

# English II

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## DENG201



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# ENGLISH - II

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## SYLLABUS

### English - II

*Objectives:* The main objective of this book is to develop understanding of the students in English Language with the fullest possible capacities and potentialities physical and spiritual of a total man. It should make a man capable of earning his livelihood reasonably well to enjoy a happy and secure life while making effective contributions to the society and national effort of making Indian strong, advanced and prosperous.

| Sr. No. | Topics   |
|---------|--|
| 1.      | Functional Grammar : Types of sentences, sentence structure, Transformation and Synthesis of Sentences   |
| 2.      | Functional Grammar : Direct and Indirect (Reported Speech)   |
| 3.      | Functional Grammar : Common Errors   |
| 4.      | Comprehension from Seen & Unseen Passages; Explanation of Unseen Passage in verse  |
| 5.      | Poetry : John Donne's "The Good Morrow", William Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" and Nissim Ezekiel's "Night of the Scorpion"   |
| 6.      | Vocabulary and usage : One -Word Substitution, Synonyms & Antonyms, Words often Confused & Misused, Idioms and Idiomatic Phrases and their usage |
| 7.      | Fiction: Jhumpa Lehari's "Interpreter of Maladies" : Detailed Study, discussion on all important spheres of the text and questions.              |
| 8.      | Jhumpa Lehari's "This Blessed House": Detailed Study, Discussion on all important spheres of the text and questions                              |
| 9.      | Essay Writing ( Short Essay), Precis Writing from Seen and Unseen Passages   |
| 10.     | One Act Play: "Chitra" by Rabindranath Tagore: Background of the Text, Detailed Study, Characterisation, Theme and Plot Construction.            |

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# Unit 1: Functional English Grammar – Types of Sentences, Sentence Structure

Notes

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Objectives

Introduction

- 1.1 Components of Sentence
- 1.2 Types of Sentences (on the Basis of Purpose)
- 1.3 Types of Sentences (on the Basis of Structure)
- 1.4 Agreement of the Verb with the Subject
- 1.5 Key-Words
- 1.6 Review Questions
- 1.7 Further Readings

## Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to:

- Define sentences and their types
- Separate subjects and predicates from a sentence
- Understand clauses and their types
- Know the agreement between verb and the subject

## Introduction

We use words to express our thoughts. A single word may not make the meaning clear. So, we use words in a group which make sense called a sentence. In the field of linguistics, a **sentence** is an expression in natural language. It is often defined as a grammatical unit consisting of one or more words that bear minimal syntactic relation to the words that precede or follow it. A sentence can include words grouped meaningfully to express a statement, question, exclamation, request, command or suggestion.

Hence, we can define sentence as,

A sentence is a group of words arranged in a manner which makes a complete sense. It contains at least one subject and one predicate, either explicit or implicit.

For examples,

1. Riti is very dear to me.
2. I always speak the truth.
3. A bad workman quarrels with his tools.
4. ( I ) Thank you. ( I is implicit )
5. ( It is ) Shocking! ( It is is implicit )

Above examples show that a sentence is a group of words which gives a complete sense.

## 1.1 Components of Sentence

A sentence is consist of many components such as subject, predicate, clauses, etc. Let us know some of these components discussed below:

## Notes

**1.1.1 Subject and Predicate**

Every sentence is made up of two parts, the Subject and the Predicate. The Subject is the word or words about which something is said. The Predicate is the word or words which says or say something about the subject. For example, Ritika is well-versed in the art of painting.

In the above sentence *Ritika* is the Subject and the rest portion “ *is well-versed in the art of painting* is Predicate.

Read the following sentences:

| <b>Subjects</b> | <b>Predicates</b>            |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| 1. The boys     | fly kites.                   |
| 2. The horse    | runs fast.                   |
| 3. We have      | won the cricket match.       |
| 4. Rishi        | met with a serious accident. |

The subject of a sentence generally comes first; but sometimes it may be put after the predicate to make the sentence more emphatic ; as,

1. Sweet are the uses of adversity.
2. Bare-footed came the beggar-maid.

A sentence may consist of a single word; as—Run, Speak.

Here *Run* means *you run* and *speak* means *you speak*. In such sentences the subject you is understood. Let's practice—

- I. Pick out the Subject and the Predicate in the following sentences:
  1. India wants peace in the world.
  2. Birth and learning do not make one a Brahmin.
  3. Happy is the contented man.
  4. Did she not sing a sweet song?
  5. Never back-bite others.

**1.1.2 Clauses**

Look at the examples:

|                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| These are clauses               | These are not clauses      |
| Ecology is a science            | to protect the environment |
| Because pollution causes cancer | after working all day      |

Clauses are the building blocks of sentences. A clause is a group of words that contains at least a subject ( noun phrase ) and a finite verb. While the subject is usually a noun phrase, other kinds of phrases (such as gerund phrases) work as well, and some languages allow subjects to be omitted. There are two types of clauses: **independent** and **subordinate (dependent)**. An independent clause demonstrates a complete thought; it is a complete sentence: for example, *I am sad*. A subordinate clause is not a complete sentence: for example, *because I have no friends*.

**Types of Clauses****1. Independent clauses.**

An Independent clause contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought. It can stand alone as a sentence by itself. An independent clause is formed with-

**Subject + verb (+complement)**

For examples:

Students normally spend four years in college.

I will declare my monitor now, but I may change it later.

Many international students experience culture shock when they come to the United States.

**2. Dependent clauses.**

A Dependent clause begins with a subordinator such as *when, while, if, that, if, or who*. This clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand alone as a sentence by itself. It is formed with:

**Subordinator + subject + verb (+ complement)**

For examples;

...although students normally spend four years in college..

...if I declare my monitor now....

...when they come to the United States...

A partial list of subordinators follows in the chart of clause connectors. Study the chart, and then refer to it when you do practice.

**3. Clause connectors**

These groups of words are used to connect clause in order to form different kinds of sentences. They are subordinators ( subordinating conjunctions), coordinators ( coordinating conjunctions), and conjunctive adverbs.

Some clause connectors are given below:

**(i) Subordinators ( subordinating conjunctions):**

|            |             |        |          |       |
|------------|-------------|--------|----------|-------|
| after      | before      | that   | when     | which |
| although   | even though | though | whenever | While |
| as         | how         | unless | where    | who   |
| as if      | if          | until  | wherever | whom  |
| as soon as | since       | what   | whether  | whose |
| because    | so that     |        |          |       |

**(ii) Coordinators ( coordinating conjunctions):**

You can remember the seven coordinators by the phrase FAN BOYS:

|     |     |     |     |    |     |    |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| for | and | nor | but | or | yet | so |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|----|

**(iii) Conjunctive adverbs:**

|              |             |             |              |                   |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|
| accordingly  | furthermore | in contrast | meanwhile    | on the other hand |
| besides      | hence       | indeed      | moreover     | otherwise         |
| consequently | however     | instead     | nevertheless | therefore         |
| for example  | in addition | likewise    | nonetheless  | thus              |

**Self-Assessment**

1. Write **INDEP** next to the independent clauses and put a period (.) after them. Write **DEP** next to the dependent clauses.

- (i) Jet lag affects most long-distance travelers
- (ii) Which is simply the urge to sleep at inappropriate times
- (iii) During long journeys through several time zones, the body's inner clock is disrupted
- (iv) For some reason, travel from west to east causes greater jet lag than travel from east to west.
- (v) Also, changes in work schedules can cause jet lag
- (vi) Although there is no sure way to prevent Jet Lag

**1.2 Types of Sentences (on the Basis of Purpose)**

Sentences can be classified on the basis of their purpose and structure.

Lets classify sentences by their purpose.

By purpose sentences can be classified into five kinds:



## Notes

1. A *declarative sentence* or declaration, the most common type, commonly makes a statement: "I have to go to work."
2. An *interrogative sentence* or question is commonly used to request information – "Do I have to go to work?" – but sometimes not; see rhetorical question.
3. An *exclamatory sentence* or exclamation is generally a more emphatic form of statement expressing emotion: "I have to go to work!"
4. An *imperative sentence* or command tells someone to do something (and if done strongly may be considered both imperative and exclamatory): "Go to work." or "Go to work!"
5. Optative sentences

### 1. Declarative or an Assertive Sentences

These sentences ( Subject + verb + object + ..... ) make only a statement. It may be Affirmative or Negative, as:

- (i) There are trees on either side of the road. ( affirmative or yes- statement )
- (ii) She does not learn her lesson. ( negative or no- statement )

### 2. Interrogative Sentence

An Interrogative sentence ends with interrogative ( Verb + subject + ...? ) and asks a question, as:

- (i) Will you help me?
- (ii) Have you seen my brother?
- (iii) Where is she going?

**Note:** An interrogative sentence ends with a mark of interrogation.

### 3. Imperative Sentence

An Imperative sentence expresses some command, request or advice. ( 1<sup>st</sup> form of the verb/ do not +1<sup>st</sup> form + ..... )

For Examples,

- (i) Show me your home-work. (order)
- (ii) Always speak the truth. (advice)
- (iii) Do not spit on the floor. (prohibition)

**Note:** In Imperative sentences the subject " you " is understood.

### 4. Exclamatory Sentence

An exclamatory sentence expresses some strong feeling of mind;

For Examples,

- (i) Alas! I am undone. (sorrow)
- (ii) Hurrah! We have won the match! (joy)
- (iii) What a nasty fall! (surprise)

**Note:** A mark of Exclamation (!) is used at the end of an exclamatory word or sentence.

### 5. Optative Sentence

An Optative Sentence expresses a prayer, wish or desire; For examples,

- (i) May you all pass!
- (ii) Long live the King!
- (iii) Would that he were here!

**Note:** Every Optative sentence ends with a mark of exclamation (!).

**Self-Assessment**

Notes

**2. Identify the following sentences:**

- (i) Blood is thicker than water.
- (ii) How did he treat you there?
- (iii) Pay my best compliments to your father.
- (iv) Nothing succeeds like success.
- (v) How dare you enter the house?
- (vi) Please listen to me.
- (vii) May God bless you!
- (viii) Have you ever tried your luck?

**1.2.1 Formation of Negative Sentences**

Study the following sentences:

A

**Affirmative**

1. He was a thief.
2. This dog barks at night.
3. The boys fly kites.
4. He kicked the ball.
5. I shall invite you to tea.
6. She has failed.
7. You can go now.

**Negative**

- He was *not* a thief.
- This dog does *not* bark at night.
- The boys do *not* fly kites.
- He did *not* kick the ball.
- I shall *not* invite you to tea.
- She has *not* failed.
- You *cannot* go now.

B

1. I have a cow.
2. Somebody hit me on the head.
3. Anybody can go in.
4. I have some books in the bag.
5. You are fit for this work.
6. He is both a poet and a singer.
7. She has to say something.
8. You always shirk work.

- I have *no* cow.
- Nobody* hit me on the head.
- Nobody* can go in.
- I have *no* book in the bag.
- You are *unfit* for this work.
- He is *neither* a poet *nor* a singer.
- She has to say *nothing*.
- You *never* shirk work.

C

Mark the different ways of writing Negative sentences:

1. She is *not able* to speak fluently.  
She is *unable* to speak fluently.
2. I did *not* invite *either* Kamal *or* Rajeev.  
I invited *neither* Kamal *nor* Rajeev.
3. He did *not* eat *anything* there.  
He ate *nothing* there.

**Self-Assessment****3. (i) Change the following Affirmative sentences into Negative ones:**

- (a) Lata is a good singer.
- (b) Somebody made off with my purse.
- (c) She will invite you to her marriage.

Notes

(d) He is pelting the frogs with stones.

(e) A cow lives on grass.

**(ii) Change the following Negative sentences into Affirmative ones:**

(a) We did not win the match.

(b) He never abuses anybody.

(c) There is no pen in the bag.

(d) You cannot jump over the wall.

(e) He should not waste his time.

**1.2.2 Formation of Interrogative Sentences**

Study the following sentences carefully:

**A**

**Assertive**

1. God is great.
2. You are a fine speaker.
3. I am learning my lesson.
4. The farmers were ploughing their fields.
5. They have won the match.
6. I had already reached there.
7. You will succeed now.

**Interrogative**

- Is God great?  
 Are you a fine speaker?  
 Am I learning my lesson?  
 Were the farmers ploughing their fields?  
 Have they won the match?  
 Had I already reached there?  
 Will you succeed now?

**B**

1. She always reaches late.
2. A horse feeds on grass.
3. I pray to God.
4. It rains heavily in July.
5. They swam across the river.
6. She taught us English.

- Does she always reach late?  
 Does a horse feed on grass?  
 Do I pray to God?  
 Does it rain heavily in July?  
 Did they swim across the river?  
 Did she teach us English?

**Note:** While forming questions, we use 'do' and 'does' in the Present Indefinite Tense and 'did' in the Past Indefinite Tense.

**C**

The following **Interrogative Sentences** begin with **Interrogative Words** (Pronouns, Adverbs etc.):

1. *Who* is your father?
2. *Whose* book is this?
3. *Whom* do you want to see?
4. *Which* subject do you like most?
5. *What* made you weep?
6. *Where* are you going at this odd hour?
7. *Why* are you creating a scene?
8. *How much* milk do you buy daily?
9. *How far* is your school from here?
10. *How many* days are there in a week?

### 1.2.3 Formation of Negative-Interrogative Sentences

Notes

Study the following sentences carefully:

#### Affirmative

1. He is a good player.
2. They were boating in the canal.
3. She loves her children.
4. We shall buy mangoes.
5. She will sing a song.
6. He held me by the arm.
7. You have insulted me.
8. They had already reached home.

#### Negative-Interrogative

- Is he not a good player?  
 Were they not boating in the canal?  
 Does she not love her children?  
 Shall we not buy mangoes?  
 Will she not sing a song?  
 Did he not hold me by the arm?  
 Have you not insulted me?  
 Had they not already reached home?

### Self-Assessment

4. (i) Change the following Assertive sentences into Interrogative ones:

- (a) I am a student.
- (b) She is plucking flowers.
- (c) You have stolen my pen.
- (d) He had never been to Kashmir.
- (e) He calls me names.
- (f) They have finished their work.
- (g) Only the wearer knows where the shoes pinch.
- (h) You deserved this honour.
- (i) He failed to keep his word.
- (j) I know how to swim.

(ii) Change the following Interrogative sentences into Assertive ones:

- (a) Does a cow live on grass?
- (b) Does she reach the office late?
- (c) Did you show me your homework?
- (d) Do I hate liars?
- (e) Does he abuse his servant?
- (f) Mustn't you work hard now?
- (g) Are you feeling better today?
- (h) Was the doctor feeling the patient's pulse?
- (i) Shall I help you?
- (j) Is the train running late?

### 1.3 Types of Sentences (on the Basis of Structure)

On the basis of structure we can classify the following sentences:

- A *simple sentence* consists of a single independent clause with no dependent clauses.
- A *compound sentence* consists of multiple independent clauses with no dependent clauses. These clauses are joined together using conjunctions, punctuation, or both.
- A *complex sentence* consists of at least one independent clause and one dependent clause.
- A *complex-compound sentence* (or *compound-complex sentence*) consists of multiple independent clauses, at least one of which has at least one dependent clause.

## Notes

**Why Sentence Structure Matters**

Although ordinary conversation, personal letters, and even some types of professional writing (such as newspaper stories) consist almost entirely of simple sentences, your university of college instructors will expect you to be able to use all types of sentences in your formal academic writing. Writers who use only simple sentences are like truck drivers who do not know how to shift out of first gear: they would be able to drive a load from Montreal to Calgary (eventually), but they would have a great deal of trouble getting there.

If you use phrases and clauses carefully, your sentences will become much more interesting and your ideas, much clearer. This complex sentences develops a major, central idea and provides structured background information:

Since it involves the death not only of the title character but of the entire royal court, Hamlet is the most extreme of the tragedies written by the Elizabethan playwright William Shakespeare.

Just as a good driver uses different gears, a good writer uses different types of sentences in different situations:

- a long complex sentence will show what information depends on what other information;
- a compound sentence will emphasize balance and parallelism;
- a short simple sentence will grab a reader's attention;
- a loose sentences will tell the reader in advance how to interpret your information;
- a periodic sentence will leave the reader in suspense until the very end;
- a declarative sentence will avoid any special emotional impact;
- an exclamatory sentence, used sparingly, will jolt the reader;
- an interrogative sentence will force the reader to think about what you are writing; and
- an imperative sentence will make it clear that you want the reader to act right away.

**1.3.1 Simple Sentences**

A simple sentence, also called an independent clause, contains a subject and a verb, and it expresses a complete thought. In the following simple sentences, subjects are in yellow, and verbs are in green.

1. Some students like to study in the mornings.
2. Juan and Arturo play football every afternoon.
3. Alicia goes to the library and studies every day.

The three examples above are all simple sentences. Not that sentence B contains a compound subject, and sentence C contains a compound verb. Simple sentences, therefore, contain a subject and verb and express a complete thought, but they can also contain a compound subjects or verbs.

Some more examples:

1. I enjoy playing tennis with my friends every weekend.
2. I enjoy playing tennis and look forward to it every weekend.
3. My friends and I play tennis and go bowling every weekend.

Notice that the second sentence has two verbs, *enjoy* and *look forward to*. This is called a compound verb. Because there is only one clause, this is a simple sentence. The third sentence has a compound subject as well as a compound verb, but it is still a simple sentence because it has only one clause.

**Self-Assessment**

5. (i) Write two simple sentences with one subject and one verb.  
(ii) Write two simple sentences with one subject and two verbs.  
(iii) Write two simple sentences with two subjects and two verbs.

### 1.3.2 Compound Sentences

Notes

A compound sentence contains two independent clauses joined by a coordinator. The coordinators are as follows: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. (Helpful hint: The first letter of each of the coordinators spells FANBOYS.) Except for very short sentences, coordinators are always preceded by a comma. In the following compound sentences, subjects are in yellow, verbs are in green, and the coordinators and the commas that precede them are in red.

1. I tried to speak Spanish, and my friend tried to speak English.
2. Alejandro played football, so Maria went shopping.
3. Alejandro played football, for Maria went shopping.

The above three sentences are compound sentences. Each sentence contains two independent clauses, and they are joined by a coordinator with a comma preceding it. Note how the conscious use of coordinators can change the relationship between the clauses. Sentences B and C, for example, are identical except for the coordinators. In sentence B, which action occurred first? Obviously, “Alejandro played football” first, and as a consequence, “Maria went shopping.” In sentence C, “Maria went shopping” first. In sentence C, “Alejandro played football” because, possibly, he didn’t have anything else to do, for or because “Maria went shopping.” How can the use of other coordinators change the relationship between the two clauses? What implications would the use of “yet” or “but” have on the meaning of the sentence?

There are three ways to join the clauses:

1. With a coordinator I enjoy tennis, **but** I hate golf.
2. With a conjunctive adverb I enjoy tennis; **however**, I hate golf.
3. With a semicolon I enjoy tennis; I hate golf.

Let’s study each type of compound sentence in more detail.

#### 1. Compound Sentences with Coordinators

A compound sentence can be formed as follows:

Independent clause + Coordinator + Independent clause

Notice that there is a comma after the first independent clause. The following sentences illustrate the meanings of the seven “FAN BOYS” coordinators.

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>for</b> | Women live longer than men, <b>for</b> they take better care of their health. (The second clause gives the reason for the first clause.)  |
| <b>and</b> | Women follow more healthful diets, <b>and</b> they go to doctors more often. (The two clauses express equal, similar ideas.)  |
| <b>nor</b> | Women don’t smoke as much as men do, <b>nor</b> do they drink as much alcohol. ( <i>Nor</i> means “and not.” It joins two negative independent clauses. Notice that question word order is used after <i>nor</i> .) |
| <b>but</b> | Men may exercise harder, <b>but</b> they may not exercise as regularly as women do. (The two clauses express equal, contrasting ideas.)   |
| <b>or</b>  | Both men and women should limit the amount of fat in their diets, <b>or</b> they risk getting heart disease. (The two clauses express alternative possibilities.)   |
| <b>yet</b> | Women used to be known as the “weaker sex,” <b>yet</b> in some ways, they are stronger than men. (The second clause is a surprising or unexpected contrast to the first clause.)                                    |
| <b>so</b>  | Men are less cautious than women, <b>so</b> more men die in accidents. (The second clause is the result of the first clause.)   |

Notes

**Self-Assessment**

6. A. Add another independent clause to the following independent clauses to form compound sentences. Be sure to write a complete clause containing a subject and a verb. Circle the coordinator and add punctuation.

**Example**

The college campus is located in the center of the city, (so) it is very easy to do my shopping.

- 1. Students can attend day classes and .....
- 2. Students can live in dormitories or .....
- 3. I have finished my math homework but .....
- 4. I have studied English for six years yet .....
- 5. My adviser suggested a word processing class for .....
- 6. Some students do not like to write term papers nor .....
- 7. The instructor gave us eight weeks to write our term papers yet .....
- 8. Most students had not even chosen a topic nor .....
- 9. The instructor was very upset for .....
- 10. My roommate scored very high on the English placement test so .....

- B. For each pair of sentences below, choose a coordinator that best fits the meaning, and join the two independent clauses to form a compound sentence. Use each FAN BOYS coordinator once. Write your new sentences on a separate sheet of paper, and punctuate them correctly.

**Example**

Nuclear accidents can happen. Nuclear power plants must have strict safety controls.

Nuclear accidents can happen, so nuclear power plants must have strict safety controls.

- 1. The accident at the nuclear power plant at Three Mile Island in the United States created fears about the safety of this energy source. The disaster at Chernobyl in the former Soviet Union confirmed them.
- 2. Solar heating systems are economical to operate. The cost of installation is very high.
- 3. Energy needs are not going to decrease. Energy sources are not going to increase. (Use *nor* and question word order in the second clause, deleting the word *not*.)
- 4. Burning fossil fuels causes serious damage to our planet. We need to develop other sources of energy.
- 5. Ecologists know that burning fossil fuels causes holes in the ozone layer. People continue to do it.

6. Poorer nations especially will continue this harmful practice. They don't have the money to develop "clean" energy sources.
  7. All nations of the world must take action. Our children and grandchildren will suffer the consequences.
- C. On a separate sheet of paper, write seven compound sentences of your own, using each coordinator once.

## 2. Compound Sentences with Conjunctive Adverbs

A compound sentence can also be formed as follows:

Independent clause; + conjunctive adverb, + independent clause

Notice the punctuation: a semicolon follows the first independent clause, and a comma follows the conjunctive adverb. Also, just like the FAN BOYS coordinators, conjunctive adverbs express relationships between the clauses. The following chart shows the coordinators and conjunctive adverbs that express similar meanings.

| Coordinators             | Conjunctive Adverbs                              | Sentence   |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| <b>and</b>               | besides furthermore<br>moreover also             | Community colleges offer preparation for many occupations; <b>moreover</b> , they prepare students to transfer to a four year college or university. |
| <b>but</b><br><b>yet</b> | however nevertheless<br>nonetheless              | Many community colleges do not have dormitories; <b>however</b> , they provide housing referral services.  |
| <b>or</b>                | otherwise  | Students must take final exams; <b>otherwise</b> , they will receive a grade of Incomplete.  |
| <b>so</b>                | accordingly consequently<br>hence therefore thus | Native and nonnative English speakers have different needs; <b>therefore</b> , most schools provide separate English classes for each group.         |

## Self-Assessment

7. A. Add another independent clause to each independent clause that follows to form compound sentences. Be sure to add a complete clause containing a subject and a verb. Circle the conjunctive adverb and add punctuation. Notice that some of these sentences are from Practice 3A on pages 156-157.

### Example

The college campus is located in the center of the city; (therefore ) it is very easy to do my shopping .....

1. Students can attend day classes moreover .....
2. Students can live In dormitories otherwise .....



Notes

- 3. I have finished my math homework however .....
- 4. I have studied English for six years nevertheless .....
- 5. The instructor gave us eight weeks to write our term papers nonetheless .....
- 6. My roommate scored very high on the English placement test consequently .....

B. On a separate sheet of paper, combine the pairs of sentences in items 2, 4, 5, and 7 from Practice 3B on page 157, using conjunctive adverbs instead of coordinators. Punctuate your new sentences correctly.

**Example**

Nuclear accidents can happen. Nuclear power plants should have strict safety controls.

Nuclear accidents can happen: therefore, nuclear power plants should have strict, safety controls.

C. On a separate sheet of paper, write four compound sentences, using each of these conjunctive adverbs once: *furthermore, however, therefore, and otherwise*.

**3. Compound Sentences with Semicolons**

A compound sentence can also be formed with a semicolon alone:

Independent clause

My older brother studies law; my younger brother studies medicine.

Poland was the first Eastern European country to turn away from communism; others soon followed.

This kind of compound sentence is possible only when the two independent clauses are closely related in meaning. If they aren't closely related, they should be written as two simple sentences, each ending with a period.

**Self-Assessment**

- 8. A. Place a semicolon between the two independent clauses in the following compound sentences.
  - 1. The American way of life apparently does not foster marital happiness half of all American marriages end in divorce.
  - 2. Motherhood causes some women to quit their jobs others continue working despite having young children to care for.
  - 3. Three hundred guests attended his wedding two attended his funeral.
- B. Write three compound sentences of your own, using a semicolon to join the independent clauses.

**1.3.3 Complex Sentences**

A complex sentence has an independent clause joined by one or more dependent clauses. A complex sentence always has a subordinator such as *because, since, after, although*, or a relative pronoun such as *that, who, or which*. In the following complex sentences, subjects are in yellow, verbs are in green, and the subordinators and their commas (when required) are in red.

- 1. When he handed in his homework, he forgot to give the teacher the last page.
- 2. The teacher returned the homework after she noticed the error.
- 3. The students are studying because they have a test tomorrow.
- 4. After they finished studying Juan and Maria went to the movies.
- 5. Juan and Maria went to the movies after they finished studying.

When a complex sentence begins with a subordinator such as sentences A and D, a comma is required at the end of the dependent clause. When the independent clause begins the sentence with subordinators in the middle as in sentences B, C, and E, no comma is required. If a comma is placed before the subordinators in sentences B, C, and E, it is wrong.

Note that sentences D and E are the same except sentence D begins with the dependent clause which is followed by a comma, and sentence E begins with the independent clause which contains no comma. The comma after the dependent clause in sentence D is required, and experienced listeners of English will often hear a slight pause there. In sentence E, however, there will be no pause when the independent clause begins the sentence.

## Dependent Clauses

### Adverb Clauses

A dependent adverb clause begins with an adverbial subordinator such as *when, while, because, although, if, so that*, etc.

1. **Although women in the United States could own property**, they could not vote until 1920.
2. In the United States, women could not vote until 1920 **although they could own property**.

Notice that there are two possible positions for an adverb clause: before or after the independent clause. If it comes before the independent clause, it is followed by a comma (sentence 1). If it comes after the independent clause, no comma is used (sentence 2).

### Adjective Clauses

A dependent adjective (relative) clause begins with a relative pronoun such as *who, whom, which, whose*, or *that*, or with a relative adverb such as *where* or *when*. An adjective clause functions as an adjective; that is, it modifies a noun or pronoun. The position and punctuation of dependent adjective clauses is discussed in Chapter 13.

3. Men **who are not married** are called bachelors.
4. Last year we vacationed on the Red Sea, **which features excellent scuba diving**.

### Noun Clauses

A dependent noun clause functions as a noun and begins with a *wh*-question word, *that*, *whether*, or sometimes *if*. A dependent noun clause can be either a subject (sentence 5) or an object (sentence 6). No commas are necessary.

5. **That there is a hole in the ozone layer of the earth's atmosphere** is well known.
6. Scientists believe **that excess chlorofluorocarbons in the atmosphere are responsible for creating it**.

## Self-Assessment

9. A. **STEP 1** Underline the independent clause of each sentence with a solid line.  
**STEP 2** Underline the dependent clause with a broken line.  
**STEP 3** Write SUB above the subordinator. Refer to the chart on page 154 for a list of subordinators.

### Example

Because the cost of education is rising, many students must work part-time.

1. When students from other countries come to the United States, they often suffer from culture shock.
2. Because the cost of education has risen, many students are having financial problems.
3. Please tell me where the student union is.
4. Engineers, who have an aptitude for drafting and mechanics, must also be artistic and imaginative.

**Notes**

5. While the contractor follows the blueprint, the engineer checks the construction in progress.
6. Since the blueprint presents the details of the engineer’s plans, it must be interpreted accurately by the contractor.
7. Students should declare a major by their junior year unless they have not made up their minds.
8. Even though students declare a major now, they can change it later.
9. Last year, the government reported that drug use is increasing.
10. Doctors are concerned about drug use by young people, who think that smoking marijuana is risk-free.

**B. STEP 1** Add a logical independent clause to each of the following dependent clauses.

**STEP 2** Punctuate each sentence correctly.

1. .... until I pay my tuition.
2. .... unless I take twelve units.
3. .... that computer engineering is a popular major.
4. .... who is chair of the Communications Department.
5. Because I had to look for a part-time job .....
6. .... if I want to get to school on time.
7. .... whether I should take advanced calculus.
8. .... whom I met at the social club meeting last month.
9. .... when I left my country.
10. .... that my college adviser recommends.

**1.3.4. Compound-Complex Sentences**

A **compound-complex sentence** is a combination of two or more independent clauses and one (or more) dependent clauses. Many combinations are possible, and their punctuation requires careful attention.

1. I wanted to travel after I graduated from college; however, I had to go to work immediately.
2. After I graduated from college, I wanted to travel, but I had to go to work immediately.
3. I wanted to travel after I graduated from college, but I had to go to work immediately because I had to support my family.
4. I couldn’t decide where I should work or what I should do, so I did nothing.
  - Punctuate the compound part of a compound-complex sentence like a compound sentence; that is, use a semicolon/comma combination (sentence 1), or put a comma before a coordinator joining two clauses (sentences 2, 3, and 4).
  - Punctuate the complex part like a complex sentence. With adverb clauses, put a comma after a dependent adverb clause (sentence 2) but not before them (sentence 3). With noun clauses, use no commas (sentenced 4).

**Self-Assessment**

**9. Punctuate these compound-complex sentences:**

**STEP 1** Underline the independent clauses with a solid line and the dependent clauses with a broken line.

**STEP 2** Add commas and/or semicolons as necessary.

- (i) If housework and childcare are included women work more hours per week than men every place in the world except North America and Australia but they also earn less than men everywhere.

- (ii) In Africa, women work harder than men because they work 67 hours per week but men work only 53.
- (iii) Although Latin American women work 60 hours Latin men work only 54 and in Asia women work 62 hours to men's 48.
- (iv) Men in Western Europe work the least they put in only 43 hours per week although women average 48.
- (v) The report stated that even when men's working hours were reduced they used the extra time for leisure activities rather than for housework or childcare.

## 1.4 Agreement of the Verb with the Subject

Read the following sentences:

1. **He** is a good speaker.
2. **They** are good speakers.

In the sentence 1 the **Subject 'he'** is in the *Singular Number* ; the Verb '*is*' is also in the *Singular*. But in the sentence 2 the **Subject 'they'** is in the *Plural Number* ; the Verb '*are*' is also in the *Plural*. **Examples**

1. **Sham** is reciting a poem.  
My **brother** does not speak the truth.  
**He** likes milk but **his sister** does not.

2. **Boys** are taking a test.  
**Women** were weeping bitterly.  
**They** have not finished their work.

Now study these sentences:

- He** learns his lesson daily.  
**You** have not replied to my letter.  
**I** am sure to win a scholarship.

In the above sentences, the **Verbs** have changed according to the persons of the Subjects. Thus we know that the **Verb agrees with the Subject in Number and Person**.

We use '*is*' and '*was*' when the subject is '**he**', '**she**' or '**it**'; '*am*' and '*was*' when the subject is '**I**' while '*are*' and '*were*' when the subject is '**we**' **you**' or '**they**'. **In all other tenses we use a Plural Verb with 'I' and 'you'**.

### Examples

- She/he** is in the wrong.  
**It** was very hot yesterday.  
**I** am also ready to go.  
**You** too are mistaken.  
**Were you** present in the meeting?  
**I** respect my elders.  
**Do you** also approve of this decision?

1. **When two or more Singular Subjects** are joined by '*and*' they take a **Plural Verb** ; as –  
**Shashi and Indu** are sisters.  
**Two and two** make four.  
**You, he and I** play together.
2. **When two Subjects** are joined by '*as well as*' the Verb **agrees with the first Subject** ; as –  
**I** as well as **you** am in the wrong.  
**His parents** as well as he are illiterate.

Notes

3. **When two or more Singular Subjects** are connected by 'or', 'nor', 'either-or', 'neither-nor', they take a **Verb in Singular** ; as –

*Either you or he has* stolen the watch.

*Neither he nor his friend is* guilty.

*She or her sister is* present here.

**But when there are two subjects of different persons** joined by 'Neither – nor' or 'Either – or' the **Verb agrees in person with the subject nearest to it** ; as –

*Either he or his companions were* guilty.

*Either his companions or he was* guilty.

*Either she or her parents are* mistaken.

*Either her parents or she is* mistaken.

4. *Either, neither, each, every* and *everyone* are followed by a **Singular Verb**; as –

*Either of the two brothers is* at fault.

*Neither of these two roads leads* to the hospital.

*Each of them is* honest.

*Every Scout honours* the Scout Law.

*Everyone of the girls likes* her dress.

1. When **two Singular Nouns** refer to the same person or thing, the **Verb** must be **Singular**. The **Article** is then **not repeated** ; as –

*The poet and philosopher is* dead.

*My friend and colleague has* come.

2. If **two Subjects** together *express one idea*, the **Verb** may be in the **Singular**; as –

*Slow and steady wins* the race.

*Rice and curry is* my favourite dish.

3. When a **Plural Noun** expresses **some** specific quantity or amount considered as a whole, the **Verb** is in **Singular** ; as –

*Nine hundred rupees is* not much for this cow.

*Twenty kilometres is* a long distance.

When **two or more Singular Subjects** are connected by *with, together with, and not, besides, no less than*, the **Verb** is in **Singular** ; as –

The suitcase *with* all its contents **was** stolen.

Kamal *together with* her sisters, **is** present.

He, *and not* you, **is** to blame.

No one *besides* the nurse **knows** this secret.

He *no less than* you **is** guilty.

The **Verbs** agree with the number of the **Nouns that follow the Verb**; as –

There **is** no leaf on the tree.

There **are** six boys in the classroom.

There **were** many players present there.

1. Some **Nouns** which are **Plural in form** but **Singular in meaning**, take a **Singular Verb** ; as –

*Mathematics is* my favourite subject.

*Economics has* no charm for him.

*This news is* false.

*The wages of sin is* death.

2. A **Plural Noun** which is the *name of a country or province or the title of a book*, is followed by a **Singular Verb** ; as –

The *United States* **has** a fine navy.

*The Arabian Nights*, **contains** interesting stories.

*Great Expectations*, **is** an interesting novel.

A **Collective Noun** generally takes a **Singular Verb** when the subject stands for the collection as a whole and a Plural Verb when the subject stands for the individuals of which it is composed ; as –

1. The whole *class* **is** absent.

The *mob* **has** dispersed.

The *gentry* **is sitting** on the chairs.

2. The *jury* **has** four members.

The *jury* **have** different opinions.

The *crew* **were** arrested.

A **Relative Pronoun** must agree with its antecedent in **Gender, Number and Person** ; as –

It is **he** *who is* to blame.

It is **they** *who are* to blame.

It is **you** *who are* to blame.

It is **I** *who am* to blame.

He has sold **the cow** *which gives* milk.

Study the following sentences:

*Two thirds of this book* **is** easy.

*Many people* **live** in slums.

*A pair of shoes* **is lying** under the table.

*A large number* **is expected** at the match.

*This news* **spreads** fast.

*One of my friends* **has** not come.

*The quality of the mangoes* **was** not good.

Not only *he* but all *his companions* **were** arrested.

Not only *you* but also *I* **am** to blame.

### Common Errors in the Use of Verbs

#### Incorrect

- Two thousand rupees **are** a good sum.
- The king and poet **are** here.
- The father with his sons **were** present there.
- He as well as his parents **are** illiterate.
- Bread and butter **are** my only food.
- Either you or your brother **have** done this.
- Either of these two boys **are** guilty.
- The jury **were of** one mind.
- 'Gulliver's Travels' **are** an interesting book.
- Neither you came here nor your brother **did**.
- A large number of people **was** present there.
- The majority of the applicants **is** girls.

#### Correct

- Two thousand rupees **is** a good sum.
- The king and poet **is** here.
- The father with his sons **was** present there.
- He as well as his parents **is** illiterate.
- Bread and Butter **is** my only food.
- Either you or your brother **has** done this.
- Either of these two boys **is** guilty.
- The jury **was** of one mind.
- 'Gulliver's Travels' **is** an interesting book.
- Neither you came here nor **did** your brother.
- A large number of people **were** present there.
- The majority of the applicants **are** girls.

**Notes**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>13. <i>The news</i> from the War front <b>are</b> not encouraging.</p> <p>14. <i>None</i> of them <b>are</b> right.</p> <p>15. <i>What I say</i> and <i>do</i> <b>is</b> none of his business.</p> | <p><i>The news</i> from the War front <b>is</b> not encouraging.</p> <p><i>None</i> of them <b>is</b> right.</p> <p><i>What I say</i> and <i>do</i> <b>are</b> none of his business.</p> |
|---|--|

**1.5 Key-Words**

1. Subject : A subject is a word or words about something is said.
2. Clauses : A clause is a group of words that contains at least a subject and a finite verb.

**1.6 Review Questions**

**I. Fill in the blanks with one of the two words given in brackets:**

1. Politics ..... a dirty game. (is / are)
2. No news ..... good news. (is / are)
3. Neither you nor I ..... invited. (am / is)
4. The master of these shops ..... very rich. (are / is)
5. Fire and water ..... not agree. (do / does)
6. All the girls of this class ..... absent. (is / are)
7. The clothes of this beggar ..... torn. (is / are)
8. The United Nations ..... the only hope in these days of cold wars, (is / are)
9. Either he or they ..... mistaken. (is / are)
10. Time and tide ..... for none. (wait / waits)

**II. Separate the Subject and the Predicate:**

1. Rome was not built in a day.
2. He is a second Nepolean.
3. Shakespeare was a great dramatist.
4. Bread and butter is a wholesome food.
5. Tea is grass in Darjelling

**III. Read the following sentences and name the kind to which each one of them belongs:**

1. He is a valiant young man.
2. Make less noise.
3. Don't be in such a hurry.
4. What a clever trick he played?
5. Did Dranjay with the prize?

**1.7 Further Readings**



Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 2: Functional English Grammar: Transformation and Synthesis of Sentences

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- 2.3 Summary
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### Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to:

- Understand interchanging of sentences.
- Know how to combine two or more simple sentences into one simple
- Combine simple sentences into a compound sentence.
- Make combination of simple sentences into complex ones.

### Introduction

Transforming a sentence means to change it from one *grammatical form to another making the least possible change in meaning or sense*. It helps in expressing the same idea in different ways.

## 2.1 Transformation of Sentences

### 2.1.1 Interchange of Sentences Containing the Adverb 'Too'

#### Removing Too

1. He is *too* honest *to* accept bribe.  
He is *so* honest *that* he *cannot* accept bribe.
2. You are *too* young *to* travel alone.  
You are *so* young *that* you *cannot* travel alone.
3. My heart was *too* full *for* words.  
My heart was *so* full *that* I could *not* utter any word.
4. The Taj is *too* beautiful a building *not to* attract the attention of passers-by.  
The Taj is *so* beautiful a building *that* it attracts the attention of passers-by.
5. Your tongue is a little *too* loose.  
Your tongue is loose *beyond* endurance.

#### Now mark the following points:

1. The Adverb, '**too**' followed by an '*Infinitive*' or the Preposition '*for*' gives a *negative meaning*.
2. When the sentence containing '**too**' and followed by an *Infinitive*, is covered, it expands into *two clauses*, the first containing '*so*' and the second beginning with '*that*'.
3. The *subordinate clause* becomes *negative*.
4. If there is a *negative word* in the original sentence, the subordinate clause *becomes positive*.



## Notes

5. If 'too' is not followed by 'to', 'too' is replaced by such words as *over, beyond, proper limit, more than enough*.

**Using Too**

1. She is *so* young *that* she *cannot* travel alone.  
She is *too* young *to* travel alone.
2. He is *so* sensible *that* he will understand it.  
He is *too* sensible *not to* understand it.
3. I was *so* greatly shocked *that* I could *not* speak a word.  
I was *too* greatly shocked *to speak* a word.
4. He is *over eager* for praise.  
He is *too* eager for praise.

**Self-Assessment****1. Re-write the following sentences by using the Adverb 'too':**

- (i) She is so vain that she will not learn anything.
- (ii) He is so clever that he cannot be taken in.
- (iii) It is so hot in the room that we cannot sit.
- (iv) This colour is bright beyond limits.
- (v) Your essay is always longer than it should be.  
[Hint. Your essay is always too lengthy.]
- (vi) The rope in your hand is so long that it will touch the bottom.
- (vii) It is so dear that it cannot be bought.
- (viii) He is so quick that I cannot overtake him.

**2.1.2 Interchange of Degrees of Comparison****(A)**

From Comparative to Positive degree and vice versa; as –

1. **Comparative** : Ram is taller *than* Shyam.  
**Positive** : Sham is not *so tall as* Ram.
2. **Comparative** : A donkey is not *duller than* he.  
**Positive** : He is *as dull as* a donkey.
3. **Positive** : She is *as fair as* a rose.  
**Comparative** : A rose is not *fairer than* she.
4. **Positive** : This room is not *so large as* that.  
**Comparative** : That room is *larger than* this.

While interchanging *Comparative Degree* into *Positive Degree*, make the **Positive Sentence a negative one** and *vice versa*.

**(B)**

From Positive to Superlative or Comparative Degrees and vice versa; as –

1. **Positive** : I have never seen *so dreadful* a scene *as* this.  
**Comparative** : This scene is *more dreadful than* any other scene I have ever seen.
2. **Positive** : Some students in the class are at least *as intelligent as* Rajesh.  
**Comparative** : Rajesh is *more intelligent than* some other students in the class (are).

- Superlative** : Rajesh is *not the most intelligent* of all the students in the class.
3. **Superlative** : The Himalayas are *the highest* mountains in the world.
- Comparative** : The Himalayas are *higher than* any other mountain in the world.
- Positive** : No other mountain in the world is *so high as* the Himalayas.
4. **Superlative** : Kolkata is *one of the largest* sea-ports in India.
- Comparative** : Kolkata is *larger than* many other sea-ports in India.
- Positive** : *Very few* sea-ports in India are *as large as* Kolkata.

### Self-Assessment

#### 2. Change the Degree of Comparison in the following sentences:

##### (A)

- (i) He is as cunning as a fox.
- (ii) Sonapat is not so cold as Shimla.
- (iii) Prevention is better than cure.
- (iv) You are as bright as she.
- (v) The pen is mightier than the sword.
- (vi) It is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.

##### (B)

- (i) No other fruit is so nourishing as the mango.
- (ii) Jacobabad is not the hottest of all places.
- (iii) Lead is heavier than any other metal.
- (iv) Lata sings the sweetest of all.
- (v) Some grains are at least as nutritious as wheat.

### 2.1.3 Interchange of Active and Passive Voice

Voice is that branch of grammar which studies the form that the verb takes in a sentence to determine the status of the subject and the object.

Voice can be studied under the following headings:

1. **Active Voice:** A verb is said to be in the Active Voice when its subject acts or when the emphasis is on the doer or the subject. The active voice is so called because the person or thing denoted by the subject acts.

Example:

Mohan sang a song.

Here, the subject Mohan is acting.

2. **Passive Voice:** A verb is in the Passive Voice when the subject is being acted upon or when the emphasis is on the object or the work done. The passive voice is so called because the person or thing denoted by the subject is not active but passive, that is suffers or receives some action.

Example:

A song was sung by Mohan.

Here, the subject (Mohan) is being acted upon.

#### Note:

1. Voice changes occur only in transitive verbs.
2. The perfect continuous form of all the three tenses and future continuous cannot be changed into passive voice.

## Notes

Examples:

|                   |   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Present           | : | He has been doing the work.<br>(No change of voice)       |
| Past              | : | He had been doing the work.<br>(No change of voice)       |
| Future            | : | He will have been doing the work.<br>(No change of voice) |
| Future Continuous | : | He will be doing the work.<br>(No change of voice)        |

The reason is that if the change of voice is done in these tenses, then the verb is to be used twice which is wrong.

Example:

He has been doing the work. (Active)

The work has been being done by him.

This is a wrong sentence as the verb is used twice. Similar is the case with the other sentences.

Let us look at some more examples of active and passive voice.

| Active                                   | Passive                               |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Mohan has burnt the shop.                | The shop has been burnt by Mohan.     |
| People speak English all over the world. | English is spoken all over the world. |
| They built the bridge last year.         | The bridge was built last year.       |
| The boy beat the child.                  | The child was beaten by the boy.      |

From the above examples, it is clear that we use active voice when we are more interested in the doer or agent. And we use passive voice when we are more interested in the object of the action.

As you will notice above, most passive voice sentences drop the agent or the doer either because it is not known or because it is understood and hence not needed or also because it is not important.

In order to convert active voice into passive voice, certain rules need be observed.

1. First of all, the arrangement of the words in a sentence in the active voice is changed.

**Active Voice:** Subject + Verb + Object  
Mohan read a book.

**Passive Voice:** Object + helping verb + main verb + by + subject  
A book was read by Mohan

Thus, the subject of the active voice becomes the object of the passive voice.

2. Change of Pronoun

(i) When *he* as subject of active voice becomes object of the passive voice, it changes into *him*. Similarly.

(ii) She becomes her

(iii) We becomes us

(iv) They becomes them

(v) I becomes me

3. Change required under each tense

**(i) Present Tense**

(a) *Present Indefinite*: Assertive sentence

Here, we need to change the first form of the verb into the third form and add *is/am/are* before it, depending on the number and person of the subject in the active voice.

Examples:

- (1) The boy makes toys. .... Active  
 Toys are made by the boy. .... Passive
- (2) You vex me. .... Active  
 I am vexed by you. .... Passive
- (3) She annoys him. .... Active  
 He is annoyed by her. .... Passive

Thus, you will notice that apart from following the first two rules, we have changed the verb from the first to the third form. We have also added *is/am/are* according to the nature of the *object* in the active voice which has become the subject of the passive voice.

For transforming interrogative sentences under this tense, all you need do is put *is/am/are* before the subject (which was object in the active voice) in the passive voice.

Example:

- Does she want a book? .... Active  
 Is a book wanted by her? .... Passive

Note: For interrogative sentences of the active voice beginning with *who*, the passive voice will be formed by changing *who* into *whom*.

(b) *Present Continuous*: Assertive sentences

To get the passive voice, the verb is used in its third form and *being* is inserted between *is/am/are* and the verb.

Example:

- I am eating an egg. .... Active  
 An egg is being eaten by me. .... Passive

(c) *Present Perfect*

Here, *been* is put between *has/have* and *verb* in a passive voice sentence.

Example:

- Sita has eaten the fruit. .... Active  
 The fruit has been eaten by Sita. .... Passive

Examples of Present Perfect Interrogative:

- Who has written this letter? .... Active  
 By whom has this letter been written? .... Passive  
 Have you seen the play? .... Active  
 Has the play been seen by you? .... Passive

(ii) **Past Tense**

The rules for transforming the past tense active voice sentences are the same as that for the present tense with necessary modifications.

Examples:

**Past Indefinite**

- I read the book. .... Active  
 The book was read by me. .... Passive

**Past Continuous**

- I was reading the book. .... Active  
 The book was being read by me. .... Passive

## Notes

**Past Perfect**

I *had read* the book. .... Active

The book *had been read* by me. .... Passive

**(iii) Future Tense****(a) Future Indefinite: Assertive sentence**

For transforming an active voice sentence under this tense into passive voice, the verb is used in its third form and *be* is inserted between *will* and *the verb*.

Example:

I *will write* a book? .... Active

A book *be written* by me? .... Passive

**(b) Future Perfect**

In the passive voice, under this tense *been* is inserted between *have* and *the verb*.

Example:

I *will have written* a book. .... Active

A book *will have been written* by me. .... Passive

Interrogatives are obtained only by putting *will/shall* before *the subject*.

**(iv) Other Conditions for transforming Active into Passive****(a) The preposition after a verb in the active voice does not change its place in the passive voice.**

Example:

She *laughed* at the child. .... Active

The child *was laughed* at by her. .... Passive

We *have not heard* of this play. .... Active

This play *has not been heard* of. .... Passive

They *will object* to your seeing this film. .... Active

your *seeing* this film will be objected to. .... Passive

They *do not approve* of this plan. .... Active

This plan *is not approved* of by them. .... Passive

**(b) Modal Auxiliaries: Can, could, should, must, ought to, might, etc. do not change when transformed from active to passive.**

They *should help* the child. .... Active

The child *should be helped* by them. .... Passive

You *ought to follow* the instructions carefully. .... Active

The instructions *ought to be followed* carefully. .... Passive

The child *can throw* the book. .... Active

The book *can be thrown* by the child. .... Passive

You *might help* him. .... Active

He *might be helped* by you. .... Passive

**(c) Infinitive in passive construction.**

Example:

I want them *to help* you. .... Active

I want you *to be helped*. .... Passive

The child expected his mother *to praise* him. .... Active

The child expected *to be praised* by his mother. .... Passive

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| I want someone <i>to inform</i> the police.              | ..... Active  |
| I want the police <i>to be informed</i> .                | ..... passive |
| (d) <i>Participles in passive construction.</i>          |               |
| Example:   |               |
| I <i>saw</i> him <i>turning</i> the key.                 | ..... Active  |
| I <i>saw</i> the key <i>being</i> turned by him.         | ..... Passive |
| I heard her <i>shouting</i> at the child.                | ..... Active  |
| I heard the child <i>being</i> <i>shouted</i> at by her. | ..... Passive |
| (e) <i>Imperatives in passive construction.</i>          |               |
| Example:   |               |
| <i>Switch off</i> the fan.                               | ..... Active  |
| <i>Let</i> the fan <i>be switched off</i> .              | ..... Passive |
| <i>Bring</i> the child.                                  | ..... Active  |
| <i>Let</i> the child <i>be brought</i> .                 | ..... Passive |
| <i>Please forgive</i> him.                               | ..... Active  |
| <i>You are requested to forgive</i> him.                 | ..... Passive |
| <i>He may please be forgiven</i> .                       | ..... Passive |
| <i>Open</i> the gate.                                    | ..... Active  |
| <i>Let</i> the gate <i>be opened</i> .                   | ..... Passive |

**Note:** All imperatives except requests use *let* in passive constructions. *Please* becomes *you are requested to* in passive.

