

A Hero

- R. K. Narayan

Previous Years' Questions Solved

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Multiple Choice Questions - Solved

1. Swami saw a moving creature in the room. It was

- (A) his shadow
- (B) a scorpion
- (C) a man
- (D) his imagination.

(March 2015)

Answer: (C) a man

2. The newspaper report made Swami's father challenge Swami to

- (A) become wiser than the newspaper
- (B) sleep alone in the office room
- (C) fight with a tiger
- (D) catch hold of a burglar.

(June 2018)

Answer: (B) sleep alone in the office room

3. 'How could a boy fight a tiger?' This was said by

- (A) Swami's father
- (B) the inspector
- (C) Swami
- (D) Granny

(2021)

Answer: (C) Swami

4. When Swami saw something moving towards him

- (A) he cried out in fear
- (B) he hugged it and used his teeth on it like a mortal weapon
- (C) he covered his face with blanket
- (D) he tried to run away from it

(2021)

Answer: (B) he hugged it and used his teeth on it like a mortal weapon

5. 'Courage is everything. Strength and age are not important.' This remark was made by

- (A) Swami
- (B) Granny
- (C) Inspector
- (D) Swami's father

(MQP 2020)

Answer: (D) Swami's father

6. As the night advanced Swami remembered all the stories of

- (A) adventure
- (B) tiger
- (C) devils and ghosts
- (D) cricket match

(MQP 2020)

Answer: (C) devils and ghosts

7. 'A frightful proposition, Swami thought.' The proposition was

- (A) to sleep alone in the passage
- (B) to sleep alone in the office room
- (C) to sleep beside his granny in the passage
- (D) to sleep under the hall lamp

(MQP 2020)

Answer: (B) to sleep alone in the office room

2 Mark Questions - Solved

1. What habit of sleeping was disgraceful according to Swami's father?

(March 2015)

Answer: Swami's father thought that the habit of sleeping besides a mother or grandmother was something a baby would do. Since Swami was older and in the second form, him continuing to sleep besides his grandmother was a disgraceful habit according to Swami's father.

2. What made Swami's father, his cook and his servant rush up to the office room?

(June 2015)

Answer: A man screamed, "Aiyol! Something has bitten me". This was followed by heavy tumbling and falling amidst furniture. Hearing the noise, Swami's father, his cook and his servant rushed up to the office room.

3. Why did Swami's father want him to sleep alone in the office room?

(March 2017)

Answer: Swami's father was impressed by the news of the courageous boy who fought off the tiger and displeased that his son slept beside his grandmother like a baby. Wanting Swami to be brave, his father insisted that he sleep alone in the office room.

4. Though Swami was not courageous, he became a hero overnight. How?

(March 2017)

OR

How did Swami become hero overnight?

(MQP 2023)

Answer: While sleeping alone in the office room, Swami saw a dark shape moving and heard rustling noise. Although he was scared, he grabbed the moving figure and bit down with all his might. Swami had inadvertently help to catch a notorious housebreaker of the district, making him famous overnight.

5. How did Swami react when his father challenged him to sleep alone in the office room?

(June 2017)

Answer: When Swami's father suggested that he sleep alone, Swami mumbled 'yes' and then tried to distract his father with news of the cricket team. When his father was insistent, Swami tip toed quietly to his bed, pulled the covers over his head and pretended to be asleep to avoid his father's challenge.

6. The inspector suggested Swami to join the police department, when he grew up. Why?

(June 2017)

Answer: Swami had helped nab a notorious housebreaker. The police were grateful and the inspector, impressed by Swami's bravery, asked him to join the police department when he grew up.

7. There was silence in the room. In spite of it, some noises reached Swami's ears. What were they?

(March 2018)

Answer: As the night advanced and silence deepened in the house Swami heard various noises such as the ticking of the clock, trees rustling, snoring sounds and noises of vague night insects humming.

8. Congratulations were showered on Swami after the house breaker was caught. How was he congratulated? (March 2018)

Answer: Swami was showered with congratulations on the day after the he helped catch the burglar. His classmates looked at him with respect, his teacher patted his back and the headmaster called him a true scout. The police were also grateful to Swami and the inspector suggested that he join the police when he grew up.

9. How did Swami's father try to convince Swami that 'courage' is important? (April 2024)

Answer: According to Swami's father courage was everything and strength and age didn't matter. One could have the strength of an elephant and still be a coward whereas another person could have the strength of a straw but have courage, which would allow them to do anything.

3 Mark Questions (Extract) - Solved

1. "Why don't you join the police when you are grown up?"

a) Who made this suggestion?

b) Why did the speaker ask him to join the police?

c) Was he really willing to join the police? Give reason.

(June 2018)

Answer:

a) The inspector of police made this suggestion.

b) Swami had helped to nab a notorious housebreaker of the district. Hence the speaker suggested that he could join the police when he grew up.

c) Swami wasn't willing to join the police but agreed to be polite. He wanted to be an engine driver, railway guard or bus conductor when he grew up.

2. "You are in the second form and I don't like the way you are being brought up."

a) Who does 'I' refer to?

b) Who was studying in the second form?

c) When did the speaker say this?

(March 2020)

Answer:

a) 'I' refers to Swami's father.

b) Swami was studying in the second form.

c) Swami's father read a newspaper article about a brave boy fighting a tiger. He wanted Swami to also be brave asked him to sleep alone at night. When Swami protested, his father commanded him and said that Swami was older, in the second form and shouldn't be sleeping with his grandmother, thus responding with the given statement.

