

3.2 The Night I Met Einstein








Warming Up!

1. With your bench-mate prepare a profile of Albert Einstein.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

- Profession :
- Field of Science :
- World famous theory proposed :
- Awards :
- Disability in childhood :
- Books written :

2. Look at the pictures of musical instruments and write their names; what the player of the instrument is called and a famous player of the instrument.

Instrument	Name of the instrument	One who plays is called	A famous player

	Ustad Bismillah Khan
	Pianist





3. Separate the words in the columns they belong to.

(chorus, ballet, melody, swar, kathak, raga, salsa, symphony, mudra, serenade, choreography, tune, audience, tango, allegro, duet, odissi, choir, concert, performance, hip-hop)

Music	Common to both arts	Dance

The Night I Met Einstein

Jerome Weidman (1913-1998) was an American playwright and novelist.

In 1960 he won the Pulitzer Prize for his work - a musical (drama) titled 'Fiorello'. He collaborated with George Abbot, Jerry Bocjk and Sheldon Harnick to for its music and lyrics.

His book 'I Can Get It For You Wholesale' has also been used for a movie of the same name.

- **dine** : have dinner
- **hostess** : a woman who invites guest to a social event
- **concert** : performance of music by players or singers
- **pianist** : someone who plays the piano
- **tone-deaf** : unable to hear the difference between high and low notes of music
- **Bach** : Johann Sebastian Bach, a German organist and composer of the 17th century.

- ◆ What was the entertainment arranged for by the hostess ?
- ◆ What was the writer's reaction to classical music ?

When I was a very young man, I was invited to **dine** at the house of a philanthropist. After a wonderful dinner, our **hostess** took us to a large drawing room. Chairs were being arranged. "I'm arranging the chairs for a **concert**", my hostess said, "We're going to listen to a very good **pianist**."

Though everyone else was very happy, I was not. I did not understand classical music. I thought I was **tone-deaf**. I sat down so that I would not be impolite and waited for the concert to begin. I did not pay attention to the music after it began.

After a while, I heard everyone clapping, so I realised that the piece was over. Just then I heard a gentle, but firm voice saying, "You're fond of **Bach**?"

I knew as much about Bach as I did about nuclear physics. I was going to say something ordinary so that I could get out of the situation. I turned in order to look at my neighbour and I saw a very famous face. It was someone with a shock of white hair and a pipe.

I knew that I must tell this man the truth. He looked at me as if my answer was very important.

"I do not know anything about Bach", I said, "I have never heard any of his music." He looked surprised.

"You have never heard of Bach?" he asked.

He made it sound as if I had said that I had never taken a bath!

"I'd like to understand music so that I could understand Bach," I said, "but I'm not able to. I'm tone-deaf."

The old man got up.

“You will come up with me?” he asked. I just remained seated. “I’m requesting you to come with me”, he said again.

So I went up with him. He took me to a room which had a **gramophone** in it and asked, “What kind of music do you like?”

“Well,” I answered, “I like songs that have words, and the kind of music where I can follow the tune.”



He smiled and **nodded**, obviously pleased. “You can give me an example, perhaps?”

I told him I like anything by **Bing Crosby**. At once, I could hear Bing Crosby’s voice filling the room.

“Now, can you please tell me what you just heard?”, he said.

The simplest answer seemed to be to sing the lines. So I sang it back to him.

He smiled. “You’re not tone-deaf,” he said.

I told him this was one of my favourite songs, something I had heard hundreds of times, so it didn’t really prove anything.

“Nonsense!” said Einstein. “It proves everything! Do you remember your first arithmetic lesson in school? Suppose, at your very first contact with numbers, your teacher had ordered you to work out a problem in, say, long division or fractions. Could you have done it?”

- ◆ **gramophone** : machine for playing recorded music.



- ◆ *What do you learn from Einstein’s treatment of the young man?*
- ◆ *Do you think the comparison between music and arithmetic was a good one? In what ways?*

- ◆ **nodded** : moved head up and down to indicate agreement
- ◆ **Bing Crosby** : American singer and actor

- ◆ *As far as listening is concerned, what difference do you notice between the writer and Einstein?*

◆ How did Einstein help the narrator appreciate music?



◆ What does the last line tell you about Einstein?



“No, of course not.”

“Exactly! It’s like learning maths. You have to learn addition and subtraction in order to do multiplication and division. Now I’m playing something a little more advanced.”

It was John McCormack singing *The Trumpeter*. “Sing that back”, he ordered.

And we went on from level to higher level until he was playing just music without words. I was amazed that this great man was paying complete attention to me so that I could learn something new. It was as if I was the most important person in his world. Suddenly, he got up and turned off the gramophone.

“Now young man”, he said, “We’re ready to listen to Bach.”

We went down and sat in the hall. “Just allow yourself to listen”, he said, “that’s all there is to it.”

I have heard that piece many times since that day. But I am never alone. I am sitting beside a small man with a shock of untidy hair and a pipe in his mouth. He has eyes that are unusually warm. When the concert ended, I too was able to clap—sincerely. Our hostess came towards us. We both stood up.

