



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (2026- 27)
CLASS – XI
WE'RE NOT AFRAID TO DIE...IF WE CAN ALL BE
TOGETHER

The chronological timeline of the voyage and the disaster include the following key events:

- **July 1976:** The narrator, his wife Mary, and their two children (Suzanne, age 7, and Jonathan, age 6) set sail from Plymouth, England, aiming to duplicate Captain James Cook's historic voyage.
- **December 25, 1976:** The family celebrates Christmas despite experiencing severe, rough weather, located roughly east of Cape Town.
- **January 2, 1977:** Colossal storm waves hit the ship. An immense, towering wave damages the boat, severely injuring the narrator's wife and causing him bodily harm as well.
- **January 3, 1977:** The crew discovers the ship's ribs are broken and it is taking on massive amounts of water. The narrator calculates they must reach Île Amsterdam—a tiny, remote island in the southern Indian Ocean—to survive.
- **January 4, 1977:** After 36 hours of continuous pumping, the water levels are reduced, but they still have to navigate severe, returning storms.
- **January 6, 1977:** The severe tempest clears. Using a makeshift map, the *Wavewalker* safely touches the shore of Île Amsterdam at about 6 p.m.

SUMMARY

"We're Not Afraid to Die... if We Can All Be Together" is a tale of extraordinary resilience, courage, and family unity. It recounts the story of a 37-year-old businessman, his family, and two crewmates who battled towering waves in the Southern Indian Ocean, ultimately surviving a devastating storm together.

1. The Voyage Begins

In July 1976, the narrator, his wife Mary, and their children (Jonathan, age 6, and Suzanne, age 7) set sail from Plymouth, England. They aimed to replicate the round-the-world voyage made 200 years earlier by Captain James Cook. To prepare, they built a 23-meter, 30-ton wooden boat named *Wavewalker* and hired two experienced sailors—Larry Vigil (an American) and Herb Seigler (a Swiss)—to help them cross the notoriously rough Southern Indian Ocean.

2. The Disaster Strikes

The first leg of their journey was smooth, but by early January, they encountered massive, 15-meter waves in the Indian Ocean. On January 2, a gigantic vertical wave struck the boat with terrifying force. The narrator was thrown overboard, suffered broken ribs, and sustained other severe injuries. Water gushed into the ship, and the situation became critical.

3. The Battle for Survival

The crew exhibited supreme determination. The narrator scrambled back to the deck, tied himself to the ship, and managed to secure a canvas cover over the gaping holes to block the surging waves. Meanwhile, Larry and Herb frantically worked the hand pumps to remove the water that had already flooded the vessel.

4. Family Courage

Despite grievous injuries—including a deep wound on her head that required six stitches—

young Suzanne did not complain so as not to worry her parents. Even more remarkably, when the narrator checked on his children, his son Jonathan told him, *"We aren't afraid of dying if we can all be together—you and Mummy, Sue and I."*

5. Relief and Rescue

Inspired by his children's bravery, the narrator redoubled his efforts. Despite a broken compass and heavily damaged instruments, he calculated their position and steered the battered *Wavewalker* toward two small islands. On January 6, they successfully reached the shores of Ile Amsterdam, a small volcanic island, where their ordeal finally came to an end.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS:

1. What preparations did the narrator and his wife make for their round-the world sea voyage?

The narrator and his wife wanted to 'duplicate' the round-the-world voyage made 200 years ago by Captain James Cook. They had been making formidable preparations for the last 16 years. First, they got 'Wavewalker' a boat especially designed and professionally built for this purpose. They tested it for months in the roughest weather. They spent all their leisure time in strengthening their seafaring skills in British waters. They were both mentally and physically prepared to undertake their exceptionally long and challenging sea voyage.

2. Describe the boat Wavewalker.

The narrator wanted to duplicate the round-the-world voyage made by Captain James Cook 200 years ago. In order to undertake this journey, they got a boat built professionally. The boat, named Wavewalker, was 23 meters long, 30ton wooden hulled sailboat. They had spent months fitting it out and testing it in the roughest weather conditions.

3. Why did they take on two crewmen with them at Cape Town?

Before heading East from Cape Town, they took on two crewmen who were experienced seamen. They were Larry Vigil, an American and Herb Seigler, a Swiss. The narrator knew that they would require expert help to tackle one of the world's roughest seas – the southern Indian Ocean.

4. How did the voyagers celebrate their Christmas and where?

On Christmas Day, the voyagers were 3500 kms East of Cape Town in the southern Indian Ocean. Though the sea was rough, they enjoyed the wonderful holiday. They celebrated Christmas singing carols complete with a Christmas tree. They expected the weather to improve but it didn't.

