

Reach for The Top

Answers to NCERT Questions

PART-I

THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

I. Answer these questions in one or two sentences each. (The paragraph number within brackets provides the clues to the answers.)

1. Why was the 'holy man' who gave Santosh's mother his blessings surprised?

Ans: The holy man was surprised when Santosh's grandmother told him that they did not want a son. It was strange that a society who disregarded women, could wish to be blessed with a girl. However, he gave the requested blessings.

2. Give an example to show that even as a young girl, Santosh was not ready to accept anything unreasonable.

Ans: Santosh's statement, "from the very beginning I was quite determined that if I choose a correct and a rational path, the others around me had to change, not me, very clearly explains that she was not ready to accept anything that was unreasonable.

3. Why was Santosh sent to the local school?

Ans: Santosh, being a girl, was sent to a local school according to the prevailing customs. This was despite the fact that her parents were affluent enough to send her to a city school.

4. When did she leave home for Delhi and why?

Ans: The societal rules required a girl to get married at the age of sixteen. Santosh, however, was not willing to be forced into marriage and insisted that she would never get married if she did not acquire education. In protest, she went off to Delhi and enrolled herself in a school there.

5. Why did Santosh's parents agree to pay for her schooling in Delhi? What mental qualities of Santosh are brought into light by this incident?

Ans: Initially, her parents refused to pay for her education. She very politely informed them that she would then earn money by working part time to pay her fees. It was this threat that made their parents relent.

This shows the conviction and the stability of the young girl, who knew exactly what she wanted in life.

II. Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (about 30 words).

1. How did Santosh begin to climb mountains?

Ans: Her hostel room at Maharani college faced the Aravalli Hills. She would watch the villagers going up the hill and suddenly vanishing. She was so curious that she decided to check out the matter. There were only mountaineers that day, and she requested to join them. Pleasantly surprised with their consent, Santosh made her first step up to a mountain.

2. What incidents during the Everest expedition show Santosh's concern for her team-mates?

Ans: In the year 1992, during the Everest mission, Santosh provided special care to a climber who lay dying at the South Col. She could not revive him though. However, she managed to save another climber, Mohan Singh, who would have met with the same fate had she not shared her oxygen with him. Santosh was very empathetic towards her co-climbers.

3. What shows her concern for the environment?

Ans: Santosh was not just a mountaineer. She was a fervent environmentalist too. On one occasion, she brought down 500 kgs of garbage from the Himalayas. She could have left it behind, ignoring the call of duty. But she was made of a different mettle (strength of character).

4. How does she describe her feelings at the summit of the Everest?

Ans: She says that it took her some time to absorb that she actually was 'on top of the world'. And when she unfurled the Indian tri-colour and held it aloft on the highest point in the world, her emotions and feelings were undescrivable. She felt extremely spiritual, and took pride in being an Indian.

5. Santosh Yadav got into the record books both times she scaled Mt. Everest. What were the reasons for this?

Ans: The first time she entered the book of records, was in recognition of the fact that she was the first woman to scale and reach the summit of Mt. Everest. Twelve months later, she joined the Indo-Nepalese Women's Expedition on an invitation, and scaled the mountain once again, and got recognised as the only woman to scale the Mount for a second time. She thus, secured for herself and India a unique place in the annals of mountaineering.

III. Complete the following statements.

1. From her room in Kasturba Hostel, Santosh used to _____

Ans: From her room in Kasturba Hostel, Santosh used to watch villagers from her room going up a hill and vanishing after a while

2. When she finished college, Santosh had to write a letter of apology to her father because _____ .

Ans: When she finished college, Santosh had to write a letter of apology to her father because she got enrolled at Uttarkashi's Nehru Institute of Mountaineering without his permission.

3. During the Everest expedition, her seniors in the team admired her _____ .

Ans: During the Everest expedition, her seniors in the team admired her climbing skills, physical fitness and mental strength while her concern for others and desire to work together with them endeared her to the fellow climbers.

