

## The Swimmer Who Does Not Need Her Legs !

### A. Lead in :

We meet several people on our way to school or on our return from places of work. Vendors, hawkers and handicapped people – do we anytime think about them ?

Think about a child who is struck by polio and discuss the following points in pairs.

- (i) Does he / she swim across a pond or a river?
- (ii) Will it be easy or difficult for him / her?
- (iii) Will it be impossible for him / her?

Read the lesson and see how a young girl of nineteen who was struck by polio was able to swim the English Channel. Her crippled legs did not stand in her way to become a talented sea-swimmer.

### B. The Text :

#### I

1. Imagine swimming across a pool with your feet dragging you down. Now imagine having the courage to swim across the English Channel in a similar fashion. Unbelievable, isn't it ? In spite of having legs made useless by polio, C.N. Janaki has become the first handicapped person to be part of a successful team - crossing the Channel.
2. It was in 1987 that Janaki was struck by polio. As a child she got the idea of trying to swim the English Channel. So she conveyed this to the English Channel Swimming Association for details and they replied that two conditions have to be met before a swimmer is allowed to make an attempt :
  - a. The swimmer should be able to spend at least ten hours continuously in water.

- b. The swimmer should be able to do marathon swimming, that is, he or she should be able to swim in the high seas for long hours at a stretch.
3. Janaki began training very hard in Bangalore to fulfil these conditions. 'After almost four years of training', she said, 'I was able to spend ten hours at a stretch in the swimming pool. An NIS coach, Mr. Gopal, gave me a certificate saying that he had seen me swim for ten hours continuously.'
4. Then, with the help of the Thimaiah National Academy of Adventure, she went to the coastal town of Malpe and began training in the Arabian Sea. She spent three weeks there with a coach called Dinesh Suvarna. She learnt to spend long hours in the sea by swimming a minimum of 20 kilometres a day.
5. Janaki then returned to Bangalore and sent her certificates to the Channel Swimming Association in England. When they gave her the permission to make the attempt, she had to start collecting funds for the trip. The government, a few private agencies and several friends contributed the money she needed for the attempt.
6. Janaki and her parents left for England in the middle of 1992. When she reached Dover and began practising in the English Channel, the Channel Swimming Association officials were quite shocked. This was the first time in their experience that a physically handicapped person was trying to swim the English Channel.

## II

7. 'They were very worried, said Janaki, 'and they kept a sharp eye on me during my training runs. I trained for about three weeks under the famous Channel coach, Stella Streeter. But when I told them that I wanted to make a solo attempt, they said they did not have a special boat to

accompany me. This was in case I needed to be lifted out of the water; so it was decided that I would be part of a relay team.'

8. The Channel swim can be done in two ways. One is the solo, and the other the relay swim. Six swimmers form a team and they each do a minimum of two hours of swimming. Now the other swimmers in the team, mostly Americans, were amazed to see that Janaki could swim, and to honour her they named the relay team, 'Janaki's Maritime Express'. Needless to say, every member of the team other than Janaki was physically normal.
9. The unique attempt was made on 28 July 1992. 'My fight,' said Janaki, 'in the course of the swim was against nature. The Channel waters are so cold that I needed much more energy than usual to keep my arms moving. Then I had the problem of my legs moving to the left or to the right, whichever way the waves were moving. So I really needed a lot of energy. The water was very salty, and when it entered my mouth, I felt sick. And then there were the seaweeds and jelly fish. These fish kept sticking to my body and I felt very uncomfortable.'
10. However, despite these problems, Janaki successfully did her share of the relay. She swam for about two hours and helped the relay team cross the 36 km Channel in 14 hours and 45 minutes.
11. Janaki's parents, Mr Nagappa and Mrs Indiramma, had anxiously stood on Dover beach wondering how things would turn out. 'We could not eat a single morsel,' said Mr Nagappa. 'How could we when our daughter was doing something so dangerous? For us old people it was really very agonizing'. But their daughter did triumph and become the first handicapped swimmer to part-swim the English Channel.
12. After her success Janaki said, 'Although I wanted to swim solo, I'm nevertheless happy that I was part of a relay team that helped me fulfil my dream of swimming the English Channel. I would now like to start training for the 1996 Paraplegic Olympics in Atlanta.

