

MARY KOM'S INTERVIEW



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Do you like playing sports? Is playing a sport really important for children? Do you think everyone should participate in sport's activities? Which is your favourite sport? Who is your favourite sportsperson? Can you think of a few names? Do you cheer for India during world cups and championship matches? Do you want to become a sports star yourself? Come! Let us get to know a sports sensation of India, a living legend in the field of boxing.

M. C. Mary Kom is an Indian boxer who has earned many medals, awards, and titles worldwide by playing her favourite sport, Boxing. She has won World Boxing Championships six times. She is unparalleled. She is so magnificent in this sport that she has been nicknamed 'Magnificent Mary'. Do you know Mary Kom continued and completed her secondary schooling from NIOS? Yes! She is one of us. Let us now get to know her.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this lesson, the learner:

- Recognises the genre of interview as a literary text by close reading, and interpreting possible meanings;
- Identifies northeastern India;
- Explains the exceptional qualities like hard work, determination, and dedication;
- Illustrates the accomplishment of sports personnel and their contributions to the nation;
- Composes write ups in expository styles from their own experiences.

Mary Kom's Interview



Notes

- **Underprivileged:** deprived
- **To make ends meet:** earn just enough money to live on
- **Hand-to-mouth:** in poverty
- **Considerate:** careful, not to harm others

2.1 MARY KOM

Mangte Chungneijang Mary Kom is an Indian boxer born (24th November, 1982) to Mr. Mangte Tonpa Kom and Mrs. Saneikham Kom in a village named Sagang in the Churachandpur district of the state of Manipur in India. As per tradition, she was named Chungneijang after her maternal grandmother. Mary Kom was born in an **underprivileged** family of the Kom tribe in Manipur, India. Soon after she was born, her parents moved to a different village **to make ends meet**. Therefore, she was raised in a small village known as Kangathei in Manipur. Her father worked as a tenant farmer to support the family there; it was a **hand-to-mouth situation** for them.

Mary Kom grew up in humble surroundings and was the eldest of the three children. She helped her father in farm-related chores and helped her mother in household chores, along with going to school and playing that she liked the best. She was a good athlete. She participated in all kinds of sports, namely, volleyball, football, athletics, etc. She started training in athletics, but soon her passion for boxing was ignited when boxer Dingko Singh returned to Manipur with a gold medal from the Asian Games in 1998. She was inspired beyond measure, so much so that she enrolled herself for training in boxing without telling her parents.



Fig. : 2.1

This journey to the World Championship was not an easy one for Mary Kom. Her parents and her neighbours rejected the idea of boxing for her initially. Since boxing is considered unsuitable for women by many, Mary Kom hid her passion for boxing from her family. She was a **considerate** daughter. She knew the condition of the

family. She understood that boxing could lead to injuries, and her family did not have the money to treat those injuries. Mary Kom left home to train herself and continued her training and studies at the Sports Authority of India, Imphal, the capital city of Manipur. She began her training in boxing under Coach M. Narjit Singh. Soon the family saw her picture in the newspaper for winning the Manipur State Boxing Championship in 2000. Seeing their daughter's **prolific** performances and innate talent for boxing, they could not continue to disregard her plea to play the game she loved the most. Since then, there was nothing stopping her.

Mary Kom dominated the ring for several years. She took a short break after her marriage when she gave birth to twins in 2007. After having kids, **reinstating** her training regime was not an easy task at all. Still, she came back sturdier than ever. She won a silver medal in 2008 at the Asian Women's Boxing Championship in India, followed by a gold medal in 2008 at the AIBA Women's World Boxing Championship in China, and so on. She went on to **add many feathers to her hat**. Mary Kom never compromises hard work, determination, dedication, and confidence. Be it in the training or the ring. This makes her the perfect role model for the young generation.

