



INDIAN SCHOOL NIZWA - WORKSHEET

ENGLISH MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: XII Sec: ____

SHORT QUESTIONS

1 **“I felt like sinking to the floor”! Who felt so and why?**

Ans. Zitkala-sa felt so when on her first day in Carlisle Indian School her blanket was rudely stripped off her shoulders. She felt exposed, as if her very identity had been snatched away so cruelly

2 **What were the indignities that the new girls were subjected to at Carlisle Indian School?**

Ans. The girls were scrutinized thoroughly and supervised by a grey-haired woman. They were made to wear tight fitting immodest clothes and stiff shoes. During breakfast a systematic and regimental discipline was observed. The girls with long hair had to get them shingled and they had to submit to the authorities who were strong, unfeeling and cruel.

3 **Why was the girl, Zitkala tied to a chair in ‘Memories of Childhood’?**

Ans. Zitkala Sa tells about her first day in school. She had long hair. According to the culture of the whites they wanted to cut her long hair. But she refused to obey their decision. She was dragged out and tied fast with a chair for cutting her hair. She resisted but all in vain

4 **What was the incident that made Bama laugh as well as feel so provoked and angry?**

Ans. Bama saw an elderly man of her street carrying a packet of ‘Vadais’ by the strings and walking gingerly, holding the parcel away from his body. Bama found his manner of carrying the parcel very funny. But her brother explains to her the higher caste people believed that if the lower caste people touched the parcel it would be polluted. That’s why the elder was carrying it in that manner. This provokes and angers Bama.

LONG QUESTIONS

1 **Seeds of rebellion are sown early in life injustice even can’t escape the eyes of child. Justify the statement with reference to the lesson and “Memories of childhood.”**

Ans. The lesson ‘Memories of Childhood’ is an amalgamation of two autobiographical episodes. One by American Indian woman and second by a Tamil Dalit writer. Both stories highlight the women’s oppression, class barriers, racialism, discrimination and exploitation that tend to pull them down. Both the stories advocate the statement that seeds of rebellion are sown early in life.

In ‘The Cutting of my long hair’ the feeling of breaking free and gaining freedom are seen in the girl. Zitkala-Sa, in the very first line reports that her first day in school was “bitter-cold”. For her, it not only describes the weather, but also represents the atmosphere of the boarding school. Though she was a child but she could observe the overly disciplined students of the school and its unfriendly staff. She faced indignity & oppression since she had left her mother. She is not ready to get her hair cut, to lose her & identity. She fights till the end but is helpless as she overpowered.

Also in ‘We Too Are Human Beings’, when Bama was in class 3rd, no had talked to her about untouchability but still she had experienced it and could notice the difference between landlords and Dalits. The little girl was amused to see how the old man was holding the packet but when she came to discover the truth, she is extremely upset & citizens the way of the rich. Through her struggle & hard work she stands first & wins many friends. Thus we can see that though the children are small & innocent but they cannot tolerate injustice if they are taught



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early in their life.

- 2 **It took almost an hour for Bama to reach back home from school. Why?**
OR

What were the ‘novelties and oddities’ in the bazaar which entertained Bama?

- Ans. Bama was a young playful girl studying in class three. Her school was at a distance of ten minutes from her home but she normally took at least thirty minutes to traverse this distance. The bazaar on the way was full of novelties and oddities for her-the performing monkey, the snake kept by the snake charmer in its box, the cyclist who had not got off his bike for three days, the spinning wheels, the Maariyaata temple, the pongal offerings being cooked in front of the temple; the various food stalls in front of the temple, the different hues of the street light and the narikkuravan hunter gypsy with its wild lemur in cages. A different kind of performance on stage such as a street play, a puppet show, a magic show or speeches by budding politicians also caught her attention. Even the way the waiters cooled the coffee at the coffee clubs or the way people cut onions held the little girl spell-bound. The fruit growing on a tree as well as the seasonal fruits being sold held her captive. Hence we see that before Bama was rudely oriented to the unfortunate reality of her caste she was an innocent child buoyed by the simple sights of life.

- 3 **Bama’s experience is that of a victim of the caste system. What kind of discrimination does Zitkala-sa’s experience depict? What are their responses to their respective situations?**

Zitkala Sa : victim of racial discrimination / cultural invasion

The lesson presents a good account of two different girls living at distant places. Both the women belong to the marginalized communities. Zitkala-Sa was a Native American. She was taken away from her mother forcibly because the white people wanted the native Indians to adopt their culture. Zitkala revolted the way the Indian girls were forced to wear dresses in an immodest way. She was shocked to know that that the school authorities were going to cut her long hair because in her community shingled hair were worn only by cowards. She hid herself under a bed in a large room. But when she was caught , she resisted by kicking and scratching.. But she could do nothing when they took her bravely, tied in a chair and cut off her hair. But her spirit could not be suppressed.

On the other hand, Bama was a low –caste girl. She saw the upper caste people showing discrimination against lower caste people. They could not touch food and other items of the upper caste people. They had to work for them and bow their heads. Her spirit too revolted against this injustice. She felt terribly sad and agitated. She could not understand this human treatment since all are human beings. She wanted honour for all. Her brother Annan told her that she could do away with these indignities if she worked hard. Bama studied hard and stood first in her class. Many people became her friends.