

## We're Not Afraid to Die QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

### We're Not Afraid to Die – Understanding the Text

#### Question 1:

List the steps taken by the captain

1. to protect the ship when rough weather began
2. to check the flooding of the water in the ship

#### Answer:

1. In order to protect the ship from rough weather, the captain decided to slow it down. So he dropped the storm jib and lashed heavy mooring rope in a loop across the stem. Then they double fastened everything and went through their life-raft drill.
2. Larry and Herb started pumping out water. The captain stretched canvas and secured water proof hatch covers across the gaping holes. When the two hand pumps blocked and electric pump short circuited, he found another electric pump, connected it to an out pipe and started it.

#### Question 2:

Describe the mental condition of the voyagers on 4th and 5th January.

#### Answer:

On January 4, the voyagers felt relieved after 36 hours of continuous pumping out water. They had their first meal in almost two days. Their respite was short-lived. They faced dangerous situation on January 5. Fear of death loomed large. They were under great mental stress.

#### Question 3:

Describe the shifts in the narration of the events as indicated in the three sections of the text. Give a subtitle to each section.

#### Answer:

The first section describes a peaceful journey from Plymouth (England) to 3500 km east of Cape Town (Africa). The narrator is relaxed and full of confidence. As the weather deteriorated, they faced gigantic waves. They took precautions to save themselves and struggle with the disaster. The narration becomes grim. But it exudes the fighting spirit, confidence and strong will power. By the morning of January 6, Wave walker rode out the storm and by evening they sighted He Amsterdam island.

The narrator is now relaxed. Joy, relief and complete confidence are apparent.

The subtitle to each section is—Section 1 – Cheerful Journey, Section 2-Facing the Wave, Section 3-Searching the Island.

### We're Not Afraid to Die – Talking About the Text

**Discuss the following questions with your partner.**

**Question 1:**

What difference did you notice between the reaction of the adults and the children when faced with danger?

**Answer:**

There is a lot of difference between the way in which the adults and the children reacted when faced with danger. The adults felt the stress of the circumstances but prepared themselves to face the dangers. They took sufficient precautions to protect the ship when the rough weather began. They equipped everyone with lifelines, water proof clothes, and life jackets. Larry and Herb worked cheerfully and optimistically for three days continuously to pump out water from the ship. Mary replaced the narrator at the wheel when the deck was smashed, and steered the ship. She also served them meal after two days of struggle against odds. The narrator performed his role as captain with courage, determination, resourcefulness and full responsibility. He undertook repair work and provided apparatus and directions needed to protect the ship. He also helped in steering the ship towards the island. The children suffered silently and patiently. Sue did not want to bother her father with her troubles. Jon acted courageously. He was not afraid to die if all of them perished together.

**Question 2:**

How does the story suggest the optimism helps to “endure the direst stress”?

**Answer:**

The story suggests that optimism certainly helps to endure the direst stress. The behaviour of the four adults during crisis bears it out. Larry Vigil and Herb Seigler were two crewmen. As the mighty waves smashed the deck, water entered the ship through many holes and openings. Right from the evening of January 2, Larry and Herb started pumping out water. They worked continuously, excitedly and feverishly for 36 hours. It was a result of their continuous pumping that they reached the last few centimetres of water on January 4. They remained cheerful and optimistic while facing extremely dangerous situations. The narrator did not lose his courage, hope or presence of mind while facing problems. He did not worry about the loss of equipment. He used whatever was available there. His self confidence and practical knowledge helped them to steer out of storm and reach the lie Amsterdam island. Mary stayed at the wheel for all those crucial hours. She did not lose hope or courage either.

**Question 3:**

What lessons do we learn from such hazardous experiences when we are face to face with death?

**Answer:**

Hazardous experiences may bring us face to face with death, but they impart us many important lessons of conduct. Life is not always a bed of roses. We must react to dangers and risks with patience and fortitude. Adversity is the true test of character. The purity of gold is judged by putting it in fire. The hazardous experiences bring out the best in us. Coward persons die many times before their death. Fear is a negative feeling and leads to inactivity and abject surrender to circumstances. Such sailors or soldiers lose the battle against the odds in life. On the other hand, persons with self confidence, courage, resourcefulness and presence of

mind face all the dangers boldly and overcome all disasters. Their sharing and caring attitude inspires others also to face the adverse circumstances boldly and tide over them.