An important point to remember is that when we change imperative sentences from active to passive voice, we must try to use *let* in case of non-living things. For example:

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Open the door.                             | ..... Active  |
| <i>Let</i> the door <i>be opened</i>       | ..... Passive |
| Break the glassbox.                        | ..... Active  |
| <i>Let</i> the glassbox <i>be broken</i> . | ..... passive |

In case of other animals except man, *let* may also be used. For example:

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Drive away the cattle.                      | ..... Active  |
| <i>Let</i> the cattle <i>be drive</i> away. | ..... Passive |
| Beat the dogs.                              | ..... Active  |
| <i>Let</i> the dogs <i>be beaten</i> .      | ..... Passive |

But in case of human beings, *should* is more appropriate.

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Help the poor.                              | ..... Active  |
| The poor <i>should</i> be helped.           | ..... Passive |
| Don't laugh at the lame.                    | ..... Active  |
| The lame <i>should</i> not be laughed at.   | ..... Passive |
| Take care of the old man.                   | ..... Active  |
| The old man <i>should</i> be taken care of. | ..... passive |

Request, advice, order are used only when

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| (i) Imperative sentences have intransitive verbs; as, |               |
| Go there.   | ..... Active  |
| You are requested to go there.                        | ..... Passive |

## Notes

- (ii) Sentences whose object is not mentioned; as,
- Please sign. .... Active
- You are requested to sign. .... Passive
- (f) Some other passive constructions.
- Examples:
- People *say that* she is a liar. .... Active
- It is said that* she is a liar. .... Passive
- She is said to be* a liar. .... Passive
- Everyone *knows that* he is a rich man. .... Active
- It is known that* he is a rich man. .... Passive
- He is known to be* a rich man. .... Passive
- (g) Verbs denoting a state in passive form.
- Examples:
- This cup *contains* tea. .... Active
- Tea *is contained* in this cup. .... Passive
- Novels *interest* me. .... Active
- I am interested* in novels. .... Passive
- He *vexed* me greatly. .... Active
- I was greatly vexed* by him. .... Passive
- His performance *surprised* her. .... Active
- She was *surprised* at his performance. .... Passive

## 2.1.4 Interchange of Affirmative and Negative

(A)

By using an Antonym after 'not'; as—

1. **Affirmative** : Your schemes are practicable.  
**Negative** : Your schemes are not impracticable.
2. **Affirmative** : You are an intelligent girl.  
**Negative** : You are *not a dull girl*.
3. **Affirmative** : I shall succeed in bringing him round.  
**Negative** : I shall *not fail in* bringing him round.
4. **Affirmative** : This knife is sharp.  
**Negative** : This knife is *not blunt*.
5. **Affirmative** : Remember to bring your books with you.  
**Negative** : *Do not forget* to bring your books with you.

(B)

By using double Negative; as—

1. **Affirmative** : I tried every plan.  
**Negative** : I left *no* plan *untried*.
2. **Affirmative** : I left everything complete.  
**Negative** : I left *nothing incomplete*.
3. **Affirmative** : I was hopeful.  
**Negative** : I was *not without hope*.

4. **Affirmative** : The policeman will accept the bribe.  
**Negative** : The policeman *will not fail to accept* the bribe.

(C)

By removing the Adverb 'too'; as –

1. **Affirmative** : He is too clever to be taken in.  
**Negative** : He is so clever *that he cannot be taken in*.  
2. **Affirmative** : You are so intelligent that you will see through his trick.  
**Negative** : You are *too intelligent not to see* through his trick.

(D)

By using 'No sooner-than' and 'but'; as –

1. **Affirmative** : As soon as the thief saw the policeman, he took to his heels.  
**Negative** : *No sooner* did the thief see the policeman *than* he took to his heels.  
2. **Affirmative** : As soon as you receive my letter, reply to it.  
**Negative** : *No sooner* do you receive my letter *than* reply to it.  
3. **Affirmative** : Only the brave deserve the fair.  
**Negative** : *None but the* brave deserve the fair.  
4. **Affirmative** : It always pours when it rains.  
**Negative** : It *never rains*, but it pours.

(E)

By interchanging the Degree of Comparison; as –

1. **Affirmative** : Sohrab was as *brave as* Rustam.  
**Negative** : Rustam was not *braver than* Sohrab.  
2. **Affirmative** : Lata sings *better than* Asha.  
**Negative** : Asha does not sing *so well as* Lata.  
3. **Affirmative** : Raman is the *strongest* athlete in the school.  
**Negative** : No *other* athlete in the school is *so strong as* Raman.

(F)

By using Phrases opposite in meaning; as –

1. **Affirmative** : He stood surety for me.  
**Negative** : He *did not fail to stand* surety for me.  
2. **Affirmative** : Everybody admits that he is a fool.  
**Negative** : *Nobody denies* that he is a fool.  
3. **Affirmative** : I am a sleeping partner in this business.  
**Negative** : I am *not a working partner in* this business.

(G)

1. **Affirmative** : I am willing to walk to the hospital.  
**Negative** : I *don't mind walking to* the hospital.  
2. **Affirmative** : How can I punish either of you?  
**Negative** : I *cannot punish* either of you.

### Self-Assessment

3. (i) Change the following sentences into Negative, without changing the sense:  
(a) I hate liars.  
(b) Your honesty is beyond doubt.



## Notes

- (c) Life is a bed of thorns.  
 (d) He was a fool to decline her offer.  
 (e) Harsha was the greatest scholar that ever ruled over India.  
 (f) His parents are illiterate.  
 (g) Only fools can do so.
- (ii) **Transform the following sentences from Negative to Affirmatives without altering the sense:**
- (a) I leave nothing unfinished.  
 (b) He is not blind to his own interests.  
 (c) This mango is not unripe.  
 (d) You are not in the good books of your teachers.  
 (e) His voice was not inaudible.  
 (f) He does not deny that he is to blame.  
 (g) They did not find the road very bad.  
 (h) None but a man of guts can oppose him.

### 2.1.5 Interchange of Interrogative and Assertive Sentences

Questions may be asked to get information or to suggest the answer that the speaker expects. An Affirmative question suggests a Negative Answer while a Negative Question suggests a Positive Answer.

#### EXAMPLES

##### (A)

1. **Interrogative** : When can their glory fade?  
**Assertive** : Their glory can *never* fade.
2. **Interrogative** : Who can put up with such treatment?  
**Assertive** : *None* can put up with such treatment.
3. **Interrogative** : Who wastes time?  
**Assertive** : It is *foolish to waste* time?
4. **Interrogative** : What, if he fails?  
**Assertive** : *It does not matter* much, if he fails.
5. **Interrogative** : Who does not want to be happy?  
**Assertive** : *Everybody* wants to be happy.
6. **Interrogative** : Is virtue not its own reward?  
**Assertive** : Virtue is *its* own reward.

##### (B)

1. **Assertive** : We cannot please everybody.  
**Interrogative** : Can we please everybody?
2. **Assertive** : Nothing succeeds like success.  
**Interrogative** : Does anything succeed like success?
3. **Assertive** : Man cannot die better than facing fearful odds.  
**Interrogative** : How can man die better than facing fearful odds?

#### Self-Assessment

4. (i) **Transform the following questions into Assertive Sentences:**
  - (a) Is this the way to behave?
  - (b) Is there any place like home?

- (c) What have we to do with him?
- (d) Who does not love his parents?
- (e) Why waste time in idle pursuits?

(ii) Change the following Assertive Sentences into questions:

- (a) Nothing succeeds like success.
- (b) The face is the index of mind.
- (c) A hermit has to do nothing with money.
- (d) None can put up with such an insult.
- (e) If you prick us, we bleed.

### 2.1.6 Interchange of Exclamatory and Assertive Sentences

#### (A)

1. **Exclamatory** : What a terrible shock!  
**Assertive** : It is a very terrible shock.
2. **Exclamatory** : What a fool you are!  
**Assertive** : You are a great fool.
3. **Exclamatory** : How charming the sight is!  
**Assertive** : The sight is very charming.
4. **Exclamatory** : O! that I were young again.  
**Assertive** : I wish I were young again.
5. **Exclamatory** : Oh, for the wings of a dove!  
**Assertive** : I wish I had the wings of a dove.
6. **Exclamatory** : Alas! he is no more.  
**Assertive** : It is sad that he is no more.
7. **Exclamatory** : A soldier and afraid of war!  
**Assertive** : A soldier should never be afraid of war.

#### (B)

1. **Assertive** : It was a very nasty fall.  
**Exclamatory** : What a nasty fall!
2. **Assertive** : It is a matter of joy that I have passed.  
**Exclamatory** : Hurrah, I have passed!
3. **Assertive** : I earnestly desire to go abroad.  
**Exclamatory** : If I could only go abroad!

**Note.** 'How' and 'What' in Exclamatory Sentences are replaced by 'very' or 'great' in Assertive Sentences; 'very' before Adjectives and 'great' before Nouns.

### Self-Assessment

5. (i) Change the following sentences from Exclamatory to Assertive:

- (a) What a blunder you have committed!
- (b) Oh, for a cup of water!
- (c) Would that I were dead!
- (d) Alas, she has lost her only child!
- (e) What a lame excuse!

## Notes

**(ii) Change the following sentences from Assertive to Exclamatory:**

- (a) The nightingale sang very nicely.
- (b) It is sad that he has lost his father.
- (c) It was a great fall, my countrymen.
- (d) His ways are very mysterious.
- (e) He is very unlucky.

**2.1.7 Different Ways of Expressing a Condition**

Here are some of the commonest ways of expressing a condition:

1. **By using the Conjunction 'if; as –**
  - If you run fast, you will carry the day.* (Future Tense)
  - If I were you, I would help him.* (Present Tense)
  - If he had worked hard, he would have passed.* (Past Tense)
2. **By using the Conjunction 'if' (understood); as –**
  - Had he worked hard, he would have passed.*
  - Were you ill, you should stay at home.*
  - Should you see him in the bazaar, send him to me.*
3. **By using the Conjunction 'unless'; as –**
  - You won't get through the examination unless you work hard.*
  - Unless you speak the truth, I shall not let you go.*
4. **By using an Absolute Participle; as –**
  - Supposing he doesn't succeed, what will he do?*
  - Provided you do not stand in my way, I am sure to win the prize.*
5. **By using a Conjunctive Phrase; as –**
  - In case you are in danger, pull the chain.*
  - But that she is (if she is not) ill, she would take the examination.*
6. **By using the Preposition 'but' followed by a Phrase or Clause as Object; as –**
  - But for your timely help, I would have been killed.*
  - But that you were shy, you would certainly have made your mark as a speaker.*
7. **By using the Imperative Mood; as –**
  - Run fast and you will catch the train.*
  - Work hard and you will get a scholarship.*
8. **By using the Phrase one more; as –**
  - One more word, and I strike.*
  - One more step, and you will fall into the well.*
9. **By using an Interrogative Sentence; as –**
  - Are you running temperature? Then you should not move out.*
  - Will you look sharp? Then you will catch the train.*

**Self-Assessment**

6. **Re-write the following sentences in as many ways as you can:**
  - (i) Weather permitting, we shall go out for a walk.
  - (ii) If you stay with me, nobody can do you harm.
  - (iii) But for your timely arrival, he would have been drowned.

- (iv) Are you anxious to win a scholarship? Then put your heart and soul in studies.
- (v) Had you posted the letter, it would have reached me.
- (vi) Unless you take care of your diet, you cannot improve your health.
- (vii) Supposing she does not turn up in time, we cannot leave today.
- (viii) But that he is sick, he would attend the meeting.

### 2.1.8 Different Ways of Expressing a Contrast or Concession

Here are some of the commonest ways of expressing a Contrast or Concession:

1. **By the Conjunction 'though' or 'although'; as –**  
*Though he worked hard, yet he failed.*  
*Although he worked hard, still he failed.*  
 He does not help me *although* he is my brother.
2. **By the Conjunction 'as' –**  
 Poor *as* he is, he cannot send his son to a college.  
 Rich *as he is*, he is not proud.
3. **By the Conjunction 'if, 'even if'; as –**  
*If he offered bribe, he did not do it willingly.*  
 He will appear in the examination, *even if* he is ill.
4. **By the Preposition 'notwithstanding' followed by a Clause; as –**  
*Notwithstanding that he is ill, he appeared in the examination.*  
 He did not cast his vote *notwithstanding* that he was there at the polling booth.
5. **By the Relative Adverb 'However'; as –**  
*However fast he may run, he cannot overtake me.*  
 He will never succeed, *however* hard he may try.
6. **By the use of an Absolute Participle; as –**  
*Admitting that he is your brother, he should not behave like this.*  
*Granting that he is your servant, you should not have beaten him.*
7. **By the Adverb 'Indeed' followed by 'but'; as –**  
 He tried his best *indeed*, *but* he could not win a scholarship.  
 You have recovered *indeed*, *but* you have not recouped your health fully.
8. **By the Relative Pronoun 'whatever'; as –**  
*Whatever his father says, he will have his own way.*  
 I shall not open my mouth, *whatever* you may do.
9. **By the Phrases 'all the same', 'for all that', 'at the same time', 'none-the-less' 'never-the-less' etc.; as –**  
 He is poor, *all the same* he is honest.  
 He is honest, *at the same time* he is poor.  
 He is poor, *never-the-less* (*none-the-less*) he is honest.  
 He is poor, *for all that* he is honest.  
*In spite of the fact* that he is poor, he is honest.

### Self-Assessment

7. Re-write the following sentences in as many ways as you can:

- (i) Whatever he says, I shall stick to my guns.
- (ii) He is very poor, all the same he lives like a lord.

## Notes

- (iii) Rich as he is, he is not contented.
- (iv) Admitting that he is competent, he will prove a round peg in a square hole.
- (v) Notwithstanding I feel for you, I cannot help you.
- (vi) You will get the better of your opponent, notwithstanding you look so frail.
- (vii) She looks rather innocent, all the same she has deceived you.
- (viii) In spite of the fact that she is your daughter, she does not take after you.

**2.1.9 Substitution of One Part of Speech for Another****A***Substituting a Noun*

1. **Verb** : I shall *help* you.  
**Noun** : I shall come to your *help*.
2. **Adjective** : We are *proud* of our country.  
**Noun** : We take *pride* in our country.
3. **Adverb** : She waited *patiently* for my return.  
**Noun** : She waited *with patience* for my return.
4. **Adverb** : Our soldiers fought *bravely*.  
**Noun** : Our soldiers put up a *brave* fight.

**Self-Assessment****8. Re-write the following sentences, replacing italicised words by their Noun forms:**

- (i) I work *honestly*.
- (ii) She leads a *virtuous* life.
- (iii) He selected his friends *judiciously*.
- (iv) I am *pained* to learn of your failure.
- (v) He believes that I am *innocent*.
- (vi) You will *succeed* in your attempt.
- (vii) You do not work *carefully*.
- (viii) I *like* her manners.

**B***Substituting an Adjective*

1. **Noun** : Your scheme can be put into *practice*.  
**Adjective** : Your scheme is *practicable*.
2. **Verb** : These children *trouble* me much.  
**Adjective** : These children are very *troublesome*.
3. **Adverb** : She writes *beautifully*.  
**Adjective** : She writes a *beautiful* hand.
4. **Noun** : Indira Gandhi enjoys a great *popularity*.  
**Adjective** : Indira Gandhi is very popular.

**Self-Assessment****9. Re-write the following sentences, replacing the italicised words with their Adjective forms:**

- (i) I answered *politely*.
- (ii) You *appear* to be guilty.
- (iii) Why do you *suspect* me?
- (iv) *Respect* your elders.

- (v) We shall meet *secretly*.  
 (vi) This is an act of *grace*.  
 (vii) Circumstances did *not favour*.  
 (viii) We *thankfully* accepted the present.

## C

*Substituting a Verb*

1. **Noun** : I have no *intention* of going to Agra.  
**Verb** : I do not *intend* to go to Agra.
2. **Noun** : The *cost* of this pen is ten rupees.  
**Verb** : This pen *costs* ten rupees.
3. **Adjective** : Drinking is *injurious* to health.  
**Verb** : Drinking *injures* health.
4. **Adverb** : Gandhi was *admittedly* the noblest soul of this era.  
**Verb** : It is *admitted* that Gandhi was the noblest soul of this era.

## D

*Substituting an Adverb*

1. **Noun** : The king treated him with *kindness*.  
**Adverb** : The king treated him *kindly*.
2. **Verb** : We *succeeded* in repelling every attack on Kashmir.  
**Adverb** : We *successfully* repelled every attack on Kashmir.
3. **Adjective** : We had a *narrow-escape*.  
**Adverb** : We escaped *narrowly*.
4. **Noun** : Let him depart in *peace*.  
**Adverb** : Let him depart *peacefully*.

**Self-Assessment****10. (i) Re-write the following sentences, replacing the italicised words with their Adverb forms:**

- (a) There was a *heavy* snowfall at Gulmarg.
- (b) I am very *regular* in my studies.
- (c) They live in *comfort*.
- (d) He is *admitted* to be the best athlete.
- (e) The firing stopped *all of a sudden*.
- (f) I shall be back in a *short time*.
- (g) We waited for the result with *patience*.
- (h) The king showed Phintias *no mercy*.

**(ii) Re-write the following sentences recasting the italicised words as directed:**

- (a) This medicine is bitter in *taste*. [Use the Verb form]
- (b) I was not *invited*. [Use the Noun form]
- (c) Her dress was *poor* and *mean*. [Use the Adverb form]
- (d) Milk gives *strength* to the body. [Use the Verb form]
- (e) I went to Mumbai *hoping* to get a job. [Use the Noun form]
- (f) He *agreed* to supply me with a newspaper daily. [Use the Noun form]
- (g) Dev and Rajinder *differ* in their play. [Use the Adjective form]
- (h) I wish you *success* in your undertaking.

[Turn the Verb into a Noun and the Nouns into Verbs]

## 2.2 Synthesis of Sentences

Read the following sentences:

She is very poor.

She leads a contented life.

We can combine these sentences in the following ways:

1. *In spite of being poor*, she leads a contented life. (*Simple Sentence*)
2. She is very poor, *but* she leads a contented life. (*Compound Sentence*)
3. *Although* she is very poor, *yet* she leads a contented life. (*Complex Sentence*)

**Synthesis** is a process by which two or more Simple Sentences are joined into one Simple, Compound, or Mixed Sentence.

### 2.2.1 Combination of two or more Simple Sentences into one Simple Sentence

#### 1. By using a Participle; as—

- |                       |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| (i) <b>Separate</b>   | : | He switched off the light. He went to bed.                                    |
| <b>Combined</b>       | : | <i>Switching off the light</i> , he <b>went</b> to bed.                       |
| (ii) <b>Separate</b>  | : | He opened the drawer. He took out a revolver.                                 |
| <b>Combined</b>       | : | <i>Opening</i> the drawer, he <b>took out</b> a revolver.                     |
| (iii) <b>Separate</b> | : | He placed his books on the table. He went to play.                            |
| <b>Combined</b>       | : | <i>Having placed</i> his books on the table, he <b>went</b> to play.          |
| (iv) <b>Separate</b>  | : | I finished my work. I lay down for rest.                                      |
| <b>Combined</b>       | : | <i>Having finished</i> my work I <b>lay down</b> for rest.                    |
| (v) <b>Separate</b>   | : | This pitcher is broken. It cannot hold water.                                 |
| <b>Combined</b>       | : | This <i>broken</i> pitcher <b>cannot hold</b> water.                          |
| (vi) <b>Separate</b>  | : | She was standing in the porch. She saw a youngman. He was coming towards her. |
| <b>Combined</b>       | : | Standing in the porch, she saw a youngman <b>coming</b> towards her.          |

#### 2. By using an Infinitive; as—

- |                       |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| (i) <b>Separate</b>   | : | She heard the news of my success. She was glad.                            |
| <b>Combined</b>       | : | She <b>was glad to hear</b> the news of my success.                        |
| (ii) <b>Separate</b>  | : | He has some home-task. He must finish it.                                  |
| <b>Combined</b>       | : | He <b>has</b> some home-task <i>to finish</i> .                            |
| (iii) <b>Separate</b> | : | He must apologise. He will not escape punishment.                          |
| <b>Combined</b>       | : | He <b>must apologise to escape</b> punishment.                             |
| (iv) <b>Separate</b>  | : | The old man is very weak. He cannot move about.                            |
| <b>Combined</b>       | : | The old man <b>is</b> too weak <i>to move</i> about.                       |
| (v) <b>Separate</b>   | : | I want to reach home at once. I want to see my mother. She is ever ailing. |
| <b>Combined</b>       | : | <b>I want</b> to reach home at once <i>to see</i> my ever ailing mother.   |

#### 3. By using a Noun or Phrase in Apposition; as—

- |                      |   |   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| (i) <b>Separate</b>  | : | She is my sister. Her name is Kamla.                |
| <b>Combined</b>      | : | She is my sister, <i>Kamla</i> .                    |
| (ii) <b>Separate</b> | : | Prem was a good batsman. He died in an air-crash.   |
| <b>Combined</b>      | : | Prem, <i>a good batsman</i> , died in an air crash. |

- (iii) **Separate** : Kalidas wrote Shakuntla. It is a play in Sanskrit.  
**Combined** : Kalidas wrote Shakuntla, *a play in Sanskrit*
- (iv) **Separate** : Mumtaz Mahal was the beloved queen of Shah Jahan. Shah Jahan was a great Mughal king. She lies in the Taj.  
**Combined** : Mumtaz Mahal, *the beloved queen of Shah Jahan, a great Mughal king*, lies in the Taj.
- (v) **Separate** : Banaras is a city of temples. It stands on the bank of the river Ganges. The Ganges is a sacred river in India.  
**Combined** : Banaras, *the cit of temples*, stands on the bank of the Ganges, *a sacred river in India*.

**4. By using a Preposition with a Noun or a Gerund; as –**

- (i) **Separate** : The sun set. The train did not arrive.  
**Combined** : The sun set *before* the arrival of the train.
- (ii) **Separate** : He is ill. He still attends the school.  
**Combined** : In *spite of illness*, he attends the school.
- (iii) **Separate** : You must support him. Otherwise he will lose the election.  
**Combined** : *But for* your support he will lose the election.
- (iv) **Separate** : He wrote novels. In this way he earned his living.  
**Combined** : He earned his living *by writing novels*.
- (v) **Separate** : My son succeeded. I heard the news. I was beside myself with joy.  
**Combined** : *On hearing the news of my son's success*, I was beside myself with joy.

**5. By using an Absolute Phrase; as –**

- (i) **Separate** : It was a holiday. We went out for a picnic.  
**Combined** : *It being a holiday*, we went out for a picnic.
- (ii) **Separate** : The negotiations failed. The war broke out in Europe.  
**Combined** : The negotiations *having failed*, the war broke out in Europe.
- (iii) **Separate** : The sun rose. The fog disappeared.  
**Combined** : *The sun having risen*, the fog disappeared.
- (iv) **Separate** : The war broke out. Things disappeared from the market. The prices rose sky-high.  
**Combined** : The war *having broken out* and the things *having disappeared* from the market, the prices rose sky-high.

**6. By using an Adverb or an Adverbial Phrase; as –**

- (i) **Separate** : The sun rose. They had dug a deep channel.  
**Combined** : They had dug a deep channel *by sun-rise*.
- (ii) **Separate** : He will come here. It is sure.  
**Combined** : He will *surely* come here.
- (iii) **Separate** : He did not invite me. He did it with an intention.  
**Combined** : He did not invite me *intentionally*.
- (iv) **Separate** : She spoke the truth. She did not fear at all.  
**Combined** : She spoke the truth *without any fear*.
- (v) **Separate** : All the convicts made good their escape from the prison. This was unfortunate.  
**Combined** : *Unfortunately* all the convicts made good their escape from the prison.



## Notes

**(vi) By using a Conjunction; as –**

**Separate** : He is illiterate. His parents are illiterate as well.

**Combined** : He *as well as* his parents are illiterate.

**(vii) By using several of the above methods; as –**

**Separate** : It was night. The moon rose. The party did not mind the danger on the way. The party resumed the journey.

**Combined** : At *nightfall*, the moon *having risen*, the party *unmindful* of the dangers on the way, resumed the journey.

**Self-Assessment****19. Combine each of the following sets of sentences into a Simple Sentence:****(A)**

- (i) I knew that she was poor. I wanted to help her.
- (ii) He threw himself on the sword. He killed himself.
- (iii) I took my walking stick. I went out for a walk.
- (iv) This chair is broken. It is of no use.
- (v) He stole the silver candle sticks. He jumped out through the window.

**(B)**

- (i) It was very hot. We would not stir out.
- (ii) The peasant lost his only piece of bread. He was sad.
- (iii) I gave him clothes to wear. I helped him with money.
- (iv) He is very rich. He leads an unhappy life.
- (v) You must help her. Otherwise she will not succeed.

**(C)**

- (i) It will be evening. I shall reach home. I shall see my mother.
- (ii) It was evening. He received a telegram. It contained the news of his father's arrival.
- (iii) He goes to school. He wishes to learn. He wants to grow up honest, healthy and clever.
- (iv) The votes on each side were equal. The chairman gave his casting vote. It was against the resolution.
- (v) His mother objected to his going abroad. He took a solemn vow not to touch wine, woman and meat. He overcame her objection.

**2.2.2 Combination of Simple Sentences into a Compound Sentence**

Co-ordinate Conjunctions are used to combine Simple Sentences into a Compound Sentence. They are:

*And, both.....and, not only.....but also, as well as, besides, therefore, for, so, or, otherwise, either.....or, neither.....nor, but, still, yet, however, only etc.*

**1. By using and, both....and, not only....but also, as well as etc.; as –**

**(i) Separate** : The thief was caught. He was handed over to the police.

**Combined** : The thief was caught **and** handed over to the police.

**(ii) Separate** : She was illiterate. Her sister was also illiterate.

**Combined** : She **as well as** her sister was illiterate.

**(iii) Separate** : He works in a college. He manages his farm.

**Combined** : He **not only** works in a college **but also** manages his farm.

*Or*

He **both** works in a college **and** manages his farm.

- (iv) **Separate** : Tagore was a philosopher. Tagore was a poet.  
**Combined** : Tagore was **both** a philosopher **and** a poet.  
*Or*  
 Tagore was **not only** a philosopher **but also** a poet.

- (v) **Separate** : He was punished. He was fined.  
**Combined** : He was **not only** punished **but also** fined.  
*Or*  
 He was **both** punished **and** fined.

2. By using **therefore, for, so etc.**; as—

- (i) **Separate** : He was intelligent. He won a prize.  
**Combined** : He was intelligent, **therefore**, he won a prize.  
(ii) **Separate** : He was guilty. He was punished.  
**Combined** : He was punished **for** he was guilty.  
(iii) **Separate** : He worked-hard. He got through the examination.  
**Combined** : He worked hard **so** he got through the examination.  
(iv) **Separate** : She must leave now. It is already late.  
**Combined** : She must leave now for it is already late.  
(v) **Separate** : He is dishonest. He is mean. He is wicked. You must keep him at an arm's length.  
**Combined** : He is dishonest, mean and wicked, **therefore**, you must keep him at an arm's length.

3. By using **or, otherwise, either – or, neither – nor etc.**; as—

- (i) **Separate** : Run fast. You will miss the train.  
**Combined** : Run fast or (**otherwise**) you will miss the train.  
(ii) **Separate** : Mend your ways. You will come to grief.  
**Combined** : Mend your ways **or (otherwise)** you will come to grief.  
(iii) **Separate** : He will come on Saturday. If not, he will come on Monday.  
**Combined** : He will come **either** on Saturday or on Monday.  
(iv) **Separate** : You have broken my slate. Your sister has broken my slate. One of you has broken my slate.  
**Combined** : **Either** you **or** your sister has broken my slate.  
(v) **Separate** : Do not be a lender. Do not be a borrower.  
**Combined** : **Neither** be a lender **nor** a borrower.

4. By using **but, still, yet, however, only etc.**; as—

- (i) **Separate** : I would like to be an engineer.  
 I would not like to be a doctor.  
**Combined** : I would like to be an engineer, **but** I would not like to be a doctor.  
(ii) **Separate** : He did not work hard. He passed.  
**Combined** : He did not work hard, **still** he passed.  
(iii) **Separate** : He is not keeping fit. He will take part in sports.  
**Combined** : He is not keeping fit, **never-the-less**, he will take part in sports.  
(iv) **Separate** : He hates me. I love him.  
**Combined** : He hates me **still** I love him.

## Notes

- (v) **Separate** : He invited me to his birthday party.  
I could not attend it.
- Combined** : He invited me to his birthday party, I, **however** could not attend it.
5. **By using a Relative Pronoun or a Relative Adverb in a continuative sense;**
- (i) **Separate** : He abused his servant. It was a mean act.  
**Combined** : He abused his servant, **which** (and it) was a mean act.
- (ii) **Separate** : My father left for Ambala. He will stay there for a month.  
**Combined** : My father left for Ambala, **where** (and there) he would stay for a month.
- (iii) **Separate** : At least send some Principal. He should announce admission.  
**Combined** : At least send some Principal, **who** (and he) should announce admission.
- (iv) **Separate** : I shall call on you tomorrow. We will then decide the issue.  
**Combined** : I shall call on you tomorrow, **when** (and then) we will decide the issue.
6. **By using several of the above methods; as –**
- (i) **Separate** : Greatly vexed, Arjuna made up his mind to seek out the hidden foe.  
He wanted to grapple with him. First he must quench his terrible thirst.  
**Combined** : Greatly vexed, Arjuna made his mind to seek out and grapple with the hidden foe, **but** first he must quench his terrible thirst.
- (ii) **Separate** : Give me a rupee. I will not open my mouth. You may do anything.  
**Combined** : Give me a rupee, **otherwise** I will not open my mouth **and** you may do anything.

**Self-Assessment**20. (i) **Combine each of the following sets of sentences into a Compound Sentence:**

- (a) He is rich. He leads an unhappy life.  
(b) He works in a college. He manages his farm.  
(c) He missed the bus. He was late for school.  
(d) You are a good poet. You are a good singer.  
(e) She was absent. She was fined.

(ii) **Do as directed:**

- (a) Our team went to Jaipur yesterday. It will play a cricket match.  
(Rewrite as one sentence using a Relative Adverb)
- (b) I reached his house. I knocked at the door. No one gave any response.  
(Rewrite as one sentence using 'and' and 'but')
- (c) Your son is intelligent. He is industrious too.  
(Make one sentence using 'not only – but also')
- (d) He will fly to Paris on Tuesday. If not, he will fly on Friday.  
(Make one sentence using 'either – or')
- (e) There is nothing good. There is nothing bad. Thinking makes it so.  
(Make a Compound Sentence)

**2.2.3 Combination of Simple Sentences into Complex Sentences**

Two or more *Simple Sentences* can be combined into a **Complex Sentence** in the following ways:

1. **By using a Noun Clause; as –**

- (i) **Separate** : You have vanquished death in battle. Who could have thought it?  
**Combined** : Who could have thought **that** you had vanquished death in battle?

- (ii) **Separate** : The king was dead. This was a rumour. This rumour was false.  
**Combined** : The rumour **that** *the king was dead* was false.
- (iii) **Separate** : Ranjit Singh was healthy and well-built. He had lost one eye.  
**Combined** : **Except that** *he had lost one eye*, Ranjit Singh was healthy and well-built.
- (iv) **Separate** : You may come or not. I am not interested in it.  
**Combined** : I am not interested in **whether** *you come or not*.
- (v) **Separate** : Why does the patient's temperature go up every evening. The doctor is unable to explain.  
**Combined** : The doctor is unable to explain **why** *the patient's temperature goes up every evening*
- (vi) **Separate** : Who is at the bottom of this mischief? We must find out.  
**Combined** : We must find out **who** *is at the bottom of this mischief*.
- (vii) **Separate** : The distant galaxies are all moving away from us at immense speed. That is the most surprising fact discovered recently.  
**Combined** : The most surprising fact discovered recently is **that** *the distant galaxies are all moving away from us at immense speed*.
- (viii) **Separate** : Fate had something different in store for him. He did not know this. He had only escaped from an unpleasant situation.  
**Combined** : He had only escaped from an unpleasant situation, not knowing **that** *fate had something different in store for him*.
- (ix) **Separate** : This silent pledge of the rough looking young-man was to shape the history of the country. Nobody knew this.  
**Combined** : Nobody knew **that** *this silent pledge of the rough looking youngman was to shape the history of the country*.

2. By using an Adjective Clause; as –

- (i) **Separate** : My uncle sent me a lovely birthday present. He likes me very much.  
**Combined** : My uncle **who** likes me very much sent me a lovely birthday present.
- (ii) **Separate** : My father gave me a pen yesterday. I have lost that pen.  
**Combined** : I have lost the pen **that** *my father gave me yesterday*.
- (iii) **Separate** : Then we visited the Birla House. Mahatma Gandhi was shot dead here.  
**Combined** : Then we visited the Birla House **where** *Mahatma Gandhi was shot dead*.
- (iv) **Separate** : He is a glutton. I have never come across such a glutton.  
**Combined** : I have never come across **such** a glutton **as** *he is*.
- (v) **Separate** : I bought a new pen yesterday. This is the same pen.  
**Combined** : This is the **same** new pen **as** *I bought yesterday*.
- (vi) **Separate** : It is his name. By this name the world knows him today.  
**Combined** : It is by this name **that** *the world knows him today*.

3. By using an Adverb Clause; as –

- (i) **Separate** : I reached the school. The bell was ringing then.  
**Combined** : **When** *I reached the school*, the bell was ringing.
- (ii) **Separate** : He died. He wanted the nation to live.  
**Combined** : He died **so that** *the nation might live*.
- (iii) **Separate** : Push northward into the unknown country. There is a great work for you.  
**Combined** : **If** *you push northward into the unknown country*, there is a great work for you.

|       |                        |   |
|-------|------------------------|---|
| Notes | (iv) <b>Separate</b>   | : From there he went to Bihar. He did not wish the people there to lose their head again.   |
|       | <b>Combined</b>        | : From there he went to Bihar <b>lest</b> <i>the people there should lose their head again.</i>   |
|       | (v) <b>Separate</b>    | : He is very old. He has not lost any of his powers of sight or hearing.  |
|       | <b>Combined</b>        | : <b>Although</b> <i>he is very old,</i> <b>yet</b> <i>he has not lost any of his powers of sight or hearing.</i>                                   |
|       | (vi) <b>Separate</b>   | : You have completely recovered from your illness. You should start attending the school.   |
|       | <b>Combined</b>        | : <b>Now that</b> <i>you have completely recovered from your illness,</i> you should start attending the school.                                    |
|       | (vii) <b>Separate</b>  | : Fleming had a very great appetite for knowledge. He learned very fast.  |
|       | <b>Combined</b>        | : Fleming had <b>such</b> an appetite for knowledge <b>that</b> <i>he learned very fast.</i>  |
|       | (viii) <b>Separate</b> | : The doctor gave the patient a medicine. He wanted the patient to sleep well.  |
|       | <b>Combined</b>        | : The doctor gave the patient a medicine <b>so that</b> <i>he might sleep well.</i>   |
|       | (ix) <b>Separate</b>   | : He grew older. He worked at his lessons far into the night. He was able to go to college to study medicine.                                       |
|       | <b>Combined</b>        | : <b>As</b> <i>he grew older,</i> he worked at his lessons far into the night <b>until</b> <i>he was able to go to a college to study medicine.</i> |

### Self-Assessment

#### 21. (i) Combine into a Complex Sentence containing one or more Noun Clauses:

- Milk is a perfect food. Everybody knows this.
- You are so kind and generous. I shall never forget it.
- What happened on the playground. Tell me all about it.
- We are on the wrong track. I have this feeling.
- What does she want to become? Her choice of course depends on that.

#### (ii) Combine into a Complex Sentence containing one or more Noun and Adjective Clauses:

- I gave you a book yesterday. Will you return it?
- I know this boy. He has stood first in our class.
- She is wearing a sari. I like it.
- You gave the washerman some clothes last week. Has he washed them?
- These apples are rotten. I bought them yesterday.

### 2.2.4 Combination of Simple Sentences into a Mixed Sentence

- Separate** : Livingstone fired. He wounded a lion. He was re-loading the gun.  
The lion sprang upon Livingstone. It seized him by the shoulder.  
**Combined** : Livingstone fired *and* wounded a lion, *but* as he was re-loading the gun, it sprang upon him *and* seized him by the shoulder.
- Separate** : This was a signal for the astrologer to bundle up too. It left him in a darkness except for a little shaft of green light. The green light came from somewhere. It touched the ground before him.

- Combined** : This was a signal for the astrologer to bundle up too, *since* it left him in darkness except for a little shaft of green light *which* came from somewhere and touched the ground before him.
- 3. Separate** : Sham is the son of a rich man. He is very intelligent. He is a fine speaker. He is a good player as well. He was awarded the first prize for his best performance in the tournament.
- Combined** : Sham, the son of a rich man, *who* was awarded the first prize for his best performance in the tournament is *not only* very intelligent and a fine speaker *but also* a good player.

Notes

### 2.3 Summary

- In this Unit we have learnt about interchanging of various types of sentences. We focused on how to combine two or more simple sentences into one simple, combine simple sentences into a compound sentence and also learnt to make combination of simple sentences into complex ones.
- An attempt has been made to focus on active and passive voice, interchanging of affirmative and negative sentences and also different ways of expressing a condition.
- We also try to educate students about the substitution of one part of speech for another. At the end of this unit we focus on the synthesis of sentences.

### 2.4 Key-Words

1. Co-ordinate conjunctions : They are used to combine simple sentences into a compound sentence
2. Synthesis : It is a process by which two or more simple sentences are joined into one simple, compound or mixed sentences

### 2.5 Review Questions

**I. Combine each of the following sets of Simple Sentences into Complex ones:**

1. You cannot mend your ways. This is a fact. This fact pains me.
2. He was still in the high school. He was married to Kasturba. She was of the same age.
3. He was a sturdy youngman. He was from Scotland. He was a fine shot. It was soon discovered.
4. It was at a crowded meeting in the great hall. The old man was too full of feeling. He could not speak.
5. In the centre of the great hall the Emperor sat. A golden perch had been fixed there. The nightingale was to sit on it.

**II. Combine each of the following sets of sentences into any kind of sentence:**

1. The people did not see him at the court. He was dead. They thought this. The rumour got wind in no time.
2. The blood of wild animals is always in men. It is kept under control. Men need much corn. Only if they have the amount of corn needed by them.
3. Jumman had an old aunt. She had some property. Jumman treated her kindly. He wanted the property to be transferred to his name.
4. There was a cricket. He sang and danced. He did not lay by anything. The rainy season set in. The cricket found nothing to eat. So he went to an ant. He begged her to lend him food.
5. The Indian nation honours the name of Subhash Chandra Bose. He fought the India's battle of freedom abroad. He won great laurels in the field of patriotism. He died in the service of his Mother-land.

## Notes

**III. Combine each of the following sets of sentences into one sentence as directed:**

1. In the afternoon it was raining very heavily.  
At that time I was swimming. *(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'while')*
2. He is not happy with relatives.  
He is not happy with his friends too. *(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'neither.....nor')*
3. The book was very useful.  
My father had sent it from Simla. *(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'that')*
4. You may go anywhere.  
You are bound to remember me. *(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'wherever')*
5. Some relatives are very troublesome.  
They always think of their own ends. *(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'who')*
6. Robin was to see me this morning.  
He did not see me, but saw my father. *(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'who')*
7. She is a mother. She is also a mother-in-law. *(Combine by using 'not only.....but also')*
8. He is not a friend. He is not a foe. *(Combine by using 'neither.....nor')*
9. He was guilty. The court did not punish him. *(Combine by using 'although')*
10. He is a doctor. He is social worker. *(Combine by using 'not only')*
11. He is not a French. He is not a German. *(Combine by using 'neither.....nor')*
12. The bell rang. All the students left the school. *(Join by using 'as soon as')*
13. It is raining. We will hold the exhibition. *(Join by using 'nevertheless')*
14. We were in our beds. The thieves made away with our precious articles. *(Join by using 'while')*
15. The patient had expired. The doctor came later. *(Join by using 'after')*

**IV. (a) Combine each pair of sentences by using 'who' or 'whom':**

1. This is my friend. I often go out with him.
2. There were many people there. Among them was Mr. Naresh Kumar.
3. This is the carpenter. He repaired my table.

**(b) Combine the following sentences in three ways as different from each other as possible:**

4. He was ill. He went to the doctor.
5. Mohan was late for school. He was punished for it.
6. He did not work hard. He failed in the examination.
7. My father will go to Connaught Place.  
After that he will come home. *(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'before')*
8. Some persons were present there.  
They were unknown to me. *(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'that')*
9. He saw me. He ran away immediately. *(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'as soon as')*
10. Why has he gone home? I do not know. *(Rewrite as one sentence)*
11. You will see him tomorrow. You will like him then. *(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'when')*

**(c) Combine each pair of sentences by using 'who' or 'whom':**

12. This is Rajni. She has often helped me.
13. There were many ministers there. Among them was Mr. Patel.
14. Here comes Miss Tomas. She taught me English.

15. Suresh will not come back. Mahesh will not come back.  
(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'neither.....nor')
16. They were to go to station. They have gone home.  
(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'instead of')
17. He has come here. He will see you. (Rewrite as one sentence by using Infinitive)
18. My brother will come today. My sister will come tomorrow.
19. The rain did not stop. The wind did not stop.  
(Rewrite as one sentence by using 'neither.....nor')
20. He will see you. He will help you. (Rewrite as one sentence by using 'as well as')
21. I ran fast. I wanted to reach in time. (Rewrite as one sentence by using the Infinitive form)

V. (a) **Combine each pair of sentences by using 'who' or 'whom':**

1. Here is my best friend. I like him very much.
2. There goes our Principal. We dislike him.
3. This is the picture of Gandhiji. He secured freedom for India.
4. There were many Principals there. Among them was Mr. Kapoor.
5. There comes the fat lady. She reminds me of Tun Tun.

(b) **Combine each of the following pairs of sentences:**

1. Where have I to get off the bus? Tell me.
2. Why did they go away? Do you know?
3. How does the aeroplane fly? I will tell you.
4. Where is the bus-stop? Ask some one.
5. He knows me well. He will lend me money.
6. He has eaten rice. He has not eaten chappaties.
7. He jumped up. He ran away.
8. This is my friend. His name is Ram.
9. He cannot stand first in the class. He may work day and night.
10. He will return on Saturday. If not he will come on Monday.
11. He is rich. He is not contented.
12. The match began. It started raining.

## 2.6 Further Readings



Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.



## Unit 3: Functional English Grammar: Direct and Indirect Speech (Reported Speech)

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Objectives

Introduction

3.1 Direct Narration and Indirect Narration

3.2 Reporting Verb and Reported Speech

3.3 Transformation of Direct Speech into Indirect Speech

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3.5 Review Questions

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### Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to:

- Explain Direct and Indirect Narrations.
- Understand Reporting Verb and Reported Speech.

### Introduction

In our speech, we often speak to the other person of some thing that was said to us by somebody. In other words, we often report a speech whether ours or someone else's. We do this in two ways. We either report the speech exactly as we had heard or said it without making any change. This is called *Direct Speech*.

#### Example:

The girl said to her mother, "My plate is empty."

Or we may change the sentence that we had heard or said without changing its meaning and then report it. This is called *Indirect Speech*.

#### Example:

The girl said to her mother that her plate was empty.

In the first example, the first part of the sentence which is before the comma, is referred to as *reporting speech* and the part which is within inverted commas is called the *reported speech*.

**Note:** While transforming from direct into indirect, we have made several changes in the sentence above:

1. We have removed the *comma* in the indirect sentence and put *that* in its place.
2. We have removed the inverted commas of the reported speech.
3. We have changed the *my* of the reported speech into *her*.

We have not used any capital letter in between the sentence unlike in the direct form where the reported speech always begins with a capital letter.

Now, in order to bring about these changes while converting from direct into indirect or vice-versa, there are several important but simple rules that need to be observed.

### 3.1 Direct Narration and Indirect Narration

There are two different ways in which we can report the words of a speaker:

1. *Direct Speech or Direct Narration.*
2. *Indirect Speech or Indirect Narration.*

1. **Direct Speech** contains the actual words of the speaker ; as—  
Sarla said, "My father has a roaring business in Mumbai."
2. **Indirect Speech** gives the substance of the speaker's actual words and not the exact words spoken by him or her ; as—  
Sarla said that her father had a roaring business in Mumbai.

### 3.2 Reporting Verb and Reported Speech

The actual words of the speaker are called the *Reported Speech* and the Verb which introduces the Reported Speech is called the *Reporting Verb*.

In the sentence above *said* is the **Reporting Verb** and 'My father has a roaring business in Mumbai' is the **Reported Speech**.

Here are some distinctive points regarding the Direct Speech and Indirect Speech:

#### 1. In the Direct Speech

- (i) The Reported Speech is put within *Inverted Commas*.
- (ii) The Reporting Verb is separated from the Reported Speech by a comma.
- (iii) The first word of the Reported Speech begins with a capital letter.
- (iv) In the Reported Speech we may use any Tense required by the sense and any kind of sentence.

#### 2. In the Indirect Speech

- (i) *Inverted commas are not used*.
- (ii) The comma separating the Reporting Verb from the Reported Speech is removed.
- (iii) The Reported Speech is introduced by some Conjunction (*that, if, what, why* etc.)
- (iv) The Reporting Verb changes according to the sense.
- (v) The Tense of the Reporting Verb is never changed.
- (vi) All kinds of sentences change into Assertive ones.

### 3.3 Transformation of Direct Speech into Indirect Speech

(A)

#### 3.3.1 Rules for the Change of Tenses

**Rule I.** If the Reporting Verb is in the Present or Future Tense, the Tense of the Verb in the Reported Speech does not change.

##### EXAMPLES

1. **Direct** : Rajesh says, "She has brought a fair name to her family."  
**Indirect** : Rajesh says that she has brought a fair name to her family.
2. **Direct** : I say, "I spoiled all my books."  
**Indirect** : I say that I spoiled all my books.

**Rule II.** If the Reporting Verb is in the Past Tense, the Verb in the Reported Speech must be changed into the corresponding Past Tense.

##### EXAMPLES

1. **Direct** : I said, "I am speaking the truth."  
**Indirect** : I said that I was speaking the truth.

## Notes

2. **Direct** : The teacher *said*, "Boys *fail* because they do *not study* regularly."  
**Indirect** : The teacher *said* that boys *failed* because they *did not study* regularly.
3. **Direct** : We *said*, "They *cannot cross* the river unless the boatmen help them."  
**Indirect** : We *said* that they *could not cross* the river unless the boatmen helped them.

## 3.3.2 Change of Verbs

|  |                |             |                         |
|--|----------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Is or am  | <i>Changes</i> | <i>into</i> | was                     |
| Are  | "              | "           | were                    |
| Has or have  | "              | "           | had                     |
| 2. Present Indefinite  | "              | "           | Past Indefinite         |
| Tell or tells (1st form)   | "              | "           | told (2nd form)         |
| Do or does   | "              | "           | did                     |
| 3. Present Continuous  | "              | "           | Past Continuous         |
| Is, am or are telling  | "              | "           | was or were telling     |
| 4. Present Perfect   | "              | "           | Past Perfect            |
| Has or have told   | "              | "           | had told                |
| 5. Present Perfect Continuous  | "              | "           | Past Perfect Continuous |
| Has or have been telling   | "              | "           | had been telling        |
| 6. Past Indefinite   | "              | "           | Past Perfect            |
| Told (did tell)  | "              | "           | had told                |
| 7. Past Continuous   | "              | "           | Past Perfect Continuous |
| Was or were telling  | "              | "           | had been telling        |
| 8. Will  | "              | "           | would                   |
| Shall  | "              | "           | should                  |
| 9. May   | "              | "           | might                   |
| Can  | "              | "           | could                   |
| 10. <i>Past Perfect and Past Perfect Continuous Tenses remain unchanged.</i> |                |             |                         |

## EXAMPLES

1. **Direct** : You *said*, "He *is* a very good athlete."  
**Indirect** : You *said* that he *was* a very good athlete.
2. **Direct** : I *said*, "I *have finished* my work."  
**Indirect** : I *said*, that I *had finished* my work.
3. **Direct** : He *said*, "Her parents *will pay* a visit to Delhi."  
**Indirect** : He *said* that her parents *would pay* a visit to Delhi."
4. **Direct** : The doctor *said*, "If the patient *does not take* medicine, he *will not recover*."  
**Indirect** : The doctor *said* that if the patient *did not take* medicine he *would not recover*."
5. **Direct** : The Headmaster *said*, "Those who *did not work* hard *failed*."  
**Indirect** : The Headmaster *said* that those who *had not worked* hard *had failed*."
6. **Direct** : I *said*, "It *may take* him a year to make up his deficiency."  
**Indirect** : I *said* that it *might take* him a year to make up his deficiency."

7. **Direct** : You said, "They were busy the whole day."  
**Indirect** : You said that they had been busy the whole day.
8. **Direct** : I said, "She was waiting for us at her uncle's."  
**Indirect** : I said that she had been waiting for us at her uncle's.

**Exception to Rule II**

If there is a Universal Truth or Habitual Fact in the Reported Speech, the Tense of the Verb is never changed ; as –

1. **Direct** : He said, "Face is the index of mind." (Proverbial truth)  
**Indirect** : He said that face is the index of mind.
2. **Direct** : The teacher said, "The earth rotates round its axis." (Geographical truth)  
**Indirect** : The teacher said that the earth rotates round its axis.
3. **Direct** : Horatious said, "Death comes sooner or later." (Universal truth)  
**Indirect** : Horatious said that death comes sooner or later.
4. **Direct** : Her uncle said, "Two and two make four and not five." (Factual truth)  
**Indirect** : Her uncle said that two and two make four and not five.
5. **Direct** : I said, "I am an early bird." (Habitual fact)  
**Indirect** : I said that I am an early bird.

The Tense of the Verb in the Reported Speech does not change in the following cases:

- | Direct  | Indirect   |
|---|--|
| 1. The teacher said, "He had better pay his dues."                          | The teacher said that he had better pay his dues.                          |
| 2. He said, "Her father lived at Lahore for ten years."                     | He said that her father lived at Lahore for ten years.                     |
| 3. The teacher said, "Akbar defeated Hemu in the second Battle of Panipat." | The teacher said that Akbar defeated Hemu in the second Battle of Panipat. |
| 4. The mother said, "He ought to have obeyed the teacher."                  | The mother said that he ought to have obeyed the teacher.                  |

**Self-Assessment****1. Change the following sentences into Indirect Speech:**

- (i) I said, "Ashok may come back in the evening."  
(ii) My father said, "Honesty is the best policy."  
(iii) The teacher said, "The Sikhs defeated the English in the battle."  
(iv) You said, "They were solving sums on Arithmetic."  
(v) She said, "Mother does not eat meat at all."