5. How was the weather on the morning of 2nd January?

On New Year's Day, the weather saw no improvement and was bad. On 2nd January, it got even worse. The waves were gigantic. They were sailing with only a small storm jib but still were going pretty fast. As the ship rose to the top of each wave, they could see the endless, enormous sea rolling towards them. The wind seemed to be howling.

6. What attempts did the narrator make to protect himself and his family from the huge

waves?

The waves were gigantic on 2nd January. In order to protect themselves, they decided to slow down the boat. They dropped the storm jib and lashed a heavy mooring rope in a loop across the stem. Then they double-lashed everything, went through their life raft drill, attached lifelines, donned oilskins and life jackets and prepared themselves for the worst-case scenario.

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

The problem that deserved immediate attention was the repair of the starboard side, which had been smashed; with every wave, it was letting water enter the boat. If he did not make some repairs, the boat would have surely sunk and they would have drowned.

8. What did Sue say when she was asked by her father about why she had not complained about her grave injuries?

Sue had been injured badly when the wave had hit the ship. Her head had swollen alarmingly. She had two black eyes and she had a deep cut on her arm. When asked why she had not complained about her injuries earlier, she replied that she had not wanted to worry her parents when they were trying to save them all from sinking.

9. What happened on the morning of 3rd January?

By the morning of 3rd January, they had managed to pump out the water out of the boat to a reasonable level and the situation was under control but, they suspected a huge leak below and found that nearly all the boat's main rib frames were damaged down to the keel. The narrator knew that Wavewalker will not be able to hold together long enough to reach Australia. So, the narrator made some calculations and found two small islands a few hundred kilometers to the East. They hoped to reach one of them.

10. Why did the narrator call Ile Amsterdam the most beautiful island in the world?

Ile Amsterdam was the only hope of survival for the voyagers and so, when they reached there, it looked the most beautiful island to the narrator. He was successful in saving his family and crewmen by reaching there. He had won the fight for survival. If they had not reached the island, they would surely have sunk.

11. Describe how the narrator tried his best to find the small island for the last time.

It was very hard for the narrator to get to the island of Ile Amsterdam because of the bad weather. The narrator also saw the compass was not working correctly, but he gave it one last try. He used the main compass to calculate the influence of the westerly wind at 2 p.m. He asked the crewmen to steer the boat at 185 degrees. He hoped that if the calculations went right, they would be able to see the island after 5 p.m. After this, he went to his cabin and took a nap. He woke up at 6 p.m., and his children gave him the good news that they had found the island.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS:

1. Highlight the tremendous courage and forbearance shown by the two children during the struggle to keep the boat from sinking. What values do you learn from them?

The two children, Suzanne and Jonathan, showed tremendous courage and forbearance during the epic struggle put up by their parents and the crewmen to keep the boat from sinking. Sue had been injured badly when the big wave hit the boat. Her head had swollen alarmingly and both her eyes were hurt. She also had a deep cut on her arm. But she did not complain about her injuries as she did not want to worry her parents when they were trying to save them from sinking. When the author went to comfort the children, his son Jonathan, asked him if they were going to die. When he was assured that they would all survive, he told his father that they were not afraid of dying if they could all be together. Moreover, Sue had patience and power enough to even draw the caricatures of her parents with a message of hope and gratitude to her parents. The children, thus, exhibit extraordinary patience, courage and tolerance.

2. The hurdles of life can be challenged if we have confidence to make optimum use of our potential. Elaborate.

The statement holds true in the light of the story ‘We’re Not Afraid to Die……’. The narrator along with his wife, children, and two crewmen overcame the worst situations and defeated death by fighting the adverse situations which cropped up during their voyage. When the big wave hit the boat, it was severely damaged and the narrator was badly injured. However, he did not pay attention to it and Mary also helped by following instruction without worrying about the destruction around. Both Larry and Herb kept pumping out water and did not stop. Moreover, when the hand-pumps stopped working and the electric pump short circuited, he did not lose confidence and used electric pump to drive out water from the boat. Even the children had confidence in their father and they hoped to survive. They also showed great courage. Jon said that they were not afraid to die if they are all together. Sue made a card to thank her parents. It was a great example of unity and trust that they had on each other. Thus, it can be concluded that by staying optimistic like the children and making the best use of your potential like the narrator, one can fight adversities and be a winner.

3. “We are Not afraid to die” is a saga of patience and bravery. Comment.

The story “we are not afraid to die” is a story of the rare courage and perseverance of the narrator’s family. The narrator’s undertaking to replicate Captain James Cook’s voyage was a challenging task, as they had to sail in some of the roughest seas. However, the voyagers kept their sprits high and made every effort to save the boat and their lives. Even in the worst of circumstances, the captain did not give up hope and tried his best to protect the ship from flooding. All the dangers and disasters were confronted with patience, courage and determination. Even the children showed exemplary courage. They were not afraid to die if they were all together. The two crewmen continuously pumped out water and never complained. They trusted their captain and worked as a team. Luckily the voyagers were able to come out of a near death experience due to their never-say- die attitude. Thus, the story proves to be a saga of patience and bravery.

