

### 3. DEEP WATER-William Douglas

Deep water opens the way for all to achieve the impossible. Focusing the target, staying determined and consistent efforts can help to fight the challenges and tough situations of life. Challenge in life are inevitable but we need to accept them and make our course/run clear so these do not become hurdle for our lives.

#### Lesson at a Glance

-William Douglas' first encounter with water  
-beginning of aversion to water.

When he was three or four years old  
went to california beach with father  
swept over/knocked down by waves  
felt suffocated and frightened

Misadventure  
at  
YMCA Pool

decided to learn swimming at YMCA pool.  
Yakima pool was safe-3 feet at shallow end,  
9 feet at deep end  
got water wings, began feeling comfortable  
Misadventure- big boy threw him into the pool at deeper end

Plan & efforts  
in vain -  
series of emotions

hit the bottom, made a big jump to come to surface but failed  
nine feet looked like ninety-grew panicky, tried to yell but in vain  
dizziness with aching lungs and throbbing head  
a futile struggle - gave up all efforts

Saved and survived  
but seized  
by terror

found himself out of the pool-vomitting  
weak and trembling - reached home-  
could not eat that night-haunting fear  
wobbly in the knees and sick to the stomach  
got scared of water and  
started avoiding water bodies.

After the misadventure-  
got deprived of  
the joy of

fishing trips  
boating and swimming  
rafting

determined to  
overcome fear of  
water

engaged an instructor - practiced  
five days a week, an hour a day  
a rope attached to belt put around  
him- rope went through pulley- ran on  
overhead cable  
went back and forth across the  
pool- learnt to inhale and exhale  
piece by piece -  
instructor built a swimmer out of  
him  
but Douglas not satisfied  
went to lake Wentworth-dived and  
swam across the Warm lake -  
conquered his fear of water

## SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. How and when did Douglas develop an aversion to water?  
Ans. His aversion to water began when he was three or four years old. He went with his father to a beach where the waves knocked him down and overpowered him. He was buried under the waves. This created the phobia in his mind and left him in a state of fear.
2. Why has the Yakima river been referred to as treacherous?  
Ans. There had been several cases of drowning in the river. It was not considered safe because of its rough water and fast current. Douglas mother used to remind him the drowning cases there.
3. In order to escape drowning what strategy did Douglas adopt while in the deep end of the pool?  
Ans. When Douglas was thrown into water, he was terribly frightened but still mentally alert. He planned that when his feet hit the bottom, he would make a big jump, come to the surface, lie flat on it and paddle to the edge of the pool.
4. How did the instructor 'build a swimmer' out of Douglas?  
Ans. The instructor built a swimmer out of Douglas piece by piece. For three months, he held him high on a rope attached to his belt. Douglas practised moving back and forth across the pool. Then he was taught to put his face under water and exhale, raise his nose and inhale. Next, the instructor told him to kick with his legs. Finally his legs relaxed and he could command over them.

### Additional Questions:

1. Why was Douglas determined to get over his fear of water?
2. What kind of terror seized Douglas as he went down in the pool?
3. How did the incident at YMCA pool affect Douglas later in his life?
4. What does Douglas mean when he says, "The instructor was finished, but I was not"? How did he remove his residual doubts?
5. How did the writer experience the truth of Roosevelt's statement – "All we have to fear is fear itself"?
6. Though the mother did not allow Douglas to go to Yakima river, she allowed him to go to the swimming pool at YMCA. Why?

## LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Give an account of the fears and emotions of Douglas as he made efforts to save himself from drowning in YMCA pool.
  - When the author was flung into the deep end of the pool, he was overcome with fear.
  - Fortunately, he was able to think rationally.
  - So, he planned that as soon as he hit the bottom, he would make a big jump.
  - He hoped that he would be able to come to the surface.
  - but his efforts went futile.
  - Panic gripped him when he realised that he had gone deep inside nine feet of water.
  - He thought he would bob to the surface like a cork.
  - His limbs were almost paralysed.
  - He failed to find anything to hold on and he was again being pulled under.
  - His lungs ached and his screams went unheard.
  - The mass of yellow water gripped him which produced stark terror.
  - When three attempts to rise to the surface failed, he fainted. He experienced a terror which never left him.

### Question for Practice

1. If we surrender to our fears, they overpower us; If we face them, they fade away. Do you agree? Explain with reference to the lesson. 'Deep Water'.
2. 'Life is not bed of roses'. We need to stay calm, determined and focused to accomplish our goal. Explain.
3. Why does Douglas as an adult recount a childhood experience of terror and his conquering of it? What larger meaning does he draw from this experience?
4. Which character traits of Douglas helped him conquer his fear of water?

### **Reference to Context**

It had happened when I was ten or eleven years old. I had decided to learn to swim. There was a pool at the Y.M.C.A. in Yakima that offered exactly the opportunity. The Yakima River was treacherous. Mother continually warned against it, and kept fresh in my mind the details of each drowning in the river. But the Y.M.C.A. pool was safe.

1. What does "It" refer to in the first line?
2. Did the YMCA pool prove safe for the speaker?
3. Why did the narrator think that the YMCA was safe?
4. Why did the narrator avoid the Yakima river?