Hornbill
Textbook in English for Class XI
(Core Course)
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Textbook in English for Class XI
(Core Course)
Foreword

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, recommends that children’s life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy of Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children’s life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.
The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the advisory group in languages, Professor Namwar Singh and the Chief Advisor for this book, Professor R. Amritavalli for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this textbook; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, materials and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinements.

Director

New Delhi

20 December 2005

National Council of Educational Research and Training
About the Book

This textbook for Class XI is based on the English syllabus on the lines suggested by the National Curriculum Framework, 2005. It aims to help learners develop proficiency in English by using language as an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition.

In the Reading Skills section, the texts have been chosen to mirror the kind of serious reading in real life that a school-leaver should be capable of. The prose pieces are drawn from biographies, travelogues, science fiction, art and contemporary expository prose by writers from different parts of the world. Samples from journalistic writing have also been included. The play, placed centrally in the textbook, is on a theme that learners will particularly identify with and is in a lighter vein. The poems relate to universal sentiments and appeal to contemporary sensibilities.

Learners at this stage bring along with them a rich resource of world-view, knowledge and cognitive strategies. Teachers should encourage them to make educated guesses at what they read and help them initially to make sense of the language of the text and subsequently become autonomous readers. The Notes after every Unit help the teacher and learners with strategies for dealing with the particular piece.

The activities suggested draw upon the learners’ multilingual experiences and capacities. Comprehension is addressed at two levels: one of the text itself and the other of how the text relates to the learners’ experience. The vocabulary exercises will sensitise learners to make informed choices of words, while the points of grammar highlighted will help them notice the use of forms. The ‘Things to Do’ section at the end of every unit invites learners to look for other sources of information that will help them deal with learning tasks across the curriculum.

The section on Writing Skills prepares them for the kind of independent writing that a school-leaver will need to engage in for academic as well as real-life purposes. Help has been provided in a step-by-step manner to lead the learners on to make notes, summarise, draft letters and write short essays, paying attention to the form, content and the process of writing.
THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a [SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC] and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;

and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the [unity and integrity of the Nation]:

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
Textbook Development Committee

Chairperson, Advisory Group for Textbooks in Languages
Professor Namwar Singh, formerly Chairman, School of Languages, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Chief Advisor
R. Amritavalli, Professor, English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad

Chief Coordinator
Ram Janma Sharma, Former Professor and Head, Department of Education in Languages, NCERT, New Delhi

Members
Indu Khetarpal, Principal, Salwan Public School, Gurgaon
Malathy Krishnan, Reader, EFLU, Hyderabad
Nasiruddin Khan, Reader (Retd.), NCERT, New Delhi
Rashmi Mishra, PGT (English), Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, P.O. Kalamati, Sambalpur

Member – Coordinator
Meenakshi Khar, Assistant Professor of English, Department of Education in Languages, NCERT, New Delhi
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Effective reading involves

- understanding the text
- talking about the text
- thinking about language
- working with words
- noticing form and patterns.
My grandmother, like everybody’s grandmother, was an old woman. She had been old and wrinkled for the twenty years that I had known her. People said that she had once been young and pretty and had even had a husband, but that was hard to believe. My grandfather’s portrait hung above the mantelpiece in the drawing room. He wore a big turban and loose-fitting clothes. His long, white beard covered the best part of his chest and he looked at least a hundred years old. He did not look the sort of person who would have a wife or children. He looked as if he could only have lots and lots of grandchildren. As for my grandmother being young and pretty, the thought was almost revolting. She often told us of the games she used to play as a child. That seemed quite absurd and undignified on her part and we treated it like the fables of the Prophets she used to tell us.

She had always been short and fat and slightly bent. Her face was a criss-cross of wrinkles running from everywhere to everywhere. No, we were certain she had always been as we had known her. Old, so terribly old that she could not have grown older, and had stayed at the same age for twenty years. She could never have been pretty; but she was always beautiful. She

Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meaning from the context.

- the thought was almost revolting
- a veritable bedlam of chirrupings
- an expanse of pure white serenity
- frivolous rebukes
- a turning-point
- the sagging skins of the dilapidated drum
- accepted her seclusion with resignation
hobbled about the house in spotless white with one hand resting on her waist to balance her stoop and the other telling the beads of her rosary. Her silver locks were scattered untidily over her pale, puckered face, and her lips constantly moved in inaudible prayer. Yes, she was beautiful. She was like the winter landscape in the mountains, an expanse of pure white serenity breathing peace and contentment.

My grandmother and I were good friends. My parents left me with her when they went to live in the city and we were constantly together. She used to wake me up in the morning and get me ready for school. She said her morning prayer in a monotonous sing-song while she bathed and dressed me in the hope that I would listen and get to know it by heart; I listened because I loved her voice but never bothered to learn it. Then she would fetch my wooden slate which she had already washed and plastered with yellow chalk, a tiny earthen ink-pot and a red pen, tie them all in a bundle and hand it to me. After a breakfast of a thick, stale chapatti with a little butter and sugar spread on it, we went to school. She carried several stale chapattis with her for the village dogs.

My grandmother always went to school with me because the school was attached to the temple. The priest taught us the alphabet and the morning prayer. While the children sat in rows on either side of the verandah singing the alphabet or the prayer in a chorus, my grandmother sat inside reading the scriptures. When we had both finished, we would walk back together. This time the village dogs would meet us at the temple door. They followed us to our home growling and fighting with each other for the chapattis we threw to them.

When my parents were comfortably settled in the city, they sent for us. That was a turning-point in our friendship. Although we shared the same room, my grandmother no longer came to school with me. I used to go to an English school in a motor bus. There were no dogs in the streets and she took to feeding sparrows in the courtyard of our city house.

As the years rolled by we saw less of each other. For some time she continued to wake me up and get me ready for school. When I came back she would ask me what the teacher had taught me. I would tell her English words and little things of western science and learning, the law of gravity, Archimedes’ Principle, the world being round, etc. This made her unhappy. She could not help me with my lessons. She did not believe in
the things they taught at the English school and was distressed that there was no teaching about God and the scriptures. One day I announced that we were being given music lessons. She was very disturbed. To her music had lewd associations. It was the monopoly of harlots and beggars and not meant for gentlefolk. She said nothing but her silence meant disapproval. She rarely talked to me after that.

When I went up to University, I was given a room of my own. The common link of friendship was snapped. My grandmother accepted her seclusion with resignation. She rarely left her spinning-wheel to talk to anyone. From sunrise to sunset she sat by her wheel spinning and reciting prayers. Only in the afternoon she relaxed for a while to feed the sparrows. While she sat in the verandah breaking the bread into little bits, hundreds of little birds collected round her creating a veritable bedlam of chirrupings. Some came and perched on her legs, others on her shoulders. Some even sat on her head. She smiled but never shooed them away. It used to be the happiest half-hour of the day for her.

When I decided to go abroad for further studies, I was sure my grandmother would be upset. I would be away for five years, and at her age one could never tell. But my grandmother could. She was not even sentimental. She came to leave me at the railway station but did not talk or show any emotion. Her lips moved in prayer, her mind was lost in prayer. Her fingers were busy telling the beads of her rosary. Silently she kissed my forehead, and when I left I cherished the moist imprint as perhaps the last sign of physical contact between us.

But that was not so. After five years I came back home and was met by her at the station. She did not look a day older. She still had no time for words, and while she clasped me in her arms I could hear her reciting her prayers. Even on the first day of my arrival, her happiest moments were with her sparrows whom she fed longer and with frivolous rebukes.

In the evening a change came over her. She did not pray. She collected the women of the neighbourhood, got an old drum and started to sing. For several hours she thumped the sagging skins of the dilapidated drum and sang of the home-coming of warriors. We had to persuade her to stop to avoid overstraining. That was the first time since I had known her that she did not pray.

The next morning she was taken ill. It was a mild fever and
the doctor told us that it would go. But my grandmother thought differently. She told us that her end was near. She said that, since only a few hours before the close of the last chapter of her life she had omitted to pray, she was not going to waste any more time talking to us.

We protested. But she ignored our protests. She lay peacefully in bed praying and telling her beads. Even before we could suspect, her lips stopped moving and the rosary fell from her lifeless fingers. A peaceful pallor spread on her face and we knew that she was dead.

We lifted her off the bed and, as is customary, laid her on the ground and covered her with a red shroud. After a few hours of mourning we left her alone to make arrangements for her funeral. In the evening we went to her room with a crude stretcher to take her to be cremated. The sun was setting and had lit her room and verandah with a blaze of golden light. We stopped half-way in the courtyard. All over the verandah and in her room right up to where she lay dead and stiff wrapped in the red shroud, thousands of sparrows sat scattered on the floor. There was no chirruping. We felt sorry for the birds and my mother fetched some bread for them. She broke it into little crumbs, the way my grandmother used to, and threw it to them. The sparrows took no notice of the bread. When we carried my grandmother’s corpse off, they flew away quietly. Next morning the sweeper swept the bread crumbs into the dustbin.
3. Three ways in which the author’s grandmother spent her days after he grew up.
4. The odd way in which the author’s grandmother behaved just before she died.
5. The way in which the sparrows expressed their sorrow when the author’s grandmother died.

Talking about the text

Talk to your partner about the following.
1. The author’s grandmother was a religious person. What are the different ways in which we come to know this?
2. Describe the changing relationship between the author and his grandmother. Did their feelings for each other change?
3. Would you agree that the author’s grandmother was a person strong in character? If yes, give instances that show this.
4. Have you known someone like the author’s grandmother? Do you feel the same sense of loss with regard to someone whom you have loved and lost?

Thinking about language

1. Which language do you think the author and his grandmother used while talking to each other?
2. Which language do you use to talk to elderly relatives in your family?
3. How would you say ‘a dilapidated drum’ in your language?
4. Can you think of a song or a poem in your language that talks of homecoming?

Working with words

I. Notice the following uses of the word ‘tell’ in the text.
   1. Her fingers were busy telling the beads of her rosary.
   2. I would tell her English words and little things of Western science and learning.
   3. At her age one could never tell.
   4. She told us that her end was near.
Given below are four different senses of the word ‘tell’. Match the meanings to the uses listed above.

1. make something known to someone in spoken or written words
2. count while reciting
3. be sure
4. give information to somebody

II. Notice the different senses of the word ‘take’.

1. to take to something: to begin to do something as a habit
2. to take ill: to suddenly become ill

Locate these phrases in the text and notice the way they are used.

III. The word ‘hobble’ means to walk with difficulty because the legs and feet are in bad condition.

Tick the words in the box below that also refer to a manner of walking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>haggle</th>
<th>shuffle</th>
<th>stride</th>
<th>ride</th>
<th>waddle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wriggle</td>
<td>paddle</td>
<td>swagger</td>
<td>trudge</td>
<td>slog</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noticing form

Notice the form of the verbs italicised in these sentences.

1. My grandmother was an old woman. She had been old and wrinkled for the twenty years that I had known her. People said that she had once been young and pretty and had even had a husband, but that was hard to believe.

2. When we both had finished we would walk back together.

3. When I came back she would ask me what the teacher had taught me.

4. It was the first time since I had known her that she did not pray.

5. The sun was setting and had lit her room and verandah with a golden light.

These are examples of the past perfect forms of verbs. When we recount things in the distant past we use this form.
Things to do

Talk with your family members about elderly people who you have been intimately connected with and who are not there with you now. Write a short description of someone you liked a lot.

———Notes———

Understanding the text

The tasks cover the entire text and help in summarising the various phases of the autobiographical account and are based on the facts presented.

- Ask the students to read the text silently, paragraph by paragraph, and get a quick oral feedback on what the main points of each are. For example: Para1—description of grandmother and grandfather’s photograph.
- At the end of the unit ask students to answer the comprehension questions first orally and then in writing in point form. For example, when he went to the:
  - village school
  - city school
  - university

Talking about the text

Peer interaction about the text is necessary before students engage in writing tasks. The questions raised in this section elicit subjective responses to the facts in the text and also open up possibilities for relating the events to the reader's own life and establish the universality of the kind of relationship and feelings described in the text.

Thinking about language

The questions here try to:

- make the reader visualise the language that must have been used by the author and his grandmother
- think about their own home language
- find equivalents in their language for English phrases
• relate to songs with emotional import in their own language.

Working with words
Highlight different uses of common words like ‘tell’ and ‘take’; words used for different ways of walking; and semantically-related word groups. You could add to the items by using the dictionary for vocabulary enrichment.

Noticing form
Make students notice the use of the past perfect form of the verb that frequently appear in the text to recount the remote past. You could practise the form with other examples.

Things to do
Relating the topic of the text to the reader’s real-life experience; writing about a person who one holds dear.
A Photograph

Shirley Toulson

The cardboard shows me how it was
When the two girl cousins went paddling,
Each one holding one of my mother’s hands,
And she the big girl — some twelve years or so.
All three stood still to smile through their hair
At the uncle with the camera. A sweet face,
My mother’s, that was before I was born.
And the sea, which appears to have changed less,
Washed their terribly transient feet.

Some twenty — thirty — years later
She’d laugh at the snapshot. “See Betty
And Dolly,” she’d say, “and look how they
Dressed us for the beach.” The sea holiday
Was her past, mine is her laughter. Both wry
With the laboured ease of loss.

Now she’s been dead nearly as many years
As that girl lived. And of this circumstance
There is nothing to say at all.
Its silence silences.

Infer the meanings of the following words from the context.

paddling transient

Now look up the dictionary to see if your inference is right.
Think it out

1. What does the word 'cardboard' denote in the poem? Why has this word been used?
2. What has the camera captured?
3. What has not changed over the years? Does this suggest something to you?
4. The poet’s mother laughed at the snapshot. What did this laugh indicate?
5. What is the meaning of the line “Both wry with the laboured ease of loss.”
6. What does “this circumstance” refer to?
7. The three stanzas depict three different phases. What are they?

———Notes———

Poems are included to heighten students’ sensitivity to literary writing and to appreciate rhythm and sound patterns in language. Follow these steps:

- Read the poem aloud once without the students looking at the poem. Ask them a few general questions.
- Re-read the poem with the students looking at the poem. Ask a few more questions to check comprehension.
- Ask students to read the poem silently and answer the questions given, first orally and then in writing.

- The poem ‘A Photograph’ is placed after ‘The Portrait of a Lady’ because of the thematic relation between the two.
- The questions seek to examine factual and inferential comprehension, establish empathy and draw attention to the structure of the poem and choice of words.
In July 1976, my wife Mary, son Jonathan, 6, daughter Suzanne, 7, and I set sail from Plymouth, England, to duplicate the round-the-world voyage made 200 years earlier by Captain James Cook. For the longest time, Mary and I — a 37-year-old businessman — had dreamt of sailing in the wake of the famous explorer, and for the past 16 years we had spent all our leisure time honing our seafaring skills in British waters.

Our boat Wavewalker, a 23 metre, 30 ton wooden-hulled beauty, had been professionally built, and we had spent months fitting it out and testing it in the roughest weather we could find.

The first leg of our planned three-year, 105,000 kilometre journey passed pleasantly as we sailed down the west coast of Africa to Cape Town. There, before heading east, we took on two crewmen — American Larry Vigil and Swiss Herb Seigler — to help us tackle one of the world’s roughest seas, the southern Indian Ocean.
On our second day out of Cape Town, we began to encounter strong gales. For the next few weeks, they blew continuously. Gales did not worry me; but the size of the waves was alarming — up to 15 metres, as high as our main mast.

December 25 found us 3,500 kilometres east of Cape Town. Despite atrocious weather, we had a wonderful holiday complete with a Christmas tree. New Year’s Day saw no improvement in the weather, but we reasoned that it had to change soon. And it did change — for the worse.

At dawn on January 2, the waves were gigantic. We were sailing with only a small storm jib and were still making eight knots. As the ship rose to the top of each wave we could see endless enormous seas rolling towards us, and the screaming of the wind and spray was painful to the ears. To slow the boat down, we dropped the storm jib and lashed a heavy mooring rope in a loop across the stern. Then we double-lashed everything, went through our life-raft drill, attached lifelines, donned oilskins and life jackets — and waited.

The first indication of impending disaster came at about 6 p.m., with an **ominous silence**. The wind dropped, and the sky immediately grew dark. Then came a growing roar, and an enormous cloud towered aft of the ship. With horror, I realised that it was not a cloud, but a wave like no other I had ever seen. It appeared perfectly vertical and almost twice the height of the other waves, with a frightful breaking crest.

The roar increased to a thunder as the stern moved up the face of the wave, and for a moment I thought we might ride over it. But then a tremendous explosion shook the deck. A torrent of green and white water broke over the ship, my head smashed into the wheel and I was aware of flying overboard and sinking below the waves. I accepted my approaching death, and as I was losing consciousness, I felt quite peaceful.

Unexpectedly, my head popped out of the water. A few metres away, *Wavewalker* was near capsizing, her masts almost horizontal. Then a wave hurled her upright, my lifeline jerked taut, I grabbed the guard rails and sailed through the air into *Wavewalker’s* main boom. Subsequent waves tossed me around the deck like a rag doll. My left ribs cracked; my mouth filled with blood and broken teeth. Somehow, I found the wheel, lined up the stern for the next wave and hung on.

Water, Water, Everywhere. I could feel that the ship had water below, but I dared not abandon the wheel to investigate.
Suddenly, the front hatch was thrown open and Mary appeared. “We’re sinking!” she screamed. “The decks are smashed; we’re full of water.”

“Take the wheel”, I shouted as I scrambled for the hatch. Larry and Herb were pumping like madmen. Broken timbers hung at crazy angles, the whole starboard side bulged inwards; clothes, crockery, charts, tins and toys sloshed about in deep water.

I half-swam, half-crawled into the children’s cabin. “Are you all right?” I asked. “Yes,” they answered from an upper bunk. “But my head hurts a bit,” said Sue, pointing to a big bump above her eyes. I had no time to worry about bumped heads.

After finding a hammer, screws and canvas, I struggled back on deck. With the starboard side bashed open, we were taking water with each wave that broke over us. If I couldn’t make some repairs, we would surely sink.

Somehow I managed to stretch canvas and secure waterproof hatch covers across the gaping holes. Some water continued to stream below, but most of it was now being deflected over the side. More problems arose when our hand pumps started to block up with the debris floating around the cabins and the electric pump short-circuited. The water level rose threateningly. Back on deck I found that our two spare hand pumps had been wrenched overboard — along with the forestay sail, the jib, the dinghies and the main anchor.

Then I remembered we had another electric pump under the chartroom floor. I connected it to an out-pipe, and was thankful to find that it worked.

The night dragged on with an endless, bitterly cold routine of pumping, steering and working the radio. We were getting no replies to our Mayday calls — which was not surprising in this remote corner of the world.

Sue’s head had swollen alarmingly; she had two enormous black eyes, and now she showed us a deep cut on her arm. When I asked why she hadn’t made more of her injuries before this, she replied, “I didn’t want to worry you when you were trying to save us all.”

By morning on January 3, the pumps had the water level sufficiently under control for us to take two hours’ rest in rotation. But we still had a tremendous leak somewhere below the waterline and, on checking, I found that nearly all the boat’s
main rib frames were smashed down to the keel. In fact, there was nothing holding up a whole section of the starboard hull except a few cupboard partitions.

We had survived for 15 hours since the wave hit, but Wavewalker wouldn’t hold together long enough for us to reach Australia. I checked our charts and calculated that there were two small islands a few hundred kilometres to the east. One of them, Ile Amsterdam, was a French scientific base. Our only hope was to reach these **pinpricks in the vast ocean**. But unless the wind and seas abated so we could hoist sail, our chances would be slim indeed. The great wave had put our auxilliary engine out of action.

On January 4, after 36 hours of continuous pumping, we reached the last few centimetres of water. Now, we had only to keep pace with the water still coming in. We could not set any sail on the main mast. Pressure on the rigging would simply pull the damaged section of the hull apart, so we hoisted the storm jib and headed for where I thought the two islands were. Mary found some corned beef and cracker biscuits, and we ate our first meal in almost two days.

But our respite was short-lived. At 4 p.m. black clouds began building up behind us; within the hour the wind was back to 40 knots and the seas were getting higher. The weather continued to deteriorate throughout the night, and by dawn on January 5, our situation was again desperate.

When I went in to comfort the children, Jon asked, “Daddy, are we going to die?” I tried to assure him that we could make it. “But, Daddy,” he went on, “we aren’t afraid of dying if we can all be together — you and Mummy, Sue and I.”

I could find no words with which to respond, but I left the children’s cabin determined to fight the sea with everything I had. To protect the weakened starboard side, I decided to heave-to — with the undamaged port hull facing the oncoming waves, using an improvised sea anchor of heavy nylon rope and two 22 litre plastic barrels of paraffin.

That evening, Mary and I sat together holding hands, as the motion of the ship brought more and more water in through the broken planks. We both felt the end was very near.

But Wavewalker rode out the storm and by the morning of January 6, with the wind easing, I tried to get a reading on the sextant. Back in the chartroom, I worked on wind speeds,
changes of course, drift and current in an effort to calculate our position. The best I could determine was that we were somewhere in 150,000 kilometres of ocean looking for a 65 kilometre-wide island.

While I was thinking, Sue, moving painfully, joined me. The left side of her head was now very swollen and her blackened eyes narrowed to slits. She gave me a card she had made.

On the front she had drawn caricatures of Mary and me with the words: “Here are some funny people. Did they make you laugh? I laughed a lot as well.” Inside was a message: “Oh, how I love you both. So this card is to say thank you and let’s hope for the best.” Somehow we had to make it.

I checked and rechecked my calculations. We had lost our main compass and I was using a spare which had not been corrected for magnetic variation. I made an allowance for this and another estimate of the influence of the westerly currents which flow through this part of the Indian Ocean.

About 2 p.m., I went on deck and asked Larry to steer a course of 185 degrees. If we were lucky, I told him with a conviction I did not feel, he could expect to see the island at about 5 p.m.

Then with a heavy heart, I went below, climbed on my bunk and amazingly, dozed off. When I woke it was 6 p.m., and growing dark. I knew we must have missed the island, and with the sail we had left, we couldn’t hope to beat back into the westerly winds.

At that moment, a tousled head appeared by my bunk. “Can I have a hug?” Jonathan asked. Sue was right behind him.

“Why am I getting a hug now?” I asked.

“Because you are the best daddy in the whole world — and the best captain,” my son replied.

“Not today, Jon, I’m afraid.”

“Why, you must be,” said Sue in a matter-of-fact voice. “You found the island.”

“What!” I shouted.

“It’s out there in front of us,” they chorused, “as big as a battleship.”

I rushed on deck and gazed with relief at the stark outline of Ile Amsterdam. It was only a bleak piece of volcanic rock, with little vegetation — the most beautiful island in the world!
We anchored offshore for the night, and the next morning all 28 inhabitants of the island cheered as they helped us ashore. With land under my feet again, my thoughts were full of Larry and Herbie, cheerful and optimistic under the direst stress, and of Mary, who stayed at the wheel for all those crucial hours. Most of all, I thought of a seven-year-old girl, who did not want us to worry about a head injury (which subsequently took six minor operations to remove a recurring blood clot between skin and skull), and of a six-year-old boy who was not afraid to die.

Understanding the text

1. List the steps taken by the captain
   (i) to protect the ship when rough weather began.
   (ii) to check the flooding of the water in the ship.
2. Describe the mental condition of the voyagers on 4 and 5 January.
3. Describe the shifts in the narration of the events as indicated in the three sections of the text. Give a subtitle to each section.

Talking about the text

Discuss the following questions with your partner.

1. What difference did you notice between the reaction of the adults and the children when faced with danger?
2. How does the story suggest that optimism helps to endure “the direst stress”?
3. What lessons do we learn from such hazardous experiences when we are face-to-face with death?
4. Why do you think people undertake such adventurous expeditions in spite of the risks involved?

Thinking about language

1. We have come across words like ‘gale’ and ‘storm’ in the account. Here are two more words for ‘storm’: typhoon, cyclone. How many words does your language have for ‘storm’?
2. Here are the terms for different kinds of vessels: yacht, boat, canoe, ship, steamer, schooner. Think of similar terms in your language.

3. ‘Catamaran’ is a kind of a boat. Do you know which Indian language this word is derived from? Check the dictionary.

4. Have you heard any boatmen’s songs? What kind of emotions do these songs usually express?

**Working with words**

1. The following words used in the text as ship terminology are also commonly used in another sense. In what contexts would you use the other meaning?

   | knot | stern | boom | hatch | anchor |

2. The following three compound words end in -ship. What does each of them mean?

   | airship | flagship | lightship |

3. The following are the meanings listed in the dictionary against the phrase ‘take on’. In which meaning is it used in the third paragraph of the account:

   - **take on sth:** to begin to have a particular quality or appearance; to assume sth
   - **take sb on:** to employ sb; to engage sb to accept sb as one’s opponent in a game, contest or conflict
   - **take sb/sth on:** to decide to do sth; to allow sth/sb to enter e.g. a bus, plane or ship; to take sth/sb on board

**Things to do**

1. Given on the next page is a picture of a yacht. Label the parts of the yacht using the terms given in the box.
2. Here is some information downloaded from the Internet on Ile Amsterdam. You can view images of the isle if you go online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>South Indian Ocean, between southernmost parts of Australia and South Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latitude and longitude</td>
<td>37 92 S, 77 67 E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sovereignty</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political status notes</td>
<td>Part of French Southern and Antarctic Lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census notes</td>
<td>Meteorological station staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land area in square</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kilometres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Locate Ile Amsterdam on the world map.
This is a first person account of an adventurous ordeal that a family experiences.

Understanding the text

This section deals with factual and global comprehension. Practice is given in describing and noticing text organisation.

Talking about the text

Peer interaction about subjective responses to the text; empathy with and comment on universal experiences; and human behaviour related to risk-taking and adventure.

Thinking about language

- Variety of terms for a particular item in different languages
- English words derived from Indian languages
- Linking language to music (boatmen’s songs)

Working with words

- ‘Ship’ terms as homonyms.
- Compound words with ‘-ship’ with different connotations
- Phrasal verbs

Things to do

- Honing reference skills by finding facts from the Internet, the encyclopedia, and maps
- Exposure to various genres of fact presentation
He was just a teenager when he died. The last heir of a powerful family that had ruled Egypt and its empire for centuries, he was laid to rest laden with gold and eventually forgotten. Since the discovery of his tomb in 1922, the modern world has speculated about what happened to him, with murder being the most extreme possibility. Now, leaving his tomb for the first time in almost 80 years, Tut has undergone a CT scan that offers new clues about his life and death — and provides precise data for an accurate forensic reconstruction of the boyish pharaoh.
An angry wind stirred up ghostly dust devils as King Tut was taken from his resting place in the ancient Egyptian cemetery known as the Valley of the Kings*. Dark-bellied clouds had scudded across the desert sky all day and now were veiling the stars in casket grey. It was 6 p.m. on 5 January 2005. The world’s most famous mummy glided head first into a CT scanner brought here to probe the lingering medical mysteries of this little understood young ruler who died more than 3,300 years ago.

All afternoon the usual line of tourists from around the world had descended into the cramped, rock-cut tomb some 26 feet underground to pay their respects. They gazed at the murals on the walls of the burial chamber and peered at Tut’s gilded face, the most striking feature of his mummy-shaped outer coffin lid. Some visitors read from guidebooks in a whisper. Others stood silently, perhaps pondering Tut’s untimely death in his late teens, or wondering with a shiver if the pharaoh’s curse — death or misfortune falling upon those who disturbed him — was really true.

“The mummy is in very bad condition because of what Carter did in the 1920s,” said Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of Egypt’s Supreme Council of Antiquities, as he leaned over the body for a long first look. Carter—Howard Carter, that is — was the British archaeologist who in 1922 discovered Tut’s tomb after years of futile searching. Its contents, though hastily ransacked in antiquity, were surprisingly complete. They remain the richest royal collection ever found and have become part of the pharaoh’s legend. Stunning artefacts in gold, their eternal brilliance meant to guarantee resurrection, caused a sensation at the time of the discovery — and still get the most attention. But Tut was also buried with everyday things he’d want in the afterlife: board games, a bronze razor, linen undergarments, cases of food and wine.

After months of carefully recording the pharaoh’s funerary treasures, Carter began investigating his three nested coffins. Opening the first, he found a shroud adorned with garlands of willow and olive leaves, wild celery, lotus petals, and cornflowers, the faded evidence of a burial in March or April. When he finally reached the mummy, though, he ran into trouble. The ritual resins had hardened, cementing Tut to the bottom of his solid gold coffin. “No amount of legitimate force could move them,” Carter wrote later. “What was to be done?”

The sun can beat down like a hammer this far south in Egypt, and Carter tried to use it to loosen the resins. For several hours

* See map on next page
AFRICA

ASIA

EGYPT

NEW KINGDOM
During Tutankhamun's reign
(1332-1322 B.C.)

Western Desert

Mediterranean Sea

CYPRUS

LEBANON

SYRIA

ISRAEL

JORDAN

SAUDI ARABIA

NILE

EGYPT

Desert

Luxor
(Thebes)

Desert

Nubian

(map not to scale)
he set the mummy outside in blazing sunshine that heated it to 149 degrees Fahrenheit. Nothing budged. He reported with scientific detachment that “the consolidated material had to be chiselled away from beneath the limbs and trunk before it was possible to raise the king’s remains.”

In his defence, Carter really had little choice. If he hadn’t cut the mummy free, thieves most certainly would have circumvented the guards and ripped it apart to remove the gold. In Tut’s time the royals were fabulously wealthy, and they thought — or hoped — they could take their riches with them. For his journey to the great beyond, King Tut was lavished with glittering goods: precious collars, inlaid necklaces and bracelets, rings, amulets, a ceremonial apron, sandals, sheaths for his fingers and toes, and the now iconic inner coffin and mask — all of pure gold. To separate Tut from his adornments, Carter’s men removed the mummy’s head and severed nearly every major joint. Once they had finished, they reassembled the remains on a layer of sand in a wooden box with padding that concealed the damage, the bed where Tut now rests.

Archaeology has changed substantially in the intervening decades, focusing less on treasure and more on the fascinating details of life and intriguing mysteries of death. It also uses more sophisticated tools, including medical technology. In 1968, more than 40 years after Carter’s discovery, an anatomy professor X-rayed the mummy and revealed a startling fact: beneath the resin that cakes his chest, his breast-bone and front ribs are missing.

Today diagnostic imaging can be done with computed tomography, or CT, by which hundreds of X-rays in cross section are put together like slices of bread to create a three-dimensional virtual body. What more would a CT scan reveal of Tut than the X-ray? And could it answer two of the biggest questions still lingering about him — how did he die, and how old was he at the time of his death?

King Tut’s demise was a big event, even by royal standards. He was the last of his family’s line, and his funeral was the death rattle of a dynasty. But the particulars of his passing away and its aftermath are unclear.

Amenhotep III — Tut’s father or grandfather — was a powerful pharaoh who ruled for almost four decades at the height of the eighteenth dynasty’s golden age. His son Amenhotep IV succeeded him and initiated one of the strangest periods in the history of
ancient Egypt. The new pharaoh promoted the worship of the Aten, the sun disk, changed his name to Akhenaten, or ‘servant of the Aten,’ and moved the religious capital from the old city of Thebes to the new city of Akhetaten, known now as Amarna. He further shocked the country by attacking Amun, a major god, smashing his images and closing his temples. “It must have been a horrific time,” said Ray Johnson, director of the University of Chicago’s research centre in Luxor, the site of ancient Thebes. “The family that had ruled for centuries was coming to an end, and then Akhenaten went a little wacky.”

After Akhenaten’s death, a mysterious ruler named Smenkhkare appeared briefly and exited with hardly a trace. And then a very young Tutankhaten took the throne — King Tut as he’s widely known today. The boy king soon changed his name to Tutankhamun, ‘living image of Amun,’ and oversaw a restoration of the old ways. He reigned for about nine years — and then died unexpectedly.

Regardless of his fame and the speculations about his fate, Tut is one mummy among many in Egypt. How many? No one knows. The Egyptian Mummy Project, which began an inventory in late 2003, has recorded almost 600 so far and is still counting. The next phase: scanning the mummies with a portable CT machine donated by the National Geographic Society and Siemens, its manufacturer. King Tut is one of the first mummies to be scanned — in death, as in life, moving regally ahead of his countrymen.

