



## Grade IX

### Lesson 6. My Childhood

- A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

Prose

#### Soul of the Chapter

Dr. Kalam in his autobiography tells us about his childhood. One of the world's greatest scientists. Dr. Kalam was born in 1931 to a middle-class Muslim family in Rameswaram. His journey from a middle-class family in Rameswaram to the President's House was not a smooth one. He worked hard and faced all the odds of life. Born in a conservative society, his family, his teachers and his friends influenced Dr. Kalam in his childhood. His father, Jainulabdeen, was not much educated but he was very generous and a kind person. He was not rich but he provided Abdul with a happy and secure childhood. Abdul inherited honesty and self-discipline from his father.

Abdul earned his first wages by working as a helping hand to his cousin, Samsuddin who distributed newspapers in Rameswaram.

Apart from his parents, he was also influenced by some of his friends and teachers. He had three close friends, Ramanadha Sastry, Arvindan and Sivaprakasan. Once when he was in the fifth standard, a new teacher asked him not to sit in the front row along with the high caste Brahmin boys. Abdul found Ramanadha Sastry weeping as he went to the last row. This made a lasting impression on Abdul.

Abdul was deeply influenced by his science teacher, Sivasubramania Iyer. Abdul learnt the lesson of breaking social barriers from him. Iyer invited Abdul to his home for a meal. His wife was an orthodox Brahmin. She refused to serve a Muslim boy in her pure kitchen. Iyer served Abdul with his own hand and sat down beside him to eat his meal. He convinced his wife to serve meal with her own hands.

Now Abdul was grown up. His father sent him to the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram for higher studies. His father remarked, "Abdul! I know you have to go away and grow." And thus began his journey.



## NCERT Questions

### Thinking About the Text

#### I. Answer these questions in one or two sentences each.

##### 1. Where was Abdul Kalam's house?

Abdul Kalam's house was on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram.

##### 2. What do you think Dinamani is the name of? Give a reason for your answer.

Dinamani is the name of a local newspaper. It is so because Kalam traced the stories of the war in the headlines in Dinamani.

##### 3. Who were Abdul Kalam's school friends? What did they later become?

Ramanadha Shastry, Aravindan and Shivaprakasan were Abdul Kalam's school friends. Ramanadha Shastry became the high priest of the Rameshwaram temple, Aravindan a transport businessman and Shivaprakasan was the catering contractor for the southern railways.

##### 4. How did Abdul Kalam earn his first wages?

During the Second World War, the newspapers were bundled and thrown out of a moving train. Abdul Kalam earned his first wages by helping his cousin, who distributed newspapers in Rameswaram, to these bundles.

##### 5. Had he earned any money before that? In what way?

Yes, Abdul Kalam had earned some money before he started helping his cousin. When the Second World War broke out, there was a sudden demand for tamarind seeds in the market. He collected the seeds and sold them at a provision shop on Mosque Street. Usually, a day's collection earned him one anna.

#### II. Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (about 30 words).

##### 1. How does the author describe: (i) his father, (ii) his mother, (iii) himself?

i. Kalam's father, Jainulabdeen was not a wealthy or educated person. However, he was an honest and generous man, who possessed great innate wisdom. He was self-disciplined and avoided all inessential luxuries.



- ii. Kalam's mother, Ashiamma was an ideal helpmate to her husband. She believed in goodness and profound kindness, and fed many people everyday.
- iii. The author describes himself as a short boy with undistinguished looks, who had a secure childhood. An honest and self-disciplined person, Dr. Kalam believed in goodness and kindness.

**2. What characteristics does he say he inherited from his parents?**

He says that he inherited honesty and self-discipline from his father. He further says that he inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness from his mother?

