

Deep Water

Previous Years' CBSE Board Questions

MCQ (1 mark)

1. "And then sheer, stark terror seized me".

Which of the following options has used the same figure of speech as in the underlined phrase above?

(a) Sea waves roared frighteningly on a stormy night.

(b) Fear is a poison.

(c) He roared like a lion in anger.

(d) I am frightfully sorry for my mistakes. (Term I, 2021-22)

2. 'But the jump made no difference. Select the option that reflects the tone of Douglas.

(a) fear (b) regret

(c) anger (d) grief (Term I, 2021-22)

SA I (2 marks)

3. What handicap did Douglas suffer from? How did he overcome that?

(2023)

4. Which two incidents in Douglas' early life made him scared of water?

(Delhi 2014C)

5. Why did Douglas prefer to go to YMCA swimming pool to learn swimming?

(Delhi 2014C)

SA II (3 marks)

6. Which first incident in Douglas' childhood filled him with fear of the water?

(2019 C)

7. How did the instructor turn Douglas into a swimmer?

(Delhi 2019)

8. How did his experience at the YMCA swimming pool affect Douglas?

(Delhi 2016)



9. What deep meaning did his experience at the YMCA swimming pool have for Douglas? (AI 2016)

10. 'All we have to fear is fear itself. When did Douglas learn this lesson? (AI 2016)

11. How did the feeling of terror return to Douglas at Lake Wentworth? How did he react? (Foreign 2016)

12. Why did Douglas' mother recommend that he should learn swimming at the YMCA swimming pool? (Delhi 2015)

13. How did Douglas remove his residual doubts about his fear of water? (Delhi 2015)

14. How did Douglas' experience at YMCA pool affect him? (Delhi 2015)

15. What lesson did Douglas learn when he got rid of his fear of water? (Delhi 2015C)

LA I (5 marks)

16. Read the extract given below to attempt the questions that follow:

I went to the pool when no one else was there. The place was quiet. The water was still, and the tiled bottom was as white and clean as a bathtub. I was timid about going in alone, so I sat on the side of the pool to wait for others.

I had not been there long when it came is big bruiser of a boy, probably eighteen years old he had thick hair on his chest. He was a beautiful physical specimen, with legs and arms that showed rippling muscles. He yelled.

Hi Skinny! How'd you like to be ducked? (Term I, 2021-22)

(i) What impression do you form about the narrator?

(a) He is a beginner in swimming lessons.

(b) He has made friends during his swimming lessons.

(c) The big boy was well built and handsome.

(d) The narrator lacks courage and confidence to enter the pool alone.

(ii) The description of the big boy by the narrator is one of

(a) Complaint

(b) Admiration

(c) Criticism

(d) Poise



(iii) Select the option that lists the probable reason for the big boy's behavior towards the narrator.

(a) his intention to frighten the narrator.

(b) his desire to give him a surprise.

(c) The place was quiet and odd.

(d) The narrator was skinny and alone.

(iv) The figure of speech in the expression 'as white and clean as a bath tub' is _____.

(a) Metaphor

(b) Alliteration

(c) Simile

(d) Irony

(v) The writing style of the narrator indicates that the passage can be classified under a/an _____.

(a) Interview

(b) Autobiography

(c) Fiction

(d) Short story

17. The story "Deep Water" has made you realise that with determination and perseverance one can accomplish the impossible. Write a paragraph in about 100 words on how a positive attitude and courage will aid you to achieve success in life. (Delhi 2014)

18. Desire, determination and diligence lead to success. Explain the value of these qualities in the light of Douglas' experience in "Deep Water". (Delhi 2014)

LA II (6 marks)

19. Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:

The next I remember I was being on my beside the pool, vomiting. The chap that threw me in saying. "But I was only fooling". Someone said, "The kid nearly Let's carry him to the locker room."

Several hours later, I walked house. I was weak and trembling. I shook and cried when I lay on any bed. I couldn't eat that night. For days a haunting fear was in my heart. The me, making me wobbly in the knees and sick to my stomach.

I never went back to the pool. I feared water. I avoided it whenever I could.

(2023)

(i) With reference to the extract. Douglas was vomiting because



- (a) he had got seven food poisoning.
- (b) he had just been rescued from nearly drowning in the pool.
- (c) he has frightened when he saw the big man.
- (d) he had gone for a swim on an empty stomach.
- (ii) Rewrite the sentence by replacing the underlined phrase with its inference.

For days a haunting fear was in my heart.

