

## Grade VIII - English

### Lesson 7. A Visit to Cambridge

Prose

#### Soul of the Chapter

#### Author's Tour to Cambridge and Hearing about Stephen Hawking

For the author, Firdaus Kanga, Cambridge contained the essence of England. The place became something entirely different, but more meaningful by the time he left, for he had then become acquainted with Stephen Hawking. During a walking tour through Cambridge, the guide mentions the name of Stephen Hawking and tells the author about the brilliance of this differently abled man, who held the chair of Isaac Newton at the university. The author becomes immediately startled for he knew, but author becomes immediately startled for he knew, but had forgotten about Stephen, the writer of 'A Brief History of Time'.

#### The Author Calls up at the Residence of Stephen Hawking

After the walking tour, Kanga immediately rushed to the telephone booth and phoned at Hawking's residence. Hawking's assistant received the phone. Kanga informs Hawking's assistant that he had come from India on a wheel chair was working on the topic of his travel in Britain. He seeks an appointment from Hawking's assistant to be able to meet Hawking in person, no matter if briefly. The assistant fixes up a half an hour meeting between the author and Hawking.

#### Meeting with Stephen Hawking

The next afternoon, when he meets Hawking, Hawking informs him that he had not been very braved and that he had no choice. Kanga wished to shares his opinion that living a disembodied, fragmented life can never be a choice, but he kept his opinions to himself. He was closely observing Hawking, how Hawking had to constantly look for and press the buttons to find to right words to express himself. He was talking through computer automated sound that he was operating through the only moving part of his body, his long pale fingers. After he puts the receiver down, Kanga begins to feel weak. He generalises the state of disabled people and



discusses that it is difficult to live up to the pretence of being brave at all times. The only time one genuinely feels brave and strong is when someone equally disabled does something great, achieves something.

### **Exhaustion and Frustration**

Very often the author would notice Hawking closing his eyes in sheer and frustration. His mind was quite active, but his thoughts lay frozen from time-to-time in the absence of a quick convertor of his thoughts, his own speech. The author had heard people branding disabled people as continuously unhappy, so he asked Hawking a question, whether he was happy from inside. Hawking replied that he found it annoying when people patronised him or tried to pity him. The author further asked him if he got irritated with people like him who came to meet him and force him to talk and respond. Hawking immediately replied with a yes, but then smiled.

### **The Author Observes Hawking's Appearance**

Kanga found the first glimpses of Hawking as shocking. He found his appearance as still as the pictures in newspapers and magazines. He felt that his body was entirely wasted and reduced to nothingness. It was entirely tilted to one side. His eyes, however, caught the author's attention. The eyes were still full of life, they wanted to speak and speak urgently, but it was hard to decode that message.

On seeing the condition of Hawking and some kind of inner glow that his personality seemed to emanate, the author becomes sure that even the body is irrelevant and everything else surely an accessory. The author, though not a believer of souls, began to believe in the concreteness of Hawking as an eternal soul.

### **Kanga Keeds on with the Meeting**

This time Kanga asks him about becoming aware of the intensity of kindness in the world, through one's disabled status. Hawking agrees with him, but Kanga was not sure if that agreement was a serious one. The synthesiser through which Hawking's voice could be heard was a mono-tone one.

Author was constantly glancing his wrist watch to make the best use of this half an hour long meeting and as he was doing it, he realises that he enjoys a much better condition. He could at least move his various limbs, his only disability being that he could never stand or walk.

## Hawking- a Source of Inspiration

Kanga informs Hawking that he is a source of inspiration for him and many others and then asks him if this piece of information helps him in any way. Hawking, quite obviously, replies with a no. the author then seeks from Hawking some final advice for disabled people. Hawking advises him that all disabled people should concentrate on what they are good at. They should not unnecessarily waste time on Olympics for disabled and so on.

