

At the High School



A. Lead In

As you all know, Mahatma Gandhi (born in 1869) was one of the tallest leaders of the world. He was the greatest of our independence movement. He is popularly called the Father of the Nation.

But before he became the Mahatma (Great Soul) in his later life, Gandhi received his early education at Rajkot English School in Rajkot in the state of Gujarat. Later it became a full-fledged High School and came to be known as Rajkot High School. Gandhi matriculated from this school in 1887 at the age of 18. After independence in 1947, the school was renamed the “Mohandas Gandhi High School” in honour of the Father of the Nation.

According to several accounts, Gandhi was not so brilliant as a student. He was noted to be good at English, fair in Arithmetic, weak in Geography, good in conduct and bad in handwriting. Though he did not have any high regard for his “ability”, he was astonished whenever he won prizes and scholarships.

Let's read the following text to know some more interesting facts on Gandhi's experience of high school days as he himself had described it in his autobiography named “My Experiment with Truth”. (Chapter 5).

B. The text:

Read the text silently and answer the questions that follow.

1. I was not regarded as a fool at the high school. I always enjoyed the affection of my teachers. Certificates of progress and character used to be sent to the parents every year. I never had a bad certificate. In fact,

I even won prizes after I passed out of the second standard. In the fifth and sixth I obtained scholarships of rupees four and ten respectively, an achievement for which I have to thank good luck more than my merit.

2. My own recollection is that I did not have any high regard for my ability. I used to be astonished whenever I won prizes and scholarships. But I very jealously guarded my character. The least little blemish drew tears from my eyes. When I merited, or seemed to the teacher to merit a rebuke, it was unbearable for me. I remember having once received corporal punishment. I did not so much mind the punishment as the fact that it was considered my desert. I wept piteously. That was when I was in the first or second standard. There was another such incident during the time when I was in the seventh standard. Dorabji Edulji Gimi was the headmaster then. He was popular among the boys, as he was a disciplinarian, a man of method and a good teacher. He made gymnastics and cricket compulsory for the boys of upper standard. I disliked both. I never took part in any exercise, cricket or football, before they were made compulsory. My shyness was one of the reasons for this aloofness, which I now see wrong. I had then the false notion that gymnastics had nothing to do with education. Today I know that physical training should have much place in the curriculum as mental training.

3. The reason for my dislike was my keen desire to serve as nurse to my father. As soon as the school closed, I would hurry home and begin serving him. Compulsory exercise came directly in the way of this service. I requested Mr Gimi to exempt me from gymnastics so that I might be free to serve my father. But he would not listen to me. Now it happened that one Saturday, when we had school in the morning, I had to come from home to school for gymnastics at four o' clock in the afternoon. I had no watch, and the cloud deceived me. Before I reached the

school, the boys had all left. The next day Mr Gimi examining the roll, found me marked absent. Being asked for the reason of absence, I told him what had happened. He refused to believe me and ordered me to pay a fine of one or two annas.

4. I was convicted of lying! That deeply pained me. How was I to prove my innocence? There was no way. I cried in deep anguish. I saw that a man of truth must also be a man of care. This was the first time and last instance of my carelessness in school. I had a faint recollection that I finally succeeded in getting the fine remitted. The exemption from exercise was of course obtained as my father wrote himself to the headmaster saying that he wanted me at home after school.

5. But though I was none the worse for having neglected exercise, I am still paying the penalty of another neglect. I do not know whence I got the notion that good handwriting was not a necessary part of education, but I retained it until I went to England. When later, especially in South Africa, I saw the beautiful handwriting of lawyers and young men born and educated in South Africa, I was ashamed of myself and repented of my neglect. I saw that bad handwriting should be regarded as a sign of an imperfect education. I tried later to improve mine, but it was too late. I could never repair the neglect of my youth. Let every young man and woman be warned by my example, and understand that good handwriting is a necessary part of education. I am now of the opinion that children should first be taught the art of drawing before learning to write. Let the child learn his letters by observation as he does different objects, such as flowers, birds , etc. , and let him learn handwriting only after he has learnt to draw objects. He will then write a beautifully formed hand.

