

2.4 An Epitome of Courage

Warming up!

Chit-Chat

A Strange Truth – ‘Handicapped are those who refuse to take up challenges, even with all their senses and physiology in perfect condition.’

- Understand and discuss the above truth.
- How can you encourage such people to change and become confident? Discuss at least 4 to 5 ways you can do the above.

1. There are pleasant and polite ways of referring to people with physical and mental disabilities. Fill in the table below :

	Previously used Term		New Polite Terms
1.		(a)	Visually challenged
2.	Deaf	(b)
3.	(c)	Speech impaired
4.	mad	(d)
5.	lame	(e)

2. Read the beginning and complete the story in your own words :-

Sumit, the son of a shoe maker, was a highly intelligent student in a municipal school. His Maths teacher called him ‘Einstein’, for he was brilliant in Maths. He loved Maths. Sumit wanted to study further after SSC, however he suffered from Polio and

Now, continue the story with a favourable/positive ending.

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An Epitome of Courage

- **mourn** : feel sorry for
- **exemplary** : worth of imitation and admirable
- **hailed** : acclaimed
- **epitome** : a very fine example of something
 - ✦ What did Stephen Hawking's parents fail to know about him?
 - ✦ What is courage?
 - ✦ Where was Stephen Hawking sent for studying mathematics?
- **cosmology** : study of origin and development of the Universe
- **quirk of fate** : unexpected change of destiny
 - ✦ What happened when he was seventeen?
- **clumsy** : awkward, incompetent
- **perplexed** : full of difficulty / confused
 - ✦ What did his family doctor diagnose?

*(We often tend to hide behind our weaknesses, disabilities, handicaps... or **mourn** over them our whole life through. Dr Stephen Hawking, one of the greatest scientists of this century, did not do so. In spite of suffering from a very rare and dreaded disease, Dr Hawking continued his research undaunted. His **exemplary** courage should inspire us to do our best even under trying circumstances.)*

Exactly 300 years after the death of the great scientist Galileo, Dr Stephen Hawking was born in Oxford, London on the eighth day of January 1942. Little did his parents know that one day their little boy would be **hailed** as one of the greatest scientists of this century. Neither could anybody imagine that his mind would soar up into space like light. More importantly, none could predict that he would be the very **epitome** of courage.

Courage is a wonderful thing. It is that quality, which makes people not lose heart when faced with a great calamity. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Dr Stephen Hawking, a living legend of **Cosmology**, is the very personification of courage and hope. Except his mind, his whole body is bound to a wheelchair, thanks to a cruel **quirk of fate**. Yet, he is one of the greatest scientists of this century.

An average child, Stephen grew up to be a normal teenager, full of mischief and lots of love for music and mathematics. Even though his father wanted him to study medicine, he was bent on studying mathematics. The University of Oxford, at that time, did not have a course in mathematics so he opted to study physics instead.

At the age of 17, Stephen started noticing that he was becoming increasingly **clumsy** and even fell down a couple of times, for no reason. This **perplexed** him and he went to see his family doctor, who diagnosed him as suffering from an extremely rare disease - ALS or LOU Gehrig's disease that affects the nervous system and eventually weakens all the

muscles of the body. Stephen says that even as a child, his muscle co-ordination was nothing to write home about. He recollects that his handwriting would send his teacher into a **fit of frenzy**. Nor was he inclined towards sports. Nevertheless, this disease came as a **bolt from the blue**.

How much time he had left on this planet was very uncertain. The **prognosis** was bad and the doctors said they could not do much. **Undaunted**, Stephen decided to continue his research and even got engaged to a Jane Wilde. Hawking says that, ironic as it may sound, it is at this dismal stage, he began enjoying life the most. This he says was because he started living life for the moment and continued his doctoral research work with renewed vigour.