IV. Pick out words from the text that mean the same as the following words or expressions. (look in the paragraphs indicated)

1. took to be true without proof (1): _____

Ans: Assumed

2. based on reason, sensible; reasonable (2): _____

Ans: Rational

3. the usual way of doing things (3): _____

Ans: Custom

4. a strong desire arising from within (5): _____

Ans: Urge

5. the power to endure, without falling ill (7): _____

Ans: Resistance

PART-II

BEFORE YOU READ

1. A Russian girl, Maria Sharapova, reached the summit of women's tennis when she was barely eighteen. As you read about her, see if you can draw a comparison between her and Santosh Yadav.

Match the following.

something disarming	quickly, almost immediately
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at odds with	more calm, confident and in control than people of her age usually are
glamorous attire	in contrast to; not agreeing with
in almost no time	something that makes you feel friendly, taking away your suspiciousness
poised beyond her years	sent off
packed off	attractive and exciting clothes
launched	causing strong feelings of sadness
heart wrenching	started

Ans:

something disarming	something that makes you feel friendly, taking away your suspiciousness
at odds with	in contrast to; not agreeing with
glamorous attire	attractive and exciting clothes
in almost no time	quickly, almost immediately
poised beyond her years	more calm, confident and in control than people of her age usually are
packed off	sent off
launched	started
heart wrenching	causing strong feelings of sadness

THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. Working in groups of 4-5 students, go back over the two passages on Santosh Yadav and Maria Sharapova and complete the table given below with relevant phrases or sentences.

Points of Comparison/Contrast	Santosh Yadav	Maria Sharapova
1. Their humble beginning		
2. Their parents' approach		

3. Their will power and strong desire to succeed		
4. Evidence of their mental toughness		
5. Their patriotism		

Ans:

Points of Comparison/Contrast	Santosh Yadav	Maria Sharapova
1. Their humble beginning	Born in a small village in Haryana	Born in Siberia
2. Their parents' approach	Not supportive as she was a girl but gradually fell in with her plans	Lived and worked to help achieve her goal
3. Their will power and strong desire to succeed	Going against social norms, Santosh is adamant about being educated. She enrolls herself in a school in Delhi and joins college. Then she enrolls for a course in mountaineering and is determined to succeed.	She moves to America to master the game of tennis. She works hard, ignores all the adversities and fights a winning battle.
4. Evidence of their mental toughness	She began living on her own terms refusing to follow irrational customs. Refused to get married without being educated. Boldly enrolled in a school, and convinced her parents to pay her fees. Took a fancy for mountaineering, registered for the course, and worked her way to the top.	She was a small girl of ten. Was insulted by other students but did not get upset, was determined. To succeed work hard and with a lot of focus to be on top.
5. Their patriotism	Was proud of being an Indian. Was proud to unfurl the tri-colour.	Though it was in America that she achieved her dream, she was proud of being a Russian and will be happy to play for

		Russia, if the country wants.
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THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

I. Identify the two parts in the sentences below by underlining the part that gives us the information in brackets.

1. Where other girls wore traditional Indian dresses, Santosh preferred shorts.

(Contrasts her dress with that of others)

Ans: Where other girls wore traditional Indian dresses, Santosh preferred shorts.

2. She left home and got herself enrolled in a school in Delhi. (Tells us what happened after the first action.)

Ans: She left home and got herself enrolled in a school in Delhi.

3. She decided to fight the system when the right moment arrived. (Tells us when she was going to fight the system.)

Ans: She decided to fight the system when the right moment arrived.

4. Little Maria had not yet celebrated her tenth birthday when she was packed off to train in the United States. (Tells us when Maria was sent to the U.S.)

Ans: Little Maria had not yet celebrated her tenth birthday when she was packed off to train in the United States.