6. Sanskrit, however, proved a harder task. In geometry there was nothing to memorise, whereas in Sanskrit, I thought, everything had to be learnt by heart. This subject was also commenced from the fourth stan-

dard. As soon as I entered the six, I became disheartened. The teacher was a hard taskmaster, anxious, as I thought, to force the boys. There was a sort of rivalry going on between the Sanskrit and the Persian teachers. The Persian teacher was lenient. The boys used to talk among themselves that Persian was very easy and the Persian teacher, was very good and considerate to the students. The 'easiness' tempted me and one day I sat in the Persian class. The Sanskrit teacher was grieved. He called me to his side and said: How can you forget that you are the son of a Vaishnava father? Won't you learn the language of your own religion? If you have any difficulty, why not come to me? I want to teach you students Sanskrit to the best of my ability. As you proceed further, you will find in it things of absorbing interest. You should not lose heart. Come and sit again in the Sanskrit class.

This kindness put me to shame. I could not disregard my teacher's affection. Today I cannot but thank with gratitude of Krishnashankar Pandya. For if I had not acquired the little Sanskrit that I learnt then, I
7. should have found it difficult to take any interest in our sacred books. In fact I deeply regret that I was not able to acquire a more thorough knowledge of the language.

— M.K. Gandhi

C. About the Author:

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (2 October 1869 – 30 January 1948) was India's greatest leader, who employed non-violence to lead the successful campaign for India's independence from British Rule, and in turn inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world.

'The Story of My Experiments with Truth', 'Hind Swaraj' or 'Indian Home Rule' are some of the leading books by Mahatma Gandhi.

In the present extract, Gandhi focuses on his life and learning at high school.

D. Notes and Glossary:

recollection	: what is remembered
jealously	: being afraid of losing what you have
blemish	: moral defect
corporal punishment	: punishment by beating
obtain	: to get
disciplinarian	: a person who makes others obey his orders
gymnastics	: a sport in which you perform exercises that develop physical strength and the ability to bend and stretch your body
curriculum	: course of study in a school or a college
exempt from	: to make someone free from duty, service, payment
refuse	: to state strong unwillingness to accept, to say no
convict	: to find somebody guilty
anguish	: severe mental suffering
be none the worse(idiom)	: to not to be harmed / affected by something
notion	: an impression, an idea
retain	: continue to have or possess
repair the neglect	: to make up the loss
be of the opinion	: to think
commence	: to begin or start
became disheartened	: lost courage or hope
hard taskmaster	: any person who imposes a harsh workload on someone
rivalry	: competition for the same thing
lenient	: not strict
considerate	: kind hearted person who considers others' difficulties
the best of one's ability	: as well as one can
absorbing	: deep , keen
sacred	: holy

E. Let's understand the Text:

P-1

1. What is a biography? What is an autobiography?
2. Is this lesson a biography or an autobiography?
Support your answer with reasons.
3. Was Gandhi good at studies? How will you support your answer?
4. Did his teacher like him?
5. What sorts of certificates were sent to his parents?
6. When did he win prizes ?
7. Which standards did he get scholarships in?
8. What were the amounts of his scholarships?
9. Who did he thank more for his scholarship– himself or his good luck?
10. What do you know about Gandhi as a person?

P-2

11. What was he very much careful about?
12. How did he react when blamed?
13. What was more important for Gandhi– winning prizes or building character?
14. Why did he get physical punishment?
15. Who was the headmaster?
16. Was he popular? Why?
17. What was made compulsory for upper standard boys?
18. I disliked both. What does 'both' refer to?
19. What was the reason for Gandhi's dislike for cricket and gymnastics?
20. Was the headmaster a lover of games?
21. What false idea did Gandhi have about games?
22. What were his views on games later?

P-3

23. What was the special reason for Gandhi's dislike for gymnastics?
24. Compulsory exercise came directly in the way of this service. What was the service?
25. Did the headmaster grant his request? Why?
26. Why did he get to school late?
27. Clouds deceived him. How?
28. Did the headmaster believe what he said?
29. How much was he fined?
30. What was he accused of? Was the accusation proper?
31. What pained him so much?

P-4

32. What lesson did he learn from it?
33. Was he careless in school later?
34. Did he really have to pay the fine?
35. How was the fine exempted in the end?