In the meanwhile, the disease worked its way into Stephen's body and left him disabled. He began studying the concept of "Black Holes", to get his Ph.D. By this time, he was **confined** to a wheelchair and was rapidly losing control of his hands and speech. The study of "black holes" sparked his imagination with bright ideas. He made many **epoch-making** statements that shook established theories. Scientists believe that the universe began with a "Big Bang". To explain this concept better, Stephen invented what is known as "Lie Algebra".



Though confined to a wheel chair with no control over his body save a finger and with a computer to help him express his thoughts. Dr Hawking is an authority on profound subjects of science. Numerous honorary doctorates and awards have been **bestowed on** him. He is a Fellow of The Royal Society

- **fit of frenzy** : great annoyance or a rage

- **a bolt from the blue** : a sudden unexpected shock or surprise

- **prognosis** : forecast of a future health condition

- **undaunted** : not afraid of misfortunes

- ✦ What did he study about to get his Ph.D. ?

- **epoch-making** : of great importance at a particular restricted time

- **bestowed on** : granted as an honour

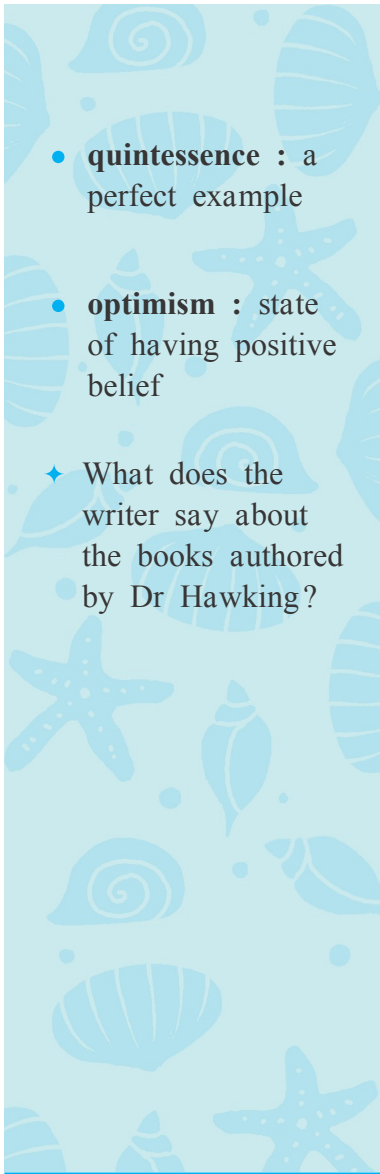
- **layman** : an ordinary person without any special skills or knowledge

Guess the meaning of :

- profound

- awesome ideas

- ✦ In spite of no control on his body, how did Hawking express his ideas?



- **quintessence** : a perfect example
- **optimism** : state of having positive belief
- ♦ What does the writer say about the books authored by Dr Hawking?

and a Member of the US National Academy of Sciences.

In spite of being considered Einstein’s equal in intelligence, Dr Hawking is a very humble man. A simple, down to earth man, he has authored many books dealing with his awesome ideas keeping a **layman** in mind. His writing is full of wit and humour. His style is so lucid that non-scientists can also understand him. His book, “A Brief History of Time” is one of the best selling books of our times.

On being asked, how he feels about having the dreadful ALS, Dr Hawking, the **quintessence** of **optimism** and hope, says, “Not very different from the rest. I try and lead as normal a life as possible, and not think about my condition or regret the things it prevents me from doing, which are not many.”

Dr Hawking firmly believes that in the next millenium, science will discover the core secrets of the universe, its origin, its history and maybe even predict its ultimate demise.

Like Dr Hawking, there are many people who display exemplary courage in their lives. Let us salute all those brave people, who in spite of being disabled strive to do their best.

ENGLISH WORKSHOP

1. Match the following.

Group A		Group B	
1.	Galileo	(a)	The concept which helped Stephen to get his Ph.D.
2.	Dr Stephen Hawking	(b)	music and mathematics.
3.	Black Holes	(c)	the greatest scientist of this century.
4.	Stephen’s favourite subjects	(d)	the greatest scientist 300 years before Hawking.