II. Now rewrite the pairs of sentences given below as one sentence.

1. Grandfather told me about the old days. All books were printed on paper then.

Ans: Grandfather told me that all books were printed on paper in the old days.

(or)

Grandfather told me about the old days when all books were printed on paper.

2. What do you do after you finish the book? Perhaps you just throw it away.

Ans: Do you throw away your books after you finish it?

(or)

After finishing your books, do you throw it away?

3. He gave the little girl an apple. He took the computer apart.

Ans: He gave the little girl an apple and took the computer apart.

4. You have nothing. That makes you very determined.

Ans: Having nothing makes you determined.

(or)

Having nothing is what that makes you determined.

5. I never thought of quitting. I knew what I wanted.

Ans: I never thought of quitting as I knew what I wanted.

(or)

I knew what I wanted so I never thought of quitting.

WRITING

Working in pairs, go through the table below that gives you information about the top women tennis players since 1975. Write a short article for your school magazine comparing and contrasting the players in terms of their duration at the top. Mention some qualities that you think may be responsible for their brief or long stay at the top spot.

Top-Ranked Women Players

I. The roll of honour of women who enjoyed life at the summit since everybody's favourite player, Chris Evert, took her place in 1975.

Name	Ranked on	Weeks as No. 1
Maria Sharapova (Russia)	22 August 2005	1
Lindsay Davenport (U.S.)	October 2004	82
Amelie Mauresmo (France)	13 September 2004	5
Justine Henin-Hardenne (Belgium)	20 October 2003	45
Kim Clijsters (Belgium)	11 August 2003	12
Serena Williams (U.S.)	8 July 2002	57
Venus Williams (U.S.)	25 February 2002	11

Jennifer Capriati (U.S.)	15 October 2001	17
Lindsay Davenport (U.S.)	12 October 1998	82
Martina Hingis (Switzerland)	31 March 1997	209
Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario (Spain)	6 February 1995	12
Monica Seles (U.S.)	11 March 1991	178
Steffi Graf (Germany)	17 August 1987	377
Tracy Austin (U.S.)	7 April 1980	22
Martina Navratilova (U.S.)	10 July 1978	331
Chris Evert (U.S.)	3 November 1975	362

Ans:

Top-Ranked Women Players

by XYX

The roll of honour of women who enjoyed life at the summit since everybody's favourite player, Chris Evert, took her place in 1975, has been spectacular. She has occupied the No. 1 place for 362 weeks, second only to Steffi Graf of Germany who was ranked No. 1 for 377 weeks. The other champions who brought honours to their countries were Martina Navratilova from U.S. who was ranked No. 1 for 331 weeks, followed by Martina Hingis of Switzerland who was on top for 209 weeks and Monica Seles of U.S., for 178 weeks.

There were many other women who brought honour to their countries, though it may not have been as many times as their contemporaries. Serena Williams, Venus Williams, Jennifer Capriati, Lindsay Davenport, and Tracy Austin have played a major role in keeping the flag of Tennis flying high in the United States. The other stars of tennis include Amelie Mauresmo of France, Justin Henin-Hardenne and Kim Clijsters of Belgium, and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain.

These women have proved that there is nothing that a woman is not capable of doing. Be it tennis, mountaineering or fighting at the battlefield, a woman stands apart.

II. Which of these words would you use to describe Santosh Yadav? Find reasons in the text to support your choices, and write a couple of paragraphs describing Santosh's character.

contented	determined	resourceful	polite	adventurous	considerate
weak-willed	fearful	independent	pessimistic	patient	persevering

Ans: Santosh was determined, resourceful, adventurous, independent, persevering and considerate.

Santosh Yadav, was a girl from an affluent yet orthodox background. Life was a big challenge for the bright and spirited young girl. Her grit and determination motivated her to cross all barriers with courage and will.

This Indian woman, stood atop the roof of the world's highest peak, Mt. Everest twice and was the first woman in the world to have achieved this feat.

