



EVELYN GLENNIE

List of new words to be learnt

1. Prestigious
2. Aspiring
3. Profound
4. Deteriorate
5. Headmistress
6. Specialist
7. Xylophone
8. Percussionist
9. Ron Forbes
10. Evelyn Glennie
11. Orchestra
12. Auditioned
13. Achievement
14. Hectic
15. International
16. Intriguing
17. Lilt
18. Japanese
19. Resonance
20. Vibration
21. Flawlessly
22. Audience
23. Workaholic
24. Concert
25. Beethoven
26. Handicapped
27. Pleasure
28. Demonstrated
29. Millions
30. Enormous
31. Soloist
32. Philharmonic
33. Delights
34. Confess
35. Potential

VALUE POINTS

- Life tests us by throwing many challenges and disabilities. Our response to these challenges, determines our character. We have two choices before us. Either we may develop a negative attitude, become angry at life or we can change our challenges into opportunities.
- This lesson deals with percussionist Evelyn Glennie's determined effort to pursue her interest in music despite her hearing impairment. Instead of crumbling to her handicap, she mastered a thousand instruments to become an accomplished soloist. She is now a source of inspiration to all people who suffer setbacks in life. her dream by sensitising her body to feel music instead of hearing through her ears.
- Evelyn's gradual loss of hearing by the tender age of eleven prompted her teachers to discourage her from pursuing a career in music as she could no longer hear the strains of music.
- Under the able guidance of Ron Forbes, she developed her potential and achieved her goal to become a musician. She switched from piano playing to percussion instruments. Ron guided her to sense musical sounds and vibrations using her body and mind and she found a way out of her problem by developing an ability to sense music through different parts of her body. She soon realized that could feel the higher notes of the drum from her upper body and the lower notes of the drum from the waist down.
- When she plays the xylophone, she can sense the sound passing up the stick into her fingertips. By leaning against the drums, she can feel the resonances flowing through her body. On a wooden platform, she removes her shoes so that the vibrations pass through her bare feet and up her legs.
- Music assisted her to regain her confidence and she became the only differently -abled artist to achieve the highest marks in the audition at the history of Royal Academy of Music beating other able-bodied candidates.
- Her mastery of a thousand percussion instruments has been possible due to her hard work and determination.
- She overcame her challenge with her confidence, indomitable spirit and her indestructible will power to master her instrument. Her life story motivates the readers to work hard and achieve their goals.
- With her hard work and self-confidence, she got admission to the Royal Academy of Music, London which is the most prestigious institution for music. In fact, her confidence and faith in her abilities which made her to audition for The Royal Academy of Music where she received the top most awards. Her unshakeable self confidence is a source of inspiration for everyone and that no goal is unachievable for those who work hard and are focussed on the goal.
- Evelyn is a kind and benevolent person who gives free concerts in prisons and hospitals.
- She is a great source of inspiration for all those who suffer from physical disabilities. She makes them believe that if she could do it, then so can they.
- Her main achievements are that she has brought percussion to the front of the orchestra. She is a source of inspiration for those who are differently-abled and her music has brought pleasure to millions.

EVELYN GLENNIE LISTENS TO SOUND WITHOUT HEARING IT

Q1. Why was Evelyn "nervous yet excited" as she waited for the train?

While leaving for the Royal Academy of Music, Evelyn was excited despite her nervousness as going to the Royal Academy of Music at London was a dream come true for her. She was going to join a three - year course in a prestigious institute that she had hoped to study in. She was excited that despite her hearing impairment and the fact that she was a simple farm girl, she had secured admission with good marks after beating other contestants. She was nervous because she was young, had a hearing disability and did not have much experience and exposure to professional orchestral music.

Q2. When and how was Evelyn's hearing problem noticed?

Evelyn was only eight years old when her hearing problem was noticed by her mother when she did not respond to a call for a piano performance. However, her loss of hearing was gradual and her deafness was confirmed at the age of eleven when her poor academic performance forced her parents to consult a specialist.

