

Essay on Republic Day (26 January) for students and teachers



“Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom”.

It is with these historic words that Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru welcomed the freedom that India and Indians had earned after decades of struggle and sacrifice. Despite gaining freedom India did not become the great democracy that it now is. It remained a constitutional monarchy with King George VI as its head of state. It is nearly two and a half years later, on 26 January, 1950, when the Constitution of India came into effect that India became the most populous democracy in the world; it is on this day that our nation became the Republic of India. It is this momentous occasion that we celebrate on 26 January each year – India’s Republic Day.

Why Do We Celebrate Republic Day?

The importance of the Republic Day of India goes well beyond the fact that it is one of the three national holidays of the country. It is the day which marks the adoption of the Constitution of India by the people. The pledge in the preamble to our constitution talks of India as a “sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic, republic”. Each of these is an ideal that forms the foundation on which this nation is built. Republic Day reminds us of the elevated values enshrined in this sacred document that we call our Constitution.

The Republic Day is a day of national pride. The grand display of military pride serves as a reminder that the security of our territorial sovereignty comes at the cost of many sacrifices. The development that we achieve each year takes us further ahead on the path that our

freedom fighters had dreamed of. It is a reminder that we may claim with dignity the Fundamental Rights that our Constitution guarantees but at the same time we are also bound to perform the Fundamental Duties that this very Constitution prescribes.

Republic Day Celebrations

Each year we look forward to our Republic Day with great excitement and enthusiasm. The arrival of the President, the unfurling of the flag, the 21 gun salute, the marching regiments, the state tableaux, the performances by school children – each of these leaves us full of pride, each of these lend meaning to our Republic Day. There is, however, much more to the Republic Day celebrations. The President's visit to the Amar Jawan Jyoti at the start of the day is a homage to all those who sacrifice their lives at the altar of patriotism. The gallantry awards awarded on this day are meant to teach us the value of courage and valour. The appearance of young children, recipients of the National Bravery Award, is meant to inspire us into selfless acts.

The Republic Day is also an exercise in direction setting for the country as a whole. We look forward to the Chief Guest – usually a dignitary, a head of state or government from a friendly country. This is of great significance. It tells us of the diplomatic, economic, and military relations between that country and our own. This year we are set to witness an unprecedented occurrence. The heads of 10 South East Asian countries – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam – are set to attend the Republic day celebrations as Chief Guests. It speaks of the great importance that India places on building relationships with other countries in the continent.

Conclusion

When we are asked “What is Republic Day?” we can merely choose to refer to the parade and the fact that it is a national holiday. We can, on the other hand, choose to reflect on the deeper significance of the day, the various conventions that are followed, and the importance of the Constitution which is an all-encompassing document which embraces India's diversity and upholds equality, justice, and liberty.

This year when we talk about our Republic Day let it be from a place of deep personal commitment to the national building process. Our nation may be vast but we are its building blocks and our Republic Day brings with it a reminder to strengthen ourselves and dedicate ourselves to bringing our country its due pride. Let this be our dream, our ambition, and our pledge on 26 January this year.