

Class 7 · English · Poorvi · Unit 1: Learning Together

Chapter 1

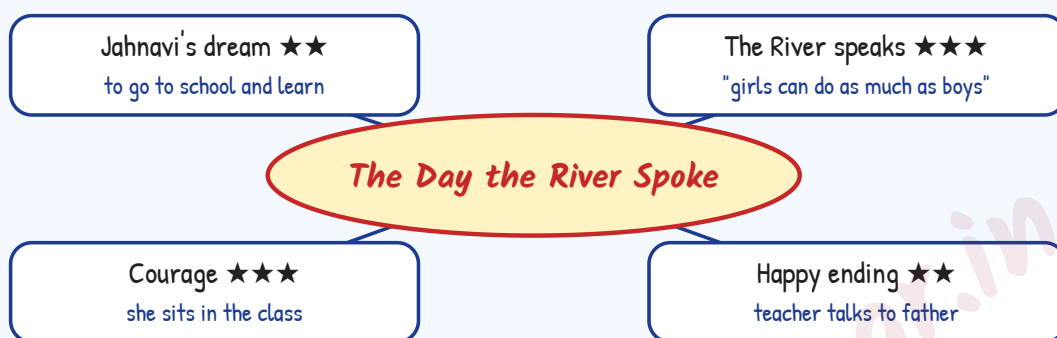
The Day the River Spoke

Kamala Nair (adapted) · NCERT Poorvi, Textbook of English for Grade 7 · CBSE

2026-27



Chapter map (★ = most important for the exam)



About the story

An extract adapted from **Kamala Nair's** story *The Day the River Spoke*. **Jahnavi**, a girl of nearly ten in a coastal village, longs to go to school. A **talking River** gives her the courage to try.

What is inside

1. Concept notes: story in brief, themes, characters, key lines, words
2. NCERT (Poorvi) exercises, fully solved, with prepositions and adverbs
3. **Important exam questions, fully solved**
4. Quick-reference sheet, extract sets, practice A-G, 20 MCQs, 6 A-R, answers, summary

Colour code used

red = key term green = definition

purple = sub-heading black = explanation

"purple Kalam" = a line quoted from the text

★ **Exam tip:** Exams ask about Jahnavi's **dream**, the River's **advice** ("it's up to you"), why the River **laughed**, and the **message** (girls' education, courage).

Theme in one line: every girl has the right to learn, and courage turns a dream into reality.

1.1 The story in brief ★★

Part I: tears by the river

- Jahnvi sits crying by the river. A **kingfisher** swoops down, a **green lizard** slithers to the water's edge. A **sleepy, murmuring voice** asks, "Dear, dear! What's the matter?"
- She is startled: it is not the lizard, the kingfisher or the parrots. It is **the River**, who says she comes to see it "almost every day".
- Jahnvi explains: "*They won't let me go to school.*" Her mother always said "Maybe later", first because she was too small, then because she had to mind her baby brothers **Ramu** and **Little Appu**. Now she is **nearly ten**.
- She wants to read like her elder brother **Ettan (Gopi)** and **Meena**, and to know **why**: why spiders are yellow on yellow flowers, why bamboo rustles, why the moon rises from behind the hills, why baby fish become frogs...
- "Stop! You make me breathless," says the River, and tells her the moon goes "over the mountains and down to the sea, like me!"

Part II: "it's up to you"

- The River says "*little girls can do as much as little boys—they swim as fast as little boys.*" Its advice: slip into the school one morning, sit and listen; maybe the teacher will let her stay.
- Jahnvi is afraid. The River **laughs**: she is not scared of the lizard, the **snake in the bamboo clump** or the **trains rattling** past. It tells her about **ships** and **Chandu's catamaran**. "*Try going to school first... Remember—it's up to you!*"
- Next day, carrying sleeping Appu, Jahnvi stands at the school door, listens to a story about **Ashoka**, and creeps to the back row. The **teacher** welcomes her ("Gopi's little sister") and promises: "*we'll talk to your father... We'll find a way.*"
- The teacher visits her father. Her **mother** says she once wanted to study too, and is glad: "*Girls should learn as much as they want.*"
- Jahnvi resolves to become a **teacher** and bring every girl in the village to school. She tells the River, "*I was scared, but I did it!*" The River chuckles: "Come again, little girl..."