Q3. " Everything suddenly looked black". Why did Evelyn feel this way?

When Evelyn was advised to use hearing aids and join a school for the hearing impaired, she felt that her future was bleak and dark. She was depressed as she felt she would not be able to lead a normal life nor pursue her interest in music.

Q4. How did Evelyn Glennie respond to the discovery of her deafness?

On learning about her deafness due to gradual nerve damage, Evelyn initially felt that her future was dark and bleak. However, instead of giving up, she decided to lead a normal life like other children and pursue her dream of learning music.

Q5. How did Evelyn's teachers respond when she expressed her desire to play a xylophone?

Evelyn loved music and despite her deafness she expressed a desire to play the xylophone when she saw another girl playing it. However, her teachers felt that she would not be able to play it because of her impaired hearing and discouraged her from pursuing music.

Q6. "I had learnt to open my mind and body to sounds and vibrations," says Evelyn. How did she do that?

Guided by Ron Forbes, Evelyn learned to listen through different parts of her body other than her ears. Her mind and entire body became sensitised to notice and differentiate various sounds and vibrations of music. Her body compensated for the loss of hearing with her awakened and sharpened senses in other parts of her body. Music tingles in her skin, her cheekbones and she can sense music even from her hair. On a wooden platform, she removes her shoes to feel the vibrations through her legs and feet.

Q7. Which qualities of character enabled Evelyn to achieve unprecedented success in life?

Hard work, determination and an indomitable spirit enabled Evelyn to gain success in life. Instead of crumbling to her handicap, she decided to overcome it and lead a normal life. She was devoted to music and her sincere efforts helped her achieve unprecedented success.

Q8. How did Evelyn get admission in the Royal Academy of Music, London?

Evelyn auditioned for admission to Royal Academy of Music, London. Her score in the audition was one of the highest in the history of the academy. Therefore, she got selected for a three-year course despite her hearing disability.

Q9. How does Evelyn regard her own success?

Evelyn is an extremely modest person and does not consider her achievements to be heroic. She is a workaholic who is focussed on her goals and feels that if one puts in hard work and is determined, then one is sure to succeed.

Q10. What kind of recognition did Evelyn get at the Royal Academy of Music?

Evelyn joined the prestigious institute at the tender age of seventeen. She scored the highest marks in the history of the academy. She was one of the most brilliant students of the academy and won many top awards during her three year course.

Q11. "If you work hard and know where you are going, you'll get there," says Evelyn. What does it reveal about her character?

Evelyn's indomitable spirit, determination, self-confidence, hard working personality and to remain focused on goal till it is achieved are revealed by the above statement. These values of character helped her to successfully overcome her hearing disability and to pursue a career in music.

It was this confidence and faith in herself that made her take courage to audition for the Royal Academy of Music London. She worked harder than other percussionists and with her sincere efforts, she moved from orchestra to solo performances and eventually to become a world-famous percussionist. During her three-year course, she had bagged most of the top awards and mastered over a thousand percussion instruments.

She is a source of inspiration for people who suffer from disabilities and has given pleasure to millions with her performances.

THE SHEHNAI OF BISMILLAH KHAN

List of new words to be learnt

1. Emperor
2. Aurangzeb
3. Pungi

4. Banned
5. ShriII
6. Generic
7. Professional
8. Hollow
9. Melodious
10. Royalty
11. Impressed
12. Chambers
13. Shehnai
14. Auspicious
15. Indispensable
16. Component
17. Traditional
18. Court
19. Naubat
20. Ustad
21. Bismillah
22. Classical
23. Ancient
24. Dumraon
25. Bihariji Temple
26. Chaita
27. Maharaja
28. Bharat Ratna
29. Rasool Bux
30. Shehnai Nawaz

