


# Puspa Shrestha

Best Quality Resource Site for Class 11 And 12 Students  
(Based on Updated Curriculum 2077)

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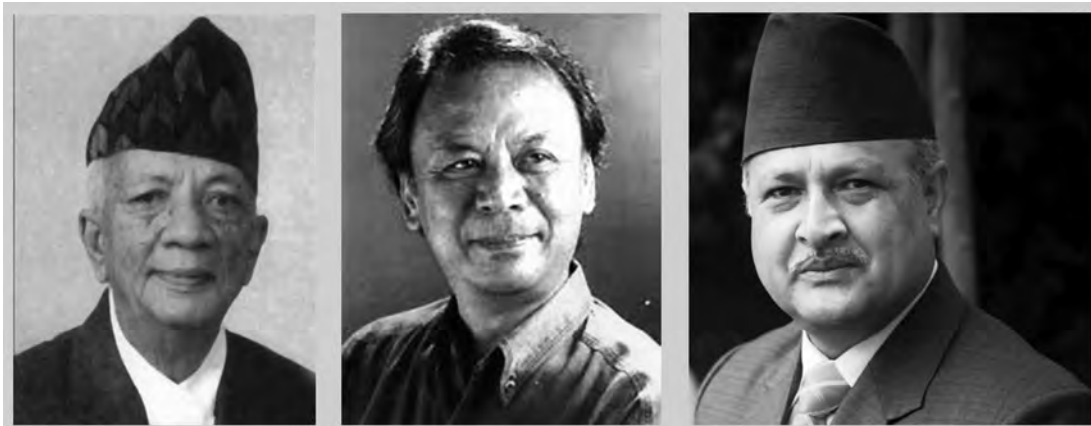
Puspa Shrestha

## Reading

## A Life of Sound and Silence

***Before you read***

- a. Who are these people? Name them.
- b. Who are your favourite musicians? Why?



**Read a short biography of a legendary music composer Ludwig van Beethoven and do the given tasks.**

Over twenty-three million Americans suffer from deafness, and over seven million from tinnitus, a continual ringing or buzzing in the ears that is not objectively measurable. Man is a social being, and deafness is an isolating disease. The socially disabling nature of deafness was aptly summarized by Helen Keller, who noted that, whereas blindness separates people from things, deafness separates people from people. Despite the social cost, however, hearing problems often lack the public recognition that blindness receives.

One major creative figure whose life was profoundly affected by hearing problems was the composer Ludwig van Beethoven. As with Milton's blindness, van Gogh's ear, and Toulouse-Lautrec's absinthism, the one thing everyone knows about Beethoven is his deafness. Beethoven did not become suddenly deaf, however. His deafness was a slow process, occupying over twenty years from the first hearing problems to total deafness.

Ludwig van Beethoven was born into a musical family in Bonn, Germany, in December 1770. With the example of the young Mozart in mind, Beethoven's father relentlessly drove his son as a musical performer. As a child, Beethoven learned to play the organ,

piano, violin, and viola. He gave his first public concert at the age of seven. At twelve years, he published his first composition.

Beethoven moved to Vienna in 1792 to take lessons from Joseph Haydn, and within a few years was renowned both as a composer and as a performer. Beethoven claimed he had had exceptionally keen



hearing in early life. A loss of ability to hear high-pitched sounds, an indication of nerve deafness, first became apparent at the age of twenty-seven. By this age, he had written his First Symphony, the first two piano concertos, the piano trios of Opus 1 and Opus 11, the piano sonatas of Opus 13, the cello sonatas of Opus 5, and most of the work on the string quartets of Opus 18. He did not admit to his deafness for another three years. On June 29, 1801, he writes to Dr. Franz Wegeler in Bonn, “My hearing has grown steadily worse for three years...I was often in despair. To give you some idea of my extraordinary deafness, I must tell you that in the theater I am obliged to lean up close against the orchestra in order to understand the actors, and when a little way off I hear none of the high notes...Frequently, I can hear the sounds of a low conversation, but cannot make out the words.” Poor discrimination is classic for nerve deafness: Beethoven can hear, but not understand.

In the same letter, Beethoven refers to another phenomenon: “As soon as anybody shouts, I can’t bear it. Heaven alone knows what is to become of me.” His response indicates that he is suffering from hyperacusis, or a painful sensitivity to sounds. In deafness, the lower threshold for hearing is raised; sounds must be louder to be perceived comfortably. But the upper threshold for comfortable hearing for a person with hyperacusis may be lowered. Normal sounds ranging from beepers to coughs can be painful. For such a person, the sound intensity range in which hearing is clear and comfortable is compressed both at the upper end and at the lower.