Setting. A coastal village in India (fields, a river, bamboo, a railway bridge, a village school). Characters' names (Ettan, Appu, Chandu, catamaran) suggest Kerala. **Narration:** third person, with lively dialogue between a girl and a personified River.

1.2 Themes, characters and key lines ★★★

Themes

1. **Right to education, especially for girls.** Jahnvi is kept home to mind her brothers; her mother was also stopped once.
2. **Courage and self-belief.** "It's up to you!": she must take the first step.

3. **Curiosity.** Her many "whys" show a natural love of learning.
4. **Gender equality.** "Little girls can do as much as little boys."
5. **Nature as a friend and guide.** The River comforts and advises her.
6. **Change across generations.** The mother, once refused, now supports her daughter.

Key lines

"So many whys!": her curiosity.

"Seems to me little girls can do as much as little boys": equality.

"Remember—it's up to you!": she must act herself.

"Girls should learn as much as they want.": the mother's change of heart.

"I was scared, but I did it!": courage is acting in spite of fear.

Characters

Jahnavi

Curious (endless "whys"), **eager to learn**, **responsible** (minds Appu), at first **timid and sad**, but **brave** when it matters; **generous** (wants to teach all the village girls).

The River

Kind, affectionate, wise and encouraging; observant (knows about the snake, the trains); playful and humorous ("You make me breathless"); always "in a hurry to reach the sea".

The teacher

Warm, welcoming and helpful; takes action by visiting the father.

Mother

Busy in the fields, kept Jahnavi home, but **understanding**: she wanted to study as a girl and now supports her daughter.

★ **Exam tip:** The River is written with a capital R because it is **personified**: it talks, laughs, chuckles and gives advice, like a character.

1.3 Words, borrowed words and prepositions ★★

word	meaning
splashed	fell in drops, making a sound
slithered	moved by sliding side to side
murmuring	speaking in a low voice
startled	surprised, alarmed
thicket	dense group of bushes and trees
shrieked	made a high-pitched sound
rustle	light sound of leaves rubbing
conspiratorially	secretly

clump	small group of trees
rattling	noise made by shaking
catamaran	a boat (Tamil "kattu maram", tied wood)
wailed	(here) complained loudly

Words India gave English

karma (Sanskrit: action and its result) · sahib (Arabic/Urdu: sir) · chutney (Hindi: relish) · guru (Sanskrit: teacher) · verandah (Hindi/Portuguese: open porch) · jungle (Hindi: forest) · areca (Malayalam: betel-nut palm) · palanquin (Sanskrit/Pali via Portuguese: covered litter) · catamaran (Tamil)

Prepositions

A preposition shows the relation of a noun/pronoun to another word: place (**in, on, under, between, among**), direction (**towards, into, through, over, down**), time (**at, on, in, since, for**). "It goes **down towards** the sea... **over** the mountains."

Preposition or adverb?

preposition (has an object)	adverb (no object)
She ran up the stairs .	She rang me up .
The cat jumped on the table .	The children played outside .
A kingfisher swept down the bank .	A kingfisher swept down .

Boats of India

canoe (narrow, paddled) · **catamaran** (two hulls / tied logs; Tamil Nadu, Kerala coasts) · **coracle** (round basket boat; Karnataka, Tamil Nadu rivers) · **shikara** (Dal Lake, Kashmir)

Girls' education schemes

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao · Balika Samridhi Yojana · Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (Samagra Shiksha)

NCERT exercises, fully solved

Before you read (model)

Ans. I. 1. The birds' chirping seems to say "Wake up!", the wind seems to whisper. 2. Perhaps; trees and rivers "hear" us in stories. II. 1. Her dream could be to go to school. 2. By asking her parents, talking to a teacher, and being brave. 3. (model) I dream of becoming a doctor; I will study hard, especially science, and help others.

Let us discuss (Part I)

Ans. 1. Her dream was to go to school and learn to read like Ettan and Meena. It was very important to her because she was full of questions, felt left out and "not wanted", and was afraid it was getting too late. 2. Yes: it comforts her, makes her laugh, gives her courage and practical advice.

