

Puspa Shrestha

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

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Reading

A Story of My Childhood

Before you read

- “Childhood is a chance for kids to discover who they are before the world tells them who they should be.” Do you agree or not?
- Share one of your interesting childhood memories.



Read the following childhood memory of Indian scientist, A. P. J. Abdul Kalam and do the given tasks.

‘Vanakkam, Aiya! I have some good news for you!’ It was my Mathematics teacher from class four and he was standing just outside the house and calling out to my father. He looked quite excited, so we all rushed out to greet him and invite him inside. My father offered him a seat and then looked on expectantly.

‘Abdul, come up here, to me,’ my teacher beckoned to me. I was standing with all the other children, peeping from behind my elder brother. I came up shyly to him. He pulled me close affectionately, then turned to my father and said, ‘Abdul has scored full marks in Mathematics in the exam! And not only in Mathematics but in Science as well, and he has done very well in English and Tamil too! We teachers are very proud of him.’



I was so pleased to hear this result. But I was even more pleased because my teacher had taken the trouble to come all the way to my house to tell us about this. He had finished his work at the school, and then instead of hurrying back home he had come here, to share his pride and happiness with my family. Our school was small, but it had many such teachers like him. They taught us with love and care and felt the same joy

in our achievements as we did.

That evening, my mother made special poli (a flat chapatti-shaped sweet) to celebrate. We all loved polis and ate many helpings till we were told we'd had enough and sent off to bed in case we got tummy aches! My love for this sweet endures to this day, and when I travel in south India, I have friends who make it at home and bring it to me wherever I am. I make sure to steal a few minutes from my schedule and enjoy this sweet dish that carries so many memories of childhood for me.

As a child, my day started very early. It began with my mother gently shaking me awake very early in the morning, before sunrise. 'Abdul, wake up kanna,' she would call affectionately and I got up, wiping the sleep from my eyes. I had two places to go to before school. One was the Arabic tuition class that all of us attended. There, we learnt to read the Koran. After it was over, I went to my Mathematics teacher's house. He took a special class for students who showed promise in the subject. I have always loved learning about numbers and their rules and patterns. I had learnt addition and subtraction, and multiplication, and all the other basic functions very quickly. Now I was raring to know about more complex problems. My teacher had started the class for students just like me and I enjoyed going there and grappling with number problems in the early hours of the day.

I ran back home once the class was over. My mother would have a hot meal ready. We all ate our fill. In our school, children did not carry tiffin boxes and water bottles so I ate the mid-morning meal hungrily, enjoying the rice and vegetables and chutney and dal. Some days she would make piping hot dosas and I still remember their thick crispy texture and the spicy powder smeared on them.

The children all walked to school together. Our school was the Rameswaram Elementary School and the only one in the town then. We walked along the cobbled roads together, chatting and playing little games. We had to carry only a few books with us and no one took schoolbags. The school building had rows of classrooms and a small playground. In the class I sat with RamanadhaSastry, my best friend. We had known each other from the first day we came to school and had been friends ever since. He and I loved to chat and somehow we never ran out of things to say to each other and do together.

One day, we decided that we would build boats made of leaves and keep them ready in case it rained. Whenever we got a break between classes we took up our pile of leaves and made little boats out of them. Imagine our joy when it actually rained that day!



Our whole fleet of boats set sail on the puddles. If I saw an ant or some other insect I carefully made sure it got a ride on my boat to safety. I don't know if the ants were any grateful for this unexpected joyride, but we were thrilled to see them clinging on to the flimsy leaf boats and sail away.

Ramanadhan and I sat next to each other in class. Once it so happened that a new teacher joined our school. As soon as he entered the class, he saw from our attire that Ramanadhan was a Brahmin and that I was a Muslim. These were divisions we had never thought of earlier but the teacher was not happy that a Hindu and a Muslim boy were sitting together. He made me get up and go sit elsewhere. I was shocked and heartbroken. I remember crying because I had been made to give up my seat next to my best friend. And, who knew that a Muslim and a Hindu boy could not sit together? That evening, Ramanadhan's father, who was also head priest at the Rameswaram Shiva temple, heard about this and told my father about it. Together, they spoke to the teacher and told him that he should not have brought the divisions of religion into the classroom. Children should grow up together, studying and playing, without their faiths coming in between. The teacher understood this and Ramanadhan and I went back to sitting together as usual.