(iii) On the basis of the extract, choose the correct option with reference to the two statements given below:

I. The boy did not know how to swim.

II. The boy took a long time to recover from his fear.

- (a) I can be inferred from the extract but II cannot.
- (b) I cannot be inferred from the extract but II can.
- (c) I is true but II is false.
- (d) Both I and II are true.

(iv) Identify the textual clue that allows the reader to infer that the chap threw the boy into the pool just for fun (clue: a phrase)

(v) Complete the sentence with an appropriate explanation as per the extract.

The slightest exertion upset the boy because _____.

(vi) Replace the underlined word with its synonym from the extract.

The boy felt unsteady in the knees.

20. What is the misadventure that William Douglas speaks about? What were the series of emotions and fears that Douglas experienced when he was thrown into the pool? (2020 C)

21. How did Douglas develop a fear of water? (2020)

22. Childhood fears are deeply entrenched in our mind. Determination, hard work and right training are needed to get rid of them. Comment on the statement in the light of Douglas' efforts to overcome his fear of water. (AI 2019)

23. Fear is something that we must learn to overcome if we want to succeed in life. How did Douglas get over his fear of water? (2018)

24. What happened at the YMCA swimming pool which instilled fear of water in Douglas' mind? (Foreign 2015)

25. How did Douglas' experience at the YMCA pool affect him? How did he get over this effect? (Foreign 2015)

26. Describe the efforts made by Douglas to overcome his fear of water. (Foreign 2015)

27. "All we have to fear is fear itself." Describe Douglas' experiences which led to the making of this statement. (Delhi 2015C)

CBSE Sample Questions

MCQ (1 mark)

1. Select the option that lists the qualities of Douglas' trainer.

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| (1) adventurous | (2) generous | (3) patient |
| (4) methodical | (5) encouraging | (6) courageous |
| (a) (1) and (6) | (b) (3), (4) and (5) | |
| (c) (2) and (5) | (d) (1), (4) and (6) | (Term I, 2021-22) |

LAI (5 marks)

2. The prose selections, Deep Water and Indigo, bring out the importance of overcoming fear, in order to be able to lead our lives successfully.

Imagine yourself to be a motivational speaker who has to address high school students. Write this address in 120 150 words elaborating on occurrences from the two texts to inspire your audience and to convince them about the importance of overcoming fear.

You may begin like this...

Good morning, students!

We all know what it's like to be afraid. Fear is our body's natural response to a perceived threat or danger.

But when... (2022-23)

3. Read the given extract to attempt questions that follow:

Tiny vestiges of the old terror would return. But now I could frown and say to that terror, "Trying to scare me, eh? Well, here's to you! Look!" And off I'd go for another length of the pool. This went on until July. But I was still not satisfied. I was not sure that all the terror had left. So, I went to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire, dived off a dock at Triggs Island, and swam two miles across the lake

to Stamp Act Island. I swam the crawl, breast stroke, side stroke, and back stroke. Only once did the terror return. When I was in the middle of the lake, I put my face under and saw nothing but bottomless water. The old sensation returned in miniature.

(Term I, 2021-22)

(i) Why did Douglas go to swim at Lake Wentworth?

(a) To showcase his skills for all who had doubted him.

(b) To honour the efforts of his swimming instructor.

(c) To build on his ability of swimming in a natural water body.

(d) To know for sure that he had overcome his fear of drowning in water.

(ii) Select the option that lists the correct inference based on the information in the extract.

(a) Triggs Island and Stamp Act Island are both located in Lake Wentworth.

(b) Lake Wentworth is a part of Triggs Island.

(c) Stamp Act Island is two miles away from New Hampshire.

(d) Lake Wentworth is connected via docks to New Hampshire.

(iii) What was the reason for the 'return' of terror?

(a) Superstitions about the dock at Triggs Islands.

(b) Recent reports about drowning incidents.

(c) Prior drowning experiences.

(d) Warnings by experienced swimmers.

(iv) Douglas mentions that the old sensation returned in miniature.

He means that he felt the familiar feeling of fear

(a) at irregular intervals.

(b) on a small scale.

(c) repeatedly.

(d) without notice.

(v) How did Douglas handle the 'old sensation'?

(a) Addressed it.

(b) Avoided it.

(c) Submitted to it.

(d) Stayed indifferent to it.

4. The story 'Deep Water' talks about Douglas' attempts to overcome his fear of water. The story can also be viewed as a figurative manifestation of life's many challenges. Elaborate with reference to the text. (2020-21)

ANSWERS

Previous Years' CBSE Board Questions

1. (a) Sea waves roared frighteningly on a stormy night.

2. (b) regret.