Let us discuss (Part II): questions and answers

Ans. "...why the moon always comes from behind the hills..." → "It goes down towards the sea... over the mountains and down to the sea, like me!"

"Can I do something?" → "Well, it's up to you... Little girls can do as much as little boys."

"What are ships?" → "Big boats, so big that they can take hundreds of people, and they sail along the sea with lights that shine all night."

"Will they come here?" → "I'm afraid not. Too large, you know... Chandu can take you to see a ship, someday."

Let us think and reflect: extracts

Extract 1

Ans. (i) **assuring**. (ii) "you have been coming here to see me every day, well, almost every day". (iii) **D. disbelief**.
(iv) **affectionate, thoughtful, kind-hearted**.

Extract 2

Ans. (i) ...girls can do as much as boys; they even swim as fast as boys (ability does not depend on gender). (ii)
True. (iii) **C. quietly**. (iv) It shows her fear, panic and lack of confidence.

Answer the questions

1. Why does the writer describe nature in detail at the beginning?

Ans. To create a calm, beautiful setting, show how close Jahnvi is to nature and how alone she is, and to make it believable that the River could speak to her.

2. How did the River know so much about Jahnvi?

Ans. She came to the river almost every day, and the River had watched her: it knew about the lizard, the snake in the bamboo and the trains she was not afraid of.

3. "And I'm so old now, they'll never let me go." Inference?

Ans. Jahnvi is nearly ten, older than children who usually start school. She fears she has missed her chance and that the school will not admit her; girls in her home were kept back to look after siblings.

4. Why did the River laugh?

Ans. Because Jahnvi was brave in so many ways: she was not afraid of the lizard, the snake in the bamboo clump or the noisy trains, so being scared of school seemed funny.

5. Why should Jahnvi follow the River's advice?

Ans. It was simple and practical: just go, sit and listen. It needed only courage. It also reminded her that her future was "up to" her. It worked: the teacher welcomed her and spoke to her father.

6. How does the conversation make the story appealing?

Ans. A talking River makes the story magical; the lively dialogue shows Jahnvi's feelings and curiosity, adds humour ("You make me breathless"), and carries the message naturally.

7. The main message?

Ans. Every child, especially every girl, has the right to education. With courage and self-belief we can make our dreams come true, and adults should support girls' learning.

Let us learn

I. Why "River" with a capital R?

Ans. The River is personified: it speaks, laughs and gives advice like a person, so it is treated as a name (proper noun).

II. Sound words.

Ans. 1. shrieked · 2. splashed · 3. murmuring · 4. sob · 5. rustle · 6. gasped · 7. rattling · 8. noisy · 9. wailed.
Paragraph: (i) noisy · (ii) rustle · (iii) gasped · (iv) wailed (sobbed) · (v) murmuring · (vi) shrieked

III. Borrowed words.

Ans. karma – action / deeds and their results (Sanskrit) · sahib – sir, master (Arabic via Urdu) · chutney – a spicy relish (Hindi) · guru – teacher (Sanskrit) · verandah – open porch (Hindi, via Portuguese) · jungle – forest (Hindi,

from Sanskrit "jangala") · areca – betel-nut palm (Malayalam) · palanquin – covered litter carried on poles (Sanskrit/Pali, via Portuguese)

IV. Boats.

Ans. (i) (model) I would like to travel in a shikara on Dal Lake because it is colourful and calm. (ii) Drawing activity.

V. Crossword.

Ans. Across: 1. SHIP · 2. BOAT · 3. RAFT · 4. STEAMER. Down: 5. CANOE · 6. TUGBOAT · 7. YACHT

VI. Prepositions.

Ans. 1. at · 2. outside · 3. inside · 4. between · 5. about · 6. about

VII. Preposition or adverb.

Ans. 1. on · 2. outside · 3. through (across) · 4. overhead (above) · 5. along (around) · 6. in (inside) · 7. around · 8. under

Let us listen: school life (transcript in the textbook)

Ans. I. Words actually used: **careers, homemaker, books** (the fifth speaker is a Principal).