**Note.** In statements, if the Reporting Verb has an Object after it, it generally changes into 'told'.

(B)

**3.3.3 Rules for the Change of Pronouns**

**Rule I.** Pronouns of the **First Person** in the Reported Speech are changed into the Persons of the **Subject of the Reporting Verb** ; as –

1. **Direct** : I said to her, "I shall bring my camera with me."  
**Indirect** : I told her that I should bring my camera with me.
2. **Direct** : He said to me, I haven't got my glasses with me."  
**Indirect** : He told me that he hadn't got his glasses with him.

## Notes

3. **Direct** : You said to him, "I did not give Sham my book."  
**Indirect** : You told him that *you* had not given Sham *your* book.
4. **Direct** : She said to *me*, "Shashi insulted *my* brother in *my* presence."  
**Indirect** : She told *me* that Shashi had insulted *her* brother in *her* presence.
5. **Direct** : They said, "We helped *our* neighbours as much as *we* could."  
**Indirect** : They said that *they* had helped *their* neighbours as much as *they* could.

**Rule II.** The Pronouns of the **Second Person** in the Reported Speech are changed into the **Person of the Object of the Preposition 'to'** that comes after the Reporting Verb ; as –

1. **Direct** : I said to *him*, "You have taken *your* turn."  
**Indirect** : I told *him* that *he* had taken *his* turn.
2. **Direct** : He said to *me*, "You did not admit *your* mistake."  
**Indirect** : He told *me* that *I* had not admitted *my* mistake.
3. **Direct** : You said to *her*, "I cannot take *you* at *your* word."  
**Indirect** : You told *her* that you could not take *her* at *her* word.
4. **Direct** : I said to *you*, "Your chances of success are not bright."  
**Indirect** : I told *you* that *your* chances of success were not bright.
5. **Direct** : We said to *them*, "You cannot get the posts *you* aspire for."  
**Indirect** : We told *them* that *they* could not get the posts *they* aspired for.

**Note.** All nouns are of the Third Person.

**Rule III.** Pronouns of the Third Person undergo no change ; as –

1. **Direct** : I said, "He cannot contain *himself* for joy."  
**Indirect** : I said that *he* could not contain *himself* for joy.
2. **Direct** : You said to me, "They will carry the day even against heavy odds."  
**Indirect** : You told me that *they* would carry the day even against heavy odds.
3. **Direct** : She said to you, "He will surely drop a line in reply."  
**Indirect** : She told you that *he* would surely drop a line in reply.

(C)

### 3.3.4 Change of Words Denoting Position

While changing Direct Speech into Indirect one words showing *nearness* are replaced by the corresponding words showing *distance*.

| We Change |             |              |            |             |                    |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Now       | <i>into</i> | then         | Thus       | <i>into</i> | so                 |
| Come      | "           | go           | Ago        | "           | before             |
| Here      | "           | there        | Just       | "           | then               |
| This      | "           | that         | Hither     | "           | thither            |
| These     | "           | those        | Hence      | "           | thence             |
| Today     | "           | that day     | Yesterday  | "           | the previous day   |
| To-night  | "           | that night   | Last night | "           | the previous night |
| Tomorrow  | "           | the next day | Next week  | "           | the following week |

The day before yesterday *into* the day before the previous day.

The day after tomorrow *into* the day after the next day.

| EXAMPLES   |  | Notes |
|--|--|-------|
| Direct   | Indirect   |       |
| 1. I said to her, "I shall see you <i>here tomorrow</i> ."           | I told her that I should see her <i>there the next day</i> ."                  |       |
| 2. She said to him, "I bought <i>these</i> books <i>yesterday</i> ." | She told him that she had bought <i>those</i> books <i>the previous day</i> ." |       |
| 3. You said to them, " <i>Now</i> I shall tell you another story."   | You told <i>them</i> that <i>then</i> you would tell them another story."      |       |
| 4. He said to me, "I saw your brother two years <i>ago</i> ."        | He told me that he had seen my brother two years <i>before</i> ."              |       |
| 5. I said to you, "I intend to start business <i>next year</i> ."    | I told you that I intended to start business <i>the following year</i> ."      |       |

Words showing nearness in Direct Speech do not undergo any change when they refer to the objects present at the time of reporting, or to the place or time at which the speech is reported ; as –

- Direct** : She says, "I shall settle accounts *just now*."

**Indirect** : She says that she will settle accounts *just now*.
- Direct** : He said, "*This is* the house where my father lives."

**Indirect** : He said that *this was (is)* the house where his father lived.  
(*the house where he was standing*)

### Mark the Sense in the following sentence

- Direct** : I said to her yesterday, "I shall wait for you *here tomorrow*."
- Indirect** : I told her yesterday that I should wait for her *here today*."

**Note.** Words showing remoteness do not change into words showing nearness.

### Self-Assessment

#### 2. Change the following sentences into Indirect Form of Speech:

- He said, "I am feeling out of sorts to-day."
- I said to him, "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown."
- You said to me, "I shall not appear in the examination this year."
- They said, "We shall not play the match tomorrow."
- He said, "This is the play that these people want to stage here to-night."

### 3.3.5 Conversion of Assertive Sentences

#### (A)

(From Direct Speech into Indirect Speech)

#### Rules

- The Reporting Verb generally changes into *tell*. But in order to give clarity of meaning 'answer, reply, inform, remark' etc. may also be used instead of say and tell.
- If the Reporting Verb has *no object*, it does not change.
- The Conjunction '**that**' introduces the Reported Speech.
- All Nouns in the *Vocative case* in the Reported Speech become objects of the Reporting Verb.
- The *Inverted Commas* and the *Comma* after the reporting Verb are removed.

## Notes

## EXAMPLES

| Direct  | Indirect   |
|---|--|
| 1. Jehanara <i>said</i> to Aurangzeb, "I shall suffer all that you mete out to our aged father."    | Jehanara <i>told</i> Aurangzeb <b>that</b> she would suffer all that he meted out to their aged father.      |
| 2. I <i>said</i> , "I care not a fig for him."  | I <i>said</i> <b>that</b> I cared not a fig for him.   |
| 3. "Prem", <i>said</i> the teacher, "You will pass only if you work hard."                          | The teacher <i>told</i> Prem <b>that</b> he would pass only if he worked hard.                               |
| 4. "Today it is clear", <i>said</i> the teacher to the class, "but it will rain heavily to-morrow." | The teacher <i>told</i> the class <b>that</b> that day it was clear, but it would rain heavily the next day. |

## Self-Assessment

## 3. Change the following into Indirect Speech:

- (i) Once Lincoln said, "If elected I shall be thankful, if not it will be all the same".
- (ii) Gautam said to his disciples, "If others speak against me, or against my religion, or against the Order, there is no reason why you should be angry."
- (iii) Socrates said, "This plain speaking of mine is the cause of my unpopularity."
- (iv) The old mother said to Pasteur, "If you can cure animals, you can cure my son."
- (v) Mahatma Gandhi said, "Our quarrel is not with the British people ; we fight with their imperialism."

(B)

(From Indirect Speech to Direct Speech)

## Rules

1. Change Verb in the Past Tense in Indirect Speech into the corresponding Present Tense in the Direct Form according to the sense.
2. Put Direct Speech within Inverted Commas (" ").
3. Separate the Reported Speech from the Reporting Verb by a Comma.
4. Use *say* as the Reporting Verb.
5. Change the Pronouns according to the sense.
6. Change words showing *remoteness* and *distance* by the corresponding words showing *nearness*.

## EXAMPLES

1. **Indirect** : I told her that she had not returned my book even that day.  
**Direct** : I said to her, "You have not returned my book even to-day."
2. **Indirect** : Our teacher told us that blood is thicker than water.  
**Direct** : Our teacher said to us, "Blood is thicker than water."
3. **Indirect** : My father informed you that he had told him to see you the next day on his behalf.  
**Direct** : My father said to you, "I have told him to see you to-morrow on my behalf."
4. **Indirect** : I told my friend, Lal, that he was tired and that I would take him home.  
**Direct** : "Lal " said I to my friend, "You are tired. I will take you home."

## Self-Assessment

## 4. Change the following sentences into the Direct Speech:

- (i) Budha said that he must go away the poorer because he had lost a friend.
- (ii) The officer said that he was absolutely certain that he had seen him run into the cellar.
- (iii) She told him that if he liked her book, she would give it to him.

- (iv) The Hermit came to me in a smiling way. I told him that I had a very long walk, and that I was tired out.
- (v) The shopkeeper told the customer that the previous day he had sold them five for a rupee, but that day he could not sell even three for a rupee.

### 3.3.6 Conversion of Interrogative Sentences

#### From Direct into Indirect

##### Rules

1. The Reporting Verb is changed into *ask, enquire, inquire, demand* etc.
2. No Conjunction is used to introduce the Reported Speech if the question begins with an Interrogative word ; such as— *who, whose, whom, which, where, why, when, how* etc.
3. **If or whether** is used to introduce the Reported Speech if the question begins with a Helping Verb ; such as— *is, are, am, was, were, has, have, had, does, do, did, shall, will, can, could, should, would, may, might, must* etc.
4. Questions become statements ending in Full Stop.
5. We observe the rules for the change of Verbs, Pronouns and words showing nearness.

##### Notes:

1. "That" never introduces the Reported Speech in the Interrogative Sentences.
2. *Enquire, inquire and demand* take 'of' before a Personal Object.

#### EXAMPLES

##### 1. Questions beginning with a Helping Verb.

| Direct  | Indirect   |
|---|--|
| (i) Sham said to Rani "Are you not my sister?"              | Sham <i>asked</i> Rani <i>if</i> she was not his sister.                       |
| (ii) She said to me, "Will you take part in games?"         | She <i>asked</i> me <i>if</i> I would take part in games.                      |
| (iii) I said to him, "Have you a spare pencil?"             | I <i>asked</i> him <i>if</i> he had a spare pencil.                            |
| (iv) The teacher said to me, "Do you intend to England?"    | The teacher <i>enquired</i> of me <i>if</i> I go to intended to go to England. |
| (v) He said to her, "Did you enjoy the trip to Chandigarh?" | He <i>enquired</i> of her <i>if</i> she had enjoyed the trip to Chandigarh.    |

##### 2. Sentences having 'Yes' or 'No':

|  |  |
|--|--|
| (vi) "Are there any more files"? He asked. "Yes, sir," said the peon.  | He <i>asked</i> the peon <i>if</i> there were any more files. The peon <i>replied respectfully</i> that there were.  |
| (vii) The teacher said to Lila, "Did you break the window pane?" "No, sir," said Lila, "I did not."                        | The teacher <i>asked</i> Lila <i>if</i> she had broken the window pane. Lila <i>replied respectfully</i> that she had not.   |
| (viii) "May I come in Madam?" said Krishna. "Yes, said the teacher, "very gladly." the affirmative and told her that she   | Krishna <i>enquired</i> of the teacher respectfully <i>if</i> she might come in. The teacher <i>replied</i> in could come in very gladly.  |
| (ix) "If you find my answers satisfactory, will you give me five rupees?" said the astrologer. "No", replied the customer. | The astrologer <i>asked</i> the customer <i>whether</i> he (C) would give him (A) five rupees if he (C) found his (A) answers satisfactory. The customer <i>replied</i> that he would not. |



## Notes

## 3. Questions beginning with Interrogative Words:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (x) "What is the greatest in the world?" said the Yaksha to Yudhishtira.                    | The Yaksha <i>asked</i> Yudhishtira <i>what</i> the greatest wonder in the world was.                 |
| (xi) Jumman said, "Auntie, who could have thought that you had vanquished death in battle?" | Jumman <i>asked</i> his auntie <i>who</i> could have thought that she had vanquished death in battle. |
| (xii) The teacher said, "Rambha, why don't you not speak the truth."                        | The teacher <i>asked</i> Rambha <i>why</i> she did speak the truth?"                                  |
| (xiii) The patient said to the doctor, "How often should I take the medicine?"              | The patient <i>asked</i> the doctor <i>how</i> often he should take the medicine.                     |

## Self-Assessment

## 4. Change the following sentences into Indirect Speech:

- (i) "Do you see what is going to happen to you through your foolish loyalty to your friend? said the king to Daman."
- (ii) The poet said, "Will nobody tell me what she sings?"
- (iii) The aunt said, "Son, will you hesitate to say the honest thing because you fear a quarrel?"
- (iv) "Shall I bring them, sir?" said the peon. "Yes," he said and got absorbed in reading.
- (v) "Don't I want the good of the people too?" said Sita Ram to the officer.

## 3.3.7 Mixed Interrogative Sentences.

## EXAMPLES

- (i) **Direct** : Auster said, "Who is not ready to die for his Motherland, my countrymen? Will you follow me if I lead the way?"
- Indirect** : Auster *asked* his countrymen *who* was not ready to die for his Motherland and *if* they would follow him if he led the way.
- (ii) **Direct** : "Am I not your father? Did I not bring you up? Why do you insult me in this way?" said he to his sons.
- Indirect** : He *enquired* of his sons if he was not their father and if he had not brought them up. He *further asked* them *why* they insulted him in that way.
- (iii) **Direct** : "Boys," said the teacher, "why don't you attend to the lesson? You will repent if you are not careful now."
- Indirect** : The teacher *asked* the boys *why* they did not *attend* to the lesson and *warned* them *that they* would repent if they were not careful then.
- (iv) **Direct** : "Don't I want the *good* of the people too?" said Sita Ram to Professor Ramukshi. "Why am I making frantic efforts to have the college started? A stitch in time saves nine."
- Indirect** : Sita Ram *asked* Professor Ramukshi *if* he didn't want the good of the people and *why* he was making frantic efforts to have the college started. He *further told* him (S.R.) that a stitch in time saves nine.

**Self-Assessment**

Notes

**5. Change the following sentences into Indirect Speech:**

- (i) He said to the Inspector of Police, "Why do you cross question me as if I were a thief or robber. I am travelling on a business of my own and there is no need to question me."
- (ii) I said to Mohan, "Can you come tomorrow?" Mohan said, "No, tomorrow I shall not be here."
- (iii) "Father," said the girl, "were you always good, when you were a boy?" I was generally good," said the father, "at least, when I was asleep."
- (iv) "Have you any news from my family?" asked the trader. "Yes," replied the man. "Well! How is my son? I am very anxious about him," said the trader.
- (v) The officer said to the merchant, "Where did you spend the night? Were you alone? Did you see the other merchant this morning? Why did you leave the inn before dawn?"

**From Indirect Speech to Direct Speech****Notes:**

1. Reverse the rules for changing Direct Speech into Indirect Speech.
2. Do not forget to mark the sign of Interrogation at the end of a question.

**EXAMPLES**

1. **Indirect** : He asked her what he could do for her and if he might send for the doctor.  
**Direct** : He said to her, "What can I do for you? May I send for the doctor?"
2. **Indirect** : His mother asked him where he was coming from and if he did not know that she had been waiting for him for two hours.  
**Direct** : His mother said to him, "Where are you coming from. Don't you know that I have been waiting for you for two hours?"
3. **Indirect** : He asked his customer if there was any woman in his family, might be even a distant relative, who was not well-disposed towards him and further told him that most of his troubles were due to his nature.  
**Direct** : "Is there any woman in your family, may be even a distant relative, who is not well-disposed towards you? Most of your troubles are due to your nature," he said to his customer.

**Self-Assessment****6. Change the following sentences into Direct Speech:**

- (i) She asked me if I should call on her in the evening and assured me that we would have a jolly time.
- (ii) You asked her if she had a watch and what time it was then.
- (iii) The teacher asked the boys why they did not look at the black-board and told them that they would repent if they did not attend to their lesson then.
- (iv) She asked Dinesh if he had not broken the jug and why he did not make a clean breast of his guilt.
- (v) His father told him that he had heard that he had been punished for mis-behaviour and asked him if it was really true.

**3.3.8 Conversion of Imperative Sentences****Rules**

Change the Reporting Verb according to the sense:

1. **Request** : *request, beg, entreat, ask* etc.
2. **Advice** : *advise, forbid, urge, exhort* etc.
3. **Order** : *order, command, tell* etc.
4. The *Imperative* word is changed into *Infinitive* one.

## Notes

5. **No conjunction** is used to introduce the Reported Speech.
6. If the conjunction '*that*' is used '*should*' is placed before the Infinitive.
7. Observe the rules for the change of Pronouns and words showing nearness.

## EXAMPLES

## From Direct Speech into Indirect Speech

1. **Direct** : The Voice said, "Sehdeva, answer my questions and then drink water."  
**Indirect** : The Voice *ordered* Sehdeva to answer his questions and then drink water.
2. **Direct** : He said to Bhima, "Please seek them out and be quick about it."  
**Indirect** : He *requested* Bhima *to* seek them out and be quick about it. "
3. **Direct** : Forward, the Light Brigade," said the Commander, "and charge for the guns."  
**Indirect** : The commander *commanded* the Light Brigade *to* march forward and charge for the guns.
4. **Direct** : "Avoid bad company, Sarla," said the mother.  
**Indirect** : The mother *advised* Sarla *to* avoid bad company.
5. **Direct** : The father said to her, "Do not take in hand anything unless you think over the pros and cons of it before-hand."  
**Indirect** : The father *forbade* her *to* take in hand anything unless she thought over the pros and cons of it before-hand.

Or

The father *advised* her *not to* take in hand anything unless she thought over the pros and cons of it before-hand.

**Note:** In the Negative Sentences '*to*' is used after '*not*'.

## 3.3.9 Sentences Beginning with 'Let'

1. Where **let** expresses '*proposal*' the Reporting Verb is changed into '*propose*' or '*suggest*' and '**let**' is replaced by '*should*'; as—
  - (i) **Direct** : She said, "Let us enjoy boating in the river, friends."  
**Indirect** : She *suggested* to her friends *that* they *should* enjoy boating in the river.
  - (ii) **Direct** : He said to them, "Let us cast lots and decide the issue."  
**Indirect** : He *proposed* to them *that* they *should* cast lots and decide the issue.
2. If **let** is used to mean '*allow*' or '*persuade*', it is changed into such phrases as '*might be allowed*' or simply into the Infinitive '*to let*'; as—
  - (iii) **Direct** : The Headmaster said, "Ram Kishan, let the boy come in".  
**Indirect** : The Headmaster *ordered* Ram Kishan *to let* the boy come in.
  - (iv) **Direct** : He said to his host, "Let me go home now."  
**Indirect** : He *suggested* to his host *that* he *might be allowed* to (or should like to) go home that day.
3. When **let** expresses a condition or supposition, it is changed into '*might*'; as—
  - (v) **Direct** : I said, "Let him work ever so hard, he cannot win a scholarship."  
**Indirect** : I said that he could not win a scholarship *however* hard he might work.

Or

I said that he *might work ever so hard*, he could not win a scholarship.

**Mixed Imperative, Interrogative or Assertive Sentences**

Notes

1. **Direct** : The Devil said to the Imp, "If the peasants and their wives do that kind of things, we shall be lost. Go back at once and make things right."  
**Indirect** : The Devil *told* the Imp that if the peasants and their wives did that kind of things, they would be lost and *ordered* him to go back at once and make things right.
2. **Direct** : "Beg your pardon, Sir," said Nabendu. "There has been a mistake," and with perspiration, he came out of the room somehow.  
**Indirect** : Nabendu respectfully *begged his pardon* and *remarked* that there had been a mistake ; and *wet* with perspiration, he came out of the room somehow.
3. **Direct** : He said to her, "Why do you come here and disturb me? You are a great nuisance. Go away at once and do not come here again."  
**Indirect** : He asked her why she came there and disturbed him. He *told* her that she was a great nuisance. He further *ordered* her to go away at once and not to come there again.

**Self-Assessment****7. Change the following sentences into Indirect Speech:**

- (i) "Stop writing," said the superintendent to the examinees, "Stand up and deliver the answer-books to me."
- (ii) The mouse said to the lion, "Your Majesty, spare my life."
- (iii) "Always speak the truth, Rakesh," said the father, "and never try to deceive anybody."
- (iv) She said to me, "Let us have a game of chess."
- (v) The teacher said, "Do not play here, boys. Go and play somewhere else."

**From Indirect Speech to Direct Speech****EXAMPLES**

- | <b>Indirect</b>   | <b>Direct</b>  |
|---|--|
| 1. The preacher advised the people to do good and forget.                                 | The preacher said to the people "Do good and forget."                                  |
| 2. The master ordered the servant to get out of his sight and not to show his face again. | The master said to the servant, "Get out of my sight. Do not show me your face again." |
| 3. He proposed to us that we should go out for a walk then.                               | He said to us, "Let us go out for a walk now."   |
| 4. I said that she could not pass how-ever hard she might study.                          | I said, "Let her study ever so hard, she cannot pass."                                 |

**Self-Assessment****8. Change the following sentences into Direct Speech:**

- (i) The father advised me not to keep late hours as it would tell upon my health.
- (ii) I advised her to trust in God and do the right.
- (iii) He shouted to the people to catch the thief and not to let him escape.
- (iv) The host requested the guests to accept his humble fare.
- (v) The accused begged the judge respectfully to pardon him and pardon him only once.

### 3.3.10 Conversion of Exclamatory Sentences

#### From Direct Speech to Indirect Speech

##### Rules

1. Reporting Verb changes into *exclaim, try, applaud, confess* etc.
2. Change the *Exclamatory Sentences* into *Assertive ones* and replace (!) with a Full Stop (.).
3. 'That' is used as the *linking word*.
4. Replace the *expressions of Interjections and Exclamations* with suitable *Adverbs or Adverb Phrases* according to the sense.
5. Observe the rules for the change of *Verbs, Pronouns* and *words showing nearness*.

##### EXAMPLES

1. **Direct** : Pinki said, "Hurrah! I have passed."  
**Indirect** : Pinki *exclaimed with joy (or joyfully)* **that** she had passed.
2. **Direct** : She said, "Alas! I have lost my gold ring."  
**Indirect** : She *exclaimed sorrowfully (or with sorrow)* **that** she had lost her gold ring.
3. **Direct** : "Pooh!" said she to me, "you have again failed in the examination."  
**Indirect** : She *exclaimed with contempt* **that** I had again failed in the examination.
4. **Direct** : I said to her, "What! You have lost your bridal ring."  
**Indirect** : I *exclaimed with surprise* **that** she had lost her bridal ring.
5. **Direct** : The spectators said, "Bravo! Well played, Mohan!"  
**Indirect** : The spectators *applauded* Mohan, *calling out* **that** he had played well.

##### Remember

1. **Aha! Ha! Hurrah!** etc. express *joy*.
2. **Alas! Oh!** etc. express *sorrow, grief or pain*.
3. **Oh! What!** etc. express *surprise*.
4. **Bravo! Hear!** etc. express *approval*.
5. **Lo! Hush! Hark! Behold!** etc. express *attention*.
6. **Pooh! Pshaw!** etc. express *contempt*.
7. **Good God! Thank God! Well Done!** etc. are also *Interjectional Phrases*.
6. **Direct** : She said, "How lovely the child is!"  
**Indirect** : She *exclaimed* that the child was *very* lovely.
7. **Direct** : I said to him, "What a fool you are!"  
**Indirect** : I *exclaimed* that he was a *great* fool.

**Note:** Use 'very' before Adjectives and 'great' or 'big' before Nouns.

#### From Direct Speech into Indirect Speech

##### Rules

1. Change the Reporting Verb into *wish, pray, bid*.
2. Observe all the rules for Changing Exclamatory Sentences *Direct and Indirect Speech*.
1. **Direct** : The old woman said to me, "May you be happy and prosperous!"  
**Indirect** : The old woman *prayed* that I *might* be happy and prosperous.
2. **Direct** : She said to me, "Would that you were here at that time!"  
**Indirect** : She *wished* that I had been there at that time.

3. **Direct** : The people said, "Long live the President!"  
**Indirect** : The people *prayed* that the President *might* live long.
4. **Direct** : He said to me, "Good morning, I have come to consult you."  
**Indirect** : He *wished* me *good morning* and told me that he had come to consult me.
5. **Direct** : The leader said, "Farewell, my country-men!"  
**Indirect** : The leader *bade* his countrymen farewell.

### Self-Assessment

#### 9. Change the following sentences into Indirect Speech:

- (i) I said, "Alas! You have made a mess of the whole affair, Lata."  
(ii) The child said, "Aha! Papa has come back."  
(iii) She said, "How fearful the sight is!"  
(iv) The mother said, "May you succeed in your mission, my son!"  
(v) "Oh! for a glass of water!" said Captain Sidney.

#### From Indirect Speech to Direct Speech

##### EXAMPLES

1. **Indirect** : The old lady exclaimed with delight that she had regained her eye-sight.  
**Direct** : "Aha!" said the old lady, "I have regained my eye-sight."
2. **Indirect** : He exclaimed painfully that he had run a thorn into his foot.  
**Direct** : He said, "Oh! I have run a thorn into my foot."
3. **Indirect** : She exclaimed with surprise that I was there.  
**Direct** : He said to me, "Oh! You are here."
4. **Indirect** : I prayed that God might grant peace to the departed soul.  
**Direct** : I said, "May God grant peace to the departed soul!"

### Self-Assessment

#### 10. Change the following sentences into Direct Speech:

- (i) They shouted with joy that they had carried the day.  
(ii) She confessed with regret that she had been very sinful.  
(iii) I exclaimed with contempt that she had again committed the same blunder.  
(iv) The Captain applauded the players saying that they had done well.  
(v) She exclaimed with sorrow that she had failed by one mark.

## 3.4 Miscellaneous Types

### 3.4.1 Some Typical Sentences Reported Indirectly

Study the following examples carefully:

1. **Direct** : The patient said, "Thank you, doctor."  
**Indirect** : The patient **thanked** the doctor."
2. **Direct** : He said to me, "Rest assured I shall not leave you in the lurch."  
**Indirect** : He **assured** me that he would not leave me in the lurch.
3. **Direct** : I said to him, "I hope you will pass."  
**Indirect** : I **expressed the hope** that he would pass.
4. **Direct** : The teacher said, "Look here, boys, honesty is the best policy."  
**Indirect** : The teacher **invited the attention** of the boys to the fact that honesty is the best policy.

## Notes

5. **Direct** : "Curse it" said the teacher, "who could have fore-seen your failure?"  
**Indirect** : The teacher **exclaimed with oath** that no one could have fore-seen his failure.
6. **Direct** : I said to her, "By God, I have not seen your pen." **Indirect**: I **swore** that I had not seen her pen.
7. **Direct** : She said, "God knows, I *did* not steal your book."  
**Indirect** : She **called upon God to witness** that she had not stolen his book.
8. **Direct** : "Yes, I say, I did it," said Rani.  
**Indirect** : Rani **emphatically declared** (confessed) that she had done it.
9. **Direct** : "No sir, I did not touch the glass," said I.  
**Indirect** : I **respectfully denied** that I had touched the glass.
10. **Direct** : "Fear! grand-mamma" replied Nelson, "I, never saw fear."  
**Indirect** : **Being much surprised** when his grand-mamma spoke of fear, Nelson told her that he had never seen fear.

### 3.5 Review Questions

#### 1. Change the following sentences into Indirect Form of Speech:

- (i) Shanta said, "Why are you late? I wanted for you so long."
- (ii) "Tell your mistress, little man," said the Captain kindly, "that we must speak to her."
- (iii) I said, "Good-bye, dear comrades!"
- (iv) "Good-bye, my dear friend. May we meet again," said Ram.
- (v) Ranjit said to his servant, "Run Chandu, and bring my umbrella."

#### 2. Turn the following into the Direct Form of Speech:

- (i) I asked him how he dared to disobey my orders and whether he did not deserve to be punished. He said that he was prepared to apologise for his fault and hoped that I would forgive him.
- (ii) Andy asked the postmaster why he wanted to know that. The Postmaster laughed at this funny question and told him that he must tell him who the letter was for, or he won't know which letter he should give him.
- (iii) He asked me when I intended to leave Chandigarh. I told him that, as the next day would be spent in meeting old friends, I could only hope to leave by the day after at the earliest.
- (iv) He stood up and remarked that Jai Singh was up in arms against the Nawab and he must be by his side. The bride's men pleaded and requested him to stay for a while and complete the ceremonies.
- (v) She warned Tyl that if in his picture she didn't see herself smiling, with a perfect set of pearly teeth, she would have him cut into small bits by her lover.
- (vi) Tyl told the Archduke that he wanted him to grant him one last favour. He implored him to order all the courtiers to assemble in that room. He further said that when they were there he wanted to say a few words to them and then he would draw the curtain.

### 3.6 Further Readings



Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 4: Functional Grammar: Common Errors

### CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

- 4.1 Common Errors
- 4.2 Miscellaneous Examples
- 4.3 Review Questions
- 4.4 Further Readings

### Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to:

- Avoid grammatical errors in each and everyday conversation and in writing.
- Learn to write correct English in different parts of speech.

### Introduction

We tend to commit grammatical errors in our everyday conversation and in writing, without being aware of them. The importance of the English language is increasing day by day in the academic curriculum as well as in competitive examinations. Grammar is the base and the foundation on which rests the structure of a language. A perfect harmony is attained in a sentence when one speaks or writes correctly. This section is a practical guide to the reader/learner to avoid errors in the usage of the English language.

### 4.1 Common Errors

#### 4.1.1 Errors in the Use of Nouns

##### Incorrect

1. I must help him. After all, we are brothers of the same profession.
2. He does everything for conscience's sake.
3. Has the agendum for tomorrow's meeting been drawn up?
4. Custom on exports and imports is collected at the airport.
5. The old lady who was crushed to death by a speeding truck was walking in the centre of the road.

##### Correct

1. I must help him. After all, we are *brethren* of the same profession.  
**Explanation:** *Brothers* refers to *the brothers in a family*. *Brethren* refers to a *community or members of a guild or a society*.
2. He does everything for *conscience* sake.
3. He the *agenda* for tomorrow's meeting been drawn up?  
**Explanation:** *Agendum* is not used in English. *Agenda* (Programme of a meeting) is treated as singular.
4. *Customs* on exports and imports *are* collected at the airport.
5. The old lady who was crushed to death by a speeding truck was walking in the *middle* of the road.



## Notes

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 6. My uncle's friend's son is a doctor.                                  | 6. <i>The son of my uncle's friend</i> is a doctor.<br><b>Note:</b> The use of the double possessive (s) should be avoided.  |
| 7. Good night! How do you do?  | 7. Good <i>evening!</i> How do you do?<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Good night</i> is a parting salutation. When we meet someone (in the evening time), the salutation should be <i>Good evening</i> .   |
| 8. One of these men's sons was killed in the recent police firing.       | 8. One of the sons of these <i>men</i> was killed in the recent police firing.   |
| 9. The juries consist of ten members.                                    | 9. The <i>jury</i> consists of ten members.  |
| 10. The jury was divided in its opinion.                                 | 10. The jury <i>were</i> divided in <i>their</i> opinion.<br><b>Explanation:</b> <i>Jury</i> is a collective noun. Whenever there is a sense of <i>unanimous action</i> , we use <i>singular verb</i> with <i>Jury</i> ; but when it is used in the sense of <i>separation</i> , we use <i>plural verb</i> with it.<br><b>Mark the following examples:</b><br>The jury were unanimous on the issue (Incorrect)<br>The jury was unanimous on the issue. (Correct) |
| 11. My father is in the teaching line.                                   | 11. My father is in the teaching <i>profession</i> .<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Teaching line</i> is a slang word.   |
| 12. Women's clothes are generally more expensive than men.               | 12. Women's clothes are generally more expensive than <i>men's</i> .   |
| 13. All his family members are lovers of dance and music.                | 13. <i>All members of his family</i> are lovers of dance and music.<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Family members</i> is a slang expression. The actual use is <i>members of the family</i> .  |
| 14. His hat was blown off by a strong air.                               | 14. His hat was blown off by a strong <i>wind</i> .  |
| 15. I may spend these summer vacations with one of my friends in Mumbai. | 15. I may spend <i>this summer vacation</i> with one of my friends in Mumbai.<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Summer vacations</i> is a wrong use. This term is always used in the singular form.   |
| 16. If the cattles enter the field, please drive them out.               | 16. If the <i>cattle</i> enter the field, please drive them out.   |
| 17. My cousin sister is a lecturer in Dayal Singh College.               | 17. My <i>cousin</i> is a lecturer in Dayal Singh College.<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Cousin brother/cousin sister</i> is a slang usage.   |
| 18. Joseph was granted freeship by the Principal.                        | 18. Joseph was granted free <i>studentship</i> by the Principal.<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Freeship</i> is a slang expression. The actual use is <i>free studentship</i> .  |
| 19. The magistrate has passed order for his release.                     | 19. The magistrate has passed <i>orders</i> for his release.   |
| 20. There is no place for you on this bench.                             | 20. There is no <i>room</i> for you on this bench.<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Room</i> in the above sentence refers to <i>space</i> .  |

|  |  | Notes |
|--|--|-------|
| 21. Mr. Bhatia, our English teacher, takes great pains in his work.        | 21. Mr. Bhatia, <i>our teacher of English</i> , takes great pains in his work.<br><b>Explanation:</b> <i>English teacher</i> is a slang use. The <i>English teacher</i> means a teacher belonging to England. The correct use is the <i>teacher of English</i> which means a teacher who teaches the language English. |       |
| 22. The police has arrested the thief.                                     | 22. The police <i>have</i> arrested the thief.   |       |
| 23. The wages of sin are death.  | 23. The wages of sin <i>is</i> death.  |       |
| 24. The weather of Delhi does not suit me.                                 | 24. The <i>climate</i> of Delhi does not suit me.  |       |
| 25. Credit this sum in my name.  | 25. Credit this sum <i>to my account</i> .<br><b>Note:</b> <i>In my name</i> is a slang expression. The correct use is <i>to my account</i> .  |       |
| 26. We should always be true to our words.                                 | 26. We should always be true to our <i>word</i> .<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Word</i> in the above sentence means <i>promise</i> . <i>Words</i> means <i>words in a language</i> . <i>We must be true to our word</i> means <i>we must honour our promise</i> .  |       |
| 27. I have learnt these poetries by memory.                                | 27. I have learnt these <i>poems</i> by memory.<br><b>Note:</b> There is no such word as <i>poetries</i> . There is no plural of the word <i>poetry</i> . In place of <i>poetries</i> , we should use <i>poems</i> .   |       |
| 28. Such phenomena has never been seen before.                             | 28. Such phenomena <i>have</i> never been seen before.<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Phenomena</i> is always used in the <i>plural sense</i> . Hence, we use plural verb with it.   |       |
| 29. Some of the guests were sitting on the ground of the room.             | 29. Some of the guests were sitting on the <i>floor</i> of the room.   |       |
| 30. Twenty males and thirty females were selected by the commission.       | 30. Twenty <i>men</i> and thirty <i>women</i> were selected by the Commission.   |       |
| 31. What is your date of birth?  | 31. What is the <i>date of your birth</i> ?<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Your date of birth</i> is a slang expression. It hardly makes any sense. <i>Birth</i> is concerned with <i>man</i> and not with <i>the date</i> . So, the correct use will be <i>the date of your birth</i> .   |       |
| 32. I met him in the hospital and enquired about his state of health.      | 32. I met him in the hospital and enquired about <i>the state of his health</i> .  |       |
| 33. The scientists have not been able to tell the reason of an earthquake. | 33. The scientists have not been able to tell the <i>cause</i> of an earthquake.<br><b>Explanation:</b> There is a positive difference in the meanings of <i>reasons</i> and <i>cause</i> . <i>Cause</i> produces <i>result</i> . <i>Reason</i> explains or justifies the <i>cause</i> .                               |       |
| 34. He does not know even alphabets of English.                            | 34. He does not know even <i>alphabet</i> of English.<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Alphabet</i> means the number of letters of a language.   |       |
| 35. No summon has yet been issued from the Court.                          | 35. No <i>summons</i> has yet been issued from the court.<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Summon</i> is a wrong usage.  |       |

## 4.1.2 Errors in the Use of Pronouns

| Incorrect   | Correct  |
|---|--|
| 1. Shankar is one of the greatest philosophers that has ever lived. | 1. Shankar is one of the greatest philosophers that <i>have</i> ever lived.                |
| 2. The prize was given to the girl whom they said stood first.      | 2. The prize was given to the girl <i>who</i> they said stood first.                       |
| 3. My father does not like me going to pictures everyday.           | 3. My father does not like <i>my</i> going to pictures everyday.                           |
| 4. She was more beautiful than either of her three sisters.         | 4. She was more beautiful than <i>any one</i> of her three sisters.                        |
| 5. The more you read, the more you will like this book.             | 5. The more you read <i>this book</i> , the more you will like <i>it</i> .                 |
| 6. Between you and I, he is a rogue.                                | 6. Between you and <i>me</i> , he is a rogue.  |
| 7. Zia can sing better than me.                                     | 7. Zia can sing better than I.   |
| 8. This is the only one of his comments that deserve our attention. | 8. This is the only one of his comments that <i>deserves</i> our attention.                |
| 9. Neither of the three candidates are fit for the post.            | 9. <i>None</i> of the three candidates <i>is</i> fit for the post.                         |
| 10. Both did not go.  | 10. Neither went.<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Both</i> cannot be used in the <i>negative</i> sense. |
| 11. You and he should not waste his money.                          | 11. You and he should not waste <i>your</i> money.   |
| 12. My watch is better than that of yours.                          | 12. My watch is better than <i>yours</i> .   |
| 13. I who is your father should be respected.                       | 13. I who <i>am</i> your father should be respected.                                       |
| 14. The man standing beside the Minister is a friend of me.         | 14. The man standing beside the Minister is a friend of <i>mine</i> .                      |
| 15. Too much of love is one of those things which spoils the child. | 15. Too much of love is <i>one</i> of those things that spoil the child.                   |
| 16. They invited my friend and I to tea.                            | 16. They invited my friend and <i>me</i> to tea.   |
| 17. The jury was divided on the issue.                              | 17. The jury <i>were</i> divided on the issue.   |
| 18. I who is standing here wrote that letter.                       | 18. I who <i>am</i> standing here wrote that letter.                                       |
| 19. I hate him talking too much.                                    | 19. I hate <i>his</i> talking too much.  |
| 20. It was being a cloudy day, we stayed indoors.                   | 20. <i>It</i> being a cloudy day, we stayed indoors.                                       |
| 21. We went to Batkal lake and enjoyed myself.                      | 21. We went to Batkal lake and enjoyed <i>ourselves</i> .                                  |
| 22. The repent who do not look before they leap.                    | 22. They repent <i>that</i> do not look before they leap.                                  |
| 23. None of we accepted his invitation.                             | 23. <i>None of us</i> accepted his invitation.   |
| 24. He bought a beautiful pen and gave the pen to his sister.       | 24. He bought a beautiful pen and gave <i>it</i> to his sister.                            |
| 25. That is the first time that I have seen you.                    | 25. <i>This</i> is the first time that I have seen you.                                    |
| 26. I, him and you must help that poor man.                         | 26. <i>You, he and I</i> must help that poor man.  |

- |  |  |       |
|--|--|-------|
| 27. Divide this apple between he and myself.             | 27. Divide this apple between <i>him</i> and <i>me</i> .         | Notes |
| 28. He stole a dog and sold the dog for ₹ 50.            | 28. He stole a dog and sold <i>it</i> for ₹ 50.                  |       |
| 29. Santosh being a poor man, cannot buy costly clothes. | 29. <i>Being a poor man</i> , Santosh cannot buy costly clothes. |       |
| 30. Who are you referring to?                            | 30. <i>Whom</i> are you referring to?                            |       |
| 31. Whom did you say was digging the ground?             | 31. <i>Who</i> did you say was digging the ground?               |       |
| 32. I shall take your leave now.                         | 32. I shall take <i>leave of you</i> now.                        |       |
| 33. Is this book your's or mine?                         | 33. Is this book <i>yours</i> or mine?                           |       |
| 34. I do not like you talking to Radha.                  | 34. I do not like <i>your</i> taking to Radha.                   |       |
| 35. Mohini's looks are more charming than Sudha's.       | 35. Mohini's looks are more charming than <i>that of</i> Sudha.  |       |

### 4.1.3 Errors in the Use of Adjectives

- | Incorrect   | Correct  |
|---|--|
| 1. India is more beautiful than any country of the world.                           | 1. India is more beautiful than <i>any other</i> country of the world.   |
| 2. Mr. Raisinghani is the most industrious and noblest member of the college staff. | 2. Mr. Raisinghani is the <i>noblest</i> and most industrious member of the college staff.<br><b>Explanation:</b> When two adjectives in the Comparative or superlative degree come together, the one formed by adding <i>more</i> or <i>most</i> should be given the second position in the sentence. |
| 3. The whole India mourned the death of Mrs. Indira Gandhi.                         | 3. The <i>whole of India</i> mourned the death of Mrs. Indira Gandhi.  |
| 4. Television has proved much harmful than useful.                                  | 4. Television has proved <i>more harmful</i> than useful.  |
| 5. No less than five students were drowned.   | 5. No <i>fewer</i> than five students were drowned.  |
| 6. Mr. Amarnath is the most ablest man of the town.                                 | 6. Mr. Amarnath is the <i>ablest</i> man of the town.  |
| 7. There are not much books in the library.   | 7. There are not <i>many</i> books in the library.   |
| 8. Health is more preferable than wealth.   | 8. Health is preferable <i>to</i> wealth.  |
| 9. The Taj Mahal is a worth-seeing monument.  | 9. The Taj Mahal is a <i>monument worth-seeing</i> .   |
| 10. Less books are needed for the library.  | 10. <i>Fewer</i> books are needed for the library.   |
| 11. She wrote a best book.  | 11. She wrote a <i>very good</i> book.   |
| 12. Indira Gandhi was the first pilitician of her time.                             | 12. Indira Gandhi was the <i>foremost</i> politician of her time.  |
| 13. Napoleon was greater than any politician of his time.                           | 13. Napoleon was greater than <i>any other</i> politician of his time.   |
| 14. As a sleeping partner he had invested a little amount of money.                 | 14. As a sleeping partner, he has invested a <i>small amount of money</i> .  |
| 15. He had only the few rupees left.  | 15. He had only <i>a few</i> rupees left.  |

Notes

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|--|---|
| 16. Amritsar is further from Delhi than Ambala.  | 16. Amritsar is <i>farther</i> from Delhi than Ambala.  |
| 17. This is the most perfect system.   | 17. This is the <i>perfect</i> system.  |
| 18. The climate of Shimla is as good as Kashmir.                                       | 18. The climate of Shimla is as good <i>as that of Kashmir</i> .  |
| 19. He is only a peon and gets a less salary.  | 19. He is only a peon and gets a <i>small</i> salary.   |
| 20. Lal got cent per cent marks in English.  | 20. Lal got <i>hundred per cent</i> marks in English.<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Cent per cent</i> is a slang expression. The correct use is <i>hundred per cent</i> .  |
| 21. No other man of the town is more wiser than Mr. Sethi.                             | 21. No other man of the town is <i>as wise as</i> Mr. Sethi.<br><b>Note:</b> When we start a sentence with <i>no other man</i> it is a case of positive degree. So, we are supposed to use <i>as .....as</i> in such cases. |
| 22. He gave a few coins he had in his pocket to the beggar.                            | 22. He gave <i>the few</i> coins he had in his pocket to the beggar.  |
| 23. The teacher will give the students a verbal test.                                  | 23. The teacher will give the students <i>an oral</i> test.   |
| 24. He got only passing marks in English.  | 24. He got only <i>pass marks</i> in English.<br><b>Note:</b> <i>Passing-marks</i> is a slang usage.  |
| 25. These days people prefer coffee than tea.  | 25. These days people prefer coffee <i>to</i> tea.  |
| 26. Gold is the most precious of all other metals.                                     | 26. Gold is the most <i>precious of all</i> metals.   |
| 27. Radha is the older of the two sisters.   | 27. Radha is the <i>elder</i> of the two sisters.   |
| 28. Of Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi, the latest has the largest number of motor vehicles. | 28. Of Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi, the <i>last</i> has the largest number of motor vehicles.   |
| 29. This watch is superior than that.  | 29. This watch is superior <i>to</i> that.  |
| 30. Mohan is wiser than honest.  | 30. Mohan is <i>more wise</i> than honest.  |
| 31. I do not like this kinds of jokes.   | 31. I do not like <i>these</i> kinds of jokes.  |
| 32. Death is more preferable than dishonour.   | 32. Death is preferable <i>to</i> dishonour.  |
| 33. My father has been sick for a very long time.                                      | 33. My father has been <i>ill</i> for a very long time.   |
| 34. Please open your book at twenty page.  | 34. Please open your book <i>at page twenty</i> .   |
| 35. Both the brothers have not passed.   | 35. <i>Neither</i> brother has passed.  |

4.1.4 Errors in the Use of Verbs

(A)

- | Incorrect  | Correct  |
|--|--|
| 1. Had you been to Kolkata, I has also gone there.             | 1. Had you been to Kolkata, <i>I would have</i> also gone.               |
| 2. These news were broadcasted from All India Radio yesterday. | 2. <i>This</i> news was <i>broadcast</i> from All India Radio yesterday. |
| 3. The pick-pocket was arrested and his pockets searched.      | 3. The pick pocket was arrested and his pockets <i>were</i> searched.    |

**Explanation:** The sentence is a combination of two sentences, or we say *the sentence shows two actions in the past tense*, i.e.

(i) The pick pocket was arrested.

(ii) His pockets searched.

In part (iii) of the sentence, we find that the helping word is missing. Since the subject is plural and the tense is past, we have to use *were* to complete the sentence.

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| 4. Ten were killed and one taken prisoner.   | 4. Ten were killed and <i>one was</i> taken prisoner.  |
| 5. Hinduism is in existence from time immemorial.  | 5. Hinduism <i>has been</i> in existence from time immemorial.   |
| 6. I have never and will never abuse your brother.   | 6. I have never <i>abused</i> and will never abuse your brother.   |
| 7. I asked him why he walked forward in the open field like that.                                  | 7. I asked him why he <i>had walked</i> forward in the open field like that.   |
|  | <b>Note:</b> When the reporting verb is in the past tense, the past tense in the reported speech is changed into past perfect tense. |
| 8. All that is typically human was due to language.  | 8. All that is typically human <i>is</i> due to language.  |
|  | <b>Note:</b> The sentence is a case of universal truth.  |
| 9. The patient died before the doctor arrived.   | 9. The patient <i>had died</i> before the doctor arrived.  |
| 10. I have passed the M.A. examination in 1981.  | 10. I <i>passed</i> the M.A. examination in 1981.  |
| 11. Every chair and every table in the room were in order.   | 11. Every chair and every table in the room <i>was</i> in order.   |
| 12. Sushma as well as her mother were honoured by the President.                                   | 12. Sushma as well as her mother <i>was</i> honoured by the President.   |
| 13. <i>The Tale of Two Cities</i> are an interesting novel.  | 13. <i>The Tale of Two Cities</i> <i>is</i> an interesting novel.  |
|  | <b>Note:</b> <i>The Tale of Two Cities</i> is the title of a book. Hence, the verb used must be singular.                            |
| 14. You mistake in thinking that I am against you.   | 14. You <i>are mistaken</i> in thinking that I am against you.   |
| 15. Hard work and honesty are needed for success in life.  | 15. Hard work and honesty <i>is</i> needed for success in life.  |
| 16. Many a battle were fought on the soil of India   | 16. Many a battle <i>was</i> fought on the soil of India.  |
| 17. He married his daughter.   | 17. He <i>got</i> his daughter married.  |
| 18. Mohan is one of those boys who has expressed his willingness for joining the educational tour. | 18. Mohan is one of those boys who <i>have</i> expressed their willingness for joining the educational tour.                         |
| 19. The criminal will be hung in the Ambala Central Jail.  | 19. The criminal will be <i>hanged</i> in the Ambala Central Jail.   |
| 20. If I will reach late, I shall be punished.   | 20. If I reach late, I shall be punished.  |
| 21. If wishes were horses, beggars may ride.   | 21. If wishes were horses, beggars <i>would</i> ride.  |

Notes

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| <p>22. The poet and philosopher are dead.</p> <p>23. The teacher and the doctor has been honoured.</p> <p>24. I know Mr. Sharma for five years.</p> <p>25. Rita and Rekha is going to the market.</p> <p>26. Students as well as the teacher was absent.</p> <p>27. Did you wrote that letter?</p> <p>28. One of the boys were playing.</p> <p>29. The teacher told the boys that the sun and the moon were the lamps of the sky.</p> <p>30. If I am you, I would do it right away.</p> <p>31. He spoke as though he was very angry.</p> <p>32. He lived in Quetta for ten years before the earthquake occurred.</p> <p>33. Not only the mother but also the children was happy.</p> <p>34. He will kill the lion before you bring a rifle.</p> <p>35. This rumour may have spread through the town before you make efforts to check it.</p> | <p>22. The poet and the philosopher are dead.<br/>or<br/>The poet and philosopher <i>is</i> dead.<br/><b>Note:</b> Mark the following difference:<br/>(i) The poet and the philosopher – two persons.<br/>(ii) The poet and philosopher – one person.<br/>Hence, the verb will be used accordingly.</p> <p>23. The teacher and the doctor <i>have</i> been honoured.</p> <p>24. I <i>have known</i> Mr. Sharma for five years.</p> <p>25. Rita and Rekha <i>are</i> going to the market.</p> <p>26. Students as well as the teacher <i>were</i> absent.</p> <p>27. Did you <i>write</i> that letter.</p> <p>28. One of the boys <i>was</i> playing.</p> <p>29. The teacher told the boys that the sun and the moon <i>are</i> the lamps of the sky.</p> <p>30. If I <i>were</i> you, I would do it right away.</p> <p>31. He spoke as though <i>he had been</i> very angry.</p> <p>32. He <i>had lived</i> in Quetta for ten years before the earthquake occurred.</p> <p>33. Not only the mother but also the children <i>were</i> happy.</p> <p>34. He <i>will have</i> killed the lion before you bring a rifle.</p> <p>35. This rumour <i>will have spread</i> through the town before you make efforts to check it.</p> |
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(B)

Incorrect

1. Madhu was unhappy as though she (*fall*) from a high social position.
2. By the time we reach his place, he (*take*) his breakfast.
3. When I went to meet him, he (*work*) in his
4. He was so lame that he (*can*) hardly walk.
5. Nobody knew that he was (*live*) in a forest.
6. His fault was (*forgive*) by me.
7. The principal said that those who had not worked hard (*fail*).
8. She sold the cow because it (*go*) dry.
9. He always (*forget*) the good things done to him.

Correct

1. Madhu was as unhappy as though she *had fallen* from a high social position.
2. By the time we reach his place, he *will have taken* his breakfast.
3. When I went to meet him, he *was working* in his garden.
4. He was so lame that he *could hardly* walk.
5. Nobody knew that he was *living* in a forest.
6. His faults were *forgiven* by me.
7. The principal said that those who had not worked hard *had failed*.
8. She sold the cow because it *had gone* dry.
9. He always *forgets* the good things done to him.