A CT machine scanned the mummy head to toe, creating 1,700 digital X-ray images in cross section. Tut’s head, scanned in 0.62 millimetre slices to register its intricate structures, takes on eerie detail in the resulting image. With Tut’s entire body similarly recorded, a team of specialists in radiology, forensics, and anatomy began to probe the secrets that the winged goddesses of a gilded burial shrine protected for so long.

The night of the scan, workmen carried Tut from the tomb in his box. Like pallbearers they climbed a ramp and a flight of stairs into the swirling sand outside, then rose on a hydraulic lift into the trailer that held the scanner. Twenty minutes later two men emerged, sprinted for an office nearby, and returned with a pair of white plastic fans. The million-dollar scanner had quit because of sand in a cooler fan. “Curse of the pharaoh,” joked a guard nervously.
Eventually the substitute fans worked well enough to finish the procedure. After checking that no data had been lost, the technicians turned Tut over to the workmen, who carried him back to his tomb. Less than three hours after he was removed from his coffin, the pharaoh again rested in peace where the funerary priests had laid him so long ago.

Back in the trailer a technician pulled up astonishing images of Tut on a computer screen. A grey head took shape from a scattering of pixels, and the technician spun and tilted it in every direction. Neck vertebrae appeared as clearly as in an anatomy class. Other images revealed a hand, several views of the rib cage, and a transection of the skull. But for now the pressure was off. Sitting back in his chair, Zahi Hawass smiled, visibly relieved that nothing had gone seriously wrong. “I didn’t sleep last night, not for a second,” he said. “I was so worried. But now I think I will go and sleep.”
By the time we left the trailer, descending metal stairs to the sandy ground, the wind had stopped. The winter air lay cold and still, like death itself, in this valley of the departed. Just above the entrance to Tut’s tomb stood Orion — the constellation that the ancient Egyptians knew as the soul of Osiris, the god of the afterlife — watching over the boy king.

(Source: National Geographic, Vol 207, No. 6)

Understanding the text

1. Give reasons for the following.
   (i) King Tut’s body has been subjected to repeated scrutiny.
   (ii) Howard Carter’s investigation was resented.
   (iii) Carter had to chisel away the solidified resins to raise the king’s remains.
   (iv) Tut’s body was buried along with gilded treasures.
   (v) The boy king changed his name from Tutankhaten to Tutankhamun.

2. (i) List the deeds that led Ray Johnson to describe Akhenaten as “wacky”.
   (ii) What were the results of the CT scan?
   (iii) List the advances in technology that have improved forensic analysis.
   (iv) Explain the statement, “King Tut is one of the first mummies to be scanned — in death, as in life...”

Talking about the text

Discuss the following in groups of two pairs, each pair in a group taking opposite points of view.

1. Scientific intervention is necessary to unearth buried mysteries.
2. Advanced technology gives us conclusive evidence of past events.
3. Traditions, rituals and funerary practices must be respected.
4. Knowledge about the past is useful to complete our knowledge of the world we live in.
Thinking about language

1. Read the following piece of information from The Encyclopedia of Language by David Crystal.

   Egyptian is now extinct: its history dates from before the third millennium B.C., preserved in many hieroglyphic inscriptions and papyrus manuscripts. Around the second century A.D., it developed into a language known as Coptic. Coptic may still have been used as late as the early nineteenth century and is still used as a religious language by Monophysite Christians in Egypt.

2. What do you think are the reasons for the extinction of languages?

3. Do you think it is important to preserve languages?

4. In what ways do you think we could help prevent the extinction of languages and dialects?

Working with words

1. Given below are some interesting combinations of words. Explain why they have been used together.

   (i) ghostly dust devils  (vi) dark-bellied clouds
   (ii) desert sky  (vii) casket grey
   (iii) stunning artefacts  (viii) eternal brilliance
   (iv) funerary treasures  (ix) ritual resins
   (v) scientific detachment  (x) virtual body

2. Here are some commonly used medical terms. Find out their meanings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CT scan</th>
<th>MRI</th>
<th>tomography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>autopsy</td>
<td>dialysis</td>
<td>ECG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post mortem</td>
<td>angiography</td>
<td>biopsy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Things to do

1. The constellation Orion is associated with the legend of Osiris, the god of the afterlife.
Find out the astronomical descriptions and legends associated with the following.
(i) Ursa Major (Saptarishi mandala)
(ii) Polaris (Dhruva tara)
(iii) Pegasus (Winged horse)
(iv) Sirius (Dog star)
(v) Gemini (Mithuna)

2. Some of the leaves and flowers mentioned in the passage for adorning the dead are willow, olive, celery, lotus, cornflower. Which of these are common in our country?

3. Name some leaves and flowers that are used as adornments in our country.

---Notes---

Understanding the text
Factual comprehension: giving reasons, listing

Talking about the text
Debate on issues raised in the text related to rediscovering history with the help of technology; respect for traditions (reflection on issues)

Thinking about language
Extinction of language and language preservation

Working with words
Understanding adjectival collocations; common medical terms

Things to do
- Relating astronomical facts and legends (across the curriculum)
- Finding out botanical correlates
The Laburnum Top

The Laburnum top is silent, quite still
In the afternoon yellow September sunlight,
A few leaves yellowing, all its seeds fallen.

Till the goldfinch comes, with a twitching chirrup
A suddenness, a startlement, at a branch end.
Then sleek as a lizard, and alert, and abrupt,
She enters the thickness, and a machine starts up
Of chitterings, and a tremor of wings, and trillings —
The whole tree trembles and thrills.
It is the engine of her family.
She stokes it full, then flirts out to a branch-end
Showing her barred face identity mask

Then with eerie delicate whistle-chirrup whisperings
She launches away, towards the infinite

And the laburnum subsides to empty.

laburnum: a short tree with hanging branches, yellow flowers and poisonous seeds

goldfinch: a small singing bird with yellow feathers on its wings

Find out
1. What laburnum is called in your language.
2. Which local bird is like the goldfinch.

Think it out

1. What do you notice about the beginning and the ending of the poem?
2. To what is the bird’s movement compared? What is the basis for the comparison?
3. Why is the image of the engine evoked by the poet?
4. What do you like most about the poem?
5. What does the phrase “her barred face identity mask” mean?

Note down

1. the sound words
2. the movement words
3. the dominant colour in the poem.

List the following

1. Words which describe ‘sleek’, ‘alert’ and ‘abrupt’.
2. Words with the sound ‘ch’ as in ‘chart’ and ‘tr’ as in ‘trembles’ in the poem.
3. Other sounds that occur frequently in the poem.

Thinking about language

Look for some other poem on a bird or a tree in English or any other language.

Try this out

Write four lines in verse form on any tree that you see around you.

This poem has been placed after a text which has references to names
of plants for thematic sequencing.

Understanding the poem

- Glossing of ‘laburnum’ and ‘goldfinch’
- Factual understanding
- Movement of thought and structuring (poetic sensitivity)
- Focus on figures of speech and imagery used (poetic sensitivity)
- Attention to sounds, lexical collocations (poetic sensitivity)

Thinking about language

- Finding equivalents in other languages (multilingualism)
- Relating to thematically similar poems in other languages (multilingualism)
- Attempt at creativity
4. Landscape of the Soul

Nathalie Trouveroy

Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meaning from the context.

- anecdote
- illusionistic likeness
- delicate realism
- conceptual space
- figurative painting

A wonderful old tale is told about the painter Wu Daozi, who lived in the eighth century. His last painting was a landscape commissioned by the Tang Emperor Xuanzong, to decorate a palace wall. The master had hidden his work behind a screen, so only the Emperor would see it. For a long while, the Emperor admired the wonderful scene, discovering forests, high mountains, waterfalls, clouds floating in an immense sky, men on hilly paths, birds in flight. “Look, Sire”, said the painter, “in this cave, at the foot of the mountain, dwells a spirit.” The painter clapped his hands, and the entrance to the cave opened. “The inside is splendid, beyond anything words can convey. Please let me show Your Majesty the way.” The painter entered the cave; but the entrance closed behind him, and before the astonished Emperor could move or utter a word, the painting had vanished from the wall. Not a trace of Wu Daozi’s brush was left — and the artist was never seen again in this world.

Such stories played an important part in China’s classical education. The books of Confucius and Zhuangzi are full of them; they helped the master to guide his disciple in the right direction. Beyond the anecdote, they are deeply revealing of the spirit in which art was considered. Contrast this story — or another famous one about a painter who wouldn’t draw the
eye of a dragon he had painted, for fear it would fly out of the painting — with an old story from my native Flanders that I find most representative of Western painting.

In fifteenth century Antwerp, a master blacksmith called Quinten Metsys fell in love with a painter’s daughter. The father would not accept a son-in-law in such a profession. So Quinten sneaked into the painter’s studio and painted a fly on his latest panel, with such delicate realism that the master tried to swat it away before he realised what had happened. Quinten was immediately admitted as an apprentice into his studio. He married his beloved and went on to become one of the most famous painters of his age. These two stories illustrate what each form of art is trying to achieve: a perfect, illusionistic likeness in Europe, the essence of inner life and spirit in Asia.

In the Chinese story, the Emperor commissions a painting and appreciates its outer appearance. But the artist reveals to him the true meaning of his work. The Emperor may rule over the territory he has conquered, but only the artist knows the way within. “Let me show the Way”, the ‘Dao’, a word that means both the path or the method, and the mysterious works of the Universe. The painting is gone, but the artist has reached his goal — beyond any material appearance.

A classical Chinese landscape is not meant to reproduce an actual view, as would a Western figurative painting. Whereas the European painter wants you to borrow his eyes and look at a particular landscape exactly as he saw it, from a specific angle, the Chinese painter does not choose a single viewpoint. His landscape is not a ‘real’ one, and you can enter it from any point, then travel in it; the artist creates a path for your eyes to travel up and down, then back again, in a leisurely movement. This is even more true in the case of the horizontal scroll, in which the action of slowly opening one section of the painting, then rolling it up to move on to the other, adds a dimension of time which is unknown in any other form of painting. It also requires the active participation of the viewer, who decides at what pace he will travel through the painting — a participation which is physical as well as mental. The Chinese painter does not want you to borrow his eyes; he wants you to enter his mind. The landscape is an inner one, a spiritual and conceptual space.
This concept is expressed as *shanshui*, literally ‘mountain-water’ which used together represent the word ‘landscape’. More than two elements of an image, these represent two complementary poles, reflecting the Daoist view of the universe. The mountain is *Yang* — reaching vertically towards Heaven, stable, warm, and dry in the sun, while the water is *Yin* — horizontal and resting on the earth, fluid, moist and cool. The interaction of *Yin*, the receptive, feminine aspect of universal energy, and its counterpart *Yang*, active and masculine, is of course a fundamental notion of Daoism. What is often overlooked is an essential third element, the Middle Void where their interaction takes place. This can be compared with the yogic practice of *pranayama*; breathe in, retain, breathe out — the suspension of breath is the Void where meditation occurs. The Middle Void is essential — nothing can happen without it; hence the importance of the white, unpainted space in Chinese landscape.

This is also where Man finds a fundamental role. In that space between Heaven and Earth, he becomes the conduit of communication between both poles of the Universe. His presence is essential, even if it’s only suggested; far from being lost or oppressed by the lofty peaks, he is, in Francois Cheng’s wonderful expression, “the eye of the landscape”.

[excerpt from ‘Landscape of the Soul: Ethics and Spirituality in Chinese Painting’, slightly edited]

**Getting Inside ‘Outsider Art’**

When French painter Jean Dubuffet mooted the concept of ‘art brut’ in the 1940s, the art of the untrained visionary was of minority interest. From its almost veiled beginnings, ‘outsider art’ has gradually become the fastest growing area of interest in contemporary art internationally.

This genre is described as the art of those who have ‘no right’ to be artists as they have received no formal training, yet show talent and artistic insight. Their works are a stimulating contrast to a lot of mainstream offerings.

Around the time Dubuffet was propounding his concept, in India “an untutored genius was creating paradise”. Years ago the little patch of jungle that he began clearing to make himself a garden sculpted with stone and recycled material is
known to the world today as the Rock Garden, at Chandigarh.

Its 80-year-old creator-director, Nek Chand, is now hailed as India’s biggest contributor to outsider art. The fiftieth issue (Spring 2005) of Raw Vision, a UK-based magazine pioneer in outsider art publications, features Nek Chand, and his Rock Garden sculpture ‘Women by the Waterfall’ on its anniversary issue’s cover.

The notion of ‘art brut’ or ‘raw art’, was of works that were in their raw state as regards cultural and artistic influences. Anything and everything from a tin to a sink to a broken down car could be material for a work of art, something Nek Chand has taken to dizzying heights. Recognising his art as “an outstanding testimony of the difference a single man can make when he lives his dream”, the Swiss Commission for UNESCO will be honouring him by way of a European exposition of his works. The five-month interactive show, ‘Realm of Nek Chand’, beginning October will be held at leading museums in Switzerland, Belgium, France and Italy. “The biggest reward is walking through the garden and seeing people enjoy my creation,” Nek Chand says.

Brinda Suri

Hindustan Times, 28 August 2005
Understanding the text

1. (i) Contrast the Chinese view of art with the European view with examples.
   (ii) Explain the concept of *shanshui*.

2. (i) What do you understand by the terms 'outsider art' and 'art brut' or 'raw art'?
   (ii) Who was the “untutored genius who created a paradise” and what is the nature of his contribution to art?

Talking about the text

Discuss the following statements in groups of four.

1. “The Emperor may rule over the territory he has conquered, but only the artist knows the way within.”
2. “The landscape is an inner one, a spiritual and conceptual space.”

Thinking about language

1. Find out the correlates of Yin and Yang in other cultures.
2. What is the language spoken in Flanders?

Working with words

I. The following common words are used in more than one sense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>panel</th>
<th>studio</th>
<th>brush</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>essence</td>
<td>material</td>
<td></td>
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Examine the following sets of sentences to find out what the words, ‘panel’ and ‘essence’ mean in different contexts.

1. (i) The masks from Bawa village in Mali look like long *panels* of decorated wood.
   (ii) Judge H. Hobart Grooms told the jury *panel* he had heard the reports.
   (iii) The *panel* is laying the groundwork for an international treaty.
(iv) The glass panels of the window were broken.
(v) Through the many round tables, workshops and panel discussions, a consensus was reached.
(vi) The sink in the hinged panel above the bunk drains into the head.

2. (i) Their repetitive structure must have taught the people around the great composer the essence of music.
(ii) Part of the answer is in the proposition; but the essence is in the meaning.
(iii) The implications of these schools of thought are of practical essence for the teacher.
(iv) They had added vanilla essence to the pudding.

II. Now find five sentences each for the rest of the words to show the different senses in which each of them is used.

Noticing form

- A classical Chinese landscape is not meant to reproduce an actual view, as would a Western figurative painting.
- Whereas the European painter wants you to borrow his eyes and look at a particular landscape exactly as he saw it, from a specific angle, the Chinese painter does not choose a single viewpoint.

The above two examples are ways in which contrast may be expressed. Combine the following sets of ideas to show the contrast between them.

1. (i) European art tries to achieve a perfect, illusionistic likeness.  
   (ii) Asian art tries to capture the essence of inner life and spirit.
2. (i) The Emperor commissions a painting and appreciates its outer appearance.  
   (ii) The artist reveals to him the true meaning of his work.
3. (i) The Emperor may rule over the territory he has conquered.  
   (ii) The artist knows the way within.

Things to do

1. Find out about as many Indian schools of painting as you can. Write a short note on the distinctive features of each school.
2. Find out about experiments in recycling that help in environmental conservation.
A painting by an 86-year old Chinese master has gone under the hammer for a record 30 million yuan, highlighting soaring world interest in Chinese art.

The work by Wu Guanzhong depicting a cluster of colourful parrots sitting on tree branches smashed the previous record price for a Chinese ink painting of 23 million yuan for a twelfth century masterpiece by the Song Dynasty emperor, Huizong. “Wu Guanzhong has successfully melded Chinese and Western artistic traditions,” said Ma Zhefei, marketing manager from China’s Poly Art and Culture Co.
The Voice of the Rain

Walt Whitman

And who art thou? said I to the soft-falling shower,
Which, strange to tell, gave me an answer, as here translated:
I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain,
Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land and the bottomless sea,
Upward to heaven, whence, vaguely form’d, altogether changed, and yet the same,
I descend to lave the droughts, atomies, dust-layers of the globe,
And all that in them without me were seeds only, latent, unborn;
And forever, by day and night, I give back life to my own origin,
And make pure and beautify it;
(For song, issuing from its birth-place, after fulfilment, wandering
Reck’d or unreck’d, duly with love returns.)

- **impalpable**: something that cannot be touched
- **lave**: wash; bathe
- **atomies**: tiny particles
- **latent**: hidden
Think it out

I. 1. There are two voices in the poem. Who do they belong to? Which lines indicate this?
   2. What does the phrase “strange to tell” mean?
   3. There is a parallel drawn between rain and music. Which words indicate this? Explain the similarity between the two.
   4. How is the cyclic movement of rain brought out in the poem? Compare it with what you have learnt in science.
   5. Why are the last two lines put within brackets?
   6. List the pairs of opposites found in the poem.

II. Notice the following sentence patterns.
   1. And who art thou? said I to the soft-falling shower.
   2. I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain.
   3. Eternal I rise
   4. For song... duly with love returns

Rewrite the above sentences in prose.

III. Look for some more poems on the rain and see how this one is different from them.

Notes

This is a nature poem celebrating the coming of the rain.

Understanding the poem

- Voices in the poem
- Sense of the poem
- Relating to the process of rainfall scientifically (across the curriculum)
- Noticing sentence structure in poems
- Comparison with other rain poems
5. The Ailing Planet: the Green Movement’s Role

Nani Palkhivala

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Notice these expressions in the text.
Infer their meaning from the context.

- a holistic and ecological view
- sustainable development
- languish
- ignominious darkness
- inter alia
- decimated
- catastrophic depletion
- transcending concern

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The following article was written by Nani Palkhivala and published in The Indian Express on 24 November 1994. The issues that he raised regarding the declining health of the earth continue to have relevance.

One cannot recall any movement in world history which has gripped the imagination of the entire human race so completely and so rapidly as the Green Movement which started nearly twenty-five years ago. In 1972 the world’s first nationwide Green party was founded in New Zealand. Since then, the movement has not looked back.

We have shifted — one hopes, irrevocably — from the mechanistic view to a holistic and ecological view of the world. It is a shift in human perceptions as revolutionary as
that introduced by Copernicus who taught mankind in the sixteenth century that the earth and the other planets revolved round the sun. For the first time in human history, there is a growing worldwide consciousness that the earth itself is a living organism — an enormous being of which we are parts. It has its own metabolic needs and vital processes which need to be respected and preserved.

The earth’s vital signs reveal a patient in declining health. We have begun to realise our ethical obligations to be good stewards of the planet and responsible trustees of the legacy to future generations.

The concept of sustainable development was popularised in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development. In its report it defined the idea as “Development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”, i.e., without stripping the natural world of resources future generations would need.

In the zoo at Lusaka, Zambia, there is a cage where the notice reads, ‘The world’s most dangerous animal’. Inside the cage there is no animal but a mirror where you see yourself. Thanks to the efforts of a number of agencies in different countries, a new awareness has now dawned upon the most dangerous animal in the world. He has realised the wisdom of shifting from a system based on domination to one based on partnership.

Scientists have catalogued about 1.4 million living species with which mankind shares the earth. Estimates vary widely as regards the still-uncatalogued living species — biologists reckon that about three to a hundred million other living species still languish unnamed in ignominious darkness.

One of the early international commissions which dealt, inter alia, with the question of ecology and environment was the Brandt Commission which had a distinguished Indian as one of its members — Mr L.K. Jha. The First Brandt Report raised the question — “Are we to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing deserts, impoverished landscapes and ailing environment?”

Mr Lester R. Brown in his thoughtful book, The Global Economic Prospect, points out that the earth’s principal biological systems are four — fisheries, forests, grasslands, and croplands — and they form the foundation of the global economic system.
In addition to supplying our food, these four systems provide virtually all the raw materials for industry except minerals and petroleum-derived synthetics. In large areas of the world, human claims on these systems are reaching an unsustainable level, a point where their productivity is being impaired. When this happens, fisheries collapse, forests disappear, grasslands are converted into barren wastelands, and croplands deteriorate. In a protein-conscious and protein-hungry world, over-fishing is common every day. In poor countries, local forests are being decimated in order to procure firewood for cooking. In some places, firewood has become so expensive that “what goes under the pot now costs more than what goes inside it”. Since the tropical forest is, in the words of Dr Myers, “the powerhouse of evolution”, several species of life face extinction as a result of its destruction.

It has been well said that forests precede mankind; deserts follow. The world’s ancient patrimony of tropical forests is now eroding at the rate of forty to fifty million acres a year, and the growing use of dung for burning deprives the soil of an important natural fertiliser. The World Bank estimates that a five-fold increase in the rate of forest planting is needed to cope with the expected fuelwood demand in the year 2000.

James Speth, the President of the World Resources Institute, said the other day, “We were saying that we are losing the forests at an acre a second, but it is much closer to an acre-and-a-half to a second”.

Article 48A of the Constitution of India provides that “the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country”. But what causes endless anguish is the fact that laws are never respected nor enforced in India. (For instance, the Constitution says that casteism, untouchability and bonded labour shall be abolished, but they flourish shamelessly even after forty-four years of the operation of the Constitution.) A recent report of our Parliament’s Estimates Committee has highlighted the near catastrophic depletion of India’s forests over the last four decades. India, according to reliable data, is losing its forests at the rate of 3.7 million acres a year. Large areas, officially designated as forest land, “are already virtually treeless”. The actual loss of forests is estimated to be about eight times the rate indicated by government statistics.
A three-year study using satellites and aerial photography conducted by the United Nations, warns that the environment has deteriorated so badly that it is 'critical' in many of the eighty-eight countries investigated.

There can be no doubt that the growth of world population is one of the strongest factors distorting the future of human society. It took mankind more than a million years to reach the first billion. That was the world population around the year 1800. By the year 1900, a second billion was added, and the twentieth century has added another 3.7 billion. The present world population is estimated at 5.7 billion. Every four days the world population increases by one million.

Fertility falls as incomes rise, education spreads, and health improves. Thus development is the best contraceptive. But development itself may not be possible if the present increase in numbers continues.

The rich get richer, and the poor beget children which condemns them to remain poor. More children does not mean more workers, merely more people without work. It is not suggested that human beings be treated like cattle and compulsorily sterilised. But there is no alternative to voluntary family planning without introducing an element of coercion. The choice is really between control of population and perpetuation of poverty.

The population of India is estimated to be 920 million today — more than the entire populations of Africa and South America put together. No one familiar with the conditions in India would doubt that the hope of the people would die in their hungry hutments unless population control is given topmost priority.

For the first time in human history we see a transcending concern — the survival not just of the people but of the planet. We have begun to take a holistic view of the very basis of our existence. The environmental problem does not necessarily signal our demise, it is our passport for the future. The emerging new world vision has ushered in the Era of Responsibility. It is a holistic view, an ecological view, seeing the world as an integrated whole rather than a dissociated collection of parts.

Industry has a most crucial role to play in this new Era of Responsibility. What a transformation would be effected if
more businessmen shared the view of the Chairman of Du Pont, Mr Edgar S. Woolard who, five years ago, declared himself to be the Company’s “Chief Environmental Officer”. He said, “Our continued existence as a leading manufacturer requires that we excel in environmental performance.”

Of all the statements made by Margaret Thatcher during the years of her Prime Ministership, none has passed so decisively into the current coin of English usage as her felicitous words: “No generation has a freehold on this earth. All we have is a life tenancy — with a full repairing lease”. In the words of Mr Lester Brown, “We have not inherited this earth from our forefathers; we have borrowed it from our children.”

Understanding the text

1. Locate the lines in the text that support the title ‘The Ailing Planet’.
2. What does the notice ‘The world’s most dangerous animal’ at a cage in the zoo at Lusaka, Zambia, signify?
3. How are the earth’s principal biological systems being depleted?
4. Why does the author aver that the growth of world population is one of the strongest factors distorting the future of human society?

Talking about the text

Discuss in groups of four.

1. Laws are never respected nor enforced in India.
2. “Are we to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing deserts, impoverished landscapes and an ailing environment?”
3. “We have not inherited this earth from our forefathers; we have borrowed it from our children”.
4. The problems of overpopulation that directly affect our everyday life.
Thinking about language

The phrase ‘inter alia’ meaning ‘among other things’ is one of the many Latin expressions commonly used in English.

Find out what these Latin phrases mean.

1. prima facie
2. ad hoc
3. in camera
4. ad infinitum
5. mutatis mutandis
6. caveat
7. tabula rasa

Working with words

I. Locate the following phrases in the text and study their connotation.
   1. gripped the imagination of
   2. dawned upon
   3. ushered in
   4. passed into current coin
   5. passport of the future

II. The words ‘grip’, ‘dawn’, ‘usher’, ‘coin’, ‘passport’ have a literal as well as a figurative meaning. Write pairs of sentences using each word in the literal as well as the figurative sense.

Things to do

1. Make posters to highlight the importance of the Green Movement.
2. Maintain a record of the trees cut down and the parks demolished in your area, or any other act that violates the environment. Write to newspapers reporting on any such acts that disturb you.
Notes

Understanding the text
- Environmental issues
- Social issues

Talking about the text
- Contemporary issues
- Envisioning the future

Thinking about language
Latin expressions commonly used

Working with words
- Connotations
- Finding literal and figurative meanings

Things to do
Making children aware of their responsibilities towards the environment
Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meaning from the context.

- remove
- slackers
- muck
- kept in
- got carried away
- sadist
- shrivelled up
- cut

This is an excerpt from The Browning Version*. The scene is set in a school. Frank is young and Crocker-Harris, middle-aged. Both are masters. Taplow is a boy of sixteen who has come in to do extra work for Crocker-Harris. But the latter has not yet arrived, and Frank finds Taplow waiting.

**Frank:** Do I know you?

**Taplow:** No, sir.

**Frank:** What’s your name?

**Taplow:** Taplow.

**Frank:** Taplow! No, I don’t. You’re not a scientist I gather?

**Taplow:** No, sir, I’m still in the lower fifth. I can’t specialise until next term — that’s to say, if I’ve got my remove all right.

**Frank:** Don’t you know if you’ve got your remove?

**Taplow:** No sir, Mr Crocker-Harris doesn’t tell us the results like the other masters.

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*The reference within the play of Robert Browning’s translation of the Greek tragedy, Agamemnon*
FRANK: Why not?

TAPLOW: Well, you know what he’s like, sir.

FRANK: I believe there is a rule that form results should only be announced by the headmaster on the last day of term.

TAPLOW: Yes — but who else pays attention to it — except Mr Crocker-Harris?

FRANK: I don’t, I admit — but that’s no criterion. So you’ve got to wait until tomorrow to know your fate, have you?

TAPLOW: Yes, sir.

FRANK: Supposing the answer is favourable — what then?

TAPLOW: Oh — science, sir, of course.

FRANK: (sadly) Yes. We get all the slackers.

TAPLOW: (protestingly) I’m extremely interested in science, sir.

FRANK: Are you? I’m not. Not, at least, in the science I have to teach.

TAPLOW: Well, anyway, sir, it’s a good deal more exciting than this muck (indicating his book).

FRANK: What is this muck?

TAPLOW: Aeschylus, sir. The Agamemnon.

FRANK: And your considered view is that the Agamemnon is muck?

TAPLOW: Well, no, sir. I don’t think the play is muck — exactly. I suppose, in a way, it’s rather a good plot, really, a wife murdering her husband and all that. I only meant the way it’s taught to us — just a lot of Greek words strung together and fifty lines if you get them wrong.

FRANK: You sound a little bitter, Taplow.

TAPLOW: I am rather, sir.

FRANK: Kept in, eh?

TAPLOW: No, sir. Extra work.

FRANK: Extra work — on the last day of school?
TAPLOW: Yes, sir, and I might be playing golf. You'd think he'd have enough to do anyway himself, considering he's leaving tomorrow for good — but oh no, I missed a day last week when I was ill — so here I am — and look at the weather, sir.

FRANK: Bad luck. Still there's one comfort. You're pretty well certain to get your remove tomorrow for being a good boy in taking extra work.

TAPLOW: Well, I'm not so sure, sir. That would be true of the ordinary masters, all right. They just wouldn't dare not to give a chap a remove after his taking extra work. But those sort of rules don't apply to the Crock — Mr Crocker-Harris. I asked him yesterday outright if he'd given me a remove and do you know what he said, sir?

FRANK: No. What?

TAPLOW: *(imitating a very gentle, rather throaty voice)* "My dear Taplow, I have given you exactly what you deserve. No less; and certainly no more." Do you know sir, I think he may have marked me down, rather than up, for taking extra work. I mean, the man's hardly human. *(He breaks off quickly.)* Sorry, sir. Have I gone too far?

FRANK: Yes. Much too far.

TAPLOW: Sorry, sir. I **got carried away.**

FRANK: Evidently. *(He picks up a newspaper and opens it)* — Er Taplow.

TAPLOW: Yes, sir?

FRANK: What was that Crocker-Harris said to you? Just — er — repeat it, would you?

TAPLOW: *(imitating again)* "My dear Taplow, I have given you exactly what you deserve. No less; and certainly no more."

FRANK: *(looking severe)* Not in the least like him. Read your nice Aeschylus and be quiet.

TAPLOW: *(with dislike)* Aeschylus.
FRANK: Look, what time did Mr Crocker-Harris tell you to be here?

TAPLOW: Six-thirty, sir.

FRANK: Well, he's ten minutes late. Why don't you cut? You could still play golf before lock-up.

TAPLOW: (really shocked) Oh, no, I couldn't cut. Cut the Crock — Mr Crocker-Harris? I shouldn't think it's ever been done in the whole time he's been here. God knows what would happen if I did. He'd probably follow me home, or something...

FRANK: I must admit I envy him the effect he seems to have on you boys in the form. You all seem scared to death of him. What does he do — beat you all, or something?

TAPLOW: Good Lord, no. He's not a sadist, like one or two of the others.

FRANK: I beg your pardon?

TAPLOW: A sadist, sir, is someone who gets pleasure out of giving pain.

FRANK: Indeed? But I think you went on to say that some other masters...

TAPLOW: Well, of course, they are, sir. I won't mention names, but you know them as well as I do. Of course I know most masters think we boys don't understand a thing — but, sir, you're different. You're young — well, comparatively, anyway — and you're science. You must know what sadism is.

FRANK: (after a pause) Good Lord! What are our schools coming to?

TAPLOW: Anyway, the Crock isn't a sadist. That's what I'm saying. He wouldn't be so frightening if he were — because at least it would show he had some feelings. But he hasn't. He's all shrivelled up inside like a nut and he seems to hate people to like him. It's funny, that. I don't know any other master who doesn't like being liked —
And I don't know any boy who doesn't use that for his own purposes.

Well, it's natural sir. But not with the Crock —

Mr Crocker-Harris.

Mr Crocker-Harris. The funny thing is that in spite of everything, I do rather like him. I can't help it. And sometimes I think he sees it and that seems to shrivel him up even more —

I'm sure you're exaggerating.

No, sir. I'm not. In form the other day he made one of his classical jokes. Of course nobody laughed because nobody understood it, myself included. Still, I knew he'd meant it as funny, so I laughed. Out of ordinary common politeness, and feeling a bit sorry for him for having made a poor joke. Now I can't remember what the joke was, but suppose I make it. Now you laugh, sir. (Frank laughs.)

(in a gentle, throaty voice) “Taplow — you laughed at my little joke, I noticed. I must confess that I am pleased at the advance your Latin has made since you so readily have understood what the rest of the form did not. Perhaps, now, you would be good enough to explain it to them, so that they too can share your pleasure”.

The door up right is pushed open and Millie Crocker-Harris enters. She is a thin woman in her late thirties, rather more smartly dressed than the general run of schoolmasters' wives. She is wearing a cape and carries a shopping basket. She closes the door and then stands by the screen watching Taplow and Frank. It is a few seconds before they notice her.

Come along, Taplow (moves slowly above the desk). Do not be so selfish as to keep a good joke to yourself. Tell the others... (He breaks off suddenly, noticing Millie.) Oh Lord!
Frank turns quickly, and seems infinitely relieved at seeing Millie.

