



By Nelson Rohlihlahla Mandela

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Comprehension Check

1. Where did the ceremonies take place? Can you name any public buildings in India that are made of sandstone?

Answer:

The ceremonies took place in the campus of the Union Building of Pretoria.

The Parliament House in New Delhi, the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, the Supreme Court of India in New Delhi and Madras High Court in Chennai are some examples of Indian public buildings that are made of sandstone.

2. Can you say how 10 May is an 'autumn day' in South Africa?

Answer:

10 May is an 'autumn day' in South Africa because on this day there was the largest gathering of international leaders on South African soil for the installation of South Africa's first democratic, non-racial government.

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3. At the beginning of his speech, Mandela mentions "an extraordinary human disaster". What does he mean by this? What is the "glorious ... human achievement" he speaks of at the end?

Answer:

By human disaster Mandela means to say that coloured people have suffered a lot due to discrimination in the hands of whites. He considered it as great glorious human achievement that a black person became the president of a country where the blacks are not considered as human being and are treated badly.

4. What does Mandela thank the international leaders for?

Answer:

Mandela felt privileged to be the host to the nations of the world because not too long ago, the South Africans were considered outlaws. He thus thanked all the international leaders for having come to witness his investiture as President since this event could be considered as a common victory for justice, peace and human dignity.

5. What ideals does he set out for the future of South Africa?

Answer:

Mandela set out the ideals of poverty alleviation, removal of suffering of people. He also set the ideal for a society where there would be no discrimination based on gender or racial origins.

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Oral Comprehension Check

1. What do the military generals do? How has their attitude changed, and why?

Answer:

The highest military generals of the South African defence force and police saluted Mandela and pledged their loyalty. Their attitude towards blacks had taken great change. Instead of arresting a black they saluted him.

2. Why were two national anthems sung?

Answer:

On the day of the inauguration, two national anthems were sung, one by the whites, and the other by the blacks. This symbolized the equality of blacks and whites.

3. How does Mandela describe the systems of government in his country (i) in the first decade, and (ii) in the final decade, of the twentieth century?

Answer:

(i) In the first decade of the twentieth century, the white-skinned people of South Africa patched up their differences and erected a system of racial domination against the dark-skinned people of their own land, thus creating the basis of one of the harshest and most inhumane societies the world had ever known.

(ii) In the last decade of the twentieth century, the previous system had been overturned forever and replaced by one that recognized the rights and freedoms of all peoples, regardless of the colour of their skin.

4. What does courage mean to Mandela?

Answer:

For Mandela courage does not mean the absence of fear but a victory over fear. According to him brave men need not be fearless but should be able to conquer fear.

5. Which does he think is natural, to love or to hate?

Answer:

For Mandela, love comes more naturally to the human heart than hate.

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Oral Comprehension Check

1. What "twin obligations" does Mandela mention?

Answer:

Mandela mentions that every man has twin obligations. The first is to his family, parents, wife and children; the second obligation is to his people, his community and his country.

2. What did being free mean to Mandela as a boy, and as a student? How does he contrast these "transitory freedoms" with "the basic and honourable freedoms"?

Answer:

Like any other kid for Mandela also the freedom meant a freedom to make merry and enjoy the blissful life. Once anybody becomes an adult then antics of childhood looks like transitory because most of the childish activity is wasteful from an adult's perspective. Once you are adult then someday you have to earn a livelihood to bring the bacon home, then only you get an honourable existence in the family and in the society.

3. Does Mandela think the oppressor is free? Why/Why not?

Answer:

Mandela does not feel that the oppressor is free because according to him an oppressor is a prisoner of hatred, who is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. He feels that both the oppressor and the oppressed are robbed of their humanity.