**III. Discuss these questions in class with your teacher and then write down your answers in two or three paragraphs each.**

**1. "On the whole, the small society of Rameswaram was very rigid in terms of the segregation of different social groups", says the author.**

- i. Which social groups does he mention? Were these groups easily identifiable (for example, by the way they dressed).
  - ii. Were they aware only of their differences or did they also naturally share friendships and experiences? (Think of the bedtime stories in Kalam's house; of who his friends were; and of what used to take place in the pond near his house.)
  - iii. The author speaks both of people who were very aware of the differences among them and those who tried to bridge these differences. Can you identify such people in the next?
  - iv. Narrate two incidents that show how differences can be created, and also how they can be resolved. How can people change their attitudes?
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- i. Dr. Kalam mentions two social groups of Rameshwaram - orthodox Brahmins and Muslims. Yes, these groups were easily identifiable. For example, by the way they dressed; Kalam's wore a cap which marked him as a Muslim. Ramanadha Sastry wore a sacred thread which marked him a Hindu.



- ii. No, they were not only aware of their differences but also they naturally shared friendships and experiences.

Kalam's mother and grandmother would tell the children of his family bedtime stories about the events from the Ramayana and from the life of the prophet. During the Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony, his family used to arrange boats with a special platform for carrying idols of the Lord from the temple to the marriage site, situated in the middle of the pond called RamaTirtha which was near his house.

- iii. The people who were very aware of the differences among them, were the young teacher who joined the Rameshwaram elementary school and came to teach Kalam's class, the fifth standard; and his science teacher's conservative wife who refused to serve Kalam in her kitchen. Those who tried to bridge these differences were Kalam's science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer who invited, served and dined with him to break social barriers so that people could mingle easily; and Lakshmana Sastry who conveyed the strong sense of conviction to the new young teacher to reform him.
- iv. The first incident to show how differences can be created is that when the new young teacher found a Muslim student sitting beside a Hindu student. He asked Kalam to sit in the last row.

The other incident shows how differences can be resolved. The author's science teacher, Sivasubramania Iyer, though an orthodox Brahmin with a very conservative outlook tried to bridge these difference.

2. (i) Why did Abdul Kalam want to leave Rameswaram?

(ii) What did his father say to this?

(iii) What do you think his words mean? Why do you think he spoke those words?

- (i) Kalam wanted to leave Rameswaram for further studies. He wanted to study at the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram.

- (ii) Kalam's father said that he knew that one day Kalam had to go away to grow. He gave him the analogy of a seagull that flies across the sun alone and without a nest. He then quoted Khalil Gibran to Kalam's mother saying that her children were not their own children. They were the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. They come through their parents, but not from them. They may give them their love, but not their thoughts as the children have their own thoughts.
- (iii) Abdul Kalam's father's words bear great meanings. First, he inspired his son to go ahead above giving the example of the seagull. Secondly, he explained Kalam's mother to give his son opportunities to get higher education and to make progress. I think he spoke those words to encourage Abdul Kalam and to control the emotional attachment of his wife for Kalam.
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### Thinking about Language

#### I. Find the sentences in the text where these words occur:

erupt surge trace undistinguished casualty

Look these words up in a dictionary which gives examples of how they are used. Now answer the following questions.

1. What are the things that can erupt? Use examples to explain the various meanings of erupt. Now do the same for the word surge. What things can surge?

A few things that can erupt are anger, volcano, tooth, rash, riots, unrest, etc. Erupt has several meanings. Their explanation, with examples, is given as under.

- (i) Start unexpectedly

**Example:** Riots erupted in the city.

- (ii) Start to burn or burst into flames

**Example:** The spark soon erupted into flames.

- (iii) Become active and spew forth lava and rocks

**Example:** The molten lava erupted out of the active volcano.



(iv) Forceful and violent release of something pent up

**Example:** The difference in their views soon erupted in a fight.

(v) Sudden appearance on the skin

**Example:** Eruption of the wisdom tooth gives a lot of pain.

(vi) Break up

**Example:** Eruption of the wisdom tooth gives a lot of pain.

Things that can surge are pride, anxiety, waves, boats, army, etc. the several meanings it has can be explained with the following examples:

(i) Sudden forceful flow

**Example:** The boy drowned in the surging waves.

(ii) Rise and move forward

**Example:** The army surged towards their enemy.

(iii) Heave upward under the influence of a natural force

**Example:** The boat surged in the high tide.

(iv) See one's performance improve

**Example:** Hard work helped to surge Sandra's scores.

(v) A sudden or abrupt strong increase

**Example:** The surge in the stock market left people in a shock.

(vi) Rise rapidly

**Example:** As time passed, her tension surged.

**2. What are the meanings of the word trace and which of the meanings is closest to the word in the text?**

The following are the meanings of the word trace:

(i) Follow, discover, or ascertain the course of development of something

(ii) Make a mark or lines on a surface

(iii) To go back over again

(iv) Pursue or chase relentlessly

(v) Find or discover through investigation

(vi) Make one's course or travel along a path; travel or pass over, around, or along

(vii) Read with difficulty

The closest meaning of the word 'trace' in the text is 'to find or discover through investigation'.

