

Title: Saheer's Dream

Level: Intermediate to Upper Intermediate

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Genre: Fiction (Education, Personal Dreams, Social Problems)

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It was truly a special day for *Saheer*. As he looked **ahead** to the day's plans, he thought to himself, "Today, my dream comes true." This was his first day at Dhaka University. From his early childhood, *Saheer* had been dreaming of this day, though the **journey** to his **goal** was not so **smooth**. He had to work hard. **Finally**, he achieved a GPA of 5, in both his SSC and his HSC exams. After completing his HSC **examination**, he started preparing for his admission test to Dhaka University. He knew he was up against some **tough competition**.

The day of the university admission test was to be a memorable day for him. To take part in the exam he had to travel to Dhaka, a totally a new experience for him. He was from far away, born and brought up in the north of Bangladesh, in the *Rangpur* district. This would be the first time he had been to Dhaka. He started his journey two days before the admission test.

Though it was a long journey by train, he was not **tired** at all. Instead, he stared through the train window, and enjoyed the natural beauty of the Bangladeshi countryside, but he felt both **tense** and **excited** at the same time. At last, when he arrived in Dhaka, he **managed** to find his way through the **busy** Dhaka traffic to his **uncle's** house, where he had **arranged** to stay. The **warm** hospitality of his uncle and **aunt** amazed him, and that night, he fell **asleep** feeling content.



Finally, the day of entrance examination arrived. *Saheer* **woke** up very early in the morning, took a **shower** and enjoyed the delicious **breakfast** made by his aunt. The exam was at 10.00

a.m. Though he was earlier than he needed to be, *Saheer* reached Dhaka University campus before nine o'clock. He wanted to look around a little first. Dhaka University was beyond anything he had ever imagined.

At first he saw the central library. He started dreaming of entering the library soon and reading various interesting books.



At that thought, he **suddenly** became very nervous. “What if I don’t **qualify** in the exam? What a huge opportunity I will miss in my life.” He thought. “I have to try to be **confident**.” he said to himself, and off he went to find the examination room. He soon found the room, and his seat, in *Kala Bhaban* which was a big building. The exam was **challenging**, but *Saheer* thought he had answered the questions well enough.



After the exam was over, the next two days were very tough for him. He **eagerly** waited for the result. Again, he felt tense and nervous. He kept **checking** the Dhaka University website. He couldn’t sleep. Finally, the examination results were **published**. *Saheer*’s heart was banging as he **searched** for his roll number. Finally, he found it.



He could hardly believe his eyes when he saw that he had scored very well in the test. *Saheer* **phoned** his **parents** **immediately**. When they heard his good news, *Saheer's* parents became very excited. He was so pleased to make them so happy. Even his uncle gave him 5000 *taka* as a token of love. Within the next few days, *Saheer* was able to complete the admission **procedures**. He was a university student at last!

Saheer felt a huge sense of accomplishment when he **attended** the **orientation programme**. It felt like he was in a dream. The senior students welcomed the 'freshers' with flowers, the teachers **delivered** wonderful speeches and gave out course **guidelines** to their new students. *Saheer* was pleased to learn about all the different **clubs** at Dhaka University. In his school and college, he had attended **debating** competitions several times. Now, he decided to join the Dhaka University debating club. He started dreaming again. This time, in his dream, he **imagined** how he would become a famous debater one day. Perhaps, one day, he might even appear in a public debate on BTV.

Saheer started walking from the *Kala Bhaban* to the building everyone called the TSC, the Teacher-Student Centre. His plan was to **collect** the membership form for the debating club.



After that, he had decided to spend the money his uncle had given him on some books to learn more about debating. He had also decided to buy some new **clothes**. “I need to look like a proper student now.” he thought.

Suddenly, *Saheer* met a boy who was selling *badam* (**nuts**) in front of the TSC. He looked to be about 10 years old. He was holding a book in his hands, and other books lay **scattered** around him. While selling *badam*, the boy was also reading. *Saheer* became **curious**.

“What is your name?” he asked the boy.

“*Ratan*.” said the boy.

“Do you go to school?” *Saheer* **inquired**.

“No, not at all,” *Ratan* replied **sadly**.

Saheer bought some *badam* from *Ratan* and chatted some more with him. *Ratan* began to share more of his sad story with *Saheer*.

“I used to go to school...” *Ratan* began, “...back when I was six years old.” He explained that his teachers had said he was a brilliant student. At that time, his father had been a shopkeeper, who always **encouraged** and **motivated** *Ratan* to study well. *Ratan*’s father often bought books for his son, even though they were quite poor.



Suddenly, *Ratan's* life changed. His father died and the family became helpless. *Ratan* had two younger sisters, and with his father's death, his mother's sufferings knew no **bounds**. At that point, *Ratan* had to leave school to **earn** money to help support his family. He started selling *badam* and his mother took a **job** as a **cleaner** in an office. However, *Ratan* had a passion for books. He continued to read as much as he could, trying to teach himself, little by little, as he read, but still he longed to go to school again. At night, after everyone in the house went to sleep, he would cry silently and **hide** his tears from his mother's eyes.