13. Janaki, who is a bank officer in Bangalore, has a simple philosophy : 'I have always wanted to do something worthwhile in life. I strongly believe that the word 'impossible' is applied to something that has not been tried. I wanted to prove that to be handicapped is no bar to success. One can overcome all obstacles by hard work, determination, courage and self-reliance. Self-reliance is very important. God helps those who help themselves. Lastly, there is one more thing I would like to say : there is really no short-cut to success !'.

### C. Notes and Glossary :

English channel	: the narrow sea passage that separates England and France.
polio	: infectious disease of the spine which causes an inability to move certain muscles.
handicapped	: (here) having the physical disability of not being able to walk.
at a stretch	: without stopping.
NIS	: National Institute of Sports.
solo	: (here) an unaccompanied swimming by one person alone.
waters (plural)	: part of a sea or a river.
feel sick	: start vomiting.
morsel	: a small piece of food.
agonizing	: cause mental anguish; worried
paraplegic	: (a person) the lower part of whose body, including both legs, is paralysed; (incapable of moving)
obstacle	: hindrance; barrier; bar; obstruction etc.
self-reliance	: an ability to do things and make decisions by oneself without the help of others.

**D. Let's understand the text :**

- (i) When did Janaki get the idea of swimming the English Channel ?
- (ii) What did she plan to do then ?
- (iii) Who said, 'I was able to swim 10 hours at a stretch in the swimming pool' ?
  - a. Mr. Gopal
  - b. Mr. Dinesh Suvarna
  - c. Janaki.

(Choose the correct answer)

- (iv) Where did she go with the help of Thimaiah Academy of Adventure ?
- (v) What did she do there ?
- (vi) Who contributed the money she needed for swimming the English channel ?
- (vii) Who was Stella Streeter ?
- (viii) What does 'Janaki's Maritime Express' mean ?

**E. Let's understand the text better :**

1. What were the conditions set by the English Channel Swimming Authority ?
2. Why were the officials of English Channel Swimming Association shocked ?
3. Why was it decided that Janaki would be part of a relay team ?
4. What were the channel waters like ?
5. What were the problems that Janaki faced while swimming the channel in a relay team ?
6. What were the feelings of Janaki's parents when she was crossing the channel waters ?
7. What does the expression paraplegic Olympics mean ?
8. What is it you like most about Janaki ? (Is it her determination, her courage, her hardwork....?)

**F. Let's Talk :**

- (a) Say whether the following statements are true or false. Discuss in groups.
- Janaki was struck by polio at the age of two.
  - Janaki was the first woman to swim the English Channel.
  - Janaki had begun training very hard before she attempted the channel swim.
  - The Channel swimming Association permitted Janaki to swim alone across the English Channel.
  - All other members of the relay team were also handicapped like Janaki.
  - Janaki's parents were worried about her when she was in the channel waters.
  - The dream of Janaki was to swim the English channel.
  - Janaki wanted to prove that to be handicapped is no bar to success.
- (b) Here are a few rules trekkers are expected to follow. Read the rules carefully. Discuss the rules in groups of three or four and say why each of them is necessary. Thereafter present your group's views to the whole class.

**SOME RULES FOR TREKKING**

- Follow the route given by the Department of Tourism.
- Take an authorised guide and porter.
- Do not cut any plants or trees.
- Do not kill any wild animal or bird
- Be careful when you walk in a wooded or grassy area.

**G. Learn to Listen :**

The students of class-IX have decided to go trekking in the Barunei Hills. Bakul was absent from school when the class teacher had a meeting with the students to plan the trip. So he meets his classmate Rahul to know what happened at the meeting. Bakul collects the information from Rahul. Now help Bakul to fill in the details about the trip :

## 1. The Bus / Train

Name	Leaving at	Leaving from

## 2. Luggage to be carried in a.....

## 3. Items of luggage :

Clothes etc.	Personal	bedding	food

## H. Let's learn some new words :

Mark the word in bold letters (para-13) below.