## Hawking Shows Kanga his Garden

Hawking asks Kanga to have tea with him and takes him to show the garden. They could not talk much as the glare of the Sun made the letters on the screen disappear, so Hawking became silent. It was more than an hour and it was time to leave. The author wanted to kiss him and cry, but he could not do so. He merely touched him on the shoulders and left. Kanga looks at Hawking as bravest of the selves and knew that he was moving towards him to become what he was an embodiment of. And this very neatly marked for him the end of his journey in Britain.

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**NCERT Folder**

**Comprehension Check - 1**

**Which is the right sentence?**

**1. "Cambridge was my metaphor for England." To the writer,**

- (i) Cambridge was a reputed university in England.
- (ii) England was famous for Cambridge.
- (iii) Cambridge was the real England.

**Ans. (iii) Cambridge was the real England.**

**2. The writer phoned Stephen Hawking's house.**

- (i) From the nearest phone booth.
- (ii) From outside a phone booth.
- (iii) From inside a phone booth.

**Ans. (ii) from outside a phone booth.**

**3. Every time he spoke to the scientist, the writer felt guilty because**

- (i) he wasn't sure what he wanted to ask.
- (ii) he forced the scientist to use his voice synthesiser.



(iii) he was face to face with legend

**Ans. (ii) he forced the scientist to use his voice synthesiser.**

**4. “I felt a huge relief.... in the possibilities of my body”. ‘In the given context, the highlighted words refer to**

(i) shifting in the wheelchair, turning the wrist.

(ii) standing up, walking.

(iii) speaking, writing.

**Ans. (i) shifting in the wheelchair, turning the wrist.**

### Working with the Text

**1. (i) Did the prospect of meeting Stephen Hawking make the writer nervous? If so, why?**

The author was both excited and nervous at the prospect of meeting Stephen Hawking. He had to meet him, for Hawking was a genius of his times.

At the same time, the author was doubtful if he would be allowed to meet Hawking or no. Also, he did not know what all to ask him and how.

**(ii) Did he at the same time feel very excited? If so, why?**

The author got extremely excited when Hawking's assistant gave him an appointment to meet Hawking, that too for half an hour.

**2. Guess the first question put to the scientist by the writer.**

The first question that the writer asked Stephen Hawking was that how he managed to so barve.

**3. Stephen Hawking said, “I’ve had no choice.” Does the writer think there was a choice? What was it?**

The writer feels that there was a choice and Hawking was a living example of this choice. Hawking had refused to live a boring and unexciting life, he was on the contrary living a creative life. That was choice in itself.

**4. “I could feel his anguish. “What could be the anguish?**

The writer could feel Hawking's anguish it being unable to express himself clearly and freely.



His thoughts had to be communicated via the computer and the exercise of finding the write letters through the buttons put a full stop to the vigour of his thoughts.

**5. What endeared the scientist to the writer so that he said he was looking at one of the most beautiful men in the world?**

The one-way smile of Stephen Hawking and the fact that he was not getting suppressed under the weight of his disintegrated heavy body endeared the scientist to the writer.

**6. Read aloud the description of the beautiful man. Which is the most beautiful sentence in the description?**

“you look at his eyes which can speak, still and they are saying something huge and urgent.”

7. (i) If ‘the lantern’ is the man, what would its walls’ be?  
(ii) What is housed within the thin walls?  
(iii) What general conclusion does the writer draw from this comparison?

**Ans.**

- (i) The wall would be the body of the scientist which has been reduced to nothingness.  
(ii) The inner glow of the man is housed within the thin walls or the thin body.  
(iii) The author realises that ultimately it is not the body but the soul that is significant.

**8. What is the scientist’s message for the disabled?**

The scientist’s message for the disabled is that they should do what they are good at and not what people want to extract out of them to view disabilities in a glorious light.

**9. Why does the writer refer to the guitar incident? Which idea does it support?**

The writer had spent a couple of years learning to play a Spanish guitar, a guitar that was much larger than its size.