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|--|---|-------|
| 10. When I reached her place, a man ( <i>sit</i> ) there. He had a familiar face, but I ( <i>cannot recognize</i> ) him.                                     | 10. When I reached her place, a man was <i>sitting</i> there. He had a familiar face, but I <i>could not</i> recognise him.                                     |       |
| 11. She told me his name after he ( <i>left</i> ), I, then ( <i>remember</i> ) he used to come to us at Dehradun. I asked her when he ( <i>come</i> ) again. | 11. She told me his name after he <i>had left</i> , I, then <i>remembered</i> , he used to come to us at Dehradun. I asked her when he <i>would come</i> again. |       |
| 12. Have you ever ( <i>be</i> ) to Mumbai?   | 12. Have you ever <i>been</i> to Mumbai?  |       |
| 13. There ( <i>be</i> ) a strong wind last night.  | 13. There <i>was</i> a strong wind last night.  |       |
| 14. Birds usually ( <i>build</i> ) nests in trees.   | 14. Birds usually <i>build</i> nests in trees.  |       |
| 15. I ( <i>finish</i> ) my work before Divya ( <i>call</i> ) for me.   | 15. I <i>had finished</i> my work before Divya <i>called</i> for me.  |       |
| 16. The patient ( <i>die</i> ) before the doctor ( <i>come</i> ).  | 16. The patient <i>had died</i> before the doctor <i>came</i> .   |       |
| 17. His company was ( <i>seek</i> ) after by all.  | 17. His company was <i>sought</i> after by all.   |       |
| 18. Unless you mend your habits, you ( <i>not succeed</i> ) in life.   | 18. Unless you mend your habits, you <i>will not succeed</i> in life.   |       |
| 19. He ( <i>live</i> ) in Ambala for three years.  | 19. He had <i>lived</i> in Ambala for three years.  |       |
| 20. I ( <i>wait</i> ) for you since Monday last.   | 20. I <i>have been waiting</i> for you since Monday last.   |       |
| 21. We are surprised to hear that she ( <i>pass</i> ) the B.A. examination at the age of fourteen.   | 21. We are surprised to hear that <i>she had passed</i> the B.A. examination at the age of fourteen.  |       |
| 22. If I go to Kolkata, I ( <i>bring</i> ) a watch for you.  | 22. If I go to Kolkata, I <i>will bring</i> a watch for you.  |       |
| 23. The number of boys in this class ( <i>be</i> ) very small.   | 23. The number of boys in this class <i>is</i> very small.  |       |
| 24. Of late the custom ( <i>fall</i> ) into disuse.  | 24. Of late, the custom <i>has fallen</i> into disuse.  |       |
| 25. We ( <i>eat</i> ) our dinner when he ( <i>come</i> ) to visit us.  | 25. We <i>were eating</i> dinner when he <i>came</i> to visit us.   |       |
| 26. The police already ( <i>catch</i> ) the thief.   | 26. The police <i>had</i> already <i>caught</i> the thief.  |       |
| 27. Mala told me that her brother ( <i>deal</i> ) in iron.   | 27. Mala told me that her brother <i>dealt</i> in iron.   |       |
| 28. The Ganga ( <i>rise</i> ) in the Himalayas and ( <i>fall</i> ) into the Bay of Bengal.   | 28. The Ganga rises in the Himalayas and <i>falls</i> into the Bay of Bengal.   |       |
| 29. Till last year, I ( <i>prefer</i> ) films to stage plays, Now, I ( <i>not like</i> ) films at all.   | 29. Till last year, I <i>preferred</i> films to stage plays. Now, I <i>do not like</i> films at all.  |       |
| 30. He ( <i>give</i> ) all possible help when I was a student. Now, he ( <i>not even talk</i> ) to me.   | 30. He <i>gave</i> all possible help when I was a student. Now, he <i>does not even talk</i> to me.   |       |
| 31. Had he worked hard, he ( <i>succeed</i> ).   | 31. Had he worked hard, he <i>would have succeeded</i> .  |       |
| 32. He ran there so that he ( <i>may</i> ) meet his friend.  | 32. He ran there so that he <i>might</i> meet his friend.   |       |
| 33. We heard that the inspector ( <i>pay</i> ) a visit to our school next month.   | 33. We heard that the inspector <i>would pay</i> a visit to our school next month.  |       |
| 34. I ( <i>lean</i> ) against the door and ( <i>listen</i> ) to the wireless.  | 34. I <i>leaned</i> against the door and listened to the wireless.  |       |
| 35. Had he passed the I.A.S. examination he ( <i>be</i> ) a collector today.   | 35. Had he passed the I.A.S. examination, he <i>would have been</i> a collector today.  |       |



## Notes

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|---|--|
| <p>36. Five days from today we <i>(be)</i> on the train at this time.</p> <p>37. Radha <i>(suffer)</i> from fever since yesterday.</p> <p>38. I <i>(sleep)</i> soundly and <i>(dream)</i> that a lion <i>(enter)</i> the room. I <i>(spring)</i> off the bed.</p> <p>39. So long as the rain <i>(continue)</i> I stayed at home.</p> <p>40. The children <i>(please)</i> at the prospects of going to the cinema.</p> <p>41. Had you been to Kolkata, I also <i>(go)</i>.</p> <p>42. Ravi Shankar <i>(honour)</i> by the Music Society.</p> <p>43. It <i>(rain)</i> all the year round here ?</p> <p>44. Newton discovered that the earth <i>(attracts)</i> all bodies.</p> <p>45. I <i>(knock)</i>. I do not think anybody <i>(be)</i> in.</p> <p>46. Why can't he <i>(hold)</i> guilty, if all the evidence is against him ?</p> <p>47. The children <i>(see)</i> the film since 6.30 p.m.</p> <p>48. <i>(Has)</i> the gypsies <i>(wander)</i> in the street since morning ?</p> <p>49. When you see him again, you <i>(strike)</i> by the way his health <i>(improve)</i> since he <i>(go)</i> Switzerland.</p> <p>50. If you bought a car today, it <i>(cost)</i> you a lot of money.</p> | <p>36. Five days from today, we <i>will be</i> on the train this time.</p> <p>37. Radha <i>has been</i> suffering from fever since yesterday.</p> <p>38. I <i>slept</i> soundly and <i>dreamt</i> that a lion <i>had entered</i> the room. I <i>sprang</i> off the bed.</p> <p>39. So long as the rain <i>continued</i>, I stayed at home.</p> <p>40. The children were <i>pleased</i> at the prospects of going to the cinema.</p> <p>41. Had you been to Kolkata, I <i>would have also gone</i>.</p> <p>42. Ravi Shankar <i>was honoured</i> by the Music Society.</p> <p>43. <i>Does it rain</i> all the year round here ?</p> <p>44. Newton discovered that the earth <i>attracts</i> all bodies.</p> <p>45. I <i>have knocked</i>, I do not think anybody <i>is</i> in.</p> <p>46. Why can't he <i>be held</i> guilty, if all the evidence is against him ?</p> <p>47. The children <i>will have been seeing</i> the film since 6.30 p.m.</p> <p>48. <i>Have the gypsies been wandering</i> in the street since morning ?</p> <p>49. When you see him again, you <i>will be struck</i> by the way his health <i>has improved</i> since he went to Switzerland.</p> <p>50. If you bought a car today, it <i>would cost</i> you a lot of money.</p> |
|---|--|

(C)

## Incorrect

- For a long time, I *(can)* not decide whether I should speak to her or not. I could not tell her that her father *(die)* before the doctor *(arrive)*. I *(know)* she *(start)* weeping. She *(look)* towards me with anxious eyes. She was anxious to know about her father. At last, I *(move)* my lips and told her that her father *(pass away)*.
- I *(teach)* in this college for ten years. Now, I *(be)* a popular teacher and everyone *(like)* me, but there *(be)* a time when no one liked

## Correct

- For a long time, I *could* not decide whether I should speak to her or not. I could not tell her that her father *had died* before the doctor *arrived*. I *knew* she *would start weeping*. She *looked* towards me with anxious eyes. She was anxious to know about her father. At last, I *moved* my lips and told her that her father *had passed away*.
- I *have been teaching* in this college for ten years. Now, I *am* a popular teacher and everyone *likes* me but there *was* a time

- me. I (*think*) myself to be a third rate teacher. My colleagues (*make*) fun of me. But I worked hard. I knew that hard work always (*pay*). My hard work and honest efforts ultimately (*win*) the favour of the teachers and the students and today I am the most (*admire*) teacher in the college.
3. When I (*go*) to meet him, he (*write*) a letter. I did not (*like*) to disturb him. So I (*sit*) on the ground for some time. When he (*be*) free, he greeted me and asked what he (*can*) do for me. I told him that I (*have*) so many things bottled up in me, but I (*not know*) how to express them. He (*think*) for some time. Then he raised his eyebrows and ordered me to (*take*) a pen and a bit of paper and (*start*) writing.
4. I (*work*) for Anil almost a month and, apart from (*cheat*) at the shop, had not done anything in my line of work. I (*have*) every opportunity for doing so. Anil (*give*) me a key to the door, and I (*come and go*) as I pleased. He was the most trusting person, I (*ever meet*). And that is why it was so difficult to rob him. It (*be*) easy to rob a greedy man, because he (*can*) afford to be robbed; but it (*be*) difficult to rob a careless man, sometimes, he (*not even notice*) he's been robbed.
5. When Ben (*do*) enough, other boys (*come*) along. At first they laughed at Tom, as Ben (*do*). But soon they (*whitewash*) the fence. Of course, they had to pay Tom before he let them help him. Tom (*have*) an easy time. He (*not work*) but soon the fence had three coats of whitewash on it.
- when no one liked me. I *thought* myself to be a third rate teacher. My colleagues *made* fun of me. But I worked hard. I knew that hard work always *pays*. My hard work and honest efforts ultimately *won* the favour of the teachers and the students and today, I am the most *admired* teacher in the college.
3. When I *went* to meet him, he *was writing* a letter. I did not *like* to disturb him. So, I *sat* on the ground for some time. When he *was* free, he greeted me and asked what he *could* do for me. I told him that *I had* so many things bottled up in me but I *did not know* how to express them. He *thought* for some time. Then he raised his eyebrows and ordered me to *take* a pen and a bit of paper and *start* writing.
4. I *had been working* for Anil for almost a month and apart from *cheating* at the shop, had not done anything in my line of work. I *had* every opportunity for doing so. Anil *had given* me a key to the door, and I *could come and go* as I pleased. He was the most trusting person I *had ever met*. And that is why it was so difficult to rob him. It *is* easy to rob a greedy man, because he *can* afford to be robbed: but it *is* difficult to rob a careless man, sometimes, he *may not even notice* he's been robbed.
5. When Ben *had done* enough, other boys *came* along. At first they laughed at Tom, as Ben *had done*. But soon they *were whitewashing* the fence. Of course, they had to pay Tom before he let them help him. Tom had an easy time. He *did not work*, but soon the fence had three coats of whitewash on it.

#### 4.1.5 Errors in the Use of Adverbs

##### Incorrect

1. Actions sometimes speak loudly than the words.

##### Correct

1. Actions sometimes speak *louder* than the words.

Notes

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|---|---|
| <p>2. I want to know as to why he hit the dog.</p> <p>3. Call me anything else than a fool.</p> <p>4. He behaved cowardly before the principal.</p> <p>5. Please kindly help me in my work.</p> <p>6. She ran very fastly.</p> <p>7. I care a straw for you.</p> <p>8. I am only free in the morning.</p> <p>9. Mohan is a very wise man, certainly.</p> <p>10. We entirely draw our intellectual and cultural heritage from the Mediterraneans.</p> <p>11. I never remember having met him before.</p> <p>12. Of course, you will succeed in your mission.</p> <p>13. Mr. Reddy is working very hardly on this project.</p> <p>14. Alexander Pope was a much learned man.</p> <p>15. Last night, my father returned lately.</p> <p>16. The old man lived miserly.</p> <p>17. Kamlesh is somewhat intelligent for his age.</p> <p>18. You only are responsible for my misfortunes.</p> <p>19. I am quite sorry to hear of your losses.</p> <p>20. He is named as Chander Mohan.</p> <p>21. He seldom or ever tells a lie.</p> <p>22. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is respected greatly.</p> <p>23. He was here presently.</p> | <p>2. I want to know <i>why</i> he hit the dog.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>As to</i> is an unnecessary attachment to <i>why</i>. It should not be used with <i>why</i>.</p> <p>3. Call me anything else <i>but</i> a fool.</p> <p>4. He behaved <i>in a cowardly manner</i> before the principal.</p> <p>5. <i>Kindly</i> help me in my work.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p><i>Please</i> help me in my work.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>Kindly</i> and <i>Please</i> cannot be used together. We should use either <i>kindly</i> or <i>please</i>. However, there is a difference in the use of the two.</p> <p>(a) When we talk to our seniors or superiors, we use <i>kindly</i>.</p> <p>(b) When we talk to our <i>equals</i> or <i>juniors</i>, we use <i>please</i>.</p> <p>6. She ran very <i>fast</i>.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>Fastly</i> is a slang usage.</p> <p>7. I <i>do not</i> care a straw for you.</p> <p>8. I am free <i>only</i> in the morning.</p> <p>9. Mohan is <i>certainly</i> a very wise man.</p> <p>10. We draw our intellectual and cultural heritage <i>entirely</i> from the Mediterraneans.</p> <p>11. I <i>do not</i> remember having met him before.</p> <p>12. You will <i>certainly</i> succeed in your mission.</p> <p>13. Mr. Reddy is working very <i>hard</i> on this project.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Mark the following difference:</p> <p>(a) Working hard – Working dedicatedly.</p> <p>(b) Hardly working – Not working at all.</p> <p>14. Alexander Pope was a <i>very</i> (or highly) learned man.</p> <p>15. Last night, my father returned <i>late</i>.</p> <p>16. The old man lived in a <i>miserly way</i>.</p> <p>17. Kamlesh is somewhat <i>more</i> intelligent for his age.</p> <p>18. <i>Only</i> you are responsible for my misfortunes.</p> <p>19. I am <i>very</i> sorry to <i>hear</i> of your losses.</p> <p>20. He is named Chander Mohan.</p> <p>21. He seldom or <i>never</i> tells a lie.</p> <p>22. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is <i>greatly</i> respected.</p> <p>23. He was here <i>just now</i>.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>Presently</i> is used with future tense.</p> |
|---|---|

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|---|---|--------------|
| 24. I shall present the book just now.  | 24. I shall present the book <i>presently</i> .   | <b>Notes</b> |
| 25. I shall be much thankful to you if you convey my message to my father.    | 25. I shall be <i>very</i> thankful to you if you convey my message to my father.   |              |
| 26. I am very disturbed to hear that his services have been terminated.       | 26. I am <i>much</i> disturbed to hear that his services have been terminated.  |              |
| 27. The patient is comparatively better today.                                | 27. The patient is comparatively <i>well</i> today.<br>or<br>The patient is <i>rather better</i> today.   |              |
| 28. He was fortunately not hurt.  | 28. <i>Fortunately</i> , he was not hurt.   |              |
| 29. He carefully does his work.   | 29. He does his work <i>carefully</i> .   |              |
| 30. We overpowered the culprit at length.                                     | 30. <i>At length</i> , we over-powered the culprit.   |              |
| 31. He is very fat that he cannot walk fast.                                  | 31. He is <i>so</i> fat that he cannot walk fast.   |              |
| 32. This is the same shirt which I bought yesterday.                          | 32. This is the same shirt I bought yesterday.  |              |
| 33. I scarcely go to the pictures.  | 33. I <i>rarely</i> go to the pictures.   |              |
| 34. I have not heard from my son for long.                                    | 34. I have not heard from my son <i>since</i> long.   |              |
| 35. Firstly, he insulted me; secondly, he asked me to leave his room at once. | 35. <i>First</i> he insulted me; <i>then</i> he asked me to leave his room at once.   |              |
| 36. She is too beautiful.   | 36. She is <i>very</i> beautiful.   |              |
| 37. I am too glad to see you looking so well.                                 | 37. I am <i>very</i> glad to see you looking so well.<br><b>Explanation :</b> The use of <i>too</i> – <i>to</i> in a sentence always conveys a negative sense. <i>Too</i> means <i>more than enough</i> . So, we have used <i>very</i> in place of <i>too</i> . |              |
| 38. I am very interested in the deal.   | 38. I am <i>much</i> interested in the deal.  |              |
| 39. This story is much amusing.   | 39. This story is <i>very</i> amusing.  |              |
| 40. The patient is very better today.   | 40. The patient is <i>much</i> better today.  |              |

#### 4.1.6 Errors in the Use of Prepositions

##### Incorrect

- When he parted with his sister, there were tears in his eyes.
- The teacher ordered me to write with ink.
- The Hindu religion has been in existence since time immemorial.
- The lion sprang on the cow.
- Police are not allowed to enter into the University Campus.
- Translate this passage from Urdu to Sanskrit.

##### Correct

- When he parted *from* his sister, there were tears in his eyes.  
**Note:** *Part from* means *separate from*.
- The teacher ordered me to write *in* ink.
- The Hindu religion has been in existence *from* time immemorial.  
**Explanation:** *Since* is used to express a *point of time*, whereas *for* is used to express a *length of time*. But a time that is *immemorial* can express neither a point of time nor a length of time. In all such cases, we should use *from* as preposition.
- The lion sprang *upon* the cow.
- Police are not allowed to enter the University Campus.
- Translate this passage from Urdu *into* Sanskrit.

## Notes

7. The house should be disposed off in the manner indicated below.
8. I found him leaning on the chair.
9. Last year, my friend lived in Sonepat for six months.
10. It had a small kitchen garden on the back.
11. His house is very different and very superior to your house.
12. Sheela resembles with her mother.
13. None except the brave deserve the fair.
14. It has been raining cats and dogs from Monday last.
15. These days, I am busy in writing a book of grammar.
16. He married with a poor girl.
17. Can a miser part from his wealth?
18. I told him on his face that he could not pass.
19. The students had a tussle on the words.
20. She is a memory of the past running in the present.
21. The frustrated lover jumped in the river.
22. A person who is filled by wonder, opens his eyes very wide.
23. Please open your book on page twenty.
24. Is not a pen to write?
25. Lady Drakemanton ordered for dinner.
26. I have learnt this lesson word by word.
27. I have been waiting for you since the last three days.
28. I enquired from him if he could convey my message to my father.
29. It is half past ten in my watch.
30. Some bandits deprived him from his belongings.
31. I saw him sitting besides the minister.
7. The house should be disposed *of* in the manner indicated below.
8. I found him leaning *over* the chair.
9. Last year, my friend lived *at* Sonepat for six months.
- Note:** live in – a big city  
Live at – a small town or village.
10. It had a small kitchen garden *at* the back.
11. His house is very different *from* and very superior to your house.
12. Sheela resembles her mother.
- Note:** No preposition is used with *resemble*.
13. None *but* the brave deserve the fair.
- Note:** As preposition, *but* means *except*.
14. It has been raining cats and dogs *since* Monday last.
15. These days, I am busy in writing a book *on* grammar.
16. He married a poor girl.
17. Can a miser part *with* his wealth?
18. I told him *at* his face that he could not pass.
19. The students had a tussle *over* the words.
20. She is a memory of the past running *into* the present.
21. The frustrated lover jumped *into* the river.
22. A person who is filled *with* wonder, opens his eyes very wide.
23. Please open your book *at* page twenty.
24. Is not a pen to write *with*?
25. Lady Drakemanton ordered dinner.
26. I have learned this lesson word *for* word.
27. I have been waiting for you *for* the last three days.
28. I enquired *of* him if he could convey my message to my father.
29. It is half past ten *by* my watch.
30. Some bandits deprived him *of* his belongings.
31. I saw him sitting *beside* the minister.

|  | <b>Note:</b> Please mark the difference:  | <b>Notes</b> |
|--|---|--------------|
|  | (a) Beside – by the side of; near   |              |
|  | (b) Besides – in addition to  |              |
| 32. China is in the north of India.  | 32. China is <i>to</i> the north of India.  |              |
| 33. A deputation waited for the Prime Minister.  | 33. A deputation waited <i>on</i> the Prime Minister.   |              |
|  | <b>Note:</b> wait on – to attend (to go to meet)  |              |
| 34. The tired traveller was sitting under the shade of the tree.   | 34. The tired traveller was sitting <i>in</i> the shade of the tree.  |              |
| 35. Our examination begins from Monday.  | 35. Our examination begins <i>on</i> Monday.  |              |
| 36. There is no exception of this rule.  | 36. There is no exception <i>to</i> this rule.  |              |
| 37. Mountain tops are covered from snow in winter.   | 37. Mountain tops are covered <i>with</i> snow in winter.   |              |
| 38. All this discussion is beside the point.   | 38. All this discussion is <i>besides</i> the point.  |              |
| 39. Burfi is made of khoya.  | 39. Burfi is made <i>from</i> khoya.  |              |
| 40. The pick-pocket mixed among the crowd which was coming from the station.                             | 40. The pick-pocket mixed <i>with</i> the crowd which was coming from the station.                              |              |
| 41. Sachin was admitted in the tenth class.  | 41. Sachin was admitted <i>to</i> the tenth class.  |              |
| 42. Our friends have not been here for long.   | 42. Our friends have not been here <i>since</i> long.   |              |
| 43. Cigarette smoking is injurious for health.   | 43. Cigarette smoking is injurious <i>to</i> health.  |              |
| 44. His genius borders with lunacy.  | 44. His genius borders <i>on</i> lunacy.  |              |
| 45. Ashoka ruled on a vast empire.   | 45. Ashoka ruled <i>over</i> a vast empire.   |              |
| 46. Content yourself with what you have and do not strive about the impossible.                          | 46. Content yourself with what you have and do not strive <i>for</i> the impossible.                            |              |
| 47. The book fell on the table.  | 47. The book fell <i>upon</i> the table.  |              |
| 48. The political Pundits have jumped at the conclusion that the future of democracy in India is bright. | 48. The political Pundits have jumped <i>to</i> the conclusion that the future of democracy in India is bright. |              |
| 49. Being an ordinary shopkeeper, he has no taste in music.  | 49. Being an ordinary shopkeeper, he has no <i>for</i> music.   |              |
| 50. Francis Bacon, the father of English Essay, had a thirst in knowledge.                               | 50. Francis Bacon – the father of English Essay, had a thirst <i>for</i> knowledge.                             |              |

#### 4.1.7 Errors in the Use of Conjunctions

| <b>Incorrect</b>  | <b>Correct</b>  |
|---|---|
| 1. As you are my younger brother so I shall take care of you. | 1. I shall take care of you <i>because</i> you are my younger brother.    |
| 2. He had hardly seen me, so he came to me running.           | 2. He had <i>hardly</i> seen me <i>when</i> he came running to me.        |
|   | <b>Note:</b> <i>Hardly</i> in such sentences is followed by <i>when</i> . |
| 3. I will die some day since all men are mortal.              | 3. I will die some day <i>as</i> all men are mortal.                      |

## Notes

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>4. No sooner did we reach the stadium, it started raining cats and dogs.</p> <p>5. Manobi was not in a good mood, therefore, I did not talk to her.</p> <p>6. Because he is intelligent, therefore, everybody likes him.</p> <p>7. I was reading the newspaper, at that time Sachin came to me.</p> <p>8. Both Mili as well as Meena are beautiful.</p> | <p>4. <i>No sooner</i> did we reach the stadium <i>than</i> it started raining cats and dogs.</p> <p>5. Manobi was not in a good mood, <i>so</i> I did not talk to her.</p> <p>6. Everybody likes him <i>because</i> he is intelligent.</p> <p>7. I was reading the newspaper <i>when</i> Sachin came to me.</p> <p>8. Both Mili <i>and</i> Meena are beautiful.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>Mili <i>as well as</i> Meena <i>is</i> beautiful.</p> |
| <p>9. Two weeks have passed since I have seen him.</p> <p>10. I took the medicine that I might get well.</p> <p>11. Supposing if he misses the train, will he come back?</p>   | <p>9. Two weeks have passed <i>since</i> I saw him.</p> <p>10. I took the medicine <i>so</i> that I might get well.</p> <p>11. Supposing he misses the train, will he come back?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>If he misses the train, will he come back?</p> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>Supposing</i> and <i>if</i> carry the same meaning.</p> <p>Hence, they cannot be used together in the same sentence.</p>  |
| <p>12. Both Madhu and Sudha did not attend school yesterday.</p> <p>13. She is equally honest as her sister.</p>   | <p>12. <i>Neither</i> Madhu <i>nor</i> Sudha attended school yesterday.</p> <p>13. She is <i>as</i> honest <i>as</i> her sister.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>Equally honest as</i> is slang. The correct use is <i>as honest as</i>.</p>   |
| <p>14. He is neither happy with his relative nor he is happy with his friends.</p> <p>15. All is not right that is expedient.</p> <p>16. He took another path from the one I showed him.</p> <p>17. Moving on the grass I saw a snake.</p> <p>18. As soon as the bell rang, then the students rushed out of their classes.</p>                             | <p>14. He is happy <i>neither</i> with his relatives <i>nor</i> with his friends.</p> <p>15. All that is expedient is not right.</p> <p>16. He took a <i>different</i> path from the one I showed him.</p> <p>17. <i>While</i> moving on the grass, I saw a snake.</p> <p>18. <i>As soon as</i> the bell rang, the students rushed out of their classes.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>As soon as</i> is never followed by <i>then</i>.</p>                                |
| <p>19. The choice is between glorious death or shameful life.</p> <p>20. This book is as good, if not better than that.</p>  | <p>19. The choice is between glorious death <i>and</i> shameful life.</p> <p>20. This book is <i>as good as</i>, if not better than that.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The first part of the sentence is incomplete. <i>As good</i> does not make any sense. The correct use is <i>as good as</i>.</p>   |
| <p>21. Although she is foolish, but people like her.</p>   | <p>21. <i>Although</i> she is foolish <i>yet</i> people like her.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>Although</i> is never followed by <i>but</i>. It is always followed by <i>yet</i>.</p>   |

- |  |   | Notes |
|--|---|-------|
| 22. The accident took place as the train was crossing a bridge.                      | 22. The accident took place <i>when</i> the train was crossing a bridge.<br><b>Explanation:</b> <i>As</i> means <i>because</i> . On the other hand, <i>when</i> shows a time. The accident took place <i>when</i> (means, at a certain time) the train was crossing a bridge and <i>not because</i> it was crossing the bridge.                               |       |
| 23. May you pass or not, I don't care.   | 23. <i>Should</i> you pass or not, I don't care.  |       |
| 24. Any fast he may run, he cannot catch the train.                                  | 24. <i>How</i> fast he may run, he cannot catch the train.  |       |
| 25. Work hard lest you may not fail.   | 25. Work hard lest you <i>should</i> fail.<br><b>Note:</b> Mark the following two things about the use of <i>lest</i> .<br>(a) <i>Lest</i> is always followed by <i>should</i> . It is never followed by <i>may</i> .<br>(b) <i>Lest</i> carries a negative sense. Therefore, <i>not</i> cannot be used with <i>lest</i> .                                    |       |
| 26. Scarcely he had entered the room, I recognised him.                              | 26. Scarcely <i>had</i> he entered the room <i>when</i> I recognised him.   |       |
| 27. He is more intelligent but not so hard working as his elder brother.             | 27. He is more intelligent <i>than</i> but not so hard working as his elder brother.  |       |
| 28. Unless you do not pay attention to what I say, you will not succeed.             | 28. <i>Unless</i> you pay attention to what I say, you will not succeed.<br><b>Explanation:</b> <i>Unless</i> carries a negative sense. So, <i>do not</i> cannot be used with it.   |       |
| 29. The teacher asked John why he was late.  | 29. The teacher asked John why he was late.<br><b>Note:</b> In a reported speech, <i>that</i> cannot be used before <i>who</i> , <i>whose</i> , <i>whom</i> , <i>when</i> , <i>where</i> , <i>what</i> , <i>why</i> and <i>how</i> .  |       |
| 30. It is not certain if he will come.   | 30. It is not certain <i>that</i> he will come.   |       |
| 31. No other country but India has spoken against the racist regime of South Africa. | 31. No other country <i>than</i> India has spoken against the racist regime of South Africa.  |       |
| 32. He behaves as if he is mad.  | 32. He behaves as if he <i>were</i> mad.  |       |
| 33. I have neither seen him nor his brother.   | 33. I have seen neither him nor his brother.  |       |
| 34. Lions are both found in Asia and Africa.   | 34. Lions are found both in Asia and Africa.  |       |
| 35. Do you know that where he lives?   | 35. Do you know where he lives?   |       |
| 36. He did not speak loudly and clearly.   | 36. He did not speak loudly <i>or</i> clearly.<br><b>Note:</b> If a negative word is used in sentence, the conjunction <i>or</i> must be used instead of <i>and</i> . But if clauses having different subjects are joined, the conjunction <i>and</i> is used.<br><b>Mark the following examples:</b><br>She did not come, <i>and</i> I did not feel at rest. |       |
| 37. He either is a fool or a scoundrel.  | 37. He is either a fool or a scoundrel.   |       |
| 38. My pen is superior and more expensive than yours.                                | 38. My pen is superior <i>to</i> and more expensive than yours.   |       |



## Notes

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|---|---|
| <p>39. The world lasts, the earth will go round the sun.</p> <p>40. When my father says so, I must believe it.</p> <p>41. Not only he is honest but sincere.</p> <p>42. This is the reason our hockey team suffers a defeat.</p> <p>43. It is really surprising that he did not behave like he should have behaved.</p> <p>44. He is such a person that no one can hate him.</p> <p>45. The little boy was lazy and careless.</p> | <p>39. <i>As long as</i> the world lasts, the earth will go round the sun.</p> <p>40. <i>If</i> my father says so, I must believe it.</p> <p>41. He is <i>not only</i> honest <i>but also</i> sincere.</p> <p>42. This is the reason <i>why</i> our hockey team suffers a defeat.</p> <p>43. It is really surprising that he did not behave <i>as</i> he should have.</p> <p>44. He is such a person <i>as</i> no one can hate him.</p> <p>45. The little boy was lazy and careless <i>too</i>.</p> |
|---|---|

## 4.1.8 Errors in the Use of Tenses

## Incorrect

1. I am taking exercise everyday.
2. I have read this news yesterday.
3. He has seen you in the party last night.
4. I am learning English grammar for many days.
5. The earth move round the sun.
6. We shall not go out if it will rain.
7. I had taught him three lessons.
8. I did my work when he came.
9. Here are your shoes. I just polished them.
10. I am studying in Delhi Public School since last year.
11. He know his faults.
12. If you would have come to me, I would have helped you.
13. If you will obey your superiors, you will not come to grief.
14. He get up early in the morning.
15. When she was at Lucknow, she had broken one plate everyday.
16. Is your failure known to all?
17. When I reached home, my father already came.
18. He said that he will not attend the function.
19. He is taking a bath everyday.
20. We are helping the poor for four years.

## Correct

1. I *take* exercise everyday.
2. I *read* this news yesterday.
3. He *saw* you in the party last night.
4. I *have been* learning English grammar for many days.
5. The earth *moves* round the sun.
6. We shall not go out if it *rains*.
7. I *taught* him three lessons.
8. I *had done* my work when he came.
9. Here are your shoes, I *have* just polished them.
10. I *have been studying* in Delhi Public School since last year.
11. He *knows* his faults.
12. If you *had come* to me, I would have helped you.
13. If you *obey* your superiors, you will not come to grief.
14. He *gets* up early in the morning.
15. When she was at Lucknow, she *would break* one plate everyday.
16. *Are* your failures known to all?
17. When I reached home, my father *had* already came.
18. He said that he *would not* attend the function.
19. He *takes* a bath everyday.
20. We *have been* helping the poor for four years.

|   |   | Notes |
|---|---|-------|
| 21. My mother cut the vegetables everyday.                            | 21. My mother <i>cuts</i> the vegetables everyday.                      |       |
| 22. This news was telecasted on Zee News.                             | 22. This news was <i>telecast</i> on Zee News.                          |       |
| 23. He quitted this place last year.                                  | 23. He <i>quit</i> this place last year.                                |       |
| 24. The peon rang the bell before I reached school.                   | 24. The peon <i>had rung</i> the bell before I reached school.          |       |
| 25. I am knowing him.   | 25. I <i>know</i> him.  |       |
| 26. She is learning music for three months.                           | 26. She <i>has been</i> learning music for three months.                |       |
| 27. The believes in honesty.  | 27. They <i>believe</i> in honesty.                                     |       |
| 28. When the telephone bell rang, I took bath.                        | 28. When the telephone bell rang, I <i>was taking</i> bath.             |       |
| 29. If my boss would have helped me, I would have been saved.         | 29. If my boss <i>had</i> helped me, I would have been saved.           |       |
| 30. He told that he can solve all the sums.                           | 30. He told that he <i>could</i> solve all the sums.                    |       |
| 31. My father was visiting the church everyday when he was in London. | 31. My father <i>visited</i> the church everyday when he was in London. |       |
| 32. She plays table tennis since morning.                             | 32. She <i>has been playing</i> table tennis since morning.             |       |
| 33. It usually rain in Delhi in July but it is raining now.           | 33. It usually <i>rains</i> in Delhi in July but it is raining now.     |       |
| 34. Our teacher taught us that the earth moved round the sun.         | 34. Our teacher taught us that the earth <i>moves</i> round the sun.    |       |
| 35. His behaviour annoy me.   | 35. His behaviour <i>annoys</i> me.                                     |       |
| 36. Honesty and hard work certainly brings happiness.                 | 36. Honesty and hard work certainly <i>bring</i> happiness.             |       |
| 37. The boys are making a noise since morning.                        | 37. The boys <i>have been</i> making a noise since morning.             |       |
| 38. If you will meet him now, he may advise you.                      | 38. If you <i>meet</i> him now, he may advise you.                      |       |
| 39. The sun has rose.   | 39. The sun has <i>risen</i> .  |       |
| 40. His sufferings were all born with great patience.                 | 40. His sufferings were all <i>borne</i> with great patience.           |       |
| 41. He is born on April 22, 1935.                                     | 41. He was <i>born</i> on April 22, 1935.                               |       |
| 42. He lain the book on the table.                                    | 42. He <i>laid</i> the book on the table.                               |       |
| 43. The soldier laid dead on the ground.                              | 43. The soldier <i>lay</i> dead on the ground.                          |       |
| 44. He has laid awake in bed for hours.                               | 44. He has <i>lain</i> awake in bed for hours.                          |       |
| 45. Has the bell rang?  | 45. Has the bell <i>rung</i> ?  |       |
| 46. I rung him on the telephone.                                      | 46. I <i>rang</i> him on telephone.                                     |       |
| 47. I stroke him on the head.   | 47. I <i>struck</i> him on the head.                                    |       |
| 48. The birds flown away when the ground was froze.                   | 48. The birds <i>flew</i> away when the ground <i>was frozen</i> .      |       |
| 49. Have you sowed the seed?  | 49. Have you <i>sown</i> the seed?                                      |       |
| 50. We have lose all we had.  | 50. We have <i>lost</i> all we had.                                     |       |

## 4.1.9 Errors in the Use of Modals

| Incorrect  | Correct   |
|--|---|
| 1. He should not hurry; there is plenty of time.                   | 1. He <i>need</i> not hurry; there is plenty of time.                     |
| 2. The case is serious; you should consult a good doctor.          | 2. The case is serious, you <i>ought to</i> consult a good doctor.        |
| 3. When I was young, I had worked for twelve hours.                | 3. When I was young, I <i>used to</i> work for twelve hours.              |
| 4. Should you care for a glass of milk?                            | 4. <i>Would</i> you care for a glass of milk?                             |
| 5. You should not go to college today. The teachers are on strike. | 5. You <i>need not</i> go to college today. The teachers are on strike.   |
| 6. I went to him so that I should warn him of the coming danger.   | 6. I went to him so that I <i>might</i> warn him of the coming danger.    |
| 7. We eat so that we should live.                                  | 7. We eat so that we <i>may</i> live.                                     |
| 8. One must serve one's country.                                   | 8. One <i>ought to</i> serve one's country.                               |
| 9. You may not go there personally; just send someone.             | 9. You <i>needn't</i> go there personally; just send someone.             |
| 10. Can I borrow your pen?   | 10. <i>May</i> I borrow your pen?   |
| 11. He ran fast so that he could catch the bus.                    | 11. He ran fast so that he <i>might</i> catch the bus.                    |
| 12. My boy, you must not have spoken this.                         | 12. My boy, you <i>should</i> not have spoken this.                       |
| 13. I cannot accept your challenge; you are too strong.            | 13. I <i>dare not</i> accept your challenge; you are too strong.          |
| 14. A doctor should do everything possible to save a patient.      | 14. A doctor <i>ought to</i> do everything possible to save a patient.    |
| 15. Had he worked hard, he might have passed.                      | 15. Had he worked hard, he <i>would have</i> passed.                      |
| 16. With the help of a dictionary, you may learn new words easily. | 16. With the help of a dictionary, you <i>can</i> learn new words easily. |
| 17. I was afraid that if I asked him again he could refuse it.     | 17. I was afraid that if I asked him again, he <i>might</i> refuse it.    |
| 18. He was working hard so that he should get good marks.          | 18. He was working hard, so that he <i>might</i> get good marks.          |
| 19. When would you accompany me to Kolkata?                        | 19. When <i>will</i> you accompany me to Kolkata?                         |
| 20. He played with me when he was a boy.                           | 20. He <i>used to</i> play with me when he was a boy.                     |

## 4.1.10 Errors in the Use of Shall and Will

| Incorrect   | Correct   |
|---|---|
| 1. I am sorry, I will not be able to reach there in time. | 1. I am sorry, I <i>shall</i> not be able to reach there in time. |
| 2. You shall know the result tomorrow.                    | 2. You <i>will</i> know the result tomorrow.                      |
| 3. I will forgive him if he will tell me the truth.       | 3. I <i>shall</i> forgive him if he tells me the truth.           |

|  |  | Notes |
|--|--|-------|
| 4. If you do not work hard, you will fail.                               | 4. If you do not work hard, you <i>shall</i> fail.                               |       |
| 5. I will be drowned and nobody shall save me.                           | 5. I <i>shall</i> be drowned and nobody will save me.                            |       |
| 6. If you do not change your habits, you will be dismissed from service. | 6. If you do not change your habits, you <i>shall</i> be dismissed from service. |       |
| 7. Unless you speak the truth, I shall not pardon you.                   | 7. Unless you speak the truth, I <i>will not</i> pardon you.                     |       |
| 8. We will see the Taj during the coming holidays.                       | 8. We <i>shall</i> see the Taj during the coming holidays.                       |       |
| 9. I will be thankful to you for your kindness.                          | 9. I <i>shall</i> be thankful to you for your kindness.                          |       |
| 10. "Tomorrow will be a function," said Ramesh to me.                    | 10. "Tomorrow <i>shall</i> be a function," said Ramesh to me.                    |       |
| 11. Shall he appear in the examination this year?                        | 11. <i>Will</i> he appear in the examination this year?                          |       |
| 12. As soon as the chief guest will reach here, all of you will stand.   | 12. As soon as the chief guest <i>reaches</i> here, all of you shall stand.      |       |
| 13. Our teacher shall be on leave tomorrow.                              | 13. Our teacher <i>will</i> be on leave tomorrow.                                |       |
| 14. We shall certainly catch the bus.                                    | 14. We <i>will</i> certainly catch the bus.                                      |       |
| 15. We shall never deceive you.  | 15. We <i>will</i> never deceive you.  |       |

#### 4.1.11 Errors in the Use of the Articles

| Incorrect  | Correct  |
|--|--|
| 1. My elder brother is a M.A. whereas I am only a B.A.   | 1. My elder brother is <i>an</i> M.A. whereas I am only a B.A.   |
| 2. USA is richest country of the world.  | 2. <i>The</i> USA is <i>the</i> richest country of the world.  |
| 3. What kind of the man is he?   | 3. What kind of <i>a</i> man is he?  |
| 4. This is a news to me.   | 4. This is news to me.   |
| 5. <i>Ramayana</i> is read and held in high esteem not only in India but also in USA and USSR. | 5. <i>The Ramayana</i> is read and held in high esteem not only in India but also in <i>the</i> USA and <i>the</i> USSR. |
| 6. Ganga is one of longest rivers of the world.  | 6. <i>The</i> Ganga is one of <i>the</i> longest rivers of the world.  |
| 7. None but brave deserves the fair.   | 7. None but <i>the</i> brave deserves the fair.  |
| 8. He is an European but his wife is a Indian.   | 8. He is <i>a</i> European but his wife is <i>an</i> Indian.   |
| 9. He recited the poem in an honour of the Prime Minister.                                     | 9. He recited <i>a</i> poem in <i>the</i> honour of the Prime Minister.  |
| 10. Than man is mortal.  | 10. Man is mortal.   |
| 11. That the honesty is a best policy is known to the honest person.                           | 11. That honesty is <i>the</i> best policy is known to <i>an</i> honest person.  |
| 12. Our principal is the man of principle.   | 12. Our Principal is <i>a</i> man of principle.  |
| 13. Shakespeare is Kalidas of England.   | 13. Shakespeare is <i>the</i> Kalidas of England.  |
| 14. Delhi is a paris of India.   | 14. Delhi is <i>the</i> Paris of India.  |
| 15. He is a Raj Kapoor of our class.   | 15. He is <i>the</i> Raj Kapoor of our class.  |

## Notes

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 16. Higher we go, cooler it is.  | 16. <i>The higher we go, the cooler it is.</i>   |
| 17. <i>Times of India</i> , published from Delhi, is the perfect newspaper.        | 17. <i>The Times of India</i> , published from New Delhi, is the perfect newspaper.  |
| 18. Punjab is land of braves.  | 18. <i>The Punjab is a land of the brave.</i>  |
| 19. Dickens is famous as novelist and essayist.                                    | 19. Dickens is famous as a novelist and <i>an</i> essayist.  |
| 20. Hindu culture assigns highest position to Pundit.                              | 20. <i>The</i> Hindu culture assigns <i>the</i> highest position to <i>the</i> Pundit.   |
| 21. He is a greater statesmen then administrator.                                  | 21. He is a greater statesman than <i>an</i> administrator.  |
| 22. Wheat of Punjab is sent to other States of India.                              | 22. <i>The</i> wheat of <i>the</i> Punjab is sent to sent to other States of India.  |
| 23. Gold of South Africa is exported to many countries.                            | 23. <i>The</i> gold of South Afica is exported to many countries.  |
| 24. The breakfast should be light, but the breakfast I had this morning was heavy. | 24. Breakfast should be light, but the breakfast I had this morning was heavy.   |
| 25. One can see heaven and the hell only in religious books.                       | 25. One can see heaven and hell only in <i>the</i> religious books.  |
| 26. The honesty is one of the choicest gifts.                                      | 26. Honesty is one of the choicest gifts.  |
| 27. The summer is a hot season but summer of last year was very hot.               | 27. Summer is a hot season, but <i>the</i> summer of last year was very hot.   |
| 28. Mr. Ghosh is a honour to the teaching profession.                              | 28. Mr. Ghosh is <i>an</i> honour to the teaching profession.  |
| 29. I attend the college everyday.   | 29. I attend college everyday.<br><b>Note:</b> Please mark the following points:<br>(a) <i>To attend college</i> —To attend college regularly for study purpose.<br>(b) <i>To attend the college</i> —To attend the college off and on for a purpose other than studies. |
| 30. The English is the language of English.  | 30. English is the language of <i>the</i> English.   |
| 31. Almighty will help us in our work.   | 31. <i>The</i> Almighty will help us in our work.  |
| 32. Hindus and Muslims live in perfect harmony in India.                           | 32. <i>The</i> Hindus and the Muslims live in perfect harmony in India.  |
| 33. Cow is a domestic animal.  | 33. <i>The</i> cow is a domestic animal.   |
| 34. He is ablest man of the town.  | 34. He is <i>the</i> ablest man of the town.   |
| 35. Taj Mahal of Agra is a wonderful creation of the man.                          | 35. <i>The</i> Taj Mahal of Agra is a wonderful creation of man.   |
| 36. Sun is a source of all life on the earth.                                      | 36. <i>The</i> sun is <i>the</i> source of all life on the earth.  |
| 37. Should we look down upon poor?   | 37. Should we look down upon <i>the</i> poor?  |
| 38. This cost me hundred rupees.   | 38. This cost me <i>a</i> hundred rupees.  |
| 39. The gold is a precious metal.  | 39. Gold is a precious metal.  |
| 40. Man you saw here yesterday is uncle of mine.                                   | 40. <i>The</i> man you saw here yesterday is <i>an</i> uncle of mine.  |

- |  |   |       |
|--|---|-------|
| 41. He died on first of July, 1980.              | 41. He died on <i>the</i> first of July, 1980.            | Notes |
| 42. Make him stand by ear.                       | 42. Make him stand by <i>the</i> ear.                     |       |
| 43. I have lost a watch that my brother gave me. | 43. I have lost <i>the</i> watch that my brother gave me. |       |
| 44. In this way, the game came to end.           | 44. In this way, the game came to <i>an</i> end.          |       |
| 45. The tea is the popular drink.                | 45. Tea is <i>a</i> popular drink.                        |       |

#### 4.1.12 Errors Committed in Everday Conversation

- | Incorrect  | Correct   |
|--|---|
| 1. Mr. Bhatia is my <i>English Teacher</i> .             | 1. Mr. Bhatia is my <i>teacher of English</i> .             |
| 2. I forgave him <i>for</i> his faults.                  | 2. I forgave him his faults.                                |
| 3. My elder brother is in the <i>teaching line</i> .     | 3. My elder brother is in the <i>teaching profession</i> .  |
| 4. I have read <i>four-fifth</i> of this book.           | 4. I have read <i>four-fifths</i> of this book.             |
| 5. Our teacher will <i>take our</i> test tomorrow.       | 5. Our teacher will <i>give us</i> a test tomorrow.         |
| 6. Chiranjiv is my <i>cousin brother</i> .               | 6. Chiranjiv is my <i>cousin</i> .                          |
| 7. Credit this sum to <i>my name</i> .                   | 7. Credit this sum to <i>my account</i> .                   |
| 8. All <i>his family members</i> are mad.                | 8. All <i>members of his family</i> are mad.                |
| 9. He is very <i>miser</i> .                             | 9. He is very <i>miserly</i> .                              |
| 10. <i>My all friends</i> are very helpful.              | 10. <i>All my friends</i> are very helpful.                 |
| 11. She does not <i>know swimming</i> .                  | 11. She does not <i>know how to swim</i> .                  |
| 12. My uncle lives at <i>Janpath Road</i> .              | 12. My uncle lives at <i>Janpath</i> .                      |
| 13. Our examination starts <i>form</i> Monday next.      | 13. Our examination starts <i>on</i> Monday next.           |
| 14. I shall return this book <i>after</i> one week.      | 14. I shall return this book <i>in</i> one week.            |
| 15. Thousands were <i>injured</i> in the war.            | 15. Thousands were <i>wounded</i> in the war.               |
| 16. He has grown into a <i>beautiful youth</i> .         | 16. He has grown into a <i>handsome youth</i> .             |
| 17. He is a <i>family man</i> .                          | 17. He is a <i>man with a family</i> .                      |
| 18. There is no <i>other alternative</i> .               | 18. There is no <i>alternative</i> .                        |
| 19. This is <i>more better</i> .                         | 19. This is <i>better</i> .                                 |
| 20. What is the <i>cost</i> of this pen?                 | 20. What is the <i>price</i> of the pen?                    |
| 21. Translate this passage from English to Hindi.        | 21. Translate this passage from English <i>into</i> Hindi.  |
| 22. I have learnt this lesson word <i>by</i> word.       | 22. I have learnt this lesson word <i>for</i> word.         |
| 23. One must do <i>his</i> duty.                         | 23. One must do <i>one's</i> duty.                          |
| 24. He made a <i>blunder mistake</i> .                   | 24. He made a <i>blunder</i> .                              |
| 25. I am going <i>to cut my hair</i> .                   | 25. I am going <i>to have my hair cut</i> .                 |
| 26. My watch is two minutes <i>behind</i> .              | 26. My watch is two minutes <i>slow</i> .                   |
| 27. I asked him <i>that why</i> he was late.             | 27. I asked him <i>why</i> he was late.                     |
| 28. He pays more attention to Hindi <i>than</i> English. | 28. He pays more attention to Hindi <i>than to</i> English. |
| 29. It is a <i>female</i> compartment.                   | 29. It is a <i>ladies'</i> compartment.                     |
| 30. Open your book <i>on</i> page ten.                   | 30. Open your book <i>at</i> page ten.                      |

## Notes

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 31. <i>Close</i> the door at once.                                     | 31. <i>Shut</i> the door at once.   |
| 32. <i>Verbal</i> orders will not be obeyed.                           | 32. <i>Oral</i> orders will not be obeyed.                                |
| 33. He has gone <i>to foreign</i> .                                    | 33. He has gone <i>abroad</i> .   |
| 34. <i>Burn</i> the lamp at once.                                      | 34. <i>Light</i> the lamp at once.  |
| 35. He <i>married</i> his daughter.                                    | 35. He <i>got his daughter married</i> .                                  |
| 36. Sachin has <i>made</i> ten goals.                                  | 36. Sachin has <i>scored</i> ten goals.                                   |
| 37. Madhu is very <i>proudy</i> .                                      | 37. Madhu is very <i>proud</i> .  |
| 38. He <i>admitted</i> that he had committed the murder.               | 38. He <i>confessed</i> that he had committed the murder.                 |
| 39. He lives in the <i>boarding</i> .                                  | 39. He lives in the <i>boarding house</i> .                               |
| 40. A dictator generally <i>misuses</i> his political powers.          | 40. A dictator generally <i>abuses</i> his political powers.              |
| 41. Sachin and <i>myself</i> helped you.                               | 41. Sachin and <i>I</i> helped you.                                       |
| 42. This is the house <i>whose roof</i> leaks.                         | 42. This is the house, <i>the roof of which</i> leaks.                    |
| 43. <i>Being</i> a cloudy day, we did not go out.                      | 43. <i>It being</i> a cloudy day, we did not go out.                      |
| 44. It is possible to score <i>cent per cent</i> marks in Mathematics. | 44. It is possible to score <i>hundred per cent</i> marks in Mathematics. |
| 45. Please write <i>with</i> ink.                                      | 45. Please write <i>in</i> ink.   |
| 46. He died <i>from</i> cancer.  | 46. He died <i>of</i> cancer.   |
| 47. He died <i>of</i> overwork.  | 47. He died <i>from</i> overwork.   |
| 48. He has no lust <i>of</i> money.                                    | 48. He has no lust <i>for</i> money.                                      |
| 49. Mohan has a thirst <i>of</i> knowledge.                            | 49. Mohan has a thirst <i>for</i> knowledge.                              |
| 50. My neighbour is five years elder <i>to me</i> .                    | 50. My neighbour is five years older <i>than</i> me.                      |

## 4.2 Miscellaneous Examples

Some more examples have been given for practice.