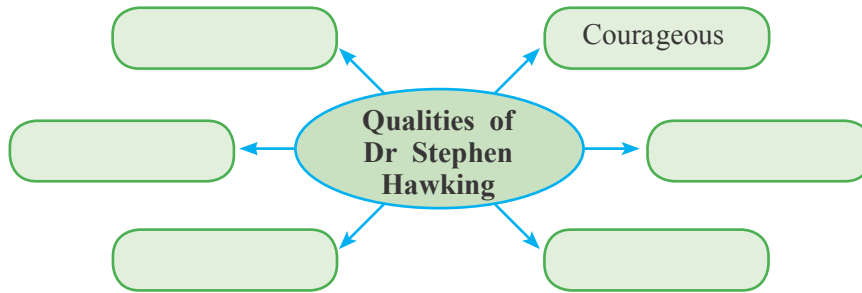
(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

2. Complete the following web-chart containing the qualities of Dr Stephen Hawking.



3. Arrange the following statements according to the occurrence in the life history of Dr Stephen Hawking.

- (a) At the age of 17, Stephen noticed that he fell down a couple of times for no reason.
- (b) He became a fellow of the Royal Society and a member of the US National Academy of Science.
- (c) He believes that in the next millenium, science will discover the core secrets of the universe.
- (d) Stephen was born on 8th January, 1942 and then grew up like an average child and a normal teenager.
- (e) The disease worked its way into Stephen's body and left him disabled.
- (f) Stephen decided to continue his doctoral research work with renewed vigour.
- (g) Stephen was diagnosed with a rare disease - ALS or LOU.
- (h) Though confined to a wheelchair he worked on computer and expressed his thoughts.

(1) (2) (3) (4)

(5) (6) (7) (8)

4. Homographs – Pairs of words that are spelled and pronounced the same, but have different meanings, in different contexts.

For example, ● watch-observe ● watch-device that shows time

Use the following words in two different contexts.

(a) couple couple

(b) mind mind

(c) space space

(d) sound sound

(e) left left

In your notebook, make pairs of sentences with any 3 of the above homographs.

5. Use the following words/phrases in your own sentences.

- (a) quirk of fate
- (b) confined to
- (c) exaggeration
- (d) an epitome of
- (e) millenium

6. Expand the given themes-

Make use of this support/hints

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) If you fall ill during your final exam. | - First step/what to do
support/help |
| (b) If you meet a disabled person who needs help. | - Act/behave
- Contact whom? |
| (c) If your friend is in trouble. | - Gestures/Body language
Patience/Tolerance |
| (d) If you meet a great person like
Dr Stephen Hawking | - Plan/organise
- Face/Handle/Overcome
Succeed/accomplish |

7. You happen to meet a successful person who is a disabled. Write an imaginary dialogue between you and him/her. You can take support of the hints provided.

- (a) introduction/welcome/greetings
- (b) congratulating/honouring
- (c) cause/reason for the disability
- (d) decision/plan/organisation/implementation
- (e) idols in life.
- (f) parents/friends - support if any.
- (g) success stories/accomplishments
- (h) conclusion/final message if any

Language Study

1. Complete the following Word Chain of adjectives.

- (a) cruel → → → →
- (b) Complete the following word chain of nouns.
medicine → → → →
- (c) Complete the following word chaing of verbs.
grow → → → →
- (d) Complete the following word chain any way.
physics → → → →

2. (A) Convert the following to Exclamatory sentences of the same meaning.

- (a) Dr Hawking is a very humble man.
- (b) He was very clumsy.
- (c) He was very simple and intelligent.
- (d) Courage is a truly wonderful thing.

(B) Convert the following to Interrogative (Question) form.

- (1) The prognosis was bad.
- (2) Stephen decided to continue his research.
- (3) There are many people who display exemplary courage.
- (4) His mind would soar up into space, like light.