II. Speaker (i) Father – 3 (education gives freedom of choice) · Speaker (iii) Teacher – 7 (learning skills is not gender-based) · Speaker (iv) Student – 4 (companionship) · Speaker (v) Principal – 1 (active participation for all). Speaker (ii) Grandmother recalls that girls were once kept at home; by elimination, statement 6. Not needed: 2 and 5.

Let us speak (models)

Ans. Different voices: say "Dear, dear! What's the matter?" in a happy, surprised, angry, scared, sad and worried voice; change pitch and speed.

Advice: (i) "Our school has an all-boys football team. What do you think I should do?" – "Why don't you ask the sports teacher to start a girls' team, or a mixed one?" (ii) "I get nervous in Maths exams." – "I think you should practise timed tests at home." (iii) "I don't get time to practise music." – "The best thing to do is to fix twenty minutes daily." (iv) "I can't see the board from the last bench." – "If I were you, I would get my eyes tested and ask to sit in front."

Let us write: descriptive paragraph (model)

Ans.

A Morning by the Pond

Every day, I see the small pond behind our colony, but this week I really looked at it. At sunrise the water is a sheet of silver, broken only by the soft ripples of a diving kingfisher, a flash of electric blue. Pink lotus buds stand straight like candles, while their wide, waxy leaves hold trembling drops of dew. A bulbul with a black crest sings from the neem tree, and the leaves rustle in reply. The air smells of wet mud and wild jasmine. I find it very interesting that the pond changes colour every hour, from silver to green to gold. I feel calm and fresh as I sit there. My advice to all is: slow down and look around; nature is always talking to us.

★ **Exam tip:** Descriptive paragraph: a title, an interesting opening, details for sight, sound, smell and touch, your feeling, and a message at the end.

Let us explore (notes)

Ans. Indian rivers are seen as sacred life-givers and mothers (Ganga, Yamuna, Narmada, Kaveri); the Brahmaputra and Sone are thought of as male. Posters on girls' education show that when daughters are educated and happy, families and the nation prosper.

Important exam questions, fully solved

School-exam pattern for Class 7: extract (4-5 marks), short answer (2-3 marks, 30-50 words), long answer (5 marks, 100-120 words).

A. Extract-based questions

Extract · 5 marks

"They won't let me go to school," said Jahnavi. "I asked my mother, 'Why can't I go to school like Ettan and Meena?' And Mother had replied, 'You are too small, baby. Maybe later.'" But when she was five, little Ramu was born and Mother still said, "Maybe next year. Jahnavi, mind your little brother while I go to the fields."

(i) To whom is Jahnavi speaking? (ii) Who is Ettan? (iii) Why was Jahnavi not sent to school? (iv) What does "mind" mean here? (v) Which word shows that the mother kept postponing? [5]

Ans. (i) The River. (ii) Her elder brother, Gopi ("Ettan" means elder brother). (iii) First she was "too small"; later she had to look after her baby brothers while her mother worked in the fields. (iv) Look after. (v) "Maybe" ("Maybe later", "Maybe next year").

Extract · 5 marks

"If you really, really want to come to my school, Jahnavi," the teacher had said, "we'll talk to your father about it. Don't you worry. We'll find a way."

(i) Where was Jahnavi when the teacher said this? (ii) What does "really, really" stress? (iii) What did the teacher do next? (iv) Give one quality of the teacher. (v) Choose the tone: (A) angry (B) reassuring (C) bored (D) proud. [5]

Ans. (i) In the back row of the classroom, with little Appu asleep on her shoulder. (ii) How strong her wish must be. (iii) She visited Jahnavi's home the next evening and spoke to her father. (iv) Kind / helpful / encouraging. (v) **(B) reassuring.**

B. Short answer questions

Short answer · 3 marks

What questions did Jahnavi want answered? What do they show? [3]

Ans. Why spiders are yellow on yellow flowers, why bamboo trees rustle, why the moon comes from behind the hills, and why baby fish become frogs. They show her curiosity and her eagerness to learn about the world.

Short answer · 3 marks

How did Jahnavi get into school? [3]

Ans. Following the River's advice, she went to the school with Appu, stood at the door listening to a story about Ashoka, then crept into the back row. The teacher noticed her, welcomed her and promised to speak to her father.