3. Can you find **undistinguished** in your dictionary? (If not, look for the word **distinguished** and say what **undistinguished** mean).

No, the word **undistinguished** does not exist in the dictionary. However, its meaning can be derived from the meaning of the word 'distinguished', which denotes the 'special or eminent appearance or behaviour of a person'. Thus, **undistinguished** symbolises 'ordinary appearance or behaviour of a person'.

II. 1. Match the phrases in Column A with their meanings in Column B.

A	B
i. broke out	a. an attitude of kindness, a readiness to give freely
ii. in accordance with	b. was not able to tolerate
iii. a helping hand	c. began suddenly in a violent way
iv. could not stomach	d. assistance
v. generosity of spirit	e. persons with power to make decisions
vi. figures of authority	f. according to a particular rule, principle, or system

Column A	Column B
i. broke out	c. began suddenly in a violent way
ii. in accordance with	f. according to a particular rule, principle, or system
iii. a helping hand	d. assistance
iv. could not stomach	b. was not able to tolerate
v. generosity of spirit	a. an attitude of kindness, a readiness to give freely
vi. figures of authority	e. persons with power to make decisions

2. Study the words in *italics* in the sentences below. They are formed by prefixing **un** - or **in** - to their antonyms (words opposite in meaning).

- I was a short boy with rather *undistinguished* looks. (un + distinguished)

- My austere father used to avoid all *inessential* comforts. (in + essential)
- The area was completely *unaffected* by the war. (un + affected)
- He should not spread the poison of social *inequality* and communal *intolerance*. (in + equality, in + tolerance)

Now form the opposites of the words below by prefixing un- or in-. The prefix in- can also have the forms il-, ir-, or im- (for example; *illiterate* -il + literate, *impractical* -im + practical, *irrational* -ir + rational). You may consult a dictionary if you wish.

_____adequate	_____acceptable	_____regular	_____tolerant
_____demanding	_____active	_____true	_____permanent
_____patriotic	_____disputed	_____accessible	_____coherent
_____logical	_____legal	_____responsible	_____possible

inadequate	unacceptable	irregular	intolerant
undemanding	inactive	untrue	impermanent
unpatriotic	undisputed	inaccessible	incoherent
illogical	illegal	irresponsible	impossible

### III. Passive Voice.

Study these sentences:

- My parents *were regarded* as an ideal couple.
- I *was asked* to go and sit on the back bench.
- Such problems have to be *confronted*.

The italicised verbs in these sentences are made up of a form of the verb *be* and a past participle. (For example: *were* + *regarded*, *was* + *asked*, *be* + *confronted*) these sentences focus on *what happens*, rather than *who does what*. Notice that the doer of the action is not included in the sentences.

If necessary, we can mention the doer of the action is not included in the sentences.





- The tree was struck by *lightning*.
- The flag was unfurled by the *Chief Guest*.

**IV. Rewrite the sentences below, changing the verbs in brackets into the passive form.**

- 1. In yesterday's competition the prizes (give away) by the Principal.**

In yesterday's competition the prizes were given away by the Principal.

- 2. In spite of financial difficulties, the labourers (pay) on time.**

In spite of financial difficulties, the labours were paid on time.

- 3. On Republic Day, vehicles (not allow) beyond this point.**

On Republic Day, vehicles are not allow beyond this point.

- 4. Second-hand books (buy and sell) on the pavement every Saturday.**

Second-hand books are bought and sold on the pavement every Saturday.

- 5. Elections to the Lok Sabha (hold) every five years.**

Elections to the Lok Sabha are held every five years.