She undertook the necessary training, making an independent decision to do so, as she was fascinated by the sight of the villagers climbing up and down the Aravalli hills. Scaling the Himalayan mountains, and its tall snow clad peaks is highly risky because of the terrain and the extreme climate. Being a woman did not deter her in any way. In fact, her presence of mind during her maiden expedition to Mt. Everest in 1992, she rescued a co-climber who was short of breath due to depleting oxygen in his cylinder, by sharing her cylinder. Ms Santosh Yadav was awarded with the Padma Shri by the central government.

Additional Questions

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow: (4 Marks each)

1. "grandmother who was standing close by, told him that they did not want a son. The 'holy man' was also surprised!

(a) Which lesson has the above lines been taken from?

(b) Whose grandmother is this?

(c) Why was the 'holy man' surprised?

(d) Why did they not want a son?

Ans:

(a) These lines have been taken from Part I of the lesson, 'Reach for the Top'.

(b) The grandmother mentioned here is Santosh Yadav's grandmother.

- (c) The holy man was surprised to know that they did not want a son.
- (d) They did not want a son because they already had five sons in the family.

2. “From the very beginning I was quite determined that if I chose a correct and a rational path, the others around me had to change, and not me.

- (a) Who is saying these lines?
- (b) Why does she say so?
- (c) What does she mean by rational path?
- (d) Give one word to describe her character.

Ans:

- (a) These lines are being spoken by Santosh Yadav.
- (b) She says so because she was not a traditional village girl.
- (c) By rational path she means a path which is logical and not based on myths and traditions.
- (d) Progressive/Sensible/Dynamic/Strong-willed

3. “She left home and got herself enrolled in a school in Delhi.

- (a) Who is ‘she’?
- (b) Why did she leave home?
- (c) Why did she go to a school in Delhi?
- (d) Do you think what she did was right?

Ans:

- (a) ‘She’ is Santosh Yadav.
- (b) She left home to pursue higher education, which her family was not allowing her to do.
- (c) She went to a school in Delhi because they were close to the capital, and her family could afford to pay for her education.
- (d) Considering the situation she was facing in a traditional set up being a girl, probably, her action can be condoned. She tried to convince her family who refused to relent.

4. “her concern for others and desire to work together with them found her a special place in the hearts of fellow climbers.

- (a) Who is 'her' in the above lines?
- (b) 'Desire to work together' shows what quality in her?
- (c) What is the activity/work mentioned in the above lines?
- (d) 'Concern for others'. Explain.

Ans:

- (a) Santosh is 'her' in the above lines.
- (b) It shows her quality of being a good team worker.
- (c) The activity is mountaineering.
- (d) It refers to the care and responsibility she felt towards her co-climbers.

5. "It took some time for the enormity of the moment to sink in....."

- (a) Who is saying these lines?
- (b) What does 'it' refer to?
- (c) What was the enormity of the moment?
- (d) Where is the narration being made from?

Ans:

- (a) Santosh Yadav is saying these lines.
- (b) 'It' refers to the feeling she was experiencing.
- (c) The enormity of the moment was her success at reaching the top of the world.
- (d) The narration is being made from the top of the Everest.

6. "All this happened in almost no time."

- (a) From which lesson is this line taken?
- (b) What does 'all this' mean?
- (c) Who is being referred to in the above line?
- (d) What happened in no time?

Ans:

- (a) This line is taken from Part II of the lesson, 'Reach for the Top'.
- (b) 'All this' refers to the success of the narrator.
- (c) Maria Sharapova is the person being referred to in the above line.

(d) Maria acquired the position of No. 1 in women's tennis in no time.

7. "The nine year old had already learnt an important lesson in her life.

(a) Who is the nine year old girl?

(b) Why was this statement made?

(c) Why did this happen?

(d) What was the lesson that she learnt?

Ans:

(a) The nine year old girl is Maria Sharapova.