Short answer · 2 marks

How did Jahnavi's mother react? [2]

Ans. She said she would miss her, that girls should learn as much as they want, and that she was glad the teacher came, as she herself had been stopped from going to school.

Short answer · 2 marks

What did Jahnavi want to become? [2]

Ans. A teacher who would go from house to house asking all the little girls to come to school, and teach them what she learnt.

Short answer · 2 marks What does "it's up to you" mean?

[2]

Ans. The decision and the effort are hers; she must take the first step herself.

C. Long answer questions (5 marks, 100–120 words)

Long answer · character Describe how the River helps Jahnvi.

[5]

Ans. The River is Jahnvi's friend and guide. When she sits crying, it speaks gently, "Dear, dear! What's the matter?", and tells her not to be scared. It listens patiently to her story and her many "whys", and even answers one, about the moon. It builds her confidence by saying that "little girls can do as much as little boys". When she fears school, it laughs and reminds her that she is not afraid of the lizard, the snake or the noisy trains. It gives her a simple plan: slip into the school, sit and listen. Above all, it tells her, "it's up to you!" With its kindness, humour and wise advice, the River helps Jahnvi find the courage to fulfil her dream.

Long answer · theme "Girls should learn as much as they want." Discuss with reference to the story.

[5]

Ans. The story shows how girls are often kept away from school. Jahnvi, nearly ten, is kept at home to mind her baby brothers while her elder brother goes to school. Her mother too had been refused schooling by her grandmother. Yet Jahnvi is curious and eager to learn. The River insists that girls can do as much as boys, and the teacher welcomes her and speaks to her father. Her mother finally agrees: "Girls should learn as much as they want." Jahnvi dreams of becoming a teacher and bringing every girl to school. The story teaches that educating girls gives them confidence and choices, and helps families and the nation progress.

Long answer · beyond the text Imagine you are Jahnvi. Write a diary entry about your first day at school.

[5]

Ans.

Monday, 6 p.m.

Dear Diary

Today I did something I never thought I could do. I went to school!

Yesterday the River told me, "It's up to you." So this morning I carried Appu on my shoulder and ran all the way to the school. My heart was thumping as I stood at the door. The teacher was reading a story about Ashoka, a prince who became a great king. I crept to the back row and sat on the floor. Appu didn't make a sound.

Then the teacher saw me! I thought she would send me away, but she smiled and said they would talk to Father. This evening she came to our house. Mother said girls should learn as much as they want.

I was scared, but I did it! Tomorrow I will tell the River everything.

Jahnvi

Quick-reference sheet

point	remember
writer	Kamala Nair (adapted extract)
heroine	Jahnvi, nearly ten, coastal village
family	Ettan (Gopi), Meena, Ramu, Little Appu; parents work on the farm
problem	not allowed to go to school; minds baby brothers
her "whys"	yellow spiders, rustling bamboo, the moon, fish into frogs
River's view	"little girls can do as much as little boys"

River's advice	slip into school, sit and listen; "it's up to you!"
things she isn't afraid of	lizard, snake in the bamboo clump, rattling trains
school story	Ashoka, a prince who became a great king
ending	teacher talks to father; mother agrees; she will be a teacher

Extract-based practice (answers at the end of the chapter)

Set 1.

A big bright tear splashed down her nose. And another. A kingfisher swept down, its wings an arrow of blue in the sunlight. And a green lizard slithered down to the river's edge to bask in the sun.

(i) Why was Jahnavi crying? (ii) Pick a metaphor. (iii) What does "bask" mean? (iv) Pick a sound word.

Set 2.

"Stop!" said the River. "You make me breathless. So many whys! I can tell you where the moon goes," the River said conspiratorially.

(i) Why does the River say "Stop!"? (ii) What does "conspiratorially" mean? (iii) Where does the moon go, according to the River? (iv) What does this show about the River?

Set 3.

"I did it!" she told the River. "I was scared, but I did it! And they're letting me go."

(i) What had she done? (ii) Who is letting her go? (iii) What quality does she show? (iv) How does the River reply?

Practice set: test yourself *Exam-style*

Try every question before looking at the answers. 49 or more out of 61 means you are ready for the exam.