- 6. Our National Anthem (compose) Rabindranath Tagore.**

Our National Anthem was composed by Rabindranath Tagore.

**V. Rewrite the paragraphs below, using the correct form of the verb given in brackets.**

- 1. How Helmets Came To Be Used in Cricket**

Nari Contractor was the Captain and opening batsman for India in the 1960s. The Indian cricket team went on a tour to the West Indies in 1962. In a match against Barbados in Bridgetown, Nari Constractor (seriously injure and collapse). In those days helmets (not wear). Contractor (hit) on the head by a bouncer form Charlie Griffith. Contractor's skull (fracture). The entire team (deeply concern). The West Indies players (worry). Contractor (rush) to hospital. He (accompany) by Frank Worrell, the Captain of the West Indies Team. Blood (donate) by the West Indies





players. Thanks to the timely help, Contractor (save). Nowadays helmets (routinely use) against bowlers.

### **How Helmets Came To Be Used in Cricket**

Nari Contractor was the Captain and opening batsman for India in the 1960s. The Indian cricket team went on a tour to the West Indies in 1962. In a match against Barbados in Bridgetown, Nari Contractor seriously injured and collapse. In those days helmets were not worn. Contractor was hit on the head by a bouncer from Charlie Griffith. Contractor's skull had fractured. The entire team was deeply concerned. The West Indies players were worried. Contractor was rushed to hospital. He was accompanied by Frank Worrell, the Captain of the West Indies Team. Blood was donated by the West Indies players. Thanks to the timely help, Contractor was saved. Nowadays helmets are routinely used against bowlers.

## **2. Oil from Seeds**

Vegetable oils (make) from seeds and fruits of many plants growing all over the world, from tiny sesame seeds to big, juicy coconuts. Oil (produce) from cotton seeds, groundnuts, soya beans and sunflower seeds. Olive oil (use) for cooking, salad dressing etc. Olives (shake) from the tress and (gather) up, usually by hand. The olives (ground) to a thick paste which is spread onto special mats. Then the mats (layer) up on the pressing machine which will gently squeeze them to produce olive oil.

### **Oil from Seeds**

Vegetable oils are made from seeds and fruits of many plants growing all over the world, from tiny sesame seeds to big, juicy coconuts. Oil is produced from cotton seeds, groundnuts, soya beans and sunflower seeds. Olive oil is used for cooking, salad dressing etc. Olives are shaken from the tress and gathered up, usually by hand. The olives are ground to a thick paste which is spread onto special mats. Then the mats are layered up on the pressing machine which will gently squeeze them to produce olive oil.



## Solved Question Bank

### Reference-to-Context Questions

**Q. Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow:**

1. I was one of many children - a short boy with rather undistinguished looks, born to tall and handsome parents. We lived in our ancestral house, which was built in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was a fairy large pucca house, made of limestone and brick, on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram. My austere father used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries.

a. \_\_\_\_\_ was a short boy with undistinguished looks.

Dr. Abdul Kalam

b. In contrast his parents were \_\_\_\_\_.

Tall and handsome

c. His father used to provide him all inessential comforts. True/False

False

d. 'Strict or stern' means the same as \_\_\_\_\_ in the above lines.

'Austere'

2. A day's collection would fetch me the princely sum of one anna. My brother-in-law Jallaluddin would me stories about the War which I would later attempt to trace in the headlines in Dinamani. Our area, being isolated, was completely unaffected by the War.

a. Dinamani is the name of a \_\_\_\_\_.

Newspaper

b. Jallaluddin was the brother-in-law of \_\_\_\_\_.

Abdul Kalam

c. Their area was not touched by the war as it was a remote area.

True/False

True



d. The word in the passage that means the same as 'grand or royal' is \_\_\_\_\_.

'Princely'

3. That forced my cousin Samsuddin, who distributed newspapers in Rameswaram, to look for a helping hand to catch the bundles and as if naturally, I filled the slot. Samsuddin helped me earn my first wages. Half a century later, I can still feel the surge of pride in earning my own money for the first time.

a. Samsuddin was the cousin of \_\_\_\_\_.

Abdul Kalam

b. \_\_\_\_\_ helped him earn his initial wages.

