



## INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

Department: ENGLISH

Class: IX

Topic: My Childhood  
QB-ANSWER KEY

2021-22

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

1. Where was Abdul Kalam's house?
2. What do you think Dinamani is the name of? Give a reason for your answer.
3. Who were Abdul Kalam's school friends? What did they later become?
4. How did Abdul Kalam earn his first wages?
5. Had he earned any money before that? In what way?

### ANSWER:

1. Abdul Kalam's house was on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram.
2. Dinamani is the name of a local newspaper. It is because Abdul Kalam tried to trace the stories of the Second World War in the headlines in Dinamani.
3. Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakasan were Abdul Kalam's school friends. Ramanadha took over the priesthood of the Rameswaram temple from his father; Aravindan went into the business of arranging transport for visiting pilgrims; and Sivaprakasan became a catering contractor for the Southern Railways.
4. During the Second World War, when the stoppage of trains was cancelled at Rameshwaram, the newspapers were bundled and thrown out of a moving train. Kalam's cousin, who distributed newspapers, asked him to help in collecting these bundles. This task helped Abdul Kalam earn his first wages.
5. Yes, Abdul Kalam had earned some money before that. When the Second World War broke out, there was a huge demand for tamarind seeds in the market. He used to collect the seeds and sell them at a provision shop on Mosque Street. This helped him earn one anna a day.

### 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?
2. What characteristics does he say he inherited from his parents?
3. Why did Abdul Kalam want to leave Rameshwaram?
4. What did his father say to this?
5. What do you think his words mean? Why do you think he spoke those words?

6. Why did A.P.J Abdul Kalam call his childhood a secure childhood?
7. What was the difference in the attitude of the science teacher and his wife towards A.P.J Abdul Kalam?
8. How did Abdul come to know about the progress of the World War?
9. Describe Abdul's house in Rameshwaram.

**ANSWER:**

1. i) The author, Abdul Kalam describes his father as an honest and generous man. He had neither much formal education nor much wealth. However, he possessed great innate wisdom and a kind heart. He was self-disciplined and avoided all inessential luxuries.  
(ii) He describes his mother, Ashiamma as an ideal helpmate to her husband. She was a woman with a big heart who fed many people every day.  
(iii) He describes himself as a short boy with undistinguished looks. He possessed the qualities of honesty, self-discipline and kindness which he inherited from his parents.
2. Kalam inherited many values from his family. Although he did not belong to a very rich and wealthy family, his family was very rich in traditions and values. He says that he inherited honesty and self-discipline from his father. From his mother he inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness.
3. After Kalam finished his high school, he wanted to pursue future education to fulfill his desire to be a successful man. Kalam wanted to leave Rameswaram and study at the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram.
4. Kalam's father said that he knew that one day Kalam had to go away to grow. He was happy on his decision and appreciated it by giving him the example of the young seagulls who leave their parents' nest to learn to fly.
5. Abdul Kalam's father's words bear deep meanings. He encouraged his son to go ahead giving the example of the seagull. He also explained Kalam's mother to let her son go to grab the opportunities of growth and success. Parents can nurture their kids with love, but they cannot give them their thoughts. They have their own thoughts. Kalam's father spoke those words to control his wife's emotions for their son.
6. A.P.J Abdul Kalam called his childhood a secure one because he had loving and caring parents. Although his parents were not very rich and wealthy, he had all necessary things which included food, clothes, medicine, etc.
7. Though the science teacher was an orthodox Brahmin, he broke social barriers and mixed with other religions and communities. Once, he invited Abdul to his home and served him food besides sitting and eating with him. His wife was very conservative and refused to serve Abdul that time. However, her attitude changed on seeing her husband's behavior and, next time, she served Abdul herself.

8. Abdul came to know about the progress of the War from the stories narrated to him by his brother -in -law Jallaluddin. Later on, he tried to find these events in the headlines in the local Tamil newspaper Dinamani. These were the ways in which Kalam used to get the news of the war.
9. Abdul's house in Rameswaram was their ancestral house built in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was a fairly large pucca house, made of limestone and brick, on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram. It accommodated all the members of his family. Kalam loved his ancestral house very much.

**III. Discuss these questions in class with your teacher and then write down your answers.**

- 1) *“On the whole, the small society of Rameswaram was very rigid in terms of the segregation of different social groups,” says the author.*
  - a) Which social groups does he mention? Were these groups easily identifiable (for example, by the way they dressed)?
  - b) 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.)
  - c) 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 text?
  - d) Narrate two incidents that show how differences can be created, and also how they can be resolved. How can people change their attitudes?