- The teacher wanted to know why the student is copying.  
**Correct:** The teacher wanted to know why the student **was** copying.
- Shobhit ran as fast as he can.  
Shobhit ran as fast as he **could**.
- Either you or he are right.  
Either you or he **is** right.
- A white and black cat were running after a rat.  
A white and black cat **was** running after a rat.
- None of the students have failed.  
None of the students **has** failed.
- The majority of the Indians like milk and ghee.  
The majority of the Indians **likes** milk and ghee.
- Neither the teacher nor the students likes to go to Dehradun.  
Neither the teacher nor the students **like** to go to Dehradun.
- One should love his country.  
One should love **one's** country.
- The sky is blue.  
The sky is **blue**.

10. Kalidas is Shakespeare of India.  
Kalidas is **the** Shakespeare of India.
11. The man is mortal.  
**Man** is mortal.
12. He isn't going to Delhi, is't he?  
He isn't going to Delhi, **is he**?
13. You are a good carpenter, are you?  
You are a good carpenter, **aren't** you?
14. Do you agree to me?  
Do you agree **with me**?
15. He drives on seventy kilometres an hour.  
He drives **at** seventy kilometres an hour.
16. Taj Mahal is one of the wonders of the world.  
**The** Taj Mahal is one of the wonders of the world.
17. If you had written to me, I met you at the stations.  
If you had written to me, I **would have met** you at the stations.
18. If I was you I would scold him.  
If I **were** you I would scold him.
19. Have I the wings of a dove, I would have flown to you.  
**Had** I the wings of a dove, I would have flown to you.
20. Scacely had I reached the station than it began to rain.  
Scarcely had I reached the station **when** it began to rain.
21. He will go, if you will ask him.  
He will go, if you ask him.
22. You are sleeping when I entered the room.  
You **were** sleeping when I entered the room.
23. The scissors is made of steel.  
The scissors **are** made of steel.
24. The furnitures are made of wood.  
The furniture **is** made of wood.
25. Walk fast lest you will be late.  
Walk fast lest you **should be** late.
26. A great essayist and critic are dead.  
A great essayist and critic **is** dead.
27. He is living in Meerut since birth.  
He **has** been living in Meerut since birth.
28. He said that man could not live without water.  
He said that man **cannot** live without water.
29. There stands Ram and his brother.  
There **stand** Ram and his brother.
30. There stand Ram with his brother.  
There **stands** Ram with his brother.
31. Each of you shall receive a packet.  
Each of you **will** receive a packet.
32. The cattles are grazing in the field.



Notes

- The **cattle** are grazing in the field.
33. The hairs are grey.  
The **hair is** grey.
34. I wish he was here.  
I wish he **were** here.
35. The committee are consisted of ten members.  
The committee **is** consisted of ten members.
36. As you sow, so shall you reap.  
As you sow, so you reap.
37. Bread and butter are sick diet.  
Bread and butter **is** sick diet.
38. Neither Kshitij nor Shashwat are present.  
Neither Kshitij nor Shashwat is present.
39. Slow and steady win the race.  
Slow and steady wins the race.
40. A lot of money were needed.  
A lot of money **was** needed.
41. A lot of books has been purchased.  
A lot of books **have** been purchased.
42. Economics are not a difficult subject.  
Economics **is** not a difficult subject.
43. The wages are never meagre in this factory.  
The wages **is** never meagre in this factory.
44. Many a fighter were defeated in the combat.  
Many a fighter **was** defeated in the combat.
45. Each boy and each girl were given a prize.  
Each boy and each girl **was** given a prize.
46. The trousers is dirty.  
The trousers **are** dirty.
47. This is my umbrella, that is your.  
This is my umbrella, that is **yours**.
48. It is an university, famous for its discipline.  
It is a university, famous for its discipline.
49. Children often don't listen their elder's advice.  
Children often **don't** listen to their elder's advice.
50. Hard work is rewarded always.  
Hard work is **always** rewarded.

### 4.3 Review Questions

1. *Due to illness*, I could not go to college.
2. This news was *broadcasted* from All India Radio only yesterday.
3. I will teach you *reading and writing* English.
4. Mohan and Sohan are *fast enemies*.
5. *It is the first time* I have said so.

6. *Failed* students cannot be promoted to the next higher class.
7. Please *do the needful* and oblige.
8. Accompanied *with* my friends, I went there.
9. His grandmother *is died*.
10. Send this letter *on* my address.
11. I have seen him *today morning*.
12. *What to speak* of English, he cannot speak even Hindi.
13. The plane circled the airport *two times* before landing.
14. He became a rich man *by and by*.
15. Are you a member *in* the committee?
16. He is *fail in* Mathematics.
17. We reached *safely*.
18. Sachin is good *in* English.
19. My dear *respected* father, you are really great.
20. Send your reply by return post.
21. Please speak to the *concerned authority*.
22. He is a *noted* dacoit.
23. It was *very wonderful*.
24. I am *quite* sorry to hear of your failure.

#### 4.4 Further Readings



##### Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 5: Comprehension from Seen Passages

### CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

5.1 Solved Examples

5.2 Further Readings

### Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to

- Evaluate their skill in comprehending the seen passages.
- Develop their understanding and grasp the ideas and facts of the given passages.

### Introduction

**Reading comprehension** is defined as the level of understanding of a text/message. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text/message. Proficient reading depends on the ability to recognize words quickly and effortlessly. If word recognition is difficult, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words, which interferes with their ability to comprehend what is read. In this Unit we try to provide number of solved examples for the students to have proper understanding of the given passage.

### 5.1 Solved Examples

#### **1. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follows:**

Social service is the highest form of service of the Motherland. This ideal was held by all the Indian pioneers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi equated social service with religious duties. Later his followers also acted according to the belief of their leader.

Mahatma Gandhi was the embodiment of Indian tradition. But perhaps it will be unjust to say so because he was at times greatly influenced by the western thinkers. Gandhi had faith in all the basic tenets of ancient Indian culture. His sympathy for the down-trodden and aversion for caste were largely influenced by the European liberalism of the 19th century which worked for freedom, progress dignity of man. Similarly, his faith in non-violence found its root in the preachings of Jesus Christ, known as the Sermon on the Mount, and the Russian philosopher and man of letters, Tolstoy. He stood for the women's right and here again he was influenced by the western thought. In the social context, he was not an orthodox but an innovator. The methods recommended for social reform were slow but he succeeded in laying stress on such a social order where all are equal. Working on the lines of his immediate predecessors, Gandhi diverted people's attention from the hierarchy of caste and creed and gave a new lease of life to Hindu culture.

The modern generation of Indians is proud of its ancient culture but at the same time the young intelligent Indians are open to modern changes. They are ready to give up the degenerating or weak elements of their past culture. India is vis-a-vis many political and economic problems when it is difficult to predict the tomorrow of India. But it is certain that the Indians will, not be blind imitators of western culture rather they shall be deeply rooted in their ancient culture without being fanatical. It is a fact that Indian culture and civilization has been a continuous process of synthesis. In the past also, the Indian culture has been affected by various foreign cultures such as European, Mesopotamian, Iranian, Greek, Roman, Turkish and Arab. With each new influence it has changed and become rich. Soon the western ways are going to be assimilated with the Indian culture.

The Hindu Civilization, despite all the foreign influences, shall keep itself intact. The preachings of the holy book of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Upanishads* shall never miss their significance. However, under the western influence, the Indians' lives would be largely influenced by the technological development. But the Indians shall always be influenced by the heroes of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* and so on.

The outdated and useless traditions of the Indian culture have almost vanished. The barbarous public sacrifices of the vedic period are not in vogue. Similarly, the practice of widows burning on the pyres of their husbands has been stopped. The evils of child marriages and untouchability are removed from the society. There is complete abolition of caste system. The old family system has been changed according to the present day conditions. No doubt, Indian culture is being changed according to the present needs but it will, undoubtedly, survive till the doomsday. It will never be lost.

## Questions for Comprehension

### I. Questions for Short Answers

1. How did the great Indian social reformers define social service?

**Ans.** Social service to the Indian social reformers was a religious duty.

2. Who is called 'Great Mother' in the essay 'The Heritage of India'?

**Ans.** By 'Great Mother', A. L. Basham means the motherland.

3. Why is it false to say that Gandhi was the epitome of Hindu tradition?

**Ans.** Since Gandhi was much influenced by the Western ideas, it will be wrong to say that he was an epitome of Hindu tradition.

4. How was Gandhi influenced by European 19th century liberalism?

**Ans.** Gandhi inculcated in him passionate love of the downtrodden and aversion to caste under the influence of the European 19th century liberalism.

5. To whom was Gandhi indebted for his pacificism?

**Ans.** Gandhi was indebted to the Sermon on the Mount and to Tolstoy for his pacificism.

6. What are the two extremes, disappearing from India?

**Ans.** National self-denigration and fanatical cultural chauvinism are gradually disappearing from India.

7. What special feature of the Indian culture and civilization has been referred to by the author?

**Ans.** Indian culture has the ability to adapt and digest elements of different cultures. It is performing the most astonishing thing, synthesis or assimilation of the Western culture.

8. Hindu civilization will, we believe, retain its continuity. How did the author prove it?

**Ans.** The Western thoughts may affect and sometime change the Indian way of life but it is sure that Indian civilization will retain its continuity. He proves it with the argument that the holy writings, like the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Upanishads* etc will always inspire the Indians.

9. Name the legendary figures, mentioned by Basham in his essay 'The Heritage of India'?

**Ans.** Basham refers to *Dushyanta* and *Shakuntala* on the one hand and on the other *Pururavas* and *Urvashi*.

10. What pervades Indian life despite oppression, disease and poverty?

**Ans.** Despite oppression, disease and poverty, the gentle happiness has always pervaded Indian life.

11. Name two useless things in old Indian culture which have already perished.

**Ans.** The uncivilized public sacrifices and untouchability are two important useless things which have disappeared from the old Indian culture.

12. How are Dushyanta and Shakuntala related?

**Ans.** Dushyanta and Shakuntala were passionate lovers.

## Notes

## II. Multiple Choice Questions

1. The essay 'The Heritage of India' has been written by  
(i) C. V. Raman. (ii) Jonathan Swift (iii) A. L. Basham. (iv) J. B. Priestley.
2. Mahatma Gandhi had love for  
(i) the underdog. (ii) the affluent.  
(iii) the disabled. (iv) none of the above.
3. The Sermon on the Mount means  
(i) the preachings of Lord Krishna. (ii) the doctrines propagated by Tolstoy.  
(iii) the principles of Hindu philosophy. (iv) the preaching of Jesus Christ.
4. Indians are ready to give up  
(i) effete elements of Indian culture.  
(ii) the extremes of self-condemnation of Indian culture.  
(iii) the fanatical cultural chauvinism.  
(iv) all the above.
5. People in India will always love the tales of  
(i) heroes of the Mahabharata. (ii) the heroes of the *Ramayana*.  
(iii) *Dushyanta* and *Shakuntala*. (iv) *Pururavas* and *Urvashi*.  
(e) all the above.
6. Indian Life is always pervaded by  
(i) gentle happiness. (ii) oppression.  
(iii) disease and poverty. (iv) 'B' and 'C' options.
7. The whole face of India is altering but one thing will never be lost -  
(i) the geographical boundaries of India.  
(ii) its natural resources.  
(iii) its cultural tradition.  
(iv) its weaknesses.
8. Indian culture will always remain intact since  
(i) it has given up its effete elements.  
(ii) it is influenced by Western ideals.  
(iii) the useless things in it are disappearing.  
(iv) it is inclusive of its own cultural traditions and the foreign cultures.
9. The principle of non-violence was given by  
(i) B. G. Tilak. (ii) Subhash Chandra Bose.  
(iii) Mahatma Gandhi. (iv) Tolstoy.

## ANSWERS

1. (iii) 2. (i) 3. (iv) 4. (iv) 5. (e) 6. (i) 7. (iii) 8. (iv) 9. (iii)

## 2. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follows:

**Gandhiji was essentially a religious man** who rose above the confines of a particular sect, religion and community. He was secular in his attitude towards religion. It implies that he saw those elements of each religion that are useful to the whole humanity. He was a true prophet who lived for the Hindus' principles of *Abhaya* and *Ahimsa*, the Buddhists' doctrines of wisdom and love, the Christians' ideals of truth and freedom and also Muslims' belief in one God and one family.

Gandhiji is rightly called a universal man, an internationalist who, above the narrow loyalties to some religion, believed in the great ideals of Truth and Love in which he found a way leading to the welfare of mankind.

Gandhiji, in true sense, was not a nationalist rather he was an internationalist. His conviction was that violence and deception were not the only means to achieve the political objectives. If he employed the weapon of non-violence to set India free, it was not only because he loved India but because he wanted to extend the same weapon to the rest of the world. He wanted to show how freedom could be won through non-violent methods.

Gandhiji believed in universal brotherhood. His cosmopolitan outlook made him to believe that despite having certain conflicts with the British, Indians should not develop any permanent hatred for them because the Indians as well as the English are the children of God. Besides, he believed in hating the evil and not the evil-doer.

This ardent faith in love made Gandhi to regard other religions as valid as his own since **Truth happens to be the essence of all religions**. If Indian constitution assigns equal importance to all religions, it is because of Gandhiji's teachings.

The wide-spread chaos in the modern world is on account of our failure to realise the universal truth that all religions aim at the upliftment of men and the greatest religiosity lies in humanism. Gandhiji wished people to love all irrespective of their caste, creed and religion. He said, "Our primary loyalty must be to the human race".

Unfortunately, this sort of common humanity is missing today. The world can be better off if we inculcate in our young people the sense of world citizenship. The United Nations symbolizes the concept of globalization.

Gandhiji's ideals are quite relevant in the present day social contexts. Gandhi would have built a world state. Moreover, he would have given to the world state a kind of police force to maintain the normal civil life. He dreamt of a world state where the people of different nationalities would live like brothers and not like rivals. This transformation of our society may be slow. The best measure for this change is educating people for the practice of self-denial.

If we go to the prehistoric age, we find that man started his life as an individual, governed by his individual concept of right and wrong. But gradually he learnt, how to subordinate the individual interest to the group interests. He accepted the rule of law and then emerged a system, an order of life. The **Sanyasis** or sages are above the national or the world governments. But the common people who want to live peacefully in a society need a world organization, world police, world bank world court and so on in order to maintain internal order. All this is possible if people cherish belief in the doctrine of non-violence and employ such ways that are good for the rest of the world. He concludes - "In this connection, I would only add that Gandhi was anxious that means must be as pure as the end itself".

## Questions for Comprehension

### I. Questions for Short Answers:

1. What happens to man when he becomes religious?

**Ans.** A religious man rises above all the particular group loyalties and becomes a universal man.

2. Name the ideals for which several religions, as mentioned in the essay, stand for.

or

What basic principles did Gandhiji follow?

**Ans.** The author refers to the Hindus' principles of *Abhaya* and *Ahimsa*, fearlessness and non-violence; the Buddhists' doctrines of *Prajna* and *Karuna*, wisdom and compassion; the Christians' ideals of truth and freedom and also the Muslims' belief in one God and one family.

3. What distinguishes Gandhi from common man of the world?

**Ans.** Gandhi was a man of prophetic nature who lived in accordance with his preaching. An ordinary man also talks about high ideals but never acts according to them.

Notes

4. What is the greatest contribution of Gandhi, as mentioned by the author?  
**Ans.** The greatest contribution of Gandhi to the world is to enable the people to realise that even in this world of narrow loyalties, if they wish, they can embody the high ideals of Truth and Love.
5. What weapon did he employ for winning of India's freedom?  
**Ans.** Non-violence was the chiefest weapon that Gandhi employed for winning the political freedom of India.

II. Multiple Choice Questions

1. Gandhiji was called a man of prophetic nature because
  - (i) he was a *sanyasi*.
  - (ii) he adopted the ideals of several religions and lived for them.
  - (iii) he fought for India's freedom.
  - (iv) he loved truth.
  - (e) extremely in love with India.
2. Whenever Gandhi had to do a particular action he
  - (i) questioned himself.
  - (ii) fasted.
  - (iii) prayed.
  - (iv) ransacked his brains.
  - (e) all the above.
3. Gandhi took up the Indian cause because
  - (i) he loved India.
  - (ii) he was an internationalist.
  - (iii) he hated the Englishmen.
  - (iv) he believed that political freedom could be won by non-violent methods.
4. Gandhiji's belief was that
  - (i) our religion is supreme.
  - (ii) only our religion can claim an exclusive monopoly to truth.
  - (iii) our religion is as valid as the religion of others.
  - (iv) none of the above.
5. The constitution of our country embodies fit Gandhian principle that
  - (i) Truth is the essence of all religions.
  - (ii) violence is necessary for survival.
  - (iii) we must take our own religion more seriously.
  - (iv) all strife should come to an end.
6. It will be true to say that Gandhi was
  - (i) a nationalist.
  - (ii) extremely in love with india.
  - (iii) an internationalist.
  - (iv) options 'a' and 'b'.
7. The word 'Divinity' in this essay stands for
  - (i) God.
  - (ii) supernatural powers.
  - (iii) sacred.
  - (iv) soul.
8. The 'United Nations' stands for
  - (i) loyalty to the nation.
  - (ii) unity of the world order.
  - (iii) setting the controversies between two rival countries.
  - (iv) none of the above.

ANSWERS

1. (ii) 2. (v) 3. (iv) 4. (iii) 5. (i) 6. (iii) 7. (i) 8. (ii)

**3. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follows:****Notes**

According to Bacon, there are three uses of studies to man. First of all they provide a healthy entertainment to the reader when he is sitting within the four walls of his house. Secondly, they provide good thoughts and phrases to the readers by which they can beautify their conversation. Thirdly, the studies of good books make men more able. They sharpen one's intellect and wisdom. The use of books for entertainment is chiefly when one is without a friend, away from the hustle and bustle of the busy city life. Similarly, the things learnt from the books ornate our discourse just as ornaments add more charm to one's natural beauty. For ability, the use of studies is in taking decisions while conducting the business affairs because the well-read persons can manage the business more wisely. To set the pace, the author gives certain disadvantages of the studies. The excess of studies gives birth to laziness. The habit of using too many thoughts, phrases, references etc., learnt from books, leads to affection. And if a scholar never sets aside the rules learnt from a book while taking decisions about some business affairs, it shows his eccentricity because sometimes the theoretical principles fail in practice.

Everyone in the world is born with certain inherent qualities in him which are just like natural plants. If natural plants are not trimmed from time to time, they grow in big wild bushes and look ugly. Similarly, the innate talents need to be disciplined and controlled by studies. But studies should be supplemented by experience.

Cunning people do not appreciate studies while ordinary people are astonished by the worth of studies. But only wise men know how to use the knowledge learnt from the books. Books themselves do not teach their own use only wise and experienced man learns how to use knowledge acquired through studies. The essayist admonishes a reader and says that books should not be read merely to disprove or contradict the arguments of others nor to take everything for granted. The intelligent readers should weigh the arguments and try to examine them.

Bacon discusses the various types of books and the methods of reading them. Comparing the reading of books to eating of food, he says, that some books which are not very important should be read in parts just as ordinary food need to be simply tasted. These books have no grave ideas, therefore, they should be read hurriedly. There are some other books which are also meant for cursory reading just as some food items can only be swallowed. But there are a few books which contains quite worth while and weighty ideas such books be read word for word, carefully and with concentration just as tasty and nutritive food should be properly chewed and digested. A man of position cannot read all the books himself hence he reads the summary of some of the books, prepared by his secretary. Though the charm of the book is lost in this process just as distilled waters become insipid or tasteless.

Reading gives perfection to human mind and heart while writing brings exactness in one's expression. Conversation makes a person quick witted and quick tongued, always ready to answer. "Therefore, a person who writes a little, must have an extraordinary memory; another who has a natural inclination mostly to keep silent, must have a ready wit since birth. He who has gathered no knowledge through studies should be cunning enough to pretend to know those things which he actually does not know.

Books of different subjects affect human beings differently. Reading of the history books makes man wise by not repeating those mistakes which their forefathers might have committed. Poetry endows man with imagination, the mathematics makes him subtle, sharp. Reading of moral books makes man serious and so on. Bacon thinks that studies pass into the character and can cure many mental illnesses just as many exercise can set right many physical illnesses. The author cites certain examples such as bowling is good for the stone and kidneys, shooting is for the lungs and breast, riding for the head and the like. Therefore, if a person is not able to concentrate, let him study the mathematics which needs a lot of concentration. The study of philosophy enables one to study the things minutely. Thus, every mental defect needs the study of a proper subject.

**Questions for Comprehension****I. Questions for Short Answers**

1. What are the three functions of study according to Bacon?

**Ans.** According to Bacon studies serve for delight, for ornament and for ability.



## Notes

2. When does study give us delight?
- Ans.** When we are lonely, without any company, at such time books provide good entertainment.
3. Who is completely guided by the rules, mentioned in a book?
- Ans.** It is the whim of a scholar to be wholly guided by the rules of the books.
4. With which does the author compare the natural abilities?
- Ans.** Bacon compares the natural abilities with the natural plants which should be pruned from time to time.
5. What is the outlook of craftsmen towards study?
- Ans.** Crafty men condemn studies. They have no taste for reading good books. They hide their ignorance under the cover of their hatred or disliking for studies.
6. Bacon has written of few books to be 'tasted and digested'. What do you mean by the phrase 'tasted and digested'?
- Ans.** There are few books which contain in them very ennobling subject matter. Those books should not be read hurriedly. Just as the nutritive food should be eaten slowly so that it will be properly digested and provide good nutrition to the body. A serious and good book read in this manner becomes the part and parcel of human mind.
7. How is mathematics beneficent to human being?
- Ans.** The study of mathematics inculcates in young people the power of concentration. They learn to pick up a subtle outlook towards life.
8. Why are the philosophers called the *cymini sectores*?
- Ans.** The philosophers have been called *cymini sectores* because this expression literally means hair-splitting which figuratively means to go to the minutest detail while studying a thing. Philosophers are used to analyse the things minutely hence they are suitably called *cymini sectores*.
9. What should a person do if he reads little?
- Ans.** If somebody reads little, it means he is in want of knowledge. Such a man need to be so cunning to seem to know those things which he actually does not know.
10. What sort of books should be read by the deputy?
- Ans.** The books which have less important arguments in them should be read by the deputy. A great man is supposed to read only the extracts, prepared by the deputy.

## II. Multiple Choice Questions

1. The reading of books is meant for  
 (i) delight. (ii) ornament. (iii) ability. (iv) all the above.
2. Only learned can  
 (i) provide general counsels. (ii) manage the plans.  
 (iii) manage affairs of life. (iv) all the above.
3. Distilled books are like  
 (i) distilled water, flashy things. (ii) tasty food.  
 (iii) safe drinking water. (iv) none of the above.
4. If a person writes little he should have  
 (i) a present wit. (ii) a power to pretend.  
 (iii) a great memory. (iv) none of the above.
5. The word 'humour' here means  
 (i) mood. (ii) hobby. (iii) wish. (iv) whim.

- Notes**
6. A less important book should be  
 (i) read by the deputy. (ii) read wholly.  
 (iii) thrown away. (iv) kept safely in the shelf.
7. Abeunt studia in mores means  
 (i) studies are useful. (ii) studies teach lessons.  
 (iii) studies pass into the character. (iv) none of the above.
8. Bowling here means  
 (i) making balls. (ii) playing at bowls.  
 (iii) purchasing the balls. (iv) none of the above.
9. Shooting is good for  
 (i) stone and reins. (ii) the stomach.  
 (iii) the lungs and breast. (iv) none of the above.
10. Of Studies is written by  
 (i) Bacon. (ii) J. B. Priestley (iii) C. E. M. Joad. (iv) Jonathan Swift.

#### ANSWERS

1. (iv) 2. (i) 3. (i) 4. (iii) 5. (iv) 6. (i) 7. (iii) 8. (ii) 9. (iii) 10. (i)

## 5.2 Further Readings



*Books*

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 6: Comprehension from Unseen Passages

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Objectives

Introduction

6.1 Solved Examples

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### Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to

- Evaluate their skills in reading unseen passages.
- Understand the unseen passages and answer the questions that follows.

### Introduction

Comprehension of an unseen passage means a complete and thorough understanding of the passage. The main object of comprehension is to test one's ability to grasp the meaning of a given passage properly and also one's ability to answer, in one's own words, the questions based on the passage. A variety of questions like short answer type questions, completion of incomplete sentences, filling the blanks with appropriate words and exercises based on vocabulary are set forth for the purpose.

Before attempting to answer the questions on a passage, it is necessary to read the passage again and again so that a general idea of the subject of the passage becomes clear. Once the passage is clear, it is easy to answer the questions.

### 6.1 Solved Examples

**1. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions given below in the context of the passage.**

But for the fact that only higher education, the only education worth the name, has been received by us through the English medium, there would be no need to prove such a self-evident proposition that the youth of a nation to remain a nation must receive all instructions, including the highest, in its own vernacular or vernaculars. Surely, it is a self-demonstrated proposition that the youth of a nation cannot keep or establish a living contact with the masses unless their knowledge is received through a medium understood by the people. Who can calculate the immeasurable loss sustained by the nation owing to thousands of its young men having been obliged to waste years in mastering a foreign language and its idiom, of which in their daily life they have the least use and in learning which they had to neglect their own mother tongue and their own literature? There never was a greater superstition than that a particular language can be incapable of expansion or of expressing abstruse or scientific ideas. A language is an exact reflection of the character and growth of its speakers. Among the many evils of foreign rule, this blighting imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth of the country will be counted by history as one of the greatest. It has sapped the energy of the nation, it has shortened the lives of the pupils, it has estranged them from the masses, it has made education unnecessarily expensive. If this process is still persisted in, it bids fair to rob the nation of its soul. The sooner, therefore, educated India shakes itself free from the hypnotic spell of the foreign medium, the better it would be for them and the people. (Gandhi in *Young India*, 5 July, 1928).

**Choose the correct option:**

1. Mahatma Gandhi stresses that
  - (i) the only education worth the name is through the medium of English, though it might not make our youth the builder of a great nation
  - (ii) higher education should not be received through a foreign language
  - (iii) every nation teaches its youth through the native language
  - (iv) the use of the native language can unite the nation
2. The second sentence of Mahatma Gandhi's comment means that
  - (i) the masses can acquire knowledge only through a language they understand
  - (ii) youth should be instructed in a language understood by the common people
  - (iii) youth should live in close contact with the masses
  - (iv) the language used in education can bring youth closer to, or separate it from the general body of the nation
3. Of what nature is the immeasurable loss sustained by the nation?
  - (i) the years wasted by thousands of young men in mastering a foreign language
  - (ii) progressive weakening of the confidence and energy of youth and its isolation from the life of the country
  - (iii) the strengthening of foreign rule through the spell of a foreign language on educated India
  - (iv) the neglect of Indian languages and the consequent failure to perfect them for precise expression of scientific ideas
4. Imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth
  - (i) has made the youth hate the British empire
  - (ii) has made the youth carefree
  - (iii) has brought the youth close to the masses
  - (iv) has shortened the lives of the pupils and sapped the energy of the nation
5. Gandhiji says
  - (i) that foreign medium should be done away with
  - (ii) that foreign medium can be retained only for technical education
  - (iii) that only the educated Indians should study in foreign medium
  - (iv) that foreign medium should be used only for official purpose
6. According to the passage,
  - (i) mastering a foreign language invites the resentment of common masses
  - (ii) foreign medium is too difficult to understand
  - (iii) foreign medium is very expensive for a poor country like India to afford
  - (iv) young men are obliged to waste years in mastering a foreign language and this leads to the neglect of their mother tongue
7. By vernacular, Gandhiji meant
  - (i) a language understood by the masses of the country
  - (ii) the language native to a country as opposed to a language that is foreign
  - (iii) Hindi or Hindustani, for it is the national language of India
  - (iv) the great languages that have grown out of Pali spoken in particular regions

## Notes

8. Gandhiji made a mention of
  - (i) all the evils of foreign rule
  - (ii) only the dominating attitude of foreign rule
  - (iii) only those evils which were linked with foreign medium
  - (iv) evils which were prevalent in England also
9. Idiom means
  - (i) the rules governing a language
  - (ii) the expression peculiar to a language, and often beyond grammatical analysis, but approved by usage
  - (iii) the structure of words in a sentence
  - (iv) ornamental phrases which beautify the language
10. Abstruse means
 

|            |            |                 |                 |
|------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| (i) hidden | (ii) clear | (iii) religious | (iv) scientific |
|------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|

## ANSWERS

1. (ii) higher education should not be received through a foreign language.
2. (ii) youth should be instructed in a language understood by the common people.
3. (i) the years wasted by thousands of young men in mastering a foreign language.
4. (iv) has shortened the lives of the pupils and sapped the energy of the nation.
5. (i) that the foreign medium should be done away with.
6. (iv) young men are obliged to waste years in mastering a foreign language and this leads to the neglect of their own mother tongue.
7. (i) a language understood by the masses of the country.
8. (iii) only those evils which were linked with foreign medium.
9. (ii) the expression peculiar to a language and often beyond grammatical analysis, but approved by usage.
10. (i) hidden

**2. Read the following passage carefully, and answer the questions given below.**

Unquestionably, a literary life is for the most part an unhappy life, because, if you have genius, you must suffer the penalty of genius; and, if you have only talent, there are so many cares and worries incidental to the circumstances of men of letters, as to make life exceedingly miserable. Besides the pangs of composition, and the continuous disappointment which a true artist feels at his inability to reveal himself, there is the ever-recurring difficulty of gaining the public ear. Young writers are buoyed up by the hope and the belief that they have only to throw that poem at the world's feet to get back in return the laurel-crown; that they have only to push that novel into print to be acknowledged at once as a new light in literature. You can never convince a young author that the editors of magazines and the publishers of books are a practical body of men, who are by no means frantically anxious about placing the best literature before the public. Nay, that for the most part they are mere brokers, who conduct their business on the hardest lines of a Profit and Loss account. But supposing your book fairly launches, its perils are only beginning. You have to run the gauntlet of the critics. To a young author, again, this seems to be as terrible an ordeal as passing down the files of Sioux or Comanche Indians, each one of whom is thirsting for your scalp. When you are a little older, you will find that criticism is not much more serious than the bye-play of clowns in a circus, when they beat around the ring, the victim with bladders slung at the end of long poles. A time comes in the life of every author when he regards critics as comical rather than formidable, and goes his way unheeding. But there are sensitive souls that yield under the chastisement and, perhaps, after suffering much silent torture, abandon the profession of the pen for ever. Keats, perhaps, is the saddest example of a

fine spirit hounded to death by savage criticism; because, whatever his biographers may aver, that furious attack of Gifford and Terry undoubtedly expedited his death. But no doubt there are hundreds who suffer keenly from hostile and unscrupulous criticism, and who have to bear that suffering in silence, because it is a cardinal principle in literature that the most unwise thing in the world for an author is to take public notice of criticism in the way of defending himself. Silence is the only safeguard, as it is the only dignified protest against insult and offence.

**Choose the correct option:**

1. Why is the literary life mostly an unhappy one?
  - (i) because a genius suffers the penalty of genius, and a talented person has so many cares and worries
  - (ii) because it is mostly a lonely life
  - (iii) because it does not pay much materialistically
  - (iv) because it is difficult to get a reading public
2. What are the ambitions of a young author?
  - (i) to be acknowledged as a new light in literature
  - (ii) to be able to reveal himself
  - (iii) to gain a public ear
  - (iv) to get his compositions published
3. Are editors and publishers sympathetic to young authors?
  - (i) they are
  - (ii) they are not
  - (iii) they are anxious about placing only the best literature before the public
  - (iv) they are mere brokers who conduct their business on the hardest lines of a Profit and Loss account.
4. What are the ordeals awaiting the young author from the critics?
  - (i) the critics harass him
  - (ii) he has to run the 'gauntlet' of the critics
  - (iii) he has to save his scalp, as the critics throw stones at him
  - (iv) the critics are sympathetic towards him
5. What attitude should an author adopt in the face of bitter criticism?
  - (i) he should defend himself
  - (ii) he should regard critics formidable and change his way of writing
  - (iii) he should suffer silently
  - (iv) he should take criticism as not more than the bye-play of clowns in a circus and go his way unheeding.
6. Why does a true artist suffer?
  - (i) he suffers because of the pangs of composition
  - (ii) he suffers because of his inability to express himself.
  - (iii) he suffers because of the difficulty in gaining the public ear
  - (iv) all the above
7. What happens to the sensitive authors when they are attacked by critics?
  - (i) they remain indifferent
  - (ii) they commit suicide
  - (iii) they abandon the writing profession
  - (iv) none of the above
8. The attack of Gifford and Terry
  - (i) forced Keats to give up writing
  - (ii) expedited the death of Keats.
  - (iii) brought Keats to limelight
  - (iv) none of the above

## Notes

9. The cardinal principle in literature is
  - (i) not to maintain one's own style throughout one's literary career
  - (ii) to satisfy the critics
  - (iii) to satisfy the public
  - (iv) not to take public criticism in the way of defending oneself
10. The only safeguard against insult and offence is
  - (i) to maintain a dignified silence
  - (ii) to protest openly
  - (iii) to defend one's own writing
  - (iv) to attack the offenders

## ANSWERS

1. (i) because a genius suffers the penalty of genius and a talented person has so many cares and worries
2. (i) to be acknowledged as a new light in literature
3. (iv) they are mere brokers who conduct their business on the hardest lines of a Profit and Loss account.
4. (ii) he has to run the 'gauntlet' of the critics
5. (iv) He should take criticism as not more than the bye-play of clowns in a circus and go his way unheeding
6. (iv) all of the above
7. (iii) they abandon the writing profession
8. (ii) expedited the death of Keats
9. (iv) not to take public criticism in the way of defending oneself
10. (i) to maintain a dignified silence

## 3. Read the following passage carefully to answer the questions given below it.

The University Grants Commission's directive requiring college and university lecturers to spend a minimum of 22 hours a week in direct teaching is the product of budgetary cutbacks rather than pedagogic wisdom. It may seem odd, at first blush, that teachers should protest about teaching a mere 22 hours. However, if one considers the amount of time academics require to prepare lectures of good quality as well as the time they need to spend doing research – it is clear that most conscientious teachers work more than 40 hours a week. In university systems around the world, lecturers rarely spend more than 12 to 15 hours in direct teaching activities a week. The average college lecturer in India does not have any office space. If computers are available, Internet connectivity is unlikely. Libraries are poorly stocked. Now, the UGC says, universities must implement a complete **freeze** on all permanent recruitment, abolish all posts which have been vacant for more than a year, and cut staff strength by 10 per cent. And it is in order to ensure that these cutbacks do not affect the quantum of teaching that existing lecturers are being asked to work longer. Obviously, the quality of teaching and academic work in general – will decline. While it is true that some college teachers do not take their classes regularly, the UGC and the institutions concerned must find a proper way to hold them accountable. An absentee teacher will continue to play truant even if the number of hours he is required to teach goes up.

All of us are well aware of the unsound state that the Indian higher education system is in today. Thanks to years of sustained financial neglect, most Indian universities and colleges do no research worth the name. Even as the number of students entering colleges has increased dramatically, public investment in higher education has actually declined in relative terms. Between 1985 and 1997, when public expenditure on higher education as a percentage of outlays on all levels of education grew by more than 60 per cent in Malaysia and 20 per cent in Thailand, India showed a decline of more than 10 per cent. Throughout the world, the number of teachers in higher education per million population

grew by more than 10 per cent in the same period; in India it fell by one percent. Instead of transferring the burden of government apathy on to the backs of the teachers, the UGC should insist that the needs of the country's university system are adequately catered for.

**Choose the correct option:**

1. Why does the UGC want to increase the direct teaching hours of university teachers?
  - (i) The UGC feels that the duration of contact between teacher and the taught should be more.
  - (ii) The UGC wants teachers to spend more time in their departments.
  - (iii) The UGC wants teachers to devote some time to improve university administration.
  - (iv) The UGC does not have money to appoint additional teachers.
  - (v) None of these.
2. Which of the following is the reason for the sorry state of affairs of the Indian universities as mentioned in the passage?
  - (i) The poor quality of teachers.
  - (ii) Involvement of teachers in extra-curricular activities.
  - (iii) Politics within and outside the departments.
  - (iv) Heavy burden of teaching hours on the teachers.
  - (v) Not getting enough financial assistance.
3. Which of the following statement(s) is/are TRUE in the context of the passage?
  - (I) Most colleges do not carry out research worth the name.
  - (II) The UGC wants lecturers to spend minimum 22 hours a week in direct teaching.
  - (III) Indian higher education system is in unsound state.
  - (i) Only (I) and (III)
  - (ii) All (I), (II) and (III)
  - (iii) Only (III)
  - (iv) Only (II)
4. Besides direct teaching, university teachers spend considerable time in/on ...
  - (i) administrative activities such as admissions
  - (ii) supervising examinations and correction of answer papers
  - (iii) carrying out research in the area of their interest
  - (iv) maintaining research equipment and libraries
  - (v) developing liaison with the user organizations
5. Which of the following statements is **not true** in the context of the passage?
  - (i) The UGC wants teachers to spend minimum 40 hours a week in teaching.
  - (ii) Some college teachers do not engage their classes regularly.
  - (iii) The average college teacher in India does not have any office space.
  - (iv) The UGC wants universities to abolish all posts which have been vacant for more than a year.
  - (v) All of these are true.
6. Between 1985 and 1997, the number of teachers in higher education per million population, in India ...
  - (i) increased by 60%
  - (ii) increased by 20%
  - (iii) decreased by 22%
  - (iv) decreased by 10%
  - (v) decreased by 1%



**Notes**

7. Which of the following statements is **not true** in the context of the passage?
- (i) Indian universities are financially neglected.
  - (ii) All over the world, the university lecturers hardly spend more than 12 to 15 hours a week in direct teaching.
  - (iii) Indian universities are asked to reduce staff strength by 10%.
  - (iv) Public investment in higher education has increased in India.
  - (v) Malaysia spends more money on education than Thailand.
8. Choose the word which is **similar** in meaning as the word **freeze** as used in the passage.
- (i) Cold
  - (ii) Halt
  - (iii) Decay
  - (iv) Control
  - (v) Power
9. What is the UGC directive to the universities?
- (i) Improve the quality of teaching
  - (ii) Spend time on research activities
  - (iii) Do not appoint any permanent teacher
  - (iv) Provide computer and internet facilities
  - (v) Do not spend money on counselling services to the students
10. Choose the word which is **similar** in meaning as the word **sustained** as used in the passage.
- (i) Continuous
  - (ii) Frequent
  - (iii) Careless
  - (iv) Deliberate
  - (v) Sporadic

**ANSWERS**

1. (iv) 2. (v) 3. (ii) 4. (iii) 5. (i) 6. (v) 7. (iv) 8. (ii) 9. (iii) 10. (i)

**6.2 Further Readings**



*Books*

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit: 7 Essay Writing (Short Essays)

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### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to

- Introduce methods of essay writing.
- Discuss the types of essays.

### Introduction

Of all areas of studying and learning, the most challenging is writing. The reason why writing is especially demanding is that it forces a very deep and powerful type of learning to take place. When making the effort to use the ideas of the subject that you are studying and saying something for yourself, then it may be said that you are learning. The ideas only become a functioning part of your thought processes when you can call on them in expressing yourself to other people.

#### **What is an essay?**

You are no longer in high school, so most study at a tertiary level requires an analytical, not a descriptive, approach. Written work must present an argument. Essays are generally answers to questions which ask whether or not you agree with a certain statement, or which ask you to discuss something critically, to assess a statement, or to make a choice. University essays are therefore arguments for or against certain propositions.

An argument is a series of generalizations or propositions, supported by evidence or reasoning and connected in a logical manner, that lead to a justified conclusion. You must sustain your argument by giving evidence and reasons.

Assertions do not constitute an argument. You must support your opinions with good evidence and valid reasoning. What counts as good evidence and valid reasoning you will learn by experience, and by consulting your lecturers. Being critical may mean determining whether or not the evidence available justifies the conclusions that are drawn from it; or it may mean uncovering and questioning the assumptions which underlie theories.

Essays give you a chance to show what you can do: that you understand the question asked; that you understand the issues involved; that you have done the appropriate amount of reading. Having got that far, you must then show that you can communicate your understanding to others.

For writing a good essay, one needs discipline of mind and regimentation of thought. It requires the framework within which an essay should be written.

It has often been observed that many good speakers find it difficult to put down their thoughts on paper. The reason is, they have never practised the craft of writing. They have never analysed, synthesised, or organised their thoughts to express them in writing.

Look at the following points that are relevant to all kinds of essays and should be kept in mind while writing an essay.

1. An essay is divided into Introduction, Body and Conclusion. It is essential to build a background to the essay in the Introduction, because otherwise, the starting of the essay will be rather abrupt. Introduction to an essay can be compared to the face of an individual. A striking Introduction favourably disposes the reader towards the whole essay.

**Notes**

The Body of an essay contains all the relevant information about the topic under discussion. Arguments, for and against a topic, different viewpoints, pros and cons of an issue form the Body of the essay.

In the Conclusion, the discussion started in the Body of the essay is rounded up. The concluding paragraph caps the discussion with a conclusive statement which is the result of well-reasoned arguments put forward in the Body.

2. Being precise and to the point brings about clarity which is the hallmark of a good essay. This can be done, if the points are noted down before the actual composition of the essay. These points should then be developed into thoughts.
3. It is necessary that there should be a logical development of the arguments. Each paragraph should be related to the other by logic. A well-reasoned essay is like a clear picture which leaves an impact on the reader.
4. Examples, illustrations and data should be used to support the arguments. If the arguments are not substantiated, then they, may appear as subjective ideas. Furthermore, the writer of an essay is expected to be aware of the relevant data and information about a given topic. Therefore, if an essay is to reflect the writer's knowledge of events and developments in a particular field, it ought to contain all the relevant facts and figures.
5. Use of appropriate words is the criterion of a good essay. Choosing difficult and high sounding words for their own sake is not advisable. Exact meaning can be conveyed by the right words. However, English not being our mother tongue, at times, the writer may not be able to think of an appropriate word. In that case, a simple substitute should be used. Short sentences should be preferred to long ones. The emphasis should be on conveying the point only.
6. Single-sentence-paragraphs should not be written. Grammar and punctuation should be kept in mind. Slang and colloquial words should be avoided. One should ensure objectivity and avoid using extreme ideas and opinions. If the subject can be treated impersonally, then the use of 'I' should be avoided. There should be no numbering of the paragraphs and no headings should be used in the Body of the essay.

## 7.1 Types of Essays

1. *Descriptive Essays* require precise knowledge on the part of the writer. Essays on Scientific, Educational, Political, Economic and Current topics should contain relevant facts and figures.
2. *Biographical Essays* involve knowledge of the major events in the life of the person whose biography is being described. In addition to that, the essay should mention the qualities or character of the 'hero', his achievements, his struggles and his principles.
3. *Narrative Essays* can be presented in the form of a story. Chronological arrangement of events is needed to write such essays. Also the narration should be made as interesting as possible by making use of episodes which fit in the context of the narrative.
4. *Reflective Essays* require deep thinking on the part of the writer. These essays are abstract in nature and demand imagination and capacity to express ideas in concrete terms.
5. *Idiomatic Essays* need elaboration of an idiom. While writing an idiomatic essay, care should be taken to understand the meaning of the idiom, otherwise the whole essay will be wrong.

## 7.2. Modal of Essays

### **1. Impact of Science on Man**

To the primitive man, the earth was like a *platter*. He did not dare to venture to places unknown to him, lest he should fall off the edges. The sun, the moon and the stars amazed him. These heavenly bodies were held in great *reverence*. He was helpless and at the mercy of nature. Hence, he worshipped its forces. The invention of the wheel and the discovery of fire were the achievements of primitive man. The initiation into the scientific arena was 'a small step for man, but a giant leap for mankind'.

The *advent* of science has *altered* the life of man. With his intellect, man has proved his superiority over the other beings in nature. Man ventured on sea and discovered new lands. He also discovered that the earth is round and it revolves around the sun. The laws of gravitation were discovered. Later, he discovered electricity, invented telephone, telex and felt elated. These inventions shrunk the world and man felt well-connected with far off places. Aeroplanes, trains, cars, buses and two-wheelers became his mode of transportation.

With the advancements of science, man invented objects which eased his work, provided him comfort and *recreation*. Television, radio, air-conditioner, geyser, oven, room-heater, etc. provided for his needs. Man conquered the earth, and wanted to conquer the space. After a series of attempts, man was successful in launching spacecrafts. Later on, manned spacecrafts were launched and, in 1969, man landed on moon.

The successive discoveries and inventions, in the fields of medical science, have provided relief to mankind. It has led to low mortality rate and has increased life-expectancy. Penicillin was discovered. The causes of smallpox, malaria, tuberculosis were identified and their remedies worked upon. Smallpox, polio, plague and cholera have been almost *eradicated* from the face of the earth. The human body can be operated upon for removal of cancer and an open-heart surgery can be conducted. The discoveries of antibiotics and drugs have also reduced the sufferings of mankind.

With the technological advancements in space research, artificial satellites were launched to promote communications. These satellites have helped in broadcasting, weather forecasting, etc. Invention of mobile phones, internet, fax and e-mail have further shrunken the size of the globe.

Technological changes such as the Bluetooth wireless service would revolutionise communication. This would establish connections between mobile computers, mobile phones, portable handheld devices and provide connectivity to the Internet. *Interface* and *synchronised* exchange are possible. This would completely change the look of the office. Wireless technology would undoubtedly contribute to the trend towards remote teleworking. Working from home would become a viable option.

Agriculture too, has benefitted from scientific advances. Improved methods of irrigation, better quality seeds and use of fertilizers have increased crop yield. New hybrid seeds and drought resistant seeds have also helped to increase the yield. New tools and implements, tractors and harvesters have benefitted the farmers. Science has enabled man to identify the diseases in crops and find out remedies.

Atomic energy when harnessed by man, for peaceful purposes, yields good results. Isotopes of some radioactive materials are used to cure diseases. Atomic energy is used to run reactors to produce electricity. It has proved to be a *viable* alternative to the fossil fuels. The isotopes are also used to sterilise crops and vegetables to keep them free from diseases. Carbon-14 is used by archaeologists to find the exact age of an organic fossil.

While science has been a boon to mankind, it has also proved to be a *bane*. It is because, man does not use his foresight. In his pursuit of excellence, man ignores nature. In an attempt to civilise, he tampers with nature and causes immeasurable damage to it. Indiscriminate industrialisation and urbanisation have resulted in alarming levels of pollution. Man chokes the rivers with sewage, industrial wastes and filth. The modes of transport have contributed to further deterioration of the planet and now pose a threat to the very existence of the *flora and fauna*.

The destructive potential of atomic energy was witnessed in August 1945, when the United States dropped atom bombs in the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Those who survived the nuclear bombing are still suffering from its *aftermath*. Man has, since then, discovered weapons which are more sophisticated and destructive than their earlier versions. The use of any of these bombs can *annihilate* the whole of mankind. Apart from atomic weapons, man has also started stockpiling biological and chemical weapons. Biosciences, meant for the betterment of mankind is now used to make disease germs which can be used in the battlefield. Chemical weapons are also extremely dangerous.

The earth being a unique planet, because of its life-supporting features, maintains a delicate equilibrium

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among its different components. The atmosphere acts as a blanket, shielding us from the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun and maintains the right intensity of heat. It keeps the planet warm enough for the sustenance of life. The harmful chemical emissions released into the atmosphere cause gradual depletion of the ozone layer in the atmosphere. Continual emission can damage the blanket further and result in the rise in global temperature, melting of ice caps and the flooding of low-lying coastal areas.

Man, by thoughtless acts, has caused irreparable damage to himself as well as to the environment. Now, he should use science with a good conscience and *prudence*. Science has made man civilised, but in the process he has ignored nature. He should believe in 'live and let live'. If man learns to use science scrupulously, it will make a positive impact on him.

**Key-words**

1. *platter* – a large flat plate 2. *reverence* – feeling of high respect 3. *advent* – arrival 4. *altered* – changed 5. *recreation* – amusement 6. *eradicated* – got rid of, removed 7. *interface* – a common boundary between two parts of an electronic system 8. *synchronise* – be simultaneous 9. *viable* – able to succeed in operation 10. *flora and fauna* – vegetation and wild life 11. *aftermath* – aftereffect 12. *annihilate* – destroy 13. *prudence* – wisdom

**Points to Remember:**

1. Primitive man held nature in great reverence.
2. Various discoveries and inventions have altered his life.
3. Modes of recreation found out and conquest of the moon accomplished.
4. Science has helped in the eradication and prevention of various diseases.
5. Artificial satellites have helped in communication.
6. Concept of wireless office.
7. Agricultural advancements through science.
8. Atomic energy benefits man, when harnessed for peaceful purposes.
9. Man, by using science, has brought about unfavourable conditions on the earth.
10. Destructive uses of the atom bomb.
11. Effect of machines and computers on the job market.
12. Man must use his prudence and conscience for the betterment of mankind and the environment.

**2. Importance of Educational System in India**

According to Diogenes, "The foundation of every state is the education of its youth." The instability of India could, perhaps, be attributed to the millions of educated, yet unemployed, people abounding in the country. The educational system gives degrees but does not guarantee employment. The educational system in India is theoretical, *hackneyed* and requires a serious revamping exercise. In a nutshell, some radical changes must be introduced in order to tune it to the needs of the modern society. India had a glorious tradition of education. During the ancient times, Indian educational centres and universities were the temples of knowledge. India's ancient universities of Nalanda, Taxila, Pataliputra and Ujjain were considered as the reservoirs of knowledge, and beckoned the foreign students to India. Indian education was respected around the world for its high quality, syllabi and learning. However, the past did not transcend into the future. Foreign invasions disturbed the country's economy, educational system and polity.

The present educational system of India was inherited from the British and is predominantly theoretical. The British evolved a system of learning aimed at producing Brown Sahebs and clerks in large numbers. It was Lord McCaulay's System of Education. It was supposed to perpetuate loyalty to the British educational and political institutions.

Whatever be the various flaws in the inherited educational system in India, the number of universities and colleges have, undoubtedly, increased since independence. In the year 2002, there were 291 university-level institutions in India (including 70 deemed universities). Of these 17 were central universities, 162 traditional universities while the others were professional/ technical institutions. Of these, 40 provide education in agriculture, including forestry, dairy, fisheries and veterinary science, 18 in medicine, 33 in engineering and technology, and 3 in information technology. The total number of colleges in the country was 12,342, including 1,525 women's colleges.