31. Bhojpur
32. Paternal ancestors
33. Maternal
34. Benaras
35. Fascinated
36. Vishnu Temple
37. Allahabad
38. Music Conference
39. Recital
40. Raag Kafi
41. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
42. Tryst with Destiny
43. Memorable
44. Performances
45. Audience
46. King Zahir Shah
47. Maestro (meaning - a distinguished performer of classical music)
48. Souvenirs
49. Impressed
50. Gunj Uthi Shehnai
51. Chartbuster
52. Celluloid
53. Artificiality
54. Recognition
55. Lincoln Centre Hall
56. World Exposition
57. Montreal

58. Osaka
59. Auditorium
60. Padmashri
61. Padma Bhushan
62. Padma Vibhushan
63. Replicating
64. Yearning
65. Mattha
66. Partition
67. Namaskar
68. Salaam alaikum
69. Cultural heritage
70. Kashi Vishwanath Temple
71. National Mourning.
72. Conferred
73. Coveted
74. Exceedingly
75. Teheran
76. Tahar Mosiquee
77. Cannes Art Festival
78. Solitude
79. Devout
80. Internationally

VALUE POINTS

- ❖ This chapter highlights the evolution of Shehnai, a reeded musical instrument and showcases the life of celebrated Shehnai maestro Ustad Bismillah Khan who achieved national and international fame.
- ❖ The pungi was banned by Emperor Aurangzeb to be played in the royal court and residence as he found its sound to be shrill and unpleasant. The shehnai was the improved version of the pungi

and a barber or nai, who hailed from a family of musicians, revived it by making the modifications on the pungi to produce melodious notes. The hollow reed was increased in length and breadth and seven holes were made to generate dulcet (melodious) strains of music.

- ❖ As it was played by the nai in the chambers of the Shah (King) and it was different from the pungi, hence the new instrument was called the shehnai.
- ❖ Its sound so impressed the king that it was made a part of the naubat or the traditional ensemble of the nine instruments found at the royal courts.
- ❖ As it was part of the naubat, the shehnai came to be associated with auspicious occasions. It was only played in temples, royal courts and for weddings in North India till Ustad Bismillah Khan brought it onto the classical music stage.
- ❖ Belonging to a family of musicians, he was born in the princely state of Dumraon in Bihar and his grandfather Rasool Bux Khan was a shehnai player in the court of King of Bhojpur.
- ❖ His father Paigamber Bux and his paternal and maternal uncles were shehnai players.
- ❖ He was fascinated by his maternal uncle Ali Bux's shehnai playing. As a young boy, Bismillah sat in the Vishnu temple of Benaras where his uncle played the shehnai.
- ❖ At the young age of five, he began his musical career by singing the Chaita or religious songs at the Bihariji temple.
- ❖ He honed (perfected) his shehnai playing skills in the temples of Balaji and Mangala Maiya and on the banks of the river Ganga. He often sat on its banks to practice his music in solitude.
- ❖ The flowing waters of the river Ganga inspired Bismillah to create new ragas which were considered to be outside the range of the shehnai. He developed such a close bond with the river Ganga that he declined the offer to settle in the USA. The maestro showed his immense love and close bond with the river when he declined his student's proposal to head the shehnai school as he won't be able to recreate the River Ganga in the USA. River Ganga was his inspiration to improvise and invent new raagas.
- ❖ At the age of fourteen, his talent was recognised by Ustad Faiyaz Khan at the Allahabad Music Conference. He got his big break when AIR was established in Lucknow where he played the shehnai on the radio.
- ❖ Bismillah Khan's shehnai was played from the Red Fort when India attained its independence even before the PM's address to the nation.
- ❖ He was awarded the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan and the Bharat Ratna by the Govt of India for his invaluable contribution to the musical world of Shehnai. (learn the international accolades as well)
- ❖ He was a simple man dedicated to his music who could not come to terms with the artificiality and glamour of the film world. His song became a chartbuster but he left the celluloid world to dedicate his life to the music of the shehnai.
- ❖ This acclaimed artiste is an example of the rich secular cultural heritage of India that did not differentiate between Hindus and Muslims. This unique heritage focused on music and not religious differences.
- ❖ Bismillah was a devout Muslim yet he could not live away from River Ganga and Benaras. He could not think of settling in Pakistan when partition of India was announced or in USA where his student wanted him to head the Shehnai School.

