



**INDIAN SCHOOL DARSAIT
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



Subject : English Lesson : Deep Water

Date of Worksheet : April 2019

Name of the Student : _____ Date: _____

Class & Div : XII Roll Number :

Summary

The story is taken from the author's autobiography- 'O Men and Mountains'.
 William O. Douglas had a desire to learn swimming since childhood.
 At the age of three or four, he was knocked down and buried by a wave at a beach in California.
 He developed a great aversion to water.
 At the age of ten or eleven he decided to learn to swim with water wings at the Y.M.C.A pool since it was safe at the shallow end.
 A misadventure:- while sitting alone and waiting for others to come at the Y.M.C.A pool, a big boy came and threw Douglas into deep end of the pool.
 Douglas swallowed water and went straight down to the bottom of the pool.
 While going down he planned to make a big jump upwards but came up slowly.
 Stark terror seized him. Tried to shout but could not.....
 As he went down the pool second time, he tried to jump upwards but it was a waste of energy.
 Terror held him deeper and deeper. During the third trial he sucked water instead of air.
 Light was going out and there was no more panic.
 So he ceased all efforts and he became unconscious. He crossed to oblivion.
 When revived he found himself vomiting beside the pool.
 He was in grip of fear of water and it deprived him of the joys of canoeing, boating swimming and fishing.
 Hired an instructor to learn swimming. The instructor taught him swimming piece by piece.
 He went to different lakes to swim and found tiny vestiges of fear still gripped him.
 He challenged the fear and swam.
 Swimming up and down the Warm Lake he finally overcame his fear of water.
 He realized that in death there is peace and there is terror only in fear of death.
 Will to live is stronger than fear of death.

I Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:

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1. How did Douglas develop an aversion to water ?
 When Douglas was three or four years old, his father took him to the beach in California. While he was standing in the surf, a strong wave knocked him down and he was buried in water. His breath was gone and he was much frightened though his father was holding him. Thus he developed an aversion to water.
2. What was the strategy planned by Douglas when he was drowning in the water?
 Douglas did not lose his courage when he was drowning in the pool. He thought of a strategy to fight with the situation. He planned he would spring from the bottom of the pool and come like a cork to the surface. Then he would lie flat on the water, strike out his arms and thrash his legs. Then he would get to the edge of the pool and be safe.
3. What is the "misadventure" that William Douglas speaks about?
 Douglas refers to the incident at the Y.M.C.A. swimming pool where he almost drowned as a "misadventure." The author was about ten or eleven years old at the time and had barely begun to

learn swimming, primarily by aping others. As he was thrown suddenly into the water by someone and he couldn't swim, he started drowning. The struggle to come to surface and to avoid getting drowned left him with a deep fear of water which deprived him from enjoying water-related activities for many years.

4. How did this experience affect him? 2
The near death experience of drowning had a very strong impact on his psychology. He was deeply perturbed and shaken by the whole experience. A haunting fear of water took control of his physical strength and emotional balance for many years. As he couldn't bear being surrounded by water, he was deprived of enjoying any water-related experience.

II Answer the following questions in 120-150 words.

1. How did Douglas overcome his fear of water? 6
At first, he tried to overcome his fear of water on his own. But when this failed, he got an instructor for himself who worked on Douglas' fear very methodically. With his help, Douglas began by learning to be at ease in water. After this, he practiced exhaling-inhaling in water to eliminate the fear of putting his head inside the water. Then, he moved on to master individual steps of swimming which were, finally, integrated into a complete experience of swimming, by his instructor. After about six months, Douglas could not only swim well but was, also, free of his fear to a great extent. At this stage, Douglas' journey of truly overcoming his fear to its tiniest vestiges began. He swam alone in the pool. He went to Lake Wentworth to dive. He tried every possible stroke he learnt. Finally, in his diving expedition, in the Warm Lake, he conquered his fear completely.
2. How did the instructor "build a swimmer" out of Douglas? 6
The instructor worked gradually on Douglas' psychology, moved on to his physical movements and then integrated each part to build a swimmer out of him. Initially, he made Douglas swim back and forth across the swimming pool so that he could get used to it. He used an elaborate mechanism with a rope, belt, pulley and an overhead cable to help them stay connected while Douglas was in the pool. Then, one-by-one, he made Douglas master the individual techniques of swimming, like putting his head in the water, exhaling and inhaling while in water, movements of his hands, body, legs, etc. Finally, he integrated these perfected steps into a whole experience of swimming for Douglas.
3. Why does Douglas as an adult recount a childhood experience of terror and his conquering of it? 6
What larger meaning does he draw from his experience?
Douglas recounts his childhood experience at the Y.M.C.A. pool to enable the readers to understand the exact nature and intensity of the terror. The fear of being surrounded by water, the fear of putting his head in the water, the fear of choking and the fear of his limbs going numb couldn't have been explained to a reader unacquainted with Douglas' childhood experience. In that case, the elaborate strategy adopted by the author (and his instructor) and the time-taken by him to learn or master even simple things, though put in the perspective of his fear of water, couldn't have been understood properly. By quoting Roosevelt, "All we have to fear is fear itself," Douglas indicates the larger meaning that he draws from his experience. For him, the importance of life became evident when he encountered death or rather its proximity threatening his life.