

8. At School



What do you like best about your school? Tell your classmates about it.

I must have been about seven when my father left Porbandar for Rajkot to become a member of the Rajasthanik Court. There I was put to a primary school, and I can well recollect those days, including the names and other particulars of the teachers who taught me. As at Porbandar, so here, there is hardly anything to note about my studies. I could only have been a mediocre student. From this school, I went to the suburban school and then to the High School, having already reached my twelfth year. I do not remember having ever told a lie during this short period, either to my teachers or to my school-mates. I used to be very shy and avoided all company. My books and my lessons were my sole companions. To be at school at the stroke of the hour and to run back home as soon as the school closed—that was my daily habit. I literally ran back, because I could not bear to talk to anybody. I was even afraid lest anyone should poke fun at me.

" Gandhiji was always the topper in his school ." Do you agree? Give reasons.

Two incidents belonging to this period have always clung to my memory. As a rule I had a distaste for any reading beyond my school books. The daily lessons had to be done, because I disliked being taken to task by my teacher as much as I disliked deceiving him. Therefore I would do the lessons, but often without my mind on them. Thus when even the lessons could not be done properly, there was of course no question of any extra reading. But somehow my eyes fell on a book purchased by my father. It was *Shravana Pitribhakti Nataka* (a play about Shrivana's devotion to his parents). I read it with intense interest. There came to our place, about the same time,

travelling showmen. One of the pictures I was shown was of Shravana carrying his blind parents on a pilgrimage. The book and the picture left an indelible impression on my mind. 'Here is an example for you to copy,' I said to myself. The agonized lament of the parents over Shravana's death is still fresh in my memory. The melting tune moved me deeply and I played it on a concertina, which my father had bought for me.

There was a similar incident connected with another play. Just about this time, I had secured my father's permission to see a play performed by a certain dramatic company. This play—*Harischandra*—captured my heart. I could never be tired of seeing it. But how often should I be permitted to go? It haunted me and I must have acted *Harischandra* to myself several times. 'Why should not all be truthful like Harischandra?' was the question I asked myself day and night. To follow truth and to go through all the ordeals Harischandra went through was the one ideal which inspired in me. I literally believed in the story of Harischandra. The thought of it all too often made me weep. My common sense tells me today that Harischandra could not have been a historical character. But for me, both Harischandra and Shravana are living realities and I am sure I should be touched as before if I were to read again those plays today.

Name the two plays mentioned in this lesson.

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, though he was a disciplinarian. He was a man of method and a good teacher. He had made gymnastics and cricket compulsory for the boys of the upper standards. 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 was wrong. I then had the false notion that gymnastics had nothing to do with education. Today I know that physical training should have as much place in the curriculum as mental training.

Why is sports important for everyone?

But though I was none the worse for having neglected exercise, I am still paying the penalty of another neglect. I do not know from where I got the notion that good handwriting was not a necessary part of education, but I retained it until I went to England. I then saw that bad handwriting should be regarded as a sign of an imperfect education. Let every young man and woman understand that good handwriting is a necessary part of education.

Word Meanings

mind	the part of a person that makes them able to think
recollect	to remember
mediocre	average, not very good
suburban	an area where people live which is outside the city
sole	single
literally	(here) actually
poke fun at	make fun of
memory	ability to remember
distaste	dislike
taken to task	scolded
deceive	to cheat
pilgrimage	a journey to a holy place for religious reasons
indelible	unremovable
impression	an idea, feeling, an opinion about something
agonised lament	a strong expression of grief and sorrow
concertina	an instrument on which music can be played
haunt	keeps coming to your mind so that you cannot forget it
ordeal	severe test of character
gymnastics	a sport in which flexibility of the body is tested
aloofness	keep oneself away
piteous	desiring or causing pity
clung	stuck to
false notion	wrong idea
physical training	sports exercise that is taught in school
disciplinarian	person who believes in strict training of mind and body
benefit	advantage
curriculum	framework on which lessons are based

Reading Comprehension

Answer the following questions:

1. Gandhiji's sole companions at high school were his books and lessons. Why ?
2. What made Gandhiji do his lessons though his mind was not on them ?
3. How did the book and pictures of Shrivana affect Gandhiji ?
4. Which ideal did the play Harischandra inspire in him ?
5. Why did Gandhiji weep piteously ?
6. What was the wrong notion that he had ?
7. What is the importance of good handwriting?