3. The handicap that Douglas suffered from was his fear of water that he had developed after a traumatic experience in a pool. This handicap deprived him from enjoying the basic joys of life as a child. He overcame his fear of water by gradually exposing himself to water. He took swimming lessons from an instructor, and also tries to push himself harder despite his fears. He eventually conquered his fear and swam in various places to challenge himself and overcome his fear completely.

4. The very first incident was the one at the beach with his father when Douglas was three or four years old. A wave had knocked him over and engulfed him in it completely. The next incident was at YMCA when an eighteen years old boy pushed Douglas into the swimming pool.

5. Douglas' mother recommended that he should learn swimming at the YMCA pool because unlike the Yakima River, which was treacherous and had drowned many, the pool was safe. It was only 2 or 3 feet deep at the shallow end and nine feet deep at the other end. There too, the fall was gradual.

6. Douglas' first childhood incident happened when he was a toddler, about 3-4 years old. His father took him to the beach in California where he was knocked down by the waves and completely submerged him. Despite the fear in his eyes, his father laughed at the incident. This incident filled him with fear for water, becoming his first terrifying experience with water.

7. Bit by bit, the instructor turned Douglas into a swimmer. Initially, he put a belt around Douglas and the attached rope went through a pulley that ran on an overhead cable. He held on to the rope and went back and forth across the pool until Douglas began to relax in water. Next, the instructor taught Douglas to put his face under water and exhale and to raise his nose and inhale. They practised



this until Douglas stopped panicking on putting his head under water. Then Douglas learnt to kick in the water. At first, he was terror-stricken but continuous practice with his instructor made Douglas lose his fear of water and emerge as a confident swimmer.

8. At YMCA swimming pool, when Douglas was thrown into the water, it affected him quite deeply. The experience scared him so much that he was unable to eat due to the haunting fear. He became wobbly in the knees and sick in the stomach and the slightest exertion tired him. Eventually, he developed fear of water. Since he could not go near the water for many years, he was deprived of the joy of various water related activities, such as canoeing, boating, fishing, etc. in his adulthood.

9. Douglas developed a fear of getting into the water at a very young age due to two severe water related incidents - one at the beach with his father when Douglas was three or four years old and the other one at the YMCA swimming pool when an eighteen-year-old boy pushed Douglas into the swimming pool. However, the experience at YMCA pool had deep meaning for Douglas. Later on, when he realised that he was missing out on a lot of fun because of his fear, he decided to face it. The experience of fear and death and its conquest made him live intensely. It made him realise the true value of life and helped him enjoy every moment of it.

10. Once the writer realised that his fear of water was keeping him from enjoying any of the water related sports and activities, he decided to engage a swimming instructor, who gradually helped him face his fear. However, it was after his successful swimming attempts in Lake Wentworth and Warm Lake that the writer understood the real meaning of conquering one's fear in order to truly value life and enjoy every moment of it. This revelation made the writer confident and determined.

11. Douglas went to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire because he wanted to be sure that the old terror of water had left him for good after the swimming lessons. Douglas swam two miles across the lake. The terror returned only once when he was in the middle of the lake. But, he laughed at his fear and brushed it aside. His terror fled away and he swam on.

12. Douglas' mother recommended that he should learn swimming at the YMCA pool because unlike the Yakima river, which was treacherous and had drowned many, the pool was safe. It was only 2 or 3 feet deep at the shallow end and nine feet deep at the other end. There too, the fall was gradual.

13. Douglas removed his residual doubts about his fear of water by diving into the Warm Lake and swimming across to the other shore and back. He shouted

with joy when he was able to achieve this feat. He had finally conquered his fear of water.

14. His experience at the YMCA pool left Douglas haunted by fear of water. He became extremely weak physically and never went back to the pool again. He felt handicapped for years as he couldn't enjoy any water sport like swimming, fishing, boating, etc.

15. Douglas went to lake Wentworth in New Hampshire because he wanted to be sure that the old terror of water had left him for good after the swimming lessons. Douglas swam two miles across the lake. The terror returned only once when he was in the middle of the lake. But, he laughed at his fear and brushed it aside. His terror fled away and he swam on. When Douglas finally got rid of his fear of water, he realised that all one has to fear is fear itself. Once the fear is conquered or overcome, one can achieve anything one wants.

16. (i) (d) The narrator lacks courage and confidence to enter the pool alone.

(ii) (b) Admiration

(iii) (d) The narrator was skinny and alone.

(iv) (c) Simile

(v) (b) Autobiography

17. In the story "Deep Water", we see Douglas overcoming his childhood fear of water, through determination, perseverance and hard work. Thus, this story shows that with positive attitude and strength of will, we can accomplish almost anything. All of us may fear something or the other. But fear, when conquered through courage, becomes victory. The victory, emerging from the bitterness of failures and hardships of enduring them for a long period of time, has its own significance and joy. It might appear to be a long and an arduous journey, but it will definitely culminate in success.