P-5

36. What was the other neglect Gandhi talked about?
37. What was his earlier notion on handwriting?
38. When and where did he realise that his notions were wrong? What made him think so?
39. What were his views on handwriting?
40. What was his advice to young men and women in this regard?

P-6

41. Why did Gandhi consider Sanskrit harder than geometry?
42. Which class was Sanskrit introduced in?

43. What did Gandhi say about the Sanskrit and Persian teachers?
44. Were they on good terms? Quote the sentence from your text in support of your answer.
45. What tempted him to sit in the Persian class?
46. How did the Sanskrit teacher feel about it?
47. Why did he think it necessary for Gandhi to study Sanskrit?

P-7

48. Did he come back to Sanskrit class? Why?
49. What put him to shame?
50. Who was his Sanskrit teacher?
51. How did the study of Sanskrit help him later?
52. What feelings did Gandhi have for his teachers?

F. Let's sum up:

The present text "At the High School" is built up of a main idea and supporting ideas. The text title itself is the main theme/idea. The facts/ information presented in the paragraphs form the contents/ sub-themes/ supporting ideas. Given below is a table, which shows a well-knit structure of the text. Some facts/ information are missing in it. Complete the table using the required information choosing from the HELP-BOX. Some paragraphs have more than one theme.

At the High School

Para-1	Para-2	Para-3	Para-4	Para-5	Para-6	Para-7
	punishment				subjects	

handwriting	subjects	studies	punishment
teachers	reward	games	headmaster

G. Let's listen and speak:

- (a) Read the following conversation between Gandhi and his Sanskrit teacher.

Your teacher will read out the conversation. Listen to him/her. Follow the dialogue while listening.

Your teacher will act out the character of Gandhi's Sanskrit teacher and the class, Gandhi. Next, the role changes- the class acts as the Sanskrit teacher and your teacher as Gandhi.

Next, the teacher divides the class into groups who will role-play in the like manner with change in roles. Then practise in pairs.

Finally your teacher invites two of your friends to play the roles in front of the class.

Sanskrit Tr : Hello Moniya! How are you?

Gandhi : Fine.

Sanskrit Tr : I hear you're sitting in the Persian class?

Gandhi : Yes, sir.

Sanskrit Tr : What prompted you to do so?

Gandhi : Persian is easy, sir.

Sanskrit Tr : But Sanskrit is the language of our culture. You should study the language by any means.

Gandhi : Sanskrit is very difficult for me.

Sanskrit Tr : Why do you think so?

Gandhi : Because everything has to be learnt by heart.

Sanskrit Tr : That's not the case, Manu. Come to me. I'll help you learn Sanskrit with ease.

Gandhi : Thank you for your offer, sir.

Note: "Moniya" or "Manu" were Gandhi's nicknames during his childhood.

(b) Your teacher will conduct a quiz on the lesson. She/he will organise/ administer the activity following every step as shown in a similar quiz programme under the lesson "**Festivals of Northeast India**".-"**K. Let's do this activity**".(Page-65)

H. Let's enrich our vocabulary:

Notice the underlined word in the sentence below.

When I merited or seemed to the teacher to merit a rebuke , it was unbearable for me.

The word begins with 'un' which is a prefix added to the word 'bearable'. A prefix is a letter or a group of letters added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning. 'Unbearable' means 'not bearable'. So 'un' is a negative prefix and when it is added to a word , the new word conveys opposite meaning.

(a) Show how the following words are built up of their prefixes and roots. One is done as an example: disobedient = dis + obedient

abnormal =

demerit =

disappear =

illegible =

impossible =

intransitive =

misunderstand =

unlucky =

(b) Rewrite the following sentences replacing the underlined words by single words with their opposite/negative meanings. For example,

Swarupa's achievement is not believable.

Swarupa's achievement is unbelievable.

- (i) Remote tribal areas among hills and forests are not still reachable.
- (ii) The younger generation is not interested in traditional occupations.
- (iii) The stranger did not talk in a polite manner.
- (iv) Many people are not happy with what they have.
- (v) Dull weather does not make us active.
- (vi) Human wants are not limited.
- (vii) They are not managing the organization properly.
- (viii) Her inaugural speech was not motivating.
- (ix) They did not behave their guests well.
- (x) The soul is not mortal.