LET US UNDERSTAND 2.1

This unit details Mary Kom's background, her journey into boxing, the initial challenges she faced, and her impressive achievements as a boxer. It emphasises her status as a role model for aspiring athletes. She was born in an underprivileged family of the Kom tribe in the village of Sagang in the Churachandpur district of Manipur, India. Her parents moved to the village of Kangathei to make ends meet, where she was raised. Despite facing financial hardships, she pursued her passion for boxing, inspired by Dingko Singh's success. Initially met with resistance from her family and community due to societal norms against women in boxing, Mary Kom persevered and trained secretly. Her dedication and talent eventually won her family's support, and she went on to achieve great success in the sport. Her career included winning medals at Asian and World Championships, even after a break for childbirth, making her an inspiring role model for her unwavering commitment, determination, and confidence.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.1

1. When did Mary Kom get her first Medal for winning boxing championship
 - a) Manipur State Boxing Championship in 2000



Notes

- **Prolific:** abundant
- **Reinstating:** restore to former position or state
- **Add many feathers to her hat:** achievements to be proud of

Mary Kom's Interview



Notes

- b) Asian Women's Boxing Championship in 2008
- c) Women's World Boxing Championship in 2008
- d) Asian Games in 1998

2. Why did Mary Kom's parents reject the idea of her boxing?
3. Why did Mary Kom leave home?
4. What are those attributes Mary Kom never compromises on?

DO YOU KNOW? 2.1

- Northeast in India is the easternmost region of India. It is an integral and imperative part of our country.
- There are eight states in the northeastern part of India. They are Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim.
- The first seven states are landlocked together, and are generally referred to as Seven Sisters. In recent times, Sikkim is also considered a part of the northeastern states of India, making it a total of seven sisters and a brother (just kidding).
- The northeastern region of our country shares its borders with China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan.

LET'S DO 2.1

Match the following northeastern states of India with their capital cities:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------|
| a) Arunachal Pradesh | Gangtok |
| b) Assam | Itanagar |
| c) Manipur | Agartala |
| d) Meghalaya | Kohima |
| e) Mizoram | Shillong |
| f) Nagaland | Aizawl |
| g) Tripura | Imphal |
| h) Sikkim | Dispur |



Fig. : 2.2

2.2 AN INTERVIEW

Mary Kom is a name that has broken all the boundaries. Youths of today can learn from this living legend and be inspired to achieve their dreams. She is one of the many great women leaders of the world. She is a world icon for many who love sports. Sheer faith in herself, unbending hard work, and unshakable determination led Mary Kom to succeed. Let us experience Mary Kom through an interview.

Interviewer: Which is your favourite sport?



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Mary Kom's Interview



Notes

- **Bout:** a wrestling or boxing match

Mary Kom: Since my childhood I have loved sports, especially boxing.

Interviewer: Why did you choose boxing?

Mary Kom: On the suggestion of my athletics coach and the introduction of women's boxing I changed my discipline from athletics to boxing. Boxing was more suited to my physical attributes and what I have always loved to do. I was also inspired to try harder and strive higher by the achievements of Muhammad Ali.

Interviewer: What is the best thing about your profession?

Mary Kom: You have to take a punch in your face, no matter if you win or lose. (laughs)

Interviewer: You have been the only female boxer representing India on many occasions internationally. Did that put any additional pressure on you?

Mary Kom: No, not at all. I was pretty confident about myself. I knew.

Interviewer: What are some of your favourite childhood memories?

Mary Kom: I loved playing in the fields back home and racing with my fellow students on the way to school. Looking back now I realise that belonging to the family of a labourer actually helped to prepare my body for boxing. There were many times when my family didn't have enough food or warm clothing to go around. All this made me physically as well as emotionally tough.

Interviewer: What is the secret behind your success? What is it that you have that other women boxers don't?

Mary Kom: My secret is complete focus and concentration. Whether it's during training or in a **bout**, I never let my attention waver. I also don't stress myself out unnecessarily about the outcome of a match during a competition; I have faith in God and my training. While I do admit that my talent is unique and God-gifted, other boxers can also better their performance by working hard at training, preparation, and strategy. I also have great instinct and attitude. You may call it 'over confidence', but I always believe that I am going to win a match. I know that I can do it and nothing will make me believe otherwise.



Fig. : 2.3

Interviewer: What was going through your mind when you boxed your way into the sixth World Championship title?