18. Douglas' experience in 'Deep Water' is a great example of how desire, determination and diligence lead to success. When Douglas was just a child, he had major water-related misadventures and he almost drowned, which affected him badly and he was left with a deep-rooted fear of water. This fear stayed with him as he grew older. As the fear lingered on, Douglas realised that it prevented him from enjoying all the activities related to water, such as boating, canoeing, swimming, etc. It was no longer acceptable to Douglas.

Therefore, his strong desire to overcome his fear of water made him take swimming lessons. Even though, the old fear kept coming back, weakening him initially, however, his determination kept him going. Eventually, with rigorous



training, vigorous practice and perseverance, he was able to get rid of his fear of water.

19. (i) (b) he had just been rescued from nearly drowning in the pool.

(ii) A terrorizing fear

(ii) (b) I cannot be inferred from the extract but II can.

(iv) "But I was only fooling"

(v) Because of fear of water

(vi) Wobbly

20. William Douglas had just learnt swimming. One day, an eighteen-year-old big bruiser picked him up and tossed him into the nine-foot-deep end of the YMCA pool. He hit the water surface in a sitting position. He swallowed water and went at once to the bottom. He nearly died in this misadventure. Douglas was frightened when he was thrown into the pool. He was frightened but not out of his wits. He had planned to make a big jump once his feet touch the bottom of the pool. Though he grew weak before touching the bottom, he summoned all his strength to try to make a great spring upwards once he touched the pool's floor. Despite his effort, he came up slower than he had imagined. It was then that he opened his eyes and saw nothing. Trying to reach for a rope, his fingers found nothing except water. Trying all his might, his attempts to reach to the surface failed, leaving him in terror and making him numb. In the end, he fainted and would later be 'saved' from the pool by someone.

21. Douglas's first experience with water was when he was a toddler. He was three or four years old when his father took him to the beach in California. There the waves knocked him down and submerged him completely. He got the fright of his life that was the first instance of Douglas's terrifying experience with water. The next horrifying episode cemented Douglas' feelings towards water. After a few years when he was about 10 or 11 years old Douglas decided to learn swimming and overcome his fear of water. Unfortunately, there was a bully who made fun of Douglas' physique and this muscular boy threw Douglas into the deepest end of the pool. He went straight to the bottom of the pool and had a panic attack. This incident triggered old traumas and from there onwards Douglas' aversion to water started to develop into a fear of water so concrete that will affect his regular life in a huge way.

22. Douglas' experience in 'Deep Water' is a great example of how, determination, hard work and right training are needed to get rid of childhood fears. When Douglas was just a child, he had major water-related misadventures and he almost drowned, which affected him badly and he was left with a deep rooted fear of water. This fear stayed with him as he grew older. As the fear lingered on,



Douglas realised that it prevented him from enjoying all the activities related to water, such as boating, canoeing, swimming, etc. It was no longer acceptable to Douglas.

Therefore, his strong desire to overcome his fear of water made him take swimming lessons. Even though, the old fear kept coming back, weakening him initially, however, his determination kept him going. Eventually, with rigorous training, vigorous practice and perseverance, he was able to get rid of his fear of water.

23. Bit by bit, the instructor turned Douglas into a swimmer. Initially, he put a belt around Douglas and the attached rope went through a pulley that ran on an overhead cable. He held on to the rope and went back and forth across the pool until Douglas began to relax in water. Next, the instructor taught Douglas to put his face under water and exhale and to raise his nose and inhale. They practised this until Douglas stopped panicking on putting his head under water. Then Douglas learnt to kick in the water. At first, he was terror-stricken but continuous practice with his instructor made Douglas lose his fear of water and emerge as a confident swimmer. To make sure that he conquered the old terror, his fear of water, he decided to go to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire. There he dived off a dock at Triggs Island and swam two miles across the lake. Even though he swam with minimum anxiety, a little doubt remained within him. Next, he dived into Warm Lake and swam across to the other shore and back. Having swam in the lake without any fear or panic attack, Douglas realised that he had finally conquered his fear.

24. William Douglas wanted to learn swimming. He went to YMCA pool as it was safe. But an eighteen years old boy came and tossed Douglas into the deep end of the pool. He was frightened but planned a strategy. He decided that the moment his feet hit the bottom, he would make a big jump, come to the surface, lie flat on it and paddle to the edge of the pool. However, because of too much depth, Douglas could not resurface. He tried more than a couple of times. He tried to yell, but no sound came out of his mouth.