**FRANK:** Oh, hullo.

**MILLIE:** (without expression) Hullo. (She comes down to the sideboard and puts her basket on it.)

**TAPLOW:** (moving up to left of Frank; whispering frantically) Do you think she heard?

**FRANK:** (shakes his head comfortably. Millie takes off her cape and hangs it on the hall-stand.) I think she did. She was standing there quite a time.

**TAPLOW:** If she did and she tells him, there goes my remove.

**FRANK:** Nonsense. (He crosses to the fireplace.)

*Millie takes the basket from the sideboard, moves above the table and puts the basket on it.*

**MILLIE:** (to Taplow) Waiting for my husband?

**TAPLOW:** (moving down left of the table) Er-yes.

**MILLIE:** He's at the Bursar's and might be there quite a time. If I were you I'd go.

**TAPLOW:** (doubtfully) He said most particularly I was to come.

**MILLIE:** Well, why don't you run away for a quarter of an hour and come back? (She unpacks some things from the basket.)

**TAPLOW:** Supposing he gets here before me?

**MILLIE:** (smiling) I'll take the blame. (She takes a prescription out of the basket.) I tell you what — you can do a job for him. Take this prescription to the chemist and get it made up.

**TAPLOW:** All right, Mrs Crocker-Harris. (He crosses towards the door up right.)
Understanding the text

1. Comment on the attitude shown by Taplow towards Crocker-Harris.
2. Does Frank seem to encourage Taplow’s comments on Crocker-Harris?
3. What do you gather about Crocker-Harris from the play?

Talking about the text

Discuss with your partners
1. Talking about teachers among friends.
2. The manner you adopt when you talk about a teacher to other teachers.
3. Reading plays is more interesting than studying science.

Working with words

A sadist is a person who gets pleasure out of giving pain to others.
Given below are some dictionary definitions of certain kinds of persons. Find out the words that fit these descriptions.
1. A person who considers it very important that things should be correct or genuine e.g. in the use of language or in the arts: P...
2. A person who believes that war and violence are wrong and will not fight in a war: P...
3. A person who believes that nothing really exists: N...
4. A person who is always hopeful and expects the best in all things: O...
5. A person who follows generally accepted norms of behaviour: C...
6. A person who believes that material possessions are all that matter in life: M...

Things to do

Based on the text enact your own version of the play. Work in pairs.
After the students have read the play silently by themselves, ask them to take on the roles of the three characters and read their parts aloud.

Understanding the text

Global comprehension

Talking about the text

- Speaking to each other about something that most students do: commenting on their teachers (To teachers — take this in a spirit of good humour)
- Reflecting on how we talk about others in their absence
- Science and Literature: the dichotomy

Working with words

Common terms used for people with particular behaviour patterns or beliefs, taking off from the text with the word ‘sadist’.

Things to do

Instead of conventional role-play involving reading out or enacting the original text, students are encouraged to make their own versions of the play based on the same content (creativity, fun and authenticity).
When did my childhood go?
Was it the day I ceased to be eleven,
Was it the time I realised that Hell and Heaven,
Could not be found in Geography,
And therefore could not be,
Was that the day!

When did my childhood go?
Was it the time I realised that adults were not all they seemed to be,
They talked of love and preached of love,
But did not act so lovingly,
Was that the day!

When did my childhood go?
Was it when I found my mind was really mine,
To use whichever way I choose,
Producing thoughts that were not those of other people
But my own, and mine alone
Was that the day!

Where did my childhood go?
It went to some forgotten place,
That’s hidden in an infant’s face,
That’s all I know.
Think it out

1. Identify the stanza that talks of each of the following.

| individuality | rationalism | hypocrisy |

2. What according to the poem is involved in the process of growing up?

3. What is the poet’s feeling towards childhood?

4. Which do you think are the most poetic lines? Why?

Notes

Understanding the poem

Questions are based on

- Thematic comprehension
- Reflection on theme
- Poetic sensibility
Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meaning from the context.

- blow-by-blow account
- morale booster
- relegated to
- political acumen
- de facto
- astute
- doctored accounts
- gave vent to

The Jijamata Express sped along the Pune-Bombay* route considerably faster than the Deccan Queen. There were no industrial townships outside Pune. The first stop, Lonavala, came in 40 minutes. The ghat section that followed was no different from what he knew. The train stopped at Karjat only briefly and went on at even greater speed. It roared through Kalyan.

Meanwhile, the racing mind of Professor Gaitonde had arrived at a plan of action in Bombay. Indeed, as a historian he felt he should have thought of it sooner. He would go to a big library and browse through history books. That was the surest way of finding out how the present state of affairs was reached. He also planned eventually to return to Pune and have a long talk with Rajendra Deshpande, who would surely help him understand what had happened.

That is, assuming that in this world there existed someone called Rajendra Deshpande!

The train stopped beyond the long tunnel. It was a small station called Sarhad. An Anglo-Indian in uniform went through the train checking permits.

The present story is an adapted version. The original text of the story can be consulted on the NCERT website: www.ncert.nic.in

* Now known as Mumbai
“This is where the British Raj begins. You are going for the first time, I presume?” Khan Sahib asked.

“Yes.” The reply was factually correct. Gangadharpant had not been to this Bombay before. He ventured a question: “And, Khan Sahib, how will you go to Peshawar?”

“This train goes to the Victoria Terminus*. I will take the Frontier Mail tonight out of Central.”

“How far does it go? By what route?”

“Bombay to Delhi, then to Lahore and then Peshawar. A long journey. I will reach Peshawar the day after tomorrow.”

Thereafter, Khan Sahib spoke a lot about his business and Gangadharpant was a willing listener. For, in that way, he was able to get some flavour of life in this India that was so different.

The train now passed through the suburban rail traffic. The blue carriages carried the letters, GBMR, on the side.

“Greater Bombay Metropolitan Railway,” explained Khan Sahib. “See the tiny Union Jack painted on each carriage? A gentle reminder that we are in British territory.”

The train began to slow down beyond Dadar and stopped only at its destination, Victoria Terminus. The station looked remarkably neat and clean. The staff was mostly made up of Anglo-Indians and Parsees along with a handful of British officers.

As he emerged from the station, Gangadharpant found himself facing an imposing building. The letters on it proclaimed its identity to those who did not know this Bombay landmark:

EAST INDIA HOUSE HEADQUARTERS OF
THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

Prepared as he was for many shocks, Professor Gaitonde had not expected this. The East India Company had been wound up shortly after the events of 1857 — at least, that is what history books said. Yet, here it was, not only alive but flourishing. So, history had taken a different turn, perhaps before 1857. How and when had it happened? He had to find out.

As he walked along Hornby Road, as it was called, he found a different set of shops and office buildings. There was no Handloom House building. Instead, there were Boots and Woolworth departmental stores, imposing offices of Lloyds, Barclays and other British banks, as in a typical high street of a town in England.

* Now known as Chattrapati Shivaji Terminus
He turned right along Home Street and entered Forbes building.

“I wish to meet Mr Vinay Gaitonde, please,” he said to the English receptionist.

She searched through the telephone list, the staff list and then through the directory of employees of all the branches of the firm. She shook her head and said, “I am afraid I can’t find anyone of that name either here or in any of our branches. Are you sure he works here?”

This was a blow, not totally unexpected. If he himself were dead in this world, what guarantee had he that his son would be alive? Indeed, he may not even have been born!

He thanked the girl politely and came out. It was characteristic of him not to worry about where he would stay. His main concern was to make his way to the library of the Asiatic Society to solve the riddle of history. Grabbing a quick lunch at a restaurant, he made his way to the Town Hall.

Yes, to his relief, the Town Hall was there, and it did house the library. He entered the reading room and asked for a list of history books including his own.

His five volumes duly arrived on his table. He started from the beginning. Volume one took the history up to the period of Ashoka, volume two up to Samudragupta, volume three up to Mohammad Ghori and volume four up to the death of Aurangzeb. Up to this period history was as he knew it. The change evidently had occurred in the last volume.

Reading volume five from both ends inwards, Gangadharpant finally converged on the precise moment where history had taken a different turn.

That page in the book described the Battle of Panipat, and it mentioned that the Marathas won it handsomely. Abdali was routed and he was chased back to Kabul by the triumphant Maratha army led by Sadashivrao Bhau and his nephew, the young Vishwasrao.

The book did not go into a blow-by-blow account of the battle itself. Rather, it elaborated in detail its consequences for the power struggle in India. Gangadharpant read through the account avidly. The style of writing was unmistakably his, yet he was reading the account for the first time!
Their victory in the battle was not only a great morale booster to the Marathas but it also established their supremacy in northern India. The East India Company, which had been watching these developments from the sidelines, got the message and temporarily shelved its expansionist programme.

For the Peshwas the immediate result was an increase in the influence of Bhausaheb and Vishwasrao who eventfully succeeded his father in 1780 A.D. The trouble-maker, Dadasaheb, was relegated to the background and he eventually retired from state politics.

To its dismay, the East India Company met its match in the new Maratha ruler, Vishwasrao. He and his brother, Madhavrao, combined political acumen with valour and systematically expanded their influence all over India. The Company was reduced to pockets of influence near Bombay, Calcutta* and Madras†, just like its European rivals, the Portuguese and the French.

For political reasons, the Peshwas kept the puppet Mughal regime alive in Delhi. In the nineteenth century these de facto rulers from Pune were astute enough to recognise the importance of the technological age dawning in Europe. They set up their own centres for science and technology. Here, the East India Company saw another opportunity to extend its influence. It offered aid and experts. They were accepted only to make the local centres self-sufficient.

The twentieth century brought about further changes inspired by the West. India moved towards a democracy. By then, the Peshwas had lost their enterprise and they were gradually replaced by democratically elected bodies. The Sultanate at Delhi survived even this transition, largely because it wielded no real influence. The Shahenshah of Delhi was no more than a figurehead to rubber-stamp the ‘recommendations’ made by the central parliament.

As he read on, Gangadharpant began to appreciate the India he had seen. It was a country that had not been subjected to slavery for the white man; it had learnt to stand on its feet and knew what self-respect was. From a position of strength and for purely commercial reasons, it had allowed the British to retain

* Now known as Kolkata
† Now known as Chennai
Bombay as the sole outpost on the subcontinent. That lease was to expire in the year 2001, according to a treaty of 1908.

Gangadharpant could not help comparing the country he knew with what he was witnessing around him.

But, at the same time, he felt that his investigations were incomplete. How did the Marathas win the battle? To find the answer he must look for accounts of the battle itself.

He went through the books and journals before him. At last, among the books he found one that gave him the clue. It was Bhausahebanchi Bakhar.

Although he seldom relied on the Bakhars for historical evidence, he found them entertaining to read. Sometimes, buried in the graphic but doctored accounts, he could spot the germ of truth. He found one now in a three-line account of how close Vishwasrao had come to being killed:

...And then Vishwasrao guided his horse to the melee where the elite troops were fighting and he attacked them. And God was merciful. A shot brushed past his ear. Even the difference of a til (sesame) would have led to his death.

At eight o’clock the librarian politely reminded the professor that the library was closing for the day. Gangadharpant emerged from his thoughts. Looking around he noticed that he was the only reader left in that magnificent hall.

“I beg your pardon, sir! May I request you to keep these books here for my use tomorrow morning? By the way, when do you open?”

“At eight o’clock, sir.” The librarian smiled. Here was a user and researcher right after his heart.

As the professor left the table he shoved some notes into his right pocket. Absent-mindedly, he also shoved the Bakhar into his left pocket.

He found a guest house to stay in and had a frugal meal. He then set out for a stroll towards the Azad Maidan.

In the maidan he found a throng moving towards a pandal. So, a lecture was to take place. Force of habit took Professor Gaitonde towards the pandal. The lecture was in progress, although people kept coming and going. But Professor Gaitonde was not looking at the audience. He was staring at the platform
as if mesmerised. There was a table and a chair but the latter was unoccupied.

The presidential chair unoccupied! The sight stirred him to the depths. Like a piece of iron attracted to a magnet, he swiftly moved towards the chair.

The speaker stopped in mid-sentence, too shocked to continue. But the audience soon found voice.

“Vacate the chair!”

“This lecture series has no chairperson...”

“Away from the platform, mister!”

“The chair is symbolic, don’t you know?”

What nonsense! Whoever heard of a public lecture without a presiding dignitary? Professor Gaitonde went to the mike and gave vent to his views. “Ladies and gentlemen, an unchaired lecture is like Shakespeare’s Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. Let me tell you...”

But the audience was in no mood to listen. “Tell us nothing. We are sick of remarks from the chair, of vote of thanks, of long introductions.”

“We only want to listen to the speaker...”

“We abolished the old customs long ago...”

“Keep the platform empty, please...”

But Gangadharpant had the experience of speaking at 999 meetings and had faced the Pune audience at its most hostile. He kept on talking.

He soon became a target for a shower of tomatoes, eggs and other objects. But he kept on trying valiantly to correct this sacrilege. Finally, the audience swarmed to the stage to eject him bodily.

And, in the crowd Gangadharpant was nowhere to be seen.

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“That is all I have to tell, Rajendra. All I know is that I was found in the Azad Maidan in the morning. But I was back in the world I am familiar with. Now, where exactly did I spend those two days when I was absent from here?”

Rajendra was dumbfounded by the narrative. It took him a while to reply.

“Professor, before, just prior to your collision with the truck, what were you doing?” Rajendra asked.
“I was thinking of the catastrophe theory and its implications for history.”
“Right! I thought so!” Rajendra smiled.
“Don’t smile smugly. In case you think that it was just my mind playing tricks and my imagination running amok, look at this.”
And, triumphantly, Professor Gaitonde produced his vital piece of evidence: a page torn out of a book.
Rajendra read the text on the printed page and his face underwent a change. Gone was the smile and in its place came a grave expression. He was visibly moved.
Gangadharpant pressed home his advantage. “I had inadvertently slipped the Bakhar in my pocket as I left the library. I discovered my error when I was paying for my meal. I had intended to return it the next morning. But it seems that in the melee of Azad Maidan, the book was lost; only this torn-off page remained. And, luckily for me, the page contains vital evidence.”
Rajendra again read the page. It described how Vishwasrao narrowly missed the bullet; and how that event, taken as an omen by the Maratha army, turned the tide in their favour.
“Now look at this.” Gangadharpant produced his own copy of Bhausahebanchi Bakhar, opened at the relevant page. The account ran thus:

...And then Vishwasrao guided his horse to the melee where the elite troops were fighting, and he attacked them. And God expressed His displeasure. He was hit by the bullet.

“Professor Gaitonde, you have given me food for thought. Until I saw this material evidence, I had simply put your experience down to fantasy. But facts can be stranger than fantasies, as I am beginning to realise.”
“Facts? What are the facts? I am dying to know!” Professor Gaitonde said.

Rajendra motioned him to silence and started pacing the room, obviously under great mental strain. Finally, he turned around and said, “Professor Gaitonde, I will try to rationalise your experience on the basis of two scientific theories as known today. Whether I succeed or not in convincing you of the facts, only you can judge — for you have indeed passed through a fantastic experience: or, more correctly, a catastrophic experience!”
“Please continue, Rajendra! I am all ears,” Professor Gaitonde replied. Rajendra continued pacing as he talked.

“You have heard a lot about the catastrophe theory at that seminar. Let us apply it to the Battle of Panipat. Wars fought face to face on open grounds offer excellent examples of this theory. The Maratha army was facing Abdali’s troops on the field of Panipat. There was no great disparity between the latter’s troops and the opposing forces. Their armour was comparable. So, a lot depended on the leadership and the morale of the troops. The juncture at which Vishwasrao, the son of and heir to the Peshwa, was killed proved to be the turning point. As history has it, his uncle, Bhausaheb, rushed into the melee and was never seen again. Whether he was killed in battle or survived is not known. But for the troops at that particular moment, that blow of losing their leaders was crucial. They lost their morale and fighting spirit. There followed an utter rout.

“Exactly, Professor! And what you have shown me on that torn page is the course taken by the battle, when the bullet missed Vishwasrao. A crucial event gone the other way. And its effect on the troops was also the opposite. It boosted their morale and provided just that extra impetus that made all the difference,” Rajendra said.

“Maybe so. Similar statements are made about the Battle of Waterloo, which Napoleon could have won. But we live in a unique world which has a unique history. This idea of ‘it might have been’ is okay for the sake of speculation but not for reality,” Gangadharpant said.

“I take issue with you there. In fact, that brings me to my second point which you may find strange: but please hear me out,” Rajendra said.

Gangadharpant listened expectantly as Rajendra continued. “What do we mean by reality? We experience it directly with our senses or indirectly via instruments. But is it limited to what we see? Does it have other manifestations?

“That reality may not be unique has been found from experiments on very small systems — of atoms and their constituent particles. When dealing with such systems the physicist discovered something startling. The behaviour of these systems cannot be predicted definitively even if all the physical laws governing those systems are known.

“Take an example. I fire an electron from a source. Where will it go? If I fire a bullet from a gun in a given direction at a
given speed, I know where it will be at a later time. But I cannot make such an assertion for the electron. It may be here, there, anywhere. I can at best quote odds for it being found in a specified location at a specified time.”

“The lack of determinism in quantum theory! Even an ignoramus historian like me has heard of it,” Professor Gaitonde said.

“So, imagine many world pictures. In one world the electron is found here, in another it is over there. In yet another it is in a still different location. Once the observer finds where it is, we know which world we are talking about. But all those alternative worlds could exist just the same.” Rajendra paused to marshall his thoughts.

“But is there any contact between those many worlds?” Professor Gaitonde asked.

“Yes and no! Imagine two worlds, for example. In both an electron is orbiting the nucleus of an atom...”

“Like planets around the sun...” Gangadharpant interjected.

“Not quite. We know the precise trajectory of the planet. The electron could be orbiting in any of a large number of specified states. These states may be used to identify the world. In state no.1 we have the electron in a state of higher energy. In state no.2 it is in a state of lower energy. It can make a jump from high to low energy and send out a pulse of radiation. Or a pulse of radiation can knock it out of state no.2 into state no.1. Such transitions are common in microscopic systems. What if it happened on a macroscopic level?” Rajendra said.

“I get you! You are suggesting that I made a transition from one world to another and back again?” Gangadharpant asked.

“Fantastic though it seems, this is the only explanation I can offer. My theory is that catastrophic situations offer radically different alternatives for the world to proceed. It seems that so far as reality is concerned all alternatives are viable but the observer can experience only one of them at a time.

“By making a transition, you were able to experience two worlds although one at a time. The one you live in now and the one where you spent two days. One has the history we know, the other a different history. The separation or bifurcation took place in the Battle of Panipat. You neither travelled to the past nor to the future. You were in the present but experiencing a different world. Of course, by the same token there must be many more different worlds arising out of bifurcations at different points of time.”
As Rajendra concluded, Gangadharpant asked the question that was beginning to bother him most. “But why did I make the transition?”

“If I knew the answer I would solve a great problem. Unfortunately, there are many unsolved questions in science and this is one of them. But that does not stop me from guessing.” Rajendra smiled and proceeded, “You need some interaction to cause a transition. Perhaps, at the time of the collision you were thinking about the catastrophe theory and its role in wars. Maybe you were wondering about the Battle of Panipat. Perhaps, the neurons in your brain acted as a trigger.”

“A good guess. I was indeed wondering what course history would have taken if the result of the battle had gone the other way,” Professor Gaitonde said. “That was going to be the topic of my thousandth presidential address.”

“Now you are in the happy position of recounting your real life experience rather than just speculating,” Rajendra laughed. But Gangadharpant was grave.

“No, Rajendra, my thousandth address was made on the Azad Maidan when I was so rudely interrupted. No. The Professor Gaitonde who disappeared while defending his chair on the platform will now never be seen presiding at another meeting — I have conveyed my regrets to the organisers of the Panipat seminar.”

Understanding the text

I. Tick the statements that are true.
   1. The story is an account of real events.
   2. The story hinges on a particular historical event.
   3. Rajendra Deshpande was a historian.
   4. The places mentioned in the story are all imaginary.
   5. The story tries to relate history to science.

II. Briefly explain the following statements from the text.
   1. “You neither travelled to the past nor the future. You were in the present experiencing a different world.”
   2. “You have passed through a fantastic experience: or more correctly, a catastrophic experience.”
   3. Gangadharpant could not help comparing the country he knew with what he was witnessing around him.
4. “The lack of determinism in quantum theory!”
5. “You need some interaction to cause a transition.”

Talking about the text

1. Discuss the following statements in groups of two pairs, each pair in a group taking opposite points of view.
   (i) A single event may change the course of the history of a nation.
   (ii) Reality is what is directly experienced through the senses.
   (iii) The methods of inquiry of history, science and philosophy are similar.
2. (i) The story is called ‘The Adventure’. Compare it with the adventure described in ‘We’re Not Afraid to Die...’
   (ii) Why do you think Professor Gaitonde decided never to preside over meetings again?

Thinking about language

1. In which language do you think Gangadharpant and Khan Sahib talked to each other? Which language did Gangadharpant use to talk to the English receptionist?
2. In which language do you think Bhausahebanchi Bakhar was written?
3. There is mention of three communities in the story: the Marathas, the Mughals, the Anglo-Indians. Which language do you think they used within their communities and while speaking to the other groups?
4. Do you think that the ruled always adopt the language of the ruler?

Working with words

1. Tick the item that is closest in meaning to the following phrases.
   1. to take issue with
      (i) to accept
      (ii) to discuss
      (iii) to disagree
      (iv) to add
2. to give vent to
   (i) to express
   (ii) to emphasise
   (iii) suppress
   (iv) dismiss

3. to stand on one’s feet
   (i) to be physically strong
   (ii) to be independent
   (iii) to stand erect
   (iv) to be successful

4. to be wound up
   (i) to become active
   (ii) to stop operating
   (iii) to be transformed
   (iv) to be destroyed

5. to meet one’s match
   (i) to meet a partner who has similar tastes
   (ii) to meet an opponent
   (iii) to meet someone who is equally able as oneself
   (iv) to meet defeat

II. Distinguish between the following pairs of sentences.

1. (i) He was visibly moved.
   (ii) He was visually impaired.

2. (i) Green and black stripes were used alternately.
   (ii) Green stripes could be used or alternatively black ones.

3. (i) The team played the two matches successfully.
   (ii) The team played two matches successively.

4. (i) The librarian spoke respectfully to the learned scholar.
   (ii) You will find the historian and the scientist in the archaeology and natural science sections of the museum respectively.
Noticing form

The story deals with unreal and hypothetical conditions. Some of the sentences used to express this notion are given below:

1. *If I fire* a bullet from a gun in a given direction at a given speed, I know where it *will be* at a later time.
2. *If I knew* the answer I *would solve* a great problem.
3. *If he himself were* dead in this world, what guarantee had he that his son *would be alive*.
4. What course *would history have taken* if the battle *had gone* the other way?

Notice that in an unreal condition, it is clearly expected that the condition will not be fulfilled.

Things to do

1. Read the following passage on the Catastrophe Theory downloaded from the Internet.

   Originated by the French mathematician, Rene Thom, in the 1960s, catastrophe theory is a special branch of dynamical systems theory. It studies and classifies phenomena characterised by sudden shifts in behaviour arising from small changes in circumstances.

   Catastrophes are bifurcations between different equilibria, or fixed point attractors. Due to their restricted nature, catastrophes can be classified on the basis of how many control parameters are being simultaneously varied. For example, if there are two controls, then one finds the most common type, called a ‘cusp’ catastrophe. If, however, there are more than five controls, there is no classification.

   Catastrophe theory has been applied to a number of different phenomena, such as the stability of ships at sea and their capsizing, bridge collapse, and, with some less convincing success, the fight-or-flight behaviour of animals and prison riots.
II. Look up the Internet or an encyclopedia for information on the following theories.

(i) Quantum theory
(ii) Theory of relativity
(iii) Big Bang theory
(iv) Theory of evolution

---Notes---

Understanding the text
- True/false items to check inferential comprehension
- Explaining statements from the text

Talking about the text
- Discussing approaches of various disciplines to knowledge inquiry (across the curriculum)
- Cross-text reference

Thinking about language
- Inter-community communication through common languages
- Reference to languages of different disciplines
- Political domination and language imposition (discuss)

Working with words
- Idiomatic expressions
- Distinction between frequently misused word forms: respectively/respectfully

Noticing form
Conditional sentences for unreal and hypothetical conditions

Things to do
Finding out about popular scientific theories (real-life reading)
A flawless half-moon floated in a perfect blue sky on the morning we said our goodbyes. Extended banks of cloud like long French loaves glowed pink as the sun emerged to splash the distant mountain tops with a rose-tinted blush. Now that we were leaving Ravu, Lhamo said she wanted to give me a farewell present. One evening I’d told her through Daniel that I was heading towards Mount Kailash to complete the kora, and she’d said that I ought to get some warmer clothes. After ducking back into her tent, she emerged carrying one of the long-sleeved sheepskin coats that all the men wore. Tsetan sized me up as we clambered into his car. “Ah, yes,” he declared, “drokba, sir.”

We took a short cut to get off the Changtang. Tsetan knew a route that would take us south-west, almost directly towards Mount Kailash. It involved crossing several fairly high mountain passes, he said. “But no problem, sir”, he assured us, “if there is no snow.” What was the likelihood of that I asked. “Not knowing, sir, until we get there.”

From the gently rolling hills of Ravu, the short cut took us across vast open plains with nothing in them except a few gazelles.
that would look up from nibbling the arid pastures and frown before bounding away into the void. Further on, where the plains became more stony than grassy, a great herd of wild ass came into view. Tsetan told us we were approaching them long before they appeared. “*Kyang,*” he said, pointing towards a far-off pall of dust. When we drew near, I could see the herd galloping en masse, wheeling and turning in tight formation as if they were practising *manoeuvres* on some predetermined course. Plumes of dust *billowed* into the crisp, clean air.

As hills started to push up once more from the rocky wilderness, we passed solitary *drokbas* tending their flocks. Sometimes men, sometimes women, these well-wrapped figures would pause and stare at our car, occasionally waving as we passed. When the track took us close to their animals, the sheep would take evasive action, veering away from the speeding vehicle.

We passed nomads’ dark tents pitched in splendid isolation, usually with a huge black dog, a Tibetan mastiff, standing guard. These beasts would cock their great big heads when they became aware of our approach and fix us in their sights. As we continued to draw closer, they would explode into action, speeding directly towards us, like a bullet from a gun and nearly as fast.

These shaggy monsters, blacker than the darkest night, usually wore bright red collars and barked furiously with massive jaws. They were completely fearless of our vehicle, shooting straight into our path, causing Tsetan to brake and swerve.
The dog would make chase for a hundred metres or so before easing off, having seen us off the property. It wasn’t difficult to understand why ferocious Tibetan mastiffs became popular in China’s imperial courts as hunting dogs, brought along the Silk Road in ancient times as tribute from Tibet.

By now we could see snow-capped mountains gathering on the horizon. We entered a valley where the river was wide and mostly clogged with ice, brilliant white and glinting in the sunshine. The trail hugged its bank, twisting with the meanders as we gradually gained height and the valley sides closed in.

The turns became sharper and the ride bumpier, Tsetan now in third gear as we continued to climb. The track moved away from the icy river, labouring through steeper slopes that sported big rocks daubed with patches of bright orange lichen. Beneath the rocks, hunks of snow clung on in the near-permanent shade. I felt the pressure building up in my ears, held my nose, snorted and cleared them. We struggled round another tight bend and Tsetan stopped. He had opened his door and jumped out of his seat before I realised what was going on. “Snow,” said Daniel as he too exited the vehicle, letting in a breath of cold air as he did so.

A swathe of the white stuff lay across the track in front of us, stretching for maybe fifteen metres before it petered out and the dirt trail reappeared. The snow continued on either side of us, smoothing the abrupt bank on the upslope side. The bank was too steep for our vehicle to scale, so there was no way round the snow patch. I joined Daniel as Tsetan stepped on to the encrusted snow and began to slither and slide forward, stamping his foot from time to time to ascertain how sturdy it was. I looked at my wristwatch. We were at 5,210 metres above sea level.

The snow didn’t look too deep to me, but the danger wasn’t its depth, Daniel said, so much as its icy top layer. “If we slip off, the car could turn over,” he suggested, as we saw Tsetan grab handfuls of dirt and fling them across the frozen surface. We both pitched in and, when the snow was spread with soil, Daniel and I stayed out of the vehicle to lighten Tsetan’s load. He backed up and drove towards the dirty snow, eased the car on to its icy surface and slowly drove its length without apparent difficulty.

Ten minutes later, we stopped at another blockage. “Not good, sir,” Tsetan announced as he jumped out again to survey the scene. This time he decided to try and drive round the snow.
The slope was steep and studded with major rocks, but somehow Tsetan negotiated them, his four-wheel drive vehicle lurching from one obstacle to the next. In so doing he cut off one of the hairpin bends, regaining the trail further up where the snow had not drifted.

I checked my watch again as we continued to climb in the bright sunshine. We crept past 5,400 metres and my head began to throb horribly. I took gulps from my water bottle, which is supposed to help a rapid ascent.

We finally reached the top of the pass at 5,515 metres. It was marked by a large cairn of rocks festooned with white silk scarves and ragged prayer flags. We all took a turn round the cairn, in a clockwise direction as is the tradition, and Tsetan checked the tyres on his vehicle. He stopped at the petrol tank and partially unscrewed the top, which emitted a loud hiss. The lower atmospheric pressure was allowing the fuel to expand. It sounded dangerous to me. “Maybe, sir,” Tsetan laughed “but no smoking.”

My headache soon cleared as we careered down the other side of the pass. It was two o’clock by the time we stopped for lunch. We ate hot noodles inside a long canvas tent, part of a workcamp erected beside a dry salt lake. The plateau is pockmarked with salt flats and brackish lakes, vestiges of the Tethys Ocean which bordered Tibet before the great continental collision that lifted it skyward. This one was a hive of activity, men with pickaxes and shovels trudging back and forth in their long sheepskin coats and salt-encrusted boots. All wore sunglasses against the glare as a steady stream of blue trucks emerged from the blindingly white lake laden with piles of salt.

By late afternoon we had reached the small town of Hor, back on the main east-west highway that followed the old trade route from Lhasa to Kashmir. Daniel, who was returning to Lhasa, found a ride in a truck so Tsetan and I bade him farewell outside a tyre-repair shop. We had suffered two punctures in quick succession on the drive down from the salt lake and Tsetan was eager to have them fixed since they left him with no spares. Besides, the second tyre he’d changed had been replaced by one that was as smooth as my bald head.

Hor was a grim, miserable place. There was no vegetation whatsoever, just dust and rocks, liberally scattered with years of accumulated refuse, which was unfortunate given that the town sat on the shore of Lake Manasarovar, Tibet’s most venerated
stretch of water. Ancient Hindu and Buddhist cosmology pinpoints Manasarovar as the source of four great Indian rivers: the Indus, the Ganges, the Sutlej and the Brahmaputra. Actually only the Sutlej flows from the lake, but the headwaters of the others all rise nearby on the flanks of Mount Kailash. We were within striking distance of the great mountain and I was eager to forge ahead.

But I had to wait. Tsetan told me to go and drink some tea in Hor’s only cafe which, like all the other buildings in town, was constructed from badly painted concrete and had three broken windows. The good view of the lake through one of them helped to compensate for the draught.

I was served by a Chinese youth in military uniform who spread the grease around on my table with a filthy rag before bringing me a glass and a thermos of tea.

Half an hour later, Tsetan relieved me from my solitary confinement and we drove past a lot more rocks and rubbish westwards out of town towards Mount Kailash.

My experience in Hor came as a stark contrast to accounts I’d read of earlier travellers’ first encounters with Lake Manasarovar. Ekai Kawaguchi, a Japanese monk who had arrived there in 1900, was so moved by the sanctity of the lake that he burst into tears. A couple of years later, the hallowed waters had a similar effect on Sven Hedin, a Swede who wasn’t prone to sentimental outbursts.