**Question 4:**

Why do you think people undertake such adventurous expeditions in spite of the risks involved?

**Answer:**

Man is adventurous by nature. The greater the risk, the more the thrill. The thrill of exploring unknown lands, discovering wealth and beauty lying hidden in far off lands inspires brave hearts to stake their life of rest and repose. Perhaps they value one crowded hour of glory more than a long uneventful life of sloth and inactivity. It is true that sometimes adventures are quite risky and prove fatal. The failures of some persons do not daunt (discourage) the real lovers of adventure. They draw lessons from the shortcomings and errors of others and make fresh attempts with greater zeal. Part of the charm of an adventurous expedition lies in adapting oneself to the circumstances and overcoming the odds. The success of an adventurous expedition brings name, fame and wealth. History books are replete with accounts of famous explorers like Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Captain Cook and Captain Scott.

## We're Not Afraid to Die – Thinking About Language

**Question 1:**

We have come across words like 'gale' and 'storm' in the account. Here are some more words for storms: typhoon, cyclone. How many words does your language have for storms?

**Answer:**

Our language has following words for storms:

aandhi (आँधी) , toofan (ताव), Jhanjavat (झंझावत ) , Chakravat (चक्रवात)

**Question 2:**

Here are the names of different kinds of vessels that are used to travel on water: yacht, boat, canoe, ship, steamer, schooner. Think of similar words in your language.

**Answer:**

Similar words for vessels that are used to travel on water are:

Nauka (नौका) , Nava (नाव) ,Pot (पोत), Jahaj (जहाज)

**Question 3:**

'Catamaran' is a kind of boat. Do you know which Indian language this word is derived from? Check the dictionary.

**Answer:**

The word 'catamaran' is derived from Tamil, where it means 'tied wood'. 'Catamaran' is a yacht or other boat with twin hulls in parallel. The dictionary defines it as 'a fast sailing boat with two hulls'.

**Question 4:**

Have you heard any boatmen's songs? What kind of emotions do these songs

usually express?

**Answer:**

Yes. These songs call upon other sailors to awake, arise and set out to the sea to explore its rich wealth. These songs are full of inspiration and provide moral support to the sad and disappointed boatmen.

## We're Not Afraid to Die – Working With Words

**Question 1:**

The following words used in the text as ship terminology are also commonly used in another sense. In what context would you use the other meaning?

**Answer:**

1. **Knot:**

(a) **in string/rope:** a joint made by tying together two pieces or ends of string, rope etc. e.g. to tie a knot.

(b) **of hair:** a way of twisting hair into a small round shape at the back of the head: e.g. She had her hair in a loose knot.

(c) **In wood:** a hard round spot in a piece of wood where there was once a branch.

(d) **Group of people:** a small group of people standing close together e.g. Little knots of students had gathered at the gate,

(e) **of muscles:** a tight, hard feeling in the stomach, throat etc. caused by nerves, anger, etc.

2. **Stem:**

(a) e.g. I could feel a knot of fear in my throat, serious and often disapproving; expecting somebody to obey you: e.g. His voice was stem.

(b) serious and difficult: e.g. we faced stem opposition.

3. **Boom:**

(a) In Business/Economy: a sudden increase in trade and economic activity, a period of wealth and success, e.g. a boom in mobile phone sales.

(b) Popular period, a period when something such as a sport or a type of music suddenly becomes very popular and successful, e.g. The only way to satisfy the cricket boom was to provide more playgrounds.

(c) Sound, a loud deep sound, e.g. the distant boom of the guns.

(d) In river/harbour, a floating barrier that is placed across a river or the entrance to a harbour to prevent ships or other objects from coming in or going out.

(e) For Microphone, a long pole that carries a microphone.

4. **Hatch:**

(a) an opening in a wall between two rooms, especially a kitchen and a dining room, through which food can be passed, e.g. a serving hatch.

(b) a door in an aircraft or a spacecraft, e.g.