However, our time together was not indefinite. Soon we had to go our separate ways. The school in Rameswaram had classes only till the secondary level and to study further one had to go to the bigger towns nearby. I had another teacher called Sivasubramania Iyer. He, too, was very fond of me and like Jalaluddin, kept encouraging me to think about higher studies.

Sivasubramania Iyer taught me when I was ten years old and in the fifth standard. He was a great teacher and all of us loved to attend his class and listen to him. One day, he was teaching how birds fly. He drew a diagram of a bird on the blackboard depicting the wings, tail and the body structure. He explained how birds create the lift and fly. He also explained to us how they change direction while flying. For nearly twenty-five minutes, he gave the lecture with various information such as lift, drag and how birds fly in formations of ten, twenty or thirty. At the end of the class, he wanted to know whether we had understood what he had been teaching. I spoke up and said I had not understood. When I said this, he asked the other students whether they had understood or not. Many students then said that they too had not understood. Our response did not upset him at all.

When we were scheduled to have our next class with him, he had a wonderful surprise. He said that he would take us to the seashore that evening! The whole class went to the seashore of Rameswaram. We enjoyed looking out at the roaring waves. In the sky, there were many birds flying around. He pointed out the birds that were flying in formations of ten or twenty numbers and we observed the marvelous flight formations they made. He asked us to watch how they looked when they were in flight and how they flapped their wings. He then told us to look at the tail and see how they used the

combination of flapping wings and twisting tail in their flying. We noticed closely and found that the birds were able to fly in the direction they wanted to by using both tail and wings.

Then he asked us, ‘Where is the engine in this bird? Do you know what engine powers each bird?’ He explained that each bird is powered by its own life force and the motivation of what it wants. In the space of fifteen minutes, he explained the concept of flight dynamics in birds and we understood everything. He gave us a theoretical lesson coupled with a live practical example available in nature. This was real teaching.

That evening, I did not merely understand how a bird flies. It went much deeper. I felt as though the bird’s flight entered into me and created a special feeling. From that evening, I was sure that my future study had to be with reference to flight and flight systems. My teacher’s teaching and the event that I witnessed decided my career path.

One evening after the classes, I asked him, ‘Sir, please tell me, how can I progress further in learning all about flight?’ He patiently explained to me that I should complete my eighth standard here, and then go to high school. After that, I should go to engineering college where I would be able to learn about flight. If I completed each step, I would be able to do something connected with flight sciences. This advice and the lesson that evening by the seashore, gave me a goal and a mission for my life.

- A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (*Excerpt from My Life: an Illustrated Autobiography*)

Working with words

A. Match the words in column ‘A’ with their meanings in column ‘B’.

Column 'A'

- a. expectantly
- b. beckon
- c. grapple
- d. texture
- e. cobbled
- f. flimsy
- g. attire
- h. marvelous
- i. dynamics

Column 'B'

- i. clothes, especially fine or formal ones
- ii. the way food or drink tastes or feels in your mouth
- iii. the science of the forces involved in movement
- iv. thin and easily torn
- v. to try hard to find a solution to a problem
- vi. in a way that shows you are hoping for something, especially something good or exciting
- vii. having a surface that is made of small round stones
- viii. to give signal to somebody to move nearer or to follow you
- ix. extremely good; wonderful

B. An autobiography is a story of a person's life, written by himself/herself. Use a dictionary and find the meanings of the following words related to people's life stories.

hagiography psychobiography pathography chronicle
obituary character sketch profile memoir

C. An intonation refers to the way the voice rises and falls when speaking. They can be rising, falling, rising-falling or falling-rising. Listen to your teacher reading the following sentences and find out their intonation patterns.

- a. I have some good news for you!
- b. I was so pleased to hear this result.
- c. My mother would have a hot meal ready.
- d. The whole class went to the seashore of Rameswaram.
- e. Who knew that a Muslim and a Hindu boy could not sit together?
- f. He also explained to us how they change direction while flying.
- g. He asked the other students whether they had understood or not.
- h. Where is the engine in this bird?
- i. How can I progress further in learning all about flight?
- j. Should I go to engineering college where I would be able to learn about flight.

Comprehension

A. Put the following events in the life of Abdul Kalam in a chronological order.

- a. They celebrated happiness with poli.
- b. Abdul Kalam was determined that he would make a future study about flight and flight systems.
- c. Abdul Kalam attended an elementary school at Rameswaram.
- d. He then took the students to the seashore for a practical class.
- e. Many students did not understand well of Sivasubramania Iyer's lecture.
- f. One day Abdul Kalam's teacher visited them to share his pride and pleasure about his performance.
- g. A new teacher in the school forbade Abdul Kalam to sit together with his Bramhin friend.