It was dark by the time we finally left again and after 10.30 p.m. we drew up outside a guest house in Darchen for what turned out to be another troubled night. Kicking around in the open-air rubbish dump that passed for the town of Hor had set off my cold once more, though if truth be told it had never quite disappeared with my herbal tea. One of my nostrils was blocked again and as I lay down to sleep, I wasn’t convinced that the other would provide me with sufficient oxygen. My watch told me I was at 4,760 metres. It wasn’t much higher than Ravu, and there I’d been gasping for oxygen several times every night. I’d grown accustomed to these nocturnal disturbances by now, but they still scared me.

Tired and hungry, I started breathing through my mouth. After a while, I switched to single-nostril power which seemed to be admitting enough oxygen but, just as I was drifting off, I woke up abruptly. Something was wrong. My chest felt
strangely heavy and I sat up, a movement that cleared my nasal passages almost instantly and relieved the feeling in my chest. Curious, I thought.

I lay back down and tried again. Same result. I was on the point of disappearing into the land of nod when something told me not to. It must have been those emergency electrical impulses again, but this was not the same as on previous occasions. This time, I wasn’t gasping for breath, I was simply not allowed to go to sleep.

Sitting up once more immediately made me feel better. I could breathe freely and my chest felt fine. But as soon as I lay down, my sinuses filled and my chest was odd. I tried propping myself upright against the wall, but now I couldn’t manage to relax enough to drop off. I couldn’t put my finger on the reason, but I was afraid to go to sleep. A little voice inside me was saying that if I did I might never wake up again. So I stayed awake all night.

Tsetan took me to the Darchen medical college the following morning. The medical college at Darchen was new and looked like a monastery from the outside with a very solid door that led into a large courtyard. We found the consulting room which was dark and cold and occupied by a Tibetan doctor who wore none of the paraphernalia that I’d been expecting. No white coat, he looked like any other Tibetan with a thick pullover and a woolly hat. When I explained my sleepless symptoms and my sudden aversion to lying down, he shot me a few questions while feeling the veins in my wrist.

“It’s a cold,” he said finally through Tsetan. “A cold and the effects of altitude. I’ll give you something for it.”

I asked him if he thought I’d recover enough to be able to do the kora. “Oh yes,” he said, “you’ll be fine.”

I walked out of the medical college clutching a brown envelope stuffed with fifteen screws of paper. I had a five-day course of Tibetan medicine which I started right away. I opened an after-breakfast package and found it contained a brown powder that I had to take with hot water. It tasted just like cinnamon. The contents of the lunchtime and bedtime packages were less obviously identifiable. Both contained small, spherical brown pellets. They looked suspiciously like sheep dung, but of course I took them. That night, after my first full day’s course, I slept very soundly. Like a log, not a dead man.
Once he saw that I was going to live Tsetan left me, to return to Lhasa. As a Buddhist, he told me, he knew that it didn’t really matter if I passed away, but he thought it would be bad for business.

Darchen didn’t look so horrible after a good night’s sleep. It was still dusty, partially derelict and punctuated by heaps of rubble and refuse, but the sun shone brilliantly in a clear blue sky and the outlook across the plain to the south gave me a vision of the Himalayas, commanded by a huge, snow-capped mountain, Gurla Mandhata, with just a wisp of cloud suspended over its summit.

The town had a couple of rudimentary general stores selling Chinese cigarettes, soap and other basic provisions, as well as the usual strings of prayer flags. In front of one, men gathered in the afternoon for a game of pool, the battered table looking supremely incongruous in the open air, while nearby women washed their long hair in the icy water of a narrow brook that babbled down past my guest house. Darchen felt relaxed and unhurried but, for me, it came with a significant drawback. There were no pilgrims.

I’d been told that at the height of the pilgrimage season, the town was bustling with visitors. Many brought their own accommodation, enlarging the settlement round its edges as they set up their tents which spilled down on to the plain. I’d timed my arrival for the beginning of the season, but it seemed I was too early.

One afternoon I sat pondering my options over a glass of tea in Darchen’s only cafe. After a little consideration, I concluded they were severely limited. Clearly I hadn’t made much progress with my self-help programme on positive thinking.

In my defence, it hadn’t been easy with all my sleeping difficulties, but however I looked at it, I could only wait. The pilgrimage trail was well-trodden, but I didn’t fancy doing it alone. The kora was seasonal because parts of the route were liable to blockage by snow. I had no idea whether or not the snow had cleared, but I wasn’t encouraged by the chunks of dirty ice that still clung to the banks of Darchen’s brook. Since Tsetan had left, I hadn’t come across anyone in Darchen with enough English to answer even this most basic question.

Until, that is, I met Norbu. The cafe was small, dark and cavernous, with a long metal stove that ran down the middle. The walls and ceiling were wreathed in sheets of multi-coloured
plastic, of the striped variety— broad blue, red and white—that is made into stout, voluminous shopping bags sold all over China, and in many other countries of Asia as well as Europe. As such, plastic must rate as one of China’s most successful exports along the Silk Road today.

The café had a single window beside which I’d taken up position so that I could see the pages of my notebook. I’d also brought a novel with me to help pass the time.

Norbu saw my book when he came in and asked with a gesture if he could sit opposite me at my rickety table. “You English?” he enquired, after he’d ordered tea. I told him I was, and we struck up a conversation.

I didn’t think he was from those parts because he was wearing a windcheater and metal-rimmed spectacles of a Western style. He was Tibetan, he told me, but worked in Beijing at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in the Institute of Ethnic Literature. I assumed he was on some sort of fieldwork.

“Yes and no,” he said. “I have come to do the kora.” My heart jumped. Norbu had been writing academic papers about the Kailash kora and its importance in various works of Buddhist literature for many years, he told me, but he had never actually done it himself.

When the time came for me to tell him what brought me to Darchen, his eyes lit up. “We could be a team,” he said excitedly. “Two academics who have escaped from the library.” Perhaps my positive-thinking strategy was working after all.

My initial relief at meeting Norbu, who was also staying in the guest house, was tempered by the realisation that he was almost as ill-equipped as I was for the pilgrimage. He kept telling me how fat he was and how hard it was going to be. “Very high up,” he kept reminding me, “so tiresome to walk.” He wasn’t really a practising Buddhist, it transpired, but he had enthusiasm and he was, of course, Tibetan.

Although I’d originally envisaged making the trek in the company of devout believers, on reflection I decided that perhaps Norbu would turn out to be the ideal companion. He suggested we hire some yaks to carry our luggage, which I interpreted as a good sign, and he had no intention of prostrating himself all round the mountain. “Not possible,” he cried, collapsing across the table in hysterical laughter. It wasn’t his style, and anyway his tummy was too big.
Understanding the text

I. Give reasons for the following statements.
1. The article has been titled ‘Silk Road.’
2. Tibetan mastiffs were popular in China’s imperial courts.
3. The author’s experience at Hor was in stark contrast to earlier accounts of the place.
4. The author was disappointed with Darchen.
5. The author thought that his positive thinking strategy worked well after all.

II. Briefly comment on
1. The purpose of the author’s journey to Mount Kailash.
2. The author’s physical condition in Darchen.
3. The author’s meeting with Norbu.
4. Tsetan’s support to the author during the journey.
5. “As a Buddhist, he told me, he knew that it didn’t really matter if I passed away, but he thought it would be bad for business.”

Talking about the text

Discuss in groups of four
1. The sensitive behaviour of hill-folk.
2. The reasons why people willingly undergo the travails of difficult journeys.
3. The accounts of exotic places in legends and the reality.

Thinking about language

1. Notice the kind of English Tsetan uses while talking to the author. How do you think he picked it up?
2. What do the following utterances indicate?
   (i) “I told her, through Daniel …”
   (ii) “It’s a cold,” he said finally through Tsetan.
3. Guess the meaning of the following words.

\[ \text{kora} \quad \text{drokba} \quad \text{kyang} \]

In which language are these words found?

**Working with words**

1. The narrative has many phrases to describe the scenic beauty of the mountainside like:

   A flawless half-moon floated in a perfect blue sky.

   Scan the text to locate other such picturesque phrases.

2. Explain the use of the adjectives in the following phrases.

   (i) shaggy monsters
   (ii) brackish lakes
   (iii) rickety table
   (iv) hairpin bend
   (v) rudimentary general stores

**Noticing form**

1. The account has only a few passive voice sentences. Locate them. In what way does the use of active voice contribute to the style of the narrative.

2. Notice this construction: Tsetan was eager to have them fixed. Write five sentences with a similar structure.

**Things to do**

“The plateau is pockmarked with salt flats and brackish lakes, vestiges of the Tethys Ocean which bordered Tibet before the continental collision that lifted it skyward.”

Given below is an extract from an account of the Tethys Ocean downloaded from the Internet. Go online, key in Tethys Ocean in Google search and you will find exhaustive information on this geological event. You can also consult an encyclopedia.

Today, India, Indonesia and the Indian Ocean cover the area once occupied by the Tethys Ocean. Turkey, Iraq, and Tibet sit on the land once known as Cimmeria. Most of the floor of the Tethys Ocean disappeared under Cimmeria and Laurasia. We
only know that Tethys existed because geologists like Suess have found fossils of ocean creatures in rocks in the Himalayas. So, we know those rocks were underwater, before the Indian continental shelf began pushing upward as it smashed into Cimmeria. We can see similar geologic evidence in Europe, where the movement of Africa raised the Alps.

--- Notes ---

A travelogue presenting a panoramic view of Mt Kailash.

Understanding the text
- Factual comprehension
- Author’s adventurous experiences while scaling the hilly terrain

Talking about the text
- Lifestyle of hill-folk
- Author’s description of exotic places

Thinking about language
- English spoken by guides
- Communicating with strangers
- Guessing the meanings of words from other languages from the context

Working with words
- Noticing picturesque phrases
- Use of uncommon adjectives

Noticing form
Predominant use of active voice as a contributor to the style of narration

Things to do
Getting information about geological formations from the Internet/encyclopedia
I do not understand this child
Though we have lived together now
In the same house for years. I know
Nothing of him, so try to build
Up a relationship from how
He was when small. Yet have I killed
The seed I spent or sown it where
The land is his and none of mine?
We speak like strangers, there’s no sign
Of understanding in the air.
This child is built to my design
Yet what he loves I cannot share.

Silence surrounds us. I would have
Him prodigal, returning to
His father’s house, the home he knew,
Rather than see him make and move
His world. I would forgive him too,
Shaping from sorrow a new love.

Father and son, we both must live
On the same globe and the same land,
He speaks: I cannot understand
Myself, why anger grows from grief.
We each put out an empty hand,
Longing for something to forgive.
Think it out

1. Does the poem talk of an exclusively personal experience or is it fairly universal?
2. How is the father’s helplessness brought out in the poem?
3. Identify the phrases and lines that indicate distance between father and son.
4. Does the poem have a consistent rhyme scheme?

Notes

The poem is autobiographical in nature and describes the relationship between a father and his son.

Understanding the poem

Questions are based on
- the universality of the experience described
- phrases in the poem
- rhyme scheme in the poem
Writing Skills
I know what I want to say, but I don’t know how to say it.

— a student

To be able to write effectively the student needs to

- understand the significance and purpose of writing
- develop coherence in writing
- understand and employ cohesive devices
- have relative command of grammar, spelling and punctuation.
Note-making is an important study skill. It also helps us at work. We need to draw the main points of the material we read as it is difficult to remember large chunks of information. Let us begin with an example.

**Study the following passage carefully**

Pheasants are shy, charming birds known for their brilliant plumage. These beautiful birds occupy an important niche in nature’s scheme of things. Of the 900 bird species and 155 families, the pheasants belong to the order *Galliformes* and family *Phasinidae*. The *Galliformes* are known as game birds and this includes, pheasants, partridges, quails, grouse, francolins, turkeys and megapodes.

There are 51 species of pheasants in the world and these are shown in the identification chart brought out by the Environment Society of India (ESI). The purpose of this chart is to create awareness among members of the school eco-clubs under the National Green Corps (NGC) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.

Except for the Congo Peafowl, all the other pheasants are from Asia. Scientists believe that all pheasants originated from the Himalayas, and then scattered into Tibet, China, Myanmar, South and South East Asian countries as well as the Caucasus Mountains. The jungle fowl and the peafowl spread to South India and Sri Lanka long before the early settlers established themselves in the Indo-Gangetic plain.

About a third of all the pheasants in the world are found in India. The male blue peafowl (the peacock) is the best known member of the pheasant family and is India’s national bird. It occupies a prominent place in India’s art, culture and folklore.
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• How many species? — 51
• What is the source of information? — ESI chart
• What is the purpose of the ESI chart? — Create awareness among school eco-clubs under NGC
• Which is the best known member? — Peacock, India’s national bird

**Step 3**

*With the help of the answers note down the main points. Write the points without full forms of the verbs.*

• Pheasants — shy birds with bright plumage found largely in Asia, especially India
• Origin in the Himalayas and spread in China, Myanmar, South and SE Asia.
• Order: *Galliformes* — game birds; Family: *Phasinidae*
• No. of species: 51 (ESI chart)
• Purpose of ESI chart — Creating awareness among school eco-clubs under NGC.
• Peacock — India’s national bird, member of this family, represented in Indian art, culture and folklore.

**Notice**

- Two or three related ideas can be combined into one point.
- Use of colons
- Use of the long dash

**Step 4**

*Now go over the facts and number them.*

- This is only to analyse the process of note-making. With practice you will be able to reach Step 4 immediately, going through Steps 2 and 3 mentally.
**Step 5**

*Finally we go over the facts and number them again.*

Read carefully the characteristics of good notes which are given below.

1. (i) Notes should be short. They should identify the main point.
   (ii) They list information in what is called ‘note form’.
   (iii) They are written only in phrases; not sentences.

2. (i) Information is logically divided and subdivided by the use of figures/letters.
   (ii) The divisions are made like this:
   - Main sections : 1, 2, 3, etc.
   - Sub-sections : (i), (ii), (iii), etc.
   - Sub-sub-sections : (a), (b), (c), etc.

3. Another common method is the ‘decimal’ system.
   - Main sections : 1, 2, 3, etc.
   - Sub-sections : 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc.
   - Sub-sub-sections : 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, etc.

4. Abbreviations and symbols are freely used. Articles, prepositions and conjunctions are omitted.

5. Notes must make sense when they are read again otherwise they will be of no use.

Now read the following text.

The energy stored in coal and petroleum originally came to the earth from the sun. The bulk of the present-day supplies was laid down some 200 to 600 million years ago, when tropical conditions were widespread. Lush, swampy forests produced huge trees; warm coastal seas swarmed with microscopic forms of life. When these organisms died, much of their tissue was recycled as it is today — through scavenging and decay. But a significant amount of dead plant and animal material was covered with mud, which prevented complete decomposition.
With the passage of time, layer upon layer of the fine sediment was deposited over the once-living material; the sheer weight turned the sediments to rock. Sandwiched between the layers, both coal and petroleum were produced and preserved under pressure. Coal was formed mostly of giant fern-like plants that have only small counterparts today. Coal may still be forming here and there on earth, but conditions are not right for the production of significant quantities.

1. Underline the important words and phrases.
2. Write down points without fully expanded verbs, numbering them as you do.
3. Combine related points.
4. Group related points.
5. Change the verbs to nouns and begin points with them.
6. Number the points.

After you have finished check with the notes given below.

- Storage of energy from sun in coal and petroleum
- Deposit of bulk of supplies 200 – 600 million years ago
- Teeming life in tropical conditions
- Death of life forms, leading to recycling through decay
- Prevention of total decomposition by considerable dead plants, animals being covered with mud
- Solidification of sediment leading to rock-formation over time
- Production of coal, petroleum by compression of organic matter between rocks
- Unsuitability of present-day conditions for coal-formation
Summarising follows note-making. The purpose of note-making is usually for one's own personal reference. If the main points are to be reported we present a summary. It is not as severely shortened as note-making.

Summarising is the selection and paraphrasing of all important information of the original source. This is done by analysing the paragraphs/passage in order to formulate a plan of writing.

The process of summarising would involve the steps followed in note-making:
1. underlining important ideas
2. writing them down, abridging the verbs
3. avoiding examples, explanations, repetition.

However, instead of nominalising the points (changing verbs into nouns), we expand the points into full sentences and link them using suitable connectors. We need to be precise in our expression. The summary will contain all the main ideas of the original. Practice in using one word for many will help.

For example:

- Children who show intelligence far beyond their age often turn out to be mediocre in adult life.

  or

  Precocious children often turn out to be mediocre in adult life.

- Her genius was marked by excellence in the various arts, languages and science.

  or

  She was a versatile genius.
Soybeans belong to the legume family. The beans are the seeds of the leguminous soybean plant. They can be grown on a variety of soils and in a wide range of climates. Soybeans are versatile as they can be used as whole beans, soy sprouts, or processed as a variety of food items, such as soy milk, tofu, tempeh, textured vegetable protein, miso, soy sauce, soy oil and margarine, and soy dairy alternatives. They are also used for making candles and bio-diesel.

Soy is an excellent source of high quality protein; is low in saturated fats and is cholesterol-free. It is also rich in vitamins, especially Vitamin B complex, minerals such as magnesium, calcium, iron, potassium and copper and also fibres. In recent times it has been highly recommended because of its ability to lower the levels of Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL), a bad cholesterol. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), has confirmed that foods containing soy protein are likely to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

An easy way to take soy is as soymilk now available with added flavour. Soymilk does not contain lactose (milk sugar) and can be drunk by those who are allergic to normal milk. To get soymilk, soybeans are soaked in water, ground and then strained. If you don’t mind the trouble, you can also make it at home. (225 words).

Now note down the important points.
- Soybeans are the seeds of the soybean plant of the legume family.
- They grow in a variety of soils and climates.
- They can be used in various forms — beans, sprouts and a variety of food items.
- They are also used to make candles and bio-diesel.
- They are a source of high quality protein, vitamins, minerals and fibres. They are low in fat content and cholesterol. They can lower LDL levels and reduces risk of coronary heart disease.
- Soymilk, lactose-free, is available as flavoured milk and can be drunk by those allergic to ordinary milk and can also
be made at home by soaking the beans, grinding them and straining the water. (111 words)

A summary is usually one-third the length of the original passage. This is about half.

Now think of what we can omit to make the summary more brief as shown below.

The soybean leguminous plant which grows in all kinds of soil and climate yields beans, sprouts and a variety of processed food items and dairy alternatives and is also used to make candles and bio-diesel.

Rich in protein, vitamins, minerals and fibres, it has a low fat and cholesterol content. It lowers LDL levels and reduces the risk of coronary heart disease.

Soymilk which is lactose-free is available as flavoured milk and agrees with people allergic to ordinary milk. It can be made at home by soaking, grinding and straining soybean. (90 words)

Try reducing it further to about 72 words.

Soybean, a legume, growing in a variety of soil and climatic conditions, yields beans, sprouts and a variety of food items and is used in making candles and bio-diesel.

Rich in protein, vitamins, minerals and fibres, it is low in cholesterol and fat. It lowers LDL levels and reduces the risk of coronary heart disease. Soymilk, lactose-free, is available flavoured and taken by people allergic to milk. It can also be made at home. (74 words)

Notice that we have phrases in apposition: 'a legume', between commas; present participles: 'growing' to effect reduction. Instead of 'it is rich in...' we have used 'rich in...' and postponed the main verb in the sentence. Almost all the main points have been covered.

Read the text below and summarise it.

**Green Sahara**

*The Great Desert Where Hippos Once Wallowed*

The Sahara sets a standard for dry land. It's the world's largest desert. Relative humidity can drop into the low single digits. There are places where it rains only about once a century.
There are people who reach the end of their lives without ever seeing water come from the sky.

Yet beneath the Sahara are vast aquifers of fresh water, enough liquid to fill a small sea. It is fossil water, a treasure laid down in prehistoric times, some of it possibly a million years old. Just 6,000 years ago, the Sahara was a much different place.

It was green. Prehistoric rock art in the Sahara shows something surprising: hippopotamuses, which need year-round water.

“We don’t have much evidence of a tropical paradise out there, but we had something perfectly liveable,” says Jennifer Smith, a geologist at Washington University in St Louis.

The green Sahara was the product of the migration of the paleo-monsoon. In the same way that ice ages come and go, so too do monsoons migrate north and south. The dynamics of earth’s motion are responsible. The tilt of the earth’s axis varies in a regular cycle — sometimes the planet is more tilted towards the sun, sometimes less so. The axis also wobbles like a spinning top. The date of the earth’s perihelion — its closest approach to the sun — varies in a cycle as well.

At times when the Northern Hemisphere tilts sharply towards the sun and the planet makes its closest approach, the increased blast of sunlight during the north’s summer months can cause the African monsoon (which currently occurs between the Equator and roughly 17°N latitude) to shift to the north as it did 10,000 years ago, inundating North Africa.

Around 5,000 years ago the monsoon shifted dramatically southward again. The prehistoric inhabitants of the Sahara discovered that their relatively green surroundings were undergoing something worse than a drought (and perhaps they migrated towards the Nile Valley, where Egyptian culture began to flourish at around the same time).

“We’re learning, and only in recent years, that some climate changes in the past have been as rapid as anything underway today,” says Robert Giegengack, a University of Pennsylvania geologist.

As the land dried out and vegetation decreased, the soil lost its ability to hold water when it did rain. Fewer clouds
formed from evaporation. When it rained, the water washed away and evaporated quickly. There was a kind of runaway drying effect. By 4,000 years ago the Sahara had become what it is today.

No one knows how human-driven climate change may alter the Sahara in the future. It’s something scientists can ponder while sipping bottled fossil water pumped from underground.

“It’s the best water in Egypt,” Giegengack said — clean, refreshing mineral water. If you want to drink something good, try the ancient buried treasure of the Sahara.

JOEL ACHENBACK
Staff Writer, Washington Post
3. Sub-titling

The purpose of sub-titling is to convey the main idea or theme of each section of a long piece of writing. It helps the reader know at a glance the sub-topics that are being addressed. Giving suitable sub-titles helps break the monotony of reading long passages.

Read the newspaper article given below and do the tasks that follow.

**A new deal for old cities**

_The example of Curitiba in Brazil, which has attracted global attention for innovative urban plans using low-cost technologies, shows that inclusive development models for urban renewal are workable._

Many cities in India accurately mirror Friedrich Engels’ description of urban centres in nineteenth century England even today. “Streets that are generally unpaved, rough, dirty, filled with vegetable and animal refuse, without sewers or gutters but supplied with foul, stagnant pools instead,” wrote Engels on the living conditions of the working class in that country.

**Urban Decay**

The depths of urban decay in India came to global notice during the pneumonic plague of 1994 in Surat; it epitomised the failure of governments in the post-Independence era and exposed development policies that ignored fundamental public health issues inherited from colonial rule. There is little evidence to show that policymakers assimilated the lessons from the Surat public health disaster. State and municipal governments did not pursue reform in waste management, though civic conditions in Surat itself underwent change in the plague aftermath. During the past decade, many cities pursued development agendas—often with the help of massive international loans—to project ‘modernisation’ at the cost of basic civic reform.

There is thus a continuing challenge before the current mission to enable and also compel local governments to abide by the
provisions of the Municipal Solid Waste Management Rules by which they are legally bound.

Post-liberalisation policies have tended to largely disregard other key factors that affect the quality of life in cities and towns: poverty, lack of sanitation, water shortages, gross undersupply of affordable housing, and traffic chaos generated by automobile dependence, in turn created by neglect of public transport.

In the absence of a hygienic environment and safe water supply, chronic water-borne diseases such as cholera and other communicable diseases continue to stalk the poor in the biggest cities.

It must be sobering to the affluent layers of the population that nearly 14 million Indian households (forming 26 per cent of the total) in the urban areas do not have a latrine within the house, as per the Census of India 2001; some 14 per cent have only rudimentary 'pit' facilities. The number of households without a drainage connection stands at 11.8 million (representing 22.1 per cent of households). Migration to cities continues and infrastructure to treat sewage is grossly inadequate to meet the demand even where it exists.

It is unlikely that the quality of the urban environment can be dramatically improved therefore, if such fundamental questions remain unresolved.

Urban transport receives scant attention from policymakers. Policy distortions have led to rising automobile dependency, higher safety risks for road users, and land use plans that are based not on the needs of people, but primarily designed to facilitate use of private motorised vehicles.

It comes as no surprise therefore that pedestrians and bicycle riders, who form 30 to 70 per cent of peak hour traffic in most urban centres, also make up a large proportion of fatalities in road accidents. A paper prepared by the Transport Research and Injury Prevention Programme (TRIPP) of the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, says pedestrian fatalities in Mumbai and Delhi were nearly 78 per cent and 53 per cent of the total, according to recent data, compared to 13 per cent and 12 per cent in Germany and the United States.

Such alarming death rates — and an equally high injury rate — should persuade policymakers to revisit their urban planning strategies and correct the distortions. But many cities such as Chennai have actually done the reverse — reduced footpaths and areas for pedestrian use to facilitate unrestricted use of motorised vehicles.

The practice in progressive world cities has been different. Curitiba in Brazil, which has attracted global attention for innovative urban plans using low-cost technologies, has done everything that Indian policymakers would dread to do. Starting in the 1970s, this provincial centre with the highest per capita ownership of cars in Brazil (other than the capital) at the time, banned automobiles from many crowded areas in favour of pedestrians, built an internationally acknowledged bus system that reduced household commuting expenditure to below the national average, and created new housing areas that were provided transport links in a planned manner. Some of the prestigious land development in the city, including a new Opera
House, came up in abandoned sites such as quarries.

The bus-way system cut riding time by a third, Scientific American noted in a review in the mid-1990s, by providing for advance ticketing, specially-designed boarding areas with wider doors for entry/exit and dedicated lanes for faster transit.

In another low-cost initiative, Curitiba managed floods with a dedication that Mumbai, Bangalore, and Chennai can only marvel at. The city created large artificial lakes in suitable places that filled up in the monsoon, avoiding flooding of residential areas. In the summer, these lakes turned into parks to provide recreational spaces.

State administrations and urban planning bodies in India follow policies that, ironically, allow filling of existing wetlands by real estate lobbies, leading to flooding. The residents then demand expensive new storm water drains.

Examples such as Curitiba show that inclusive development models for urban renewal are workable. If only the state and local governments can be persuaded to adopt a rights-based approach to affordable housing, sanitation, water supply, mobility and a clean environment, instead of a market-oriented model that lays excessive emphasis on recovery of costs incurred by profit-oriented private sector service provision. Support from a progressive middle class and trade unions is equally critical to bring about genuine urban renewal.

G. ANANTHAKRISHNAN
The Hindu, 13 December 2005

Activity

1. Notice the italicised sentence placed at the top of the article which tells us at a glance what the article is about.

2. Divide the article into four sections based on the shifts in the sub-topics and give a suitable sub-heading for each section. One has been done for you in the article as an example.

3. Look for pictures in newspapers and magazines that depict the urban civic problems discussed in the text. Cut them out and pin them to the text at appropriate places.
Most of us find it difficult to begin writing. We can make this easier by thinking about the topic either through brainstorming, that is with several people in a group giving their ideas as they strike them, or by putting them down on a sheet of paper as they occur to us.

For example, if the topic is ‘Hobbies’, we can draw a circle and write ‘hobbies’ in it:

```
Hobbies
```

Then we can put down our thoughts as they come to us in a random manner as shown below.

```
Useful

Different

Outlet for energy

Free time

Stamp-collecting

Creativity

Personality development

Games

Music

Choice

Relief from monotony

Friendship

Educative

General knowledge

Refreshing

Interesting
```

Having done that we select the points and expand each into a sentence.
1. Hobbies are free-time activities. Examples are stamp-collecting, painting etc.
2. They are matters of personal choice, not forced.
3. They are interesting and give pleasure.
4. They refresh the mind by providing an opportunity to do different kinds of activities.
5. They provide relief from monotony.
6. They help us channelise our energy.
7. They can also be useful activities and can provide pleasure to others. For example, reading out to visually impaired people, visiting art exhibitions, music concerts etc.
8. Hobbies are educative and they widen our general knowledge.
9. They help us develop our overall personality.
10. They serve as a medium for the expression of our creativity.
11. We meet interesting people through our common interests and develop friendships.

We usually begin a topic with a definition or short description. We could begin thus:

Hobbies are activities that we engage in, in our free time. We may be interested in needlework, drawing and painting or music. Other common hobbies are stamp-collecting, clay-modelling, solving crossword puzzles.

Although hobbies also entail work they are taken upon through one’s own personal choice. They are not forced upon us. They are activities that we are really interested in and hence give us a great deal of pleasure.

Hobbies make life interesting. They refresh our minds after a hard day’s work. We need to do something different in order to do our routine work effectively. Hobbies provide this variety.

Hobbies relieve us from the monotony of daily life. They fill us with enthusiasm for work and keep our energy levels high. We will go to any extent to get the things that we require, to get the utmost joy from our hobbies.
Hobbies are also useful activities. Quite a few hobbies, like stamp-collecting, widen our general knowledge about various countries of the world. When we share common interests we even get into correspondence with people of other countries.

**This is how we write an essay.**

A composition on a particular subject consisting of more than one paragraph is an essay. The characteristics of a good essay are:

**Unity**: The essay should deal with the main subject, and all parts of it should be clearly linked with that subject.

**Coherence**: There should be a logical sequence of thought. This requires a logical relationship between ideas, sentences and paragraphs.

**Relevance**: Unimportant information should not be included.

**Proportion**: Giving more space to the important ideas.

Read the following essay and the passage analysis that follows it carefully.

**The Importance of Games**

1. “The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton.” These words have been attributed to the Duke of Wellington. Certainly one does not play games in order to win battles; neither does the curriculum include them for that reason. But the importance of games in life should not be underestimated, for without them it is harder for a person to be sound in body and mind.

2. For one thing, if a person is to fulfil all the duties that society expects of him, it is important for him to keep healthy. He may be very intelligent, but that has little meaning if he cannot make use of his intelligence, because he is always suffering from bad health. In some ways, the human body is like a machine. If it is not made use of, it starts to work badly. People who are not fit grow weak and become more susceptible to disease. Any form of game is useful, provided it gives the body an opportunity to take regular physical exercise.
3. Secondly, playing — and therefore experiencing winning and losing — encourages the spirit of sportsmanship, thus enabling one to deal with life’s problems in a wise and natural manner. Games teach the truth embodied in the Olympic motto: ‘The important thing in playing is not the winning or the losing, but the participation’ — and, I may add, doing the best one can.

4. We have to remember some other things about playing games, however. First, it is the physical exercise that is important for health, not the games themselves, and there are other ways of getting this. Is not India the home of yoga? It is also possible to be too interested in games. When we think of the Greek ideal expressed in the Latin phrase, ‘mens sana in corpore sano’ (a healthy mind in a healthy body), we should not forget that it is the mind which is mentioned first. And if we let games become the most important thing in our lives, we may be in danger of changing the Olympic motto to ‘the important thing is winning’.

5. Nevertheless, in spite of these dangers, playing games can be a valuable activity, and if we take part in them wisely, we can gain great benefits.

**Passage Analysis**

- The writer uses five paragraphs
- Each paragraph deals sequentially with a topic.
  - Paragraph 1 introduces the subject, and makes a general statement about the importance of games.
  - Paragraph 2 explains the benefits of playing games.
  - Paragraph 3 deals with the moral benefits.
  - Paragraph 4 deals with the disadvantages and dangers.
  - Paragraph 5 sums up the writer’s opinion, taking into account all he has said in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4, i.e. it forms the conclusion. The structure (or plan) of the essay is summed up in the following flow diagram.
Activity

Here are a few topics for essay writing. Follow the steps listed above to write on these topics.
2. Those who can bear all can dare all.
3. Fascinating facts about water.
4. Public health in transition.
5. Human population grows up.
6. Success begins in the mind.
7. Think before you shop.

The trend of decline in the Child Sex Ratio (CSR) defined as the number of girls per 1000 boys between 0–6 years of age, has remained unabated till today. To ensure survival, protection and empowerment of the girl child, the government has announced *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* scheme. This is being implemented through a national campaign. The objectives of this scheme are:
- Prevention of gender-biased sex selection elimination.
- Ensuring survival and protection of the girl child.
- Ensuring education and participation of the girl child.

Organise as essay writing activity in your class, the themes should be based on the objectives stated above. Mention how you can contribute to this programme, in the essay.
Letter-writing is an important channel of communication between people who are geographically distant from one another. In earlier times when the telephone and e-mail were not available, the only means of communication between people was through letters.