(c) an escape hatch an opening or a door in a floor or ceiling, e.g. a hatch to the attic,

(d) to make a young bird, fish, insect, etc. come out of an egg,

(e) to create a plan or idea, especially in secret, a person or thing that gives somebody a feeling of safety, e.g. the anchor of the family.

5. **Anchor:**

(a) to fix something firmly in position so that it cannot move, e.g. Make sure the apparatus is securely anchored.

(b) to firmly base something on something else, e.g. Munshi Prem Chand's novels are anchored in rural life.

(c) to be the person who introduces reports or reads the news on television or radio, e.g. She anchored the evening news for five years.

**Question 2:**

The following three compound words end in -ship. What does each of them mean?

<b>airship</b>	<b>flagship</b>	<b>lightship</b>
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**Answer:**

1. **Airship:** a large aircraft without wings, filled with a gas which is lighter than air, and driven by engines.
2. **Flagship:**
  - (i) The main ship in a fleet of ships in the navy.
  - (ii) The most important product, service, building, etc. that an organization owns or produces, e.g. The company is opening a new flagship store in Gurgaon.
3. **Lightship:** a small ship that stays at a particular place at sea and that has a powerful light on it to warn and guide other ships.

**Question 3:**

The following are the meanings listed in the dictionary against the phrase 'take on'. Locate the meaning in which it is used in the third paragraph of the account: **(Page 19)**

**take on sth :** to begin to have a particular quality or appearance, to assume sth.

**take sb on :** to employ sb; to engage sb.

to accept sb as one's opponent in a game, contest or conflict.

**take sb/sth on :** to decide to do sth to allow to enter (e.g. a bus, plane or ship); to take sth/sb on board.

**Answer:**

In the third paragraph of the account, 'take on' is used in the sense of 'take sb on' i.e. 'to employ sb'; "to engage sb' The words are: We took on two crewmen....to help us....

## We're Not Afraid to Die – Things to do

**Question 1:**

Here is a picture of a yacht. Label the parts with the help of the words given in the box.

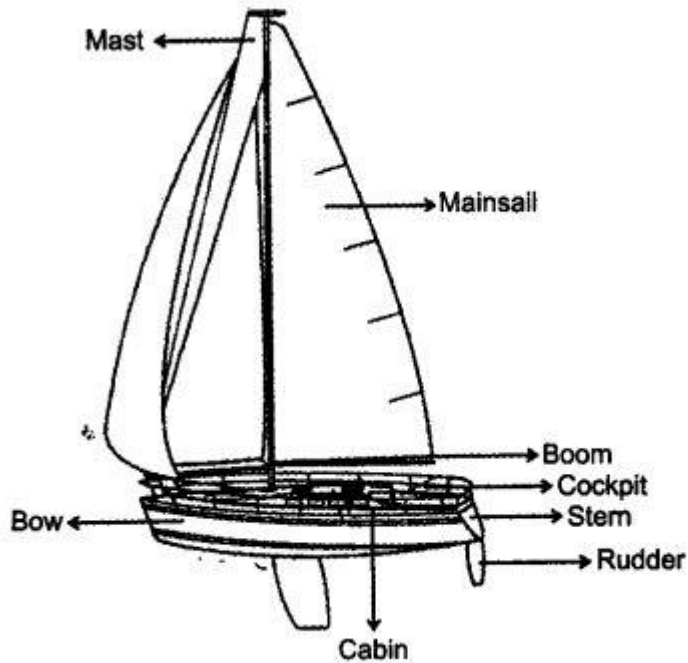
**bow**  
**stern**

**cabin**  
**boom**

**rudder**  
**mainsail**

**cockpit**  
**mast**

**Answer:**



**We're Not Afraid to Die MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED**

## **We're Not Afraid to Die Short Answer Type Questions**

### **Question 1:**

What did the narrator plan to do? What preparations did he make for it?

**Answer:**

The narrator planned to go on a round-the-world sea voyage on the same pattern as Captain James Cook had done 200 years earlier. For the past 16 years, he and his wife had spent all their leisure time developing and improving their skills with work – related to travel on the sea.

### **Question 2:**

Give a brief description of the narrator's boat. How had the narrator equipped and tested it?