Mary Kom: Winning the title was an incredibly emotional event for me. I remember that after I had held up my hand for the win and came down from the ring, I was overwhelmed with emotions. I had won six World Championship titles—all my struggles and hard work had borne fruit. There were so many fans who were rooting for me, many of them had come from **far-flung** places just to see me play; my husband and kids were there too, pride written large on their faces... All of this made me break down in tears.

Interviewer: Tell us about your fitness regime.

Mary Kom: You need to have both mental and physical strength to succeed in this sport. To compete in a **coveted** competition like the World Championship, I not only have to be fit to fight, but also need to have confidence. I don't rely solely on my coaches or my training schedule. I often go that extra mile to achieve the kind of fitness I want. I also rely heavily on my experience and the knowledge that I have gathered over the years.

Interviewer: How do you keep yourself motivated after so many years in the field?

Mary Kom: My successes obviously keep me motivated, but the fact that I am often competing against boxers who are younger than me makes me want to fight harder. The best part is that even if they train vigorously, they can't beat me easily. I can tell that they have a tough time fighting against me.



Notes

- **Far-flung:** distant or remote
- **Coveted:** greatly desired

Mary Kom's Interview



Notes



Fig. : 2.4

Interviewer: You have made history by breaking Katie Taylor's record and equalling Felix Savon's as the most successful boxer in the World Championship. What does that feel like?

Mary Kom: I am very happy that I managed to break the women's record and I am now tied with Felix Savon for the men's record. Winning the World Championship six times is a historic achievement; in fact, winning it even once is no easy task.

Interviewer: We are a nation of 1.3 billion people. Where do you think a change is required to help us win medals that are proportionate with our population?

Mary Kom: I think more and more people should take up sports as a full-time career if we want more gold medals. More corporates should come in and sponsor players so that the players don't have any financial pressure and can just focus on their games.

Interviewer: Do you think interest in boxing in India will ever go beyond the Olympics?

Mary Kom: Yes, I am sure that in a few years boxing will be very popular among everyone in India, all year round.

Interviewer: What's your opinion on the future of Indian boxing?

Mary Kom: The future is very bright and I am sure many more boxers will get medals for us.

Interviewer: Do you have a message for our students?

Mary Kom: Keep trying to achieve your dreams. If it does not happen in the first trial, try the second time, try the third time, try until you achieve what you want. It was the same for me. Especially being a woman, no one believed in me being in a men's game, but I kept trying, as I believed in myself and today, I have achieved what I dreamt of. So never fail to try. Go ahead, nobody can stop you. At the end people will recognise and appreciate you. Have the will, keep fighting and never give up!

LET US UNDERSTAND 2.2

Mary Kom, an inspirational Indian boxer, broke barriers with sheer determination. In this interview, she revealed her passion for boxing, shaped by her coach's advice and Muhammad Ali's influence. Her journey as the sole female Indian boxer internationally didn't deter her. She stressed the importance of focus, belief, and attitude in her success. Winning her sixth World Championship title was an emotional pinnacle. She emphasised the need for mental and physical strength, remaining motivated by the challenge of competing against younger opponents. Mary Kom's record-breaking achievements and hope for Indian sports' future echoed her message to never give up on dreams, especially for women in traditionally male-dominated fields.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.2

1. Why did Mary Kom choose boxing as her sport?
2. What is the secret behind Mary Kom's success?
3. Discuss Mary Kom's fitness regime.
4. What message does Mary Kom have for the young generation?

2.3 ACHIEVEMENTS

M. C. Mary Kom is the most decorated Indian athlete. She has won medals at all eight AIBA World Boxing Championships since its **inception** in 2001 (six golds, one silver, and one bronze). She is currently ranked number 1 in the AIBA world ranking as she is the only female boxer to win the highest number of gold medals, at par with Felix Savon, a Cuban boxer who is the highest-ranked male. Mary Kom is the first and only Indian female boxer to have qualified for the 2012 Summer Olympics held in



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- **Inception:** starting point

Mary Kom's Interview



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- **Trailblazer:** a person who is the first to do something

London. She won a bronze medal competing in the flyweight (51Kg) category. She is the first Indian female boxer to win a gold medal in Asian Games in 2014. And she is also the first Indian female boxer to win a gold medal in the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Mary Kom also holds a groundbreaking record of becoming the only boxer, a six-time Asian Amateur Boxing Champion.