Samsuddin

c. Samsuddin was quite proud of his first earning. True/False

False

d. 'Artificially' is the opposite of the word \_\_\_\_\_ in the passage.

'Naturally'

4. I inherited honesty and self-discipline from my father; from my mother, I inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness and so did my three brothers and sister. I had three close friends in my childhood - Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakasan. All these boys were from orthodox Hindu Brahmin families.

a. Abdul's father was known for his \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Honesty, self-discipline

b. Abdul acquired deep kindness and \_\_\_\_\_ from his \_\_\_\_\_.

Faith in goodness, mother

c. All the three close friends of Abdul belonged to Orthodox Hindu Brahmin families. True/False

True

d. The word in the passage that means the same as 'conservative' is \_\_\_\_\_.

'Orthodox'





5. During the annual Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony, our family used to arrange boats with a special platform for carrying idols of the Lord from the temple to the marriage site, situated in the middle of the pond called Rama Tirtha which was near our house.

a. \_\_\_\_\_ ceremony used to take place annually.

Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam

b. \_\_\_\_\_ was located close by Abdul's home.

Rama Tirtha

c. Kalam's family never arranged boats for carrying idols. **True/False**

False

d. The opposite of the word 'special' can be \_\_\_\_\_.

'Ordinary'

6. I used to wear a cap which marked me as a Muslim, and I always sat in the front row next to Ramanadha Sastry, who wore a sacred thread. The new teacher could not stomach a Hindu priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy. In accordance with our social ranking as the new teacher saw it, I was asked to go and sit on the back bench.

a. Abdul's partner in the class was \_\_\_\_\_.

Ramanadha Sastry

b. The new teacher asked Abdul to sit on the back bench corresponding to \_\_\_\_\_.

Their social ranking

c. Abdul was clearly noticeable as a Muslim because of his cap. **True/False**

True

d. The phrase in the above passage that means the same as 'couldn't stand the sight of something' is \_\_\_\_\_.

'Could not stomach'

7. After school, we went home and told our respective parents about the incident. Lakshmana Sastry summoned the teacher, and in our presence, told the teacher that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the







minds of innocent children. He bluntly asked the teacher to either apologise or quite the school and the island.

a. 'We' in the above lines has been used for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Abdul Kalam, Ramanadha Sastry

b. After facing inequality at school, both the children informed \_\_\_\_\_ about the school incident.

Their parents

c. The parents ordered the teacher to either apologize or quit the school.

True/False

False

d. The word that means the same as 'not being able to bear' in the passage is \_\_\_\_\_.

'Intolerance'

8. On the whole, the small society of Rameswaram was very rigid in terms of the segregation of different social groups. However, my science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer, though an orthodox Brahmin with a very conservative wife, was something of a rebel. He did his best to break social barriers so that people from varying backgrounds could mingle easily. He used to spend hours with me and would say, "Kalam, I want you to develop so that you are on a par with the highly educated people of the big cities."

a. The small society of Rameswaram was inflexible as far as \_\_\_\_\_ was concerned.

The segregation of social groups

b. Kalam was taught science by \_\_\_\_\_.

Sivasubramania Iyer

c. His science teacher wanted his best to break social barriers so that people could socialize easily.

True/False

False





d. Pick a pair of synonym from the above lines.

Orthodox and conservative

9. One day, he invited me to his home for a meal. His wife was horrified at the idea of a Muslim boy being invited to dine in her ritually pure kitchen. She refused to serve me in her kitchen. Sivasubramania Iyer was not perturbed, nor did he get angry with his wife, but instead, served me with his own hands and sat down beside me to eat his meal.

a. \_\_\_\_\_ was invited by \_\_\_\_\_ for a meal.

Abdul, Sivasubramania Iyer

b. 'She' refers to \_\_\_\_\_.

Sivasubramania Iyer's wife

c. The lady was welcoming the idea of a Muslim boy invited for a meal.

True/False

False

d. The opposite of the word 'pure' is \_\_\_\_\_.

'Impure'

10. The whole country was filled with an unprecedented optimism. I asked my father for permission to leave Rameswaram and study at the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram.

a. 'I' in the above lines is \_\_\_\_\_.