The pressure of the educational system is taking its toll on the toddlers who are barely out of their infancy. They are made to identify fruits, vegetables, animals, alphabets, numerals, etc. for admission in kindergarten. Parents of the children are interviewed to assess their educational background and financial stability. Once admitted to the school, children are subjected to an inhumanly *gruelling* academic schedule; huge and largely irrelevant syllabus; over worked, underpaid and unsympathetic teachers and emphasis on competition, rather than cooperation as a result of which they are unable to enjoy their childhood. The students learn their lessons by rote, without straining their *grey cells*. There is a domination of textual knowledge in the educational system. The students do not participate in the practical application of knowledge. Maulana Azad had once observed that "there is no adjustment between the system of our education and the needs of our life." The curricula adhered to by the system, find little or no application, in the practical life of the people.

The exam-oriented system judges the student on the basis of his performance in the annual examination held at the end of every session. The marks mania drives every teacher and every parent to expect the very best from every student, 90 per cent or above. Difference of a few per cent categorizes a brilliant student as mediocre, if he could not perform well in exams for some reasons. Parental and peer pressure to secure good percentage for entry into prestigious colleges and courses hinders the proper development of the child.

Admission in a good college is a *herculean* task. The applicants are many but colleges have limited seats for various courses, and hence, cut off percentage for admission is high. Some colleges have a limited sports or extra-curricular quota, but this is used mainly to secure back-door entry for favoured candidates. Colleges have reservation of seats for various special categories, like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, etc. Applicants belonging to such categories are able to secure admission at comparatively low percentages. Capitation fee, though banned, is charged by the colleges which at times sidelines the deserving students. Dealing with the menace of capitation fees, the Supreme Court on 14th August, 2003 ruled that no professional institution can charge capitation fees from students seeking admission. The Bench said, "Governments should consider framing appropriate regulations and cancel the recognition as well as the affiliation given to a professional college if it is found charging capitation fees or indulging in profiteering." This ruling has affected the engineering, medical, architecture and management colleges mainly in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The court also said that private, unaided or minority institutions imparting technical or medical education could decide their own fee structure which must be scrutinised by a committee headed by a retired high court judge in each state.

Though the university regulations require each student to have 75 per cent attendance, the fact is that nobody observes this regulation. Reports of massive absenteeism appear in most universities as soon as teaching begins. It is often seen that the students without attending the classes in the college opt to go for private tuitions as a result of which the teachers in the colleges are not able to take up classes properly. Students take up tuitions for each and every subject. This is the latest trend going on among the students. For this kind of degradation in the educational system, some of the teachers too are responsible. The standard of teaching is deteriorating day by day and the teachers encourage the students to take up tuitions under them. Children of well to do families can afford to go in for tuitions, but the plight of the poor children is very sad. Education is not properly imparted in the colleges and universities as a result of which the bright students who are poor are the worst sufferers.

The present educational system need be altered so that all children can get proper education. The truth is that an average youngster who merely concentrates on the university course has a bleak future as the university degree does not assure them a *lucrative* job. There is lack of emphasis on vocational education. It is evident from the fact that Delhi University has a limited number of vocational colleges and courses. A modest attempt in favour of vocationalisation was launched by the UGC

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about a decade ago and had some degree of success. But it has been very limited. An important reason for this relative failure is that the teachers themselves do not possess those skills which the students are expected to acquire.

The shortcomings in the present educational system can be attributed to the fact that only a few changes have been made in the system since the 19th century. The same regimen of three-hour exams, emphasis on *rote* learning and a rigid division between academic and vocational streams has continued. Ideally, the education system should have been over-hauled after Independence. But unlike Japan or China, Indian academics failed to carry through curriculum or examination reforms in any radical sense. Though some intellectuals helped in improving books in certain subjects, the overarching colonial legacy of the classroom, text and the annual examination remained unaltered.

The obsolete educational system need be scrapped and replaced by a reformed one. There have been a few attempts to reform the educational system. Many commissions have been constituted to look into the flaws of the existing system. The Mudaliar Commission, the Kothari Commission and the Radhakrishnan Commission have recommended thorough reforms in the present pattern of educational system. According to the recommendations, the judgement of a student's performance should be on the basis of periodical tests and his overall performance. They have also recommended imparting of practical training to the student which would enhance his skills and confidence. The scope of the formal education should be broadened by giving a place to community work, sports, crafts and fine arts in the main curriculum. This work should be assessed along with academic disciplines on a regular basis – rather than a three-hour written exam. The aim should be development of personality as a whole, instead of sharpening analytical and literary minds in isolation. This would help in lapping the various talents of the students. There should be a graded system of marking at the school and the college level so that the students do not feel depressed when they fail to match up to their expectation by a few percents.

Education should be planned keeping the requirements of industry and business in mind. It is necessary to discourage the culture of taking up graduation course at the college level just for the sake of it. The number of vocational courses and colleges should be increased which would be able to provide job to the youth. The flaws in the existing educational system need be removed to give way to a perfect and befitting system. The required changes should be brought about to make the system more effective and development oriented.

**Key-words**

1. *hackneyed* – become dull 2. *gruelling* – difficult 3. *grey cells* – brain power 4. *herculean* – needing a very great strength or effort 5. *lucrative* – producing much money, profitable 6. *rote* – learn without understanding the meaning

**Points to Remember:**

1. Historical background.
2. The present educational system was inherited from the British.
3. The number of universities and colleges in India.
4. Students learn their lessons by rote in this exam-oriented system.
5. Admission in a good college is a herculean task.
6. College degree does not assure employment.
7. There is a need to reform the existing educational system.

**3. Population**

India is the second most populous country in the world. A developing nation by economic status, India cannot afford to increase her population. India accounts for only 2.4 per cent of the world's land area which is inhabited by 16.7 per cent of the world's population. The country's population which was 345 million at the time of independence grew up to 1,027 million as on March 1, 2001 (census 2001). India became the second country in the world after China to cross the one billion population mark. It achieved the dubious distinction by mid August 1999. The United Nations has

estimated that the world population grew at an annual rate of 1.4 per cent during 1999-2000. China, meanwhile, registered a much lower annual growth rate of 1 per cent. However, India registered a comparatively higher growth rate of 1.93 per cent during 1991-2001. If the current trend remains unchecked, by 2050, India would become the most populous country on the earth with 17.2 per cent of the world's population.

One of the reasons for the rapid growth of population has been the orthodox beliefs held by most Indians. The *bigoted* belief that children are the blessings of God and any effort by man to challenge Him would mean the invitation of His wrath, has led to the population growth. More children means more hands to supplement the family income. They somehow ignore the fact that it also means more children to feed and clothe. The family planning programme initiated in the 1950s largely remained a government programme. It rarely assumed the character of a popular community programme. Even after fifty six odd years of independence, total literacy among the masses has not been achieved. Poor education level of the people is the main cause of slow pace of family planning movement. Early marriage of girls result in motherhood at the tender age of 16. Education leads to awareness, but in many states, the educational system has become ineffective. The desire for a male child also creates problems. Many couples in the rural areas refuse to adopt contraceptive measures till they get a male child. Such obsession for the male child has also led to an alarming increase of female infanticide resulting in the falling sex ratios.

India's rapid growth of population has led to many socio-economic problems. It has the maximum number of malnourished people in the world. The highest disease burden, the largest population of child labour and most number of poor are present here and these numbers continue to rise every year. The country has failed to generate new employment opportunities in proportion to the growth of population. This has created undue pressure on the land and has resulted in the migration of people from villages to the cities and towns. Poverty has forced them to seek refuge in slums, earn a livelihood in a foreign land and live in inhuman conditions. The slums lack the basic amenities of *potable* water, healthcare and sanitation. The forest cover in India has been drastically reduced to give way to new residential areas, posing an ecological imbalance. The high rate of population growth has thwarted the efforts towards development of the country both in the urban and rural sectors. The alarming increase in the rate of crime is also the result of the population explosion. The baby boom has resulted in a scramble for admissions to schools and universities.

On observing the *demographic* pattern of different states of India, states down south, viz. Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have shown a significant drop in birth rates while the BIMARU States (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh) and the newly created states Uttaranchal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh account for a major share in the increase in population. According to the Technical Group on Population Projections constituted by Planning Commission, the country would achieve the replacement level (total fertility rate) of 2.1 by 2026. However, the BIMARU States will achieve the replacement level of fertility by 2039, 2048, 2060 and 2100 respectively.

Family Planning Programme should not be the only measure to control population. It has been recognised that rapid population stabilisation can be achieved only by sustained improvement in healthcare facilities concentrating on social indicators like infant and maternal mortality, literacy, women's empowerment and life expectancy. Above all, education holds the key to growth. States of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are vigorously working towards empowering women by launching several social welfare programmes. The non-governmental organisations are working for the emancipation of rural women. Population stabilisation has also been the focus of successive Five Year Plans. The Tenth Plan, endorses that high quality services will have to be provided during the next two decades to break the *vicious cycle* of poor performance, poverty, low per capita income, low literacy and a high birth rate in most populous states. The Department of Family Welfare has drawn up the National Population Policy 2000 to improve the family welfare services. One of the major objectives of the policy is the achievement of replacement level of fertility by 2010 and of population stabilisation by 2045. The National Commission on Population has been constituted to oversee and monitor implementation of the National Population Policy (NPP). An Empowered Action Group (EAG) has been constituted in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for preparation of area



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specific programmes. It puts special emphasis on states that have been lagging behind in containing population growth to manageable limits.

The Government of India should make it mandatory for all its employees to adopt the 'small family' norm. Benefits of free schooling and medical aid to the children should be provided to the parents adopting this scheme. Simultaneously, steps to make India a totally literate state should also be taken. Only a literate country can march towards new goals or we would be plagued by the evils of population growth. The words of A.K. Shiva Kumar, Development Economist, UNICEF would sum up the state of affairs, "Stop counting people, and begin to count on people. Give priority to empowering them, expanding their capabilities, and enhancing their freedom. Begin by assuring this generation of children their right to education, health nutrition and a decent life. Then for all generations to come, people will be our greatest asset."

**Key-words**

1. *bigoted* – refusing to accept the opinions of others 2. *potable* – water fit for drinking 3. *demographic* – relating to statistics of births, death, etc. 4. *vicious cycle* – continuing situation in which one leads to another

**Points to Remember:**

1. India's population statistics.
2. Reasons of population growth.
3. Population growth has led to many socio-economic problems.
4. Statistics of different states.
5. Measures undertaken by government to control population growth.
6. Need for population control.

**4. Addiction to Drug**

Bertrand Russell in *The Conquest of Happiness* has said that the sole reason of unhappiness finding refuge in the heart of man is the *unhindered* growth of 'self-centred passions'. These passions are more often materialistic. And in the pursuit of materialistic passions, man becomes alienated from the society. Failure in his pursuit often leads him to discontentment and dejection and he finds himself a misfit in this world. In the modern world, none is unaffected by stress. The stress to outdo the other in this mad rat race of consumerism often leads to depression. Even children are not spared from this. They are supposed to fare better than their classmates in examinations and other co-curricular activities. So man, right from childhood, has to face the brunt of being born in this fast changing society.

A section of the youth, unable to cope with the expectations of their loved ones, either end their lives or experiment with drugs, for seeking temporary escape from the *rigours* of life. The illusive and momentary escape and mental relaxation provided by the initial intake, encourages people to indulge in them more often. The body then becomes totally dependent on drugs and cannot survive without the daily dose. With regular intake, the amount required to produce the effect also increases. This physical and mental dependence on drugs is called drug addiction.

Drug abuse is a psychiatric, psychological and social problem. While persons of all ages and at all places are open to drug use, the most susceptible among them are the youth. It has attained the proportions of almost an epidemic among the youth. It is mostly introduced to an unsuspecting person by his friends and is usually observed that once addicted to drugs, they initiate others to drugs. Some youngsters take to drugs because they want others to believe that they are superior and mature, as such things are taken by older people. Some get addicted because they are poked fun at if they do not use drugs. And some take drugs just to seek company or break boredom. In addition to these, other factors that lead to drug addiction are – lack of parental care and supervision, lack of moral and religious education, media and pop culture, broken homes, hatred for any authority, etc. Seeking refuge in drugs relieve tensions, eases depressions and removes inhibitions, although the period of *ecstasy*, is apparently short-lived.

Drugs, broadly speaking, are chemical compounds which when consumed alter the way the body functions. Drugs are prescribed by physicians to cure diseases and sometimes to enhance physical and mental capacities. But, psychotropic drugs accompany the risk of the patients' becoming dependent on them. They are classified into four groups. *Tranquillisers*, also known as depressants like *calmpose* induce a feeling of calmness, relaxation and drowsiness. *Opiate* such as opium and heroin are physically addictive. They are used as intoxicants to relieve pain. *Stimulants* like cocaine produce feelings of excitement, increase self-confidence and flow of ideas. *Hallucinogens* can alter a person's thoughts, feelings and perception. LSD, marijuana, cannabis are different hallucinogens.

The profile of a majority of drug addicts are the same. They start off during teenage by smoking a cigarette. And some of them graduate into bigger things like opium and smack. The first experience with drugs is not very pleasant, but the kick or ecstasy it provides to the brain makes the user seek more. The myth that the use of drug provides great peace and tranquility has led many people to fall prey to this habit. Indeed, drugs have many dimensional effects on human body and mind, which are highly harmful. People addicted to opium tend to loose weight and interest in work. They may also become sterile. Heroin addicts suffer from muscle cramps, vomiting, diarrhoea, shivering and perspiration, if they are unable to procure their daily dose. LSD can cause severe damage to the central nervous system. Drug abusers, being careless, run the risk of contracting many diseases like blood poisoning, serum hepatitis and also AIDS after using contaminated needles. Failure in getting their daily dose of drugs because of shortage of money, can also make them resort to crime and murder. Drugs can reduce *cognitive* operations making it difficult for the youth to develop a functional set of values and ideals. Reduced cognitive operations lead to poor academic performance and a decline in self-esteem. A drug addict in due course gets alienated from the mainstream of the family, neighbourhood and society.

Our country has been confronted with the problem of an increased trafficking in drugs. The northern region is the hub of growers, suppliers and couriers. Cultivation of poppy and opium is legal in U.P., Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh for medicinal purposes, but a large part of it find its way into the illegal trade. Drug trafficking is also patronised, by the politicians and the bureaucrats for their own benefits. The amount of money involved in the trafficking has made the narcotics mafia stronger than the government. The law enforcing departments often find it difficult to prosecute the criminals because of their *dubious* involvements with the politicians.

A major portion of the drugs available in India is smuggled from Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Government of India has enforced stringent laws to curb the menace of drug trafficking. The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act of 1985 has made drug offences non-bailable. The Narcotics Control Bureau has, on several occasions, intercepted huge hauls of drugs. The government should ban the cultivation of all the drug-yielding crops and provide the growers with alternate professions to sustain themselves. Article 47 of the Constitution enjoins that the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of consumption, except for medicinal purposes, intoxicating drinks and drugs which are injurious to health. The Ministry of Welfare has been implementing the Scheme for Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse since the year 1985-86. The Ministry is assisting 373 voluntary organisations for maintaining 459 centres all over the country. An amount of Rs. 22.50 crore was spent under the scheme in the year 2001-02.

Society, on its part, should also feel responsible towards the menace and help the government in eradicating it. We just can't blame the students. They find rank hypocrisy everywhere. They see the wide gulf of difference between the great values taught in the classrooms and the outside world of elders that promote the sub-culture of corruption, greed, deceit and subtle violence. They can't reconcile these two extremes. The family being the basic unit of the society should make a concerted effort towards the development of children. There should be regular counselling sessions in schools and colleges to guide students to cope with the stress on campus and in their life after their academic pursuits are complete. The NGOs like the Narcotics Anonymous give counselling and treatments to several drug abusers and restore their shattered lives. The family, friends and relatives of the patient should effectively contribute towards his rehabilitation.

## Notes

## Key-words

1. *unhindered* – unchecked 2. *rigours* – severe conditions 3. *ecstasy* – state of strong feeling  
4. *cognitive* – process of acquiring knowledge 5. *dubious* – doubtful

**Points to Remember:**

1. Growth of 'self-centred passions' has led people to depression.
2. Drug abuse is a psychiatric, psychological and social problem.
3. Drugs are mostly introduced to a person by his friends.
4. Drugs provide temporary relief from stress but produce harmful effects in later life.
5. India has been confronted with the problem of increased trafficking in drugs.
6. The government has to make more stringent laws to deal with menace.
7. The parents should make a concerted effort towards the progress of their children.
8. NGOs should also help in eradicating the menace.

**5. Unity in Diversity**

Our country comprising of many *ethnic* groups with *myriad* spoken languages, dialects and regional diversities. Its people profess and practise different faiths and religions which is reflected in their customs, rituals, norms, dresses and festivals. In spite of the regional diversities, the citizens remain essentially united. History is a witness to the fact that though several foreign invaders attacked India, none succeeded in *obliterating* the basic Indian culture. On the contrary, the inherent quality to imbibe and the power of tolerance helped the Indian culture to emerge richer after these aggressions. India emerged as a composite cultural society where world religions like Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Zoroastrianism and Judaism have co-existed with Hinduism, Jainism and others. In the process, the Indian culture has made itself rich through *synthesis*.

During the colonial rule in the 19th century, there was a widespread resentment among the local rulers, the common masses and the peasantry, towards the British which culminated in the Revolt of 1857. It was the first time in Indian history that people from all walks of life, irrespective of their caste, religion and region, stood together against a common enemy. Though the revolt was unsuccessful in its endeavour, it proved that if a *splintered* society forsakes its narrow walls of differences, it could prove a threat to any aggressor. The revolt was crushed by the end of 1858 but the British realised that Hindu-Muslim unity was a threat to their empire.

Towards the end of the 19th century, the resentment against the British rule picked up momentum. The urban middle class, which received western education and was inspired by western liberal views, became the harbinger of the second freedom struggle. But it realised that it had to involve the masses in its struggle to make it successful. Gandhiji realised the need for mass mobilization and unity among the people. He worked to develop harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims. The colonial rulers viewed the emergence of nationalism *transcending* religious barriers, as a threat to their *hegemony*. So, they propounded the policy of divide and rule which was intended to prolong their rule in India. It led to the feeling of intolerance among Indians. This culminated in the partition of India. Though we were successful in ending colonial rule in India, their prolonged presence not only exposed the cleavage between majority and minority groups but also between sub-groups of the, same religion.

Independent India inherited a conservative community which followed the rigidities of the caste system and had diverse religions. The Indian Constitution gave paramount importance to secularism. Though the word 'secularism' was included in the Preamble of the Constitution after the 42nd amendment in 1976, Articles 25 to 29 provided for the freedom of religion and protection of cultural and educational rights of the minorities. The Constitution guarantees each individual the freedom to profess, practise and propagate his religion and assures strict impartiality towards all religions. It clearly defines the nature of secular state in India. It declares that there would be no state religion in India. The state will neither establish a religion of its own nor confer any special patronage upon any particular religion. The typical Indian concept of secularism is defined as *Sarva Dharma Samabhava*.

However, we have been passing through turbulent times, of late. Certain anti-national and external forces are trying to disrupt the unity of the country by encouraging communal feelings and sentiments. It has led to increasing intolerance, disharmony and lawlessness among the masses. There has also been a spurt in riots, violence and killings of innocent people. When people face a threat to their lives, they tend to cling to their socio-religious groups which lead to distrust of the intentions of people belonging to different communities. Terrorism should not be allowed to raise its ugly head and destroy our basic unity. When a country is torn by internal strife, there is always a looming threat of external aggression.

Many ancient civilizations decayed and degenerated because of stagnation and resistance to change with time. Indian culture has remained alive and dynamic because it has always been tolerant to different cultures. It imbibed the good qualities of other cultures and constantly upgraded itself. Influence of various cultures has made it rich and vibrant. Significant contributions have been made to it by the Aryans, Dravidians, Greeks, Persians, Arabs, Mughals and Europeans. Had it not been for the tolerance shown by the people of India during the rule of foreigners, who brought in their own traditions and sought to impose them, the flexible Indian culture would have lost its *moorings*. The Persian and western influence on our art, literature, painting and dress have now become an integral part of our own culture.

The Indian civilization has always been based on religious and moral values. Herein lies its unity and strength. In all parts of the country, cultural unity, the unity of the way of life and outlook transcends the vast diversity in faiths, beliefs—at times bordering on superstition, magic, charms and other practices. One may travel from one part of the country to another and encounter a totally different *milieu*, where people talk, dress and worship differently, yet one will not feel as a stranger. Everywhere he will recognise a common thread in some aspect of life which makes him feel at home. This is because the Indian culture has preserved its fundamental character through the ages. We have experienced revolutionary economic and political changes in recent times, but our past remains very much with us. Our rich cultural heritage passed from one generation to another and in this process it got nurtured and renewed.

Our rich cultural heritage, a legacy which binds the people together, should be preserved at all costs. A correct balance of traditional values with modern ideas should be the objective. The future generations should be able to hold their heads high with pride for being born in a country with a rich tradition of values and morals. Our goal should be to achieve a balanced synthesis of the new trends of science and traditional ideals which have sustained the country through all times.

In recent times, there has been a cultural awakening of the educated youth who have become aware of the beauty of our art forms, crafts and have started taking a keen interest in educating themselves about their rich cultural traditions. The government has also, in its effort to promote national integration, started organising big cultural events and has set up four regional cultural centres in different parts of the country. All these attempts should help in strengthening the common bond of unity that ties the people together in spite of the diversity in their beliefs and religions.

However, the great Indian traditions of secularism and cultural diversity is under a major threat, of late. Diversity which our founding fathers expected to be the cornerstone of our pluralistic society is now used by many opportunistic politicians for divisive purposes. The implementation of the Mandal Commission Report has made prominent the faultlines between castes. The Ayodhya issue, Mumbai blasts and subsequent riots in the name of religion have further undermined our tradition of unity and peaceful co-existence. The massacre of innocent Sikhs in the 1984 riots was horrific. In 2002, Gujarat burnt as a result of fierce communal clashes leading to the loss of thousands of lives and massive internal migration. There are many instances of minority oppression. The militancy problem in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast too are manifestations of the damage that has been inflicted on the secular fabric of India. It is imperative that all Indians should bury their petty differences based on caste, religion, etc. and work together to ensure the success of the concept and practice of unity in diversity.

#### Key-words

1. *ethnic* – racial
2. *myriad* – great number
3. *obliterating* – destroying
4. *synthesis* – combination
5. *splintered* – fragmented
6. *transcending* – surpassing
7. *hegemony* – control
8. *moorings* – permanent anchor
9. *milieu* – social environment

## Notes

**Points to Remember:**

1. India is a vast country comprising many ethnic groups.
2. Hindu-Muslim unity led to the Revolt of 1857.
3. The second freedom struggle.
4. Provisions in the Constitution.
5. Recent disharmony in the country.
6. Indian culture has remained alive and dynamic.
7. It has preserved its fundamental character through the ages.
8. Our rich cultural heritage, which binds the people together, should be preserved at all costs.

**6. Poverty**

India, once known as the *Sone Ki Chiriya* or 'land of plenty', was full of riches. However, coming of the Turks, the Mughals, the Arabs, the Mongols and the British for extending their empires or for trade depleted its resources to a great extent, and today, poverty is a harsh reality for a large section of the Indian population.

Poverty may be defined as the inability to secure the minimum consumption requirements for life, health and efficiency. These requirements necessarily include minimum human needs in respect of food, clothing, housing, education and health. Denial of minimum consumption needs causes human misery. According to the Human Development Report of 1977, poverty is the denial of opportunities, to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-respect and the respect of others. In fact, poverty is a socio-economic phenomenon which defies any precise definition. Its concept and content varies from country to country depending upon what a particular society accepts a reasonably good living standard for its people.

Poverty line is drawn on the basis of a minimum desirable nutritional standards of calorie intake. People below poverty line comprise largely of those whose consumption is very low and who have little physical resources of production. Quite often they are located in the climatically unfavourable regions with extremely low or fluctuating levels of production, income and meagre avenues of gainful employment. According to United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Report-2003, India was ranked 127th among 175 countries. Among the South Asian Nations, India with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.416 is behind Maldives (rank 86), Sri Lanka (rank 99) but is ahead of Bhutan (rank 136), Bangladesh (rank 139), Nepal (rank 143) and Pakistan (rank 144). According to the Economic Survey 2001 -2002, 26.10 per cent of the total population live below poverty line: 27.09 per cent in rural areas and 23.62 per cent in urban areas.

In India, poverty manifests itself in its severest form as a visual of semistarved, ill-clad, deprived millions of countrymen. According to the UNDP Human Development Report-2003, India is the home to the largest number of hungry people – 23.3 million. The problem of poverty is grim in India, in Orissa, extreme poverty has forced parents to sell their children for money. Different reports state that farmers in the villages of many states of India were forced to embrace death when they failed to repay the loans to private lenders even after selling off their lands. A major defect in the economic system is that while the mere processor becomes wealthy, the basic producer struggles to have a decent living. In search of greener pastures, people migrate to urban areas which lead to development of slum areas. Asia's largest slum 'Dharavi' is in Mumbai. Poverty leads to many ills in the society. Illiteracy, child labour, crime, corruption, and prostitution are some of them.

Poverty is the *cumulative* effect of many factors operating in the Indian society. At the macro level, poverty is mainly attributed to the population explosion. In the rural areas, poverty is mainly due to low land base. It largely emanates from the semi-feudal relations of production in agriculture. The urban poor in India are largely the overflow of rural poor into the urban areas. Both in the rural and in the urban areas, growing unemployment has *accentuated* the problem of poverty. Improper sectoral investment and uneven distribution of resources are also responsible for aggravating poverty.

The eradication of poverty has been an integral component of the strategy for economic development in India. Consistent with the objectives of successive plans in the realm of poverty alleviation, a number of general as well as specific programmes were implemented for improving the living conditions of the

poor. However, in spite of these efforts, the problem of poverty continued to exist. The benefits did not percolate to the lower levels because of adverse institutional framework. With the Fifth Plan, poverty alleviation came to be accepted as one of the principal objectives of economic planning. The strategy of direct assault on poverty through rural development and rural employment programmes was first adopted in the 1970s. The Sixth Plan sought to alleviate poverty through some specific measures apart from relying on the overall higher rate of growth of the economy. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) which was initially started in 1978-79 was not very effective as a poverty alleviation measure. It was restructured and renamed as *Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana* (SGSY) in April 1999 and its allied programmes, viz TRYSEM, DWCRA, SITRA, GKY and MWS were merged with it. *Jawahar Rozgar Yojana* (JRY) was restructured and renamed as *Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana* (JGSY) in April 1999. The Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) and the *Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana* (JGSY) were merged into the *Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana* (SGRY) in September 2001. The *Swarnajayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana* (SJSRY) was launched in December 1997. All the three Urban Poverty Alleviation Schemes, namely, Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP), *Nehru Rozgar Yojana* (NRY) and Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMI-UPEP) were merged with it.

The *Annapurna Scheme* was launched in April 2000. It aimed at providing food security to those senior citizens (65 years and above) who though eligible for the National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS) remained uncovered under the Scheme. The *Samagra Awaas Yojana*, a comprehensive housing scheme, was launched in April 1999. It ensured integrated provision of shelter, sanitation and drinking water. Elimination of poverty was one of the major objectives of the Eighth Plan. The schemes and programmes aimed to provide food, health care, education, employment and shelter to the weaker sections were launched. The Ninth Plan relied essentially on the trickle down effects of economic growth for poverty alleviation. The Tenth Five Year Plan aims at reducing the poverty below 20 per cent in the country by 2007.

The District Rural Industries Project (DRIP) was launched in October 1994 for providing employment opportunities for the rural poor by setting up rural industrial estates. For people below the poverty line, *Janashree Bima Yojana*, a group insurance scheme was launched in June 2000. *Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana* (PMGY) was introduced in 2000-01 to concentrate on village level development. In November 2001, *Swayamsidha Scheme* was introduced for holistic women empowerment primarily on the self-help pattern. The government has set up *Jai Prakash Rozgar Guarantee Yojana* (JPRGY) in 2002-03 aimed at ensuring employment for people belonging to the most distressed districts of the country.

According to the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) Report (1999-2000), the incidence of poverty expressed as percentage of people living below the poverty line has witnessed a steady decline from 55% in 1973-74 to 36% in 1993-94 and 26.10% in 1999-2000. Though poverty has declined at the macro-level, rural-urban and inter-state disparities are visible. The rural poverty ratio is still relatively high in Orissa, Bihar and the North eastern States. While some states such as Punjab and Haryana have succeeded in reducing poverty by following the path of high agricultural growth, others have focussed on particular areas of development, e.g., Kerala has focussed on human resource development, West Bengal on vigorous implementation of land reform measures and empowerment of Panchayats, and Andhra Pradesh on direct public intervention in the form of public distribution of foodgrains.

Eradication of poverty is a *herculean* task. However, India has travelled a long distance on the road to development since independence. Statistics show that it has been able to alleviate poverty to some extent through various governmental programmes and schemes. The UNDP Human Development Report-2003 also maintains that India, home to one-sixth of the world population, has achieved great progress on most fronts. Finally, the objective of removal of poverty can be fulfilled if the poor themselves become conscious, improve their education and capabilities, become organised and assert themselves. Though India, today, is a poor and developing country, sincere and effective efforts for development and poverty alleviation will definitely place it in the group of rich and developed

#### Key-words

1. *precise* – clear, accurate
2. *cumulative* – gradually increasing
3. *accentuated* – made it prominent
4. *herculean* – need very great strength or effort

## Notes

**Points to Remember:**

1. The wealth and prosperity of the past.
2. Definition of poverty.
3. Effects of poverty.
4. Causes of poverty.
5. Provisions of poverty alleviation in various Five Year Plans.
6. Conclusion.

**7. Corruption**

Corruption is a widespread phenomenon in today's public life. In the past 55 years, we have virtually institutionalised corruption as an inseparable part of our life. Incorruptible officers and public figures have become a microscopic minority fighting with their back to the wall for survival. Mr. T.N. Seshan, former Chief Election Commissioner of India, opined that every patch of Indian society has become corrupt. Reacting defensively to allegations of corruption in every sphere of life, Indira Gandhi had said, "Corruption is a global phenomenon". The issue is the degree and extent to which it is to be found in India and elsewhere.

The phenomenon of corruption is rampant not only in government offices but even in politics. Many people become Panchayat Members, Panchayat Presidents, Councillors, MPs and MLAs and Ministers in order to make a fortune and not to serve the people. Politics is the most lucrative business these days where money power and muscle power are the best investments and leadership can be passed to the succeeding generations of the family. Precedents at the national levels have *permeated* to all the levels. Politics for many is the short-cut to fabulous wealth. Honest civil servants cannot survive under corrupt Ministers.

In government offices also, the practise of corruption is all pervading— right from the petty village officer to the head of the government department at the Centre or at the State. In most government offices, members of the public cannot expect the official to do his duty unless he gets the 'extra' money—the lubricant that helps the machinery to move. Corruption has reached such high levels because some of us indulge in it for petty gains or convenience and the rest tolerate and accept it. Giving and taking bribes has become the norm rather than an offence. Corruption has become so common nowadays that people are averse to thinking of public life without this phenomenon. Corruption has almost paralysed the entire Indian system.

We often wonder which is the most corrupt department or section of the administration in India. A survey was conducted by the ORG-Marg for an NGO called the Transparency International India to find out the number of people affected by corruption in different sectors. The survey disclosed that the greatest number of people affected by corruption (8.1 crore) was by the Health department, followed by Power (5.9 crore) and Education (5.3 crore). The department which least affected people by their corruption were Police (2.0 crore) and Railways (3.3 crore). About 1.3 crore people were affected by corruption in the judiciary and 0.7 crore in the Taxation department. What is really shocking about the ORG-Marg finding is that corruption is silently corroding the two key areas of development of our nation.

Is there any salvation for our country from the virtual poisoning of the entire body politic by corruption? The former Chief Vigilance Commissioner, Mr. N. Vittal suggested several times that a new fundamental right such as, the right to corruption-free service should be incorporated into the Constitution. This would allow judicial action if it was violated. Mr. T.N. Seshan tried to cleanse the election system, but in spite of his sincere efforts, he failed.

The anti-corruption agencies, such as the vigilance commissions, anti-corruption departments, CBI *et al* are constituted to look into and trap the bribe-takers. Such actions can have a short term dramatic effect, but would not deal with the root of the problem. Moreover, the *kingpins* are too clever to be caught in any trap. However, the greatest obstacle in eliminating corruption is the fact that public morality is virtually non-existent. Wholesale corruption has corroded the pillars of democracy. Bribery,

money *laundering*, incentives, fees for services rendered and scams have become a way of life. We should demand transparency and accountability. That is the crux of the problem in our polity, which has so far been only preached but seldom practised. The top has to be clean to make the lower levels clean. Unless they are clean, they cannot enthuse or enforce discipline.

Corruption at high levels of political leadership leads to corruption in the bureaucracy and other wings of the administration, like, the police or the Public Works Department. It spreads from top to bottom. It's a vicious cycle. Along with money power, muscle power has also polluted our elections. Quite a number of our MPs and legislators have criminal records against them. People with moral integrity and honesty should contest elections and should be voted to power. The collective mass movement can change the quality of our Parliament and State Legislatures in a big way. These legislatures in turn would be able to divert the resources siphoned off in corruption, for human resource development and the development of rural and urban India. There is a need for a new beginning to make India corruption-free.

Instead of promising to deal only with the symptoms, the government can tackle corruption more effectively if serious efforts are made to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people. The government policies should aim at lowering rates of infant mortality and increasing life expectancy at birth through improved healthcare services. Investment in primary and technical education as well as in adult literacy is very important. Development in infrastructure sectors especially power, telecommunications and roads and investment in social sectors in the interest of human resource development, downsizing of governmental machinery on all fronts, gradually and over a period of time, will certainly help in bringing down corruption to a minimal level. By reducing the size of bureaucracy, the scope for corruption at levels of interaction with citizens will also be reduced. Poverty, that is, stark poverty at least can be eradicated but corruption can, perhaps, never be completely eliminated. As one national leader pointed out that corruption, like *diabetes*, can only be controlled, but not totally obliterated. However, there are a few honest men everywhere, because of whom the nation survives.

In a country where corrupt elements do not hesitate to make money for buying coffins for our martyrs, the depths of depravity can be well imagined. Our attitude is so laidback that we don't even lend our support to those who are fighting against it. Everyday, reports regarding malpractices in different departments are published in the newspaper, but they hardly have any impact on us. They have become an integral part of our life. Unless we adopt zero tolerance towards corruption, this evil cannot be reduced. One can only recall Professor Galbraith who said years ago, "There is nothing wrong with Indian laws, nothing wrong with its (*socialist*) economy, or with its political and judicial institutions, what ails India is its moral poverty". Galloping corruption and the lack of integrity at higher levels needs consideration without further delay for the health of our democracy.

#### Key-words

1. *microscopic minority*—so small in number that they are hardly visible
2. *permeated*—penetrate throughout, pervade
3. *et al*—and others (Latin word)
4. *kingpin*—essential or leading person
5. *laundering*—transfer (funds) to make their source seem legitimate
6. *diabetes*—disorder of pituitary leading to a disease in which sugar and starch are not properly absorbed. The disease can be controlled but cannot be completely cured
7. *socialist*—an economic system which advocates that community as a whole should own and control the means of production, distribution and exchange

#### Points to Remember:

1. Corruption is a widespread phenomenon in public life.
2. Corruption is rampant in politics and in public services.
3. In government offices, the practise of corruption is all pervading.



**Notes**

4. According to a survey, the greatest number of people are affected by corruption in the Health, Power and Education Departments.
5. Suggestions for reducing and obliterating corruption.
6. Corruption at high levels seeps into bureaucracy and to the people. It spreads from top to bottom and forms a vicious cycle.
7. Socio-economic conditions of the people need to be improved.
8. Adopt zero tolerance towards corruption.

**8. Terrorism**

Terrorism has been defined differently by different experts. Terrorist strikes are sometimes euphemistically referred to as 'political crimes'. Killing of civilians for any purpose in a conflict is terrorism. Terrorism has developed into a global issue of late. It has assumed the global centre-stage on 11 September, 2001 when America was attacked for the first time in nearly the last two centuries.

In one of the most well planned and co-ordinated attacks ever, Islamic militants belonging to Osama bin Laden's terrorist outfit Al Qaeda, launched a *kamikaze* attack. Two passenger aircrafts were *hijacked* and deliberately directed on to the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York. Minutes later another one slammed into the Pentagon, the Headquarters of the American Defence Department in Washington. Thousands of people, including emergency workers and fire fighters were killed and the United States along with the entire world was shocked after this gruesome attack. This attack was followed by massive bomb attacks in Bali in Indonesia, Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, Casablanca in Morocco, Mombasa in Kenya and the list goes on. Terrorism has become truly global as the world has realized that no country, however economically politically and militarily strong it may be, is immune to the threat of terrorism.

A major irony of today's global terrorism is the fact that the man America dreads most and desperately wants to catch dead or alive, Osama bin Laden, is a monster created by the Americans themselves. It all started when the cold war was at its peak and the Soviet Union marched into Afghanistan in 1979. Since the Americans could not counter it militarily, they decided to employ proxy fighters. Osama bin Laden, a Saudi billionaire was one of the leading Islamic fundamentalists who arrived in Afghanistan along with a number of supporters to wage 'jihad' against the 'Godless communists'. These people were trained by the CIA, Mossad (Israeli Intelligence) and the Pakistani ISI and were given money and weapons including Stinger missiles. The Americans tried to dissociate themselves from these militants they created after the Soviet withdrawal from the region. However, a core group of terrorists were created who had lots of weapons, financial clout and religious zeal.

Osama initially turned against his previous mentor, the US in 1990 when the American troops landed in Saudi Arabia. From then onwards, he has been waging a virtual war against the US and its allies like Israel. The 1993 attack on WTC, 1998 bombing of certain American embassies, the attack on the ship USS Cole, etc. are allegedly linked to Osama Bin Laden.

Most of the present day terrorist activities can be traced to the West Asian region and have a certain inexplicable connection to the cold war. The region was a major theatre of the cold war rivalry between the US and the USSR. Most of the Arab states in the region, in a wave of pan-Arabism and socialism under the leadership of Egyptian leader Nasser tried to align with the Soviet Union. The US especially after the 1967 war supported Israel which was detested by its Arab neighbours. The establishment of Israel in 1948 in Palestine was a major blow to the native Palestinians. Another part of the Palestinian land was taken over by the Jordanians.

In 1967, Israel took over the entire Palestinian land of the West Bank and Gaza and as a result of all these, millions of Palestinians became refugees and were also subjected to foreign occupation. Israel's *intransigence* on the Palestinian issue has led to the creation of a number of terrorist outfits like the Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Al Aqsa Brigade, etc. The unconditional support of America for Israel and the helplessness of Arab states after the collapse of their patron, the Soviet Union has led to these groups starting a wave of violence in the region against Israeli and American targets. Of late, these attacks have become extra regional as the terrorist groups have declared jihad against infidel targets

worldwide. Elsewhere in the region, Iran, Syria and Lebanon have close links with Hezbollah, which is another terrorist outfit. The region is also plagued with terrorist movements of the Kurds especially in Turkey.

The collapse of the Palestinian peace talks has further *undermined* the chances of peace in the region and the whole world. The vicious circle of strikes and counter strikes has now spilled over to the global scene, and therefore, West Asia remains one of the most dangerous regions as far as terrorism is concerned.

The Anglo-American unilateral military invasion of Iraq to remove Saddam Hussain tends to create further problems. The extreme lawlessness in Iraq where the coalition occupational forces have failed miserably to maintain law and order will lead to more terrorist strikes. There are video and audio tapes of Saddam Hussain and Al Zawahiri, the deputy leader of Al Qaeda calling for suicide attacks over infidel forces worldwide. The occupation of Iraq as a part of American war on terrorism may ultimately trigger more terrorist attacks globally.

Kashmir, often described as a nuclear flash point by Americans is another major arena of terrorism. Pakistan, which illegitimately occupies a substantial *chunk* of Kashmir is providing support and *abetting* infiltrators who cross over to India. The Pakistani ISI maintains training camps, supplies arms and other provisions for gullible youngsters to make them *jihadis*. The Taliban militants dislodged from Afghanistan by the US are also involved in Kashmiri terrorism. Currently, Pakistan can be considered as the epicenter of global terrorism. On its eastern front, it runs terrorist camps to destabilize India. On the western flank (the north west province), it actively helps the Taliban militia to overthrow the Hamid Karzai regime in Afghanistan. Ironically, the US which has declared the global war on terrorism is oblivious to this and the Pakistani dictator, Musharraf is their *blue-eyed boy*. Such double standards are a major reason for the spread of terrorism across the globe.

There are also other terrorist outfits like the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, the Maoists in Nepal, which use terror as a tool for political ends. Terrorism persists in Indonesia, Philippines, Chechnya, the Balkans, Spain (Basque militants) and many parts of Africa.

Today, almost every country faces the threat of terrorism in varying degrees. It is the educated and unemployed youth who become terrorists. They join the terrorist groups not always out of conviction. Very often they are fed up with their unproductive, unemployed status and join the militants for money. Political, economic and social causes can be identified for the mushrooming of the cruel terrorist groups.

A complete absence of ethics, extreme ruthlessness, excellent co-ordination and sound finances have made terrorist strikes more deadly and effective. The terrorists are employing the most modern scientific devices and communication tools. Some of them are bankrolled by oil rich sheikhdoms. They are cold blooded murderers and do not even spare civilians, women or children. Most of them are fiercely motivated often by religious dogmas which make them more dangerous. However, it is impossible to tackle this menace by just treating the symptoms. Peace and stability can be restored not by eliminating terrorists but by removing the causes of terrorism.

#### Key-words

1. *kamikaze* – suicide attack
2. *hijack* – forcibly seize control of an aircraft
3. *intransigence* – unwillingness to change views
4. *undermine* – to make less effective
5. *chunk* – a fairly large amount
6. *abetting* – supporting
7. *blue eyed boy* – a person treated with special favour

#### Points to Remember:

1. Terrorism of late has acquired a global form.
2. The September 11 attacks on the US brought terrorism into focus.
3. America's role in creating terror networks.
4. The West Asian crisis and the role of the US.

**Notes**

5. Israel-Palestine conflict and its impact.
6. Major terrorist outfits.
7. Role of Pakistan in international terrorism.
8. Various regions in the world affected by terrorism.
9. American war on Iraq and its implications.
10. Terrorism motivated by religious dogmas.

### **7.3 Review Questions**

**Write an essay on the following topics:**

1. Is air travel as safe as it should be?
2. Aviation in peace and war
3. Science in the detection of crime
4. The uses of rubber
5. Modern methods of teaching
6. The revolution in transport and communication
7. An Eccentric person
8. A Scene During Recess
9. A Natural Disaster
10. A seaside resort on a rainy day

### **7.4 Further Readings**



*Books*

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit: 8 Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies: Detailed Study

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### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Know stories of Jhumpa Lahri.
- Discuss Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies.

### Introduction

The Interpreter of Maladies is a collection of nine short stories that explore themes of identity, the immigrant experience, cultural differences, love, and family. The characters are largely Indian or Indian-American and their stories together paint an evocative picture of India's diaspora. The stories are about the lives of Indians and Indian Americans who are caught between the culture they have inherited and the "New World."

In *A Temporary Matter*, an electrical outage forces married couple Shoba and Shukumar to confront their unspoken pain over the loss of a child. The darkness gives them a safe space to confess secrets. Shoba and Shukumar admit minor indiscretions in the beginning and lead up to nagging doubts about their marriage. In the end, Shoba admits she is moving out and Shukumar admits to holding his son after he died.

In *When Mr. Pirzada Comes to Dinner*, a young Indian-American girl meets a Pakistani man her family routinely invites to dinner. Somewhat cut off from the culture of her immigrant parents, Lilia does not understand that Mr. Pirzada, since Partition, is no longer considered the same as her parents. The Indian war with Pakistan in 1971 endangers Mr. Pirzada's daughters. Witnessing his love and fears, Lilia gains a new awareness of a world larger than her own.

*Interpreter of Maladies* is the story of Indian tour guide Mr. Kapasi. He shows the Indian-American Das family the sun temple in Konark and reveals his second job as a translator of symptoms of patients who speak his native tongue. Mrs. Das declares his job romantic and important, and Mr. Kapasi becomes briefly infatuated with the woman. She is very different quite American - and he senses she has a bad marriage, as does he. By the end of the day, Mrs. Das admits that her middle child was fathered by another man. Seeking solace in a stranger, Mrs. Das wants a remedy for her malady. However, Mr. Kapasi sees only guilt and cannot offer a solution to her problem.

In *A Real Durwan*, the residents of an apartment building cast out their old caretaker Boori Ma. Boori Ma spins lavish tales of the luxuries of the life she had to leave as a refugee of Partition. Mrs. Dalal, a resident with a soft spot for Boori Ma, promises the woman new bedding, but that promise is forgotten when her husband brings home new basins. The material jealousy of their neighbors prompts a stream of workers to parade through the building. When one of the basins is stolen, Boori Ma is

**Notes**

blamed. A Real Durwan is an exploration of globalization and its ripple effect on personal economics - and the jealousy and fear it can inspire.

Sexy chronicles an affair between aimless young Miranda and married Dev. Miranda is taken with her exotic lover because he appears to be a mature and stable man. He is also the first person who calls her sexy. As Dev's behavior changes when his wife comes back to town, Miranda's guilt is exacerbated by her coworker's report of her cousin's suffering from a husband's infidelity. Still, Miranda seeks knowledge of Dev's Bengali culture. After spending the day with the son of her coworker's cousin, however, Miranda is confronted with both the repercussions of an affair and the reality of the situation. As the boy says, sexy is loving someone you don't know.

Mrs. Sen's is the home where Eliot spends his afternoons in the care of the title character. Mrs. Sen has recently emigrated to America from Calcutta and is not fitting in very well. She misses everything about her home and refuses to learn how to drive – the one activity her husband believes will broaden her life in America. Eliot recognizes this sadness and loss because his own mother is dissatisfied with her life. The birth of her niece and the death of her grandfather cause Mrs. Sen to break down. The only solace she can find is in the fresh fish the market puts on hold for her. Taking Eliot to the market one day, she gets into a car accident. Though unharmed, Eliot is removed from her home and becomes a latchkey kid. Both Mrs. Sen and Eliot are trapped in lives they cannot understand and do not want.

This Blessed House is the home shared by newlyweds Sanjeev and Twinkle. Married after only four months of courtship, their moving in process is marred by growing pains. Twinkle's gleeful obsession with the Christian iconography left behind by previous tenants irks Sanjeev. He thinks that she is childish and content in a way that he can not comprehend. They argue about a statue of the Virgin Mary and Twinkle tells Sanjeev she hates him. Though they make up before their housewarming party, Sanjeev is left with lingering doubts of whether or not they love each other. However, her discarded pair of high heels fills Sanjeev with anticipation. Twinkle finds a silver bust of Jesus that Sanjeev knows will end up on his mantle, but he now feels resigned to the idiosyncrasies of his wife.

The Treatment of Bibi Haldar is told from the point of view of the women of Bibi's village. Bibi is gripped by a mysterious illness for which the only cure is believed to be marriage. Her cousin Haldar and his wife determine her to be damaged goods and do not indulge her fantasy of marriage. When Haldar's wife becomes pregnant, Bibi is exiled for the safety of the baby. After the girl is born, the treatment of Bibi worsens and the village women retaliate by withdrawing their business from Haldar's shop. Haldar and his wife vanish, leaving Bibi to be cared for only by the village. She suffers more attacks and keeps to herself. Months later, worried for her safety, the women check in on her and find her pregnant. Bibi keeps the secret of what happened to her and the women help teach her how to raise a child. Bibi is cured.

In The Third and Final Continent, the narrator recounts the first six weeks of his life in America in 1969, balancing a new job, a new wife, and a new country. While awaiting his wife's green card, the narrator lives in the spare room of a 103-year-old woman (Mrs. Croft) who is struck by his kindness. The narrator acclimates to his new life, cherishing Cambridge and his the new beginning. However, he is nearly indifferent to the arrival of his wife, Mala. At first they are strangers. When the narrator takes Mala to meet Mrs. Croft, a moment of intimacy and understanding between the two bridges their divide. The narrator then speaks from the present and marvels at the journey his life has encompassed.

## **8.1 Story Summaries and Analysis**

### **A Temporary Matter**

Told from the third-person perspective of the husband, this story deals with the disintegrating relationship of an Indian couple, Shoba and Shukumar. Their stillborn child has created distance between the two of them, and Shukumar observes as Shoba transforms from the attentive wife into someone more aloof and self-absorbed. As in most of Lahiri's stories, food plays a significant role in

the couple's relationship. Shoba had always given the impression that their pantries were stuffed with endless supplies of food. When she begins to neglect this, Shukumar simply observes as the food vanishes, cooking what he can of it using Shoba's old recipes. He makes no moves to create a new supply. In fact, he makes no move to cover up the signs of neglect throughout the house that he holds Shoba accountable for when in fact his own apathy and grief are to blame as well. Likewise, he does little to comfort Shoba in her grief, not quite realizing the seriousness of their relationship problems. One day, they receive notice that their electricity will be out for one hour every night for five days. They spend each of these nights in the dark sharing secrets with each other, things they had never shared before. Each confession becomes more bold and reveals a larger flaw in their marriage, until their impending separation becomes clear.

### **This Blessed House**

Sanjeev and Twinkle, a newly married couple, are exploring their new house in Hartford, which appears to have been owned by fervent Christians: they keep finding gaudy Biblical paraphernalia hidden throughout the house. While Twinkle is delighted by these objects and wants to display them everywhere, Sanjeev is uncomfortable with them and reminds her that they are Hindu, not Christian. This argument reveals other problems in their relationship; Sanjeev doesn't seem to understand Twinkle's spontaneity, whereas Twinkle has little regard for Sanjeev's discomfort. He is planning a party for his coworkers and is worried about the impression they might get from the interior decorating if their mantelpiece is full of Biblical figurines. After some arguing and a brief amount of tears, a compromise is reached. When the day of the party arrives, the guests are enamored with Twinkle. Sanjeev still has conflicting feelings about her; he is captivated by her beauty and energy, but irritated by her naivete and impractical tendencies. The story ends with her and the other party guests discovering a large bust of Jesus Christ in the attic. Although the object disgusts him, he obediently carries it downstairs. This action can either be interpreted as Sanjeev giving into Twinkle and accepting her eccentricities, or as a final, grudging act of compliance in a marriage that he is reconsidering.

### **Sexy**

One of only two stories in this collection told by a non-Indian narrator, "Sexy" tells the story of a young woman, Miranda, and her affair with a married Indian man named Dev. Aside from what she hears from her one Indian friend at work, a woman named Laxmi, Miranda knows very little about India and its culture. The first time she meets Dev, she is not able to discern his nationality. However, she is instantly captivated by his charm and the thrill of being with an exotic, older man. The title of the story refers to something he whispered to her in the Christian Science center's Mapparium, a moment that she would remember for its intimacy but would later come to be seen as a sign of an unhealthy relationship. She has pangs of guilt because he is married, and this is highlighted by the fact that Laxmi's cousin has recently been abandoned by her husband for a younger woman. One day, Laxmi's cousin comes to Boston and Miranda is asked to babysit her seven-year-old son, Rohin. Rohin ends up giving Miranda some insight into his mother's grief and calls to her attention the more unglamorous aspects of being the "other woman." This experience eventually leads her to call off her affair.