I. Let,s Learn Language:

1. Examine the following sentences.

Before I reached the school, the boys had all left.

The sentence has two clauses. Both are in the Past Tense. One of them is in the Simple Past and the other is in the Past Perfect. The two events stated in the two clauses took place in the past, but at different points of time. One took place earlier than the other. The following diagram will help you understand it better.

Earlier Past	Recent Past
The boys had all left.	I reached the school.

(a) There is such another sentence in paragraph-3 of the text. Can you find it out?

Fill in each sentence below using the correct form of the verbs given in brackets. One is done for you.

- (i) All guests had arrived (arrive) before the party started (start)
- (i) We _____ (sit) for lunch after mother _____ (fry) the eggs.
- (iii) When Mahatma Gandhi _____ (pass away), India _____ (achieve) her freedom.
- (iv) The train _____ (leave) before they _____ (reach) the station.
- (v) Namrata _____ (post) the letter after she _____ (write) it.
- (vi) The patient _____ (die) before the doctor _____ (come).
- (vii) The farmer _____ (plough) the field before he _____ (sow) seeds.
- (vii) The prizes _____ (be,give) long before the cultural programmes _____ (start).

2. Look at the following sentences.

If I had not acquired the little Sanskrit... , I should have found it difficult to take any interest....

The sentence has two clauses. One is an 'If-clause/Conditional clause' and the other is 'the main clause'.

The structure/form of the two clauses are shown below :

If + S + had not + V-en + ..., S + should + have + V-en

We use such type of conditional sentences to talk about 'impossible, unreal or imaginary events in the past'.

The real meaning of two parts in the sentence is 'I acquired the little Sanskrit.....'and 'I didn't find any difficulty.....'

This condition is called unreal condition.

(a) Read the following situations and write an 'If-sentence' for each.

Note that an affirmative sentence is turned into a negative sentence and a negative sentence , into an affirmative sentence. Also you can use any one of the modals – would, should, could or might - in the main clause.

One is done for you.

(i) They did not start early. They missed their train.

If they had started early, they would not have missed their train.

(ii) He did not fall into the river. He was not drowned.

(iii) The sun was in the right direction.

The photographs came out very well.

(iv) I saw you. I invited you to my party.

(v) Lilima won a lottery. She bought a good house.

(vi) The mangoes were not ripe.

They did not sell at a good price.

(vii) Subhra did not spend much.

She had a lot of bank balance.

(viii) The farmer worked hard. He reaped a rich harvest.

(b) Put the verbs in brackets into their correct forms.

(i) If our boys had played well, our team (win) the match easily.

- (ii) If Manisha (not get) the scholarship, she might have missed the chance of her studies abroad.
- (iii) India would not have achieved her freedom if the Indians (not fight) for it.
- (iv) Crops would have been better if it (rain) well.
- (v) The government (not be) very unpopular if they had not raised taxes.
- (vi) If you (take) my advice, you would not have got into troubles.
- (vii) The glass (not break) if she had not dropped it.

3. Fill in the blanks with correct prepositions choosing from the box.

(among, from, in, of, to, with)

- (i) She was deeply ashamed _____ her behavior at the party.
- (ii) People are _____ the opinion that price controls are losing ground.
- (iii) The festival kicked off _____ traditional music and folk dances.
- (iv) Sweets were distributed _____ children.
- (v) Charities are exempted _____ paying tax.
- (vi) Children hardly refuse _____ obey.
- (vii) India succeeded _____ winning the World Cup Cricket that year.
- (viii) The officer was convicted _____ bank fraud.

J. Let's write:

1. Write answers to all questions under "E. Let's understand the Text".
2. Write a paragraph in about 5 to 8 sentences on each of the topics given below :
 - (a) Gandhi as student
 - (b) Gandhi's Headmaster
 - (c) Gandhi's Sanskrit and Persian teachers
 - (d) Gandhi's attitude towards sports and handwriting
3. Write a letter in about 100 words to your Penpal telling him/her about Gandhi as a person.

□ □ □