

NCERT Solutions for Class 8 English (Poorvi)

Chapter 4: A Tale of Valour

Let us discuss

I Arrange the following events in chronological order. The first and the last events have been marked for you. Share your answers with your classmates and teacher.

1. Major Somnath Sharma was born in 1923 in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. (1)
 2. Even after losing Major Somnath Sharma, the soldiers fought bravely to save Srinagar for India.
 3. The D Company, under the command of Major Somnath Sharma, was flown into Srinagar.
 4. Major Somnath Sharma underwent training at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst.
 5. Major Somnath Sharma requested air strikes to combat the enemy at Badgam.
 6. Major Somnath Sharma was commissioned into the 19th Hyderabad Regiment in 1942.
 7. Major Somnath Sharma was killed immediately after a mortar shell hit him.
 8. Major Somnath Sharma was the first recipient of the Param Vir Chakra. (8)
- Answer: 1. → 4. → 6. → 3. → 5. → 7. → 2. → 8.

Let us think and reflect

I Read the given extracts and answer the questions that follow.

1. Vastly outnumbered and facing devastating fire, Major Somnath Sharma and his men stood resolute. The air was thick with the sound of gunfire and the cries of battle, but Major Somnath Sharma's voice cut through the chaos, urging his men to fight with tenacity and valour. Despite heavy casualties and his own injuries, Major Somnath Sharma displayed unparalleled bravery. He moved fearlessly through the battlefield, directing fire, filling magazines for his gunners, and encouraging his men to hold their ground.

(i) What can be inferred about the conditions from the line: 'The air was thick with gunfire...'

- A. The gunshots had stopped for a while.
- B. There was intense fighting on the battlefield.
- C. The invaders were retreating from the fight.
- D. The Indian soldiers had achieved victory.

Answer: B. There was intense fighting on the battlefield.

(ii) Complete the sentence with a suitable reason.

Despite heavy casualties, Major Somnath Sharma continued to lead his men because

Answer: he was deeply committed to his duty and wanted to inspire his soldiers to fight with courage and determination.

(iii) Select the correct option for both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) given below:

(A): Major Somnath Sharma moved fearlessly through the battlefield, even though he was injured.

(R): He believed his courage was important to motivate the soldiers.

A. Both (A) and (R) are true, and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).

B. Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).

C. (A) is true, but (R) is false.

D. (A) is false, but (R) is true.

Answer: A. Both (A) and (R) are true, and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).

(iv) Fill in the blank with the correct word from those given in the brackets:

Major Somnath Sharma was filling magazines, and encouraging his men to hold their ground despite _____. (injuries/worry)

Answer: injuries

2. Born on 31 January 1923, in the picturesque town of Dadh in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, Somnath Sharma belonged to a family with a rich military legacy. His father, Major General Amar Nath Sharma, had served the nation with distinction, and young Somnath was deeply inspired by the valorous tales of the Mahabharata, imparted to him by his grandfather.

(i) What can be inferred about Somnath Sharma's early influences on his career?

A. He was primarily influenced by his father's achievements in the military.

B. His inspiration came solely from the tales of the Mahabharata.

C. His family and heritage inspired his bravery and sense of duty.

D. He decided to join the military out of necessity rather than passion. Answer: C. His family and heritage inspired his bravery and sense of duty.

(ii) Identify whether the following statement is true or

(iii) false: Somnath Sharma belonged to a wealthy family.

Answer: False

(iv) What does the phrase 'served the nation with distinction' tell us about Major General Amar Nath Sharma?

(He performed his duties with exceptional dedication, honour, and excellence./He was highly respected for his contributions to the country.)

Answer: Major General Amar Nath Sharma performed his duties with exceptional dedication, honour, and excellence.

(v) Replace the underlined phrase with a word from the extract that has a similar meaning.

My family and I visited a popular hill station and stayed in an old but visually charming house surrounded by trees.

Answer: picturesque

II Answer the following questions.

1. 'Major Somnath's legacy of courage and devotion to the nation remains forever alive, forever alive...' What is the significance of the repetition in this line?

Answer: The repetition of the phrase 'forever alive' emphasizes the lasting impact of Major Somnath's bravery and devotion. It conveys that his sacrifice is remembered not just as a moment in history, but as an eternal source of inspiration for future generations.

2. Why do you think Major Somnath's leadership was critical during the Battle of Badgam?

Answer: Major Somnath's leadership was critical during the Battle of Badgam because he remained calm under pressure, inspired his men to fight bravely despite overwhelming odds, and made strategic decisions such as requesting air strikes. His presence and courage motivated his troops to hold their ground, buying valuable time for reinforcements to arrive and save Srinagar.

3. What were Major Somnath's last words? What do they reflect about his sense of duty?

Answer: Major Somnath's last words were: "The enemy is only 50 yards from us. We are heavily outnumbered. We are under devastating fire. I shall not withdraw an inch but will fight to the last man and the last round."

These words reflect his unshakeable commitment to his mission and his willingness to sacrifice everything for the defence of his country. They show his deep sense of duty, bravery, and leadership.

4. What might have been the outcome of the Battle of Badgam if Major Somnath and his company had not held their ground?

Answer: If Major Somnath and his company had not held their ground, the infiltrators might have captured the Srinagar airport and the surrounding areas. This could have led to the loss of Kashmir to Pakistan in 1947, changing the course of Indian history significantly.

5. Why do you think Major Somnath's story continues to inspire soldiers and civilians today?

Answer: Major Somnath's story inspires people because it embodies courage, patriotism, and selfless sacrifice. He led from the front despite personal injury and chose to fight against overwhelming odds rather than retreat. Such dedication to the nation sets a powerful example for both soldiers defending the country and civilians striving to uphold values in their daily lives.

6. How can the values demonstrated by Major Somnath Sharma— courage, duty, and self-sacrifice—be applied in our daily lives?

Answer: These values can guide us to face challenges bravely, take responsibility for our actions, and put the well-being of others above our own interests. Whether it's helping someone in need, standing up for what's right, or staying committed to our goals, we can honour his legacy by living with integrity, responsibility, and compassion.