First Year at Harrow by Sir Winston S. Churchill

Summary

In this essay, the writer has explained the place of examinations in the life of a student and the choice of the right subjects. He tells that he never liked examinations because he could not perform well in the examinations. He tells that examiners asked the questions he could not produce a satisfactory answer for.

In the entrance examination at Harrow, the author got zero marks in Latin paper. He just wrote his name and returned the empty answer sheet back. The Headmaster, Mr. Welldon, however, let him be admitted at Harrow. It was both surprising and pleasant for the author.

The writer narrates that he was only two from the bottom of the merit list of admissions. While clever boys went for Latin and Greek because in that time these subjects were most important. He was taught English because of his apparent inability to study Latin and Greek.

The author worked hard and got good grades in English. His English teacher, Mr. Somervell taught him English thoroughly in an effective way. He surpassed all grammar rules and English prose. He had a long-term advantage over the clever boy. They had to improve their English later when they were in their jobs. The author is not sad for having not learned Latin and Greek. He says that he would whip those boys for not knowing English.

Questions Answers Notes

Q. 1:Who is the writer of ‘First year at Harrow’?
Ans: Sir Winston Churchill is the author of the essay “First year at Harrow".

Q. 2: The writer says that the examiners ask the questions which students cannot answer and not those which they can answer. Is the complaint just?
Ans: To some extent, this complaint is true but mostly it does not happen. It is the complaint of dull students. The hardworking can answer any question asked in the exam.

Q. 3: What sort of questions is asked by your examiners?
Ans: Our examiners ask easy as well as difficult questions in the examinations. They ask such questions which can distinguish a diligent student from an ordinary one.

Q. 4: Why did not Churchill do well in examinations?
Ans: He liked poetry and essay writing but the examiners were interested in Latin and Mathematics. He did not know the answers of the questions. So he could not do well in the examination.

Q. 5: How did he do his Latin paper?
Ans: He did his Latin paper badly. He just wrote his name, question '1' and after much reflection put a bracket around it thus (1). Then, unknowingly, he put a blot and many smudges on the paper.

Q. 6: Churchill was taught English at Harrow and not Latin and Greek. Was it a gain or a loss?

Ans: Churchill was taught English at Harrow and not Latin and Greek it was a gain for him. This knowledge proved very useful for him in future to earn his livelihood and a promising career.

Q. 7: What good did his three years stay at Harrow do him?
Ans: His three stay at Harrow was very important for Churchill. Here he learnt the basic rules of English. This knowledge proved very useful for him in future to earn his livelihood and a promising career.

Q.8: In after years how did the knowledge of English stand him in good stead?
Ans: In after years, the knowledge of English proved very useful for him in his practical life.By knowing his national language, he faced no difficulty in the daily affairs of life. He became a successful politician.

Q. 9: What happened to boys who had learnt Latin and Greek?
Ans: Those boys who had leant Latin and Greek and had won many prizes. They had to learn English again to earn their livelihood.

Q.10: What is Churchill's advice regarding learning English?
Ans: His advice is that all English boys should learn English first. They

should get it into their bones. Later on, clever ones may learn Latin as an honor and Greek as a treat.

Q.11: Who was Mr. Welldon?

Ans: Mr. Welldon was the head of Harrow. He was an intelligent man. He judged the hidden qualities in Churchill and granted him admission. Churchill had great regards for him.

Q.12: Who was Mr. Somervell and how did he teach English?

Ans: Mr. Somervell was a delightful teacher of English at Harrow. He had his own method of teaching. He taught English by means: of red, blue, black and green inks.

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