Fig. : 2.5

For her contributions, the Government of India has honoured Mary Kom with several national awards such as Padma Shri (2006), Padma Bhushan (2013), Padma Vibhushan (2020) for sports, and Arjuna Award (2003), and Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna (2009) for being par excellence in boxing. She is also awarded Honorary Doctorate by North-Eastern Hill University (2016) and Kazinanga University (2019). Mary Kom was also nominated as a member of Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament, by the honourable President of India in 2016. We have a gem in the appearance of Mary Kom in our country's collection, who has added too many jewels to count to our nation's pride.

Mary Kom is a **trailblazer** against all odds. Despite coming from a humble background, in a remote location in India, regardless of having to endure numerous hardships, and being a woman, who is interested in a sport usually considered for men, Mary Kom fought against all odds to achieve her dream. She has quietly overcome all obstructions of her life and is unparalleled in the field of boxing. Today, she is a source of inspiration to all the women and men alike in India and abroad. She is the champion of the champions.

Let's have a look at this table showcasing Mary Kom's achievement at a glance:

Olympic Games

Medal	Year	Venue	Category
Bronze	2012	London	Flyweight

World Championships

Medal	Year	Venue	Category
Gold	2002	Antalya	Pinweight
Gold	2005	Podolsk	Pinweight
Gold	2006	New Delhi	Pinweight
Gold	2008	Ningbo City	Pinweight
Gold	2010	Bridgetown	Light flyweight
Gold	2018	New Delhi	Light flyweight
Silver	2001	Scranton	Light flyweight
Bronze	2019	Ulan-Ude	Flyweight



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Fig. : 2.6



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Asian Games

Medal	Year	Venue	Category
Gold	2014	Incheon	Flyweight
Bronze	2010	Guangzhou	Flyweight

Asian Championships

Medal	Year	Venue	Category
Gold	2003	Hisar	Pinweight
Gold	2005	Kaohsiung	Pinweight
Gold	2010	Astana	Pinweight
Gold	2012	Ulaanbaatar	Flyweight
Gold	2017	Ho Chi Minh City	Light flyweight
Silver	2008	Guwahati	Pinweight
Silver	2021	Dubai	Flyweight

Commonwealth Games

Medal	Year	Venue	Category
Gold	2018	Gold Coast	Light flyweight

Asian Indoor Games

Medal	Year	Venue	Category
Gold	2009	Hanoi	Pinweight

LET US UNDERSTAND 2.3

M. C. Mary Kom, India's one of the most decorated athlete, has a stellar boxing career with six golds at AIBA World Boxing Championships, Olympic participation,

Asian Games, and Commonwealth Games gold medals. She holds six Asian Amateur Boxing titles. Recognized with Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, Arjuna Award, and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, she's a member of the Rajya Sabha. Her inspiring journey from a humble background to global acclaim makes her a symbol of determination and achievement, inspiring both men and women in India and beyond. This section also provides a list of the achievements by this living legend.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.3

1. Mary Kom holds a groundbreaking record of becoming the only boxer, _____ in Asian Amateur Boxing Championship.
2. In 2016, North-Eastern Hill University awarded Mary Kom with _____.
3. What challenges did Mary Kom face on her journey to becoming a successful boxer?
4. What is Mary Kom's impact as a role model and inspiration to others?

LET'S DO 2.2

1. Have you watched the Olympics? Do you know how many medals India won in the Summer Olympics 2020? Find out who from India grabbed the gold, silver, and bronze. Also mention the respective sports in which they won the medals.
2. Make a list of the Women Athletes from India.



DO YOU KNOW 2.2

- Mary Kom gave birth to three sons during this journey to the championship. Later on, she and her husband also adopted a girl child.
- Mary has an active voice for cruelty against animals.
- Currently, she runs a coaching institute in her hometown for underprivileged children who are inspired to box.