Letter-writing is a skill that has to be developed. In general there are two types of letters: formal, that are written to convey official business and information and informal, which are personal letters to communicate with friends and family. Formal letters are sent out when we need to write to various public bodies or agencies for our requirements in civic life. For example, we might have to ask for a certificate or to inform a change in our address. A letter is usually one in a series of exchanges between two people or parties.

**Formal Letters**

Let us now examine some of the steps in writing formal letters.

1. (i) **Introducing oneself if it is the first time you are writing**
   (ii) **Referring to an earlier letter if you are responding to it.**

2. **Stating the purpose of the letter**

3. (i) **Stating action/information required from the addressee**
   (ii) **Explaining action taken/supplying information**

4. (i) **Urging action to be taken**
   (ii) **Offering assistance in future**

   This is the basic structure of a letter. It will have to be modified according to the purpose for which it is written and the person to whom it is addressed.
When you write a letter you should keep in mind the following points.

1. **Purpose**
2. **Person to whom it is addressed**
3. **Tone you should adopt**
4. **Completeness of the message**
5. **Action required**
6. **Conciseness of expression**

We have so far considered the content of letters. A letter also has a typical format.

1. **Name and address of sender**
   Companies have printed letterheads with the name of the company printed on them. A letterhead may also carry the name and designation of persons in responsible positions.

2. **Name and address of addressee**

3. **Date**

4. **Mode of address or salutation**
   Salutation is the mode of addressing a person. We may have the following forms.
   
   (i) **Dear Sir/Madam** (when we are writing to a total stranger whom we do not know at all).
   
   (ii) **Dear Mr/Ms/Dr/Professor + Surname** as in: Dear Dr Sinha, (when it is a formal relationship with the addressee and the writer does not know him or her personally).
   
   (iii) **Dear Sujata** (when the writer knows the addressee personally and the two share a semi-formal relationship).

5. **Reference to previous correspondence, if any.**
   Most official letters carry a subject line just above the salutation. This is for quick reference to the subject.

6. **Content of letter**
   The content of the letter begins on the next line and is arranged in two or three paragraphs.

7. **Complimentary close and signature**
   Letters usually end politely with the following phrases: Thank you, With regards, With best wishes, Hope to see you
soon, Hope to receive an early reply etc. The complimentary close is followed by ‘Yours sincerely/ Yours truly’, and the writer’s signature in the next line.

Given below is an example of the format of a formal letter.

Ritu Patel  
Manager, Customer Services  
Vijayanagar Gas Company  
121, Ameerpet  
Hyderabad 500 016  
12 November 2005

Mr Shagun Thomas  
801, Vijay Apartments  
Begumpet  
Hyderabad 500 016

Sub: Your application No. F323 for a new gas connection

Dear Mr Thomas,

With regards,
Yours sincerely,
Ritu Patel

Nowadays all the parts of a letter are aligned on the left. This style is called the Full-Block style.

- The date and signature are very important in letters.
- We do not use commas after every line in the address.
• Do not begin your letters with hackneyed expressions like, ‘With reference to your letter dated 10 January’. Instead, use personalised variations like, ‘I was glad to receive your letter of 10 January...’ or ‘We were happy to note from your letter that the goods have reached you safely...’

• Never end your letters with hanging participles like ‘Thanking you’ or ‘Awaiting your reply’. Instead write, ‘Thank you’ or ‘We/I await/look forward to your reply’.

**Informal Letters**

*Informal letters include personal letters. If it is a personal letter the format is flexible. We might just write the name of our city on top, followed by the date.*

---

Hyderabad
12 November 2005

Dear Sujata,

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

____

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

Bye,

Yours affectionately/With love/
All the best/Take care etc.

(Signature)
The flexible format of the informal letter may also be used to seek information from concerned authorities. Given below is an example.

179 NCERT Campus
Sri Aurobindo Marg
New Delhi 110 016

9 September 2005

The Manager
Himachal Tourism
Mall Road
Shimla

Dear Sir,

We are planning to spend our vacation in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh during Dussehra and would like some information regarding availability of lodging in the area.

We would like to have information about inexpensive hotels in and around Dharamsala. Could you please send me a city map and brochures about the activities and sights in the city?

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

(Suryadhan Kumar)

Given below is the format of the informal letter.

- Your address (but not your name) usually goes in the top right-hand corner, but may go on the left too.

- The name and/or job title (if you know them) and the address of the person you are writing to goes on the left.
To address someone whose name you do not know you can write: Dear Sir, Dear Madam, Dear Sirs, Dear Sir/Madam.

To address someone by name, use their title and surname e.g. Dear Dr Balakrishnan.

To end a letter, use ‘Yours sincerely’, if you have addressed the person by name; ‘Yours faithfully’, if you have begun the letter with ‘Dear Sir’ or ‘Madam’, etc.

Job Application

At some point of time each one of us will have to apply for a job. Job applications are usually written in response to advertisements. Let us take this sample advertisement from a daily newspaper, The Hindu dated 15 November 2005.

Come...join the ADVENTURE
Customer Support Executives
Graduate/Diploma holders
with/without experience
possessing good Customer Service skills. Excellent spoken and written communication skills in English is a must.
Send in your applications with your resume and passport size photograph to:
WONDERLAND
COMMUNICATIONS,
SOUTH STREET, SALEM,
TAMIL NADU

Let us assume that you have a degree or a diploma and are applying for the job. We need to prepare a resume, which actually means a summary of particulars relating to your background, academic qualifications and experience, if any. Other terms used for ‘resume’ are ‘curriculum vitae’ and ‘biodata’.
The general format of a resume or curriculum vitae is shown below.

### CURRICULUM VITAE

Name : 
Address : 
Telephone Number : 
E-mail ID : 
Date of birth : 
Academic Qualifications :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examination</th>
<th>Board/ University</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S.S.C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in…</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree in…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Experience : (Begin from present employment)

Skills :

Languages known :

Hobbies and Interests :

Achievements :

References : (names of people in positions like your school Principal who can certify your character and conduct)
Now we need to send a covering letter along with the curriculum vitae. The following letter is an example.

Your name and address
Date

The Manager
Human Resource Division
Wonderland Communications
South Street, Salem
Tamil Nadu

Dear Sir,

I would like to apply for the post of Customer Support Executive that you have advertised in *The Hindu* of 15 November 2005.

I have just completed my Diploma in Communication from the State Polytechnic. I was happy to note that you do not insist on experience.

If selected, this would be my first job. I am a sincere, honest and hardworking person. I am friendly and outgoing and have good communication skills.

I am enclosing my resume and look forward to meeting you in person.

Regards,

Yours truly,

(Signature)

**Activities**

1. You have not received your Roll Number card for the Class XII examination. Write a letter to the Registrar, Examination Branch, CBSE asking for it.
2. Write a letter to the President, Residents' Welfare Association of your locality suggesting some measures that could be taken for solving the problem of water scarcity and conserving water.

3. Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper expressing your views on the deteriorating law and order situation in your city.

4. Write a letter to your friend narrating your experiences in a rescue operation.

5. Write a letter to the Editor of a magazine describing a dance performance you have seen or an art gallery you have visited.
6. Creative Writing

The teacher was explaining the lines in the beginning of Shakespeare’s play *Macbeth*. It was a description of the battle and the lines were:

Like Valour’s minion, carved out his passage,
Till he faced the slave;
With ne’er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him.
Till he unseam’d him from the nave to the chaps,…

The teacher asked the students what the word ‘unseamed’ meant. It was difficult. The teacher prodded them on. “What does ‘seam’ mean? Haven’t you ever come across the word?” One of the students blurted out “Cricket ball”.

This is an example of how each of us reacts to words according to what our own experience has been.

When we write about factual information, all of us write almost similarly. But when we write for pleasure each of us may write about the same event in different ways.

*One very important element in creative writing is imagination. This is reflected in*

- our view or perspective
- choice of words
- the comparisons we make
- the images we use
- the tone we adopt
- novelty of ideas.

Let us study the paragraph below.

A town is like an animal. A town has a nervous system and a head and shoulders and feet. A town is a thing separate from all other towns, so that there are no towns alike. And a town has a whole emotion. How news travels through a town is a mystery not easily to be solved. News seems to move faster
than small boys can scramble and dart to tell it, faster than women can call it over the fences. (from an adapted version of Steinbeck’s *The Pearl*)

*The topic:* A Town

*Analogy or comparison:* to an animal

*Word choice:* “has a whole emotion.”

*Comparisons:* “faster than small boys can scramble and dart, faster than women....”

We find the first element of imagination operating in the way the writer visualises the town. Then he extends the primary analogy. The tone he adopts is light humour, a little sarcastic.

When we begin to write a story or poem we let our imagination free. We try to say things in a new way. This novelty is what makes our writing pleasurable to the reader.

Sometimes sentence structures are also different from factual writing. Consider the following:

They waited in their chairs until the pearls came in, and then **they cackled and fought and shouted and threatened** until they reached the lowest price the fisherman would stand. (from *The Pearl*).

In a normal construction we will not use so many ‘ands’. But the action of the story is best reflected through this kind of chaining of actions through ‘ands’. It is appropriate to the movement of the action described.

Let us look at another example:

She dragged me after her into Miss Rachel’s sitting-room, which opened to her bedroom. At her bedroom door stood Miss Rachel, **her face almost white as the white dressing-gown she wore.**

The author has used a simile: “white as the white dressing-gown she wore.”

In fact, the whiteness of a human face is because of a strong emotion — fear or shock.

But here comparing the whiteness to the dressing-gown she wore serves to **exaggerate** and intensify the emotion.
Exaggeration is one of the ways in which fact is distinguished from fiction.

Now look at these lines from a well-known poem, ‘An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard’ by Thomas Gray.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom’d caves of ocean bear
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its fragrance in the desert air.

The stanza carries a simple statement: many people with outstanding qualities live and die unnoticed by the world.

To state this, the poet has used two strong images, ‘a gem’ and ‘a flower’.

He has used two contrasting places: the ocean, that is full of water and the desert with no water at all.

Also notice the rhyming words: ‘serene’ and ‘unseen’, ‘bear’ and ‘air’.

The first and third lines also begin with the same words —“full many a”. The lines are of equal length.

All this together contribute to the literary quality of these lines.

**Activity I**

Put down the images that come to your mind immediately when you see the words in the box.

| cat | cupboard | wall | pond | bird |

**Activity II**

Try to write four lines of poetry or four sentences of prose with one of these as the starting point.

**Activity III**

Write a short story beginning with this sentence:

When the last of the guests left, I went back into the hall....

**Activity IV**

Look for a story, a poem and a newspaper article on environment conservation and see how the style of each is different from the other.
Hello Children!
If you feel uneasy about someone touching you inappropriately, you should not keep quiet. You must
1. Not blame yourself
2. Tell someone whom you trust
3. You can also inform National Commission for Protection of Child Rights through the **POCSO e-box.**

*When you get an unsafe touch, you may feel bad, confused and helpless*
*You need not feel “bad” because it’s not your fault*

**POCSO e-box available at NCPCR@gov.in**

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If you are below 18 years of age, and are troubled or confused or abused or in distress or know some other child who is...

**Call 1098...because some numbers are good!**
*They change lives!!!*

**CHILDLINE 1098 NIGHT & DAY**

**CHILDLINE 1098** - a national 24 hours toll free emergency phone service for children in distress is an initiative of CHILDLINE India Foundation supported by Ministry of Women & Child Development

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**Swachh Bharat**
*Ek Kadam Swachhchhita ki or*
Hornbills (family *bucerotidae*) are a group of birds found in South East Asia and Africa. Their bills are shaped like a cow’s horn, without a twist and with a casque on the upper bill (*buceros* means cow’s horn in Greek). Hornbills need large, old trees with hollow trunks in which to build their nests.

The Sulu and the Writhed-billed Hornbill are two of the most endangered species. The main reason for this is logging of large, old trees in their forest home.

**Did you know?**
Nagaland celebrates Hornbill Festival in reverence to the bird that shows up in many of the tribal folklores of the State. The eight-day festival brings all the tribes together in colourful performances and religious ceremonies.
Snapshots
Supplementary Reader in English for Class XI
(Core Course)

The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse
The Tale of Melon City
The Ghât of the Only World
and other stories
क्यू एअर (QR) कोड से संबंधित ई-सामग्री प्राप्त करने के लिए
मार्गदर्शिका

प्रत्येक अध्याय के ऊपर कोने में स्थित कोड बॉक्स को किसी फोनसे कोड -- क्यू एअर (QR) कोड कहते हैं।
यह क्यू एअर कोड आपको अध्याय में दिए गए विषयों से संबंधित ई-सामग्री, जैसे ऑडियो, वीडियो, मल्टीमीडिया,
पाद-सामग्री आदि को प्राप्त करने में सहायता करेगा। पहला क्यू एअर कोड संपूर्ण ई-पाठ्यपुस्तक प्राप्त करने के
लिए है। बाद में प्रत्येक अध्याय में दिए गए क्यू एअर कोड उस अध्याय से संबंधित ई-सामग्री प्राप्त करने में मदद
करेगा। यह कोड आपको अवगतता पूर्वक से सीखने में मदद करेगा।
अपने मोबाइल फोन या टेबलेट द्वारा निम्नलिखित चरणों का पालन करें और ई-सामग्री प्राप्त करें।

पहले स्टेप से क्यू एअर कोड स्कैन करें एवं इंटरलॉक
करें और इसे खोलें।
क्यू एअर कोड स्कैनिंग
लिंक को क्लिक करें
लिंक को क्लिक करें
शेयर के लिए दिए गए
क्यू एअर कोड को कार्यान्वित
करें और इसे खोलें।
लिंक को क्लिक करें
उपलब्ध ई-सामग्री का
प्रयोग करें।

कंप्यूटर या लैपटॉप पर ई-सामग्री प्राप्त करने के लिए मिमलिखित कदम उठाएँ:
1. फायरफ्रॉक्स ( ), क्रोम ( ) आदि वेब ब्राउज़र खोलें।
2. ई-पाठ्यपुस्तक वेबसाइट पर जाएँ (http://epathshala.nic.in)।
3. ‘एक्सेस ई-सामग्री’ वाले बॉक्स पर फिल्टर करें।
4. प्रत्येक क्यू एअर कोड ( ) के नीचे दिए गए अवश्यक कोड को टाइप करें।
5. अब जो लिंक प्रस्तुत हुए हैं, उनके प्रयोग से ई-सामग्री खोजें।
SNAPSHOTS
Supplementary Reader in English for Class XI (Core Course)
The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, recommends that children’s life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy of Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this supplementary reader proves for making children’s life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The book attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training
(NCERT) appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the advisory group in languages, Professor Namwar Singh and the Chief Advisor for this book, Professor R. Amritavalli for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this book; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, materials and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinements.

Director
New Delhi
20 December 2005

National Council of Educational Research and Training
About the Book

This supplementary reader, based on the English syllabus for Class XI, is prepared on the lines suggested by the National Curriculum Framework for School Education, 2005.

For young adults, awareness of personal development and growing independence begins at the higher secondary stage. It is during this period that they seek to understand themselves and the society in which they live. Literature plays an important role in moulding young minds. The choice of stories and biographical sketches in Snapshots by contemporary writers exposes learners to the various narratives of life that the literatures of the world offer.

The stories deal with a range of human predicaments: moral choices in adolescents, as in William Saroyan’s ‘The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse’; the poignancy of personal loss and reconciliation that follows war in Marga Minco’s ‘The Address’; language and imperialism invading the rural setting in ‘Ranga’s Marriage’ by Masti Venkatesha Iyengar; and professional commitment in A.J. Cronin’s ‘Birth’, an excerpt from the novel The Citadel. We also have J.B. Priestley’s play, ‘Mother’s Day’, an early comment on the acceptance of (and rebellion against) the assumed roles of men and women at home. Amitav Ghosh’s ‘The Ghat of the Only World’, is a touching tribute to Aga Shahid Ali, a Kashmiri poet who wrote in English, while Vikram Seth’s ‘The Tale of Melon City’ is a humorous satire set in verse.

The language of these stories allows learners to read on their own with only occasional support from the teacher or reference to the dictionary. Learners should be encouraged to read the stories at home and the themes, narrative patterns and stylistic features including use of punctuation can be discussed in the classroom. It is hoped that this gateway to extensive reading will help learners imbibe language unconsciously.
THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a ¹[SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC] and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the ²[unity and integrity of the Nation];

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY
this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

¹. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
². Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
Textbook Development Committee

Chairperson, Advisory Group for Textbooks in Languages
Professor Namwar Singh, formerly Chairman, School of Languages, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Chief Advisor
R. Amritavalli, Professor, English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad

Chief Coordinator
Ram Janma Sharma, Former Professor and Head, Department of Education in Languages, NCERT, New Delhi

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Malathy Krishnan, Professor, EFLU, Hyderabad
Nasiruddin Khan, Reader (Retd.), NCERT, New Delhi
Rashmi Mishra, PGT (English), Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, P.O. Kalamati, Sambalpur

Member – Coordinator
Meenakshi Khar, Assistant Professor of English, Department of Education in Languages, NCERT, New Delhi
Constitution of India

Part IV A (Article 51 A)

Fundamental Duties

It shall be the duty of every citizen of India —

(a) to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;
(b) to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;
(c) to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;
(d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;
(e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
(f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;
(g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures;
(h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;
(i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;
(j) to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement;

*(k) who is a parent or guardian, to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

Note: The Article 51A containing Fundamental Duties was inserted by the Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976 (with effect from 3 January 1977).
*(k) was inserted by the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002 (with effect from 1 April 2010).
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Right to Equality
- before law and equal protection of laws;
- irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth;
- of opportunity in public employment;
- by abolition of untouchability and titles.

Right to Freedom
- of expression, assembly, association, movement, residence and profession;
- of certain protections in respect of conviction for offences;
- of protection of life and personal liberty;
- of free and compulsory education for children between the age of six and fourteen years;
- of protection against arrest and detention in certain cases.

Right against Exploitation
- for prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour;
- for prohibition of employment of children in hazardous jobs.

Right to Freedom of Religion
- freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion;
- freedom to manage religious affairs;
- freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion;
- freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in educational institutions wholly maintained by the State.

Cultural and Educational Rights
- for protection of interests of minorities to conserve their language, script and culture;
- for minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

Right to Constitutional Remedies
- by issuance of directions or orders or writs by the Supreme Court and High Courts for enforcement of these Fundamental Rights.
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The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse

This story is about two poor Armenian boys who belong to a tribe whose hallmarks are trust and honesty.

One day back there in the good old days when I was nine and the world was full of every imaginable kind of magnificence, and life was still a delightful and mysterious dream, my cousin Mourad, who was considered crazy by everybody who knew him except me, came to my house at four in the morning and woke me up tapping on the window of my room.

Aram, he said.

I jumped out of bed and looked out of the window.

I couldn’t believe what I saw.

It wasn’t morning yet, but it was summer and with daybreak not many minutes around the corner of the world it was light enough for me to know I wasn’t dreaming.

My cousin Mourad was sitting on a beautiful white horse.

I stuck my head out of the window and rubbed my eyes.

Yes, he said in Armenian. It’s a horse. You’re not dreaming. Make it quick if you want to ride.
I knew my cousin Mourad enjoyed being alive more than anybody else who had ever fallen into the world by mistake, but this was more than even I could believe.

In the first place, my earliest memories had been memories of horses and my first longings had been longings to ride.

This was the wonderful part.

In the second place, we were poor.

This was the part that wouldn’t permit me to believe what I saw. We were poor. We had no money. Our whole tribe was poverty-stricken. Every branch of the Garoghlanian family was living in the most amazing and comical poverty in the world. Nobody could understand where we ever got money enough to keep us with food in our bellies, not even the old men of the family. Most important of all, though, we were famous for our honesty. We had been famous for our honesty for something like eleven centuries, even when we had been the wealthiest family in what we liked to think was the world. We were proud first, honest next, and after that we believed in right and wrong. None of us would take advantage of anybody in the world, let alone steal.

Consequently, even though I could see the horse, so magnificent; even though I could smell it, so lovely; even though I could hear it breathing, so exciting; I couldn’t believe the horse had anything to do with my cousin Mourad or with me or with any of the other members of our family, asleep or awake, because I knew my cousin Mourad couldn’t have bought the horse, and if he couldn’t have bought it he must have stolen it, and I refused to believe he had stolen it.

No member of the Garoghlanian family could be a thief.

I stared first at my cousin and then at the horse. There was a pious stillness and humour in each of them which on the one hand delighted me and on the other frightened me.

Mourad, I said, where did you steal this horse?

Leap out of the window, he said, if you want to ride.

It was true, then. He had stolen the horse. There was no question about it. He had come to invite me to ride or not, as I chose.

Well, it seemed to me stealing a horse for a ride was not the same thing as stealing something else, such as money. For all I knew, maybe it wasn’t stealing at all. If you were crazy about horses the way my cousin Mourad and I were, it wasn’t stealing.
It wouldn’t become stealing until we offered to sell the horse, which of course, I knew we would never do.

Let me put on some clothes, I said.
All right, he said, but hurry.
I leaped into my clothes.
I jumped down to the yard from the window and leaped up onto the horse behind my cousin Mourad.

That year we lived at the edge of town, on Walnut Avenue. Behind our house was the country: vineyards, orchards, irrigation ditches, and country roads. In less than three minutes we were on Olive Avenue, and then the horse began to trot. The air was new and lovely to breathe. The feel of the horse running was wonderful. My cousin Mourad who was considered one of the craziest members of our family began to sing. I mean, he began to roar.

Every family has a crazy streak in it somewhere, and my cousin Mourad was considered the natural descendant of the crazy streak in our tribe. Before him was our uncle Khosrove, an enormous man with a powerful head of black hair and the largest moustache in the San Joaquin Valley, a man so furious in temper, so irritable, so impatient that he stopped anyone from talking by roaring. It is no harm; pay no attention to it.

That was all, no matter what anybody happened to be talking about. Once it was his own son Arak running eight blocks to the barber’s shop where his father was having his moustache trimmed to tell him their house was on fire. This man Khosrove sat up in the chair and roared, It is no harm; pay no attention to it. The barber said, But the boy says your house is on fire. So Khosrove roared, Enough, it is no harm, I say.

My cousin Mourad was considered the natural descendant of this man, although Mourad’s father was Zorab, who was practical and nothing else. That’s how it was in our tribe. A man could be the father of his son’s flesh, but that did not mean that he was also the father of his spirit. The distribution of the various kinds of spirit of our tribe had been from the beginning capricious and vagrant.

We rode and my cousin Mourad sang. For all anybody knew we were still in the old country where, at least according to some of our neighbours, we belonged. We let the horse run as long as it felt like running.

\(^2\) one of the long interior valleys of California
At last my cousin Mourad said, Get down. I want to ride alone.
Will you let me ride alone? I asked.
That is up to the horse, my cousin said. Get down.
The horse will let me ride, I said.
We shall see, he said. Don’t forget that I have a way
with a horse.
Well, I said, any way you have with a horse, I have also.
For the sake of your safety, he said, let us hope so. Get down.
All right, I said, but remember you’ve got to let me try to
ride alone.
I got down and my cousin Mourad kicked his heels into the
horse and shouted, Vazîre, run. The horse stood on its hind legs,
snorted, and burst into a fury of speed that was the loveliest
thing I had ever seen. My cousin Mourad raced the horse across
a field of dry grass to an irrigation ditch, crossed the ditch on the
horse, and five minutes later returned, dripping wet.
The sun was coming up.
Now it's my turn to ride, I said.
My cousin Mourad got off the horse.
Ride, he said.
I leaped to the back of the horse and for a moment knew the
most awful fear imaginable. The horse did not move.
Kick into his muscles, my cousin Mourad said. What are you
waiting for? We've got to take him back before everybody in the
world is up and about.
I kicked into the muscles of the horse. Once again it reared
and snorted. Then it began to run. I didn't know what to do.
Instead of running across the field to the irrigation ditch the
horse ran down the road to the vineyard of Dikran Halabian
where it began to leap over vines. The horse leaped over seven
vines before I fell. Then it continued running.
My cousin Mourad came running down the road.
I'm not worried about you, he shouted. We've got to get that
horse. You go this way and I'll go this way. If you come upon
him, be kindly. I'll be near.
I continued down the road and my cousin, Mourad went
across the field toward the irrigation ditch.
It took him half an hour to find the horse and bring
him back.
All right, he said, jump on. The whole world is awake now.
What will we do? I said.
Well, he said, we'll either take him back or hide him until
tomorrow morning.
He didn't sound worried and I knew he'd hide him and not
take him back. Not for a while, at any rate.
Where will we hide him? I said.
I know a place, he said.
How long ago did you steal this horse? I said.
It suddenly dawned on me that he had been taking these early
morning rides for some time and had come for me this morning
only because he knew how much I longed to ride.
Who said anything about stealing a horse? he said.
Anyhow, I said, how long ago did you begin riding
every morning?
Not until this morning, he said.
Are you telling the truth? I said.
Of course not, he said, but if we are found out, that's what
you're to say. I don't want both of us to be liars. All you know is
that we started riding this morning.

All right, I said.

He walked the horse quietly to the barn of a deserted vineyard
which at one time had been the pride of a farmer named Fetvajan.
There were some oats and dry alfalfa in the barn.

We began walking home.

It wasn’t easy, he said, to get the horse to behave so nicely.
At first it wanted to run wild, but, as I’ve told you, I have a way
with a horse. I can get it to want to do anything I want it to do.
Horses understand me.

How do you do it? I said.
I have an understanding with a horse, he said.
Yes, but what sort of an understanding? I said.
A simple and honest one, he said.
Well, I said, I wish I knew how to reach an understanding
like that with a horse.

You’re still a small boy, he said. When you get to be thirteen
you’ll know how to do it.

I went home and ate a hearty breakfast.

That afternoon my uncle Khosrove came to our house for
coffee and cigarettes. He sat in the parlour, sipping and smoking
and remembering the old country. Then another visitor arrived,
a farmer named John Byro, an Assyrian who, out of loneliness,
had learned to speak Armenian. My mother brought the lonely
visitor coffee and tobacco and he rolled a cigarette and sipped
and smoked, and then at last, sighing sadly, he said, My white
horse which was stolen last month is still gone — I cannot
understand it.

My uncle Khosrove became very irritated and shouted, It’s
no harm. What is the loss of a horse? Haven’t we all lost the
homeland? What is this crying over a horse?

That may be all right for you, a city dweller, to say, John Byro
said, but what of my surrey? What good is a surrey without a
horse?

Pay no attention to it, my uncle Khosrove roared.

I walked ten miles to get here, John Byro said.
You have legs, my uncle Khosrove shouted.
My left leg pains me, the farmer said.
Pay no attention to it, my uncle Khosrove roared.
That horse cost me sixty dollars, the farmer said.
I spit on money, my uncle Khosrove said.
He got up and stalked out of the house, slamming the
screen door.
  My mother explained.
  He has a gentle heart, she said. It is simply that he is homesick
  and such a large man.
  The farmer went away and I ran over to my cousin Mourad’s
  house.
  He was sitting under a peach tree, trying to repair the hurt
  wing of a young robin which could not fly. He was talking to the
  bird.
  What is it? he said.
  The farmer, John Byro, I said. He visited our house. He wants
  his horse. You’ve had it a month. I want you to promise not to
  take it back until I learn to ride.
  It will take you a year to learn to ride, my cousin Mourad said.
  We could keep the horse a year, I said.
  My cousin Mourad leaped to his feet.
  What? he roared. Are you inviting a member of the
  Garoghalanian family to steal? The horse must go back to its
  true owner.
  When? I said.
  In six months at the latest, he said.
  He threw the bird into the air. The bird tried hard, almost fell
  twice, but at last flew away, high and straight.
  Early every morning for two weeks my cousin Mourad and I
  took the horse out of the barn of the deserted vineyard where we
  were hiding it and rode it, and every morning the horse, when
  it was my turn to ride alone, leaped over grape vines and small
  trees and threw me and ran away. Nevertheless, I hoped in time
  to learn to ride the way my cousin Mourad rode.
  One morning on the way to Fetvajian’s deserted vineyard we ran
  into the farmer John Byro who was on his way to town.
  Let me do the talking, my cousin Mourad said. I have a way
  with farmers.
  Good morning, John Byro, my cousin Mourad said to
  the farmer.
  The farmer studied the horse eagerly.
  Good morning, son of my friends, he said. What is the name
  of your horse?
  My Heart, my cousin Mourad said in Armenian.
  A lovely name, John Byro said, for a lovely horse. I could
  swear it is the horse that was stolen from me many weeks ago.
May I look into his mouth?
   Of course, Mourad said.
   The farmer looked into the mouth of the horse.
   Tooth for tooth, he said. I would swear it is my horse if I didn’t know your parents. The fame of your family for honesty is well known to me. Yet the horse is the twin of my horse. A suspicious man would believe his eyes instead of his heart. Good day, my young friends.
   Good day, John Byro, my cousin Mourad said.
   Early the following morning we took the horse to John Byro’s vineyard and put it in the barn. The dogs followed us around without making a sound.
   The dogs, I whispered to my cousin Mourad. I thought they would bark.
   They would at somebody else, he said. I have a way with dogs.
   My cousin Mourad put his arms around the horse, pressed his nose into the horse’s nose, patted it, and then we went away.
   That afternoon John Byro came to our house in his surrey and showed my mother the horse that had been stolen and returned.
   I do not know what to think, he said. The horse is stronger than ever. Better-tempered, too. I thank God. My uncle Khosrove, who was in the parlour, became irritated and shouted, Quiet, man, quiet. Your horse has been returned. Pay no attention to it.
1. You will probably agree that this story does not have breathless adventure and exciting action. Then what in your opinion makes it interesting?
2. Did the boys return the horse because they were conscience-stricken or because they were afraid?
3. “One day back there in the good old days when I was nine and the world was full of every imaginable kind of magnificence, and life was still a delightful and mysterious dream...” The story begins in a mood of nostalgia. Can you narrate some incident from your childhood that might make an interesting story?
4. The story revolves around characters who belong to a tribe in Armenia. Mourad and Aram are members of the Garoghlanian family. Now locate Armenia and Assyria on the atlas and prepare a write-up on the Garoghlanian tribes. You may write about people,
their names, traits, geographical and economic features as suggested in the story.

**Try This Out**

“The horse stood on its hind legs, snorted, and burst into a fury of speed that was the loveliest thing I had ever seen.” These lines could be an artist’s delight. Try to draw a picture as depicted in the above lines.
This short story is a poignant account of a daughter who goes in search of her mother’s belongings after the War, in Holland. When she finds them, the objects evoke memories of her earlier life. However, she decides to leave them all behind and resolves to move on.

‘Do you still know me?’ I asked.
   The woman looked at me searchingly. She had opened the door a chink. I came closer and stood on the step.
   ‘No, I don’t know you.’
   ‘I’m Mrs S’s daughter.’
   She held her hand on the door as though she wanted to prevent it opening any further. Her face gave absolutely no sign of recognition. She kept staring at me in silence.
   Perhaps I was mistaken, I thought, perhaps it isn’t her. I had seen her only once, fleetingly, and that was years ago. It was most probable that I had rung the wrong bell. The woman let go of the door and stepped to the side. She was wearing my mother’s green knitted cardigan. The wooden buttons were rather pale from washing. She saw that I was looking at the cardigan and half hid herself again behind the door. But I knew now that I was right.
   ‘Well, you knew my mother?’ I asked.
   ‘Have you come back?’ said the woman. ‘I thought that no one had come back.’
   ‘Only me.’
   A door opened and closed in the passage behind her. A musty
smell emerged.
‘I regret I cannot do anything for you.’
‘I’ve come here specially on the train. I wanted to talk to you for a moment.’
‘It is not convenient for me now,’ said the woman. ‘I can’t see you. Another time.’
She nodded and cautiously closed the door as though no one inside the house should be disturbed.
I stood where I was on the step. The curtain in front of the bay window moved. Someone stared at me and would then have asked what I wanted. ‘Oh, nothing,’ the woman would have said. ‘It was nothing.’
I looked at the name-plate again. Dorling it said, in black letters on white enamel. And on the jamb, a bit higher, the number. Number 46.
As I walked slowly back to the station I thought about my mother, who had given me the address years ago. It had been in the first half of the War. I was home for a few days and it struck me immediately that something or other about the rooms had changed. I missed various things. My mother was surprised I should have noticed so quickly. Then she told me about Mrs Dorling. I had never heard of her but apparently she was an old acquaintance of my mother, whom she hadn’t seen for years. She had suddenly turned up and renewed their contact. Since then she had come regularly.
‘Every time she leaves here she takes something home with her,’ said my mother. ‘She took all the table silver in one go. And then the antique plates that hung there. She had trouble lugging those large vases, and I’m worried she got a crick in her back from the crockery.’ My mother shook her head pityingly. ‘I would never have dared ask her. She suggested it to me herself. She even insisted. She wanted to save all my nice things. If we have to leave here we shall lose everything, she says.’
‘Have you agreed with her that she should keep everything?’ I asked.
‘As if that’s necessary,’ my mother cried. ‘It would simply be an insult to talk like that. And think about the risk she’s running, each time she goes out of our door with a full suitcase or bag.’
My mother seemed to notice that I was not entirely convinced. She looked at me reprovingly and after that we spoke no more
about it.