4. The reaction of the crew and children gives us an insight into the human mind and how it can help us survive any disaster. Discuss.

The reaction of the crew and children gives us an insight into the human mind. The crew reacted to the danger with a fighting spirit and optimism. Their undaunted efforts helped them to survive the disaster. On the other hand, the children showed amazing maturity and resilience in the face of disaster. They remained strong and composed. Despite serious

injuries, both the children displayed courage and patience. Adopting a courageous attitude in times of difficulties motivates one to face the upheavals of life courageously. It is rightly said “cowards die many times before their death: the valiant face death only once” and when the valiant to die, they die a hero’s death. The story inspires us to maintain our calm in a crisis. Stress and panic only worsen the situation. If we accept difficulties as a way of life and face them with a brave front, they soon fade away. By being positive and not losing faith in ourselves can help us to survive any disaster.

5. How did the narrator and his companions save the boat from sinking?

The narrator’s ship was greatly damaged by the waves. He somehow made it to the cabin to see his children and see if they were all right. Then he did some repairs to the boat to save them from drowning. It became almost impossible to work in the big waves, but he did some repairs that obstructed further water from entering the boat. The crewmen were pumping out the water like madmen. The electric pumps got short-circuited due to the water. Luckily, the narrator found a hand pump, and it kept working. For the next 36 hours, they kept pumping, steering, and getting radio signals. The next day, they almost got the water in the boat under control, and the weather got a little better too. Thus, they saved the boat from sinking.

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

Adults are more thoughtful than children. They have more responsibilities than children, too. On the other hand, the children are pure human beings with no experience of grief or fear. This is why adults are more horrified by any difficult situation, whereas children do not understand the complexities of the situation and accept it easily. The reflection can be seen in the story as well. The narrator and his wife thought their end was near, and we can see the narrator went through huge mental pressure and tension in the situation. He had the responsibility of saving his family. He was scared at one point. On the other hand, the children showed great bravery. The little boy, Jonathon, told his father he wasn’t afraid of death. On the other hand, Suzanne, who was only nine years old, tolerated the pain of the head bump. She even made a card for her parents so that they might feel better. Thus, the children were more spontaneous than the adults in difficult situations.

Assertion and Reason Based

Q1: Assertion: The author embarked on the journey to explore new lands.

Reason: The author wanted to be like Captain James Cook.

- (a) Both Assertion and Reason are true, and Reason is the correct explanation of the Assertion.**
- (b) Both Assertion and Reason are true, but Reason is not the correct explanation of the Assertion.**
- (c) Assertion is true, but Reason is false.**
- (d) Assertion is false, but Reason is true.**

Ans: (a)

The author explicitly states that the journey was undertaken to replicate Captain James Cook's round-the-world voyage, indicating a desire to explore new lands. This aligns with the Assertion that the author embarked on the journey to explore new lands. Furthermore, the Reason provided supports the Assertion, as the author's motivation to emulate Captain Cook directly correlates with the intention to explore. Therefore, both the Assertion and Reason are true, and the Reason correctly explains why the Assertion is true.

Q2: Assertion: The ship celebrated New Year's in the stormy seas.

Reason: The author's family wanted to experience a unique New Year celebration.

- (a) Both Assertion and Reason are true, and Reason is the correct explanation of the Assertion.**
- (b) Both Assertion and Reason are true, but Reason is not the correct explanation of the Assertion.**
- (c) Assertion is true, but Reason is false.**
- (d) Assertion is false, but Reason is true.**

Ans: (b)

The assertion states that the ship celebrated New Year's in stormy seas, which aligns with the narrative of the voyage. However, the reason provided, which suggests that the family sought a unique celebration, does not adequately explain why they were in stormy seas at that time. The family's adventurous spirit may have led them to sail during challenging conditions, but it does not directly justify the celebration occurring amidst the storm. Therefore, while both statements are true, the reason does not correctly explain the assertion.

Q3: Assertion: The author's children displayed remarkable courage during the journey.

Reason: The author's son was afraid of dying.

- (a) Both Assertion and Reason are true, and Reason is the correct explanation of the Assertion.**
- (b) Both Assertion and Reason are true, but Reason is not the correct explanation of the Assertion.**
- (c) Assertion is true, but Reason is false.**
- (d) Assertion is false, but Reason is true.**

Ans: (b)

Both the assertion and the reason are true; however, the reason provided does not correctly explain the assertion. The assertion states that the author's children displayed remarkable courage, which is evident in their ability to face the dire situation without succumbing to fear. The reason, which mentions the author's son being afraid of dying, highlights his fear but does not negate the courage displayed by both children in the face of danger. Their willingness to confront the possibility of death together reflects a profound bravery that transcends mere fear, thus making the assertion true while the reason fails to serve as its correct explanation.