3. "As the night advanced and the silence deepened, his heart beat faster."

a) Who does 'he' refer to?

b) Where was he?

c) Why did his heart beat faster?

(September 2020)

Answer:

a) 'He' refers to Swami.

b) Swami was sleeping alone in his father's office room.

c) Swami was afraid of sleeping alone and being in the dark. He began remembering all the stories of ghosts and devils that he had heard. All the noises and shadows scared him more and his heart beat faster in fear.

4. 'Leave alone strength, can you prove you have courage?'

a) Who is the speaker?

b) Who does 'you' refer to?

c) Why did the speaker make this remark?

(MQP 2022)

Answer:

a) The speaker is Swami's father.

b) 'You' refers to Swami.

c) Swami's father read a newspaper article about a courageous boy who fought a tiger and was impressed. Swami questioned how a boy could've fought a tiger. His father emphasised that age and strength didn't matter, only courage did. He then challenged Swami with the above statement.

5. "I'll make you the 'laughing stock' of your school."

a) Who is the 'I' here?

b) What does laughing stock mean?

c) Why did he say so?

(April 2023)

Answer:

a) 'I' here refers to Swami's father.

b) Laughing stock means an object of ridicule.

c) Swami's father had challenged Swami to sleep alone in the office room. Swami was afraid of the dark and of sleeping alone. He asked his father to leave the door open. His father agreed but also warned Swami not to sneak back to his usual sleeping place or he would make Swami a laughing stock at his school.

6. "How could a boy fight a tiger?"

a) Who asked this question?

b) When did the speaker ask this?

c) Who else, according to the speaker, could fight a tiger?

(June 2023)

Answer:

a) Swami asked his father the given question.

b) Swami's father read a newspaper article about a courageous boy who fought a tiger. Swami didn't believe a boy would have the strength to fight off a tiger and hence asked the given question.

c) According to the speaker, it might've been a grown up who fought the tiger and not a boy.

3 Mark Questions - Solved

1. Describe Swami's dreadful experience when he was lying under the bench.
(March 2022)

OR

Narrate Swami's dreadful experience when he was lying under the bench.
(June 2022); (MQP 2021)

Answer: Swami was afraid of sleeping alone in the office room and of the dark. He moves under the bench as the space felt more compact, reassuring and safer and unknowingly fell into a nightmare-filled sleep. He dreamt of a tiger chasing him and being unable to escape as his feet were stuck to the ground. He heard the scratching of tiger claws on the ground followed by a thud but couldn't open his eyes and felt stuck in the nightmare. When he finally opened his eyes, he tried reaching out for his grandmother for comfort but only touched the wooden bench leg. His fear intensified. Swami heard some rustling and saw a dark figure moving in the room. Swami feared the worst and assumed it was the devil who had come to take him away.

4 Mark Questions - Solved

1. Narrate Swami's dreadful experience when he was lying under the bench.

(March 2016); (MQP 2017)

Answer: In a 'A Hero' by R K Narayan, Swami was commanded by his father to sleep alone in the office room to prove he was courageous. Swami was afraid and tried protesting, but his father wouldn't listen. Once he was alone in the office, he remembered all the ghost and devil stories he'd heard and slept under the bench as the space felt more compact and reassuring. His sleep was filled with nightmares of a tiger chasing him and being unable to escape as his feet were stuck to the ground. He heard the scratching of tiger claws on the ground followed by a thud but couldn't open his eyes and felt stuck in the nightmare. When he finally opened his eyes, he tried reaching out for his grandmother for comfort but only touched the wooden bench leg. His fear intensified. Swami heard some rustling and saw a dark figure moving in the room. Swami feared the worst and assumed it was the devil who had come to take him away.

2. Narrate how Swami became a hero overnight.

(June 2016)

OR

Write in your own words how Swami became a hero overnight.

(June 2019)

Answer: 'A Hero' is a story by R K Narayan, about Swami, a boy in the second form who becomes a hero overnight. After reading an article about a boy who fought off a tiger Swami's father forces Swami to sleep alone in the dark office room. Swami was afraid and remembered all the scary ghost and devil stories he'd heard. He fell into a nightmare-filled sleep. When he opened his eyes, he saw a dark figure moving in the room and heard some rustling noise. Assuming it was the devil who had come to take him away, Swami decided to fight back. As the dark shape reached near him, Swami hugged it with all his might and bit into its leg. The dark figure fell on some furniture and cried out loud in pain. Swami's father, a cook and servant rushed into the room. When they turned on the lights, the dark shape turned out to be a notorious burglar of the district. Swami was praised and congratulated the next day by the police, his headmaster, teacher and classmates.

3. How was Swami successful in fulfilling the intention of his father to prove his courage?

(March 2019)

Answer: R K Narayan's story 'A Hero' begins with Swami's father being impressed by a newspaper article about a boy who had fought off a tiger. His father believed that courage was everything and that strength and age didn't matter. Wanting Swami, who was in the second form to be more courageous, his father forces the scared boy to sleep alone in his office room. Alone in the dark office room, Swami starts remembering all the scary ghost and devil stories he'd heard. He also sleeps under the bench as the space feels more compact, safe and reassuring. Swami's sleep is filled with nightmares and when he opens his eyes, he hears rustling in the room and sees a dark figure moving towards him. Swami thinks it's the devil who had come to take him away. Swami decides to fight back and grabs the dark figure and bites down with all his might. The dark figure turns out to be a notorious burglar of the district. Swami's courage is appreciated by the police, his headmaster, his teacher and classmates. It also proves Swami's courage to his father.