Abdul Kalam

b. The district headquarters was located in \_\_\_\_\_.

Ramanathapuram

c. The country was filled with optimism because of India's freedom. True/False

True

d. The word \_\_\_\_\_ means the same as 'never done or known before'

'Unprecedented'





11. Does the seagull not fly across the sub, alone and without a nest? He quoted Khalil Gibran to my hesitant mother, 'You children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself'.

a. The \_\_\_\_\_ is a seabird.

Seagull

b. 'Your children are not your children! The speaker of the above line is \_\_\_\_\_.

Kalam's father

c. Kalam's mother was hesitant as he was leaving for higher studies. True/False

True

d. The word \_\_\_\_\_ means the same as 'nervous'

'Hesitant'

### Short Answer Type Questions

1. Who were Abdul Kalam's school friends? What did they become later?

Ramanadha Sastry, Arvindan and Sivaprakashan were Abdul Kalam's school friends. Later Ramanadha Sastry became the priest of Rameswaram temple. Arvindan started transport business and Sivaprakashan became a catering contractor for the Southern Railways.

2. How did Abdul Kalam earn his first wages?

During the World War an emergency was declared. The stoppage of trains at Rameswaram was suspended. His cousin Samsuddin needed a helping hand who could catch the bundle at the station thrown from the train. Abdul offered his help and earned his first wages.

3. What characteristics did Abdul inherit from his parents?

Abdul's parents were simple but full of wisdom. His father avoided all inessential comforts and luxuries. Abdul inherited honesty and self-discipline from his father and faith in goodness and deep kindness from his mother.



#### **4. What did Abdul tell about his days during the World War?**

Abdul Kalam was only eight years old when the World War broke out in 1939. His brother-in-law Jallaluddin used to tell him stories about the Second World War. He read these stories in the newspapers too.

#### **5. What did the new teacher do in the classroom?**

The new teacher tried to isolate Kalam from his friends. He could not see a Muslim boy sitting with a Brahmin boy. He asked Abdul to sit in the last row of the class. He hurt the feelings of the children.

#### **6. What lesson did the priest Lakshmana Sastry teach the new teacher?**

The young teacher asked Abdul not to sit in the front row with the son of the priest as he was a Muslim. When Lakshmana Sastry came to know about this, he scolded the teacher and told him not to spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children.

#### **7. Why was the science teacher called a rebel?**

Mr Sivasubramania, a science teacher, was a rebel of his own kind. He did not believe in social barriers. He held these barriers responsible for social division and communal hatred. He wanted to break all the social barriers.

#### **8. How was Abdul treated by the wife of his science teacher when he was invited to have meal?**

Sivasubramania's wife was a conservative lady. She did not like the idea that a Muslim boy should come and eat in her ritually pure kitchen. She didn't allow Abdul to eat in her kitchen. However, for the second time she changed her stand and gave food to Abdul by her own hands.

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### **Long Answer Type Questions**

#### **1. How did Abdul Kalam earn his first wages? How did he feel at that time? Explain.**

Abdul Kalam's cousin, Samsuddin, helped him earn his first wages. It was the time of the Second World War. Initially his area, being isolated, was completely unaffected



by this War. But, soon the Indian forces also joined the allied forces. A state of emergency was declared. The first casualty of state emergency was the suspension of train halt at Rameswaram. It affected Sansuddin's business adversely. He used to collect newspapers from the station and distribute in Rameswaram. Now, the bundles of newspapers had to be thrown from the station and distribute in Rameswaram. Now, the bundles of newspapers had to be thrown from the moving train. Samsuddin wanted a helping hand who could catch the bundles thrown from the moving train. Abdul Kalam was engaged for this job by him. Thus, he earned his wages for the first time. Abdul Kalam felt a great sense of pride when he earned his first wages.

**2. *Once you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted.***

**What system is this sentence referring to? What are such problems?**

Abdul Kalam's science teacher, Sivasubramania Iyer, was a rebel by nature. He was deadly against the prevalent social system. He did his best to break social barriers so that people from varying backgrounds could mingle easily. When he invited Abdul Kalam to his home, his wife, in keeping with the customs, refused to serve him food. But, Iyer not only served him food himself but also invited him next week again. Next week, Iyer's wife served Kalam food with her own hands.

