



**CLASS X**  
**ENGLISH COURSE BOOK**  
**UNIT IV – PERSONALITIES**  
**LESSON 10**  
**MY CHILDHOOD**

**SOLUTIONS**

**A. Answer the following questions in a sentence each:**

**i. Where was Abdul Kalam's house situated?**

**Ans:** Abdul Kalam's house was situated on the Mosque Street in the Island town of Rameswaram in the erstwhile Madras State.

**ii. How does Abdul Kalam describe himself as a child?**

**Ans:** Abdul Kalam describes himself as one of many children – a short boy with rather undistinguished looks, born to tall and handsome parents.

**iii. As a child why does Abdul Kalam read Dinamani, the newspaper?**

**Ans:** As a child, Abdul Kalam read Dinamani, the newspaper in order to trace in the headlines, stories related to the Second World War.

**iv. What qualities did Abdul Kalam inherit from his father?**

**Ans:** From his father, Abdul Kalam inherited honesty and self-discipline.

**v. Apart from the events from the life of the Prophet, what other stories did Abdul Kalam as a child hear from his mother and grandmother?**

**Ans:** As a child Abdul Kalam was told events from the Ramayana by his mother and grandmother apart from the events from the life of the Prophet.

**vi. Where was Abdul Kalam asked to sit by the new teacher?**

**Ans:** Abdul Kalam was asked by the new teacher to sit on the back bench.



vii. **Why did Sivasubramania Iyer serve Abdul Kalam himself?**

**Ans:** Sivasubramania Iyer served Abdul Kalam himself because his conservative wife refused to serve a Muslim boy in her kitchen.

viii. **When Abdul Kalam visited Sivasubramania's house again, who served food to Abdul Kalam?**

**Ans:** When Abdul Kalam visited Sivasubramania's house again, it was Sivasubramania's conservative wife who served him food with her own hands.

**B. Answer the following questions briefly:**

i. **Who were Abdul Kalam's close school friends? What did they later become?**

**Ans:** Abdul Kalam's close school friends in his childhood were Ramanandha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakashan.

Ramanandha became the high priest of the Rameswaram temple after his father; Aravindan went into the business of arranging transport for visiting pilgrims and Sivaprakashan became a catering contractor for the Southern Railways.

ii. **How does Abdul Kalam describe his parents and what are the characteristics he inherited from them?**

**Ans:** Abdul Kalam described his parents as tall and handsome. His father possessed great innate wisdom and a true generosity of spirit and his mother was an ideal helpmate to him. His austere father used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries but all necessities were provided to his children.

Abdul Kalam inherited honesty and discipline from his father and from his mother, he inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness.

iii. **How did Abdul Kalam earn his first wages as a child?**

**Ans:** As a casualty of the Second World War, trains did not halt at Rameswaram station. As a result, the newspapers which were carried by train were bundled and thrown out from the moving train on the Rameswaram Road between Rameswaram and Dhanuskodi. Samsuddin, Abdul Kalam's cousin, distributed newspapers in Rameswaram and he needed a helping hand to catch the bundles and Abdul Kalam filled the slot. Thus, Abdul Kalam earned his first wages as a child.



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- iv. **What did Abdul Kalam's family do during the annual Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony?**

**Ans:** During the annual Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony, Abdul Kalam's 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.

- v. **'I felt very sad, and so did Ramanandha Sastry.' Why did the boys feel very sad?**

**Ans:** When Abdul Kalam was in the fifth standard at the Rameswaram Elementary School, he always sat in the front row next to his close friend, Ramanandha Sastry. The new teacher who came to their class could not stomach a Hindu priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy. So, in accordance with their social ranking, Abdul Kalam was asked to go and sit on the back bench. This incident made the boys feel very sad.

- vi. **Who was Lakshmana Sastry? How could he reform the young new teacher?**

**Ans:** Lakshmana Sastry who was Ramanandha Sastry's father was the high priest of the Rameswaram temple.

When he heard of the social discrimination which had taken place in his son's class, he summoned and told the teacher that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children. He also bluntly asked the teacher either to apologize or quit the school and the island. His strong sense of conviction ultimately reformed the young new teacher.

- vii. **Why does Abdul Kalam describe his science teacher as a rebel?**

**Ans:** In Abdul Kalam's childhood days, the small society of Rameswaram was very rigid in terms of the segregation of different social groups. However, his science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer, though an orthodox Brahmin with a conservative wife, did his best to break social barriers so that people from varying backgrounds could mingle easily. He would spend hours with Abdul Kalam, a Muslim boy and even invited him to a meal at his home. He even served Kalam himself and sat down beside Kalam to eat his meal. He told Kalam that in order to change the system, problems had to be confronted. For these reasons, Abdul Kalam described his science teacher as a rebel.

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