**ANSWER:**

- a) He mentions two social groups of orthodox Brahmins and Muslims. Yes, these groups were easily identifiable. They had their different dress codes and rituals. For example, Kalam used to wear a cap while his friend Ramanadha Sastry used to wear the sacred thread.
- b) 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 their family bedtime stories about the events from the Ramayana and from the life of the prophet. During the annual 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 Rama Tirtha which was near his house.
- c) The people who were very aware of the differences were:  
Kalam's new teacher who tried to segregate pupils on the basis of the religious divisions, and wife of Sivasubramania Iyer (his science teacher) who did not allow Kalam to eat in her pure Hindu kitchen. Among the people who tried to bridge these differences were: Kalam's science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer who invited, served and dined with him to break social barriers and Lakshmana Sastry who conveyed the strong sense of conviction to the new young teacher to reform him.

d) The two incidents that show how differences can be created are mentioned below:  
When Kalam was in the fifth standard, a new teacher came to their class. Kalam always sat next to Ramanadha Sastry. The teacher was unhappy to see a Hindu priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy. He immediately asked Kalam to sit in the last row. Both Kalam and his friend Ramanadha Sastry were extremely unhappy with this. In the second incidence, Kalam's science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer invited him for a meal to his house. His wife, who was very conservative got worried about the idea of a Muslim boy eating in her pure Hindu kitchen. So, she refused to serve him in her kitchen.

Now, the other incidents that show that how differences can be resolved are mentioned below:

When Kalam and Ramanadha Sastry were heartbroken by their new teacher's order they informed their respective parents. Then Lakshmana Sastry summoned the teacher and conveyed the strong sense of conviction which ultimately reformed him.

The second incidence took place when, the author's science teacher, Sivasubramania Iyer, though an orthodox Brahmin invited, served and dined with Kalam to bridge these differences.

2) *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) Why did Iyer's wife refused to serve the meal to her guest?
- b) Who, in fact, is the 'Muslim boy' in the above extract?
- c) Who is 'he' and 'me' in the first sentence?
- d) Why was Iyer's wife horrified?

ANSWER:

- a) Iyer's wife refused to serve the meal to her guest as he was a Muslim.
- b) In fact, the 'Muslim boy' in the above extract is APJ Abdul Kalam.
- c) In the first sentence 'he' is Sivasubramania Iyer, Kalam's science teacher and 'me' is Abdul Kalam.
- d) Iyer's wife was horrified at the idea of serving food to a Muslim boy in her kitchen.

3) *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 apologize or quit the school and the island. Not only did the teacher reject his behavior but the strong sense of conviction Lakshmana Sastry conveyed ultimately reformed this young teacher.*

- a) What was the incident that the children narrated to their parents?
- b) What did Lakshmana Sastry tell the teacher?
- c) What does the word 'conviction' from the above lines mean?
- d) How was the young teacher reformed?

ANSWER:

- a) The incident was about the new teacher who asked the Muslim boy to sit on the back bench.
- b) He told the teacher not to spread wrong thoughts about social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children.
- c) The word means 'sincerity'.
- d) The young teacher was reformed by the words of Lakshmana Sastry.

#### **IV. Answer the following questions in 100-120 words**

- a) What kind of emotions and feelings arise in Abdul Kalam's heart when he recalls earning for the first time?
- b) 'Once you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted.' What system is being referred in the sentence from the chapter 'My Childhood'? What are such problems?

ANSWER:

- a) When Kalam was only eight years old, the Second World War broke out in 1939. There was a great demand for tamarind seeds. Abdul used to collect those seeds and sell them in the market. His cousin Shamsuddin distributed newspapers and employed him as his helping hand. The train would not stop at Rameshwaram and the bundles of newspapers were thrown from the running train. Abdul was employed by his cousin to collect them. This way he earned his first wages. When he earned his first wages, he felt very proud and had a sense of freedom. This achievement boosted up his self-confidence and joy.
- b) Every society has a system which forms the basis of the operations of the society. It is a set of rules, regulations, ethics and the principles to be followed by the members of the society. The system referred to here is the system of discrimination on the basis of religion. It is narrow – mindedness based on the feelings of social inequality between communities and religion and communal intolerance.  
For instance, the Brahmin lady did not allow a Muslim to enter her kitchen because she felt that the purity of the kitchen would be spoilt. The science teacher, a rebel by nature, invited Kalam to his home for a meal. It proved that if one is determined to face problems and change the system, one will succeed. Society doesn't accept the change so easily. It takes time in accepting the changes which are very old and established. Problems would not be that much easy so that they could be eradicated from the society completely.