Beethoven tells Wegeler that led a miserable life and for two years has avoided social functions because he finds it impossible to tell people that he is deaf. After all, he is a composer! Beethoven remarked on the general impercipient regarding hearing problems: “It is surprising that some people have never noticed my deafness.” A recent biographer writes that Beethoven’s deafness led to fear, lack of self-esteem, emotional disarray, increasing isolation, and self-neglect.

Two days later, he writes to another friend, Carl Amenda, in Latvia, “My most prized possession, my hearing, has greatly deteriorated. When you were still with me, I

already felt the symptoms but kept silent.” Thus, like many deaf people, he tried to hide the problem. Hearing loss began in the left ear, and spread to the right.

Deafness and hyperacusis were not his only problems. Beethoven also had tinnitus, complaining in 1801, “My ears whistle and buzz continually, day and night...such a condition is truly frightful.” In 1802, he moved from the noise of Vienna to the village of Heiligenstadt to help his hearing. There, he wrote the Second Symphony. At the end of six months, however, it was clear that his last hope of an improvement was illusory. He then writes a testament in Heiligenstadt stating that his condition had driven him to despair and suicidal thoughts. Only morality and music kept him from killing himself. He complained that his hearing condition was hopeless, and although naturally sociable, that he had to withdraw from society. “How could I possibly admit to an infirmity in that one sense which ought to be more perfect in me than in others, a sense which I once possessed in the highest perfection, a perfection such as few in my profession have or ever have had.... (The humiliation) drove me to despair...I would have ended my life. It was only my art that held me back.”

These early years of high anxiety for Beethoven were extremely productive musically. In 1800, he completed, among other works, the six string quartets of Opus 18, the First Symphony, and the Third Piano Concerto. In 1801, he wrote The Creatures of Prometheus, a string quintet, two violin sonatas, and four piano sonatas. This productivity has led biographers to suggest that his hearing crisis was necessary for his creativity, allowing him to listen to inner sounds without distraction. One biographer surmises that “deafness may have heightened his abilities as a composer...by permitting a total concentration within a world of increasing auditory seclusion”. He continues, “One begins to suspect that Beethoven’s crisis and his extraordinary creativity were somehow related, and even that the former may have been the necessary precondition of the latter.” Another writes, “His deafness caused no tragic turn...it was, indeed, a definite aid that held him back from his worldly desires and kept his eye on his mission”.

Such suggestions are impercipient: hearing loss, and the associated tinnitus and hyperacusis, are handicaps, pure and simple. Beethoven’s own words attest to the affliction with which he had to struggle. It is true, however, that Beethoven noted an alleviation of his affliction while he was composing, which may reflect a minimized consciousness of tinnitus during intense mental activity. One musical consequence of his deafness was a change in emphasis from performing and conducting to composing, to the cultural enrichment of subsequent generations. In his mid-forties, following some embarrassing faux pas, Beethoven gave up attempting piano playing and conducting in public. For the last period of his life, his creative energies were expended solely in composing. However, it is doubtful that any deaf person could ever consider deafness “a blessing in disguise,” as Newman claims for Beethoven.

Following his letters of 1801, Beethoven says little about his hearing for a number of

years. In 1804, he had problems hearing the wind instruments during a rehearsal for the *Eroica*. In the same year, another friend, Stephan von Breuning, commented that Beethoven “has become withdrawn and often mistrusts his best friends.” Misanthropy and suspiciousness, like isolation, are not uncommon accompaniments of deafness, perhaps exacerbated by the tendency to think oneself the subject of conversation, or even that noise, such as the wind, is speech below the threshold for understanding. It is natural for the brain to make patterns out of randomness in the world around us.

On sketches for the Razumovsky Quartets (1806), Beethoven notes, “Let your deafness be no longer a secret— even in art.” Such a comment is an indication that he is accepting his condition and its permanence—again, a not uncommon accommodation of the hearing impaired after several years of problems.

In May 1809, during Napoleon’s siege and occupation of Vienna, there was fighting on the outskirts of the city. Beethoven hid in the cellar of his brother’s house during the bombardment and covered his head with pillows, another suggestion of hyperacusis. He comments in 1810 that a demon has “taken up his settled abode in [his] ears,” and makes another reference to suicide: “If I had not read somewhere that a man should not voluntarily quit this life so long as he could still perform a good deed, I would have left this earth long ago—and what is more, by my own hand. This life is indeed beautiful, but for me it is poisoned forever.”

By 1814, he was using an ear trumpet. A selection of these was made for him by Johann Nepomuk Mälzel, the inventor of the metronome. Beethoven found the trumpets of limited use, although he always carried a small one with him, as an ear trumpet magnifies all frequencies indiscriminately. In the same year, Beethoven’s diary records another reference to suicide.