A. Fill in the blanks (1 mark each)

1. Jahnavi lived in a _____ village.
2. Her elder brother's real name was _____.
3. She had to mind Little _____.
4. The voice that spoke to her was the _____.
5. A _____ swept down, its wings an arrow of blue.
6. The snake lived in the _____ clump.
7. Chandu had a _____.
8. The teacher read a story about _____.

B. True or false? (1 mark each)

1. Jahnavi was about fifteen years old.
2. The River spoke in a sleepy voice.
3. Jahnavi was afraid of the green lizard.
4. The River said ships would come to the village.
5. The teacher sent Jahnavi away.
6. Jahnavi's mother had also wanted to go to school.
7. Jahnavi wanted to become a doctor.
8. The River asked her to come again.

C. Very short answer (1 mark each)

1. What does "Ettan" mean?
2. Why did Jahnavi think it could not be the parrots speaking?
3. Where does the River hurry to?
4. What are ships, according to the River?
5. What is a catamaran?
6. Where did Jahnavi sit in the classroom?
7. What did her father do when he was worried?
8. What did Jahnavi want to find out about fish?

D. Short answer (2 marks each)

1. Why was Jahnavi sad?
2. Why did Jahnavi think she was too old for school?
3. How did the River show that girls are equal to boys?
4. What did the River tell Jahnavi about ships?
5. How did the teacher react on seeing Jahnavi?
6. What change do we see in Jahnavi's mother?

My score (fill in after checking the answers)

Section	A /8	B /8	C /8	D /12	E /15	F /10	G (bonus)	Total /61
My marks								

Rough work

E. Long answer (5 marks each)

1. Write a character sketch of Jahnavi.
2. "Courage is acting in spite of fear." Discuss with reference to Jahnavi.
3. Imagine you are the teacher. Describe your visit to Jahnavi's home.

F. Beyond the text (5 marks each)

1. Write a speech for the morning assembly on "Educate a girl, empower a nation".
2. Write a paragraph on "My favourite place in nature".

G. HOTS (higher-order thinking, 2 marks each)

1. Why do you think the writer chose a river to give Jahnavi advice?
2. Was the River right to say "it's up to you", when Jahnavi was only a child? Why?
3. How might Jahnavi's life be different if she had not gone to school that day?

★ **Exam tip:** In character sketches, give 3–4 qualities, each with a **proof** from the story.

Assertion–Reason (6)

- (a) Both true, R explains A. (b) Both true, R does not explain A. (c) A true, R false. (d) A false, R true.
1. A: Jahnvi could not go to school. R: She had to look after her baby brothers.
 2. A: The River laughed when Jahnvi said she was scared. R: Jahnvi was not afraid of snakes or trains.
 3. A: The River said ships would visit the village. R: Ships are big boats with lights.
 4. A: The teacher visited Jahnvi's home. R: She wanted to talk to Jahnvi's father about school.
 5. A: "River" is written with a capital letter. R: The River is personified.
 6. A: Jahnvi's mother refused to let her study. R: The mother had been stopped from going to school.

Key: 1 (a) · 2 (a) · 3 (d) · 4 (a) · 5 (a) · 6 (d)

20 MCQs

1. "The Day the River Spoke" is written by:
(a) Eliza Cook (b) Helen Keller (c) Kamala Nair (d) Ruskin Bond
2. Jahnvi lived in a:
(a) coastal village (b) desert village (c) hill town (d) big city
3. Jahnvi was nearly:
(a) six (b) fifteen (c) twelve (d) ten
4. "Ettan" means:
(a) uncle (b) elder brother (c) friend (d) father
5. Jahnvi had to look after:
(a) the cows (b) her baby brothers (c) her grandmother (d) the house
6. The voice that spoke was:
(a) shrill (b) loud (c) angry (d) sleepy and murmuring
7. The speaker was the:
(a) River (b) kingfisher (c) lizard (d) teacher
8. The River was in a hurry to reach the:
(a) hills (b) school (c) sea (d) village
9. According to the River, the moon goes:
(a) behind the hills (b) to the city (c) into the river (d) down towards the sea
10. The River said little girls can:
(a) only cook (b) do as much as little boys (c) not swim (d) never learn
11. The snake lived in the:
(a) river (b) school (c) bamboo clump (d) field
12. "Big boats with lights that shine all night" are:
(a) ships (b) canoes (c) catamarans (d) rafts
13. The River's key advice was:
(a) "Run away" (b) "It's up to you!" (c) "Cry more" (d) "Wait for years"
14. At school, the teacher was reading about:
(a) Akbar (b) Shivaji (c) Ashoka (d) Gandhi
15. Jahnvi sat in the:
(a) front row (b) teacher's chair (c) corridor (d) back row
16. The teacher promised to talk to Jahnvi's:
(a) father (b) brother (c) grandmother (d) friend
17. Jahnvi's mother said girls should:
(a) learn as much as they want (b) stay home (c) work in fields (d) marry early
18. Jahnvi wanted to become a:
(a) fisherwoman (b) sailor (c) doctor (d) teacher
19. "Startled" means:
(a) sleepy (b) surprised (c) happy (d) angry
20. The main theme of the story is:
(a) fishing (b) ships (c) the right of girls to education and courage (d) trains

