



Abraham Lincoln's Letter to his Son's Headmaster

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- * Learning what real education is – learning the right values and attitude.
- * Learning to face the truths of life and the balance to handle them with common sense and maturity.
- * Listening, reading, understanding and answering the questions orally and in writing.
- * Grammar: Active and passive voice; articles and determiners; phrases and clauses and their types.
- * Words and their meanings and usage; clichés; dictionary work and pronunciation of words with correct phonetic symbols and stress.
- * Writing a leave application; punctuation and editing.
- * Learning to speak, converse and write correctly.

- * Learning about living life with a balanced attitude and with the right sense of values.
- * Learning about active and passive voice; articles and determiners; phrases and clauses and their types.
- * Speaking, conversing and writing correctly.

- * Read the passage and discuss. The value of letters is that they can be read again and again and preserved. You connect with a person through the handwriting and the thoughts which are more personal than texted or emailed messages. A feeling of privacy and confidentiality is created in a letter.
- * Exercise A: The teacher can read out the question and discuss in the class.
- * Talk about occasions for writing letters to family and friends.
- * The person awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001 was V S Naipaul, a writer in English based who was Trinidad and Tobago. He was sent to England to study when he was seventeen. He was devoted to his father and the letters between them are a tribute to their strong bond. They were published later as 'Between Father and Son: Family Letters.'

Outcome

Get Set

Read and Enjoy

- * Read the lesson aloud or ask the students to read parts of it.
- * Talk about the author: Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President of the United States of America, from 1861 to 1865, when he was assassinated. As a child and young man, he faced poverty, illness and great hardships. But he remained a person with a strong sense of values and fought against the abhorrent practice of slavery in the USA. Explain the background of slavery and segregation in the USA against which Lincoln stood up.
- * The excerpts of this letter are a remarkable record of what constitutes the right values and attitude for a person to cultivate if he/she has to live a life of integrity and balance. Every sentence deserves attention and careful thought. Explain each sentence well.
- * Explain the words and phrases, and their meanings: a dollar earned is of far more value than five found; learn to lose; the secret of quiet laughter; bullies are the easiest to lick; eternal mystery of [nature]; getting on the bandwagon; filter all he hears on the screen of truth; no shame in tears; scoff at cynics; beware of too much sweetness; a howling mob; the test of fire makes fine steel; the courage to be impatient; sublime faith in himself ... and in mankind.
- * The values Lincoln wants his son to have are: (i) knowing how to see the worth of a hero: a friend even when there are a large number of scoundrels and enemies (ii) earning money through hard work, not simply collecting it (iii) learn to lose; enjoy winning (iv) stay away from envy (v) laugh at oneself quietly (vi) defeat bullies (vii) enjoy the world of books and reading (viii) take comfort and peace from nature (ix) be willing to fail rather than cheat (x) have faith in yourself and your ideas, not follow the crowd (xi) take only the good from others' views (xii) be gentle with the gentle and tough with the tough (xiii) learn to laugh when sad; no harm in crying (xiv) be wary of too much sweetness and stay away from cynics (xv) fight for what you believe is right (xvi) the heart and soul are priceless possessions, don't sell them to anyone (xvii) if you have faith in yourself, you'll have faith in mankind.
- * Reading creates familiarisation with words.
- * Relate the lesson and its theme with the daily life of the students and ask in-text questions: Have you received any such advice from your parents/grandparents or teachers? Do you feel it is necessary to learn these values and cultivate this attitude? Why, or why not?

Read and Understand

- * Discuss the questions in Exercises A-C and ask the students to answer orally first.
- * Where necessary, write the answers on the board to help them in answering questions on the text, whether oral or written.
- * They may then write down the answers of Exercises B-C.