**Answer:**

The narrator's boat was called 'Wave-walker'. It was a beautiful 23 metre long, 30 ton wooden-hulled ship. It had been professionally built. They had spent months fitting it out and testing in the roughest weather they could find.

### **Question 3:**

How long did the narrator plan his voyage to last?



**Answer:**

The narrator had planned his round the world journey to cover 105,000 kilometres in three years.

**Question 4:**

When and with whom did the narrator begin his voyage?

**Answer:**

The narrator began his sea voyage in July 1976. He had his wife Mary, six year old son Jonathan and seven year old daughter Suzanne with him. They set sail from Plymouth, England.

**Question 5:**

Whom did the narrator employ and why? When did he do so?

**Answer:**

The narrator employed two crewmen—American Larry Vigil and Swiss Herb Seigler in order to help them tackle the southern Indian Ocean which is known as one of the roughest seas of the world. He engaged them before leaving Cape Town.

**Question 6:**

What happened on their second day out of Cape Town? What worried the narrator and why?

**Answer:**

On their second day out of Cape Town, they began to face strong storms. These storms blew continuously for the next few weeks. He was worried about the waves. Their size was alarming. This rose up to 15 metres i.e., as high as their main mast.

**Question 7:**

How did they celebrate the Christmas holidays?

**Answer:**

They were 3,500 kilometres east of Cape Town on 25 December. The weather was very bad. Still they had a wonderful holiday—complete with a Christmas tree. New Year's Day saw no improvement in weather.

**Question 8:**

How did the weather change on January 2? How did they feel?

**Answer:**

The weather changed for worse on January 2. Now the waves were gigantic. As the ship rose to the top of each wave, they saw endless enormous seas rolling towards them. The screaming of the wind and spray was painful to the ears.

**Question 9:**

What efforts were made to face the rough weather?

**Answer:**

In order to face the rough weather, the speed of the ship was slowed down. They dropped the storm jib. They lashed heavy mooring rope in a loop across the stem. Then they fastened together everything and went through their life-raft drill. They attached lifelines, put on waterproof clothes and life-jackets.

**Question 10:**

What sort of wave hit the ship? How did the narrator react?

**Answer:**

It was a mighty and huge wave. It appeared perfectly vertical. It was almost twice the height of the other waves. It had a very unpleasant breaking crest. The narrator had never seen such an enormous wave, so he was filled with horror.

**Question 11:**

What was the impact of the torrent on the narrator and Wave walker?

**Answer:**

A tremendous explosion shook the deck. The narrator's head struck the wheel and he flew over board and was sinking below the waves. Unexpectedly his head came out of water. Wave walker was almost capsizing. Her masts were almost horizontal.

**Question 12:**

How did the narrator manage to survive through the attacks of subsequent waves?

**Answer:**

One of the waves threw the ship upright. The narrator was able to reach its main boom. Subsequent waves tossed him around the deck like a rag doll. His left ribs cracked. His mouth was filled with blood and broken teeth. Somehow, he found the wheel, lined up the stem for the next wave and remained firm.

**Question 13:**

How did the narrator, and the other members react to the presence of water in the ship?

**Answer:**

The narrator could not leave the wheel to examine the damaged parts. Mary shouted that the decks were broken and they were sinking. Larry and Herb were pumping out water like madmen. Sue had a big bump over her eyes but the children said that they were all right.

**Question 14:**

"I had no time to worry about bumped heads," says the narrator. What problems do you think deserved his immediate attention?

**Answer:**

The starboard side had been struck open. They were taking in more water with every wave breaking over them. If he did not make some repairs urgently, they would sink. The narrator managed to cover the gaping holes with canvas and waterproof hatch covers.

**Question 15:**

What problems did the narrator face during the night of January 2, 1977?

**Answer:**

The hand pumps started to block up with the debris floating around the cabins. The electric pump short circuited. The water level rose threateningly. The two spare hand pumps had been wrenched over board. The waves had also carried away the forestay sail, the jib, the dinghies and the main anchor from the deck.



**Question 16:**

How did the narrator react to the problems? What does it reveal?

