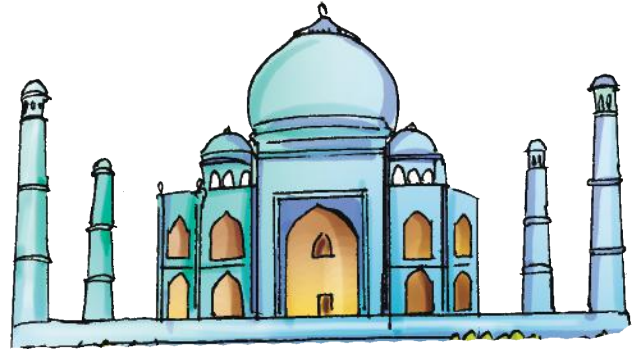


The Taj Mahal


The Taj Mahal is a wonder of white marble. Taj Mahal is a Persian/Urdu word which means 'crown of palaces.' But it is not a palace. It is a **mausoleum** which contains the tombs of Mughal **emperor** Shah Jahan and his third wife Mumtaz Mahal. He ruled over India from the year 1627 to 1658. He was the fifth emperor of the Mughal **dynasty**. Mumtaz Mahal was a Persian princess.



Shah Jahan made Taj Mahal in the memory of Mumtaz Mahal who died in 1631. The emperor was so sad at her death that all his hair and beard became white in a few months. He decided to build a grand **monument** in the memory of his beloved queen in 1632. It was built of white marble at the bank of the river Yamuna in Agra. The marble was brought from Rajasthan. It took a fleet of one thousand elephants to transport it to the site. Twenty thousand people, artisans and craftsman, worked for 22 years to complete it. At that time its cost was **estimated** to be 400 lakhs of rupees. As Shah Jahan made it in the memory of Mumtaz Mahal, many people think that the name Taj Mahal was the part of the name Mumtaz Mahal.

Taj Mahal is one of the most beautiful buildings of the world. It is one of the seven wonders of the world. It is the most well-preserved architecturally beautiful mausoleum in the world. One can find the wonder of Indian **workmanship** every where in Taj Mahal.

The Taj Mahal is built on a high platform of white marble on high red sandstone base. On the four corners of this platform, there are four tall minarets. These are also made of white marble. The main building is the centre of this platform. It is also made of milk-white marble. It has a very large dome as roof. The walls



are decorated with **carvings** of flowers and leaves. At the top of the building, on all sides, **verses** are inscribed. The size of their letters appears the same from any angle you see it.

The Taj looks beautiful in the midst of the beautiful **landscape** of fountains and gardens around it. From the main gate of the building up to the platform there are pathways having beautiful flower beds on each side. There are tanks and flowing fountains also.

Taj Mahal is a mixture of Indian, Iranian, Turk and Mughal **architecture**. India had a long tradition of craftsmanship of fine and huge architecture. Turk and Mughal period added a new style of domes and minarets to architecture. Taj Mahal is a mixture of both, domes and minarets. It has not only architecture but **sculpture**, carving and painting too.

The description of the Taj is incomplete without going inside the building. The dome of the building is so high that the voice echoes in it. If you say loudly, “I love you”, it will come back after striking the dome, “I love you”.

The Taj Mahal is a story of true love indeed. Inside the building there are two tombs, one of Mumtaz Mahal and another of Shah Jahan. But these are not the real graves. The real graves are in a vault where the king and queen are buried.

The grave of Shah Jahan is a little higher than that of Mumtaz Mahal. It was built beside the queen as an after thought. Shah Jahan was deposed by his son and imprisoned for eight years but was buried in the Taj.

Visitors from far and wide come to see this monument. They enjoy the white marble building reflecting the light of the moon. It looks matchless. They see and praise it. On full moon nights it looks like silver. It looks most beautiful on Sharad Purnima (in the month of October) in the Full Moon light. That day its beauty cannot be described in words.

The Taj is pinkish in the morning, milky white in the evening and light golden when the moon shines. These changes, some learned men say, depict the different moods of woman.

Seeing the Taj from the back side, (Yamuna side) is also a watchable scene. The reflected image of Taj in the still waters of Yamuna on Full Moon nights is worth watching. The water enhances its beauty.

The more one sees the Taj, the more they like to see it again. Rabindranath Tagore, the great poet, called it, "A Dream in Marble". The dream ever remains fresh and alive in the viewer's heart. Different people have different views of the Taj. But the Taj has a life of its own that leaps out of the marble.