January 1815 marks Beethoven’s last public piano performance. In 1816, he writes, “Live only for your art, for you are so limited by your senses.” By 1817, he could not hear music. He started to use conversation books, in which visitors would communicate with him by writing. By age 50 (1821), he was totally deaf in terms of social functioning and speech comprehension, although he could detect low-frequency sounds in his left ear. He finally accepted that nothing could help him, and never again sought help for his deafness. In his years of total deafness, he finished the *Missa Solemnis*, and he wrote the Ninth Symphony as well as his final six string quartets and piano sonatas. Beethoven died on March 26, 1827, at age fifty-six of liver (portal) cirrhosis or hepatitis.

The cause of Beethoven’s deafness is essentially unknown, as is the case with many instances of deafness today. Lack of knowledge has not prevented the growth of an extensive literature in which various causes of Beethoven’s condition have been advanced with varying degrees of certitude. Putative diagnoses have ranged from syphilis, otosclerosis, neuronal atrophy, proliferative meningitis, labyrinthitis, chronic adhesive middle ear catarrh, Paget’s disease of bone, otitis media, neuritis acoustica, and hyperparathyroidism. On autopsy, his Eustachian tube was narrowed and the

auditory nerves were atrophied. The latter finding confirms that he had nerve deafness, but does not indicate what caused it. Although the arteries to the ear were narrowed, vascular insufficiency would have produced middle ear deafness rather than nerve deafness (high tone loss).

- Ryan J. Huxtable

**Working with words**

**A. Find the single words for the following definitions. The words are given in the jumbled letters at the end.**

- a. A person who hates or distrusts mankind ..... imaseponrth
- b. A sensation of noise, such as a ringing or roaring ..... stiniunt
- c. An examination of a body after death to determine the cause of death..... osyaput
- d. A musical composition or movement for five instruments or voices..... itqneut
- e. A severe life-threatening illness caused by a bacterium. .... simetining
- f. An object that directs one's attention away from something else.... nodsitstarc
- g. The action or process of becoming impaired or inferior in quality, functioning, or condition..... nedotietraroi
- h. Failing to perceive something..... ntpimepcirepe
- i. A hearing disorder that makes it hard to deal with everyday sounds..... sihpyraesuc
- j. A bacterial infection usually spread by sexual contact..... pysslihi

**B. Put the musical instruments into different categories as below.**

drum	violin	trumpet	harmonica	viola
clarinet	cymbal	conch	tabla	bell
trombone	cello	tambourine	double bass,	harp

wind instruments	stringed instruments	percussion instruments

**C. Use a dictionary and find the definition of these genres of music.**

rock music, pop music, hip hop, jazz, folk music, classic music, blues, heavy metal, Gospel music, country music, grunge, breakbeat, reggae, disco and dubstep

**D. Word stress is an extra force given to one of the syllables of a word. Pronounce the following words with proper stress.**

'coffee, ho'tel, 'English, can'teen, 'holiday, to'morrow, voca'bulary, 'photograph, ge'ography, 'beautiful, bi'ology, responsi'bility, individu'ality, de'mocracy

### **Comprehension**

**A. Put the following events in the life of Beethoven in chronological order.**

- a. He migrated to Vienna.
- b. He even made suicidal attempts.
- c. Beethoven was born into a musical family in Bonn, Germany.
- d. His deafness got gradually worse: He could hear but not understand.
- e. He learned to play the organ, piano, violin, and viola.
- f. He died of hepatitis at the age of fifty-six.
- g. He lived a life in seclusion.
- h. At the age of twenty-seven, he felt the deafness to high-pitched sound.

**B. State whether the following statements are *True* or *False*.**

- b. Beethoven became blind in a gradual process over two decades.
- c. He became a celebrity musician in his teenage.
- d. He did not disclose his hearing problem for a long time.
- e. He knew that he misunderstood the speakers and gave up his public performances.
- f. He tried to get his deafness treated until his death.
- g. Beethoven died in his early fifties.
- h. Doctors found the cause of his deafness after his death.

**C. Answer the following questions.**

- a. What does Hellen Keller think about deafness and blindness?
- b. Why does the author compare Beethoven with Milton, Van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec?
- d. When and how did Beethoven notice him being deaf?
- e. What psychological effects did he have when he noticed that he was being deaf?
- f. How did he triumph over his suicidal thoughts?



- g. How did he accept his deafness?
- h. How was his deafness ironically good for the world?
- i. When did Beethoven give up his musical performances forever?
- j. What did Stephen von Breeuning comment on Beethoven's reactions?
- k. How did Beethoven express the conflict in his mind?