It supports the idea that disabled Olympics is an utter waste of time.

The writer had forced himself to do what normal people around him had been trying to do.

**10. The writer expresses his great gratitude to Stephen Hawking. What is the gratitude for?**

For the writer, Stephen Hawking had been an inspiration. This meeting with Hawking further inspire him.

The writer wished to thank the scientist for meeting him and allowing him to spend some time with a living genius.



11. Complete the following sentences taking their appropriate parts from both the boxes below.

- (i) there was his assistant on the line.....
- (ii) you get fed up with people asking you to be brave.....
- (iii) there he was.....
- (iv) you look at his eyes which can speak,.....
- (v) it doesn't do much good to know.....

**A**

- tapping at a little switch in his hand.
- and I told him.
- that there are people.
- as if you have a courage account.
- and they are saying something huge and urgent.

**B**

- trying to find the words on his computer.
- I had come in a wheelchair from India.
- on which you are too lazy to draw a cheque.
- smiling with admiration to see you breathing still.
- it is hard to tell what.

**Ans.**

(i) There was his assistant on the line...and I told him.... I had come in a wheelchair from India.

(ii) You get fed up with people asking you to be brave... as if you have a courage account ...on which you are too lazy to draw a cheque.

(iii) There he was...., tapping at a little switch in his hand....trying to find the words on his computer.

(iv) You look at his eyes which can speak..and they are saying something huge and urgent ....it is hard to tell what.

(v) It doesn't do much good to know....that there are people.....smiling with admiration to see you breathing still.

## Working with Language

1. Fill in the blanks in the sentences below using the appropriate forms of the words given in the following box.

guide	succeed	chair	travel
pale	draw	true	

- (i) I met a \_\_\_\_\_ from an antique land.
- (ii) I need special \_\_\_\_\_ in mathematics. I can't count the number of times I have failed in the subject.
- (iii) The guide called Stephen Hawking a worthy \_\_\_\_\_ to Isaac Newton.
- (iv) His other problems \_\_\_\_\_ into insignificance beside this unforeseen mishap.
- (v) The meeting was \_\_\_\_\_ by the youngest member of the board.
- (vi) Some people say 'yours \_\_\_\_\_' when they informally refer to themselves.
- (vii) I wish it had been a \_\_\_\_\_ match. We would have been spared the noise of celebrations, at least.

- Ans.** (i) traveller (ii) guidance  
 (iii) successor (iv) paled  
 (v) chaired (vi) truly  
 (vii) drawn

2. Look at the following words.

Walk	stick
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Can you create a meaningful phrase using both these words?

(it is simple. Add-ing to the verb and use I before the noun. Put an article at the beginning.).....a walking stick

Now, make six such phrases using the words given in the box.

read / session	smile/ face	revolve/ chair
walk/ tour	dance/ doll	win/ chance





**Ans.**

- (i) A reading session
- (ii) A smiling face
- (iii) A revolving chair
- (iv) A walking tour
- (v) A dancing doll
- (vi) A winning chance

**3. Use all or both in the blanks. Tell your partner why you choose one or the other.**

- (i) He has two brothers....are always.
- (ii) More than ten persons called....of them wanted to see you.
- (iii) They \_\_\_\_\_ cheered the team.
- (iv) \_\_\_\_\_ her parents are teachers.
- (v) How much have you got? Give me....of it.

