

# ENGLISH

## CHAPTER 7: A VISIT TO CAMBRIDGE



## A VISIT TO CAMBRIDGE

### ~Summary~

by Firdaus Kanga

The lesson 'A Visit to Cambridge' narrates the real-life experience of the author **Firdaus Kanga**, where he meets the greatest **Astrophysicist** and cosmologist of all time **Stephen Hawking**. The author is on a visit to Cambridge, where he walks across the campus and the guide reminds him of Hawking. He makes a call and schedules an appointment for **half an hour**. When he meets Hawking, he is amazed by his charisma. There is a connection between the two men that they were both **disabled**. The author is guilty of stressing Hawking out, as he had to search for the buttons in his **speech generating machine** every time he wants to convey something. He asks what Hawking feels about people thinking that disabled people are always **unhappy**, to which he replies that he finds it amusing when people **patronise** him. Hawking has the best smile when he **sarcastically** comments that the author is annoying him. Kanga understands that people tend to glorify the sufferings of disabled people. He also learns that one's **intellectual** is more important than one's body. When he is about to leave, Hawking offers him tea and shows him around the **garden**. Kanga feels that this is one of the important days in his life and that he would strive to be like Hawking.

### ~Conclusion~

The chapter – A Visit to Cambridge highlights to students that physical disability should not be considered a hindrance in someone's path towards achieving greater heights in life. One should learn to conquer the disability of the mind, rather than focusing on the physical disability. Presenting the CBSE Class 8 English Honeydew Prose Summary of A Visit to Cambridge that must have helped 8th Standard students to have a detailed understanding of the chapter.

## NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 100)  
(Comprehension Check)

Question 1. Which is the right sentence?

“Cambridge was my metaphor for England.” To the writer,

- a. Cambridge was a reputed university in England.
- b. England was famous for Cambridge.
- c. Cambridge was the real England.

Answer:

- c. Cambridge was the real England.

Question 2. The writer phoned Stephen Hawking’s house

- a. from the nearest phone booth.
- b. from outside a phone booth.
- c. from inside a phone booth.

Answer:

- b. from outside a phone booth.

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

- a. he wasn’t sure what he wanted to ask.
- b. he forced the scientist to use his voice synthesiser.
- c. he was face to face with a legend.

Answer:

- b. he forced the scientist to use his voice synthesiser.

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

- a. standing up, walking.
- b. speaking, writing.
- c. shifting in the wheelchair, turning the wrist.

Answer:

- c. shifting in the wheelchair, turning the wrist.

## Questions (Page No. 100-101) (Working with the text)

Answer the following questions.

Question 1.

- a. Did the prospect of meeting Stephen Hawking make the writer nervous? If so, why?
- b. Did he at the same time feel very excited? If so, why?

Answer:

- a. The writer was nervous at the prospect of meeting Stephen Hawking because Hawking was a very renowned and brilliant astrophysicist despite being paralysed and differently abled. He had authored one of the biggest best-sellers ever – A Brief History of Time. Besides, he was a worthy successor to Sir Isaac Newton and succeeded to his Chair at the Cambridge University.
- b. Yes, the author – Firdaus Kanga was super excited to meet Stephen Hawking because he wasn't expecting that he would be getting an opportunity to have a face-to-face conversation with such a great personality. He wondered that although Hawking was paralysed and differently abled, he had achieved great heights and was considered a worthy successor to Sir Isaac Newton and succeeded to his Chair at the Cambridge University. This made Firdaus aware of the innumerable possibilities before him and he could reach out further than he ever thought he could.

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

Answer: The first question that the writer might have asked the scientist was if he felt relieved and brave for accomplishing such great achievements in life despite being disabled.

Question 3. Stephen Hawking said, "I've had no choice." Does the writer think there was a choice? What was it?

Answer: Although Stephen Hawking stated that he had no choice, but to remain confined to the wheelchair. The writer felt that living creatively with the reality of his disintegrating body was a choice for him. Firdaus strongly felt that Hawking could have easily sulked and surrendered to life, rather he chose to accomplish new heights despite being disabled.

Question 4. "I could feel his anguish." What could be the anguish?

Answer: Stephen Hawking was such a brilliant scientist who brought to light various laws of science. His mind was always receptive to new ideas and he always wanted to express the different thoughts in his mind. He was dependent on a voice synthesizer for expressing his thoughts, without any emotions. The writer could understand Hawking's anguish for his helplessness and felt that there were innumerable things which he wanted to express, but was unable to do so. His entire existence was dependent on a computer for expressing his thoughts and emotions. He was full of anguish for this reason.

Question 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?

Answer: The writer asked Stephen Hawking if he found it annoying for causing disturbance in his work. Without a second thought, Hawking quickly responded with a yes. But he suddenly gave a one-way smile and this endeared the scientist to the writer. The writer instantly felt that he was indeed looking at one of the most beautiful men in the world, who although is disabled physically, but has a beautiful soul, not a body, which is nothing but just an accessory.