- * HOTS: Read and discuss the questions in the class. Then ask the students to write down the answers.
- * Use the board to explain active and passive voice.
- * Explain what they mean and how you change one into the other: focus of the changes in the subject, object and the form of the verb. Use examples from the classroom: Javed gave the book to Rohit. The book was given to Rohit by Javed. Meera closed the door. The door was closed by Meera. The Principal called a meeting. A meeting was called by the Principal.
- * Do Exercises A, B and C orally and then let the students write down the answers.
- * Reiterate the correct usage of articles [a/an/the] – they are indefinite and definite articles – ‘a’ is used before consonant sounds and ‘an’ before vowel sounds. ‘The’ is used before definite or particular nouns.
- * Do Exercise D orally and then ask the students to write it down.
- * Using the board, the given examples in the chart as well as your own examples, explain what are determiners – explain their types: articles; demonstrative; possessives; quantifiers; numbers; distributives; and others. ask students to make sentences orally using each determiner so that they understand the usage correctly.
- * Do Exercise E orally and then ask the students to write down the answers.
- * Explain on the board what are phrases, using the given examples as well as your own. Explain the types of phrases: noun [subject/object], adjective used as determiners, modifiers and adverb [answering when/where/why/how/how often].
- * Do Exercise F orally and then the students can write down the answers.
- * Explain on the board what are clauses – groups of words with a verb: independent or dependent. Then explain the types of clauses: noun [which acts as a noun], adjective [relative clause which are used like an adjective to describe/modify a noun], and adverb [which function as adverbs and answer when/where/why]. Use the given examples and add your own on the board.
- * Do Exercise G orally and then let the students do it on their own.
- * Announce the answers aloud for Exercises A-G and let the partners check.

- * Learning about clichés; becoming familiar with how they are used and when they should be avoided.
- * Use the given examples and your own to explain clichés on the board.
- * Do Exercise A orally first, and ask the students to collect more clichés. They are usually used in speeches or in letters. Examples: as per our discussions; do the needful; a warm welcome; your valuable advice/comment; taken time out of your busy schedule, etc.

Listen and Learn

- * Then the students can make a list with their groups.
- * Make suitable sentences with the clichés to know how to use them and what to avoid.
- * Share the lists in class; there will be several overlaps.
- * Listen to the accent, stress and intonation on the DigiDisc so that you can guide the students accordingly.
- * The teacher can read the passage aloud or ask the students to take turns reading so they understand it well.
- * Then ask the students to answer the questions orally.
- * Check the students where necessary.

Converse and Connect

- * Listen to the accent, stress and intonation on the DigiDisc so that you can guide the students accordingly.
- * Then ask pairs of students at random to enact the conversation according to their own imagination.
- * Correct the students regarding content and pronunciation.

Speak and Express

- * Read out the question.
- * Discuss the picture in the class and ask the students to imagine how they would like to serve mankind in their own ways.
- * Correct them where necessary, but encourage their imagination and listen to their suggestions.

Pronunciation Practice

- * Let the students listen to the DigiDisc so that they are sure of the right way to say the words.
- * Let the students say aloud the given words. See the way they are spelt in the first column and then see the phonetic spelling and pronunciation.
- * Differentiate the way the words are pronounced. Draw attention to the phonetic symbols.
- * Use the given words and any other examples you like or doubts that the students may have.
- * Ensure that the phonetic symbols for the sounds are understood by the students.

Punctuation

- * Use the board to do this exercise.
- * Call random students to correct the sentences.
- * Once it is all written correctly on the board, ask them to write it down in their notebooks.
- * If the exercise is done by the students on their own, announce the corrections and let the partners check the work.

- * Exercise A: Read aloud the question, and clarify any student's queries and the guidelines given.
- * Ask the students to write a leave application, as instructed.
- * The teacher must correct the individual work of the students. Only then will they become independent in their writing.

Write Well

- * Making use of the dictionary.
- * The pairs of words have a somewhat similar meaning, but each word is used in a different context. For example, we speak of global warming, not of universal warming. When we say something is priceless, we mean it is very expensive or extraordinary. But when we say something is valueless, it means the exact opposite. We mean it is worthless.
- * Ask the students at random to give the meanings and share with the class. The students may check their own work.
- * Ask the students to make sentences on their own and the teacher must correct individual work to ensure that they have understood the differences.

Dictionary Work

- * Ask the students to work with their partners.
- * Ask them to list out the points in the letter.
- * Then discuss the points with their partners to see if their parents tell them the same thing or something different.
- * Finally discuss in the class first the similarities, and then what the parents say that is different from Lincoln's advice.

Project Work

- * Exercise A: Read aloud the sentence.
- * Discuss it in the class and ask the students what their thoughts are.
- * Exercise B: Read the question and link it with what they have learnt so far.
- * Discuss what they would do, and why.