**Ans.** (i) both (ii) all (iii) all (iv) both (v) all

**4. Complete each sentence using the right form of the adjective given in the brackets.**

- (i) My friend has one of the \_\_\_\_\_ cars on the road.(fast)
- (ii) This is the \_\_\_\_\_ story I have ever read.(interesting)
- (iii) What you are doing now is \_\_\_\_\_ than what you did yesterday.(easy)
- (iv) Ramesh and his wife are both \_\_\_\_\_ (short)
- (v) He arrived \_\_\_\_\_ as usual. Even the chief guest came \_\_\_\_\_ than he did (late, early)

**Ans.**

- (i) fastest (fast)
- (ii) interesting (interesting)
- (iii) easier (easy)
- (iv) short (short)
- (v) late, earlier (late, early)



Next Generation School



## Speaking and Writing

1. Say the following words with correct stress. Pronounce the parts given colour loudly and clearly.

camel	balloon	decent	opinion
fearless	enormous	careful	fulfil
father	together	govern	degree
bottle	before		

- In a word having more than one syllabus, the stressed syllable is the one that is more **prominent than** the other syllable(s)
- A word has as many syllables as it has vowels. man (one syllable) manner (two syllable)
- The mark (') indicates that the first syllable, in 'manner' is more prominent than the other.

Ans.

Camel	balloon	decent	opinion
Fearless	enormous	careful	fulfil
Father	together	govern	degree
Bottle	before		

2. Underline stressed syllables in the following words. Consult the dictionary or ask the teacher if necessary.

Artist	mistake	accident	moment
Compare	satisfy	relation	table
Illegal	agree	backward	mountain

Ans.

artist	mistake	accident	moment
compare	satisfy	relation	table
illegal	agree	backward	mountain

3. Write a notice for the School Notice Board.

Step 1

Discuss why notices are put up on the notice board.



What kinds of 'notices' have you lately seen on the board?

How is a notice different from a letter or a descriptive paragraph?

## Step 2

Suppose you have lost or found

Something on the campus.

What have you lost or found?

You want to write a notice about it. If

You have lost something, you want it

Restored to you in case someone has

Found. If you have found something,

You want to return it to its owner.

## Step 3

Write a few lines describing the object

You have lost or found. Mention the

Purpose of the notice in clear terms.

Also write your name, class, section

And date.

## Step 4

Let one member of each group read

Aloud the notice to the entire class.

Compare your notice with the other

Notices and make changes, if

Necessary, with the help of the teacher.

Or

- Imagine that you are a journalist.
- You have been asked to interview the president of the village Panchayat.
- Write eight to ten questions you wish to ask.
- The questions should elicit comments as well as plans regarding water and electricity, cleanliness and school education in the village.

**Ans.** Notices are put on the notice board to give important and relevant information to all the students or whosoever is the reader. A notice answers all important questions related to one central topic for which it has been put up. For instance, date, time, venue etc of an



upcoming event ; or the colour , size, contents of something lost or found. lately, I have come across a number of notices, notice giving details about activities or events or the school cultural and academic calendar .

### **NOTICE**

ABC Public School LOST! LOST! LOST!

5<sup>th</sup> September , 2014

I have lost a wallet, a purple coloured rectangular wallet. The wallet contained my school Identity card and a few more person belongings. I lost it during my PT session in the playground. Anyone who finds it is requested to kindly return it.

Contact : 9999111333

(My father's mobile number)

XYZ,

Student of VIII A

**4. I imagine that you are journalist. You have been asked to interview the President of the village Panchayat. Write eight to ten questions you wish to ask. The questions should elicit comments as well as plans regarding water and electricity, cleanliness and school education in the village.**

**Ans.** Interview with the Village Panchayat

**Self, Journalist** : J

**Village Panchayat** : VP

**J** : Hello Sir, I have come to take your interview. Can you please tell me the population or head count of your village?

**VP** : Yes. There are approximately 500 people living in our village.

**J** : Do you provide the villagers with the basic facilities like hospitals, schools etc?

**VP** : Yes. Our village has one hospital and a school.

**J** : Sir, don't you think considering the number of people that live in your village, one hospital and one school is insufficient?