(b) This statement was made because she had to be away from her mother.

(c) This happened because of visa restrictions.

(d) She learnt the lesson that tennis excellence would only come at a price.

8. "This is her mantra for success.

(a) Who is 'her' in the above line?

(b) What has she succeeded?

(c) What is meant by 'mantra'?

(d) Mention any one of her mantras.

Ans:

(a) 'Her' in the above line is Maria Sharapova.

(b) She has succeeded in becoming the No. 1 tennis player.

(c) 'Mantra' refers to the guiding or motivating forces that help you with your work.

(d) 'I work hard at what I do' 'I am very competitive' 'It's my job'.

9. "I felt proud as an Indian.

(a) Name the lesson from which the above line is taken.

(b) Who is 'I'?

(c) In which context is this statement made?

(d) What made 'I' a proud Indian?

Ans:

(a) The above line is taken from the lesson, 'Reach for the Top' Part I.

(b) 'I' is Santosh Yadav.

(c) It is being said in the context of her feelings while standing on top of the world.

(d) Unfurling the Indian Flag on top of the world made her feel like a proud Indian.

Short Answer Questions (30-40 words: 2 Marks each)

1. Describe the family of Santosh Yadav.

Ans: Santosh Yadav belonged to an affluent family in Haryana. She was the sixth child of the family. There were five boys who were older to her. She lived with her parents and grandmother. Santosh's family was an orthodox family, who abided strictly by the traditions of the community.

2. Was Santosh happy as her name suggested?

Ans: The name Santosh was given to the little girl because everyone was very happy and contented when a girl was born after the five boys. But Santosh was not very content because she could not adhere to the traditional and restricted lifestyle that was expected from a girl-child.

3. Pick up an incident from the extract that exhibits Santosh's strength of character, according to you.

Ans: According to me, the incident that exhibited her strength of character was when Santosh helped her co-climber. On her trek up the Everest, two of her co-climbers were seen in a distress situation, due to empty oxygen cylinders. One of them succumbed, but she rescued Manoj Singh by sharing her oxygen cylinder till they reached their destination.

4. Write a short paragraph giving your opinion about Santosh.

Ans: Santosh Yadav is an epitome (perfect example) of a liberated woman. She is one among the few women of India who succeeded in breaking the barriers of tradition and society. It was her grit, determination, and exceptional self-confidence that enabled her choose, pave, and walk the path she designed for herself. She accomplished the impossible, and made it appear so simple for the others to emulate. A truly remarkable woman, who I would love to idealise!

5. Give a background of Maria Sharapova.

Ans: Maria Sharapova is a Russian citizen, who moved to the United States to make a mark for herself in the game of tennis. She was barely nine years of age when her father took the initiative to launch his daughter on the path of success and stardom. She endured a lot of hardships, faced them bravely, and secured the position of World No. 1 on 22nd August, 2005 at the tender age of eighteen. She was rewarded for her hard work and dedication.

6. What were the problems Sharapova faced during her training? How did she react?

Ans: Sharapova was a little girl when she began training. She would fall asleep much earlier than the other pupils who were older than her. They would come into the room as late as 11 p.m. and wake her up and order her to clean up the room. This kind of ragging, humiliation and insults, instead of buckling her under pressure, made her a stronger and more determined person. She was steadfast about pursuing her dream.

7. “Maria Sharapova cannot be pigeon-holed or categorised. Explain

Ans: Maria Sharapova was a little girl who was not born with a silver spoon in her mouth. It was her grit and determination that helped her climb the ladder of success. She was fond of reading, singing, dancing and wearing sophisticated gowns on one hand and on the other, she loved pancakes with chocolate spread and fizzy orange drink. It was her talent and sacrifice that lifted her to the top of the world. Therefore, she cannot be categorised into any particular group or class of people. She was one of a kind.