Meanwhile I had arrived at the station without having paid much attention to things on the way. I was walking in familiar places again for the first time since the War, but I did not want to go further than was necessary. I didn’t want to upset myself with the sight of streets and houses full of memories from a precious time.

In the train back I saw Mrs Dorling in front of me again as I had the first time I met her. It was the morning after the day my mother had told me about her. I had got up late and, coming downstairs, I saw my mother about to see someone out. A woman with a broad back.

‘There is my daughter,’ said my mother. She beckoned to me. The woman nodded and picked up the suitcase under the coat-rack. She wore a brown coat and a shapeless hat.

‘Does she live far away?’ I asked, seeing the difficulty she had going out of the house with the heavy case.

‘In Marconi Street,’ said my mother. ‘Number 46. Remember that.’

I had remembered it. But I had waited a long time to go there. Initially after the Liberation I was absolutely not interested in all that stored stuff, and naturally I was also rather afraid of it. Afraid of being confronted with things that had belonged to a connection that no longer existed; which were hidden away in cupboards and boxes and waiting in vain until they were put back in their place again; which had endured all those years because they were ‘things.’

But gradually everything became more normal again. Bread was getting to be a lighter colour, there was a bed you could sleep in unthreatened, a room with a view you were more used to glancing at each day. And one day I noticed I was curious about all the possessions that must still be at that address. I wanted to see them, touch, remember.

After my first visit in vain to Mrs Dorling’s house I decided to try a second time. Now a girl of about fifteen opened the door to me. I asked her if her mother was at home.

‘No’ she said, ‘my mother’s doing an errand.’

‘No matter,’ I said, ‘I’ll wait for her.’

I followed the girl along the passage. An old-fashioned iron Hanukkah candle-holder hung next to a mirror. We never used it because it was much more cumbersome than a single candlestick.
‘Won’t you sit down?’ asked the girl. She held open the door of the living-room and I went inside past her. I stopped, horrified. I was in a room I knew and did not know. I found myself in the midst of things I did want to see again but which oppressed me in the strange atmosphere. Or because of the tasteless way everything was arranged, because of the ugly furniture or the muggy smell that hung there, I don’t know; but I scarcely dared to look around me. The girl moved a chair. I sat down and stared at the woollen table-cloth. I rubbed it. My fingers grew warm from rubbing. I followed the lines of the pattern. Somewhere on the edge there should be a burn mark that had never been repaired.

‘My mother'll be back soon,’ said the girl. ‘I’ve already made tea for her. Will you have a cup?’

‘Thank you.’

I looked up. The girl put cups ready on the tea-table. She had a broad back. Just like her mother. She poured tea from a white pot. All it had was a gold border on the lid, I remembered. She opened a box and took some spoons out.

‘That’s a nice box.’ I heard my own voice. It was a strange voice. As though each sound was different in this room.

‘Oh, you know about them?’ She had turned round and brought me my tea. She laughed. ‘My mother says it is antique. We’ve got lots more.’ She pointed round the room. ‘See for yourself.’

I had no need to follow her hand. I knew which things she meant. I just looked at the still life over the tea-table. As a child I had always fancied the apple on the pewter plate.

‘We use it for everything,’ she said. ‘Once we even ate off the plates hanging there on the wall. I wanted to so much. But it wasn’t anything special.’

I had found the burn mark on the table-cloth. The girl looked questioningly at me.

‘Yes,’ I said, ‘you get so used to touching all these lovely things in the house, you hardly look at them any more. You only notice when something is missing, because it has to be repaired or because you have lent it, for example.’

Again I heard the unnatural sound of my voice and I went on: ‘I remember my mother once asked me if I would help her polish the silver. It was a very long time ago and I was probably

\[1\] the Feast of Lights, a Hebrew festival in December
bored that day or perhaps I had to stay at home because I was ill, as she had never asked me before. I asked her which silver she meant and she replied, surprised, that it was the spoons, forks and knives, of course. And that was the strange thing, I didn't know the cutlery we ate off every day was silver.

The girl laughed again.

‘I bet you don’t know it is either.’ I looked intently at her.

‘What we eat with?’ she asked.

‘Well, do you know?’

She hesitated. She walked to the sideboard and wanted to open a drawer. ‘I'll look. It’s in here.’

I jumped up. ‘I was forgetting the time. I must catch my train.’

She had her hand on the drawer. ‘Don’t you want to wait for my mother?’

‘No, I must go.’ I walked to the door. The girl pulled the drawer open. ‘I can find my own way.’

As I walked down the passage I heard the jingling of spoons and forks.

At the corner of the road I looked up at the name-plate. Marconi Street, it said. I had been at Number 46. The address was correct. But now I didn’t want to remember it any more. I wouldn’t go back there because the objects that are linked in your memory with the familiar life of former times instantly lose their value when, severed from them, you see them again in strange surroundings.

And what should I have done with them in a small rented room where the shreds of black-out paper still hung along the windows and no more than a handful of cutlery fitted in the narrow table drawer?

I resolved to forget the address. Of all the things I had to forget, that would be the easiest.

1. ‘Have you come back?’ said the woman. ‘I thought that no one had come back.’ Does this statement give some clue about the story? If yes, what is it?

2. The story is divided into pre-War and post-War times. What hardships do you think the girl underwent during these times?

3. Why did the narrator of the story want to forget the address?

4. ‘The Address’ is a story of human predicament that follows war. Comment.
Ranga, the accountant’s son, is one of the rare breed among the village folk who has been to the city to pursue his studies. When he returns to his village from the city of Bangalore, the crowds mill around his house to see whether he has changed or not. His ideas about marriage are now quite different—or are they?

When you see this title, some of you may ask, “Ranga’s Marriage?” Why not “Ranganatha Vivaha” or “Ranganatha Vijaya?” Well, yes. I know I could have used some other mouth-filling one like “Jagannatha Vijaya” or “Girija Kalyana.” But then, this is not about Jagannatha’s victory or Girija’s wedding. It’s about our own Ranga’s marriage and hence no fancy title. Hosahalli is our village. You must have heard of it. No? What a pity! But it is not your fault. There is no mention of it in any geography book. Those sahibs in England, writing in English, probably do not know that such a place exists, and so make no mention of it. Our own people too forget about it. You know how it is— they are like a flock of sheep. One sheep walks into a pit, the rest blindly follow it. When both, the sahibs in England and our own geographers, have not referred to it, you can not expect the poor cartographer to remember to put it on the map, can you? And so there is not even the shadow of our village on any map.

Sorry, I started somewhere and then went off in another direction. If the state of Mysore is to Bharatavarsha what the
sweet *karigadabu*\(^1\) is to a festive meal, then Hosahalli is to Mysore State what the filling is to the *karigadabu*. What I have said is absolutely true, believe me. I will not object to your questioning it but I will stick to my opinion. I am not the only one who speaks glowingly of Hosahalli. We have a doctor in our place. His name is Gundabhatta. He agrees with me. He has been to quite a few places. No, not England. If anyone asks him whether he has been there, he says, “No, *annayya*\(^2\), I have left that to you. Running around like a flea-pestered dog, is not for me. I have seen a few places in my time, though.” As a matter of fact, he has seen many.

We have some mango trees in our village. Come visit us, and I will give you a raw mango from one of them. Do not eat it. Just take a bite. The sourness is sure to go straight to your *brahmarandhra*\(^3\). I once took one such fruit home and a chutney was made out of it. All of us ate it. The cough we suffered from, after that! It was when I went for the cough medicine, that the doctor told me about the special quality of the fruit.

Just as the mango is special, so is everything else around our village. We have a creeper growing in the ever-so-fine water of the village pond. Its flowers are a feast to behold. Get two leaves from the creeper when you go to the pond for your bath, and you will not have to worry about not having leaves on which to serve the afternoon meal. You will say I am rambling. It is always like that when the subject of our village comes up. But enough. If any one of you would like to visit us, drop me a line. I will let you know where Hosahalli is and what things are like here. The best way of getting to know a place is to visit it, don’t you agree?

What I am going to tell you is something that happened ten years ago. We did not have many people who knew English, then. Our village accountant was the first one who had enough courage to send his son to Bangalore to study. It is different now. There are many who know English. During the holidays, you come across them on every street, talking in English. Those days, we did not speak in English, nor did we bring in English words while talking in Kannada. What has happened is disgraceful, believe me. The other day, I was in Rama Rao’s house when they bought a bundle

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1. a South Indian fried sweet filled with coconut and sugar
2. (in Kannada) a respectful term for an elder
3. (in Kannada) the soft part in a child’s head where skull bones join later. Here, used as an idiomatic expression to convey the extreme potency of sourness.
of firewood. Rama Rao’s son came out to pay for it. He asked the woman, “How much should I give you?” “Four pice,” she said. The boy told her he did not have any “change”, and asked her to come the next morning. The poor woman did not understand the English word “change” and went away muttering to herself. I too did not know. Later, when I went to Ranga’s house and asked him, I understood what it meant.

This priceless commodity, the English language, was not so widespread in our village a decade ago. That was why Ranga’s homecoming was a great event. People rushed to his doorstep announcing, “The accountant’s son has come,” “The boy who had gone to Bangalore for his studies is here, it seems,” and “Come, Ranga is here. Let’s go and have a look.”

Attracted by the crowd, I too went and stood in the courtyard and asked, “Why have all these people come? There’s no performing monkey here.”

A boy, a fellow without any brains, said, loud enough for everyone to hear, “What are you doing here, then?” A youngster, immature and without any manners. Thinking that all these things were now of the past, I kept quiet.

Seeing so many people there, Ranga came out with a smile on his face. Had we all gone inside, the place would have turned into what people call the Black Hole of Calcutta. Thank God it did not. Everyone was surprised to see that Ranga was the same as he had been six months ago, when he had first left our village. An old lady who was near him, ran her hand over his chest, looked into his eyes and said, “The janewara is still there. He hasn’t lost his caste.” She went away soon after that. Ranga laughed.

Once they realised that Ranga still had the same hands, legs, eyes and nose, the crowd melted away, like a lump of sugar in a child’s mouth. I continued to stand there. After everyone had gone, I asked, “How are you, Rangappa? Is everything well with you?” It was only then that Ranga noticed me. He came near me and did a namaskara respectfully, saying, “I am all right, with your blessings.”

I must draw your attention to this aspect of Ranga’s character. He knew when it would be to his advantage to talk to someone and rightly assessed people’s worth. As for his namaskara to me, he did not do it like any present-day boy—with his head up towards the sun, standing stiff like a pole without joints, jerking

\(^4\) (in Kannada) the sacred thread worn by Brahmins
his body as if it was either a wand or a walking stick. Nor did he merely fold his hands. He bent low to touch my feet. “May you get married soon,” I said, blessing him. After exchanging a few pleasantries, I left.

That afternoon, when I was resting, Ranga came to my house with a couple of oranges in his hand. A generous, considerate fellow. It would be a fine thing to have him marry, settle down and be of service to society, I thought.

For a while we talked about this and that. Then I came to the point. “Rangappa, when do you plan to get married?”

“I am not going to get married now,” he said.

“Why not?”

“I need to find the right girl. I know an officer who got married only six months ago. He is about thirty and his wife is twenty-five, I am told. They will be able to talk lovingly to each other. Let’s say I married a very young girl. She may take my words spoken in love as words spoken in anger. Recently, a troupe in Bangalore staged the play *Shakuntala*. There is no question of Dushyantha falling in love with Shakuntala if she were young, like the present-day brides, is there? What would have happened to Kalidasa’s play? If one gets married, it should be to a girl who is mature. Otherwise, one should remain a bachelor. That’s why I am not marrying now.”

“Is there any other reason?”

“A man should marry a girl he admires. What we have now are arranged marriages. How can one admire a girl with milk stains on one side of her face and wetness on the other, or so young that she doesn’t even know how to bite her fingers?”

“One a neem fruit, the other, a bittergourd.”

“Exactly!” Ranga said, laughing.

I was distressed that the boy who I thought would make a good husband, had decided to remain a bachelor. After chatting for a little longer, Ranga left. I made up my mind right then, that I would get him married.

Rama Rao’s niece, a pretty girl of eleven, had come to stay with him. She was from a big town, so she knew how to play the veena and the harmonium. She also had a sweet voice. Both her parents had died, and her uncle had brought her home. Ranga was just the boy for her, and she, the most suitable bride for him.

Since I was a frequent visitor to Rama Rao’s place, the girl
was quite free with me. I completely forgot to mention her name! Ratna, it was. The very next morning I went to their house and told Rama Rao’s wife, “I’ll send some buttermilk for you. Ask Ratna to fetch it.”

Ratna came. It was a Friday, so she was wearing a grand saree. I told her to sit in my room and requested her to sing a song. I sent for Ranga. While she was singing the song—\textit{Krishnamurthy, in front of my eyes} — Ranga reached the door. He stopped at the threshold. He did not want the singing to stop, but was curious to see the singer. Carefully, he peeped in. The light coming into the room was blocked. Ratna looked up and seeing a stranger there, abruptly stopped.

Suppose you buy the best quality mango. You eat it slowly, savouring its peel, before biting into the juicy flesh. You do not want to waste any part of it. Before you take another bite, the fruit slips out of your hand and falls to the ground. How do you feel? Ranga’s face showed the same disappointment when the singing stopped.

“You sent for me?” he asked as he came in and sat on a chair.

Ratna stood at a distance, her head lowered. Ranga repeatedly glanced at her. Once, our eyes met, and he looked very embarrassed. No one spoke for a long while.

“It was my coming in that stopped the singing. Let me leave.”

Words, mere words! The fellow said he would leave but did not make a move. How can one expect words to match actions in these days of Kaliyuga?

Ratna ran inside, overcome by shyness.

After a while, Ranga asked, “Who is that girl, swami?”

“Who’s that inside?” the lion wanted to know. The he-goat who had taken shelter in the temple replied, “Does it matter who I am? I am a poor animal who has already eaten nine lions. I have vowed to eat one more. Tell me, are you male or female?” The lion fled the place in fear, it seems.

Like the he-goat, I said, “What does it matter to either of us who she is? I’m already married and you aren’t the marrying kind.”

Very hopefully, he asked, “She isn’t married, then?” His voice did not betray his excitement but I knew it was there.

“She was married a year ago.”

His face shrivelled like a roasted brinjal. After a while, Ranga left, saying, “I must go, I have work at home.”
I went to our Shastri the next morning and told him, “Keep everything ready to read the stars. I’ll come later.” I tutored him in all that I wanted him to say.

I found no change in Ranga when I met him that afternoon. “What’s the matter? You seem to be lost in thought,” I said.

“Nothing, nothing’s wrong, believe me.”

“Headache? Come, let’s go and see a doctor.”

“I have no headache. I’m my usual self.”

“I went through the same thing when the process of choosing a girl for me was going on. But I don’t think that that could be a reason for your present condition.”

Ranga stared at me.

“Come, let’s go and see Shastri,” I suggested. “We will find out whether Guru and Shani are favourable for you or not.”
Ranga accompanied me without any protest. As soon as Shastri saw me, he exclaimed, “What a surprise, Shyama! Haven’t seen you for a long time.”

Shyama is none other than your servant, the narrator of this tale.

I got angry and shouted, “What? Only this morning…” Shastri completed my sentence, “You finished all your work and are now free to visit me.” Had he not done so, I would have ruined our plan by bursting like grains that are kept in the sun to dry. I was extremely careful of what I said afterwards.

Shastri turned to Ranga. “When did the young son of our accountant clerk come home? What can I do for him? It’s very rarely that he visits us.”

“Take out your paraphernalia. Our Rangappa seems to have something on his mind. Can you tell us what’s worrying him? Shall we put your science of astrology to the test?”

There was authority in my voice as I spoke to Shastri. He took out two sheets of paper, some cowries and a book of palmyra leaves, saying, “Ours is an ancient science, ayya. There’s a story to it… But I won’t tell you that story now. This is not a harikatha which allows you to tell a story within a story… You may get bored. I’ll tell it to you some other time.”

Shastri moved his lips fast as he counted on his fingers and then asked, “What’s your star?” Ranga didn’t know. “Never mind,” Shastri indicated with a shake of his head. He did some more calculations before saying in a serious tone, “It’s about a girl.”

I had been controlling my laughter all this while. But now I burst out laughing. I turned to Ranga. “Exactly what I had said.”

“Who is the girl?” It was your humble servant who asked the question.

Shastri thought for a while before replying, “She probably has the name of something found in the ocean.”

“Kamala?”

“Maybe.”

“Could it be Pachchi, moss?”

“Must it be moss if it’s not Kamala? Why not pearl or ratna, the precious stone?”

“Ratna? The girl in Rama Rao’s house is Ratna. Tell me, is there any chance of our negotiations bearing fruit?”

“Definitely,” he said, after thinking for some time.

There was surprise on Ranga’s face. And some happiness. I
noticed it.

“But that girl is married...” I said. Then I turned to him. His face had fallen.

“I don’t know all that. There may be some other girl who is suitable. I only told you what our shastra indicated,” Shastri said.

We left the place. On the way, we passed by Rama Rao’s house. Ratna was standing at the door. I went in alone and came out a minute later.

“Surprising. This girl isn’t married, it seems. Someone told me the other day that she was. What Shastri told us has turned out to be true after all! But Rangappa, I can’t believe that you have been thinking of her. Swear on the name of Madhavacharya and tell me, is it true what Shastri said?”

I do not know whether anyone else would have been direct. Ranga admitted, “There’s greater truth in that shastra than we imagine. What he said is absolutely true.”

Shastri was at the well when I went there that evening. I said, “So Shastrigale, you repeated everything I had taught you without giving rise to any suspicion. What a marvellous shastra yours is!” He didn’t like it at all.

“What are you saying? What you said to me was what I could have found out myself from the shastras. Don’t forget, I developed on the hints you had given me.”

Tell me, is this what a decent man says?

Rangappa had come the other day to invite me for dinner. “What’s the occasion?” I asked.

“It’s Shyama’s birthday. He is three.”

“It’s not a nice name—Shyama,” I said. “I’m like a dark piece of oil-cake. Why did you have to give that golden child of yours such a name? What a childish couple you are, Ratna and you! I know, I know, it is the English custom of naming the child after someone you like... Your wife is eight months pregnant now. Who’s there to help your mother to cook?”

“My sister has come with her.”

I went there for dinner. Shyama rushed to me when I walked in and put his arms round my legs. I kissed him on his cheek and placed a ring on his tiny little finger.

Allow me to take leave of you, reader. I am always here, ready

5 an exponent of Vedantic philosophy from South India
to serve you.
  You were not bored, I hope?
1. Comment on the influence of English—the language and the way of life—on Indian life as reflected in the story. What is the narrator’s attitude to English?
2. Astrologers’ perceptions are based more on hearsay and conjecture than what they learn from the study of the stars. Comment with reference to the story.
3. Indian society has moved a long way from the way the marriage is arranged in the story. Discuss.

4. What kind of a person do you think the narrator is?
Albert Einstein (1879–1955) is regarded as the greatest physicist since Newton. In the following extract from *The Young Einstein*, the well-known biographer, Patrick Pringle, describes the circumstances which led to Albert Einstein’s expulsion from a German school.

“In what year, Einstein,” asked the history teacher, “did the Prussians defeat the French at Waterloo?”

“I don’t know, sir,”

“Why don’t you know? You’ve been told it often enough.”

“I must have forgotten.”

“Did you ever try to learn?” asked Mr Braun.

“No, sir,” Albert replied with his usual unthinking honesty.

“Why not?”

“I can’t see any point in learning dates. One can always look them up in a book.”

Mr Braun was speechless for a few moments.

“You amaze me, Einstein,” he said at last. “Don’t you realise that one can always look most things up in books? That applies to all the facts you learn at school.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then I suppose you don’t see any point in learning facts.”

“Frankly, sir, I don’t,” said Albert.

“Then you don’t believe in education at all?”
“Oh, yes, sir, I do. I don’t think learning facts is education.”

“In that case,” said the history teacher with heavy sarcasm, “perhaps you will be so kind as to tell the class the Einstein theory of education.”

Albert flushed.

“I think it’s not facts that matter, but ideas,” he said. “I don’t see the point in learning the dates of battles, or even which of the armies killed more men. I’d be more interested in learning why those soldiers were trying to kill each other.”

“That’s enough,” Mr Braun’s eyes were cold and cruel. “We don’t want a lecture from you, Einstein. You will stay in for an extra period today, although I don’t imagine it will do you much good. It won’t do the school any good, either. You are a disgrace. I don’t know why you continue to come.”

“It’s not my wish, sir,” Albert pointed out.

“Then you are an ungrateful boy and ought to be ashamed of yourself. I suggest you ask your father to take you away.”

Albert felt miserable when he left school that afternoon; not that it had been a bad day — most days were bad now, anyway — but because he had to go back to the hateful place the next morning. He only wished his father would take him away, but there was no point in even asking. He knew what the answer would be: he would have to stay until he had taken his diploma.

Going back to his lodgings did not cheer him up. His father had so little money to spare that Albert had been found a room in one of the poorest quarters of Munich. He did not mind the bad food and lack of comfort, or even the dirt and squalor, but he hated the atmosphere of slum violence. His landlady beat her children regularly, and every Saturday her husband came drunk and beat her.

“But at least you have a room of your own, which is more than I can say,” said Yuri when he called round in the evening.

“At least you live among civilised human beings, even if they are all poor students,” said Albert.

“They are not all civilised,” Yuri replied. “Did you not hear that one of them was killed last week in a duel?”

“And what happens to the one who killed him?”

“Nothing, of course. He is even proud of it. His only worry is that the authorities have told him not to fight any more duels. He’s upset about this because he hasn’t a single scar on his face to wear for the rest of his life as a badge of honour.”

“Ugh!” exclaimed Albert. “And these are the students.”

“Well, you’ll be a student one day,” said Yuri.
“I doubt it,” said Albert glumly. “I don’t think I’ll ever pass the exams for the school diploma.”

He told his cousin Elsa the same next time she came to Munich. Normally she lived in Berlin, where her father had a business.

“I’m sure you could learn enough to pass the exams, Albert, if you tried,” she said, “I know lots of boys who are much more stupid than you are, who get through. They say you don’t have to know anything—you don’t have to understand what you’re taught, just be able to repeat it in the exams.”

“That’s the whole trouble,” said Albert. “I’m no good at learning things by heart.”

“You don’t need to be good at it. Anyone can learn like a parrot. You just don’t try. And yet I always see you with a book under your arm,” added Elsa. “What is the one you’re reading?”

“A book on geology.”

“Geology? Rocks and things? Do you learn that?”

“No. We have hardly any science at school.”

“Then why are you studying it?”

“Because I like it. Isn’t that a good enough reason?”

Elsa sighed.

“You’re right, of course, Albert,” she said. “But it won’t help with your diploma.”

Apart from books on science his only comfort was music, and he played his violin regularly until his landlady asked him to stop.

“That wailing gets on my nerves,” she said. “There’s enough noise in this house, with all the kids howling.”

Albert was tempted to point out that most of the time it was she who made them howl, but he decided it was better to say nothing.

“I must get away from here,” he told Yuri, after six months alone in Munich. “It is absurd that I should go on like this. In the end it will turn out I have been wasting my father’s money and everyone’s time. It will be better for all if I stop now.”

“And then what will you do?” Yuri asked.

“I don’t know. If I go to Milan I’m afraid my father will send me back. Unless...” His eyes gleamed with a sudden idea. “Yuri, do you know any friendly doctors?”

“I know a lot of medical students, and some of them are friendly,” said Yuri. “Doctor, no. I’ve never had enough money to go to one. Why?”

“Suppose,” said Albert, “that I had a nervous breakdown. Suppose a doctor would say it’s bad for me to go to school, and I need to get right away from it?”
“I can’t imagine a doctor saying that,” said Yuri.
“I must try,” said Albert, “to find a doctor who specialises in nerves.”
“There are plenty of them,” Yuri told him. He hesitated for a moment, and then added, rather reluctantly, “I’ll ask some of the students if they know one, if you like.”
“Will you? Oh, thank you, Yuri,” Albert’s eyes were shining.
“Wait a moment, I haven’t found one yet...”
“Oh, but you will!”
“And if I do I don’t know if he’ll be willing to help you...”
“He will, he will,” declared Albert. “I’m going to have a real nervous breakdown, to make it easier for him.” He laughed merrily.
“I’ve never seen you looking less nervous,” remarked Yuri.
“A day or two at school will soon put that right.” Albert assured him.
Certainly he had lost his high spirits when Yuri saw him next.
“I can’t stand it any longer,” he said, “I really shall have a nervous breakdown that will satisfy any doctor.”
“Keep it up, then,” said Yuri. “I’ve found a doctor for you.”
“You have?” Albert’s face lit up. “Oh, good. When can I see him?”
“I have an appointment for you for tomorrow evening.” Yuri said. “Here’s the address.”
He handed Albert a piece of paper.
“Doctor Ernst Weil — is he a specialist in nervous troubles?” asked Albert.
“Not exactly,” Yuri admitted. “As a matter of fact he only qualified as a doctor last week. You may even be his first patient!”
“You knew him as a student, then?”
“I’ve known Ernst for years.” Yuri hesitated for a few moments.
“He’s not a fool,” he warned Albert.
“What do you mean?”
“Don’t try to pull the wool over his eyes¹, that’s all. Be frank with him, but don’t pretend you’ve got what you haven’t. Not that you’d deceive anyone.” Yuri added. “You’re the world’s worst liar.”
Albert spent the next day wondering what to tell the doctor. When the time arrived for his appointment he had worried over it so much that he really was quite nervous.
“I don’t really know how to describe my trouble, Dr Weil,”

¹cheat or deceive him
he began.

“Don’t try,” said the young doctor with a friendly smile. “Yuri has already given me a history of the case.”

“Oh! What did he say?”

“Only that you want me to think you have had a nervous breakdown, and say that you mustn’t go back to that school.”

“Oh dear.” Albert’s face fell. “He shouldn’t have told you that.”

“Why not? Isn’t it true, then?”

“Yes, that’s the trouble. Now you’ll say there’s nothing wrong with me, and you’ll tell me to go back to school.”

“Don’t be too sure of that,” said the doctor. “As a matter of fact I am pretty sure you are in a nervous state about that school.”

“But I haven’t told you anything about it,” said Albert, wide-eyed. “How can you know that?”

“Because you wouldn’t have come to see me about this if you hadn’t been pretty close to a nervous breakdown, that’s why. Now,” said the doctor briskly, “if I certify that you have had a nervous breakdown, and must stay away from school for a while, what will you do?”

“I’ll go to Italy,” said Albert. “To Milan, where my parents are.”

“And what will you do there?”

“I’ll try to get into an Italian college or institute.”

“How can you, without a diploma?”

“I’ll ask my mathematics teacher to give me something about my work, and perhaps that will be enough. I’ve learnt all the maths they teach at school, and a bit more,” he added when Dr Weil looked doubtful.

“Well, it’s up to you,” he said. “I doubt if it will come off, but I can see you’re not doing yourself or anyone else much good by staying here. How long would you like me to say you should stay away from school? Would six months be all right?”

“This is very kind of you.”

“It’s nothing. I’ve only just stopped being a student myself, so I know how you feel. Here you are.” Dr Weil handed him the certificate, “And the best of luck.”

“How much...”

“Nothing, if you have anything to spare, invite Yuri to a meal. He’s a good friend of mine, and yours too, I think,”

Albert had no money to spare, but he pretended he had and took Yuri out to supper.

“Isn’t it wonderful?” he said after showing Yuri the certificate.

“Yes, it’s fine,” Yuri agreed. “Six months is a good period.
This way you won’t actually be leaving the school so if the worst comes to the worst you’ll be able to come back and carry on for your diploma.”

“I’ll never go back to that place,” Albert assured him. “I’m going to take this certificate to the head teacher tomorrow, and that will be the end of it.”

“Don’t forget to get a reference in writing from your mathematics teacher first,” Yuri reminded him.

Mr Koch willingly gave Albert the reference he wanted.

“If I say I can’t teach you any more, and probably you’ll soon be able to teach me, will that be all right?” he asked.

“That’s saying too much, sir,” said Albert.

“It’s only the truth. But alright. I’ll put it more seriously.”

It was still a glowing reference, and Mr Koch made the point that Albert was ready immediately to enter a college or institute for the study of higher mathematics.

“I’m sorry you’re leaving us, although you’re wasting your time in my class,” he said.

“It’s almost the only class where I’m not wasting my time,” said Albert. “But how did you know I’m leaving, sir?”

“You wouldn’t have asked me for this reference otherwise.”

“I thought you’d wonder...”

“There’s nothing to wonder about, Einstein. I knew you were going to leave before you knew yourself.”

Albert was puzzled. What did the teacher mean?

He soon found out. Before he had a chance to ask for an interview with the head teacher, he was summoned to the head’s room.

“Well, it saves me the trouble of having to wait an hour or two outside,” he thought.

He hardly bothered to wonder why he had been sent for, but vaguely supposed he was to be punished again for bad work and laziness. Well, he had finished with punishments.

“I’m not going to punish you,” the head teacher said, to Albert’s surprise. “Your work is terrible, and I’m not prepared to have you here any longer, Einstein. I want you to leave the school now.”

“Leave school now?” repeated Albert, dazed.

“That is what I said.”

“You mean,” said Albert, “that I am to be expelled?”

“You can take it that way if you wish, Einstein.” The head teacher was not mincing words. “The simplest thing will be for you to go of your own accord, and then the question won’t arise.”
“But,” said Albert, “what crime have I committed?”

“Young presence in the classroom makes it impossible for the teacher to teach and for the other pupils to learn. You refuse to learn, you are in constant rebellion, and no serious work can be done while you are there.”

Albert felt the medical certificate almost burning a hole in his pocket.

“I was going to leave, anyway,” he said.

“Then we are in agreement at least, Einstein,” the head said. For a moment Albert was tempted to tell the man what he thought of him and of his school. Then he stopped himself. Without another word, holding his head high, he stalked out.

“Shut the door after you!” shouted the head.

Albert ignored him.

He walked straight on, out of the school where he had spent five miserable years, without turning his head to give it a last look. He could not think of anyone he wanted to say goodbye to.

Indeed, Yuri was almost the only person in Munich he felt like seeing before he left the town he had come to hate almost as much as the school. Elsa was back in Berlin, and he had no other real friends.

“Goodbye—and good luck,” said Yuri when he left. “You are going to a wonderful country, I think. I hope you will be happier there.”

1. What do you understand of Einstein’s nature from his conversations with his history teacher, his mathematics teacher and the head teacher?

2. The school system often curbs individual talents. Discuss.

3. How do you distinguish between information gathering and insight formation?
The following play is a humorous portrayal of the status of the mother in a family. Let’s read on to see how Mrs Pearson’s family reacts when she tries to stand up for her own rights.

**Characters**

**Mrs Annie Pearson**  
**George Pearson**  
**Doris Pearson**  
**Cyril Pearson**  
**Mrs Fitzgerald**

The action takes place in the living-room of the Pearson’s house in a London suburb.