He told Abdul Kalam that when one decides to go against the age-old social barriers, one has to face many problems. He proved that if one is determined to face problems and change the system, one succeeds. He also tried to teach that sometimes it is good to rebel.

**3. *Subramania Iyer was a rebel by nature. Discuss.***

Mr. Subramania Iyer did not believe in social barriers and wanted to break them. When he invited Abdul Kalam to his house, his conservative wife refused to serve food to a Muslim boy. But Iyer served him with his own hands and ate his meals sitting beside him. He proved it by serving Abdul food with his own hands. He inspired his wife also to serve food when Abdul Kalam visited the second time. When Iyer's wife refused to serve him food, Abdul was hesitated. Iyer remarked, "Once you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted." He was a







rebel and persistence in his efforts. He was not orthodox. He proved that an individual can bring change in the system.

**4. Narrate the incident of new teacher's behaviour in the classroom. Was his action appropriate?**

When Abdul Kalam was in the fifth standard, a new teacher came to their class. He had a conservative and narrow outlook. He saw Abdul Kalam sitting in the front row with Ramanadha Sastry. He identified Abdul Kalam as a Muslim boy from the cap he was wearing. The teacher could not digest a Muslim boy sitting with a Brahmin boy. He immediately asked Abdul to get up and sit in the last row. The teacher believed in the prevalent social ranking. Abdul Kalam and Ramanadha Sastry, both felt very sad. Ramanasha Sastry was weeping when Kalam was asked to sit on the last bench. The new teachers action was not appropriate at all, because his behaviour spreads the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children.

**5. Do you think the qualities of Kalam's father made Kalam what he was? How? What characteristics have you inherited from your parents?**

Yes, I think that the qualities of Kalam's father made Kalam what he was. He possessed all the qualities from his father. There are some qualities like innate wisdom, truth, generosity of spirit, honesty and self-discipline that make us a good human being. Abdul became a successful scientist and a great leader because of all these qualities from my father. I have inherited honesty, humbleness and self-discipline. All the inherited qualities make us determined and focussed in our work. I was motivated by my father, both mentally and emotionally.

**6. A secure childhood like Kalam's is very important for a child's growth. Do you agree?**

A secure childhood like Kalam's is very important for a child's growth. Childhood experiences go a very long way. If one is brought up in a good environment, one learns good values and these values, help in a long way. Secured childhood is very important for growth. Kalam had a secure childhood. He inherited good values from his parents. He had a good environment at home. He was secured both materially and emotionally.





Children with insecure childhood do not grow properly. They never inculcate good values. They have insecure life.

**7. Abdul Kalam was disturbed by the behaviour of the new teacher in the class. Do you appreciate the way Lakshman Shastri treated the new teacher?**

Abdul was emotionally disturbed. He never felt like this. Nobody made him feel he was a Muslim. He always got respect and love from his friends who were Hindus. There was no such feelings. But his new teacher behaved strangely. He came to his class and asked him to sit in the last row. He could not tolerate sitting of a Muslim boy with the son of a Hindu priest. The matter was reported to Lakshman Shastri. He immediately called the new teacher and warned him not to repeat such an act in future. Yes, it is appreciable that he handled the situation in a mature way. He reformed the teacher too. He taught the teacher that one should not honour only one's own religion but respect other religions. One should work for communal harmony.

**8. Write a letter to your friend telling him how you earned your first wage. You are Abdul Kalam. Describe your feelings expressively.**

28 February 20XX

Dear Raman

Hope this letter of mine finds you in the best of your health and spirits.

You know today I earned my first wage at my own. My joy knew no bounds for this. My uncle Samsuddin sells newspapers. He gets them through the train. But nowadays, the train does not stop here so someone has to throw the bundles from the moving train. My uncle gave me the work to catch those bundles. I did it and distributed the newspapers in Rameshwarm. I had to distribute five hundred newspapers daily. He paid me for this. This was my first wage. It was so satisfying that I loved this job. I had a feeling of pride in earning my own money for the first time. Convey my regards to elders and love to young ones.

Your friend

Abdul