**VP** : We are planning to get at least one more of both hospital and school constructed.



- J** : Good to hear. Is there regular electricity in your village.
- VP** : No, not yet.
- J** : What are your plans regarding getting the village electrified?
- VP** : We are constant negotiation with the district officials to introduce electricity and replace kerosene lit lamps.
- J** : I am glad that you are doing a lot for this village.
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## Chapter Practice

### Very Short Answer Type Questions

**1. Give the name of the book written by Stephen Hawking?**

A Brief History of Time, one of the biggest best-sellers ever, was written by Stephen Hawking.

**2. Why had the writer come to England?**

The writer was working on his travels to England, for which he was also touring to Cambridge.

**3. What makes the writer feel stronger in weak times?**

Looking at physically disabled people like him, doing well in life, makes the writer feel stronger in weak times.

**4. Who reminds Kanga of Hawking's presence in Cambridge?**

The guide of the walking tour to Cambridge mentions the name of Stephen Hawking to Kanga and Kanga is immediately filled with the desire to meet him.

**5. List a couple of emotions that the writer saw in the scientist when he first saw him talking.**

Exhaustion, frustration and anguish.

**6. What does Stephen Hawking find most annoying?**

People pitying his disability and patronising him annoyed Stephen Hawking.

**7. State one disadvantage of Hawking's voice synthesiser.**

The synthesiser was unable to convey the inflection or the rise and fall of the speaker's voice. According to Kanga. This was one disadvantage of the synthesiser.



### **8. Hawking didn't talk much to the writer while they were in the garden. Why?**

In the garden, the rays of the sun cast a glare over the letters on the machine, which made it difficult for Stephen to look for the appropriate letters to be able to talk much.

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#### **Short Answer Type Questions**

#### **1. How does the writer overcome his depression over his disintegrated body?**

On seeing the state of Stephen Hawking and how creatively he lived, the writer becomes glad at observing the possibilities of his own body. Unlike Hawking, the writer had been blessed with greater movement. He could move his body, his finger, his hands, his neck and so on. In case of Hawking, Hawking could only make use of his fingers.

#### **2. Why does the writer's association with England change altogether by the time his journey comes to an end?**

For the writer, England was synonymous with Cambridge. However, by the time his journey ends England had taken an entirely new meaning. This meaning was supplied through his meeting with Stephen Hawking. Now, England stood for much more than Cambridge. It now stood for creativity, positivity, optimism and much more.

#### **3. While describing the scientist, what does the writer compare him to?**

The writer compares the sights or appearance of Hawking to a picture that one sees in a newspaper or a magazine. It was as stiff and lifeless as those pictures, except for it being three-dimensional.

#### **4. What were the six questions that the writer asked the scientist?**

- (i) Had the scientist been brave?
- (ii) Did he laugh often?
- (iii) Did the scientist find it annoying when he is disturbed by people?
- (iv) What is the best thing of being a disabled person?
- (v) If he was relieved or felt better on knowing that people admired him.
- (vi) Hawking's message for other disabled people.

#### **5. What did the writer have to say about the body-soul nexus?**

According to the writer he had never been a believer in the idea of transcendence of the soul. Yet, seeing Stephen Hawking, he became sure that the body was merely the irrelevant outward covering. The only thing worthwhile was the soul or the spirit of the human being.

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### Long Answer Type Questions

#### 1. Give detailed account of the appearance of Stephen Hawking.

When the writer first saw Stephen Hawking, he thought he was seeing a three-dimensional photograph of him and later thought him to be as stiff as a corpse. Hawking's body had entirely tilted to one side, in it was also a shrunken body that visible through the pale blue shirt. However, his eyes seemed to be life like and talking still, they appeared to convey something great and urgent. The scientist was entirely dependent on the automated sound produced by the computerised synthesiser for talking.

#### 2. "I knew that my journey was over." Why does the writer say so?

The writer was doing research and writing about his travels to Britain in a book. His meeting with Stephen Hawking, the living genius and a great source of inspiration, was the ultimate part of his journey. For the writer the journey had ended right there because he was fully content of his visit to England and couldn't have asked for anything better. It was also a metaphorical way of calling it the end of journey as he had attained a merger with his inspiration and had become aware that this is exactly how he would like to view himself in future.