**Time**: The Present

**Scene**: The living-room of the Pearson family. Afternoon. It is a comfortably furnished, much lived-in room in a small suburban semi-detached villa. If necessary only one door need be used, but it is better with two—one up left leading to the front door and the stairs and the other in the right wall leading to the kitchen and the back door. There can be a muslin-covered window in the left wall and possibly one in the right wall, too. The fireplace is assumed to be in the fourth wall. There is a settee up right, an armchair down left and one down right. A small table with two chairs on either side of it stands at the centre.
When the curtain rises it is an afternoon in early autumn and the stage can be well lit. Mrs Pearson at right, and Mrs Fitzgerald at left, are sitting opposite each other at the small table, on which are two tea-cups and saucers and the cards with which Mrs Fitzgerald has been telling Mrs Pearson's fortune. Mrs Pearson is a pleasant but worried-looking woman in her forties. Mrs Fitzgerald is older, heavier and a strong and sinister personality. She is smoking. It is very important that these two should have sharply contrasting voices — Mrs Pearson speaking in a light, flurried sort of tone, with a touch of suburban Cockney perhaps; and Mrs Fitzgerald with a deep voice, rather Irish perhaps.

Mrs Fitzgerald: [collecting up the cards] And that's all I can tell you, Mrs Pearson. Could be a good fortune. Could be a bad one. All depends on yourself now. Make up your mind — and there it is.

Mrs Pearson: Yes, thank you, Mrs Fitzgerald. I'm much obliged, I'm sure. It's wonderful having a real fortune-teller living next door. Did you learn that out East, too?
**Mrs Fitzgerald:** I did. Twelve years I had of it, with my old man rising to be Lieutenant Quartermaster. He learnt a lot, and I learnt a lot more. But will you make up your mind now, Mrs Pearson dear? Put your foot down, once an’ for all, an’ be the mistress of your own house an’ the boss of your own family.

**Mrs Pearson:** [smiling apologetically] That’s easier said than done. Besides I’m so fond of them even if they are so thoughtless and selfish. They don’t mean to be...

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** [cutting in] Maybe not. But it’ud be better for them if they learnt to treat you properly...

**Mrs Pearson:** Yes, I suppose it would, in a way.

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** No doubt about it at all. Who’s the better for being spoilt—grown man, lad or girl? Nobody. You think it does ‘em good when you run after them all the time, take their orders as if you were the servant in the house, stay at home every night while they go out enjoying themselves? Never in all your life. It’s the ruin of them as well as you. Husbands, sons, daughters should be taking notice of wives an’ mothers, not giving ‘em orders an’ treating ‘em like dirt. An’ don’t tell me you don’t know what I mean, for I know more than you’ve told me.

**Mrs Pearson:** [dubiously] I—keep dropping a hint...

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** Hint? It’s more than hints your family needs, Mrs Pearson.

**Mrs Pearson:** [dubiously] I suppose it is. But I do hate any unpleasantness. And it’s so hard to know where to start. I keep making up my mind to have it out with them but somehow I don’t know how to begin. [She glances at her watch or at a clock] Oh—good gracious! Look at the time. Nothing ready and they’ll be home any minute and probably all in a hurry to go out again.
As she is about to rise, Mrs Fitzgerald reaches out across the table and pulls her down.

Mrs Fitzgerald: Let 'em wait or look after themselves for once. This is where your foot goes down. Start now. [She lights a cigarette from the one she has just finished.]

Mrs Pearson: [embarrassed] Mrs Fitzgerald—I know you mean well—in fact, I agree with you—but I just can’t—and it’s no use you trying to make me. If I promise you I’d really have it out with them, I know I wouldn’t be able to keep my promise.

Mrs Fitzgerald: Then let me do it.

Mrs Pearson: [flustered] Oh no—thank you very much, Mrs Fitzgerald—but that wouldn’t do at all. It couldn’t possibly be somebody else—they’d resent it at once and wouldn’t listen—and really I couldn’t blame them. I know I ought to do it—but you see how it is? [She looks apologetically across the table, smiling rather miserably.]

Mrs Fitzgerald: [coolly] You haven’t got the idea.

Mrs Pearson: [bewildered] Oh—I’m sorry—I thought you asked me to let you do it.

Mrs Fitzgerald: I did. But not as me—as you.

Mrs Pearson: But—I don’t understand. You couldn’t be me.


Mrs Pearson: How do you know? Ever tried it?

Mrs Pearson: No, of course not...

Mrs Fitzgerald: [coolly] I have. Not for some time but it still ought to work. Won’t last long, but long enough for what we want to do. Learnt it out East, of course, where they’re up to all these tricks. [She holds her hand out across the table, keeping the cigarette in her mouth] Gimme your hands, dear.

Mrs Pearson: [dubiously] Well—I don’t know—is it right?

Mrs Fitzgerald: It’s your only chance. Give me your hands
an’ keep quiet a minute. Just don’t think about anything. [Taking her hands] Now look at me. [They stare at each other. Muttering] Arshatta dum—arshtatta lam—arshtatta lamdumbona...

[This little scene should be acted very carefully. We are to assume that the personalities change bodies. After the spell has been spoken, both women, still grasping hands, go lax, as if the life were out of them. Then both come to life, but with the personality of the other. Each must try to adopt the voice and mannerisms of the other. So now Mrs Pearson is bold and dominating and Mrs Fitzgerald is nervous and fluttering.]

**Mrs Pearson:** [now with Mrs Fitzgerald’s personality] See what I mean, dear? [She notices the cigarette] Here—you don’t want that. [She snatches it and puts it in her own mouth, puffing contentedly.]

[Mrs Fitzgerald, now with Mrs Pearson’s personality, looks down at herself and sees that her body has changed and gives a scream of fright.]

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** [with Mrs Pearson’s personality] Oh—it’s happened.

**Mrs Pearson:** [complacently] Of course it’s happened. Very neat. Didn’t know I had it in me.

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** [alarmed] But whatever shall I do, Mrs Fitzgerald? George and the children can’t see me like this.

**Mrs Pearson:** [grimly] They aren’t going to—that’s the point. They’ll have me to deal with—only they won’t know it.

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** [still alarmed] But what if we can’t change back? It’d be terrible.

**Mrs Pearson:** Here—steady, Mrs Pearson—if you had to live my life it wouldn’t be so bad. You’d have more fun as me than you’ve had as you.

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** Yes—but I don’t want to be anybody else...

**Mrs Pearson:** Now—stop worrying. It’s easier changing back—I can do it any time we want...

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** Well—do it now...

**Mrs Pearson:** Not likely. I’ve got to deal with your family first. That’s the idea, isn’t it? Didn’t know
how to begin with ‘em, you said. Well. I’ll show you.

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** But what am I going to do?

**Mrs Pearson:** Go into my house for a bit—there’s nobody there—then pop back and see how we’re doing. You ought to enjoy it. Better get off now before one of ‘em comes.

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** *nervously rising* Yes—I suppose that’s best. You’re sure it’ll be all right?

**Mrs Pearson:** *chuckling* It’ll be wonderful. Now off you go, dear.

[Mrs Fitzgerald crosses and hurries out through the door right. Left to herself, Mrs Pearson smokes away—lighting another cigarette—and begins laying out the cards for patience on the table.

After a few moments Doris Pearson comes bursting in left. She is a pretty girl in her early twenties, who would be pleasant enough if she had not been spoilt.]

**Doris:** *before she has taken anything in* Mum—you’ll have to iron my yellow silk. I must wear it tonight. *She now sees what is happening, and is astounded.* What are you doing? *She moves down left centre.*

[Mrs Pearson now uses her ordinary voice, but her manner is not fluttering and apologetic but cool and incisive.]

**Mrs Pearson:** *not even looking up* What d’you think I’m doing—whitewashing the ceiling?

**Doris:** *still astounded* But you’re smoking!

**Mrs Pearson:** That’s right, dear. No law against it, is there?

**Doris:** But I thought you didn’t smoke.

**Mrs Pearson:** Then you thought wrong.

**Doris:** Are we having tea in the kitchen?

**Mrs Pearson:** Have it where you like, dear.

**Doris:** *angrily* Do you mean it isn’t ready?

**Mrs Pearson:** Yours isn’t. I’ve had all I want. Might go out later and get a square meal at the Clarendon.

**Doris:** *hardly believing her ears* Who might?

**Mrs Pearson:** I might. Who d’you think?

**Doris:** *staring at her* Mum—what’s the matter with you?
Mrs Pearson: Don’t be silly.
Doris: [indignantly] It’s not me that’s being silly—and I must say it’s a bit much when I’ve been working hard all day and you can’t even bother to get my tea ready. Did you hear what I said about my yellow silk?
Mrs Pearson: No. Don’t you like it now? I never did.
Doris: [indignantly] Of course I like it. And I’m going to wear it tonight. So I want it ironed.
Mrs Pearson: Want it ironed? What d’you think it’s going to do—iron itself?
Doris: No, you’re going to iron it for me... You always do.
Mrs Pearson: Well, this time I don’t. And don’t talk rubbish to me about working hard. I’ve a good idea how much you do, Doris Pearson. I put in twice the hours you do, and get no wages nor thanks for it. Why are you going to wear your yellow silk? Where are you going?
Doris: [sulkily] Out with Charlie Spence.
Mrs Pearson: Why?
Doris: [wildly] Why? Why? What’s the matter with you? Why shouldn’t I go out with Charlie Spence if he asks me and I want to? Any objections? Go on—you might as well tell me...
Mrs Pearson: [severely] Can’t you find anybody better? I wouldn’t be seen dead with Charlie Spence. Buck teeth and half-witted...
Doris: He isn’t...
Mrs Pearson: When I was your age I’d have found somebody better than Charlie Spence—or given myself up as a bad job.
Doris: [nearly in tears] Oh—shut up!

[Doris runs out left. Mrs Pearson chuckles and begins putting the cards together.

After a moment Cyril Pearson enters left. He is the masculine counterpart of Doris.]

Cyril: [briskly] Hello—Mum. Tea ready?
Mrs Pearson: No.
Cyril: [moving to the table; annoyed] Why not?
Mrs Pearson: [coolly] I couldn’t bother.

Cyril: Feeling off-colour or something?

Mrs Pearson: Never felt better in my life.

Cyril: [aggressively] What’s the idea then?

Mrs Pearson: Just a change.

Cyril: [briskly] Well, snap out of it, Ma—and get cracking. Haven’t too much time.

[Cyril is about to go when Mrs Pearson’s voice checks him.]

Mrs Pearson: I’ve plenty of time.

Cyril: Yes, but I haven’t. Got a busy night tonight. [moving left to the door] Did you put my things out?


Cyril: [moving to the table; protesting] Now—look. When I asked you this morning, you promised. You said you’d have to look through ‘em first in case there was any mending.

Mrs Pearson: Yes—well now I’ve decided I don’t like mending.

Cyril: That’s a nice way to talk—what would happen if we all talked like that?

Mrs Pearson: You all do talk like that. If there’s something at home you don’t want to do, you don’t do it. If it’s something at your work, you get the Union to bar it. Now all that’s happened is that I’ve joined the movement.

Cyril: [staggered] I don’t get this, Mum. What’s going on?

Mrs Pearson: [laconic and sinister] Changes.

[Doris enters left. She is in the process of dressing and is now wearing a wrap. She looks pale and red-eyed.]

Mrs Pearson: You look terrible. I wouldn’t wear that face even for Charlie Spence.

Doris: [moving above the table; angrily] Oh—shut up about Charlie Spence. And anyhow I’m not ready yet—just dressing. And if I do look terrible, it’s your fault—you made me cry.

Cyril: [curious] Why—what did she do?

Doris: Never you mind.
Mrs Pearson: [rising and preparing to move to the kitchen] Have we any stout left? I can’t remember.

Cyril: Bottle or two, I think. But you don’t want stout now.

Mrs Pearson: [moving left slowly] I do.

Cyril: What for?

Mrs Pearson: [turning at the door] To drink—you clot!

[Mrs Pearson exits right. Instantly Cyril and Doris are in a huddle, close together at left centre, rapidly whispering.]

Doris: Has she been like that with you, too?

Cyril: Yes—no tea ready—couldn’t care less...

Doris: Well, I’m glad it’s both of us. I thought I’d done something wrong.

Cyril: So did I. But it’s her of course...

Doris: She was smoking and playing cards when I came in. I couldn’t believe my eyes.

Cyril: I asked her if she was feeling off-colour and she said she wasn’t.

Doris: Well, she’s suddenly all different. An’ that’s what made me cry. It wasn’t what she said but the way she said it—an’ the way she looked.

Cyril: Haven’t noticed that. She looks just the same to me.

Doris: She doesn’t to me. Do you think she could have hit her head or something—y’know—an’ got—what is it?—y’know...

Cyril: [staggered] Do you mean she’s barmy?

Doris: No, you fathead. Y’know—concussion. She might have.

Cyril: Sounds far-fetched.

Doris: Well, she’s far-fetched, if you ask me. [She suddenly begins to giggle.]

Cyril: Now then—what is it?

Doris: If she’s going to be like this when Dad comes home... [She giggles again.]

Cyril: [beginning to guffaw] I’m staying in for that—two front dress circles for the first house...

[Mrs Pearson enters right, carrying a bottle of stout and a half-filled]
glass. Cyril and Doris try to stop their guffawing and giggling, but they are not quick enough. Mrs Pearson regards them with contempt.

**Mrs Pearson** [coldly] You two are always talking about being grown-up—why don’t you both try for once to be your age? [She moves to the settee and sits.]

**Cyril:** Can’t we laugh now?
**Mrs Pearson** Yes, if it’s funny. Go on, tell me. Make me laugh. I could do with it.

**Doris:** Y’know you never understand our jokes, Mum...

**Mrs Pearson:** I was yawning at your jokes before you were born, Doris.

**Doris:** [almost tearful again] What’s making you
talk like this? What have we done?

**Mrs Pearson:**  
[**promptly**] Nothing but come in, ask for something, go out again, then come back when there’s nowhere else to go.

**Cyril:**  
[**aggressively**] Look—if you won’t get tea ready, then I’ll find something to eat myself...

**Mrs Pearson:**  
Why not? Help yourself. *[She takes a sip of stout.]*

**Cyril:**  
[**turning on his way to the kitchen**] Mind you, I think it’s a bit thick. I’ve been working all day.

**Doris:**  
Same here.

**Mrs Pearson:**  
[**calmly**] Eight hour day!

**Cyril:**  
Yes—eight hour day— an’ don’t forget it.

**Mrs Pearson:**  
I’ve done my eight hours.

**Cyril:**  
That’s different.

**Doris:**  
Of course it is.

**Mrs Pearson:**  
[**calmly**] It was. Now it isn’t. Forty-hour week for all now. Just watch it at the weekend when I have my two days off.

*[Doris and Cyril exchange alarmed glances. Then they stare at Mrs Pearson who returns their look calmly.]*

**Cyril:**  
Must grab something to eat. Looks as if I’ll need to keep my strength up. *[Cyril exits to the kitchen.]*

**Doris:**  
[**moving to the settee; anxiously**] Mummy, you don’t mean you’re not going to do anything on Saturday and Sunday?

**Mrs Pearson:**  
[**airily**] No, I wouldn’t go that far. I might make a bed or two and do a bit of cooking as a favour. Which means, of course, I’ll have to be asked very nicely and thanked for everything and generally made a fuss of. But any of you forty-hour-a-weekers who expect to be waited on hand and foot on Saturday and Sunday, with no thanks for it, are in for a nasty disappointment. Might go off for the week-end perhaps.

**Doris:**  
[**aghast**] Go off for the week-end?

**Mrs Pearson:**  
Why not? I could do with a change. Stuck
here day after day, week after week. If I don’t need a change, who does?

Doris: But where would you go, who would you go with?

Mrs Pearson: That’s my business. You don’t ask me where you should go and who you should go with, do you?

Doris: That’s different.

Mrs Pearson: The only difference is that I’m a lot older and better able to look after myself, so it’s you who should do the asking.

Doris: Did you fall or hit yourself with something?

Mrs Pearson: [coldly] No. But I’ll hit you with something, girl, if you don’t stop asking silly questions. [Doris stares at her open-mouthed, ready to cry.]

Doris: Oh—this is awful... [She begins to cry, not passionately.]

Mrs Pearson: [coldly] Stop blubbering. You’re not a baby. If you’re old enough to go out with Charlie Spence, you’re old enough to behave properly. Now stop it.

[George Pearson enters left. He is about fifty, fundamentally decent but solemn, self-important, pompous. Preferably he should be a heavy, slow-moving type. He notices Doris’s tears.]

George: Hello—what’s this? Can’t be anything to cry about.

Doris: [through sobs] You’ll see.

[Doris runs out left with a sob or two on the way. George stares after her a moment, then looks at Mrs Pearson.]

George: Did she say ‘You’ll see’...?

Mrs Pearson: Yes.

George: What did she mean?

Mrs Pearson: Better ask her.

[George looks slowly again at the door then at Mrs Pearson. Then he notices the stout that Mrs Pearson raises for another sip. His eyes almost bulge.]

George: Stout?

Mrs Pearson: Yes.
GEORGE: *amazed* What are you drinking stout for?
MRS PEARSON: Because I fancied some.
GEORGE: At this time of day?
MRS PEARSON: Yes—what’s wrong with it at this time of day?
GEORGE: *bewildered* Nothing, I suppose, Annie—but I’ve never seen you do it before...
MRS PEARSON: Well, you’re seeing me now.
GEORGE: *with heavy distaste* Yes, an’ I don’t like it. It doesn’t look right. I’m surprised at you.
MRS PEARSON: Well, that ought to be a nice change for you.
GEORGE: What do you mean?
MRS PEARSON: It must be some time since you were surprised at me, George.
GEORGE: I don’t like surprises—I’m all for a steady going on—you ought to know that by this time. By the way, I forgot to tell you this morning I wouldn’t want any tea. Special snooker match night at the club tonight—an’ a bit of supper going. So no tea.
MRS PEARSON: That’s all right. There isn’t any.
GEORGE: *astonished* You mean you didn’t get any ready?
MRS PEARSON: Yes. And a good thing, too, as it’s turned out.
GEORGE: *aggrieved* That’s all very well, but suppose I’d wanted some?
MRS PEARSON: My goodness! Listen to the man! Annoyed because I don’t get a tea for him that he doesn’t even want. Ever tried that at the club?
GEORGE: Tried what at the club?
MRS PEARSON: Going up to the bar and telling ’em you don’t want a glass of beer but you’re annoyed because they haven’t already poured it out. Try that on them and see what you get.
GEORGE: I don’t know what you’re talking about.
MRS PEARSON: They’d laugh at you even more than they do now.
GEORGE: *indignantly* Laugh at me? They don’t laugh at me.
MRS PEARSON: Of course they do. You ought to have found
that out by this time. Anybody else would have done. You’re one of their standing jokes. Famous. They call you Pompy-ompy Pearson because they think you’re so slow and pompous.

GEORGE: [horrified] Never!

Mrs Pearson: It’s always beaten me why you should want to spend so much time at a place where they’re always laughing at you behind your back and calling you names. Leaving your wife at home, night after night. Instead of going out with her, who doesn’t make you look a fool...

[Cyril enters right, with a glass of milk in one hand and a thick slice of cake in the other. George, almost dazed, turns to him appealingly.]

George: Here, Cyril, you’ve been with me to the club once or twice. They don’t laugh at me and call me Pompy-ompy Pearson, do they?

Cyril, embarrassed, hesitates. [Angrily] Go on—tell me. Do they?

Cyril: [embarrassed] Well—yes, Dad, I’m afraid they do.

[George slowly looks from one to the other, staggered.]

George: [slowly] Well—I’ll be—damned!

[George exits left, slowly, almost as if somebody had hit him over the head. Cyril, after watching him go, turns indignantly to Mrs Pearson.]

Cyril: Now you shouldn’t have told him that, Mum. That’s not fair. You’ve hurt his feelings. Mine, too.

Mrs Pearson: Sometimes it does people good to have their feelings hurt. The truth oughtn’t to hurt anybody for long. If your father didn’t go to the club so often, perhaps they’d stop laughing at him.

Cyril: [gloomily] I doubt it.

Mrs Pearson: [severely] Possibly you do, but what I doubt is whether your opinion’s worth having. What do you know? Nothing. You spend too
much time and good money at greyhound races and dirt tracks and ice shows...

**Cyril:** [sulkily] Well, what if I do? I’ve got to enjoy myself somehow, haven’t I?

**Mrs Pearson:** I wouldn’t mind so much if you were really enjoying yourself. But are you? And where’s it getting you? [There is a sharp hurried knocking heard off left.]

**Cyril:** Might be for me. I’ll see.

[Cyril hurries out left. In a moment he re-enters, closing the door behind him.]

It’s that silly old bag from next door — Mrs Fitzgerald. You don’t want her here, do you?

**Mrs Pearson:** [sharply] Certainly I do. Ask her in. And don’t call her a silly old bag either. She’s a very nice woman, with a lot more sense than you’ll ever have.

[Cyril exits left. Mrs Pearson finishes her stout, smacking her lips. Cyril re-enters left, ushering in Mrs Fitzgerald, who hesitates in the doorway.]

Come in, come in, Mrs Fitzgerald.

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** [moving to left centre; anxiously] I — just wondered—if everything’s—all right...

**Cyril:** [sulkily] No, it isn’t.

**Mrs Pearson:** [sharply] Of course it is. You be quiet.

**Cyril:** [indignantly and loudly] Why should I be quiet?

**Mrs Pearson:** [shouting] Because I tell you to—you silly, spoilt, young piecan.

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** [protesting nervously] Oh—no— surely...

**Mrs Pearson:** [severely] Now, Mrs Fitzgerald, just let me manage my family in my own way—please!

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** Yes—but Cyril...

**Cyril:** [sulky and glowering] Mr Cyril Pearson to you, please, Mrs Fitzgerald. [Cyril stalks off into the kitchen.]

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** [moving to the settee; whispering] Oh—dear—what’s happening?

**Mrs Pearson:** [calmly] Nothing much. Just putting ’em in
their places, that’s all. Doing what you ought to have done long since.

Mrs Fitzgerald: Is George home? [She sits beside Mrs Pearson on the settee.]

Mrs Pearson: Yes. I’ve been telling him what they think of him at the club.

Mrs Fitzgerald: Well, they think a lot of him, don’t they?

Mrs Pearson: No, they don’t. And now he knows it.

Mrs Fitzgerald: [nervously] Oh—dear—I wish you hadn’t, Mrs Fitzgerald...

Mrs Pearson: Nonsense! Doing ’em all a world of good. And they’ll be eating out of your hand soon—you’ll see...

Mrs Fitzgerald: I don’t think I want them eating out of my hand...

Mrs Pearson: [impatiently] Well, whatever you want, they’ll be doing it—all three of ’em. Mark my words, Mrs Pearson.

[George enters left glumly. He is unpleasantly surprised when he sees the visitor. He moves to the armchair left, sits down heavily and glumly lights his pipe. Then he looks from Mrs Pearson to Mrs Fitzgerald, who is regarding him anxiously.]

George: Just looked in for a minute, I suppose, Mrs Fitzgerald?

Mrs Fitzgerald: [who doesn’t know what she is saying] Well—yes—I suppose so, George.

George: [aghast] George! Mrs Fitzgerald: [nervously] Oh—I’m sorry...

Mrs Pearson: [impatiently] What does it matter? Your name’s George, isn’t it? Who d’you think you are—Duke of Edinburgh?

George: [angrily] What’s he got to do with it? Just tell me that. And isn’t it bad enough without her calling me George? No tea. Pompy-ompy Pearson. And poor Doris has been crying her eyes out upstairs—yes, crying her eyes out.

Mrs Fitzgerald: [wailing] Oh—dear—I ought to have known...

George: [staring at her, annoyed] You ought to have known! Why ought you to have known?
Nothing to do with you, Mrs Fitzgerald. Look—we’re at sixes and sevens here just now—so perhaps you’ll excuse us...

**Mrs Pearson:** [before Mrs Fitzgerald can reply] I won’t excuse you, George Pearson. Next time a friend and neighbour comes to see me, just say something when you see her—Good evening or How d’you do? or something—an’ don’t just march in an’ sit down without a word. It’s bad manners...

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** [nervously] No—it’s all right...

**Mrs Pearson:** No, it isn’t all right. We’ll have some decent manners in this house—or I’ll know the reason why. [glaring at George] Well?

**George:** [intimidated] Well, what!

**Mrs Pearson:** [taunting him] Why don’t you get off to your club? Special night tonight, isn’t it? They’ll be waiting for you—wanting to have a good laugh. Go on then. Don’t disappoint ‘em.

**George:** [bitterly] That’s right. Make me look silly in front of her now! Go on—don’t mind me. Sixes and sevens! Poor Doris been crying her eyes out! Getting the neighbours in to see the fun! [suddenly losing his temper, glaring at Mrs Pearson, and shouting] All right—let her hear it. What’s the matter with you? Have you gone barmy—or what?

**Mrs Pearson:** [jumping up: savagely] If you shout at me again like that, George Pearson, I’ll slap your big, fat, silly face...

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** [moaning] Oh—no—no—no—please, Mrs Fitzgerald... [Mrs Pearson sits.]

**George:** [staring at her, bewildered] Either I’m off my chump or you two are. How d’you mean—”No, no—please, Mrs Fitzgerald”? Look—you’re Mrs Fitzgerald. So why are you telling yourself to stop when you’re not doing anything? Tell her to stop—then there’d be some sense in it. [Staring at Mrs Pearson] I think you must be tiddly.

**Mrs Pearson:** [starting up: savagely] Say that again, George Pearson.
GEORGE: [intimidated] All right—all right—all right...

[Doris enters left slowly, looking miserable. She is still wearing the wrap. Mrs Pearson sits on the settee.]

MRS FITZGERALD: Hello—Doris dear!

DORIS: [miserably] Hello—Mrs Fitzgerald!

MRS FITZGERALD: I thought you were going out with Charlie Spence tonight.

DORIS: [annoyed] What’s that to do with you?

MRS PEARSON: [sharply] Stop that!

MRS FITZGERALD: [nervously] No—its all right...

MRS PEARSON: [severely] It isn’t all right. I won’t have a daughter of mine talking to anybody like that. Now answer Mrs Fitzgerald properly, Doris—or go upstairs again... [Doris looks wonderingly at her father.]

DORIS: [in despair] Don’t look at me. I give it up. I just give it up.


DORIS: [sulkily] I was going out with Charlie Spence tonight—but now I’ve called it off...

MRS FITZGERALD: Oh—what a pity, dear! Why have you?

DORIS: [with a flash of temper] Because—if you must know—my mother’s been going on at memaking me feel miserable—an’ saying he’s got buck-teeth and is half-witted...

MRS FITZGERALD: [rather bolder: to Mrs Pearson] Oh—you shouldn’t have said that...

MRS PEARSON: [sharply] Mrs Fitzgerald, I’ll manage my family—you manage yours.

GEORGE: [grimly] Ticking her off now, are you, Annie?

MRS PEARSON: [even more grimly] They’re waiting for you at the club, George, don’t forget. And don’t you start crying again, Doris...

MRS FITZGERALD: [getting up; with sudden decision] That’s enough—quite enough.

[George and Doris stare at her bewildered.]

[to George and Doris] Now listen, you two. I want to have a private little talk with Mrs Fitz—[she corrects herself hastily] with Mrs Pearson, so I’ll be obliged if you’ll leave us alone for a few minutes. I’ll let you
know when we’ve finished. Go on, please. I promise you that you won’t regret it. There’s something here that only I can deal with.

**George:** [rising] I’m glad somebody can—’cos I can’t. Come on, Doris.

*George and Doris exit left. As they go Mrs Fitzgerald moves to left of the small table and sits. She eagerly beckons Mrs Pearson to do the same thing.*

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** Mrs Fitzgerald, we must change back now—we really must...

**Mrs Pearson:** [rising] Why?

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** Because this has gone far enough. I can see they’re all miserable—and I can’t bear it...

**Mrs Pearson:** A bit more of the same would do ‘em good. Making a great difference already... [She moves to right of the table and sits.]

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** No, I can’t stand any more of it—I really can’t. We must change back. Hurry up, please, Mrs Fitzgerald.

**Mrs Pearson:** Well—if you insist...

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** Yes—I do—please—please.

*She stretches her hands across the table eagerly. Mrs Pearson takes them.*

**Mrs Pearson:** Quiet now. Relax.

*Mrs Pearson and Mrs Fitzgerald stare at each other. Muttering; exactly as before. Arshtatta dum—arshtatta lam—arshtatta lamdumbona... They carry out the same action as before, going lax and then coming to life. But this time, of course, they become their proper personalities.*

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** Ah well—I enjoyed that.

**Mrs Pearson:** I didn’t.

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** Well, you ought to have done. Now—listen, Mrs Pearson. Don’t go soft on ’em again, else it’ll all have been wasted...

**Mrs Pearson:** I’ll try not to, Mrs Fitzgerald.

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** They’ve not had as long as I’d like to have given ’em—another hour or two’s rough
treatment might have made it certain...

Mrs Pearson: I’m sure they’ll do better now—though I don’t know how I’m going to explain...

Mrs Fitzgerald: [severely] Don’t you start any explaining or apologising—or you’re done for.

Mrs Pearson: [with spirit] It’s all right for you, Mrs Fitzgerald. After all, they aren’t your husband and children...

Mrs Fitzgerald: [impressively] Now you listen to me. You admitted yourself you were spoiling ‘em—and they didn’t appreciate you. Any apologies—any explanations—an’ you’ll be straight back where you were. I’m warning you, dear. Just give ‘em a look—a tone of voice—now an’ again, to suggest you might be tough with ‘em if you wanted to be—an’ it ought to work. Anyhow, we can test it.

Mrs Pearson: How?

Mrs Fitzgerald: Well, what is it you’d like ‘em to do that they don’t do? Stop at home for once?

Mrs Pearson: Yes—and give me a hand with supper...

Mrs Fitzgerald: Anything you’d like ‘em to do—that you enjoy whether they do or not?

Mrs Pearson: [hesitating] Well—yes. I—like a nice game of rummy—but, of course, I hardly ever have one—except at Christmas...

Mrs Fitzgerald: [getting up] That’ll do then. [She moves towards the door left then turns] But remember—keep firm—or you’ve had it. [She opens the door. Calling] Hoy! You can come in now. [Coming away from the door, and moving right slightly. Quietly] But remember—remember—a firm hand.

[George, Doris and Cyril file in through the doorway, looking apprehensively at Mrs Pearson.]

I’m just off. To let you enjoy yourself.

[The family looks anxiously at Mrs Pearson, who smiles. Much relieved, they smile back at her.]

Doris: [anxiously] Yes, Mother?

Mrs Pearson: [smiling] Seeing that you don’t want to go
out, I tell you what I thought we’d do.

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** [*giving a final warning*] Remember!

**Mrs Pearson:** [*nodding, then looking sharply at the family*] No objections, I hope?

**George:** [*humbly*] No, Mother—whatever you say...

**Mrs Pearson:** [*smiling*] I thought we’d have a nice family game of rummy—and then you children could get the supper ready while I have a talk with your father...

**George:** [*firmly*] Suits me. [*He looks challengingly at the children.*] What about you two?

**Cyril:** [*hastily*] Yes—that’s all right.

**Doris:** [*hesitating*] Well—I...

**Mrs Pearson:** [*sharply*] What? Speak up!

**Doris:** [*hastily*] Oh—I think it would be lovely...

**Mrs Pearson:** [*smiling*] Good-bye, Mrs Fitzgerald. Come again soon.

**Mrs Fitzgerald:** Yes, dear. ’Night all—have a nice time.

*[Mrs Fitzgerald exits left and the family cluster round Mother as—]*

**The curtain falls.**

1. This play, written in the 1950s, is a humorous and satirical depiction of the status of the mother in the family.

   (i) What are the issues it raises?

   (ii) Do you think it caricatures these issues or do you think that the problems it raises are genuine? How does the play resolve the issues? Do you agree with the resolution?

2. If you were to write about these issues today what are some of the incidents, examples and problems that you would think of as relevant?

3. Is drama a good medium for conveying a social message? Discuss.

4. Read the play out in parts. Enact the play on a suitable occasion.

5. Discuss in groups plays or films with a strong message of social reform that you have watched.
The first time that Agha Shahid Ali spoke to me about his approaching death was on 25 April 2001. The conversation began routinely. I had telephoned to remind him that we had been invited to a friend’s house for lunch and that I was going to come by his apartment to pick him up. Although he had been under treatment for cancer for some fourteen months, Shahid was still on his feet and perfectly lucid, except for occasional lapses of memory. I heard him thumbing through his engagement book and then suddenly he said: ‘Oh dear. I can’t see a thing.’ There was a brief pause and then he added: ‘I hope this doesn’t mean that I’m dying...’