“I’m so sorry, Dr Einstein”, she said, giving me a cold look, “that you missed so much.”

“I’m sorry too”, he said, “My young friend here and I, however, were engaged in the greatest activity of which a human being is capable.”

She looked puzzled. “Really?” she said. “And what is that?”

Einstein smiled and put his arm across my shoulders. “Opening up the frontiers of beauty.”

ENGLISH WORKSHOP

1. Complete the following sentences.

- The narrator was not happy about the concert because
- When the narrator turned to look at his neighbour, he
- Einstein was surprised to hear that
- The narrator’s memory has an image of Einstein as
- The greatest act towards human beings is

2. Who said to whom?

Statement	Who	To whom	Effect on the listener
"We are going to listen to a very good pianist."
"I do not know anything about Bach."
"You are not tone-deaf."
"Just allow yourself to listen that's all there is to it"

3. List all the words from the story related to 'Music'.

.....

.....

4. Rewrite the following sentences inserting the appropriate phrases in their proper form.

(to get out of, to come up, to turn on, to give in, to get into, to come down, to work out, to turn off, to give off, to give out, to work in)

- (a) He bed and the living room, to see if the door was closed.
- (b) To enjoy the music and relax, hethe music and the lights.
- (c) Smita to her desire and her favourite toys to the poor it.
- (d) You should Mathematics so that you can problem.

5. (A) Give two points of difference between :

Instrumental Music	Vocal Music
(1)	
(2)	

(B)

Light music	Classical music	Folk music

6. Prepare a word list of occupations in alphabetical order from the letters A upto T. (You may skip 'K' and 'Q')

Actor,	Banker,	Carpenter,	D	E
F	G	H	I	J
L	M	N	O	P
R	S	T		

7. Rewrite the following in indirect narration.

- (a) “You are not tone-deaf”, he said to me.
- (b) “Could you have done it?”, said Einstein.
- (c) “Sing that back”, he ordered me.
- (d) He said, “What kind of music do you like?”
- (e) “I’m so sorry, Dr. Einstein”, she said.

8. (A) Degrees of Comparison (Positive / Comparative / Superlative)

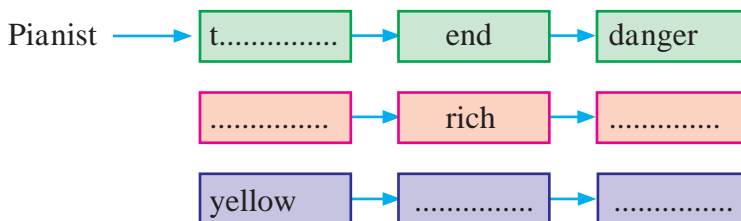
Insert the appropriate expressions, choosing from those given after each sentences, for the positive degree.

- (1) I am not my friend.
(taller than/ more taller/just as tall as)
- (2) They are their neighbours.
(as helpful as/most helpful/more helpful)
- (3) No other desert in Africa is the Sahara Desert.
(biggest of all/nearly so big as/bigger as)
- (4) Very few animals in the wild are an elephant.
(exactly huger than/exactly as huge as/hugest than)
- (5) Some snacks are a pizza.
(at least as tasty as/tastier as/most tasty as)

(B) Change the Degree of Comparison, as directed and rewrite without changing the meaning.

- (1) No one in the class is as brilliant as Tanvi. (Superlative)
.....
- (2) A diamond is one of the most precious of all stones. (Comparative)
.....
- (3) Her handwriting is better than that of her sister. (Positive)
.....
- (4) Jupiter is the largest of all planets. (Comparative)
.....
- (5) He is not the greatest of all leaders. (Positive)
.....
- (6) This painting is better than any other painting in the palace. (Superlative)
.....

9. Prepare a word chain.



10. Pick out words that refer to the following:

- (1) A musical performance in public
- (2) A lady who invites and looks after guests
- (3) A device used to play recorded music
- (4) One who is poor at deciphering musical notes
- (5) Boundaries or limits of a field

11. 'Music is the medicine of the mind'. Narrate an experience that leads to the above conclusion. Write it in your own words, in your notebook.

12. You will come across many famous personalities in the story. Go to library or search on internet the following names and write a few lines about the personalities given below.

- (a) Albert Einstein
- (b) Johann S. Bach
- (c) Bing Crosby
- (d) John McCormack

13. Imagine you are the monitor of the class. You are asked to conduct an interview of a famous scientist who is in your city/village. Frame 8 to 10 interview questions with the help of the following points.

- (1) Early life and education
- (2) Interest for this particular field
- (3) Any inspirational incident that occurred in his/her life
- (4) Guru or mentor
- (5) Inventions and awards
- (6) Future plans
- (7) Advice/Appeal to youngsters

14. Project :

Divide the class into four groups. Collect pictures or draw images of various musical instruments, of the following categories.

- (a) Stringed Instruments (Guitar)
- (b) Wind Instruments (Flute)
- (c) Percussion Instruments (Tabla)
- (d) Solid Metal Instruments (Cymbals)

Paste and decorate pictures on separate sheets of paper. Give proper headings and names. Compile into a file with a cover and suitable file-title.