The word "impossible" is applied to something that has not been tried.

The root word of impossible is possible.

We add im with possible to get a new word.

and it gives opposite in meaning of possible.

This addition is known as prefix.

There are other prefixes which also convey the opposite meaning.

can you give some examples ?

<u>improper</u>	-	<u>im</u>
<u>unable</u>	-	<u>un</u>
<u>inessential</u>	-	<u>in</u>
<u>illegal</u>	-	<u>il</u>
<u>mismanage</u>	-	<u>mis</u>
<u>derecognise</u>	-	<u>de</u>

All these are negative prefixes. Study to know which of them will go with which words. This depends on their use. For example, only dis will go with 'order'. But there are some words which take either dis or un with a change in meaning. (For example) unlike, and dislike. If you read a lot of English, you can use them naturally without any problem.

Given below is a list of words. You have to tick the negative prefix—which goes with each of them. (Some of them take more than one such prefix.) The first one has been done for you.

Words	un	im	in	dis	mis	de	il	ab
Possible								
Courage								
Sufficient								
Connect								
Personal								
Successfully								
Comfortable								
Worthy								
Obey }								
Able								
Understand								
Honest								
Count								
Valid								
Fit								
Used								
Manage								
Essential								
Believe								
Appear								
Mindful								
Proper								
Normal								
Efficient								
Suitable								



**B. Certain words or groups of words occur together very frequently. These groups of words are called phrases. Make sentences of your own using the phrases given below.**

- (a) at a stretch                      (b) leave for                      (c) in spite of  
(d) a lot of                      (e) keep a sharp eye

**I. Let's learn language :**

Study the following sentences showing the use of :

Could and be able to

1. I (Janaki) was able to spend ten hours at a stretch in the swimming pool.  
(Para-3)

Here 'was able to' means managed to.

Janaki had the ability to spend ten hours and she did it (performance).

Hence she was able to / be able to = ability + performance.

**Mark the sentence below :**

1. When Bakul was 16, he could run 100 metres in 11 seconds.  
Here Bakul had the (general) ability to run 100 metres in 11 seconds but actually he did not run 100 metres in the past. In this context we usually use could not was able to.  
Here 'could' means ability without achievement or performance.  
Now compare could and be able to in the following paragraph.
2. Mahesh was an excellent tennis player.  
He could beat anybody. (=He had the ability to beat anybody.)
3. But once he had a difficult game against Somdev. Somdev played very well but in the end Mahesh was able to beat him. (=He managed to beat him in this particular game.)

**Complete the following sentences with could, was/were able to / couldn't.**

- (i) The fire spread quickly but everyone \_\_\_\_\_ escape.  
(ii) He \_\_\_\_\_ drive when he was sixteen, but he \_\_\_\_\_ because he didn't have a licence.

- (iii) They didn't have any tomatoes in the first shop I went to, but I \_\_\_\_\_ get some in the next shop.
- (iv) The boy fell into the river but fortunately we \_\_\_\_\_ rescue him.
- (v) He had hurt his leg, so he \_\_\_\_\_ walk very slowly.
- (vi) I looked everywhere for the book but I \_\_\_\_\_ find it.

**J. Let's writing :**

You would like to learn swimming. Fill in the details in the letter to the Thimaiah National Academy of Adventure about one of the courses listed :

In your letter, ask for the following points :

- Who can apply for the course – minimum age, etc.
- What is the duration of the course ?
- How much you have to pay for the course.
- What kind of food and accommodation you will be given.
- Whether you need to give a medical certificate or not.

The Director

Thimaiah National Academy of Adventure  
Bangalore, Karnatak

Sir,

I have read your advertisement about the three courses you offer at your institute.

I am interested in doing the course in adventure. Could you please give me the information about the following ?

I look forward to your kind reply.

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Yours faithfully

(Name)

(Address)