation of over-consumerism and materialism.

I would like to end by saying that the moment we learn from our rich past and adapt it to the modern times, we would not only become a strong country, but also an iconic nation.

Thank you all for your time and I hope that if we work together, we can definitely build ‘The India of my dreams’.

[P.S. Scan this Q. R. Code to view a video that explains the Glossary, Paraphrase and Figures of Speech encountered in this poem]