### **Analysis of A Temporary Matter, This Blessed House, Sexy**

Lahiri's objective in opening her collection with "A Temporary Matter" is to start from nothing; the story is clearly about a failed relationship. By starting with a defeat, Lahiri seems to foretell that her stories will be about the hardships of communication and relationships, but that each has the possibility of success. Even in "Sexy," where the featured couple ends up separating, Miranda is actually stronger for ending her relationship with Dev because she can see that it has no potential.<sup>[1]</sup> Food is also a common theme among the stories. In "A Temporary Matter", the haunting absence of food in the household is a parallel to the lack of affection in their marriage. In "This Blessed House", Twinkle is not at all the accomplished cook that Shoba is. Having grown up in California instead of in India like Sanjeev, she doesn't seem to have any background knowledge in Indian cooking. However, she surprises Sanjeev with her spontaneous creative streak in the kitchen. Although he's annoyed that

**Notes**

she cannot cook authentic Indian food, he is still pleasantly surprised by the meal she serves him. His attitude toward her food mirrors his attitude toward her. In “Sexy” food plays a much smaller part. Miranda’s only significant encounter with Indian food in the story is when she visits an Indian grocery looking for a movie. She comes across the Hot Mix that Laxmi is always eating, but the grocer tells her it is too spicy for her. Miranda feels uncomfortable in the grocery store, and doesn’t buy the Hot Mix for Laxmi because she feels like she needs to give an excuse for being in an Indian store in the first place. This guilt or feeling of ostracism highlights the fact that she feels uncomfortable with Dev; she knows so little about him and his background, and yet their relationship is so intimate that it seems inappropriate for her not to understand more about India.

**Interpreter of Maladies**

Mr. and Mrs. Das, Indian Americans visiting the country of their heritage, hire middle-aged tour guide Mr. Kapasi as their driver for the day as they tour. Mr. Kapasi notes the parents’ immaturity. Mr. and Mrs. Das look and act young to the point of childishness, go by their first names when talking to their children, Ronny, Bobby, and Tina, and seem selfishly indifferent to the kids. On their trip, when her husband and children get out of the car to sightsee, Mrs. Das sits in the car, eating snacks she offers to no one else, wearing her sunglasses as a barrier, and painting her nails. When Tina asks her to paint her nails as well, Mrs. Das just turns away and rebuffs her daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Das ask the good-natured Mr. Kapasi about his job as a tour guide, and he tells them about his weekday job as an interpreter in a doctor’s office. Mr. Kapasi’s wife resents her husband’s job because he works at the doctor’s clinic that previously failed to cure their son of typhoid fever. She belittles his job, and he, too, discounts the importance of his occupation as a waste of his linguistic skills. However, Mrs. Das deems it “romantic” and a big responsibility, pointing out that the health of the patients depends upon Mr. Kapasi’s correct interpretation of their maladies.

Mr. Kapasi begins to develop a romantic interest in Mrs. Das, and conducts a private conversation with her during the trip. Mr. Kapasi imagines a future correspondence with Mrs. Das, picturing them building a relationship to translate the transcontinental gap between them. However, Mrs. Das reveals a secret: she tells Mr. Kapasi the story of an affair she once had, and that her son Bobby had been born out of her adultery. She explains that she chose to tell Mr. Kapasi because of his profession; she hopes he can interpret her feelings and make her feel better as he does for his patients, translating without passing judgment. However, when Mr. Kapasi reveals his disappointment in her and points out her guilt, Mrs. Das storms off.

As Mrs. Das walks away towards her family, she trails crumbs of puffed rice snacks, and monkeys begin to trail her. The neglectful Das parents don’t notice as the monkeys, following Mrs. Das’s food trail, surround their son, Bobby, isolating the son born of a different father. The monkeys begin to attack Bobby, and Mr. Kapasi rushes in to save him. Mr. Kapasi returns Bobby to his parents, and looks on as they clean up their son.

**Analysis**

The story centers upon interpretation and its power. The interpreter has power as a vehicle of understanding. Mr. Kapasi’s work enables correct diagnosis and treatment by understanding the pains and troubles of patients—effectively, he enables the saving of lives. Mrs. Das looks for this understanding from him, seeking absolution for the secret of her adultery. In confessing to Mr. Kapasi, she endows him with a sort of priestly power, expecting her confession to draw out forgiveness and consolation. Interpretation also becomes a means of communication and connection, something for which both Mr. Kapasi and Mrs. Das yearn. Both feel a disconnect from their spouses and their families, unhappy and dissatisfied with their lives.

Mr. Kapasi interprets her marital situation in relation to his own, and she asks him to interpret her secret marital violation as a connection exclusively between them. Lahiri also establishes a contrast in this story between characters who care and those who don’t. Mr. Kapasi cares about this family he has only just met; he ponders them and considers their situation.

## Main Theme – Interpretation/Seeing

Notes

Mr. Das views the world through the lens of his camera (one of the symbols in the story). Since his camera is always around his neck, he sees even tough realities through the lens of his camera, which is blinded to other characters. For example, he takes pictures of the starving peasant, and doing so openly ignores the peasant's fundamental reality. Mrs. Das, always wearing her sunglasses, sees others through their tint and this blocks others from seeing her eyes. Furthermore, when in the taxi, her window does not roll down, so she can not directly see the world outside. Mr. Kapasi watches Mrs. Das through the rearview mirror, which distorts his view of her and prevents him from looking at her directly. Mr. Das and Ronny closely resemble each other, whereas Mr. Das and Bobby have little in common. Mr. Kapasi simply observes this fact but draws no reference from it, even though this simple fact is a hint to the deeper truth. Because Mr. Kapasi sees the Das family as a unit, he never suspects the simple truth that Mr. Das is not Bobby's father. His idea of family deforms the reality of the situation.



*Notes* In the story of "Interpreter of Maladies" each character has a deformed way of viewing each other.

## A Real Durwan

Boori Ma is a feeble 64-year-old woman from Calcutta who is the stair-sweeper, or durwan, of an old brick building. In exchange for her services, the residents allow Boori Ma to live on the roof of the building. While she sweeps, she tells stories of her past: her daughter's extravagant wedding, her servants, her estate and her riches. The residents of the brick building hear continuous contradictions in Boori's storytelling, but her stories are seductive and compelling, so they let her contradictions rest. One family in particular takes a liking to Boori Ma, the Dalal's. Mrs. Dalal often gives Boori Ma food and takes care of her ailments. When Mr. Dalal gets promoted at work, he improves the brick building by installing a sink in the stairwell and a sink in his home. The Dalal's continue to improve their home and even go away on a trip to Simla for ten days and promise to bring back Boori Ma a sheep's hair blanket. While the Dalal's are away, the other residents become obsessed with making their own improvement to the building. Boori Ma even spends her life savings on special treats while circling around the neighborhood. However, while Boori Ma is out one afternoon, the sink in the stairwell is stolen. The residents accuse Boori Ma of informing the robbers and in negligence for her job. When Boori Ma protests, the residents continue to accuse her because of all her previous inconsistent stories. The residents' obsession with materializing the building dimmed their focus on the remaining members of their community, like Boori Ma. The short story concludes as the residents throw out Boori Ma's belongings and begin a search for a "real durwan."

## The Treatment of Bibi Haldar

*Analysis of A Real Durwan and The Treatment of Bibi Haldar*

"A Real Durwan" and "The Treatment of Bibi Haldar" are both examples of the effects of globalization in India. Globalization has caused many women to be or to be on the path to poverty. Although the Indian government officially eliminated the caste system in 1949, it is still a part of the social structure in India because of its deep-rooted tradition in history. Because a person is usually born into a caste, the caste rarely changes from generation to generation. Most women in poverty are in lower castes. The women who are lucky to be employed are paid poorly and exploited for their long hours of labor. Women are seen as "replaceable and disposable". Many women enter the "unorganized, underground economy". In this type of economy, there are extended hours, horrible conditions, poor wages, and they are treated unfairly. Both Boori Ma and Bibi Haldar were a part of the unorganized, underground economy because they were paid in food and shelter instead of legal, monetary compensation. Boori Ma was thrown out of her building because the community saw her as inferior and unequal. Furthermore, women's poverty is a direct link to the lack of access to education and legitimate healthcare.



## Notes

**Mrs. Sen's**

In this story, 11-year old Eliot begins staying with Mrs. Sen - a university professor's wife - after school. The caretaker, Mrs. Sen, chops and prepares food as she tells Eliot stories of her past life in Calcutta, helping to craft her identity. Like "A Temporary Matter," this story is filled with lists of produce, catalogs of ingredients, and descriptions of recipes. Emphasis is placed on ingredients and the act of preparation. Other objects are emphasized as well, such as Mrs. Sen's colorful collection of saris from her native India. Much of the plot revolves around Mrs. Sen's tradition of purchasing fish from a local seafood market. This fish reminds Mrs. Sen of her home and holds great significance for her. However, reaching the seafood market requires driving, a skill that Mrs. Sen has not learned and resists learning. At the end of the story, Mrs. Sen attempts to drive to the market without her husband, and ends up in an automobile accident. Eliot soon stops staying with Mrs. Sen thereafter.

**Analysis of Mrs. Sen's**

Mrs. Sen, the eponymous character of Lahiri's story demonstrates the power that physical objects have over the human experience. During the entire story, Mrs. Sen is preoccupied with the presence or lack of material objects that she once had. Whether it is fish from her native Calcutta or her special vegetable cutting blade, she clings to the material possessions that she is accustomed to, while firmly rejecting new experiences such as canned fish or even something as mundane as driving a car. While her homesickness is certainly understandable given her lack of meaningful social connections, her item-centric nostalgia only accentuates the fact that the people she meets in America are no barrier to her acclimation. The man at the fish market takes the time to call Mrs. Sen and reserve her special mmuff. The policeman who questions Mrs. Sen after her automobile accident does not indict her. For all intents and purposes, the people in the story make it easy for Mrs. Sen to embrace life in America. But despite this, Mrs. Sen refuses to assimilate to any degree, continuing to wrap herself in saris, serving Indian canapés to Eliot's mother, and putting off the prospect of driving. By living her life vicariously through remembered stories imprinted on her blade, her saris, and her grainy aero grams, Mrs. Sen resists assimilation through the power of material objects and the meaning they hold for her.

**The Third and Final Continent***Analysis of The Third and Final Continent*

In contrast to depictions of resistance to Indian culture found in several of the stories in Lahiri's collection, "The Third And Final Continent" portrays a relatively positive story of the Indian-American experience. In this story, the obstacles and hardships that the protagonist must overcome are much more tangible, such as learning to stomach a diet of cornflakes and bananas, or boarding in a cramped YMCA. The protagonist's human interactions demonstrate a high degree of tolerance and even acceptance of Indian culture on the part of the Americans he meets. Mrs. Croft makes a point of commenting on the protagonist's sari-wrapped wife, calling her "a perfect lady" (195). Croft's daughter Helen also remarks that Cambridge is "a very international city," hinting at the reason why the protagonist is met with a general sense of acceptance. In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 into law, abolishing several immigration quotas. This piece of legislation resulted in a massive surge of immigration from Asian countries, including India during the late 1960s and 1970s. In particular, this allowed many Asians to come to the US under the qualification of being a "professional, scientist, or artist of exceptional ability" contributing to the reputation of Asian-Americans as being intelligent, mannered, and a model minority. In this story, the only reason the narrator even meets Mrs. Croft is because he is an employee of MIT, a venerable institution of higher learning. Whereas prior to the INS Act of 1965, Asians were often seen as a yellow menace that was only tolerable because of their small numbers (0.5% of the population), by the time the Asian immigration boom tapered off in the 1990s, their reputation as a model minority had been firmly cemented, building a reputation for Asian Americans of remarkable educational and professional success, serving as the cultural backdrop in Lahiri's *The Third and Final Continent*.<sup>[4]</sup> By ending on a cultural tone of social acceptance and tolerance, Lahiri suggests that the experience of adapting to American society is ultimately achievable.

## 8.2 Text – Interpreter of Maladies

Notes

The Tea Stall Mr. and Mrs. Das bickered about who should take Tina to the toilet. Eventually Mrs. Das relented when Mr. Das pointed out that he had Mr. Kapasi watched as Mrs. Das emerged slowly from his bulky white Ambassador, dragging her shaved, largely bare legs across the back seat. She did not hold the little girl's hand as they walked to the rest room.

They were on their way to see the Sun Temple at Konarak. It was a dry, bright Saturday, the mid-July heat tempered by a steady ocean breeze, ideal weather for sightseeing. Ordinarily Mr. Kapasi would not have stopped so soon along the way, but less than five minutes after he'd picked up the family that morning in front of Hotel Sandy Villa, the little girl had complained.

The first thing Mr. Kapasi had noticed when he saw Mr. and Mrs. Das, standing with their children under the portico of the hotel, was that they were very young, perhaps not even thirty. In addition to Tina they had two boys, Ronny and Bobby, who appeared very close in age and had teeth covered in a network of flashing silver wires. The family looked Indian but dressed as foreigners did, the children in stiff, brightly colored clothing and caps with translucent visors. Mr. Kapasi was accustomed to foreign tourists; he was assigned to them regularly because he could speak English. Yesterday he had driven an elderly couple from Scotland, both with spotted faces and fluffy white hair so thin it exposed their sunburnt scalps. In comparison, the tanned, youthful faces of Mr. and Mrs. Das were all the more striking. When he'd introduced himself, Mr. Kapasi had pressed his palms together in greeting, but Mr. Das squeezed hands like an American so that Mr. Kapasi felt it in his elbow. Mrs. Das, for her part, had flexed one side of her mouth, smiling dutifully at Mr. Kapasi, without displaying any interest in him. As they waited at the tea stall, Ronny, who looked like the older of the two boys, clambered suddenly out of the back seat, intrigued by a goat tied to a stake in the ground.

"Don't touch it," Mr. Das said. He glanced up from his paperback tour book, which said "INDIA" in yellow letters and looked as if it had been published abroad. His voice, somehow tentative and little shrill, sounded as though it had not yet settled into maturity.

"I want to give it a piece of gum," the boy called back as he trotted ahead.

Mr. Das stepped out of the car and stretched his legs by squatting briefly to the ground. A clean-shaved man, he looked exactly a magnified version of Ronny. He had a sapphire blue visor, and was dressed in shorts, sneakers, and a T-shirt. The camera slung around his neck, with an impressive telephoto lens and numerous buttons and markings, was the only complicated thing he wore. He frowned, watching as Ronny rushed toward the goat, but appeared to have no intention of intervening. "Bobby, make sure that your brother doesn't do anything stupid." "I don't feel like it," Bobby said, not moving. He was sitting in the front seat beside Mr. Kapasi studying a picture of the elephant god taped to the glove compartment.

"No need to worry," Mr. Kapasi said. "They are quite tame." Mr. Kapasi was forty-six years old, with receding hair that had gone completely silver, but his butterscotch complexion and his unlined brow, which he treated in spare moments to dabs of lotus-oil balm, made it easy to imagine what he must have looked like at an earlier age. He wore gray trousers and a matching jacket-style shirt, tapered at the waist, with short sleeves and a large pointed collar, made of a thin but durable synthetic material. He had specified both the cut and the fabric to his tailor — it was his preferred uniform for giving tours because it did not get crushed during his long hours behind the wheel. Through the windshield he watched as Ronny circled around the goat, touched it quickly on its side, then trotted back to the car.

"You left India as a child?" Mr. Kapasi asked when Mr. Das had settled once again into the passenger seat.

"Oh, Mina and I were both born in America," Mr. Das announced with an air of sudden confidence "Born and raised. Our parents live here now, in Assansol. They retired. We visit them every couple years." He turned to watch as the little girl ran toward the car, the wide purple bows of her sundress flopping on her narrow brown shoulders. She was holding to her chest a doll with yellow hair that looked as if it had been chopped, as a punitive measure, with a pair of dull scissors. "This is Tina's first trip to India, isn't it, Tina?" "I don't have to go to the bathroom anymore," Tina announced.

Notes

"Where's Mina?" Mr. Das asked. Mr. Kapasi found it strange that Mr. Das should refer to his wife by her first name when speaking to the little girl. Tina pointed to where Mrs. Das was purchasing something from one of the shirtless men who worked at the tea stall. Mr. Kapasi heard one of the shirtless men sing a phrase from a popular Hindi love song as Mrs. Das walked back to the car, but she did not appear to understand the words of the song, for she did not express irritation, or embarrassment, or react in any other way to the man's declarations.

He observed her. She wore a red-and-white checkered skirt that stopped above her knees, slip-on shoes with a square wooden heel, and a close-fitting blouse styled like a man's undershirt. The blouse was decorated at chest-level with a calico appliqué in the shape of a strawberry. She was a short woman, with small hands like paws, her frosty pink fingernails painted to match her lips, and was slightly plump in her figure. Her hair, shorn only a little longer than her husband's, was parted far to one side. She was wearing large dark brown sunglasses with a pinkish tint to them, and carried a big straw bag, almost as big as her torso, shaped like a bowl, with a water bottle poking out of it. She walked slowly, carrying some puffed rice tossed with peanuts and chili peppers in a large packet made from newspapers, Mr. Kapasi turned to Mr. Das. "Where in America do you live?"

"New Brunswick. New Jersey."

"Next to New York?"

"Exactly. I teach middle school there."

"What subject?"

"Science."

In fact, every year I take my students on a trip to the Museum of Natural History in New York City. In a way we have a lot in common, you could say, you and I. How long have you been a tour guide, Mr. Kapasi?"

"Five years."

Mrs. Das reached the car. "How long's the trip?" she asked, shutting the door. "About two and half hours," Mr. Kapasi replied.

At this Mrs. Das gave an impatient sigh, as if she had been traveling her whole life without pause. She fanned herself with a folded Bombay film magazine written in English.

"I thought that the Sun Temple is only eighteen miles north of Puri," Mr. Das said, tapping on the tour book. "The roads to Konarak are poor. Actually, it is a distance of fifty-two miles," Mr. Kapasi explained. Mr. Das nodded, readjusting the camera strap where it had begun to chafe the back of his neck.

Before starting the ignition, Mr. Kapasi reached back to make sure the cranklike locks on the inside of each of the back doors were secured. As soon as the car began to move the little girl began to play with the lock on her side, clicking it with some effort forward and backward, but Mrs. Das said nothing to stop her. She sat a bit slouched at one end of the back seat, not offering her puffed rice to anyone. Ronny and Tina sat on either side of her, both snapping bright green gum.

"Look," Bobby said as the car began to gather speed.

He pointed with his fingers to the tall trees that lined the road. "Look"

"Monkeys!" Ronny shrieked. "Wow!"

They were seated in groups along the branches, with shining black faces, silver bodies, horizontal eyebrows, and crested heads. Their long gray tails dangled like a series of ropes among the leaves. A few scratched themselves with black leathery hands, or swung their feet, staring as the car passed.

"We call them the hanuman," Mr. Kapasi said. "They are quite common in the area."

As soon as he spoke, one of the monkeys leaped into the middle of the road, causing Mr. Kapasi to brake suddenly. Another bounced onto the hood of the car, then sprang away. Mr. Kapasi beeped his horn. The children began to get excited, sucking in their breath and covering their faces partly with their hands. They had never seen monkeys outside of a zoo, Mr. Das explained.

He asked Mr. Kapasi to stop the car so that he could take a picture.

While Mr. Das adjusted his telephoto lens, Mrs. Das reached into her straw bag and pulled out a bottle of colorless nail polish, which she proceeded to stroke on her index finger.

The little girl stuck out a hand. "Mine too. Mommy, do mine too."

"Leave me alone." Mrs. Das said, blowing on her nail and turning her body slightly. "You're making me mess up."

"All set," Mr. Das said, replacing the lens cap.

The car rattled considerably as it raced along the dusty road, causing them all to pop up from their seats every now and then, but Mrs. Das continued to polish her nails. Mr. Kapasi eased up on the accelerator, hoping to produce a smoother ride. When he reached for the gearshift the boy in front accommodated him by swinging his hairless knees out of the way. Mr. Kapasi noted that this boy was slightly paler than the other children.

"Daddy, why is the driver sitting on the wrong side in this car, too?" the boy asked.

"They all do it here, dummy," Ronnie said.

"Don't call your brother a dummy," Mr. Das said. He turned to Mr. Kapasi. "In America, you know... it confuses them."

"Oh yes, I am well aware," Mr. Kapasi said. As delicately as he could, he shifted gears again accelerating as he approached a hill in the road. "I see it on *Dallas*, the steering wheels are on the left-hand side."

"What's *Dallas*?" Tina asked, banging her now naked doll on the seat behind Mr. Kapasi.

"It went off the air," Mr. Das explained. "It's a television show."

They were all like siblings. Mr. Kapasi thought as they passed a row of date trees. Mr. and Mrs. Das behaved like an older brother and sister, not parents. It seemed that they were in charge of the children only for the day; it was hard to believe they were regularly responsible for anything other than themselves. Mr. Das tapped on his lens cap, and his tour book, dragging his thumbnail occasionally across the pages so that they made a scraping sound. Mrs. Das continued to polish her nails. She had still not removed her sunglasses. Every now and then Tina renewed her plea that she wanted her nails done, too, and so at one point Mrs. Das flicked a drop of polish on the little girl's finger before depositing the bottle back to her straw bag.

"Isn't this an air-conditioned car?" she asked, still blowing on her hand. The window on Tina's side was broken and could not be rolled down.

"Quit complaining," Mr. Das said. "It's not so hot." "I told you to get a car with air-conditioning," Mrs. Das continued. "Why do you do this, Raj, just to save a few stupid rupees. What are you saving us, fifty cents?" Their accents sounded just like the ones Mr. Kapasi heard on American television programs, though not like the ones on *Dallas*.

"Doesn't it get tiresome, Mr. Kapasi, showing people the same thing every day?" Mr. Das asked, rolling down his own window all the way. "Hey, do you mind stopping the car. I just want to get a shot of this guy." Mr. Kapasi pulled over to the side of the road as Mr. Das took a picture of a barefoot man, his head wrapped in a dirty turban, seated on top of a cart of grain sacks pulled by a pair of bullocks. Both the man and the bullocks were emaciated. In the back seat Mrs. Das gazed out another window, at the sky, where nearly transparent clouds passed quickly in front of one another.

"I look forward to it, actually," Mr. Kapasi said as they continued on their way. "The Sun Temple is one of my favorite places. In that way it is a reward for me. I give tours on Fridays and Saturdays only. I have another job during the week."

"Oh? Where?" Mr. Das asked.

"I work in a doctor's office."

"You're a doctor?"

"I am not a doctor. I work with one. As an interpreter."

"What does a doctor need an interpreter for?"

Notes

"He has a number of Gujarati patients. My father was Gujarati, but many people do not speak Gujarati in this area, including the doctor. And so the doctor asked me to work in his office, interpreting what the patients say."

"Interesting, I've never heard of anything like that," Mr. Das said.

Mr. Kapasi shrugged. "It is a job like any other"

"But so romantic," Mrs. Das said dreamily, breaking her extended silence. She lifted her pinkish brown sunglasses and arranged them on top of her head like a tiara. For the first time, her eyes met Mr. Kapasi's in the rearview mirror: pale, a bit smaller, their gaze fixed but drowsy.

Mr. Das craned to look at her. "What's so romantic about it?"

"I don't know. Something." She shrugged, knitting her brows together for an instant. "Would you like a piece of gum, Mr. Kapasi?" she asked brightly. She reached into her straw bag and handed him a small square wrapped in green-and-white-striped paper. As soon as Mr. Kapasi put the gum in his mouth a thick sweet liquid burst onto his tongue.

"Tell us more about your job. Mr. Kapasi." Mrs. Das said.

"What would you like to know, madame?"

"I don't know," she shrugged, munching on some puffed rice and licking the mustard oil from the corners of her mouth. "Tell us a typical situation." She settled back in her seat, her head tilted in a patch of sun, and dosed her eyes. "I want to picture what happens."

"Very well. The other day a man came in with a pain in his throat."

"Did he smoke cigarettes?" "No. It was very curious. He complained that he felt as if there were long pieces of straw stuck in his throat. When I told the doctor he was able to prescribe the proper medication." "That's so neat."

"Yes," Mr. Kapasi agreed after some hesitation.

"So these patients are totally dependant on you,"

Mrs. Das said. She spoke slowly as if she was thinking aloud. "In a way, more dependant on you than the doctor." "How do you mean? How could it be?"

"Well, for example, you could tell the doctor that the pain fell like a burning, not straw. The patient would never know what you had told the doctor, and the doctor wouldn't know that you had told the wrong thing. It's a big responsibility."

"Yes, a big responsibility you have there, Mr. Kapasi," Mr. Das agreed.

Mr. Kapasi had never thought of her job in such complimentary terms. To him it was a thankless occupation. He found nothing noble in interpreting people's maladies, assiduously translating the symptoms of so many swollen bones, countless cramps of bellies and bowels, spots on people's palms that changed color, shape, or size. The doctor, nearly half his age, had an affinity for bell-bottom trousers and made humorless jokes about the Congress party. Together they worked in a stale little infirmary where Mr. Kapasi's smartly tailored clothes clung to him in the heat, in spite of the blackened blades of a ceiling fan churning over their heads. The job was a sign of his failings. In his youth he'd been a devoted scholar of foreign languages, the owner of an impressive collection of dictionaries. He had dreamed of being an interpreter for diplomats and dignitaries, resolving conflicts between people and nations, settling disputes of which he alone could understand both sides. He was a self-educated man. In a series of notebooks, in the evenings before his parents settled his marriage, he had listed the common etymologies of words, and at one point in his life he was confident that he could converse, if given the opportunity, in English, French, Russian, Portuguese, and Italian, not to mention Hindi, Bengali, Orissi, and Gujarati. Now only a handful of European phrases remained in his memory, scattered words for things like saucers and chairs. English was the only non-Indian language he spoke fluently anymore. Mr. Kapasi knew it was not a remarkable talent. Sometimes he feared that his children knew better English than he did, just from watching television. Still, it came in handy for the tours. He had taken the job as interpreter after his first son, at the age of seven, contracted typhoid — that was how he first made acquaintance of the doctor. After the time Mr. Kapasi had been teaching English in a grammar school, and he bartered his skills as an interpreter to

pay the increasingly exorbitant medical bills. In the end the boy had died one evening in his mother's arms, his limbs burning with fever, but then there was the funeral to pay for, and the other children who were boon soon enough, and the newer, bigger house, and the good schools and tutors, and the fine shoes and the television, and the countless other ways he tried to console his wife and to keep her from crying in her sleep, and so when the doctor offered to pay him twice as much as he earned at the grammar school, he accepted. Mr. Kapasi knew that his wife had little regard for his career as an interpreter. He knew it reminded her of the son she'd lost, and that she resented the other lives he helped, in his own small way, to save. If ever she referred to his position, she used the phrase "doctor's assistant," as if the process of interpretation were equal to taking someone's temperature, or changing a bedpan. She never asked him about the patients who came to the doctor's office, or said that his job was a big responsibility. For this reason it flattered Mr. Kapasi that Mrs. Das was so intrigued by his job. Unlike his wife, she had reminded him of its intellectual challenges. She had also used the word "romantic." She did not behave in a romantic way toward her husband, and yet she had used the word to describe him. He wondered if Mr. and Mrs. Das were a bad match, just as he and his wife were. Perhaps they, too, had little in common apart from three children and a decade of their lives. The signs he recognized from his own marriage were there – the bickering, the indifference, the protracted silences. Her sudden interest in him, an interest she did not express in either her husband or her children, was mildly intoxicating. When Mr. Kapasi thought once again about how she had said "romantic," the feeling of intoxication grew.

He began to check his reflection in the rearview mirror as he drove, feeling grateful that he had chosen the gray suit that morning, and not the brown one which tended to sag a little in the knees. From time to time he glanced through the mirror at Mrs. Das. In addition to glancing at her face he glanced at the strawberry between her breasts, and the golden brown hollow in her throat. He decided to tell Mrs. Das about another patient, and another: the young woman who had complained of sensation of raindrops in her spine, the gentleman whose birthmark had begun to sprout hairs.

Mrs. Das listened attentively, stroking her hair with a small plastic brush that resembled an oval bed of nails, asking more questions, for yet another example. The children were quiet, intent on spotting more monkeys in the trees and Mr. Das was absorbed by his tour book, so it seemed like a private conversation between Mr. Kapasi and Mrs. Das. In this manner the next half hour passed, and when they stopped for lunch at a roadside restaurant that sold fritters and omelette sandwiches, usually something Mr. Kapasi looked forward to on his tours so that he could sit in peace and enjoy some hot tea, he was disappointed. As the Das family settled together under a magenta umbrella fringed with white and orange tassels, and placed their order with one of the waiters who marched about in tricornered caps, Mr. Kapasi reluctantly headed toward the neighboring table.

"Mr. Kapasi, wait. There's room here," Mrs. Das called out. She gathered Tina onto her lap, insisting that he accompany them. And so, together, they had bottled mango juice and sandwiches and plates of onions and potatoes deep-fried in graham flour batter. After finishing two omelette sandwiches Mr. Das took more pictures of the group as they ate.

"How much longer," he asked Mr. Kapasi as he paused to load a new roll of film in the camera. "About half an hour more."

By now the children had gotten up from the table to look for more monkeys perched in a nearby tree, so there was a considerable space between Mrs. Das and Mr. Kapasi. Mr. Das placed the camera to his face and squeezed one eye shut, his tongue exposed at one corner of his mouth. "This looks funny. Mina, you need to lean in closer to Mr. Kapasi."

She did. He could smell a scent on her skin, like a mixture of whiskey and rosewater. He worried suddenly that she could smell his perspiration, which he knew had collected beneath the synthetic material of his shirt. He polished off his mango juice in one gulp and smoothed his silver hair with his hands. A bit of the juice dripped onto his chin. He wondered if Mrs. Das had noticed. She had not. "What's your address, Mr. Kapasi?" she inquired, fishing for something inside her straw bag.

Notes

"You would like my address?"

"So we can send you copies," she said. "Of the pictures." She handed him a scrap of paper which she had hastily ripped from a page of her film magazine. The blank portion was limited, for the narrow strip was crowded by lines of text and a tiny picture of a hero and heroine embracing under a eucalyptus tree. The paper curled as Mr. Kapasi wrote his address in clear, careful letters. She would write to him, asking about his days interpreting at the doctor's office, and he would respond eloquently, choosing only the most entertaining anecdotes, ones that would make her laugh out loud as she read them in her house in New Jersey. In time she would reveal the disappointment of her marriage, and he his. In this way their friendship would grow, and flourish. He would possess a picture of the two of them, eating lined onions under a magenta umbrella, which he would keep, he decided, safely tucked between the pages of his Russian grammar. As his mind raced, Mr. Kapasi experienced a mild and pleasant shock. It was similar to a feeling he used to experience long ago when, after months of translating with the aid of a dictionary, he would finally read a passage from a French novel, or an Italian sonnet, and understand the words, one after another, unencumbered by his own efforts. In those moments Mr. Kapasi used to think that all was right with the world, that all struggles were rewarded, that all of life's mistakes made sense in the end. The promise that he would hear from Mrs. Das now filled him with the same belief.

When he finished writing his address Mr. Kapasi handed her the paper, but as soon as he did so he worried that he had either misspelled his name, or accidentally reversed the numbers of his postal code. He dreaded the possibility of a lost letter, the photograph never reaching him, hovering somewhere in Orissa, close but ultimately unattainable. He thought of asking for the slip of paper again, just to make sure he had written his address accurately, but Mrs. Das had already dropped it into the jumble of her bag. They reached Konarak at two-thirty. The temple, made of sandstone, was a massive pyramid-like structure in the shape of a chariot. It was dedicated to the great master of life, the sun, which struck three sides of the edifice as it made its journey each day across the sky.

Twenty-four giant wheels were carved on the north and south sides of the plinth. The whole thing was drawn by a team of seven horses, speeding as if through the heavens. As they approached, Mr. Kapasi explained that the temple had been built between A.D. 1243 and 1255, with the efforts of twelve hundred artisans, by the great ruler of the Ganga dynasty, king Narasimhadeva the First to commemorate his victory against the Muslim army.

"It says the temple occupies about a hundred and seventy acres of land," Mr. Das said reading from his book. "It's like a dessert," Ronnie said, his eyes wandering across the sand that stretched on all sides beyond the temple.

"The Candrabhaga river once flowed one mile north of here. It is dry now," Mr. Kapasi said, turning off the engine. They got out and walked toward the temple, posing first for pictures by the pair of lions that flanked the steps. Mr. Kapasi led them next to one of the wheels of the chariot, higher than any human being, nine feet in diameter.

"The wheels are supposed to symbolize the wheel of life," Mr. Das read. "'They depict the cycle of creation, preservation, and achievement of realization.' Cool." He turned the page of his book. "'Each wheel is divided into eight thick and thin spokes, dividing the day into eight equal pans. The rims are carved with designs of birds and animals, whereas the medallions in the spokes are carved with women in luxurious poses, largely erotic in nature.'"

What he referred to were the countless friezes of entwined naked bodies, making love in various positions, women dinging to the necks of men, their knees wrapped eternally around their lovers' thighs. In addition to these were assorted scenes from daily life, of hunting and trading, of deer being killed with bows and arrows and marching warriors holding swords in their hands. It was no longer possible to enter the temple, for it had filled with rubble years ago, but they admired the exterior, as did all the tourists Mr. Kapasi brought there, slowly strolling along each of its sides. Mr. Das trailed

behind, taking pictures. The children ran ahead, pointing to figures of naked people, intrigued in particular by the Nagamithunas, the half-human, half-serpentine couples who were said, Mr. Kapasi told them, to live in the deepest waters of the sea. Mr. Kapasi was pleased that they liked the temple, pleased especially that it appealed to Mrs. Das. She stopped every three or four paces, staring silently at the carved lovers, and the processions of elephants, and the topless female musicians bearing on two-sided drums. Though Mr. Kapasi had been to the temple countless times, it occurred him, as he, too, gazed at the topless women, that he had never seen his own wife fully naked. Even when they had made love she kept the panels of her blouse hooked together, the string of her petticoat knotted around her waist. He had never admired the backs of his wife's legs the way he now admired those of Mrs. Das, walking as if for his benefit alone. He had, of course, seen plenty of bare limbs before, belonging to the American and European ladies who took his tours. But Mrs. Das was different. Unlike the other women, who had an interest only in the temple, and kept their noses buried in a guidebook, or their eyes behind the lens of a camera, Mrs. Das had taken an interest in him.

Mr. Kapasi was anxious to be alone with her, to continue their private conversation, yet he felt nervous to walk at her side. She was lost behind her sunglasses, ignoring her husband's requests that she pose for another picture, walking past her children as if they were strangers. Worried that he might disturb her, Mr. Kapasi walked ahead, to admire, as he always did, the three life-sized bronze avatars of Surya, the sun god, each emerging from its own niche on the temple façade to greet the sun at dawn, noon, and evening. They wore elaborate headdresses, their languid, elongated eyes doped, their bare chests draped with carved chains and amulets. Hibiscus petals, offerings from previous visitors, were strewn at their gray-green feet. The last statue, on the northern wall of the temple, was Mr. Kapasi's favorite. This Surya had a tired expression, weary after a hard day of work, sitting astride a horse with folded legs. Even his horse's eyes were drowsy. Around his body were smaller sculptures of women in pairs, their hips thrust to one side.

"Who's that?" Mrs. Das asked. He was startled to see that she was standing beside him.

"He is the Astachala-Surya," Mr. Kapasi said. "The setting sun."

"So in a couple hours the sun will set right here?" she slipped a foot out of one of her square-heeled shoes, rubbed her toes on the back of her other leg. Mr. Kapasi was not certain exactly what the word suggested, but he had a feeling it was a favorable response. He hoped that Mrs. Das had understood Surya's beauty, his power. Perhaps they would discuss it further in their letters. He would explain things to her, things about India, and she would explain things to him about America. In its own way this correspondence would fulfill his dream, of serving as an interpreter between nations. He looked at her straw bag, delighted that his address lay nestled among its contents. When he pictured her so many thousands of miles away he plummeted, so much so that he had an overwhelming urge to wrap his arms around her, to freeze with her, even for an instant, in an embrace witnessed by his favorite Surya. But Mrs. Das had already started walking. "When do you return to America?" he asked, trying to sound placid. "In ten days." He calculated: a week to settle in, a week to develop the pictures, a few days to compose her letter, two weeks to get to India by air. According to his schedule, allowing room for delays, he would hear from Mrs. Das in approximately six weeks' time. The family was silent as Mr. Kapasi drove them back, a little past four-thirty, to Hotel Sandy Villa. The children had bought miniature granite versions of the chariot's wheels at a souvenir stand, and they turned them round in their hands. Mr. Das continued to read his book. Mrs. Das untangled Tina's hair with her brush and divided it into two little ponytails.

Mr. Kapasi was beginning to dread the thought of dropping them off. He was not prepared to begin his six week wait to hear from Mrs. Das. As he stole glances at her in the rear-view mirror, wrapping elastic bands around Tina's hair, he wondered how he might make the tour last a little longer. Ordinarily he sped back to Puri using a shortcut, eager to return home, scrub his feet and hands with sandalwood soap, and enjoy the evening newspaper and a cup of tea that his wife would serve him in silence. The thought of that silence, something to which he'd long been resigned, now oppressed him. It was then that he suggested visiting the hills at Udayagiri and Khandagiri, where a number of monastic dwellings were hewn out of the ground, lacing one another across a defile. It was some miles away, but well worth seeing, Mr. Kapasi told them.



Notes

"Oh yeah, there's something mentioned about it in this book," Mr. Das said. "Built by a Jain king or something." "Shall we go then?" Mr. Kapasi asked. He paused at a turn in the road. "It's to the left."

Mr. Das turned to look at Mrs. Das. Both of them shrugged. "Left, left," the children chanted. Mr. Kapasi turned the wheel, almost delirious with relief. He did not know what he would do or say to Mrs. Das once they arrived at the hills. Perhaps he would tell her what a pleasing smile she had. Perhaps he would compliment her strawberry shin, which he found irresistibly becoming. Perhaps, when Mr. Das was busy taking a picture, he would take her hand. He did not have to worry. When they got to the hills divided by a steep path thick with trees, Mrs. Das refused to get out of the car. All along the path, dozens of monkeys were seated on stones, as well as on the branches of the trees. Their hind legs were stretched out in front and raised to shoulder level, their arms resting on their knees. "My legs are tired," she said, sinking low in her seat. "I'll stay here."

"Why did you have to wear those stupid shoes?" Mr. Das said. "You won't be in the pictures."

"Pretend I'm there." "But we could use one of these pictures for our Christmas card this year. We didn't get one of all five of us at the Sun Temple. Mr. Kapasi could take it."

"I'm not coming. Anyway, those monkeys give me the creeps."

"But they're harmless." Mr. Das said. He turned to Mr. Kapasi. "Aren't they?"

"They are more hungry than dangerous," Mr. Kapasi said. "Do not provoke them with food, and they will not bother you." Mr. Das headed up the defile with the children, the boys at his side, the little girl on his shoulders. Mr. Kapasi watched as they crossed paths with a Japanese man and woman, the only other tourists there, who posed for a final photograph, then stepped into a nearby car and drove away. As the car disappeared out of view some of the monkeys called out, emitting soft whooping sounds, and then walked on their flat black hands and feet up the path. At one point a group of them formed a little ring around Mr. Das and the children. Tina screamed in delight. Ronny ran in circles around his father. Bobby bent down and picked up a fat stick on the ground. When he extended it, one of the monkeys approached him and snatched it, then briefly beat the ground. "I'll join them," Mr. Kapasi said, unlocking the door on his side. "There is much to explain about the caves." "No. Stay a minute." Mrs. Das said. She got out of the back seat and slipped in beside Mr. Kapasi. "Raj has his dumb book anyway." Together through the windshield Mrs. Das and Mr. Kapasi watched as Bobby and the monkey passed the stick back and forth between them.

"A brave little boy," Mr. Kapasi commented.

"It's not so surprising," Mrs. Das said.

"No?"

"He's not his."

"I beg your pardon."

"Raj's. He's not Raj's son."

Mr. Kapasi felt a prickle on his skin. He reached into his shirt pocket for the small tin of lotus-oil balm he carried with him at all times, and applied it to three spots on his forehead. He knew that Mrs. Das was watching him, but he did not turn to face her. Instead he watched as the figures of Mr. Das and the children grew smaller, climbing up the steep path, pausing every now and then for a picture, surrounded by a growing number of monkeys. "Are you surprised?" The way she put it made him choose his words with care. "It's not the type of thing one assumes," Mr. Kapasi replied slowly. He put the tin of lotus-oil balm back in his pocket.

"No, of course not. And no one knows, of course. No one at all. I've kept it a secret for eight whole years." She looked at Mr. Kapasi, tilting her chin as if to gain a fresh perspective. "But now I've told you."

Mr. Kapasi nodded. He felt suddenly parched, and his forehead was warm and slightly numb from the balm. He considered asking Mrs. Das for a sip of water, then decided against it.

"We met when we were very young," she said. She reached into her straw bag in search of something, then pulled out a packet of puffed rice. "Want some?"

"No, thank you." She put a fistful in her mouth, sank into the seat a little, and looked away from Mr. Kapasi out the window on her side of the car. "We married when we were still in college. We were in high school when he proposed. We went to the same college, of course. Back then we day, not for a minute. Our parents were best friends who lived in the same town. My entire life I saw him every week-end, either at our house or theirs. We were sent upstairs to play together while our parents joked about our marriage. Imagine! They never caught us at anything, though in a way I think it was all more or less a setup. The things we did those Friday and Saturday nights, while our parents sat downstairs drinking tea... I could tell you stories, Mr. Kapasi."

As a result of spending all her time in college with Raj, she continued, she did not make many close friends. There was no one to confide in about him at the end of a difficult day, or to share a passing thought or a worry. Her parents now lived on the other side of the world, but she had never been very close to them anyway. After marrying so young she was overwhelmed by it all, having a child so quickly, and nursing, and warming up bottles of milk and testing their temperature against her wrist while Raj was at work, dressed in sweaters and corduroy pants, teaching his students about rocks and dinosaurs. Raj never looked cross or harried, or plump as she had become after the first baby.

Always tired, she declined invitations from her one or two college girlfriends, to have lunch or shop in Manhattan. Eventually the friends stopped calling her, so that she was left at home all day with the baby, surrounded by toys that made her trip when she walked or wince when she sat, always cross and tired. Only occasionally did they go out after Ronny was born, and even more rarely did they entertain. Raj didn't mind; he looked forward to coming home from teaching and watching television and bouncing Ronny on his knee. She had been outraged when Raj told her that a Punjabi friend, someone whom she had once met but did not remember, would be staying with them for a week for some job interviews in the New Brunswick area. Bobby was conceived in the afternoon, on a sofa littered with rubber teething toys, after the friend learned that London pharmaceutical company had hired him, while Ronny cried to be freed from his playpen. She made no protest when the friend touched the small of her back as she was about to make a pot of coffee, then pulled her against his crisp navy suit. He made love to her swiftly, in silence, with an expertise she had never known, without the meaningful expressions and smiles Raj always insisted on afterward. The next day Raj drove the friend to JFK. He was married now, to a Punjabi girl, and they lived in London still, and every year they exchanged Christmas cards with Raj and Mina, each couple tucking photos of their families into the envelopes. He did not know that he was Bobby's father.

He never would. "I beg your pardon. Mrs. Das, but why have you told me this information?" Mr. Kapasi asked when she had finally finished speaking, and had turned to face him once again.

"For God's sake, stop calling me Mrs. Das. I'm twenty-eight. You probably have children my age."

"Not quite." It disturbed Mr. Kapasi to learn that she thought of him as a parent. The feeling he had had toward her, that had made him check his reflection in the rearview mirror as they drove, evaporated a little. "I told you because of your talents." She put the packet of puffed rice back into her bag without folding over the top.

"I don't understand." Mr. Kapasi said.

"Don't you see? For eight years I haven't been able to express this to anybody, not to friends, certainly not to Raj. He doesn't even suspect it. He thinks I'm still in love with him. Well, don't you have anything to say?" "About what?"

"About what I've just told you. About my secret, and about how terrible it makes me feel. I feel terrible looking at my children, and at Raj, always terrible. I have terrible urges, Mr. Kapasi, to throw things away.

Notes

One day I had the urge to throw everything I own out the window, the television, the children, everything. Don't you think it's unhealthy?"

He was silent. "Mr. Kapasi, don't you have anything to say? I thought that was your job." "My job is to give tours, Mrs. Das."

"Not that. Your other job. As an interpreter." "But we do not face a language barrier. What need is there for an interpreter?"

"That's not what I mean. I would never have told you otherwise. Don't you realize what it means for me to tell you?"

"What does it mean?"

"It means that I'm tired of feeling so terrible all the time. Eight years, Mr. Kapasi, I've been in pain eight years. I was hoping you could help me feel better, say the right thing. Suggest some kind of remedy." He looked at her, in her red plaid skirt and strawberry T-shirt, a woman not yet thirty, who loved neither her husband nor her children, who had already fallen out of love with life. Her confession depressed him, depressed him all the more when he thought of Mr. Das at the top of the path, Tina clinging to his shoulders, taking pictures of ancient monastic cells cut into the hills to show his students in America, unsuspecting and unaware that one of his sons was not his own. Mr. Kapasi felt insulted that Mrs. Das should ask him to interpret her common, trivial little secret. She did not resemble the patients in the doctor's office, those who came glassy-eyed and desperate, unable to sleep or breathe or urinate with ease, unable, above all, to give words to their pains. Still, Mr. Kapasi believed it was his duty to assist Mrs. Das. Perhaps he ought to tell her to confess the truth to Mr. Das. He would explain that honesty was the best policy. Honesty, surely, would help her feel better, as she'd put it. Perhaps he would offer to preside over the discussion, as a mediator. He decided to begin with the most obvious question, to get to the heart of the matter, and so he asked, "Is it really pain you feel, Mrs. Das, or is it guilt?" She turned to him and glared, mustard oil thick on her frosty pink lips. She opened her mouth to say something, but as she glared at Mr. Kapasi some certain knowledge seemed to pass before her eyes, and she stopped. It crushed him; he knew at that moment that he was not even important enough to be properly insulted.

She opened the car door and began walking up the path, wobbling a little on her square wooden heels, reaching into her straw bag to eat handfuls of puffed rice. It fell through her fingers, leaving a zigzagging trail, causing a monkey to leap down from a tree and devour the little white grains. In search of more, the monkey began to follow Mrs. Das. Others joined him, so that she was soon being followed by about half a dozen of them, their velvety tails dragging behind.

Mr. Kapasi stepped out of the car. He wanted to holler, to alert her in some way, but he worried that if she knew they were behind her, she would grow nervous. Perhaps she would lose her balance. Perhaps they would pull at her bag or her hair. He began to jog up the path, taking a fallen branch in his hand to scare away the monkeys. Mrs. Das continued walking, oblivious, trailing grains of puffed rice. Near the top of the incline, before a group of cells fronted by a row of squat stone pillars, Mr. Das was kneeling on the ground, focusing the lens of his camera. The children stood under the arcade, now hiding, now emerging from view.

"Wait for me," Mrs. Das called out. "I'm coming."

"Great," Mr. Das said without looking up. "Just in time. We'll get Mr. Kapasi to take a picture of the five of us." Mr. Kapasi quickened his pace, waving his branch so that the monkeys scampered away, distracted, in another direction. "Where's Bobby?" Mrs. Das asked when she stopped. Mr. Das looked up from the camera. "I don't know. Ronny, where's Bobby?"

"Where is he?" Mrs. Das repeated sharply. "What's wrong with all of you?"

They began calling his name, wandering up and down the path a bit. Because they were calling they did not initially hear the boy's screams. When they found him, a little farther down the path under a tree, he was surrounded by a group of monkeys, over a dozen of them, pulling at his T-shirt with their long black fingers. The puffed rice Mrs. Das had spilled was scattered at his feet, raked over by

the monkeys' hands. The boy was silent, his body frozen, swift tears running down his startled face. His bare legs were dusty and red with welts from where one of the monkeys struck him repeatedly with the sack he had given to it earlier.

"Daddy, the monkey's hurting Bobby," Tina said.

Mr. Das wiped his palms on the front of his shorts. In his nervousness he accidentally pressed the shutter on his camera; the whirring noise of the advancing film excited the monkeys, and the one with the stick began to beat Bobby more intently. "What are we supposed to do? What if they start attacking?"

"Mr. Kapasi." Mrs. Das shrieked, noticing him standing to one side. "Do something, for God's sake, do something!" Mr. Kapasi took his branch and shooed them away, hissing at the ones that remained, stomping his feet to scare them. The animals retreated slowly, with a measured gait, obedient but unintimidated. Mr. Kapasi gathered Bobby in his arms and brought him back to where his parents and siblings were standing. As he carried him he was tempted to whisper a secret into the boy's ear. But Bobby was stunned, and shivering with fright, his legs bleeding slightly where the stick had broken the skin. When Mr. Kapasi delivered him to his parents. Mr. Das brushed some dirt off the boy's T-shirt and put the visor on him the right way. Mrs. Das reached into her straw bag to find a bandage which she taped over the cut on his knee. Ronny offered his brother a fresh piece of gum. "He's fine. Just a little scared, right.

Bobby?" Mr. Das said, parting the top of his head.

"God, let's get out of here." Mrs. Das said. She folded her arms across the strawberry on her chest. "This place gives me the creeps."

"Yeah. Back to the hotel, definitely," Mr. Das agreed.

"Poor Bobby," Mrs. Das said. "Come here a second.

Let Mommy fix your hair." Again she reached into her straw bag, this time for her hairbrush, and began to run it around the edges of the translucent visor. When she whipped out the hairbrush, the slip of paper with Mr. Kapasi's address on it fluttered away in the wind. No one but Mr. Kapasi noticed. He watched as it rose, carried higher and higher by the breeze, into the trees where the monkeys now sat, solemnly observing the scene below. Mr. Kapasi observed it too, knowing that this was the picture of the Das family he would preserve forever in his mind.

