Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

Assignment (Invictus)

1. Explain the symbolic meaning of ‘night’ in the first line of the poem. Why does the poet thank God? Explain the irony.
2. Does the poet have Dunkirk’s spirit? Justify with the lines given in the poem.
3. Has the poet given up? What has happened to his head?
4. What will the ‘years’ find? How are these years described?
5. What does not matter the poet? Why?

**ANSWER KEY**

1. The word ‘night’ means darkness or the struggles that surrounds the poet. He thanks God because he is surrounded by Black or darkness as if it’s a pit and yet he believes that God has not conquered his soul. The irony is the poet thanking God in spite of the hardships and the struggles that he is facing.
2. Yes, the poet has Dunkirk’s spirit. It means to display fortitude in the face of adversity or a problem. The poet has darkness everywhere yet he is hopeful and grateful to God for not shaking up his spirits. He has fallen in the clutches of circumstances yet he has not cried or winced loud. He says his head is bloody under the bludgeonings of chance but is unbowed. He knows that beyond his future full of wrath and tears there is Horror of Shade and yet the menace of the years will find him afraid. He finally says that it doesn’t matter how narrow the gates are how much punishment the scroll has, he is the master of his fate and the captain of his soul.
3. No, the poet has not given up. His head is bloody, injured because of the bludgeonings of circumstances but he will remain unbowed.
4. The ‘years’ will find him unafraid and they are described to be menacing.
5. It does not matter to the poet how strait the gate is, how charged with punishments the scroll is. He is confident that he is the master of fate and the captain of the soul.