Q4: Assertion: The author's determination and willpower helped them overcome the stormy situation.

Reason: The ship was well-prepared for extreme weather conditions.

- (a) Both Assertion and Reason are true, and Reason is the correct explanation of the Assertion.**
- (b) Both Assertion and Reason are true, but Reason is not the correct explanation of the Assertion.**
- (c) Assertion is true, but Reason is false.**
- (d) Assertion is false, but Reason is true.**

Ans: (b)

While both the assertion regarding the author's determination and willpower and the reason about the ship's preparedness are true, the reason does not adequately explain the assertion. The author's willpower and mental strength were crucial in facing the dire circumstances, as evidenced by their resolve to fight the sea despite the overwhelming odds. The ship's preparedness contributed to their survival, but it was the author's personal determination that played a pivotal role in overcoming the challenges posed by the storm, indicating that the assertion stands independently of the reason provided.

Q5: Assertion: The author considered Ile Amsterdam to be the most beautiful island in the world.

Reason: The island was a popular tourist destination.

- (a) Both Assertion and Reason are true, and Reason is the correct explanation of the Assertion.**
- (b) Both Assertion and Reason are true, but Reason is not the correct explanation of the Assertion.**
- (c) Assertion is true, but Reason is false.**
- (d) Assertion is false, but Reason is true.**

Ans: (b)

In the provided text, the author expresses a personal sentiment that Ile Amsterdam is the "most beautiful island in the world," which supports the Assertion as true. However, the Reason states that the island's popularity as a tourist destination is not necessarily the basis for its beauty; rather, beauty is subjective and can exist independently of tourism. Therefore, while both statements are true, the Reason does not adequately explain why the author holds the Assertion to be true, leading to the conclusion that option (b) is the most accurate response.

EXTRACT BASED QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS:

1. Our boat Wavewalker, a 23 metre, 30 ton wooden-hulled beauty, had been professionally built, and we had spent months fitting it out and testing it in the roughest weather we could find. The first leg of our planned three-year, 105,000 kilometre journey passed pleasantly as we sailed down the west coast of Africa to Cape Town. There, before heading east, we took on two crewmen — American Larry Vigil and Swiss Herb Seigler — to help us tackle one of the world's roughest seas, the southern Indian Ocean.

Q1. Where did the second crewman hail from?

Answer. The second crewman hailed from Switzerland.

Q2. For how long did they decide to stay in water?

Answer. They planned a three year long journey.

Q3. Why were the crewmen hired?

Answer. The crewmen were hired by the narrator to help them tackle the roughest sea.

Q4. What is the name of the boat?

Answer. The boat's name is "Wavewalker".

2. At dawn on January 2, the waves were gigantic. We were sailing with only a small storm jib and were still making eight knots. As the ship rose to the top of each wave we could see endless enormous seas rolling towards us, and the screaming of the wind and spray was painful to the ears. To slow the boat down, we dropped the storm jib and lashed a heavy mooring rope in a loop across the stern. Then we double-lashed everything, went through our life-raft drill, attached lifelines, donned oilskins and life jackets — and waited.

Q1. What does knot mean?

Answer. Knot refers to a measure of the speed of a ship.

Q2. Why did they drop the storm jib?

Answer. They dropped the storm jib to slow down the speed of the boat.

Q3. What does stern mean in the above extract?

Answer. Stern means the back end of a ship or boat.

Q4. Pick a word from the extract which means extremely big.

Answer. Gigantic or enormous

3. When I went in to comfort the children, Jon asked, "Daddy, are we going to die?" I tried to assure him that we could make it. "But, Daddy," he went on, "we aren't afraid of dying if we can all be together — you and Mummy, Sue and I." I could find no words with which to respond, but I left the children's cabin determined to fight the sea with everything I had. To protect the weakened starboard side, I decided to heave to — with the undamaged port hull facing the oncoming waves, using an improvised sea anchor of heavy nylon rope and two 22 litre plastic barrels of paraffin.

Q1. Who said "We are not afraid to die if we can all be together" ?

Answer. Jonathan said these lines.

Q2. What was the attitude of the narrator's children towards their deteriorating stage?

Answer. The children were optimistic.

Q3. What does "pinpricks in the vast ocean" mean?

Answer. Islands refer to "pinpricks in the vast ocean".

Q4. Find a word from the above extract which means secondary or subsidiary.

Answer. Auxiliary