

**Question 1.**

Why was the young seagull afraid to fly? Do you think all young birds feel fear making their first flight, or are some birds more timid? Do human babies feel challenged taking their first step?

**Answer:**

The young seagull was scared to fly because it was his first flight and he was frightened he would fall and hurt himself. He thought his wings wouldn't support him up in the air. It is natural to be fearful when doing something for the first time, so all birds are likely to be nervous before their first flight. Similarly, human babies find it challenging and sometimes scary to take their first steps when learning to walk or crawl.

**Question 2.**

"The sight of the food maddened him." What does this mean? What finally made the young seagull fly?

**Answer:**

The young seagull was very hungry, and his hunger forced him to act. Seeing his mother holding a piece of fish made his hunger even stronger. He begged for food, crying out for his mother. When she came close with the fish but didn't reach him, his hunger became unbearable, and he dived for the food. At that moment, hunger overtook his fear of flying, and his body responded naturally by flying for the first time.

**Question 3.**

"They were beckoning to him, calling shrilly." Why did the seagull's parents threaten and encourage him to fly?

**Answer:**

The seagull's parents tried everything but he refused to fly due to his fear. He watched his siblings but would not try himself. So, the whole family left him alone and tried threatening and encouraging him, but nothing worked.

**Question 4.**

Have you had a similar experience, where your parents encouraged you to try something you were scared to do?

**Answer (example):**

Yes, I experienced this when learning to ride a bicycle in grade six. I kept falling and became afraid of cycling. Despite my reluctance, my father persisted in helping me overcome my fear. He brought me to a small hill and taught me

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how to ride. Eventually, I gained enough confidence through practice and was able to ride a bicycle.

## Question 5.

In birds, flying is a natural act with expected success. Was your success guaranteed, or was it critical to try despite a risk of failure in your example?

### Answer:

When learning something new, initial failures and fear are common. Like the seagull, my parents encouraged me to try cycling. While my success wasn't guaranteed, it was important to try despite the risk. Success comes with determination and repeated efforts—practice really does make perfect.

## The Black Aeroplane

### Question 1.

"I'll take the risk." What risk? Why does the narrator decide to take it?

### Answer:

A big storm was coming, but the narrator wanted very much to get home to be with his family for breakfast. So, he chose to fly through the dangerous storm despite very poor visibility and took the risk to reach home.

### Question 2.

Describe the narrator's experience flying into the storm.

### Answer:

Inside the storm, the plane twisted and bounced. The pilot couldn't see anything outside, and the sky was completely black. The compass and other instruments stopped working. He grew very scared as his fuel nearly ran out. Suddenly, he saw another black aeroplane. Its pilot signaled him to follow—he did so, and landed safely, even though that plane had no lights.

### Question 3.

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

### Answer:

The narrator was relieved and happy to be safely on the ground after the terrifying flight through the storm, so he was glad to leave his Dakota plane and walk away.

**Question 4.**

Why did the woman in the Control Centre look at the narrator strangely?

**Answer:**

She looked at him strangely because he asked about the other black aeroplane, but she had only seen the narrator's plane on radar. No other plane had been spotted during the storm.

**Question 5.**

Who do you think helped the narrator land safely?

**Answer:**

It's hard to say who helped the narrator. Most likely, it was his own skills and courage that got him through the storm. No other plane was seen, so he may have hallucinated the black aeroplane in his stressful situation, but ultimately, his flying experience helped him land safely.

**Thinking About Language****Meaning of 'black' in different sentences:**

1. absolutely black: dirty with dust
2. black look: angry look
3. blackest crime: darkest/most evil deed
4. black comedy: dark, gloomy comedy
5. black marketing: selling at illegal, high prices
6. beaten black and blue: beaten severely

**Phrases with 'fly':**

1. Fly a flag — (c) Display on a pole
2. Fly into rage — (e) Become very angry
3. Fly along — (a) Move quickly
4. Fly high — (b) Be successful
5. Fly the coop — (d) Escape from a place