**Answer:**

The narrator did not lose his calm or courage in the face of problems. He thought calmly. Then he remembered that they had another electric pump under the chart room floor. He found it in working order. They were not getting any reply to their distress radio signals. He was not surprised as they were in a remote corner of the world.

**Question 17:**

"I didn't want to worry you when you were trying to save us all," said Sue. What has happened to her?

**Answer:**

Sue's head had a bump. It had swollen alarmingly. She had two enormous black eyes. She also had a deep cut on her arm. She did not bother her daddy about her injuries as he was busy in more important task.

**Question 18:**

Why do you think the narrator searched for an island so eagerly?

**Answer:**

The wave that hit **Wavewalker** had caused extensive damage. Nearly all the boat's main frames had been smashed down to the keel. A whole section of the starboard hull was being held up by a few cupboard partitions. **Wavewalker** could not hold together long enough for them to reach Australia. So he searched for an island to repair the boat.

**Question 19:**

Why could they not set any sail on the main mast on 4 January?

**Answer:**

The hull of the ship had been damaged badly. Pressure on the ropes supporting the masts and sails would simply pull the damaged section of the hull apart. So they hoisted the storm jib and headed towards the islands.

**Question 20:**

How did little Jonathan react to the desperate situation they found themselves in on 5 January?

**Answer:**

Jonathan asked his daddy if they were going to die. The narrator tried to assure him that they would overcome the situation. Then little Jon declared bravely that he was not afraid of death provided they could all be together.

**Question 21:**

How did the narrator respond to little Jon's words? What do his actions reveal about his character?

**Answer:**

He could not find proper words to respond. However, he felt inspired to fight the sea with everything he had. He decided to stop the ship and protect the weakened

starboard side. He did so with an improvised anchor of heavy nylon ropes and two 22 litre plastic barrels of paraffin. This shows his resourcefulness and determination.

**Question 22:**

When do you think, Mary and the narrator feel the end was near? Why did they feel so?

**Answer:** On the evening of 5 January 1977, Mary and narrator felt that the end was very near. They sat together holding hands. The movement of the ship brought in more and more water through the broken planks.

**Question 23:**

“Optimism and courage help to tide over difficulties”. How did the narrator succeed in searching the small island?

**Answer:**

The narrator was searching for a 65 kilometre wide island in an ocean of 150,000 kilometres. He worked optimistically on wind speeds, changes of course, drift and current. He calculated their position with the help of sextant also.

**Question 24:**

How did Sue try to enliven the gloomy atmosphere?

**Answer:**

Sue forgot her swollen head and blackened eyes and prepared a funny card. On the front it had caricatures of Mary and the narrator. She called them funny people who had made her laugh. There was a message also. It expressed her love, thanks and good wishes.

**Question 25:**

The narrator says, “I told him with a conviction I did not feel.” What led him to believe so?

**Answer:**

The narrator had lost his main compass. He was using a spare one. It had not been corrected for magnetic variation. He had to make allowance for this as well as for the influence of the westerly currents. Though he checked and rechecked his calculations, he was not sure. He depended on luck as well.

**Question 26:**

What gloomy thoughts occurred to the narrator? What pleasant surprise was in store for him?

**Answer:**

The narrator thought that they might have missed the island. They couldn't hope to beat back into the westerly winds with the sail they had been left with. When Jonathan called him the best daddy in the world and the best captain and asked for a hug, he refused to do. When Sue remarked that he had found the island, he felt surprised.

**Question 27:**

What did Sue tell her Daddy about the island? What did he notice himself?

**Answer:**

Sue told her Daddy that the island was as big as a battleship and it was out there in front of them. The narrator gazed at its complete outline. It was a bare piece of volcano rock with little vegetation.

**Question 28:**

Why do you think, did the narrator call Ie Amsterdam 'the most beautiful island in the world'?

**Answer:**

Ile Amsterdam was a very small island made of volcanic rock. It had little vegetation and only 28 inhabitants. However, the island provided them safety from the huge waves of the sea as well as opportunity to repair the damaged ship.

**Question 29:**

What did the narrator think of while landing at Ie Amsterdam? Why?

**Answer:**

He thought of his companions. Larry and Herb had remained cheerful and optimistic under the most serious tension. His wife Mary had stayed at the wheel during the crucial hours. His daughter Suzanne did not bother him about her head injury. His son Jonathan was not afraid to die.