Textbook Q and A

Why did Aurangzeb ban the playing of the pungi?

Aurangzeb banned the playing of the pungi because it had a loud, shrill and unpleasant sound. He prohibited it to be played in the royal court.

How is a shehnai different from a pungi?

Even though both shehnai and pungi are reed instruments yet the shehnai is an improvement on the pungi. A shehnai has a hollow pipe just like the pungi but it is longer and broader and has seven holes which produce melodious notes whereas in comparison a pungi gives out shrill and unpleasant musical strains.

Where was the shehnai played traditionally? How did Bismillah Khan change this?

The music of the shehnai was soft and melodious compared to the pungi. It was made part of the naubat or the traditional ensemble of nine instruments found at the royal courts. With time, the music produced on the shehnai was believed to be auspicious. Therefore, it came to be played in temples and on the occasion of marriages in North India. Ustad Bismillah Khan brought shehnai on to the classical stage by adding new raagas and modifying old ones.

When and how did Bismillah Khan get his big break?

Ustad Faiyaz Khan had recognised the potential of a young Bismillah. But he got his big break to be heard by the entire country in 1938 when AIR opened in Lucknow. He played the shehnai on the radio and became an often heard player. It was because of his popularity and that shehnai music was considered auspicious that he was invited to play at the Red Fort on 15 August 1947 on the occasion of independence.

Where did Bismillah Khan play the shehnai on 15 August 1947? Why was the event historic?

On 15 August 1947, Bismillah Khan played Raag Kafi on the shehnai from the Red Fort prior to Pandit Nehru's speech. It was because of his popularity and the fact that shehnai music was considered auspicious that he was invited to play at the Red Fort.

The event was historic as India had attained independence from the oppressive British rule. He poured his heart out to play the auspicious music and became the first Indian to greet the independent nation.

Why did Bismillah Khan refuse to start a shehnai school in the USA?

One of Bismillah Khan's students was settled in the US and wanted the great maestro to head a shehnai school there. He promised to recreate the ambience of Benaras by making temples like those in India. Bismillah Khan refused the proposal because he could not live away from India especially from Benaras, River Ganga and Dumraon. He had immense love for the river and had developed a close bond with the river as he had improvised and invented many new raagas on its banks.

Find out two instances in the text which tell you that Bismillah Khan loves India and Benaras.

The first instance is when he turned down his student's proposal to start a shehnai school in the USA. The second is when he was asked by Shekhar Gupta about moving to Pakistan after partition of India. He replied that he would never leave Benaras.

How did the film director Vijay Bhatt honour Bismillah Khan?

Film director, Vijay Bhatt once heard the shehnai recital of Bismillah Khan in a festival. He was so fascinated by the performance that he decided to name his next film after the instrument and called it Gunj Uthi Shehnai. The film also had a song that was composed by Bismillah Khan.

What was Bismillah Khan's advice to the citizens of India?

After receiving the Bharat Ratna, Bismillah Khan advised Indians that they should respect the rich heritage of Hindustani music. He wanted all children to learn music and not cut the bond from this great tradition which has even fascinated the westerners.

How does Bismillah Khan's life an example of the rich cultural and secular tradition of India?

India's rich cultural heritage has been liberal towards all religions. The Indian society is a perfect blend of myriad religious and ethnic groups. Similarly, Bismillah Khan is an example of India's rich heritage. Although he was a Muslim, he began his musical career by playing the Chaita in Bihariji's temple and practising the shehnai in the temples of Vishnu and Mangala Maiya. He also practised the shehnai on the banks of the River Ganga and played the shehnai every morning in Kashi Vishwanath temple.