Values and Life Skills

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- * Learning (a) about personification; (b) about an inanimate object writing a biography; and (c) the interaction between a mirror and a person, from the mirror's point of view and what it teaches us.
- * Reading and reciting the poem with the correct rhythm and emphasis.
- * Answering questions on the poem.
- * Learning words and their meanings, spellings, pronunciation, rhymes.

- * Learning to appreciate the various layers of meaning and symbolism in a poem.
- * Understanding the poem well.
- * Learning to pronounce perfectly by reciting the poem.

- * This is a poem by Sylvia Plath, an American poet, novelist and short story writer [1932 - 1963]. Her best known collections are 'The Colossus and Other Poems', 'Ariel', and 'The Bell Jar', a semi-autobiographical novel published shortly before her death. In 1982, she won a Pulitzer Prize for 'The Collected Poems' posthumously.
- * This poem, in free verse, is written from the point of view of a mirror, not the person who can be seen in the mirror. It is necessary for the student to understand that the mirror reflects all that it sees, exactly as it is. It does not criticise or praise, it does not distort or dress up a figure. It tells the truth.
- * In the first stanza, the mirror describes itself. It is 'silver and exact', that is, it gives an accurate reflection without any distortion. It is 'the eye of a little god', seeing everything that is in front of it like a god, but unlike an eye, it is 'four-cornered'. However, the mirror does not judge, it merely reflects the truth: 'I am not cruel, only truthful'. The mirror is completely unemotional: 'I have no preconceptions'; 'unmisted by love and dislike'. 'Whatever I see I swallow immediately/Just as it is'.
- * In the second stanza, the mirror says that it gives a faithful reflection most of the time of what it sees, which is a wall, 'pink, with speckles'. The wall, blank and unresponsive, has become a 'part of my heart' for the mirror. But then the mirror says something strange: 'But it flickers. Faces and darkness separate us over and over'. The mirror's reflection, even of the wall that is always in front of it, is not constant because sometimes someone comes and stands in front of the mirror or, when the lights are switched off or it is night, there is darkness.

Outcome

Read and Understand



- * In the third stanza, the mirror says: 'Now I am a lake' – it is something that is not just reflecting but is capable of allowing something or someone to sink into it or drown in it. And if you are addicted to watching yourself in a mirror, that is what happens – you 'drown' in it! You lose touch with reality. 'A woman bends over me' – says the mirror. Now the poet is talking about her own interaction with the mirror. She is 'searching my reaches for what she really is' – The poet is looking into the depths of the lake, the mirror to find out her own true self, hoping to see her reflection as she would like to see herself. [reaches = depths]
- * Since the mirror does not offer any comfort, she turns away from it 'to those liars, the candle or the moon.' They are called liars because they do not turn the bright light of the sun on her to show her the truth. Artificial light or moonlight hides our flaws and weaknesses, whereas the mirror shows us what we are, exactly as we are. But even when the mirror sees only her back, it reflects it 'faithfully', with no partiality.
- * In the last stanza, the mirror talks about the poet who 'rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands' – when we see ourselves and think we do not look pretty or handsome enough, our reaction is to feel sad or cry, to try to smooth our hair and face with our hands. 'I am important to her' – because the mirror provides some reassurance to the poet through its reflection. She comes every morning to look at herself in the mirror, her face 'replaces the darkness' of the night. And then the mirror reveals the final truth. The poet has 'drowned a young girl' in its depths – like in a lake – looking into the mirror since she was young. And now what looks back at her is 'an old woman' – the image that reflects back at her 'day after day', rising as if to 'swallow' her 'like a terrible fish'.
- * The imagery and symbolism of the poem disturbs the poet who has not accepted or come to term with the changes of her life and her physical appearance. Once the changes are accepted by us, the mirror stops being 'cruel' or frightening, and we never 'drown' in it.
- * This is a deeply felt poem and needs careful explanation of its psychological depths.
- * Read aloud and enjoy the rhythm, rhyme and meaning of the poem.
- * Explain the words and phrases like: preconceptions; swallow; unmisted; cruel; truthful; a little god; flickers; darkness; lake; reaches; liars; drowned' a terrible fish – interlinking the ideas.
- * Discuss the exercises and ask the students to answer them orally, before writing the answers down. Explain the context of the questions from the poem and ensure that the students understand it before they answer.
- * Ask them to learn the poem and recite it correctly in turns in the class. Correct them where necessary.