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

Answer: The most beautiful sentence in the description of 'the beautiful' man is – "Before you, like a lantern whose walls are worn so thin you glimpse only the light inside, is the incandescence of a man."

The above sentence describes Hawking's personality as his inner beauty or glow that's so beautiful and vibrant which renders his physical inability nothing but just an accessory.

Question 7.

- a. If 'the lantern' is the man, what would its 'walls' be?
- b. What is housed within the thin walls?
- c. What general conclusion does the writer draw from this comparison?

Answer:

- a. If 'the lantern' is the man, its 'walls' would refer to the structure of the human body.
- b. The light of life is housed within the thin walls of the external structure.
- c. The author implies that inside the human body there is an eternal soul which is incandescence of a man, the outer physical structure is nothing more than just an accessory.

Question 8. What is the scientist's message for the disabled?

Answer: Stephen Hawking emphasized on the fact that every person irrespective of his capacity or disability should try to focus on enhancing or working towards what they are good at. He further added that disabled should not make unnecessary foolish efforts to imitate so called normal people. They should make the best utilization of the available resources and be thankful to God for granting them the ability to achieve or accomplish any impossible task.

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

Answer: When Stephen Hawking mentioned to the author that Olympics for the disabled was a complete waste of time, this reminded the author about the years that he spent trying to play the Spanish guitar which was considerable larger than him. One night, he loosened the guitar strings without any regrets. The author could understand Hawking's message for the disabled which mentions that one should try to concentrate on what they are good at, rather than trying to compare themselves or imitate the so called normal people.

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

Answer: Stephen Hawking inspired the author to an extent that he was grateful to the scientist. He saw how Hawking was brave enough to achieve such big things in life despite his disability. The scientist was indeed an embodiment of his courageous self. This optimistic aspect of Hawking inspired the author so much that he felt a deep sense of gratitude for the scientist and showed him a new way of leading life without complaining of the disability all the time.

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

- a. There was his assistant on the line ...
- b. You get fed up with people asking you to be brave, ...
- c. There he was, ...
- d. You look at his eyes which can speak, ...

e. 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.

Answer:

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

- b. 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.
- c. There he was, tapping at a little switch in his hand trying to find the words on his computer.
- d. You look at his eyes which can speak, and they are saying something huge and urgent – it is hard to tell what.
- e. It doesn't do much good to know that there are people smiling with admiration to see you breathing still.

## Questions (Page No. 102-103)

### (Working with language)

Question 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
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- a. I met a \_\_\_\_\_ from an antique land.
- b. I need special \_\_\_\_\_ in mathematics. I can't count the number of times I have failed in the subject.
- c. The guide called Stephen Hawking a worthy \_\_\_\_\_ to Issac Newton.
- d. His other problems \_\_\_\_\_ into insignificance beside this unforeseen mishap.
- e. The meeting was \_\_\_\_\_ by the youngest member of the board.
- f. Some people say 'yours \_\_\_\_\_' when they informally refer to themselves.
- g. I wish it had been a \_\_\_\_\_ match. We would have been spared the noise of celebrations, at least.

Answer:

- a. I met a **traveller** from an antique land.
- b. I need special **guidance** in mathematics. I can't count the number of times I have failed in the subject.



- c. The guide called Stephen Hawking a worthy **successor** to Isaac Newton.
- d. His other problems **paled** into insignificance beside this unforeseen mishap.
- e. The meeting was **chaired** by the youngest member of the board.
- f. Some people say 'yours **truly**' when they informally refer to themselves.
- g. I wish it had been a **drawn** match. We would have been spared the noise of celebrations, at least.

Question 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 it 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

Answer:

a reading session	a smiling face	a revolving chair
a walking tour	a dancing doll	a winning chance

Question 3:

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

- a. He has two brothers. \_\_\_\_\_ are lawyers.

- b. More than ten persons called. \_\_\_\_\_ of them wanted to see you.
- c. They \_\_\_\_\_ cheered the team.
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ her parents are teachers.
- e. How much have you got? Give me \_\_\_\_\_ of it.

Answer:

- a. He has two brothers. **Both** are lawyers.
- b. More than ten persons called. **All** of them wanted to see you.
- c. They **all** cheered the team.
- d. **Both** her parents are teachers.
- e. How much have you got? Give me **all** of it.

Question 4:

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

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

Answer:

- a. My friend has one of the **fastest** cars on the road.
- b. This is the **most interesting** story I have ever read.
- c. What you are doing now is **easier** than what you did yesterday.
- d. Ramesh and his wife are both **short**.
- e. He arrived **late** as usual. Even the chief guest came **earlier** than he did.