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### Value Based Questions

#### 1. It is right to judge a person on the basis of his physical ability?

No, it is not right to judge a person on the basis of their mental strength. It is possible that people without any disability are weak and pitiable.

At the sometime, disabled people need not necessarily be weak. It is possible for such people to have a strong will power and determination to overcome challenges, as in the case of Stephen Hawking.

#### 2. What lesson do we learn about learning?

The chapter 'A Visit to Cambridge' imparts a very important lesson about learning. It showcases how even a disabled person could be a source of inspiration. If a person has a zeal to learn and advance in life, no deformity or disability could be hindrance in his path. A man learns by his desire to learn and not through any external things such as physical ability.

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## Extract Based Questions

### Extract 1

**Directions (Q. Nos. 1- 6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.**

“An hour later, we were ready to leave. I didn't know what to do. I could not kiss him or cry. I touched his shoulder and wheeled out into the summer evening. I looked back, and I knew he was waving, though he wasn't. Watching him, an embodiment of my bravest self, the one I was moving towards, the one I had believed in for so many years, alone, I knew that my journey was over. For now.”

**1. What did the writer wish to do when he was leaving Hawking's residence?**

- (a) The writer wanted to kiss Hawking and cry
- (b) The writer wanted to hug Hawking
- (c) The writer wanted to run away
- (d) The writer wanted to say kind words to Hawking

**Ans. (a) The writer wanted to kiss Hawking and cry**

**2. How long did the meeting last?**

- (a) Less than an hour
- (b) More than an hour
- (c) Two hours
- (d) Four hours

**Ans. (b) More than an hour**

**3. Was Hawking waving when the writer left?**

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

**Ans. (b) No. Hawking was not waving when the writer left.**

**4. What does the writer mean by “an embodiment of my bravest self”?**

The phrase “an embodiment of my bravest self” meant that what was merely an idea for the writer, Stephen Hawking was a living example of it.



**5. Discuss the writer's idea of the end of his journey.**

The writer calls it the end of his journey because he had attained the ultimate in meeting Stephen Hawking. He had learnt the message of how to live a creative and happy life despite difficulties and disabilities.

**6. Does this meeting initiate any change in the writer?**

The meeting makes the writer a more content person. The writer now becomes satisfied with his life and begins to look at his disability differently.

**Extract 2**

**Directions (Q. Nos. 1- 6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.**

"Is there any advice you can give the disabled people, something that might help make life better?" "They should concentrate on what they are good at, I think things like the disabled Olympics are a waste of time." "I know what you mean." I remembered the years I'd spent trying to play a Spanish guitar considerably larger than I was, and how gleefully I had unstrung it one night.

**1. Which activity had the writer been learning?**

- (a) Swimming
- (b) Spanish guitar
- (c) Chinese cuisine
- (d) Singing

**Ans. (b) Spanish guitar**

**2. What was the scientist deadly against?**

- (a) The disabled Olympics
- (b) The Spanish Guitar
- (c) Swimming
- (d) Writing

**Ans. (a) The disabled Olympics**

**3. In one sentence state the advice given by Hawking to other disabled people.**

- (a) To concentrate on what they were good at
- (b) To master the art of writing
- (c) To learn to smile and laugh at their sufferings
- (d) To not meet any people

**Ans. (a) To concentrate on what they were good at**



**4. Why does he give this advice?**

He gives this advice because he thinks that disabled people were wasting their time by imitating normal people.

**5. How well does the writer connect with this advice?**

The writer connects well with this advice because he too had spent a lot of time learning the Spanish guitar, something that was large than him and not meant for him.

**6. With what intention were activities like disabled Olympics introduced?**

The activities like disabled Olympics were introduced with an intention to bring disabled people at par with normal people.

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