

TWO STORIES ABOUT FLYING (HIS FIRST FLIGHT)**Introduction:**

The story by “Liam O’ Flaherty” is an account of a young bird that is afraid to fly for the first time. He believes that his wings would not support him. Despite his younger siblings flying fearlessly with much shorter wings, he could not gather the courage to do the same. He was punished to stay hungry if he did not try. Thus, it was his mother that compelled him to fly by using food as a trap. The lesson reflects how one hesitates to take the first step and that fear is all in the mind. One should trust one’s abilities because “the fear of suffering is worse than the suffering itself”.

EXPLANATION:

Bottom line: In fact, the mother seemed to be well aware of the Chinese proverb “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” And why, she might have even heard of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s maxim “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

From an educator’s point of view ‘His First Flight’ shows how to tactfully impart motivation. The parents of the seagull had tried to cajole and threaten him in different ways, but to no avail. The mother knew well that the trick was to arouse his need and she eventually lures him out with food – to his momentary horror and then great joy.

He felt that he was going to starve to death on his ledge. Even his mother was not looking at him. She was tearing a piece of fish with her beak. The sight of food maddened him. He cried at her but she just screamed back mockingly.

His First Flight’ by Liam O’ Flaherty is a true parable about overcoming fears in life. Every journey of a thousand miles begins with but a single step. But that single step is the most difficult one to make. Conquer the fear and venture forth; and we realize that we were born with wings.

Liam O’ Flaherty was a keen observer of sea life and he believed that man has a lot to learn from nature. He has given a humane touch to the seagull’s plight so that the reader is reminded of the nervousness he too might experience before doing something new.

Suddenly, he felt the joy, seeing his mother approaching him with food. But she halted, keeping the fish just out of his reach. Maddened by hunger, he dived at the fish. But his mother flew upward and he started falling. A monstrous terror seized him, but the next moment he realized that he was flying. He was born to fly and he had made his first flight.

The story is also a metaphorical assertion that everyone needs to be independent even while staying involved in family life. But the joy of independence is not meant for cowards.

The young seagull looked down desperately at the vast expanse of sea that stretched down beneath his ledge. He was hungry. His parents had flown away along with his brothers and his little sister, leaving him alone on the rock without food. They could all fly; and he could not. He had tried several times to run forward to the brink of the ledge and flap his wings but he became afraid. He was certain that his wings would not support him. His parents had tried countless times to make him fly. But for the life of him he would not make an attempt.

Themes: ‘His First Flight’ highlights the importance of independence, self-belief and confidence, and the need for motivation to attain goals. Necessity is always the mother of invention, but it sometimes needs an initial spark from outside.

Answer the following questions:-

- 1) Why was the young seagull afraid to fly? Do you think all young birds are afraid to make their first flight, or are some birds more timid than others? Do you think a human baby also finds it a challenge to take its first steps?
- 2) “The sight of the food maddened him.” What does this suggest? What compelled the young seagull to finally fly?
- 3) “They were beckoning to him, calling shrilly.” Why did the seagull’s . father and mother threaten him and cajole him to fly?
- 4) How did the seagull`s parents try to make him fly?
- 5) Why did the young seagull feel very miserable on the ledge?
- 6) When did the seagull get over his fear of flying over the sea?
- 7) How did the young seagull and his family celebrate his first flight?
- 8) Do you think that the seagull`s family loved him? Justify their attitude towards him?

GRAMMAR AND WRITING

1. Read the conversation given below and complete the paragraph that follows.

Tanu : How did you spend your vacation?
Astha : I visited Goa with my parents.
Tanu : Have you been there earlier too?
Astha : No, it was my first trip.

Tanu asked (a) Astha replied that
(b)..... Tanu further asked (c)
Astha replied in negative, saying that (d).....

2. **ERROR OF EDITION:-**

Of all the discoveries that has made human
Progress possible, none exceed the wheel for importance.
The invention on wheel not only helped
Transport but ushered on the age of machinery.
cards to their fathers.

INCORRECT	CORRECT
.....	(a)
.....	(b)
.....	(c)
.....	(d)

3. **ERROR OF OMISSION :**

Twenty years ago, kids in school never even heard the internet. The internet is a vast resource for of types of information. It is like a giant bulletin board that whole world uses!

BEFORE	ANSWER	AFTER
.....	(a)
.....	(b)
.....	(c)
.....	(d)

4. **REARRANGE FOLLOWING WORDS/PHRASES TO FORM MEANINGFULL SENTENCES:**

- a) He/broke/at/Vigyan Bhawan/the/ security/cordon/freely/mingle/to
- b) Answered/he/questions/nuclear/weapons/topics/and/other/on
- c) The/gift/a toy/spread some joy/launched/was/scheme/also

5. **LETTER OF ENQUIRY:**

You are Prabhash, a student of class X and a resident of Mumbai. You are interested in learning French in your summer vacations. Write a letter to the Director of Language Learning Institute, Colaba, Mumbai, asking him about the various courses offered by the French during the summers.