Long Answer Questions (100-150 words: 8 Marks each)

1. Give a pen-picture of Santosh Yadav.

Ans: Santosh was a strong-headed girl who was born as the sixth child in an affluent family in a small village in Haryana. She began to live her life on her own terms from a very early age. While other girls of her age around her wore traditional Indian dresses, Santosh preferred wearing shorts. When she turned sixteen, her parents pressurised her to get married, but she threatened her parents that she would never marry if she did not get a proper education. She eventually left home and got herself enrolled in a school at Delhi. Quite naturally, her parents refused to pay for her education. But undeterred (unaffected) by their reaction, she told them that she would work part-time and pay for her education. Eventually, they agreed to finance her schooling in Delhi. She joined Maharani College for higher studies. It was during a vacation that she secretly enrolled for a course in mountaineering. Her strong will-power and passion for excellence enabled her to become the youngest woman to scale Mt. Everest twice. We get a glimpse of her caring side, when during her expedition to Mt. Everest, she saves a fellow climber by sharing her oxygen cylinder with him. She is an embodiment of all the qualities of an ideal woman and a good human being.

2. Give the character sketch of Maria Sharapova.

Ans: Maria Sharapova was born on 19 April 1987 to Yuri and Yelena in Russia. She was very fond of playing the game of tennis, and her rapid ascent in a fiercely competitive world began at a very young age with a level of sacrifice that few children would be prepared to endure at that age. She was taken to the United States by her

father to enable her reach her chosen goal. Separation from her mother was not easy for the little girl, who understood that life was not a bed of roses.

She had to overcome a lot of difficulties and make many sacrifices during her journey, which she did, without losing her self-confidence and focus. This young girl conquered the world of tennis at the young age of eighteen and was crowned world No. 1.

Maria is yet another example to show to the world, that every step backward is an assurance of two steps forward on the road that leads to success.

3. Compare and contrast the characters of the parents of Santosh Yadav and Maria Sharapova.

Ans: There was nothing in common among the two sets of parents. Santosh's parents were from a very traditional Indian background. They were guided by the norms of the society and community. Girls are generally not to be seen or heard. It was actually surprising that they desired having a girl-child. This child however, was not going to bog down by tradition or society. Her rigid parents had to face stiff revolt and challenges as their daughter had a mind of her own. She refused to be limited because she was a girl. She loved to wear comfortable clothes. She wanted to study. Her parents wanted her to get married at the age of sixteen, but had to give into her wishes because she had made up her mind to learn and grow. Left to her parents, perhaps the world would not have known the two time Everest climber, Santosh Yadav.

Maria, the little Russian girl reached the pinnacle of glory because of the support, and sacrifices made by her parents. It was her father who took her to America, worked hard to ensure that she does not fall short of the best training. He had to live away from his wife during this time, due to visa restrictions. They were with her in all her endeavours, and helped her mentally and financially to become the World No. 1 at the very young age of 18.

Parents play a very important role in the development of their children. But it is equally important for the child to know what he/she wants in life.

Self- Assessment Test

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. "I had to write a letter of apology to my father.

(a) Who had to write the letter of apology?

(b) What was the reason?

(c) What was she supposed to do?

(d) Where did she get enrolled?

2. “I will play the olympics for Russia if they want me to.

(a) Which lesson has this line been taken from?

(b) Who is saying these lines?

(c) Why is she willing to play for Russia?

(d) Which game will she play?

Short Answer Questions

1. What do you think would have happened if Santosh's parents had used force on her?

2. Can you think of any situation, when you have felt proud to be an Indian?

3. How do you think could Santosh's brothers have helped her?

4. How important is it to have a goal?

5. Write a short paragraph to explain Sharapova's stress when she had to leave her mother and go away.

Long Answer Questions

1. What is the significance of sexual discrimination? How is it affecting our country?

2. Write an article for your school magazine describing your first success. You are Santosh Yadav.

3. As Maria, make a diary entry assuming that you did not get the visa to go to America.