Ratan's story gave *Saheer* new **insight**. He decided to do something to bring a smile to *Ratan's* face. Upon hearing *Ratan's* sad story, *Saheer's* dream changed. That very **afternoon**, he made a new plan. He decided to teach *Ratan* for one hour every day. *Saheer* bought some books and clothes for *Ratan* the next day using the 5000 *taka* his uncle had given him.

Little by little, because of *Saheer's* kind help, *Ratan's* life began to change. His **sadness** was turned around, and instead, he became **extremely** happy. "Now I know my life can become different, **thanks** to you, *Saheer bhai*." he said. "You have given me hope. One day, I will take the university exam too, and one day, I will become a teacher, just like you."

Ratan's happiness pleased *Saheer*. Meeting *Ratan*, and discovering his **thirst** for learning, gave *Sahan* a completely new **vision** for his life. He realised that helping others is the true pathway to happiness. From then on, *Saheer's* dreams changed. He decided to use his knowledge and **skills** to help other underprivileged children. Now, his dream is to find a way to make it possible for every child like *Ratan* to learn, no matter how sad their life has been. Now, his goal is to help their dreams come true, too.

Learning Activities

Vocabulary Lists:

Learn all of the words you do not already know from *the first two lists* below...

1. High Frequency Words from the 2nd 1000 General Service Word List

afternoon	club	imagined	scattered
ahead	collect	immediately	searched
arranged	competition	inquired	shower
asleep	confident	journey	skills
attended	curious	managed	smooth
aunt	delivered	nuts	suddenly
bounds	eagerly	parents	thanks
breakfast	earn	phoned	thirst
busy	encouraged	programme (British English spelling)	tired

checking	exam / examination	program (American English spelling)	tough
cleaner	excited	qualify	uncle
clock	extremely	sad / sadly	warm
clot	hide	sadness	woke

2. High Frequency Words from the Academic Word List

achieved	guidelines	procedures
challenging	insight	published
debate	job	tense
finally	motivated	vision
goal	orientation	

3. Do you know the meaning of the words and expressions below? These are not high frequency, or common, words in English, so **only learn these words and expressions if you already know ALL of the words in the two lists above, very well.**

accomplishment	freshers (freshmen)	senior
amazed	hospitality	shopkeeper
banging	huge	stared
brilliant	longed	sufferings
campus	memorable	token
chatted	nervous	traffic
countryside	passion	underprivileged
debater	pathway	website
delicious	scored	

4. Comprehension Question

- What does “*He was up against some tough competition*” mean? (par. 1)
- Go back and look at paragraph two again. Find the word 'content'. Provide a synonym (a word with a similar meaning) for ‘*content*’. You should also think about how to **say** this word correctly. Check a dictionary to find out where the word is stressed. Is it... **content** or **content**?
- Why did *Ratan* continue to read so much after he had left school?
- Did *Saheer* buy any new clothes with the money his uncle gave him? Explain your answer.

- e. In what way did *Ratan*'s dream change? In what way did *Saheer*'s dream change?

5. Critical Thinking Questions

These questions require learners to use Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) (The skills of analysing, applying, evaluating and creating are based on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy of Cognitive Objectives. (See...<https://tlc.iitm.ac.in/PDF/Blooms%20Tax.pdf>).

They are useful for small group or pair discussions, when you want learners to think more deeply about the ideas in the reading, as they go beyond comprehension and recall only. If time is limited, tell your learners to choose one or two of the questions they find most interesting, and discuss only those.

Alternatively, the questions could be used as ideas for writing. If you use these ideas for a writing task, make sure your learners have the chance to exchange their writing with each other and to talk with, and ask questions of their partners about the opinions they have expressed. The exchange of ideas will enrich their understanding, and expose them to a wider range of ideas.

Questions:

1. **Applying:** Are you a university student, or do you hope to become a university student in the future? Which university do you attend or plan to attend? Why did you make this choice? In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge that university students face, these days? If you do not plan to go to university, explain what you may do instead. Give some reasons for your answer.
2. **Applying:** What is your biggest dream? What do you need to do to achieve your dream? What challenges or problems might stand in your way? How can you overcome these?
3. **Evaluating:** These days, many university students are finding it difficult to get a job near their home after they complete their studies. In fact, many decide to go abroad in order to get a job. Do you think a graduate should be willing to leave their country in order to find work in their field after they complete their education? Why/Why not? If you had to work outside your own country, where would you choose to work, and why? How long would you stay away? Permanently, or just for a few years? Why?
4. **Evaluating:** In your opinion, how important is it to use your education to help other people less fortunate than yourself? Give several reasons for your answer, and provide examples to support your argument.

5. **Analysing:** What would be some key differences between being a student at a university or being a student at a technical college or polytechnic? In what way would your experiences as a student be similar?
6. **Creating:** If you were given the responsibility to teach another person, what would you teach and why? On a piece of loose leaf paper, and writing in English, design a programme of instruction and learning activities for your student for a week using the outline of the timetable below. Explain your timetable to a partner in English, and give reasons for your choices of subjects and activities. Be creative and have some fun with this!

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							