

## *His First Flight*

### Thinking about the Text (Page 36)

**Question 1: Why was the young seagull afraid to fly? Do you think all young birds are afraid to make their first flight, or are some birds more timid than others? Do you think a human baby also finds it a challenge to take its first steps?**

**Answer:** The fear of trying something new, like flying for the first time, is common not just among birds but also among humans. Just like the young seagull, human babies also experience fear and find it challenging when they take their first steps or learn to crawl and walk independently.

It is a natural part of growth and learning for both birds and humans. Overcoming these fears and challenges is a crucial step towards independence and self-confidence.

**Question 2: “The sight of the food maddened him.” What does this suggest? What compelled the young seagull to fly finally?**

**Answer:** The young seagull struggled to gather the courage for his first flight, despite constant urging from his family. Left on the ledge for over twenty-four hours, hunger eventually pushed him to take the plunge. When he saw his mother with food, his desperation peaked, and he eagerly awaited her approach. However, she stopped midway, leaving him confused and hungrier. Driven by hunger, he impulsively dived for the food, causing him to fall towards the vast sea below. Initially terrified, he soon felt his wings spread out and realized he could fly. Hunger outweighed fear, and he joyfully completed his first flight.

**Question 3: “They were beckoning to him, calling shrilly.” Why did the seagull’s father and mother threaten him and cajole him to fly?**

**Answer:** The young seagull’s parents kept calling out to him, urging him to take his first flight. Despite trying everything, he was hesitant because he feared falling from the cliff. Watching his siblings fly away only added to his reluctance. His family left him alone on the ledge, trying to motivate and convince him to fly, but their efforts were unsuccessful.

**Question 4: Have you ever had a similar experience, where your parents encouraged you to do something that you were too scared to try? Discuss this in pairs or groups.**

**Answer:** Yes, I had a similar experience with learning to ride a bicycle mirrors the challenges faced by the young seagull in learning to fly. It's common to feel fear and struggle with something new at first. Your perseverance and your parents' encouragement played a crucial role in overcoming that fear. Just like how your father supported you while learning to ride, the seagull's family encouraged him to take flight. Your dedication to practicing cycling daily eventually led to improvement and confidence, similar to how the young seagull gained confidence with each attempt. It's inspiring to see how you overcame your fear and now ride confidently every day!

(**Note:** Students can write this answer as per their personal experience.)

**Question 5: In the case of a bird flying, it seems a natural act, and a foregone conclusion that it should succeed. In the examples you have given in answer to the previous question, was your success guaranteed, or was it important for you to try, regardless of a possibility of failure?**

**Answer:** It's common for everyone to encounter challenges when learning new skills. Fear of failure often holds us back from attempting something new. Like the young seagull's parents, my father encouraged me to learn to ride a bike despite my initial fears. Overcoming that fear was crucial for my own growth and development. Success is indeed attainable when we remain focused and determined. The saying "practice makes perfect" rings true – consistent effort leads to improvement and success in any endeavour.

## ***The Black Aeroplane***

**Thinking about the Text (Page 40)**

**Question 1: "I'll take the risk." What is the risk? Why does the narrator take it?**

**Answer:** The pilot of the Dakota DS 088 plane was eager to return home to England for a holiday with his family. However, during the journey, his plane encountered a massive storm with dark clouds. Despite the danger, the pilot was determined not to miss the chance to have a traditional English breakfast with his family. So, he made the risky decision to fly directly into the storm, even though visibility was extremely low.

**Question 2: Describe the narrator's experience as he flew the aeroplane into the storm.**

**Answer:** As the pilot ventured into the massive storm of clouds, his plane began to jolt and spin in the turbulent air. Enclosed by the pitch-black clouds, he lost all sight of the outside world. The instruments that guided him through the skies ceased to function amidst the chaos of the storm. It was a harrowing and unnerving ordeal for the pilot. With his fuel running dangerously low and unable to navigate, he faced a dire situation. Suddenly, a mysterious black plane, devoid of any lights, emerged beside him. Its pilot signalled for him to follow. Without any other options, the narrator complied, trailing the enigmatic aircraft through the tumultuous storm. Eventually, they safely landed on a runway, guided by the strange black plane.

**Question 3: Why does the narrator say, "I landed and was not sorry to walk away from the old Dakota..."?**

**Answer:** The pilot felt immense relief upon safely landing after navigating through the dense storm clouds. He felt no regret about leaving behind the old Dakota aircraft. Instead, he was overwhelmed with gratitude towards the pilot of the mysterious black plane. Despite his sincere desire to express his thanks, he realized he couldn't adequately convey his gratitude to the unknown pilot who had guided him through the perilous situation.

**Question 4: What made the woman in the control centre look at the narrator strangely?**

**Answer:** The woman at the control centre regarded the narrator with a puzzled expression when he recounted the assistance he received from the mysterious black plane. Her surprise was evident as she informed him that according to the radar, his plane was the only one present in the sky during the storm. The discrepancy between the narrator's experience and the radar data left both him and the woman perplexed, shrouding the events in an eerie mystery.