**Question 30:**

How can you say that Suzanne's injuries were serious?

**Answer:**

Suzanne's head had a bump. It was quite swollen. Her blackened eyes narrowed to slits. Her head injury took six minor operations to remove a recurring blood clot between skin and skull. This shows that her injuries were serious.

## We're Not Afraid to Die Long Answer Type Questions

**Question 1:**

Describe the harrowing experience of the narrator as mighty waves hit "Wave walker" in the southern Indian Ocean.

**Answer:**

A mighty wave hit the stem of their ship 'Wave walker' in the evening of 2nd January. A tremendous explosion shook the deck. A torrent of green and white water broke over the ship. The narrator's head struck against the wheel. He was swept overboard. He was sinking below the waves and losing his consciousness. He accepted his approaching death. He felt quite peaceful.

Suddenly, his head appeared out of water. A few metres away, "**Wavewalker**" was turning over in water. Her masts were almost horizontal. Then a wave hurled her upright. The narrator's lifeline jerked taut. He grabbed the guard rails and sailed through the air into **Wavewalker's** main boom. Succeeding waves tossed him around the deck like a rag doll. His left ribs cracked. His mouth was filled with blood and broken teeth. Somehow, he found the wheel, lined up the stem for the next wave and held tightly.

**Question 2:**

What damage did 'Wavewalker' suffer as a result of bad weather?

**Answer:**

Mighty waves struck '**Wavewalker**'. The decks were smashed. Water was gushing in through holes and openings. The whole starboard side had bulged inwards. Clothes, crockery, charts, tins and toys moved around noisily in deep water. Their hand pumps got blocked up with the debris floating around the cabins. The electric pump short circuited. Water level rose high. The two spare hand pumps had been wrenched overboard. Waves had also swept off the forestay sail, the jib, the dinghies and the main anchor.

There was a tremendous leak somewhere below the waterline. The boat's main rib frames were smashed down to the keel. A whole section of the starboard hull was being held up by a few cupboard partitions only. The hull of the ship had been damaged so badly that the pressure of rigging could simply pull the damaged section of the hull apart. **Wavewalker** was so damaged that she could not hold together long enough to reach Australia.

**Question 3:**

What efforts did the narrator make to save the ship and its passengers?

**Answer:**

At first he slowed down the ship. He dropped the storm jib and lashed heavy mooring rope in a loop across the stem. They double fastened everything. They attached life lines, put on waterproof clothes and life jackets. After being hit by the first mighty wave, the narrator handed over the wheel to Mary. He stretched canvas and fastened waterproof hatch covers across the gaping holes in the starboard side. As the two hand pumps got blocked and electric pump short circuited, he found another electric pump and started it.

Then he checked his charts and started searching for an island—lie Amsterdam. He got a reading on the sextant. He worked on wind speeds, changes of course, drift and current. He calculated their position. He checked and rechecked his calculations. They had lost main compass. He made discount for magnetic variation in the spare one and also of the influence of the westerly currents. Then he asked Larry to steer a course of 185 degrees. They succeeded in reaching lie Amsterdam island after 4 hours.

**Question 4:**

What impression do you form about the narrator on the basis of reading 'We're not Afraid to Die....If We can All be Together'?

**Answer:**

The narrator, a 37 year old businessman was a lover of adventure. He had dreamt of going around the world sea voyage. He and his wife had spent all the leisure hours for 16 years developing and improving their skills about work or travel on sea. This shows his love for perfection and attention to details.

The narrator was practical in his approach. He engaged two crewmen to help them sail through the rough waters of the southern Indian Ocean. He had keen foresight. They made advance preparations to protect the ship and passengers against violent sea-storms. He did not lose hope, calm or courage in the face of difficulties. He had his priorities fixed. Repairing the damaged ship was essential. Everything else including injuries could wait. He was resourceful also. He managed to steer the course with the help of whatever had been left with them. His presence of mind helped them to – overcome troubles. He had a level head. He made exact

calculations of their positions and that of the island. He fixed the course and speed. His self-confidence and practical knowledge made him a good captain.