Notes

Mary Kom's Interview



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- Mary Kom has written an autobiography titled *Unbreakable* (2013).
- Omung Kumar directed the Hindi film titled 'Mary Kom' (2014) which is about the life and achievements of M. C. Mary Kom. Actor Priyanka Chopra plays the titular character in this biographical sports film.

LET'S LEARN



GRAMMAR

The **Simple Present Tense** is used to talk about habitual actions, general truths, and facts. It is formed by using the base form of the verb. For most verbs:

[Subject + Base Verb (+s/es for third person singular)]

- Example:**
- I walk to school every day.
 - The Earth orbits around the sun.
 - Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius.

To form negatives, use “do not” (don't) or “does not” (doesn't):

[Subject + Do/Does + Not + Base Verb]

- Example:**
- They do not like spicy food.
 - She does not like coffee.

To form interrogative sentences, use “do” or “does” at the beginning:

[Do/Does + Subject + Base Verb + ...?]

Example: Do you speak French?

Words often associated with the simple present tense include: always, usually, often, sometimes, rarely, never.

Present Continuous Tense is used to describe actions happening now or around the present moment. It is formed by using the present tense of the verb “to be” (am/are/is) and adding the present participle (verb + -ing).

- Example:**
- a) I am walking to school right now.
 - b) We are studying for the exam.

To form negatives, the structure would be

[Subject + am/is/are + Not + Present Participle+...]

- Example:**
- a) She is not watching TV at the moment.
 - b) They are not working on the project.

To form an interrogative, the structure would be

[Am/Is/Are + Subject + Present Participle + ...?]

- Example:**
- a) Are they playing football now?
 - b) Are you coming to the party?

Words often associated with the present continuous tense include: now, at the moment, currently, right now.

Present Perfect Tense is a verb form that indicates an action that started in the past and has a connection to the present. It is also used for actions completed at an unspecified time in the past as well as while talking about experiences in life.

In case of affirmative sentences it is formed by using the auxiliary verb “have” or “has” (depending on the subject) followed by the past participle of the main verb:

[Subject + Have/Has + Past Participle + Object]

- Examples:**
- a) I have lived in this city for ten years.
 - b) She has travelled extensively.
 - c) I have visited Paris.
 - d) I have just taken a shower.

You must have noticed that the time of the action is not specified, but there is a connection to the present.

Whereas Simple Present tense emphasises regularity or frequency, Present Perfect tense emphasises completion or relevance to the present.

Adverbs that are used with Simple Present tense are ‘often’, ‘always’, ‘usually’.



Notes



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Likewise, adverbs that are used for Present Perfect tense are ‘just’, ‘already’, ‘ever’, ‘never’, ‘recently’.

To form negatives, the structure would be:

[Subject + Have/Has + Not + Past Participle+Object]

- Examples:**
- They have not visited us yet.
 - He has not seen that movie.

To form interrogative, the structure would be:

[Have/Has + Subject + Past Participle+Object?]

- Examples:**
- Have you ever been to Paris?
 - Has she completed the assignment?

Remember to use the Present Perfect Tense when describing experiences, accomplishments, or actions that started in the past but still have relevance or impact in the present.


INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.4

- Put the verb in the correct form — Present Continuous Tense or Simple Present Tense:
 - River Ganga ____ (flow) into the Bay of Bengal.
 - Please turn the tap off. Water _____ (flow) down the drain.
 - The train is never late. It always _____ (leave) on time.
 - There has been an accident. The train _____ (run) late today.
 - Can you drive? I _____ (learn). My father _____ (teach) me.
- Put the verb in the correct form — Present Continuous Tense or Present Perfect Tense:
 - I _____ (finish) my homework already, so I _____ (have) some free time now.

- ii. They _____ (visit) Paris twice this year, and they _____ (plan) to go again next summer.
- iii. She _____ (read) three books since last month, but she _____ (not / read) much this week.
- iv. We _____ (not / be) to that new restaurant yet, but we _____ (hear) good things about it.
- v. He _____ (travel) to many countries in his lifetime, but he _____ (never / visit) Asia before.