Vocabulary

- A. Think of the name- 'Mahatma Gandhi'. As you read his name, some other words come to your mind. List some of those words:

Example: Non-violence

- B. Look at the word Recollection in column 'D' the word is made up of prefix 're' root word 'collect' and suffix 'ion'. Put prefix in column A, root word in column B, Suffix in column C and the word in the last column D. Use any of the two columns or all three columns. Column B is compulsory.



A
Prefix

B
root-word

C
suffix

D
word

Eg.

Re

Collect

ion
Recollection

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

- C. Consult a dictionary and frame sentences using the following words:

Suburban, mediocre, pilgrimage, rebuke, indelible, false notion.

**Grammar**

- A. Look at the sentences:

- Gandhiji used to be shy and avoided all company in his childhood.
It means that he was shy in his childhood.
- It used to be a hospital before 2000, Now the building is used as the “secretariat.”
This means that before 2000, the place was a hospital. Now the bulding is used as the “secretariat” office instead.

Now think of some things which you used to do in your childhood that you don't do now. Write sentences with "used to".

- B. Fill in the blanks using the clues:

- Govinda _____ late to class. (come)
- Last year, we _____ cricket every Saturday. but now we have classes on Saturdays. (play)

3. In the past years, people _____ to theatres for watching movies. Now they view movies through CDs. (go)
4. When I was a child, I never _____ tea or coffee, but now I like both. (drink)
5. He _____ music when he was young. (learn)

C. Look at the sentences:

1. Gandhiji enjoyed the affection of his teachers.
2. He wept piteously.
3. He never took part in any physical activity.

Now frame questions for each sentence.

Example: What did Gandhiji enjoy ?

Here are some sentences. Frame questions, select the words from the list given below. One is done for you:

(What, Where, When, Why, How,)

- 1) I left home at 8 pm.
When did you leave home ?
- 2) I arrived at Bastar at 9 am.
Where _____
- 3) The match began at 11 am.
- 4) The class for the day ended at 5.30 pm.
- 5) We bought a gift for my friend's birthday at 6 pm.
- 6) We went to the market by taxi.
- 7) The taxi-man charged Rs 1000/- for finding a hotel.

Writing

A write-up is a written account giving an opinion of an event, performance or product.

Read the given write-up based on the lesson 'At School'

Gandhiji was a very shy child. His books and his lessons were his sole companions. He read a book named "Shravana Pitribhakti Nataka" and was highly influenced by the book. So, in my opinion, children should be given good books to read because they help to develop good habits and positive thoughts in children.

A. Read the extract given below.**School Life**

'How many days is it since you have touched your book?' father asked as he blew off the fine layer of dust on Swaminathan's books, and cleared the web that an industrious spider was weaving between a corner of the table and the pile of books.

Swaminathan viewed this question as a gross breach of promise. 'Should I read even when I have no school ?'

'Do you think you have passed B.A.?' Father asked.

'I mean, father, when the school is closed, when there is no exam, even then should I read?'

'What a question ! you must read.'

'But father, you said before the examinations that I needn't read after they were over. Even Rajam does not read'.

Now, prepare a write-up on the above extract. Remember to include the main thoughts given in the extract and your opinion on the extract.

Activity**A. Listen to the passage carefully and complete the table:**

See Appendix-1 Lesson-8

Subhash Chandra Bose

Birth	Place	.....
	Year	.....
Educated in universities		.....
.....	1920	
Arrested by the British		.....
.....	1938	
.....	1940	
Advanced from Rangoon to		.....
India with Japanese support but		.....
was defeated.		.....
Believed to be killed in a		.....
plane crash		.....
Popularly known		.....

- B.** Narrate to your classmates any interesting incident / event from your school life. You could use words/phrases like ‘then’, ‘after that’, ‘suddenly’, ‘so’, ‘hence’, ‘finally’, in the end. This will help the listener to understand the narration better.

Project

Frame some phrases with the help of the given words. An example is given:

Examples: Clear Stream
 ----- Sky
 ----- Voice

bright	_____

beautiful	_____

huge	_____

little	_____

Use the following proverb in your sentence. Meaning is given.

Proverb

An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

Meaning

Eating an apple / any fruit every day will keep you in good health.