B. Answer the following questions.

- a. What were the causes of Abdul Kalam's happiness?
- b. Which two places did Abdul Kalam visit before going to school?
- c. What did he like about mathematics?

- d. Why was the new teacher unhappy?
- e. Why did Abdul Kalam have to split with his intimate friend?
- f. What was the topic of Sivasubramania Iyer's class?
- g. How was the teacher's reaction when the students told him that they did not understand his lecture?
- h. Why did Sivasubramania Iyer take his students to the seashore?

Critical thinking

- a. APJ Abdul Kalam became a renowned aerospace scientist in his later life. Do you find any association of his childhood days in shaping his career? Explain with specific instances from the text.
- b. Kalam mentions an instance of discrimination against him in his school life. What picture of society does he want to depict by mentioning the incident? Discuss.

Writing

Write a short autobiography featuring your childhood life using the following guidelines.

Date and place of birth	Family background	Daily life
School life	Special event of childhood days, etc.	

Grammar

Connectives

- A. Study the following sentences and underline the connectives.
 - a. Although she spoke very fast, I understood what she meant to say.
 - b. In spite of her hard labour, she failed her exam.
 - c. Though he had all the required qualifications, he did not get the job.
 - d. Despite having all the qualifications, he did not get the job.
- B. Join the following pairs of sentences twice, using *although/though/even though* and *despite/in spite of* as in the example.

Example: Nepali people have limited income. They are very happy.

- i. Although Nepali people have limited income, they are happy.
- ii. Nepali people are happy in spite of their limited income.
- a. He is a millionaire. He lives in a simple house.
- b. The weather was extremely bad. The pilot landed the plane safely.
- c. We study in the same college. We hardly see each other.

- d. It rained heavily. We enjoyed our holiday.
- e. I had an umbrella. I got wet in the rain.
- f. I was really tired. I could not sleep a moment.
- g. She has very good accent in English. She failed the interview of a newsreader.
- h. Lhasa has extremely cold weather in winter. Millions of tourists go there in January.
- i. He was badly injured in the first round of the boxing match. He was victorious in the third round.

C. Complete each sentence in an appropriate way.

- a. He passed the exam although.....
- b. She climbed the mountain in spite of her.....
- c. He did not give any alms to the beggars even though.....
- d. In spite of his poor eyesight,.....
- e.though she is very sociable.
- f.in spite of his ten attempts.
- g. He refused to eat anything despite.....
- h. He could not score goods grades in the SEE exams in spite of
- i. She accepted the job although.....
- j. Even though we had planned everything carefully.....

Listening

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

- a. What do these pictures represent?
- b. What do you do to concentrate your mind?



B. Listen to the audio and fill in the blanks with appropriate words.

- a. A tool of learning to use our body, intellect and mind is
- b. When our own intelligence turns against us, it brings
- c. All the leaning will be useless and meaningless in the future.
- d. We have been misunderstanding as intelligence.
- e. All the times,will not throw the kind of ball that we want to hit.

C. According to the speaker, “Education is not just about learning, it is about learning to use ourselves”. Do you agree with the speaker? Give your reasons.

Speaking

Expressing degrees of certainty

A. Act out the following pieces of conversation in pairs.

- a. A: We’ve meeting tomorrow at 9:00 am. Did you receive an SMS?
B :Yes, I got. I’ll definitely be at the meeting, don’t worry.
- b. A: My book was on the table a few minutes ago. It’s not here now.
B: Somebody might have taken it to read.
- c. A: Mr. Shrestha’s office is locked from outside.
B: I’m sure. He has gone to the field.

B. Work in pairs. Have conversions in the following situations. Use *sure, probably, definitely, likely, certainly, undoubtedly, may/might, must or can’t*.

- a. My father had gone to the station but he has not returned home yet.
- b. It’s a holiday and their car is at home.
- c. He speaks with a German accent.
- d. You do not find the phone in your pocket.
- e. You are sure that Dolma is not in her school.
- f. You are expecting Suman to visit you. Then the doorbell rings.
- g. The sky is overcast.

Project work

Conduct an oratory contest on “**Education is the Foundation of Development**”. Invite your English teacher as a judge.