People catch the memory of Taj in photographs. Inspired by it they sing love songs. Many poets express their deep love in the verses. Once seeing it, one English lady said to her husband, "If you can build such a beautiful building in my memory, I am ready to die just now,"

But Taj is not a story of death. It is a novel and drama of true vital vibrant love of life.

Word Treasure

mausoleum : a grand tomb

dynasty : a sequence of rulers from the same family

monument : memorial buildings

workmanship : craft work

carving : designs cutting away material from stone

verses : poems

landscape : scenery of an area of land

architecture : the craft of making buildings

sculpture : idol making of stones.



EXERCISE TIME

Comprehension Skills

A. Tick (✓) the correct option :

- The Taj Mahal is made of _____ marble.
a. pinkish b. golden c. white
- The Taj is situated in :
a. India b. Iran c. Turkey
- Round roof of the Taj Mahal is called :
a. minaret b. dome c. square

4. The Taj Mahal was made by :

a. Akbar

b. Aurangzeb

c. Shah Jahan

5. When does the Taj look most beautiful :

a. on full moon nights

b. on half moon nights

c. on cloudy nights

B. Fill in the blanks with the correct option :

elephants , walls, dome, crown, mausoleum

1. Taj Mahal is a _____ made of white marble.

2. It took a fleet of one thousand _____ to transport marble to the site.

3. Taj Mahal means the _____ of palaces.

4. The _____ are decorated with carvings of flowers and leaves.

5. The _____ of the building is so high that the voice echoes in it.

C. Answer the following questions :

1. Where is the Taj Mahal situated ?

2. Who built the Taj Mahal and why ?

3. How many people worked for how many years to build the Taj Mahal ?

4. When does the Taj Mahal look most beautiful ?

5. What stone the Taj Mahal is built of ?

Fun with Words

Nationality is the nation or country to which people belong.

Japan is a country or nation. The people living there are called Japanese. We say Japanese people, Japanese children.

The people of India

Indians

The people of England

English

The people of Iran

Iranians

The people of Sweden

Swedish

The people of Russia

Russians

The people of Turkey

Turks/Turkish

The people of Italy

Italians

The people of China

Chinese

The people of Indonesia

Indonesians

The people of Nepal

Nepalese

The people of Canada

Canadians

The people of Pakistan

Pakistanis

The people of Germany

Germans

The people of Bhutan

Bhutanis

The people of Persia

Persians

The people of Portugal

Portuguese

Essential Grammar

D. We can say why things happen with **because or **so** (but not both). We use **because** to express the reason for something and **so** to express the result of something.**

Read and compare these sentences :

1. I opened the window **because** it was very hot.
It was very hot **so** I opened the window.
Because it was very hot, I opened the window.

Join the sentences with ‘because’ and with ‘so’ :

1. The taxi was late. We missed the train.
2. Joe was tired. She went to bed.
3. It was cold. I turned the heating on.
4. It was raining heavily. We did not go for the picnic.

E. We can say that things are not as we expect with **although or **but** (but not both). We usually put commas before **although** and **but**.**

Read and compare the sentences :

1. Peter did not go to bed, **although** he was tired.
Peter was tired, **but** he did not go to bed.
Although Peter was tired, he did not go to bed.

Join the sentences with ‘although’ and with ‘but’ :

1. I felt ill. I went on working.
2. She was hungry. She did not eat anything.
3. It was cold. He went out without a coat.
4. The pay and conditions were bad. She stayed in the company.

Essential Writing

F. Complete the story using the phrases from the box :

‘the father of our nation’
a set of full Dhoti and Kurta
all of them as his family
about them

how can I alone wear a new Kurta
wearing only a half Dhoti
poor people in our country

Once a rich woman visited Gandhiji. She was surprised to see such a great man _____ . She presented _____ to him. Gandhiji said, "When I have so many poor brothers and sisters, _____?" The rich woman asked him _____. Gandhiji said, "Crores of _____." He thought of _____. That is why he is called _____.

Essential Speaking

G. Talk about character :

Vicky : Is he a thief ?

Jane : He was a thief but now he is an honest man.

Vicky : Is he a proud person ?

Jane : He was. But he is very gentle now.

Vicky : Is he an angry person ?

Jane : No, you are mistaken. He is not angry but his face is like that.

Vicky : Does she tell a lie ?

Jane : She doesn't tell a lie.

Vicky : Do they break the laws often ?

Jane : Yes, they do.

Vicky : Does he abuse others ?

Jane : He does not abuse others.