Although Shahid and I had talked a great deal over the last many weeks, I had never before heard him touch on the subject of death. I did not know how to respond: his voice was completely at odds with the content of what he had just said, light to the point of jocularity. I mumbled something innocuous: ‘No Shahid — of course not. You’ll be fine.’ He cut me short. In a tone of voice that was at once quizzical and direct, he said:
‘When it happens I hope you’ll write something about me.’

I was shocked into silence and a long moment passed before I could bring myself to say the things that people say on such occasions. ‘Shahid you’ll be fine; you have to be strong...’

From the window of my study I could see a corner of the building in which he lived, some eight blocks away. It was just a few months since he moved there: he had been living a few miles away, in Manhattan, when he had a sudden blackout in February 2000. After tests revealed that he had a malignant brain tumour, he decided to move to Brooklyn, to be close to his youngest sister, Sameetah, who teaches at the Pratt Institute—a few blocks away from the street where I live.

Shahid ignored my reassurances. He began to laugh and it was then that I realised that he was dead serious. I understood that he was entrusting me with a quite specific charge: he wanted me to remember him not through the spoken recitatives of memory and friendship, but through the written word. Shahid knew all too well that for those writers for whom things become real only in the process of writing, there is an inbuilt resistance to dealing with loss and bereavement. He knew that my instincts would have led me to search for reasons to avoid writing about his death: I would have told myself that I was not a poet; that our friendship was of recent date; that there were many others who knew him much better and would be writing from greater understanding and knowledge. All this Shahid had guessed and he had decided to shut off those routes while there was still time.

‘You must write about me.’

Clear though it was that this imperative would have to be acknowledged, I could think of nothing to say: what are the words in which one promises a friend that one will write about him after his death? Finally, I said: ‘Shahid, I will: I’ll do the best I can’.

By the end of the conversation I knew exactly what I had to do. I picked up my pen, noted the date, and wrote down everything I remembered of that conversation. This I continued to do for the next few months: it is this record that has made it possible for me to fulfil the pledge I made that day.

I knew Shahid’s work long before I met him. His 1997 collection, *The Country Without a Post Office*, had made a powerful impression on me. His voice was like none I had ever heard before, at once lyrical and fiercely disciplined, engaged and yet deeply inward. Not for him the mock-casual almost-prose of so much contemporary poetry: his was a voice that was not ashamed
to speak in a bardic register¹. I knew of no one else who would even conceive of publishing a line like: ‘Mad heart, be brave.’

In 1998, I quoted a line from *The Country Without a Post Office* in an article that touched briefly on Kashmir. At the time all I knew about Shahid was that he was from Srinagar and had studied in Delhi. I had been at Delhi University myself, but although our time there had briefly overlapped, we had never met. We had friends in common however, and one of them put me in touch with Shahid. In 1998 and 1999 we had several conversations on the phone and even met a couple of times. But we were no more than acquaintances until he moved to Brooklyn the next year. Once we were in the same neighbourhood, we began to meet for occasional meals and quickly discovered that we had a great deal in common. By this time of course Shahid’s condition was already serious, yet his illness did not impede the progress of our friendship. We found that we had a huge roster of common friends, in India, America, and elsewhere; we discovered a shared love of rogan josh, Roshanara Begum and Kishore Kumar; a mutual indifference to cricket and an equal attachment to old Bombay films. Because of Shahid’s condition even the most trivial exchanges had a special charge and urgency: the inescapable poignance of talking about food and half-forgotten figures from the past with a man who knew himself to be dying, was multiplied, in this instance, by the knowledge that this man was also a poet who had achieved greatness—perhaps the only such that I shall ever know as a friend.

One afternoon, the writer Suketu Mehta, who also lives in Brooklyn, joined us for lunch. Together we hatched a plan for an *adda*—by definition, a gathering that has no agenda, other than conviviality. Shahid was enthusiastic and we began to meet regularly. From time to time other writers would join us. On one occasion a crew arrived with a television camera. Shahid was not in the least bit put out: ‘I’m so shameless; I just love the camera.’

Shahid had a sorcerer’s ability to transmute the mundane into the magical. Once I accompanied Iqbal, his brother, and Hena, his sister, on a trip to fetch him home from hospital. This was on 21 May: by that time he had already been through several unsuccessful operations. Now he was back in hospital to undergo a surgical procedure that was intended to relieve the

¹ a poetic style
Garcia Lorca is Spain’s most deeply appreciated and highly revered poet and dramatist.

pressure on his brain. His head was shaved and the shape of the tumour was visible upon his bare scalp, its edges outlined by metal sutures. When it was time to leave the ward a blue-uniformed hospital escort arrived with a wheelchair. Shahid waved him away, declaring that he was strong enough to walk out of the hospital on his own. But he was groggier than he had thought and his knees buckled after no more than a few steps. Iqbal went running off to bring back the wheelchair while the rest of us stood in the corridor, holding him upright. At that moment, leaning against the cheerless hospital wall, a kind of rapture descended on Shahid. When the hospital orderly returned with the wheelchair Shahid gave him a beaming smile and asked where he was from. ‘Ecuador’, the man said, and Shahid clapped his hands gleefully together, ‘Spanish!’ he cried, at the top of his voice. ‘I always wanted to learn Spanish. Just to read Lorca’.2

Shahid’s gregariousness had no limit: there was never an evening when there wasn’t a party in his living room. ‘I love it that so many people are here,’ he told me once. ‘I love it that people come and there’s always food. I love this spirit of festivity; it means that I don’t have time to be depressed.’

His apartment was a spacious and airy split-level, on the seventh floor of a newly-renovated building. There was a cavernous study on the top floor and a wide terrace that provided a magnificent view of the Manhattan skyline, across the East River. Shahid loved this view of the Brooklyn waterfront slipping, like a ghat, into the East River, under the glittering lights of Manhattan.

The journey from the foyer of Shahid’s building to his door was a voyage between continents: on the way up the rich fragrance of rogan josh and haak would invade the dour, grey interior of the elevator; against the background of the songs and voices that were always echoing out of his apartment, even the ringing of the doorbell had an oddly musical sound. Suddenly, Shahid would appear, flinging open the door, releasing a great cloud of heeng into the frosty New York air, ‘Oh, how nice,’ he would cry, clapping his hands, ‘how nice that you’ve come to see your little Mos-lem!’ Invariably, there’d be some half-dozen or more people gathered inside—poets, students, writers, relatives—and in the kitchen someone would always be cooking or making tea.

Almost to the very end, even as his life was being consumed by

2 Garcia Lorca is Spain’s most deeply appreciated and highly revered poet and dramatist.
his disease, he was the centre of a perpetual carnival, an endless mela of talk, laughter, food and, of course, poetry.

No matter how many people there were, Shahid was never so distracted as to lose track of the progress of the evening’s meal. From time to time he would interrupt himself to shout directions to whoever was in the kitchen: ‘yes, now, add the dahi now.’ Even when his eyesight was failing, he could tell from the smell alone, exactly which stage the rogan josh had reached. And when things went exactly as they should, he would sniff the air and cry out loud: ‘Ah! Khana ka kya mehek hai’

Shahid was legendary for his prowess in the kitchen, frequently spending days over the planning and preparation of a dinner party. It was through one such party, given while he was in Arizona, that he met James Merrill, the poet who was to radically alter the direction of his poetry: it was after this encounter that he began to experiment with strict, metrical patterns and verse forms. No one had a greater influence on Shahid’s poetry than James Merrill: indeed, in the poem in which he most explicitly prefigured his own death, ‘I Dream I Am At the Ghat of the Only World,’ he awarded the envoy to Merrill: ‘Shahid, hush. This is me, James. The loved one always leaves.’

Shahid placed great store on authenticity and exactitude in cooking and would tolerate no deviation from traditional methods and recipes: for those who took short cuts, he had only pity. He had a special passion for the food of his region, one variant of it in particular: ‘Kashmiri food in the Pandit style’. I asked him once why this was so important to him and he explained that it was because of a recurrent dream, in which all the Pandits had vanished from the valley of Kashmir and their food had become extinct. This was a nightmare that haunted him and he returned to it again and again, in his conversation and his poetry.

At a certain point I lost track of you. 
You needed me. You needed to perfect me:
In your absence you polished me into the Enemy.
Your history gets in the way of my memory.
I am everything you lost. Your perfect enemy.
Your memory gets in the way of my memory . . .

There is nothing to forgive. You won’t forgive me.
I hid my pain even from myself; I revealed my pain only to myself.
There is nothing to forgive. You won’t forgive me.
If only somehow you could have been mine, what would not have
been possible in the world?

Once, in conversation, he told me that he also loved Bengali food. I protested, ‘But Shahid, you’ve never even been to Calcutta’. ‘No,’ he said. ‘But we had friends who used to bring us that food. When you ate it you could see that there were so many things that you didn’t know about, everywhere in the country...’ What I say is: why can’t you be happy with the cuisines and the clothes and the music and all these wonderful things?’ He paused and added softly, ‘At least here we have been able to make a space where we can all come together because of the good things.’

Of the many ‘good things’ in which he took pleasure, none was more dear to him than the music of Begum Akhtar. He had met the great ghazal singer when he was in his teens, through a friend, and she had become an abiding presence and influence in his life. Shahid had a fund of stories about her sharpness in repartee.

Shahid was himself no mean practitioner of repartee. On one famous occasion, at Barcelona airport, he was stopped by a security guard just as he was about to board a plane. The guard, a woman, asked: ‘What do you do?’

‘I’m a poet,’ Shahid answered.

‘What were you doing in Spain?’

‘Writing poetry.’

No matter what the question, Shahid worked poetry into his answer. Finally, the exasperated woman asked: ‘Are you carrying anything that could be dangerous to the other passengers?’ At this Shahid clapped a hand to his chest and cried: ‘Only my heart.’

This was one of his great Wildean moments, and it was to occasion the poem ‘Barcelona Airport’. He treasured these moments: ‘I long for people to give me an opportunity to answer questions’, he told me once. On 7 May I had the good fortune to be with him when one such opportunity presented itself. Shahid was teaching at Manhattan’s Baruch College in the Spring semester of 2000 and this was to be his last class — indeed the last he was ever to teach. The class was to be a short one for he had an appointment at the hospital immediately afterwards. I had heard a great deal about the brilliance of Shahid’s teaching, but this was the first and only time that I was to see him perform in a classroom. It was evident from the moment we walked in that the students adored him: they had printed a magazine and dedicated
the issue to him. Shahid for his part was not in the least subdued by the sadness of the occasion. From beginning to end, he was a sparkling diva, Akhtar incarnate, brimming with laughter and nakhra. When an Indian student walked in late he greeted her with the cry; ‘Ah my little subcontinental has arrived.’ Clasping his hands, he feigned a swoon. ‘It stirs such a tide of patriotism in me to behold another South Asian.’

His time at Penn State he remembered with unmitigated pleasure: ‘I grew as a reader, I grew as a poet, I grew as a lover.’ He fell in with a vibrant group of graduate students, many of whom were Indian. This was, he often said, the happiest time of his life. Later Shahid moved to Arizona to take a degree in creative writing. This in turn was followed by a series of jobs in colleges and universities: Hamilton College, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and finally, the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, where he was appointed professor in 1999. He was on leave from Utah, doing a brief stint at New York University, when he had his first blackout in February 2000.

After 1975, when he moved to Pennsylvania, Shahid lived mainly in America. His brother was already there and they were later joined by their two sisters. But Shahid’s parents continued to live in Srinagar and it was his custom to spend the summer months with them there every year: ‘I always move in my heart between sad countries.’ Travelling between the United States and India he was thus an intermittent but first-hand witness (sháhid) to the mounting violence that seized the region from the late 1980s onwards:

It was ’89, the stones were not far, signs of change everywhere
(Kashmir would soon be in literal flames)...

The steady deterioration of the political situation in Kashmir—the violence and counter-violence—had a powerful effect on him. In time it became one of the central subjects of his work: indeed, it could be said that it was in writing of Kashmir that he created his finest work. The irony of this is that Shahid was not by inclination a political poet. I heard him say once: ‘If you are from a difficult place and that’s all you have to write about then you should stop writing. You have to respect your art, your form—that is just as important as what you write about.’

Anguished as he was about Kashmir’s destiny, Shahid resolutely refused to embrace the role of victim that could so easily have been his. Had he done so, he could no doubt have
easily become a fixture on talk shows and news programmes. But Shahid never had any doubt about his calling: he was a poet, schooled in the fierce and unforgiving art of language. Although respectful of religion, he remained a firm believer in the separation of politics and religious practice.

Shahid’s gaze was not political in the sense of being framed in terms of policy and solutions. In the broadest sense, his vision tended always towards the inclusive and ecumenical⁴, an outlook that he credited to his upbringing. He spoke often of a time in his childhood when he had been seized by the desire to create a small Hindu temple in his room in Srinagar. He was initially hesitant to tell his parents, but when he did they responded with an enthusiasm equal to his own. His mother bought him murtis and other accoutrements⁵ and for a while he was assiduous⁶ in conducting pujas at this shrine. This was a favourite story. ‘Whenever people talk to me about Muslim fanaticism,’ he said to me once, ‘I tell them how my mother helped me make a temple in my room.’

I once remarked to Shahid that he was the closest that Kashmir had to a national poet. He shot back: ‘A national poet, maybe. But not a nationalist poet; please not that.’ In the title poem of The Country Without a Post Office, a poet returns to Kashmir to find the keeper of a fallen minaret:

‘Nothing will remain, everything’s finished;’
I see his voice again: ‘This is a shrine
of words. You’ll find your letters to me. And mine to you. Come son and tear open these vanished envelopes’...

This is an archive. I’ve found the remains
of his voice, that map of longings with no limit.

In this figuring of his homeland, he himself became one of the images that were spinning around the dark point of stillness—both Sháhid and Shahíd, witness and martyr—his destiny inextricably linked with Kashmir’s, each prefigured by the other.

I will die, in autumn, in Kashmir,
and the shadowed routine of each vein
will almost be news, the blood censored.

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⁴ involving or uniting members of different religions
⁵ other things that were needed for the activity
⁶ taking great care that everything is done as well as it can be
Among my notes is a record of a telephone conversation on 5 May. The day before he had gone to the hospital for an important test: a scan that was expected to reveal whether or not the course of chemotherapy that he was then undergoing had had the desired effect. All other alternative therapies and courses of treatment had been put off until this report.

The scan was scheduled for 2.30 in the afternoon. I called his number several times in the late afternoon and early evening—there was no response. I called again the next morning and this time he answered. There were no preambles. He said, ‘Listen Amitav, the news is not good at all. Basically they are going to stop all my medicines now—the chemotherapy and so on. They give me a year or less. They’d suspected that I was not responding well because of the way I look. They will give me some radiation a little later. But they said there was not much hope.’

Dazed, staring blankly at my desk, I said: ‘What will you do now Shahid?’

‘I would like to go back to Kashmir to die.’ His voice was quiet and untroubled. ‘Now I have to get my passport, settle my will and all that. I don’t want to leave a mess for my siblings. But after that I would like to go to Kashmir. It’s still such a feudal system there and there will be so much support—and my father is there too. Anyway, I don’t want my siblings to have to make the journey afterwards, like we had to with my mother.’

Later, because of logistical and other reasons, he changed his mind about returning to Kashmir: he was content to be laid to rest in Northampton, in the vicinity of Amherst, a town sacred to the memory of his beloved Emily Dickinson. But I do not think it was an accident that his mind turned to Kashmir in speaking of death. Already, in his poetic imagery, death, Kashmir, and Sháhid/Shah Í’d had become so closely overlaid as to be inseparable, like old photographs that have melted together in the rain.

Yes, I remember it,
the day I’ll die, I broadcast the crimson,
so long ago of that sky, its spread air,
its rushing dyes, and a piece of earth
bleeding, apart from the shore, as we went
on the day I’ll die, post the guards, and he,
keeper of the world’s last saffron, rowed me
on an island the size of a grave. On
two yards he rowed me into the sunset,  
past all pain. On everyone’s lips was news  
of my death but only that beloved couplet,  
broken, on his:  
‘If there is a paradise on earth  
It is this, it is this, it is this.’

The last time I saw Shahid was on 27 October, at his brother’s  
house in Amherst. He was intermittently able to converse and  
there were moments when we talked just as we had in the past.  
He was aware, as he had long been, of his approaching end  
and he had made his peace with it. I saw no trace of anguish  
or conflict: surrounded by the love of his family and friends, he  
was calm, contented, at peace. He had said to me once, ‘I love  
to think that I’ll meet my mother in the afterlife, if there is an  
afterlife.’ I had the sense that as the end neared, this was his  
supreme consolation. He died peacefully, in his sleep, at 2 a.m.  
on 8 December.

Now, in his absence, I am amazed that so brief a friendship  
has resulted in so vast a void. Often, when I walk into my living  
room, I remember his presence there, particularly on the night  
when he read us his farewell to the world: ‘I Dream I Am At the  
Ghat of the Only World...’

1. What impressions of Shahid do you gather from the piece?
2. How do Shahid and the writer react to the knowledge that Shahid  
is going to die?
3. Look up the dictionary for the meaning of the word ‘diaspora’. What  
do you understand of the Indian diaspora from this piece?
Birth

In this excerpt from *The Citadel*, Andrew Manson, newly out of medical school, has just begun his medical practice as an assistant to Dr Edward Page in the small Welsh mining town of Blaenelly. As he is returning from a disappointing evening with Christine, the girl he loves, he is met by Joe Morgan. Joe and his wife, who have been married nearly twenty years, are expecting their first child.

Though it was nearly midnight when Andrew reached Bryngower, he found Joe Morgan waiting for him, walking up and down with short steps between the closed surgery and the entrance to the house. At the sight of him the burly driller’s face expressed relief.

“Eh, Doctor. I’m glad to see you. I been back and forward here this last hour. The missus wants ye—before time, too.”

Andrew, abruptly recalled from the contemplation of his own affairs, told Morgan to wait. He went into the house for his bag, then together they set out for Number 12 Blaina Terrace. The night air was cool and deep with quiet mystery. Usually so perceptive, Andrew now felt dull and listless. He had no premonition that this night call would prove unusual, still less that it would influence his whole future in Blaenelly.

The two men walked in silence until they reached the door of Number 12, then Joe drew up short.

“I’ll not come in,” he said, and his voice showed signs of strain. “But, man, I know ye’ll do well for us.”

Inside, a narrow stair led up to a small bedroom, clean but
poorly furnished, and lit only by an oil lamp. Here Mrs Morgan’s mother, a tall, grey-haired woman of nearly seventy, and the stout, elderly midwife waited beside the patient, watching Andrew’s expression as he moved about the room.

“Let me make you a cup of tea, Doctor, bach,” said the former quickly, after a few moments.

Andrew smiled faintly. He saw that the old woman, wise in experience, realised there must be a period of waiting that, she was afraid he would leave the case, saying he would return later.

“Don’t fret, mother, I’ll not run away.”

Down in the kitchen he drank the tea which she gave him. Overwrought as he was, he knew he could not snatch even an hour’s sleep if he went home. He knew, too, that the case here would demand all his attention. A queer lethargy of spirit came upon him. He decided to remain until everything was over.

An hour later he went upstairs again, noted the progress made, came down once more, sat by the kitchen fire. It was still, except for the rustle of a cinder in the grate and the slow tick-tock of the wall clock. No, there was another sound—the beat of Morgan’s footsteps as he paced in the street outside. The old woman opposite him sat in her black dress, quite motionless, her eyes strangely alive and wise, probing, never leaving his face.

His thoughts were heavy, muddled. The episode he had witnessed at Cardiff station still obsessed him morbidly. He thought of Bramwell, foolishly devoted to a woman who deceived him sordidly, of Edward Page, bound to the shrewish Blodwen, of Denny, living unhappily, apart from his wife. His reason told him that all these marriages were dismal failures. It was a conclusion which, in his present state, made him wince. He wished to consider marriage as an idyllic state; yes, he could not otherwise consider it with the image of Christine before him. Her eyes, shining towards him, admitted no other conclusion. It was the conflict between his level, doubting mind and his overflowing heart which left him resentful and confused. He let his chin sink upon his chest, stretched out his legs, stared broodingly into the fire. He remained like this so long, and his thoughts were so filled with Christine, that he started when the old woman opposite suddenly addressed him. Her meditation had pursued a different course.

“Susan said not to give her the chloroform if it would harm the baby. She’s awful set upon this child, Doctor, bach.” Her old
eyes warmed at a sudden thought. She added in a low tone: “Ay, we all are, I fancy.”

He collected himself with an effort.

“It won’t do any harm, the anaesthetic,” he said kindly. “They’ll be all right.”

Here the nurse’s voice was heard calling from the top landing. Andrew glanced at the clock, which now showed half-past three. He rose and went up to the bedroom. He perceived that he might now begin his work.

An hour elapsed. It was a long, harsh struggle. Then, as the first streaks of dawn strayed past the broken edges of the blind, the child was born, lifeless.

As he gazed at the still form a shiver of horror passed over Andrew. After all that he had promised! His face, heated with his own exertions, chilled suddenly. He hesitated, torn between his desire to attempt to resuscitate the child, and his obligation towards the mother, who was herself in a desperate state. The dilemma was so urgent he did not solve it consciously. Blindly, instinctively, he gave the child to the nurse and turned his attention to Susan Morgan who now lay collapsed, almost pulseless, and not yet out of the ether, upon her side. His haste was desperate, a frantic race against her ebbing strength. It took him only an instant to smash a glass ampule and inject the medicine. Then he flung down the hypodermic syringe and worked unsparingly to restore the flaccid woman. After a few minutes of feverish effort, her heart strengthened; he saw that he might safely leave her. He swung round, in his shirt sleeves, his hair sticking to his damp brow.

“Where’s the child?”

The midwife made a frightened gesture. She had placed it beneath the bed.

In a flash Andrew knelt down. Fishing amongst the sodden newspapers below the bed, he pulled out the child. A boy, perfectly formed. The limp, warm body was white and soft as tallow\(^1\). The cord, hastily slashed, lay like a broken stem. The skin was of a lovely texture, smooth and tender. The head lolled on the thin neck. The limbs seemed boneless.

Still kneeling, Andrew stared at the child with a haggard frown. The whiteness meant only one thing: asphyxia, pallida\(^2\), and his mind, unnaturally tense, raced back to a case he once

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\(^1\) the hard fat of animals melted and used to make soap, candles etc.\n
\(^2\) he was yellow or pale-faced.
had seen in the Samaritan, to the treatment that had been used. Instantly he was on his feet.

“Get me hot water and cold water,” he threw out to the nurse. “And basins too. Quick! Quick!”

“But, Doctor—” she faltered, her eyes on the pallid body of the child.

“Quick!” he shouted.

Snatching a blanket, he laid the child upon it and began the special method of respiration. The basins arrived, the ewer, the big iron kettle. Frantically he splashed cold water into one basin; into the other he mixed water as hot as his hand could bear. Then, like some crazy juggler, he hurried the child between the two, now plunging it into the icy, now into the steaming bath.

Fifteen minutes passed. Sweat was now running into Andrew’s eyes, blinding him. One of his sleeves hung down, dripping. His breath came pantingly. But no breath came from the lax body of the child.

A desperate sense of defeat pressed on him, a raging hopelessness. He felt the midwife watching him in stark consternation, while there, pressed back against the wall where she had all the time remained—her hand pressed to her throat, uttering no sound, her eyes burning upon him—was the old woman. He remembered her longing for a grandchild, as great as had been her daughter’s longing for this child. All dashed away now; futile, beyond remedy…

The floor was now a draggled mess. Stumbling over a sopping towel, Andrew almost dropped the child, which was now wet and slippery in his hands, like a strange, white fish.

“For mercy’s sake, Doctor,” whimpered the midwife. “It’s stillborn.”

Andrew did not heed her. Beaten, despairing, having laboured in vain for half an hour, he still persisted in one last effort, rubbing the child with a rough towel, crushing and releasing the little chest with both his hands, trying to get breath into that limp body.

And then, as by a miracle, the pigmy chest, which his hands enclosed, gave a short, convulsive heave, another… and another… Andrew turned giddy. The sense of life, springing beneath his

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2 suffocation or unconscious condition caused by lack of oxygen and excess of carbon dioxide in the blood, accompanied by paleness of the skin, weak pulse, and loss of reflexes
fingers after all that unavailing striving, was so exquisite it almost made him faint. He redoubled his efforts feverishly. The child was gasping now, deeper and deeper. A bubble of mucus came from one tiny nostril, a joyful iridescent bubble. The limbs were no longer boneless. The head no longer lay back spinelessly. The blanched skin was slowly turning pink. Then, exquisitely, came the child’s cry.

“Dear Father in heaven,” the nurse sobbed hysterically. “It’s come—it’s come alive.”

Andrew handed her the child. He felt weak and dazed. About him the room lay in a shuddering litter: blankets, towels, basins, soiled instruments, the hypodermic syringe impaled by its point in the linoleum, the ewer knocked over, the kettle on its side in a puddle of water. Upon the huddled bed the mother still dreamed her way quietly through the anaesthetic. The old woman still stood against the wall. But her hands were together, her lips moved without sound. She was praying.

Mechanically Andrew wrung out his sleeve, pulled on his jacket.

“I’ll fetch my bag later, nurse.”

He went downstairs, through the kitchen into the scullery. His lips were dry. At the scullery he took a long drink of water. He reached for his hat and coat.

Outside he found Joe standing on the pavement with a tense, expectant face.

“All right, Joe,” he said thickly. “Both all right.”

It was quite light. Nearly five o’clock.

A few miners were already in the streets: the first of the night shift moving out. As Andrew walked with them, spent and slow, his footfalls echoing with the others under the morning sky, he kept thinking blindly, oblivious to all other work he had done in Blaenelly, “I’ve done something; oh, God! I’ve done something real at last.”

1. “I have done something; oh, God! I’ve done something real at last.”
   Why does Andrew say this? What does it mean?
2. There lies a great difference between textbook medicine and the world of a practising physician. Discuss.
3. Do you know of any incident when someone has been brought back

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3 a room for washing dishes and for similar work
to life from the brink of death through medical help. Discuss medical procedures such as organ transplant and organ regeneration that are used to save human life.
8

The Tale of Melon City

Vikram Seth

The following poem is taken from *Mappings* which was published in 1981 and is included in the *Collected Poems* by Vikram Seth. The king, in this poem, is ‘just and placid.’ Does he carry his notion of justice a bit too far?

(After Idries Shah)

In the city of which I sing
There was a just and placid King.

The King proclaimed an arch should be
 Constructed, that triumphally

Would span the major thoroughfare
 To edify spectators there.

The workmen went and built the thing.
They did so since he was the King.

The King rode down the thoroughfare
To edify spectators there.
Under the arch he lost his crown.
The arch was built too low. A frown

Appeared upon his placid face.
The King said, ‘This is a disgrace.

The chief of builders will be hanged.’
The rope and gallows were arranged.

The chief of builders was led out.
He passed the King. He gave a shout,

‘O King, it was the workmen’s fault’
‘Oh!’ said the King, and called a halt
To the proceedings. Being just
(And placider now) he said, ‘I must

Have all the workmen hanged instead.’
The workmen looked surprised, and said,

‘O King, you do not realise
The bricks were made of the wrong size.’

‘Summon the masons!’ said the King.
The masons stood there quivering.

‘It was the architect...’, they said,
The architect was summoned.

‘Well, architect,’ said His Majesty.
‘I do ordain that you shall be
Hanged.’ Said the architect, ‘O King,
You have forgotten one small thing.

You made certain amendments to
The plans when I showed them to you.’

The King heard this. The King saw red.
In fact he nearly lost his head;

But being a just and placid King
He said, ‘This is a tricky thing.

I need some counsel. Bring to me
The wisest man in this country.’

The wisest man was found and brought,
Nay, carried, to the Royal Court.
He could not walk and could not see,
So old (and therefore wise) was he —

But in a quavering\(^1\) voice he said,
‘The culprit must be punished.

Truly, the arch it was that banged
The crown off, and it must be hanged’.

To the scaffold\(^2\) the arch was led
When suddenly a Councillor said —

‘How can we hang so shamefully
What touched your head, Your Majesty?’

‘True,’ mused the King. By now the crowd,
Restless, was muttering aloud.

The King perceived their mood and trembled
And said to all who were assembled —

‘Let us postpone consideration
Of finer points like guilt. The nation
Wants a hanging. Hanged must be
Someone, and that immediately.’

The noose was set up somewhat high.
Each man was measured by and by.

But only one man was so tall
He fitted. One man. That was all.

He was the King. His Majesty
Was therefore hanged by Royal Decree.

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\(1\) trembling

\(2\) platform for the execution of criminals
‘Thank Goodness we found someone,’ said
The Ministers, ‘for if instead
We had not, the unruly town
Might well have turned against the Crown.’

‘Long live the King!’ the Ministers said.
‘Long live the King! The King is dead.’

They pondered the dilemma; then,
Being practical-minded men,

Sent out the heralds to proclaim
(In His [former] Majesty’s name):

‘The next to pass the City Gate
Will choose the ruler of our state,
As is our custom. This will be
Enforced with due ceremony.’

A man passed by the City Gate.
An idiot. The guards cried, ‘Wait!

Who is to be the King? Decide!’
‘A melon,’ the idiot replied.

This was his standard answer to
All questions. (He liked melons.) ‘You

Are now our King,’ the Ministers said,
Crowning a melon. Then they led

(Carried) the Melon to the throne
And reverently set it down.

* * *
This happened years and years ago.
When now you ask the people, ‘So —
Your King appears to be a melon.
How did this happen?’, they say, ‘Well, on
Account of customary choice.
If His Majesty rejoice
In being a melon, that’s OK
With us, for who are we to say
What he should be as long as he
Leaves us in Peace and Liberty?’

The principles of *laissez faire*
Seem to be well-established there.

1. Narrate ‘The Tale of Melon City’ in your own words.

2. What impression would you form of a state where the King was ‘just and placid’?

3. How, according to you, can peace and liberty be maintained in a state?

4. Suggest a few instances in the poem which highlight humour and irony.

5. ‘The Tale of Melon City’ has been narrated in a verse form. This is a unique style which lends extra charm to an ancient tale. Find similar examples in your language. Share them in the class.
प्यारे बच्चों!
यदि कोई आपको अनूठा घटना से स्पर्श करे और वह घटना आपको अच्छा न लगे तो,
आप चुप न रहें। आप
1. खवर्च को इसका लोग न रेंज़;
2. इस बारे में किसी ऐसे व्यक्ति को बताएं जिस पर आप भरोसा करते हो;
3. आप पृक्ष्यों ई.वाक्स के माध्यम से राष्ट्रीय बाल अधिकार संरक्षण आयोग को
   भी इस बारे में सूचित कर सकते हैं।

जब आपको कोई अनूठा घटना से स्पर्श करता है तो आपको दुआ लग सकता है, आप
 नुकसान और जीवन अनुभव कर सकते हैं आपको ‘‘दुआ’’ अनुभव करने की आवश्यकता नहीं है, क्योंकि आपकी गलती नहीं है

पृक्ष्यों ई.वाक्स NCPCR@gov.in पर उपलब्ध है।

यदि आपकी आयु 18 वर्ष से कम है और आप मुसीबत में हैं अथवा नुकसान हैं अथवा आपके साथ दुर्घटना हो गई है अथवा संकट में हैं अथवा किसी ऐसे बच्चे को जानते हैं...

1098 पर कॉल करें...क्योंकि कुछ अच्छे नंबर
अच्छे बच्चे बने हैं।

चाइल्ड लाइन
1098 राज-विद्या
चाइल्ड लाइन 1098 – विश्वविद्यालय में बच्चों के लिए 24 घंटे
िशिक्षा राष्ट्रीय आयोगकालीन विषय संबंधित, महत्वपूर्ण वैकस प्रभावम के साक्षरता से चाइल्ड लाइन
छुट्टी फॉर्डेशन की चाहत है।
......Ahimsa is the very definition of woman and there is no place for untruth in her heart. If she is true to herself she is no longer Abala – the weak, but she is Sabala – the strong......