1 (c) · 2 (a) · 3 (d) · 4 (b) · 5 (b) · 6 (d) · 7 (a) · 8 (c) · 9 (d) · 10 (b) · 11 (c) · 12 (a) · 13 (b) · 14 (c) · 15 (d) · 16 (a) · 17 (a) · 18 (d) · 19 (b) · 20 (c)

Answers

Extract sets. Set 1: (i) she was not allowed to go to school (ii) "its wings an arrow of blue" (iii) lie in the warmth of the sun (iv) splashed. Set 2: (i) Jahnvi was asking too many questions at once (ii) secretly, like sharing a secret (iii) down towards the sea, over the mountains (iv) it is playful, friendly and knows much about nature. Set 3: (i) gone to school and sat in the class (ii) her parents (with the teacher's help) (iii) courage (iv) with a sleepy chuckle: "Come again, little girl, and I'll tell you all about the ships."

A. 1. coastal 2. Gopi 3. Appu 4. River 5. kingfisher 6. bamboo 7. catamaran 8. Ashoka

B. 1. F (nearly ten) 2. T 3. F (she was not afraid) 4. F (too large to come) 5. F (she welcomed her) 6. T 7. F (a teacher) 8. T

C. 1. elder brother 2. parrots shriek, and this was a sleepy voice 3. the sea 4. big boats that carry hundreds of people 5. a kind of boat 6. in the back row, on the floor 7. scratched his cheek 8. why baby fish become frogs

D. 1. she was not allowed to go to school like her brother 2. she was nearly ten and feared they would never admit her now 3. it said girls can do as much as boys and swim as fast 4. they are huge boats carrying hundreds of people, with lights all night; Chandu could take her to see one 5. she asked her name kindly and promised to talk to her father 6. once she kept Jahnvi home; now she says girls should learn as much as they want

E. 1. curious, eager, responsible, timid at first, brave, generous (with proofs) 2. she was afraid ("They'd chase me out") yet went to school with Appu; "I was scared, but I did it!" 3. teacher's account: a new girl at the door, her eagerness, visit, talk with father, mother's support

F. 1. speech: greeting; why girls' education matters; schemes; examples; call to action; thanks 2. paragraph with sensory details and feelings

G. 1. a river is always moving and never gives up, and it is part of her daily life; it makes the story magical 2. yes, because she had the will and only needed confidence; but adults (teacher, mother) also had to help 3. she might have stayed at home, her questions unanswered and her dream lost

Last-night summary

- Kamala Nair; Jahnvi (nearly 10) in a coastal village cannot go to school; minds Ramu and Appu.
- The River speaks in a sleepy voice; she tells it her dream and her "whys".
- River: "little girls can do as much as little boys"; "slip along... sit and listen"; "it's up to you!"
- River laughs: she isn't afraid of the lizard, snake or trains; tells her about ships and Chandu's catamaran.
- She goes to school with Appu; teacher (story of Ashoka) welcomes her and visits her father.
- Mother: "Girls should learn as much as they want." Jahnvi will become a teacher. "I was scared, but I did it!"
- Grammar: prepositions vs adverbs; sound words; words borrowed from Indian languages.