25. Douglas' experience at the YMCA pool left him haunted by fear of water. He became extremely weak physically and never went back to the pool again. He felt handicapped for years as he couldn't enjoy any water sport like swimming, fishing, boating, etc.

To get over his fear of water, Douglas hired a swimming coach. Though it took him a lot of time, the instructor showed a great amount of patience and kindness towards Douglas. Bit by bit he taught him to swim and at the same time helped Douglas to overcome his fear. To be sure that he was completely free of his fear of water, Douglas went to Lake Wentworth to swim across the lake. Even though he swam with minimum anxiety, a little doubt remained within him. Next, he dived



into Warm Lake and swam across the other shore and back. Having swam in the lake without any fear or panic attack, Douglas realised that he had finally conquered his fear.

26. Bit by bit, the instructor turned Douglas into a swimmer. Initially, he put a belt around Douglas and the attached rope went through a pulley that ran on an overhead cable. He held on to the rope and went back and forth across the pool until Douglas began to relax in water. Next, the instructor taught Douglas to put his face under water and exhale and to raise his nose and inhale. They practised this until Douglas stopped panicking on putting his head under water. Then Douglas learnt to kick in the water. At first, he was terror-stricken but continuous practice with his instructor made Douglas lose his fear of water and emerge as a confident swimmer. To make sure that he conquered the old terror, his fear of water, he decided to go to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire. There he dived off a dock at Triggs Island and swam two miles across the lake. Even though he swam with minimum anxiety, a little doubt remained within him. Next, he dived into Warm Lake and swam across to the other shore and back. Having swam in the lake without any fear or panic attack, Douglas realised that he had finally conquered his fear.

27. Douglas developed a fear of getting into the water at a very young age due to two severe water related incidents one at the beach with his father when Douglas was three or four years old and the other one at the YMCA swimming pool when an eighteen years old boy pushed Douglas into the swimming pool. To make sure that he conquered the old terror, his fear of water, he decided to go to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire. There he dived off a dock at Triggs Island and swam two miles across the lake. Even though he swam with minimum anxiety, a little doubt remained within him. Next, he dived into Warm Lake and swam across to the other shore and back. Having swam in the lake without any fear or panic attack, Douglas realised that he had finally conquered his fear. When Douglas finally got rid of his fear of water, he realised that all one has to fear is fear itself. Once the fear is conquered or overcome, one can achieve anything one wants.

CBSE Sample Questions

1. (b) (3), (4) and (5)

2. Good morning students!

We all know what it's like to be afraid. Fear is our body's natural response to a perceived threat or danger. But when we are too afraid of everything and let them dominate, us it will hinder us, from achieving our true potential. We can learn valuable lessons from the lives of people we learn about. Fear is a strange force that immobilizes us and prevents us from progressing. In the text, 'Deep Water, we can observe this in the case of William Douglas. Because Douglas is paralysed by his earlier traumatic experiences in the water, he is unable to lead a normal life and cannot go fishing, cannoaing, etc.

Similarly, in the case of the struggle of Champaran's peasants, this can also be observed. Due to fear of the Britishers, the peasants of Champaran couldn't take a stand for their rights. They needed to devise a plan in order to work on their fears. They were able to gather around the courthouse in Motihari, by taking steps to overcome their fear.

Learning to overcome one's fear requires a lot of persistence, grit and determination. It took Douglas months to overcome his fear while he trained with a coach and finally, he was able to overcome his fear of the water and learn swimming. Similarly, it took one year for the peasants of Champaran to get justice. Sometimes it is extremely hard to fight one's fear on one's own. So, we can take assistance and support from others and fight united. Only when the people were united in Champaran, they were able to challenge the government and fight for justice. But once they were able to overcome their fear, they were able to live their life to the fullest. We should all take inspiration from these stories and live our lives to the fullest without fear.

3. (i) (d) To know for sure that he had overcome his fear of drowning in water.

(ii) (a) Triggs Island and Stamp Act Island are both located in Lake Wentworth.

(iii) (c) Prior drowning experiences.

(iv) (b) on a small scale.

(v) (a) Addressed it.

4. HINTS:

- Douglas' struggle - determination to face fear - overcome it
- Accept any relevant examples from the text as a link to life's challenges/setbacks/obstacles



- Symbolism deep water not just restricted to water but is a metaphor for human fears/phobias/anxieties
- Significance - the struggle and journey of overcoming one's fears.

(Important to develop a connection between Douglas' journey/determination to face fear with life's challenges)