### **Critical thinking**

- a. Suicidal thoughts came in Beethoven's mind several times but he did not commit suicide and kept on composing music. Write a monologue in about 150 words from Beethoven's perspectives describing his suicidal thoughts and his will to live.
- b. Was it divine inspiration or rigorous practice that made Beethoven one of the world's greatest musicians? Give the reasons.

### **Writing**

Who is your favourite Nepali musician? Write his/her biography in about 300 words.

### **Grammar**

#### **Prepositions**

#### **A. Study the following sentences and underline the prepositions.**

- a. Over seventy-three million Americans suffer from deafness.
- b. He did not admit to his deafness for another three years.
- c. The hearing crisis allowed him to listen to inner sounds without distraction.

#### **B. Fill in the blanks with appropriate prepositions.**

- a. I was accompanied to the hospital .....my friend.
- b. I have great respect .....my teachers.
- c. The culprit was sentenced.....death.
- d. His arguments are not based.....truth.
- e. He has not contributed .....the development of our nation.
- f. He died .....of Corona at the age of thirty-five.
- g. The young generation of Nepali people don't take interest .....politics.
- h. Our village was not infected .....Corona.
- i. Why do you sneer .....me?

#### **C. Fill in the blanks with *for, since, until, by* or *in*.**

- a. The classes will be over .....5 PM.
- b. Karma Sherpa reached the top of Mt. Everest.....8 hours.
- c. We had met after five years. So we kept on talking.....three in the



morning.

- d. She has been living in America.....she got married.
- e. He has been playing video game.....ten hours.
- f. She practices the Sitar every day.....five hours.
- g. He lived in Jumla.....he passed high school examinations.
- h. There is no chance of dry weather even today. It has rained ..... last Saturday.
- i. I can type 120 words.....a minute.
- j. We take an early breakfast. It's generally ready ..... six in the morning.

## Listening

### A. Look at the pictures and answer the questions.

- a. What is the name of the singer shown in the pictures?
- b. Write two strange things about his life.



### B. Complete the sentences with the words/phrases from the recording.

- a. Michael Jackson is known as the.....
- b. He was born in the year.....
- c. He was .....the child of the family.
- d. By profession his father was.....
- e. Michael's first album was sold by .....copies.
- f. He became the most popular singer in the decade of .....
- g. He loved to spend his time with.....
- h. He had.....children from his second wife.

### C. Listen to the audio again and answer the questions.

- a. Where was Michael Jackson born?
- b. How was his childhood life?

- c. What was Michael's first group of singers called?
- d. How did Michael Jackson perform on the stage?
- e. What is peculiar about his life?
- f. What was Michael's motive behind marrying Lisa Marie Presley?
- g. How long did his first marriage last?
- h. Which of his actions in Germany was criticized by the public?

**D. Which is your favourite Nepali/English songs? Perform it in the class.**

## Speaking

### Predicting

**A. Work in a group. Take turns and act out the following dialogue.**

**First Reporter** : Hello, Will Smith.

**Smith** : Hello, Reporter!  
How are you?

**First Reporter** : I am good, Sir.  
What about you?

**Smith** : Ah, I am fine.

**Second Reporter** : So, when are we  
going to see your  
next picture, sir?

**Smith** : Soon. I have signed two movies simultaneously. They  
might be released one after another.

**Third Reporter** : Can you tell us the releasing dates?

**Smith** : They will probably appear in coming June and July  
respectively.

**First Reporter** : Your fans have been eagerly waiting for your movies.

**Smith** : Thank you very much. I would also like to thank all my  
fans for their support.

**Second Reporter** : Kindly tell us something about your upcoming movies?

**Smith** : The first is an action plus romantic movie and the second  
is a drama.

**Second Reporter** : Wow, that's interesting.

**Smith** : Hahaha. Let's wait for the details.

**Third Reporter** : And who is the lead actress in your first movie? We



would also like to know about her.

**Smith** : Definitely, Anne Hathaway is the lead actress. She is playing the role of a minister's daughter.

**Three Reporters** : That's great! We are really excited to see your movie. Good Luck.

**Smith** : Thank you.

**Three Reporters** : Bye, Mr. Smith.

**Smith** : Bye.

**B. Work in a group of three. Have a similar conversation between a popular singer and the reporters. Ask him/ her about his/her upcoming song.**

**C. Look at the following pictures and talk about them using *may, might, could, likely, probably, etc.***



## Project work

Work in a group of three to research about one of your favourite singers. In the group, prepare a 5-10 minute oral presentation about his/her life and music. You may use magazines, the internet, and books to find information. You must use a minimum of three sources for your presentation. Based on the information collected for the oral presentation, develop his/her biography.