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VOCABULARY ENRICHMENT

Words of opposite meaning or **antonyms** can be made with several words by adding prefixes like 'un-', 'im-' and '-in'.

For ex., aware-unaware
 stable-unstable
 mature-immature
 possible-impossible
 tolerant-intolerant



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.5

Add the prefixes 'un' 'im' and 'in' to the following words and fill in the blanks. invited, important, healthy, qualified, perfect, used, visible, answered, partial, proper

1. Harish got poor marks in English because he thought it was an _____ subject and did not study.
2. I do not like to go to dinner at anyone's house, _____.
3. Many medical centres are run by _____ doctors.
4. The magician performed a remarkable trick, making the rabbit temporarily _____ before bringing it back into view.
5. Rohit wrote to Ashok and invited him for a visit, but the letter remained _____.

Mary Kom's Interview



Notes

6. Would you like to wear this sweater? I bought it last year but it has remained _____ so far.
7. I saw a beautiful statue in the shop, but it had a small crack on the base. I decided not to buy an _____ piece.
8. Eating too much fat and sugar is _____.
9. To call an elderly person by his first name is _____.
10. It is the duty of a good teacher to be _____.

LET'S TALK

Just like Mary Kom, even we have role models, who we look up to, don't we? When they achieve great things in life, we are inspired to follow in their footsteps.

So, discuss with your friends about role models and the qualities of that person that inspire you the most.

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

- Nothing is impossible if you believe in yourself.
- Your riches, your background, the place you belong to are all secondary.
- The important thing is your hard work and determination.
- Be confident.
- Eat healthily, sleep timely, and work tirelessly towards achieving your dream.

**TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. When did Mary Kom win a gold medal for the first time in a World Championship? Where and in which category?
2. Where was the Summer Olympics held?
3. What is the name of the coach Mary Kom trained under in Imphal?
4. What made the parents of Mary Kom change their minds and allow her to continue to pursue her dream?

5. What makes Mary Kom the perfect role model for the young generation?
6. Mary Kom is the champion of the champions. Justify this statement with an explanation.
7. Mary Kom is ranked number 1 in the AIBA world ranking. Why?
8. Where did Mary Kom do her schooling?



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

2.1

1. c) Women's World Boxing Championship in 2008
2. because for them boxing was considered unsuitable for women
3. to train herself and continued her training and studies at the Sports Authority of India, Imphal, the capital city of Manipur
4. hard work, determination, dedication, and confidence

2.2

1. On the suggestion of her athletics coach and the introduction of women's boxing, she chose boxing. For her, Boxing was more suited to her physical attributes and what she had always loved to do. She was also inspired by the achievements of Muhammad Ali.
2. The secret behind Mary Kom's success is complete focus and concentration. She also never stresses herself out unnecessarily about the outcome of a match during a competition. She has faith in God and her training.
3. She often goes the extra mile to achieve the kind of fitness she wants. She also relies heavily on her experience and the knowledge that she has gathered over the years.
4. They must keep trying to achieve their dreams until it is achieved. They should have believed in themselves.

2.3

1. a six-time champion



Notes

Mary Kom's Interview



Notes

2. Honorary Doctorate
3. Mary Kom faced challenges such as coming from a humble background, enduring hardships, and breaking gender stereotypes by pursuing a sport typically considered for men.
4. Mary Kom serves as a tremendous source of inspiration to both women and men in India and abroad, breaking barriers and achieving unparalleled success in the field of boxing. She is a champion who defied the odds.

2.4

1.
 - i) flows
 - ii) is flowing
 - iii) leaves
 - iv) is running
 - v) am learning; is teaching
2.
 - i. have finished, have
 - ii. have visited, plan
 - iii. has read, hasn't read
 - iv. haven't been, have heard
 - v. has travelled, has never visited

2.5

1. unimportant
2. uninvited
3. unqualified
4. invisible
5. unanswered
6. unused
7. imperfect
8. unhealthy
9. improper
10. impartial