## Self-Assessment

### 1. Choose the correct options:

- (i) Mr. Das standing with their children under the Portico of the ..... .
  - (a) House
  - (b) Hospital
  - (c) Building
  - (d) Hotel
- (ii) Mr. Kapasi was assigned to foreign tourists regularly because he could speak ..... .
  - (a) Italian
  - (b) French
  - (c) English
  - (d) None of these
- (iii) "Oh, Mina and I were both born in America," ..... announced.
  - (a) Mr. Kapasi
  - (b) Bobby
  - (c) Mr. Das
  - (d) None of these
- (iv) Mrs. Das flicked a drop of polish on the tittle girl's ..... .
  - (a) Hands
  - (b) Head
  - (c) Fingers
  - (d) None of these
- (v) Mr. Kapasi had been teaching ..... in a grammar school.
  - (a) English
  - (b) French
  - (c) Italian
  - (d) None of these

### 8.3 Summary

- The Interpreter of Maladies, a profoundly popular book in the literary world, celebrates human life with its emotive value, consciously or unconsciously interpreting man and his face value. With India and Boston as two social milieu, the stories contain more of psychological conflict than social to maintain the charisma of newness. Realism is another quality and the approach is rational therefore the stories represent life in its true colours. Boori Ma (A Real Durwan) is as life-like as Mrs. Croft is (The Third And Final Continent). These stories not only give a fascinating picture of India where togetherness is yet to be totally replaced by selfishness (Bibi Haldar), a seemingly honest desire may be realized to improve the native population of its selfish inhumanity. Nevertheless, the stories give us a feel of conscientious efforts to produce a work of marvel therefore precision, economy and design are meticulously achieved. The collection in its form and design prove true what Frank O' Connor wrote:
- "Story telling is that nearest thing one can get to the quality of a pure lyric poem. It doesn't deal with problems; it doesn't have solutions to offer; it just states the human situation".
- Jhumpa Lahiri takes up many complex themes, ranging from the relationships between men and women, between children and parents, between men and society, sexual vividness to psychological struggles of the characters. As a storyteller she turns her probing eyes into the struggle of women characters, focussing on their sexual and emotional reactions and responses related to reality, marriage, motherhood, discussions of freedom in both psychological and social terms. Because a good writing is shaped by the contemporaneity, Lahiri makes a serious study of the ills and oddities around, explores its causes through incidences to reach at a final summation. Manjeri Isvaran says that a storyteller is deeply indebted to the contemporary world; Lahiri's work is a testimony to his belief:
- "The Story-teller, today cannot abstract himself from the contemporary world, he cannot also absolve himself of the role of the seer-one who sees truth and inner harmony on which things are strung together. His voice now, more than at any other time, should not be that of destructive exposition, but of peace and good will, "winning the world as rose or lily wins it", and should go on winning it with the marvel of his intelligent heart, seeing other hearts unite in sympathy, shared wonder and the joy of beauty. He is the Ancient Mariner, and the world the Wedding Guest".
- Marked with a perceptible beginning and end, the stories contain every detail, which is necessary to feel the emotions, to read the idea and to live with the unreal within the conjured atmosphere. The variegated aspects of human life sound literally the same providing Lahiri's work 'a potent air'. Uncovering the whole gamut of human passion and emotion she reveals the range of suffering in mind and body. She does not allow the eyes to go unquenched with tears, repairs are made and nearly all stories end in a happy mood. Ira Konigsberg tells us what transforms the terrible into aesthetic pleasure and how:
- "Successful short stories, however depend on more than an illusion of reality: they depend on the author's ability to mould his reality, to structure and shape it much more rigidly and compactly than the novelist. The story then presents a design, a pattern, a meaning in the sense of philosophy or morality but meaning in the sense that the work presents an interpretation of human experience."
- Lahiri, with majestic smoothness carries her readers off their feet by the profound flow of narrative, complexity of situations, external mindset and characters, transforming her art into a living experience for the full participation of her readers. The collection is not merely aimed at entertainment not at profundity of thought, but an exploration of man in his relations with society and in his understanding of his own self. Jhumpa Lahiri shows an equal amount of fascination for outdoor life and life contending with flesh. For example- Miranda (sexy) flights with her own self, categorizing her personal quality of living and finally making haste to mend wrong ways. All through the story Miranda is 'Sexuality incarnate'; no sooner she recognizes her waywardness and imagines the damage caused to Dev's family, she throws herself in a self

pronounced reformatory parole. This transformation reveals her moral beauty; hence she justifies, rightly to the image of beauty. Iyengar commenting on the substantial stuff of a story says:

- "A short story, no less than a long novel, must create characters and situations that grip and live in the reader's mind, even as the barest two-roomed tenement and the luxurious multi-chambered palace must equally, though not to be same extent or on the same lavish scale, give Shelter to their respective occupants. One may be unable to define a 'short story' when one comes across it; and the fortunate 'common reader' can afford to ignore our academic differentiations in the sheer enjoyment and enchantment of literature."
- Each story stands the test of unity for every incident and detail of the action bears a direct relation to the conflict and its relation is worked out in the linear progression focussing on the eventual resolution. Nearly all stories contain internal conflict; a very small room is provided to external conflicts nevertheless the conflict is integral to her stories and they give a sufficiently completed pattern of the life described. In most of the stories like 'Interpreter of Maladies', 'A temporary Matter', 'Sexy', and 'A Real Durwan', the moment of resolution and perception are practically simultaneous; the emotion evoked at the end makes the reader understand the situation after the disappearance of disturbing clouds. For example- in 'Blessed House', there is an immediate conflict between Twinkle's desire for exhibition of religious tolerance and the superstitious belief that removal of the effigies of Christ would deprive them of conjugal bliss. The conflict reveals through her compulsive efforts to make her wish prevail over Sanjeev. Finally the immediate conflict is resolved when Sanjeev accepts Twinkle's outlook-a moment of perception is simultaneously evoked with Twinkle projecting Sanjeev's desire by putting one of the effigies in the garden. Thus it seems the modern short story: "...demonstrates its claim to the possession of narrative structure derived from plot. Basically, its structure is not very different form that of the older and more conventional type of story, but its technique that is frequently mistaken for lack of structure by readers and critics".
- Interpreter of Maladies makes cultural invocations by using Indian and American societies side by side. Lahiri has paid enough attention to cultural appropriateness of her language and her interpretative competence is marked on almost every page, for example- in 'A Real Durwan' Indian culture is faithfully reflected to make real India echo through words:
- "Which was it, by truck or by car?" the children sometimes asked her on their way to play cops and robbers in the alley. To which Boori Ma would reply, shaking the free end of her Sari so that she skeleton keys rattled, 'Why demand specifics? Why scrapelime from betel leaf? Believe me, don't believe me. My life is composed of such grieves you cannot even dream them".
- Undoubtedly Jhumpa Lahiri has successfully shared the quintessence of Indian and American culture despite social and geographical differences, an easy victory barriers in communication is marked all through the length of the collection, Z.N Patil in his book Style In Indian English Ficiton points out:
- "Meanings are in people, not in the messages. A text is just an iceberg. It triggers off an interpretative process which vitally depends on the backgrounds, posses different individual experiences. In these differences that result in multiplicity of interpretations. A text acquire its 'multiple existence' (Armstrong 1986: 321) by inspiring different and even contradictory readings. This is so precisely because readers from various cultural and social groups bring surprisingly varied interpretative equipment. Every communicative act, textual, interpersonal or intercultural, is a transaction between two private worlds-the world of the addresser and that of the reader."
- Emerson in 'The American Scholar' says that every book become luminous with the content of an active soul that sees "absolute truth", " utters truth or creates it"; every sentence is doubly significant "and the sense of our author is as broad as the world." Certainly "life is our dictionary through which the meaning of the art of living becomes meaningful".
- Her perception embodies reality that contains living in contemporary period. Lahiri constructs reality with adequate, with expressive grace and transparent words. She uses metaphors containing wonderful emotive potential. For example- mound of a belly: bronze leaves; penciled instructions; full grapetoned lips; silver-haired men; mannish legs; bulbous lids; ('A Temporary

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Matter') graduate dormitory; brick walkways; white pillared buildings; pickled mangoes, cupped fish, sprawling orange diamond; compact man; a generous moustache; flattened raisins; cinnamon hearts; a lagging host; an immovable expression; fan shaped sails; coffee coloured reveres; a barricaded university; penciled inscriptions; leisurely meals; geometric gaze stocky fingers; rustling apparel ; single silence ('When Mr. Pirzada came to Dine' ( flashing silver wires; sunburnt scalps; butter-scotch complexion; elephant god; dull scissors; unlined brow; horizontal eyebrows; silver bodies; hairless knees; luxurious poses; topless women; elongated eyes; crisp navy suit; zigzag trail; ('Interpreter of Maladies')

- Marjorie Boulton says that words cannot be substituted. She adds:  
 "... rhetoric may be used simply to adorn speech and writing. Figures of speech may not be necessary to clarify, or to stimulate emotion, but may still be sued for the sheer pleasure they give."
- These metaphors have woven a delicate but colorful density of thoughts. They are used to characterize happiness, unhappiness, joy-sorrow, failure-success, beauty-ugliness, misery and anguish. These have added power to expression driving thoughts with much speed and pleasure.
- Lahiri's art seemed but patient, arduous observation reflecting in between lines. The heart and the soul are the tools with which the layers of reality are introduced, irony & pathos are its resultant by-products with stream of thoughts stimulating a probe into trials behind. Uncomplicated plots characters and styles further add to easy accessibility to ideas. The universal appeal of the stories rests in these out and out 'Lahiri' traits.
- Analysis of the Text  
 Again, communication is the main theme of this story. Mr. Kapasi works as an interpreter of symptoms for Gujarati-speaking patients. He enables remedies to be administered. Mrs. Das considers this both romantic and necessary, but Mr. Kapasi is disappointed by the path his life has taken. He had dreamed of being a translator for diplomats. For him, cracking a translation proved that all was right with the world. Both he and Mrs. Das silently bear marriages that do not work. Mrs. Das recognizes his loneliness and seeks his opinion on her secret affair. However, Mr. Kapasi cannot cure Mrs. Das. Guilt can only be absolved by communicating with one's partner.
- Mr. Das is oblivious to his wife's affair and dwindling affection. Though he carries a camera around his neck and snaps frequent pictures, there is irony in his choice of accessory. Just as the innocence of the strawberry appliqué on Mrs. Das's shirt is misleading, the camera gives the impression of perception where there is none. It could also be considered that Mr. Das, who met his wife very young and is content with his life, is ignoring obvious problems either for the sake of the children or his own happiness. Mr. Kapasi is also trapped in a loveless marriage, but his endurance stems from a place of duty and custom.
- The theme of cultural differences between Indians and Indian-Americans is another important component in this story. At first glance, the Das family appears to be Indian, but Mr. Kapasi knows them to be tourists. Their manner of dress and attitude give them away despite their skin tone. Mr. Kapasi is reminded of the television show Dallas when his fares speak. Lahiri points out the guidebook held by Mr. Das labeled simply INDIA, suggesting he is looking for his own culture. Mrs. Das's coolness towards her own children astonishes Mr. Kapasi.
- The Das's also appraise Mr. Kapasi. Mrs. Das's insistence on the romance of his job smacks of exoticism. It was a simple, humble job taken to support himself, and Mr. Kapasi is startled that his duty would elicit such a response. In a way, Mrs. Das is searching for an experience that is separate from her own mundane existence. Thus, half a world away, she decides to share her secret with a stranger. The false togetherness Mr. Kapasi and Mrs. Das briefly share is built upon misunderstanding and exoticism of their respective cultures.
- There are many symbols at work that bear the weight of the inner life of the characters. Mrs. Das's puffed rice snack is an extension of herself. She shares the snack with no one in the car just as she withholds attention from her daughter. After the reveal of her secret and her

disappointment in Mr. Kapasi, she joins her family at the monastic dwelling. She leaves a trail of puffed rice behind her and monkeys gather. When she finds her family, Mrs. Das is shocked to see Bobby – the child conceived in the affair – surrounded by vicious creatures. It is her guilt and mistake that invites trouble.

- The environment is also rife with representations of thematic and narrative points. Their destination, the Sun Temple of Konark, is filled with rubble and can no longer be accessed. The monument once stood at the shore of a river but it has long since dried. This is indicative of the crumbling marriage of the Das's. The monkeys are also harbingers of chaos. At first they are playful, but eventually threaten the family's safety. Mrs. Das's secret and guilt operate much like the monkeys – an ever present force that can turn dangerous in an instant.
- The book was a critical and commercial success, and was lauded for the powerful storytelling and elegant themes of the work. Lahiri writes eloquently about the immigrant experience and about the divide between cultures, examining both the difficulties and joys of assimilation. These immensely personal stories form, in one critic's opinion, a story cycle. Overarching themes and narrative styles culminate in an exploration of the Indian and Indian-American experience, through the eyes of a multitude of characters grappling with themes of identity, ethnicity, love, and culture.
- Lahiri's other major works, *The Name sake* and *Unaccustomed Earth*, draw upon similar themes of assimilation and love. Her work paints a comprehensive portrait of the varying experiences of people everywhere who grapple with their identity.

## 8.4 Key-Words

**Almari** – A wooden cabinet

**Assiduously** – carefully, diligently

**Bengali** – refers to an ethnic community of people from the region of Bengal, which is now divided between Bangladesh and India.

**Cistern** – A waterproof receptacle that holds water, like an artificial reservoir.

**Coffer boxes** – A watertight box holding valuables or money.

**Defile** – A narrow, often steep-sided, passage that can be ascended in single file.

**Frieze** – A wide section of an architectural structure that contains carved figures or designs.

**Ghazal** – A poetic form developed in 10th Century Persia consisting of five to fifteen rhyming couplets and a refrain. The subject matter is usually loss or love in spite of pain.

**Gujurati** – referring to either an ethnicity or a language of people emanating from the state of Gujurat in Western India.

**Jain** – An Indian religion that stresses non-violence.

**Parapet** – A wall-like barrier around the edge of a roof.

**Plinth** – The base or platform on top of which a column, statue or other architectural or sculptural form rests.

**Prow** – The most forward part of the boat that cuts through the water as it sails.

**Raga** – In Indian classical music, a raga is a series of five or more notes that comprise a melody. There are different ragas for different times of day, seasons, and occasions.

**Rice Ceremony** – also known as Annaprashan. In Hindu culture, the rice ceremony occurs in the sixth or seventh month of a baby's life. The child eats his or her first taste of solid food. It is a celebration for the extended family.

**Rogan josh** – an aromatic dish of lamb created in the Kashmir region of the Indian subcontinent

**Shalwar Kameez** – A traditional two-piece garment worn by men and woman in Southeast Asian cultures. The pants are wide on top and narrow at the ankle and paired with a loose tunic.



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**Urdu**— A language spoken in Pakistan and North India

**Vermillion**— A deep shade of red.

**Zamindar**— An aristocrat who inherits a large tract of land and ruling over its peasants

### **8.5 Review Questions**

1. How long does Mr Kapasi calculate it will take before he gets a letter from Mrs.Das?
2. What is on Mrs.Das's shirt that keeps making Mr. Kapasi look like an Interpreter of Maladies examines the impact of acceptance and rejection on people. Discuss.
3. Why is the book named after the particular story, "Interpreter of Maladies"?
4. Discuss the significance of Partition as a theme in Interpreter of Maladies.
5. Why does Mrs. Das reveal to Mr. Kapasi that she is not Bobby's father?
6. Discuss the immigrant experience as explored in the collection Interpreter of Maladies.
7. Do you believe Boori Ma's tales of her luxurious life? Does it matter if she was telling the truth?
8. What does "sexy" mean in the story of the same name?
9. Food is a recurring motif in Lahiri's stories. Choose a few examples and discuss their significance.

### **Answers: Self-Assessment**

1. (i) (d)
2. (b)
3. (c)
4. (c)
5. (a)

### **8.6 Further Readings**



*Books*

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit: 9 Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies: Discussion on all Important Spheres of the Text Questions

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### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Understand the background and context.
- Discuss the important spheres of Interpreter of Maladies

### Introduction

Lahiri's Indian heritage forms the basis for her short stories; stories in which she deals with questions of identity, alienation and the plight of those who are culturally displaced. She vividly shows the estrangement and isolation that often afflict first- and even second-generation immigrants. Although the immigrant experience is central to her work, it is not her exclusive concern: in the title story, she suggests, through her characters, that there are 'maladies' that trouble all of us. This contributes to our understanding of other people and of ourselves. Lahiri, like many Americans and Australians, is a second-generation immigrant who feels just as much at home in her parents' homeland as she does in her own – yet she felt she belonged nowhere when she was young. The psychological dislocation that immigrants often suffer can cause their children to feel a similar sense of alienation. Although Lahiri's parents ultimately adjusted to living in America, they must have frequently longed for their mother country, giving Lahiri the opportunity to observe, at first hand, the often painful adjustment of immigrants to life in an adopted country. Her narratives weave together not only the stories of immigrants, but also those of their children, who feel that they belong neither in one place nor another. Lahiri uses her acute powers of observation, together with her personal experiences, to create stories that transport readers to an imaginary landscape, exploring and exposing the frailties common to all of humanity.

### 9.1 Interpreter of Maladies

As the short story genre uses a wide variety of plot types, several strategies must be employed to gain an overall picture of how different stories are connected. Although each of Lahiri's stories has its own self-contained plot and characters, they are linked in ways that bind the collection together as a complete entity.

To begin with, all Lahiri's stories revolve around people who are either Indian in India, Indian in the United States or Americans of Indian descent. Further, the stories can be separated into distinct groupings and associations, based on their relation to Indian culture. The first and most obvious group of stories are the two that are set in India itself, and concern only Indians in India: 'The Treatment

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of Bibi Haldar' and 'A Real Durwan'. Here, Lahiri explores the elements of Indian society that have not been muted or changed by association with the outside world. Both of the main characters – Bibi Haldar and Boori Ma – have characteristics and experiences that are peculiar to Indian society, many of which could not exist elsewhere. These women are both subject to the repressive mores of an Indian society that appears to render them powerless.

It is useful to link these two stories with the only other story set in India, which portrays an Indian man who comes into contact with an American family of Indian descent. The title story, 'An Interpreter of Maladies', not only illustrates the main theme uniting the stories, the 'maladies' that afflict Lahiri's various characters, but also bridges the geographic divide between the subcontinent of India and continental North America. Mr Kapasi does not understand the tourists in his taxi, who look Indian despite their foreign mannerisms and behaviour. This immediate confusion points to one of Lahiri's major themes – that of disjunction between cultures. Through this story, Lahiri is able to deepen the connection between her narratives. Another grouping concerns first-generation Indians who are inevitably alienated from American culture because they have left the land in which they were born and raised. Mrs Sen, while still quite young, is made to seem old because she cannot adapt to life in America. She is a completely displaced person who yearns only for India and makes no attempt to assimilate. In a similar way, Mr Pirzada lives in America but is completely absorbed by what is happening in the war in his homeland, where his wife and children still reside. The largest grouping of stories centres on marriage and relationships, particularly the arranged marriages that underpin Indian society. 'A Temporary Matter', 'Sexy', 'This Blessed House' and 'The Third and Final Continent', while also portraying memorable characters struggling to adapt to American culture, dwell on the intricacies of marriage and the difficulties that all individuals have in adapting to life as a family.

## **9.2 Background and Context**

Jhumpa Lahiri is of Indian descent; both her parents were born in India. She was born in London but grew up in Rhode Island, a state on the east coast of the United States. From childhood, she often accompanied her parents back to India – particularly to Calcutta (now known as Kolkata), the third-largest city in India, located in the state of West Bengal, close to India's eastern border with Bangladesh. Her father worked as a librarian and her mother remained a traditional Indian wife, maintaining the customs of her youth. Lahiri began writing at age seven, co-writing stories with her best friend in primary school. She abandoned writing fiction as an adolescent, and lacked the confidence to resume the pursuit during her university years. While employed as a researcher, she found the stimulus to resume writing fiction and, after achieving a PhD in Renaissance Studies at Boston University, turned once again to creative writing. With a string of degrees behind her, she decided that the life of a scholar was less interesting than that of a fiction writer, and began seriously submitting stories for publication.

After being published in prestigious magazines such as *The New Yorker*, Lahiri was awarded the highest literary honour in the United States, the Pulitzer Prize for Literature, in 2000. Since then, she has been awarded many other prizes, including the O. Henry Award for short stories. In 2003, she wrote the novel *The Namesake*, which was made into a movie in 2006. In 2008, a second collection of short stories, *Unaccustomed Earth*, was published. Lahiri lives in New York City with her husband and two children.

### **Structure, Language and Style**

#### ***Story Genre***

The modern short story is often concerned with making an emotional impact. Writers like Lahiri do not always observe the traditional elements of narrative fiction, such as the inclusion of an introduction, rising action, a climax, falling action and an ending that ties the work together. Her work often features subtle endings that are left open to interpretation, such as that of 'A

Temporary Matter', which has two possible resolutions (see 'Different Interpretations' in section 9.3). A short story should be able to be read in a single sitting. This gives the piece unity by focusing on one isolated incident in the life of a character, or on one character's relationship with another or others. An atmosphere is created in which the characters live and function and this, in turn, evokes an emotional response from the reader. The action is an important element of the short story. Something must happen, no matter how small. There must also be a narrative of some kind. However, this

narrative is not generally as rigidly structured as a novel would be. Successful short stories usually contain several particular features. Unlike the longer novel form, they must contain an idea that can be worked through within a restricted word limit. Although this does not allow for the creation of an extended psychological study of a character, let alone a number of characters, it is surprising how much information can be conveyed to readers about a character by using deft short phrases instead of extended description.

### Story structure

The short story's internal structure determines the significance of both its technical and artistic elements, such as themes, symbols and images. The **introduction** must immediately draw the reader in and pique their interest by establishing the emotional tone of the narrative, setting the scene, creating the atmosphere and locating the characters in a specific time and place. One of the most prominent features of Lahiri's stories is her short, to the point opening sentences, which immediately introduce information that is crucial to the rest of the narrative. Take the opening to 'A Temporary Matter', for example - 'The notice informed them that it was a temporary matter' (p.1). While this immediately prompts the question of what this 'temporary matter' is - in this case, the electricity being cut off - it also clues us into the wider issue of the estrangement that exists between the married couple Shoba and Shukumar.

The **body of the story** is where the 'plot' of the story unfolds. Short stories require an organising principle; for example, all of Lahiri's characters are Indian, or of Indian extraction, and thus share similar concerns and values.

Many of Lahiri's plot lines seem trivial, such as the story 'This Blessed House', about Twinkle's preoccupation with the Christian artefacts left behind by their house's previous owners - an interest which her husband Sanjeev finds annoying. More important, though, is the way that the discovery of each relic sheds new light on the marriage of these seemingly incompatible characters. A deft development of character and plot is central to the short story, and is focused on the conflict around which the story is based. This conflict could be between characters, between characters and their society, or within the psyche of the main character. 'Mrs Sen's', for example, concerns an Indian woman who is unable to assimilate into her adopted country, in contrast to her more socially adept husband. Her friendship with an American boy becomes an opportunity for each to experience the other's alternative culture.

The **climax** results from the convergence of the separate elements in the story, and the **ending** generally comes from the falling action after the climax.

Lahiri's endings are highly varied: they can often be abrupt, can be either positive or negative, and are often tangential or ambiguous. 'The Treatment of Bibi Haldar', for example, ends with a sense of the mystical because the main character has a baby without ever, to our knowledge, having any association with the opposite sex even though she desires marriage above all things. Equally magically, the pregnancy cures her of epilepsy. Lahiri's endings do not necessarily round off the story neatly. Instead, they encourage us to contemplate the ordinary lives of others and, by doing so, provide us with a possible moment of insight or revelation about our own lives.

### The significance of titles

Titles are important in any text, but Lahiri's carefully-chosen titles often provide clues as to the stories' content, as well as important information about character; they can also lead directly to the substance of the narrative. The title 'Sexy', for example, keys us into a character's fundamental misunderstanding of the precise meaning of this word, while 'A Temporary Matter' refers to the event that sets the central plot in motion.

### Language and narrative point of view

Lahiri's precise and spare prose is stripped of any florid phrases, and the adjectives and adverbs provide specific details rather than merely embellishing her writing. She has said that 'I just want to get it *less* - get it plainer. When I rework things I try to get it as simple as I can' (Chotiner 2008, p.3). While the language in this short story collection is functional, it still creates a sense of beauty and wholeness.

## Notes

For most of her stories, Lahiri has chosen a third-person omniscient narrative structure. In this way, she can present her characters from an outsider's point of view. For 'When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine' and the closing story, however, the first-person narrative voice lends immediacy to the poignancy of the speakers' experiences.

### 9.3 Characters and Relationships

Lahiri builds her characters around the immigrant experience and the cultural divide between America and India. At the same time she paints, with sympathy and understanding, indelible characters who experience the pain and suffering of ordinary people.

In the title story, '**Interpreter of Maladies**', Mr Kapasi is a character who signifies the deep divide between the culture of American-born Indians and that of Indians living in India. As the Das family's tourist guide, he is constantly bemused by the fact that these people 'looked Indian but dressed as foreigners did'. To him, they each seem completely self-absorbed: far more 'like siblings' than parents and children. The couple also appears to be emotionally unaffected by the reality of India, particularly the grim conditions under which many are forced to live. Mr Das stops to take a photo 'of a barefoot man, his head wrapped in a dirty turban' - treating him as if he is there merely to add local colour to his travels, rather than as a human being in his own right. Mrs Das is completely indifferent to the whole tourist experience, only becoming interested when Mr Kapasi begins to tell her about his other line of work.

Mr Kapasi's main occupation is as a language interpreter for a doctor. Mrs Das views the dependence of the patients on him as 'romantic' and is suddenly interested in Kapasi as a man, rather than just as a dispensable Indian guide. She unexpectedly provides Kapasi with a different view of himself as someone worthwhile, whereas he is only considered a lowly worker in his everyday life. Kapasi sees his occupation as 'thankless', whereas Mr and Mrs Das see him as bearing a great 'responsibility'. For him 'the job was a sign of his failings', as it underlined his lost dream of becoming an indispensable interpreter to diplomats. Kapasi's job is simply the means by which he sustains his family and, notably, has recently become a symbol of his wife's reproach for his inability to save his son from dying: 'she resented the other lives he helped ... to save'. He begins to see that human behaviour is the same in all cultures. Mr and Mrs Das are no more suited to each other than he and his wife are. He recognizes the signs of a dysfunctional marriage - 'the bickering, the indifference, the protracted silences - and is flattered by Mrs Das' attention. While in conversation with Mrs Das, Kapasi begins to see her as a sexual being on his own level, rather than simply a tourist; he is charmed when she includes him in their picnic. Her offer to send him some photographs encourages him to anticipate some extension of their relationship: 'she would write to him ... and he would respond eloquently'. For him, there was a sense of promise 'that all of life's mistakes made sense in the end'. His hopes are fuelled further when Mrs Das displays her interest in the sensuality of the carved figures at Konarak temple. Alas, Kapasi is merely fantasising that Mrs Das' polite interest indicates something deeper. His attempt to prolong their tour only prompts an unwanted admission from Mrs Das that her son is not her husband's. He is dismayed to find that she thinks of him 'as a parent' rather than a potential partner, and that she has only felt comfortable in confessing to him because of his 'talents' as an interpreter. Each person has seen the other as a kind of saviour, only to be disappointed. Kapasi feels 'insulted' at being used by Mrs Das, while Mrs Das realises that he is merely an unimportant tour guide after all, irrelevant to her family.

The character of Kapasi, then, demonstrates that human misunderstandings, and not merely cultural divides, can lead to misinterpretation. As the 'slip of paper' on which he has written his address floats away, he is reminded of the harsh truth that life is full of missed opportunities.

#### Children as key characters

Children are crucial to the action of a number of Lahiri's stories. They serve to illuminate adult characters while, at the same time, they have a definitive role as individuals. In '**Mrs Sen's**' the boy, Eliot, functions as a foil to demonstrate Mrs Sen's inability to assimilate into American culture. Although Mrs Sen dominates the story, Eliot becomes a figure who not only illustrates the balance between the cultures, but also develops as a character who grows through experiencing other customs.

Eliot is an eleven-year-old white American boy; while Mrs. Sen, the next in a line of Eliot's after school 'babysitters', is hired because she is a 'Professor's wife, responsible and kind'. She is, of course, much more than this – as Eliot is soon to find out. She is a traditional Indian wife who feels isolated and lost in the foreignness of American culture. We perceive Mrs Sen through the eyes of Eliot, who notices the striking differences between the domestic life of these Indian immigrants and his own. Through his thoughts, we are given detailed descriptions of the Sens' apartment, suggesting (although he is in no way judgemental) that he perceives the family as strange. Indeed, his ability to absorb and enjoy this alternative way of life becomes a rich learning experience for him.

Eliot, in fact, compares the lushness of Mrs Sen and her beautiful attire – 'she wore a shimmering white sari patterned with orange paisleys' – favourably against his mother's 'cropped hair ... her shaved knees and thighs too exposed'. Unlike Eliot's own home, Mrs Sen's is welcoming and her apartment is warm. He soon comes to look forward to watching her 'as she chopped things, seated on newspapers on the living room floor'.

He is fascinated with the knife she uses, 'curved like the prow of a Viking ship'. But Mrs Sen is so alienated from her new life, and so starved for company, that she allows Eliot to become her confidante. During this process, he learns not only to accept another person's culture, but also to shield Mrs Sen from her fear of living in a world that is alien to her. Through her, Eliot comes to understand the anxiety that ensues from being cut off from one's family and friends, and the frustrations of being unable to prepare the food that ties one to a particular culture.

After Mrs Sen's car accident, Eliot is left at home as a 'latch-key' child and feels, for the first time, the sterility of his own culture in contrast with the richness of Mrs Sen's. Both have benefited from their mutual association. In contrast, the seven-year-old boy in 'Sexy' acts as a catalyst for Miranda to realise that her relationship with the married Dev is neither appropriate nor beneficial to her. She is swept into her liaison with Dev, attracted by his difference and lured by his Indian heritage. Their story runs parallel with that of Laxmi's cousin, whose husband has absconded with another woman whom 'he sat next to ... on a flight from Delhi to Montreal'. His son, we learn from Miranda's friend Laxmi, is very bright but badly affected by his father's dereliction of his family. When Miranda's friend asks her to look after him, she is startled by his perceptions. When the boy asks Miranda to wear the special dress she has bought to wear with Dev, he unexpectedly describes her as 'sexy'. We discover the depth of his pain when he explains that being sexy 'means loving someone you don't know'. With this remark, he reveals how badly affected he has been by his mother's constant emotional outbursts and his father's abandonment.

After thinking about the boy's words, Miranda understands the significance of the betrayal represented by her affair with Dev. The boy's pain has made her realise that 'it wasn't fair to her, or to his wife, that they both deserved better'. The child's experiences have pointed her towards the reality of the emotional suffering inevitably involved in such a deceitful relationship.

The first-person speaker of 'When Mr Pirzada Came to Dine' is a ten-year-old girl, Lilia, who finally comes to understand the pain caused by separation from one's family. Mr Pirzada is a Moslem Bangladeshi who is trapped in America when the war of separation breaks out in western India.

Each evening he is asked to dine with Lilia's family, who are Indian immigrants. Lilia is caught between the traditions of her parents and American culture. She does not understand her parents' complaints about the unavailability of ingredients for Indian food, or their lament that neighbours 'never dropped by without an invitation'. Mr Pirzada is invited to their house simply because he is Indian; or, as her father explains, 'Mr Pirzada is no longer considered Indian', something that 'made no sense' to Lilia. Her mother understands that Lilia is American – 'we live here now, she was born here' – and has little understanding of the politics of India and Pakistan. Yet, something still fascinates Lilia about her parents' homeland.

Lilia perceives Mr Pirzada as somewhat exotic in his 'ensembles of plums, olives, and chocolate browns'. His presence even makes her feel rather 'like a stranger in [her] own home'. Every evening he brings her sweets, which she feels are 'inappropriate ... to consume', placing them in a sandalwood box she inherited from a grandmother she 'had never known'; an indication of the empty space in her life created by her lack of familial connections. It is through Mr Pirzada's watch 'set to the local

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time inDacca' that Lilia comes to realise that, while Mr Pirzada is physically present in America, his experiences there are no more than 'a lagging ghost of where [he] really belonged' – with his family in Dacca. Gradually Lilia, through her contact with Mr Pirzada, is brought to understand the significance of other cultures and other people's fight for independence. Her colourless American history lessons seem unremarkable when set against the history being created in the here and now, and the anticipation of the 'birth of a nation on the other side of the world'. Lahiri subtly uses the persona of Lilia to filter the cultural differences between India/Pakistan and the reality of the American culture that Lilia is born into. She dutifully learns the history of her birth country but is drawn inexorably towards that of her parents. For Lilia, as war looms in East Pakistan, the details remain 'a remote mystery with haphazard clues' that she is somehow excluded from; she knows only that Mr Pirzada and her parents operated as 'a single body' with 'a single fear'. After the war, Mr Pirzada returns home to his family, which has survived. He will never revisit America, but Lilia has learned through this stranger what it means 'to miss someone who was so many miles and hours away'.

- What role do the children in the title story play?
- How does Lahiri use these child characters to underline the other characterisations in the story?
- Through these child characters, certain truths are revealed to readers about the adults, their relationships and the cultural divide between Indian Americans and their American counterparts.

## 9.4 Themes, Ideas and Values

### *Tolerance*

Lahiri sees tolerance as essential both to cultural harmony and within relationships. Through '**This Blessed House**', she explores both the complications of an arranged marriage and the adjustments that must be made to accommodate a couple's disparate personalities within any relationship. Sanjeev obviously prefers his bachelor existence 'when he would walk each evening across the Mass. Avenue bridge' (p.138) and need not consider anyone else in his solitary evenings. He and Twinkle are completely mismatched: he prefers an orderly existence, while Twinkle is lazy, slovenly and careless of convention. Further, she was 'excited and delighted by little things ... as if the world contained hidden wonders'. These qualities make Sanjeev 'feel stupid', because he does not understand her zest for life. When Twinkle becomes obsessed with the Christian artefacts left behind by a previous owner in their new house, Sanjeev becomes even more uptight wondering what the 'people from the office' will make of these Christian symbols in a Hindu house. He hates the fact that Twinkle is fascinated with them, but in the face of her refusal to abandon them he concedes that he 'will tolerate' her 'little biblical menagerie'. This is a further sign that he will accommodate Twinkle's excesses for the sake of harmony. He continues to clear up after her, but their differences become obvious when he plays Mahler's Fifth Symphony as a romantic gesture only to have Twinkle advise him that if he wants 'to impress people' he should not 'play this music'. The charms of the 'tender fourth movement' are completely lost on Twinkle.

The couple had met 'only four months before', and were brought together by the wishes of their parents. This is the situation at the heart of their story, for their obvious differences soon become apparent: Sanjeev is the son of parents who live in Calcutta, while Twinkle is a second-generation American. This basic cultural difference is a further obstacle to their establishment of a successful relationship. Sanjeev had been lonely in America and Twinkle had recently been abandoned by an American man. Brought together by the parents, they believed they had some things in common such as a 'persistent fondness for Wodehouse novels'. With this comment, Lahiri shows her sense of the absurd. To make a marriage work, especially from culturally diverse backgrounds, she shows that a great deal of adjustment and compromise must take place on both sides, and also that tolerance extends beyond a mere shared passion for an author. Twinkle is not interested in the complications of Indian cookery which, she complained, 'was a bother', preferring a more American style of food. Sanjeev's admission that her cooking is 'unusually tasty' suggests that he is prepared to tolerate her differences. Twinkle, for her part, tolerates Sanjeev's fussiness and, happy that she has salvaged the Christian artefacts, declares 'this house is blessed'. Sanjeev does not know if he loves Twinkle, although he has chosen her above all the other Indian brides that were suggested to him. He is clearly mesmerised

by her, but 'did not know what love was, only what he thought it was not'. In Twinkle, he asks himself, 'what was there not to love?'

The tension between the two reaches its peak when Sanjeev threatens to take the statue of the Virgin to 'the dump'. For the first time, Twinkle shows her passion: they argue until Sanjeev notices that she is crying. Her 'sadness' provokes a protective reaction from him, and 'in the end they settled on a compromise'.

Sanjeev is humbled both by Twinkle's love for him and by the respect shown toward him by his friends and colleagues. His irritation at Twinkle and the feelings that overwhelm him are finally dissipated by the 'pang of anticipation' he feels at the sight of Twinkle's shoes. Although he does not share Twinkle's taste in Christian paraphernalia, he knows that they will be together for the 'rest of their days'. He loves her because she is unique, and their relationship will be cemented because of their ability to compromise.

Lahiri shows that in any relationship the two people must be able to learn to tolerate each other's differences. This is even more so in an arranged marriage, where the couple must develop mutual love and respect. Through describing Twinkle's taste for Christian artefacts, Lahiri implies that Sanjeev also must develop a more tolerant attitude toward his new culture if he is to adapt successfully. As Sanjeev's character shows, the immigrant experience is often painful and the adjustments frequently overwhelming.

## Compassion

Many of Lahiri's stories feature an underlying pattern of human compassion:

- Shoba and Shukumar eventually develop mutual compassion in 'A Temporary Matter'.
- Lilia learns compassion through Mr Pirzada's enforced separation from his family ('When Mr Pirzada came to Dine').
- Miranda learns to value herself through her feelings of compassion for the boy Rohin ('Sexy').
- Eliot feels compassion for Mrs Sen although, in contrast, his mother does not ('Mrs Sen's').
- The narrator, although he does not fully understand her, feels a connection with Mrs Croft based on compassion ('The Third and Final Continent').

## Lack of communication leads to isolation

Lahiri points out that communication is essential, both for societies and for individuals within society. Lack of communication and miscommunication often lead her characters to feel emotionally isolated and to suffer from cultural displacement. This is particularly true for immigrants who feel divided between the customs of their homeland and those of their adopted society.

For Mrs Sen 'everything is there' - that is, in India - and she cannot assimilate to life in America. Although her Indian cooking practices function as the obvious symbol of her lack of adjustment, her separation from her family is at the heart of her alienation. She waits fretfully for the 'blue aerogram' that brings news from the family, an anxiety that Eliot finds 'incomprehensible'. Her alienation is heightened because she is unable to communicate successfully even with her husband, as Mr Sen has not understood her feelings of isolation and simply expects her to be able to cope alone. Her failure to learn to drive is the motif through which Lahiri demonstrates Mrs Sen's ongoing sense of cultural displacement. After the accident, she becomes even more isolated.

At the same time, though, Eliot's mother is shown to be equally incapable of communication. Her relationship with Eliot is distant and, in contrast with Mrs Sen, without warmth or real affection. If food is a symbol of Mrs Sen's marginality, then Eliot's mother's isolation is shown through her failure to cook for either of them, relying on pizza and bread and cheese. She represents the failure of society to bridge the cultural divide through communication and is uncomfortable around Mrs Sen, merely nibbling her Indian 'concoctions' (p.118) without offering her any real sense of inclusion. When their association ends, she is 'relieved'.

- Mr Kapas, in 'The Interpreter of Maladies', is also the victim of miscommunication (see above).
- Bibi Haldar, in 'The Treatment of Bibi Haldar', is isolated because of her illness; she is unable to communicate her needs to those around her because she is marginalised by society.

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**The search for identity is universal**

Lahiri explores the idea that identity, especially for immigrants, is something that must be sought. We gain a sense of identity through family, society and culture. For the culturally displaced, this is a difficult endeavour.

The speaker in **'The Third and Final Continent'** searches for his identity across continents. He is born in Asia, travels to Europe to study, and finally immigrates to North America. Although he has adapted to the British way of life as a student, it is not a true cultural integration as he lives in a 'house occupied entirely by penniless Bengali bachelors like [himself]'. He attempts to keep his cultural identity intact by keeping the most trivial of Indian traditions alive, such as eating 'egg curry'. When he is posted to America he relies on the Britishness that he has learned in London, converting 'ounces to grams' and comparing 'prices to things in England' as a survival strategy. His search for identity is further strained by his arranged marriage, more or less en route to refusal to eat 'hamburgers or hot dogs', as the consumption of beef is sacrilegious according to his Hindu beliefs.

The speaker is burdened with a fragmented sense of identity; constantly pulled in opposite directions between Indian culture and the need to assimilate in America. When he meets his centenarian landlady, Mrs Croft, he is bewildered by her age and her repetitious phrases while admiring her strength in surviving for so long. In contrast to his relationship with his own mother, whose rejection of life had further exacerbated the speaker's sense of emotional isolation, through his fondness for Mrs Croft, and his admiration for her ability to accept the inevitable, he gradually learns that, although he is 'bewildered by each mile [he has] traveled ... each person [he has] known', life is a strange amalgam. In contrast with the speaker, his wife Mala is able to maintain her identity because she takes on the role of a traditional Indian wife. The speaker finds their relationship strained, however - they were 'strangers' - until during a visit to Mrs Croft, who measures Mala through her own innate sense of decorum rather than her exotic dissimilarities to the American ideal, declares her to be 'a perfect lady'. The speaker sees only their differences, whereas Mrs Croft appreciates Mala's grace and charm. The speaker's ability to adjust is, Lahiri points out, a human adaptation. He has discovered that the ability to feel at home no matter what country he lives in comes only from having a strong sense of self. The 'ambition that had first hurled [him] across the world' is part of his ability to know himself and to recognise that the strength he gains from his origins is the ideal foundation on which to build a strong identity.

- Even though she is an Indian in India, is Boori Ma also seeking an identity in her self-appointed occupation as a 'real durwan'?
- Is her displacement the cause of her fragmented sense of identity?

**The Immigrant Experience/Assimilation**

The immigrant experience takes several forms in *Interpreter of Maladies*. For some characters, like the narrator of *The Third and Final Continent*, the transition to a new life is challenging but smooth. The narrator looks forward to the opportunity that the new country can afford. For Lilia's parents, the move to America also affords them a wealth of opportunity not open to them in India, but the price is paid by Lilia in terms of connection to her culture. Mrs. Sen flat-out refuses to assimilate. For her, "everything" is in India and there is no reason to attempt to make a life in her new home. There is an emotional trade-off when moving to a new land. Each character in this collection wrestles with identity, whether newly displaced or descended from immigrants. There is a longing felt for the place of one's birth, a fear of losing one's culture and fear of not being accepted.

**Marriage/Love**

Love and marriage are complicated in *Interpreter of Maladies*. A marriage is the beginning of a new joint life for two people. In these stories, a marriage is an occasion of joy but also of secrets, silences, and mysteries. Twinkle and Sanjeev's relationship crystallizes the disparate attitudes and attributes of marriage in Lahiri's collection. Although they are both born in America and their marriage is not arranged, Twinkle and Sanjeev are nearly strangers to one another. No matter what romantic feelings transpire within couples, each husband and wife in the stories remain individuals, each with their

own secrets and desires. Sanjeev doubts his love for his wife because of this disconnect. But, as is proved by the narrator of *The Third and Final Continent*, that distance can be closed by shared experience. Marriage is not a solid institution but a fluid invention. Shukumar and Shoba are radically altered by the death of their child, and the toll is taken on their marriage. They are no longer the same people as when they met. Love is found in unexpected places and can shift in the wake of experience. By reading *Sexy* from the point of view of a mistress, the reader also understands that each romantic connection is a unique and personal affair. There are no absolutes or strict moralities.

### Communication

Lahiri has stated that much of her writing is concerned with communication and its absence. Miscommunication or unexpressed feelings weigh on several characters, destroying their well-being. *A Temporary Matter* is the best example of secrecy taking its toll on a marriage. Shukumar and Shoba, lost in their own grief, cease communicating with one another. Blackouts allow them the freedom to share secrets they have never shared. They are unfailingly honest and can no longer maintain the illusion that their marriage is still viable. Mrs. Das tries to unburden herself by telling Mr. Kapasi the secret of Bobby's conception. But only Mr. Das can absolve her of her guilt. At the end of the story, nothing has changed in their marriage because she is not able to communicate her lack of love for her family to anyone other than a stranger. Twinkle and Sanjeev have different outlooks on life which cause initial discord between the newlyweds. Communication is necessary to healthy relationships.

### Parent/Child Relationships

As children grow older, the relationship between them and their parents shift, becoming either adversarial or enriched with understanding. During the bulk of *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine* the narrator Lilia is 10 years old. She brings a childlike innocence to her relationship with Mr. Pirzada, who she thinks is no different from her parents despite being a Pakistani. Lilia's parents are frustrated by her ignorance of current events in their homeland - the byproduct of her schooling in America. There is a disconnect between parents and children, both across generational and cultural lines. There is an unspoken truth between Eliot and his mother. Eliot is keenly aware of his mother's sadness and also of his powerlessness to help. Conversely, the narrator of *The Third and Final Continent* takes care of his mother when she is ill. He is forced to assume the role of the adult in their relationship. Rohin is also keenly aware of his mother's pain and the situation that has caused the pain. Lilia, Rohin, and Eliot all understand the grownups' sorrows and offer high-level observations on the nature of love and loss.

### Religion and Tradition

Maintaining old traditions and customs while learning new ones is part of the assimilation process for immigrants. Mr. Pirzada is puzzled by Halloween - the pumpkins, the costumes and the candy all mystify him. In part, Mr. Pirzada worries enough over his daughters and the thought of Lilia freely inviting danger is too much for him. Twinkle reassures Sanjeev that they are "good little Hindus" despite her affection for discovered Christian iconography. Just because she is charmed by the statuettes does not mean that she has forsaken the customs of her ancestors. Mrs. Sen, unwilling to settle in America, obstinately upholds the patterns and routines of her life in Calcutta. Adopting new customs is the mark of a successful transition into a new country. Mala's effortless absorption of the American customs preferred by her husband indicates that her assimilation will not be as painful as Mrs. Sen's.

### Partition

Partition as a historical event and as a metaphor is employed by Lahiri. Characters are divided against others and also divided within themselves. Mr. Pirzada and Boori Ma are victims of Partition. Boori Ma is a refugee who may or may not have lost her family and luxurious home in the forced exile of Hindus and Muslims from each other's territories. Her new life is in shambles and she lives on the fringes of society. Boori Ma represents the disastrous effects of the events of 1947. Lilia's reaction to Mr. Pirzada is Lahiri's critique of the skirmish between the two religions. She is unable to see any real difference between Mr. Pirzada and her parents. Her naivete taps into an overarching humanism that Partition erodes. Someone like Miranda, who is neither Indian nor Indian-American, is not immune

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to such a divide. Though she feels guilty about her tryst with Dev, her desire for him lingers. In Lahiri's fiction, each person is their own continent.

**Environment/Nature**

The environment often reflects the inner turmoil of its characters. The rubble-filled Sun Temple that sits atop a dry river is indicative of the ruin of the marriage between Mr. and Mrs. Das as well as the well of disappointment that Mr. Kapasi carries with him. The gray waves outside Eliot's window belie a sadness that he is unable to express. The snow that thaws only after Shukumar and Shoba return to honesty directly relates to the thaw between the characters. In *The Treatment of Bibi Haldar*, the changing seasons chart the life of the troubled main character. In the fall, she is shunned and in the winter she is isolated. In the spring, she is pregnant and emerges from her misery. There is a rhythm of life reflected in the changing seasons.

**Motifs**

*Seeing*

Each character in the story has a distorted way of seeing the others, as each views others through some artificial means. Mr. Das views the world through his camera. His camera is always around his neck, and he sees even harsh realities through its lens. For example, he takes pictures of the starving peasant, even though doing so blatantly ignores the peasant's essential reality. Mrs. Das hides behind her sunglasses, seeing the others through their tint and blocking others' view of her eyes. Additionally, her window does not roll down, so she cannot directly see the world outside the taxi cab. Mr. Kapasi watches Mrs. Das through the rearview mirror, which distorts his view of her and prevents him from looking at her directly. Each child is wearing a visor, which suggests that their vision will one day be as distorted as their parents' is. Finally, Mr. Das and Ronny closely resemble each other, whereas Mr. Das and Bobby have little in common. Mr. Kapasi simply observes this fact but draws no inference from it, even though this simple fact hints at the deeper truth: that Mr. Das is not Bobby's father. Because Mr. Kapasi sees the Das family as a unit, he never suspects this truth. His idea of family distorts the reality of the situation.

**Symbols**

*The Camera*

Mr. Das's camera represents his inability to see the world clearly or engage with it. Because he views the world through his camera, Mr. Das misses the reality of the world around him, both in his marriage and in the scenes outside the cab. Mr. Das chooses to have Mr. Kapasi stop the cab so that he can take a photograph of a starving peasant, wanting the picture only as a souvenir of India and ignoring the man's obvious need for help. His view of the man's reality is distorted because he sees the man only through the camera lens. Mr. Das snaps pictures of monkeys and scenery, taking the camera from his eye only when he turns back to his guidebook. Rather than engage actively with the India that surrounds him, he instead turns to the safety of frozen images and bland descriptions of ancient sites. He has come to visit India, but what he will take away with him—pictures and snatches of guidebook phrases—he could have gotten from any shop at home in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Mr. Das also uses the camera to construct a family life that does not actually exist. His children are insolent and his wife is distant, yet Mr. Das tries to pose them in pictures that suggest harmony and intimacy. When Mrs. Das refuses to leave the car when they visit the monastic dwellings, Mr. Das tries to change her mind because he wants to get a complete family portrait—something, he says, they can use for their Christmas card. This "happy family" that Mr. Das aspires to catch on film is pure fabrication, but Mr. Das does not seem to care. He would rather exist in an imaginary state of willful ignorance and arm's-length engagement than face the disappointments and difficulties of his real life.

**Mrs. Das's Puffed Rice**

Puffed rice, insubstantial and bland, represents Mrs. Das's mistakes and careless actions. Physically, Mrs. Das is young and attractive, but she is spiritually empty. She does not love her children or

husband and is caught in the boredom of her life as a housewife. Her depression and apathy distance her from her family, but she harbors a secret that could tear the entire family apart. She carelessly scatters the puffed rice along the trail at the monastic dwellings, never thinking about the danger her actions pose to others. Even when she realizes the danger to Bobby, as monkeys surround and terrify him, Mrs. Das does not take any responsibility for the situation, just as she refuses to acknowledge any guilt about her affair with Mr. Das's friend. If Mrs. Das's secret is ever revealed, Bobby will be the true victim of that carelessness as well. Conceived out of anger, boredom, and spite and then lied to about his real father, Bobby is surrounded by deceit. Mr. Kapasi feels the urge to tell Bobby the truth as he carries him away from the monkeys. He knows that the safety he is providing for the boy—scattering the monkeys and lifting Bobby away from danger—is insubstantial. He delivers Bobby back to Mrs. Das, whose distance and carelessness fail to provide true safety.

### Point of View

"Interpreter of Maladies" is told from third-person limited point of view—that is, the story is told by an objective narrator who reveals the perceptions of Mr. Kapasi's perceptions but not those of the other characters. Events unfold primarily as Mr. Kapasi, not Mrs. Das, sees them. For example, when the characters leave the taxi at the temple, the narrator follows Mr. Kapasi, who walks ahead so as not to disturb Mrs. Das, and does not show us what Mrs. Das is doing until she again enters Mr. Kapasi's view. Likewise, when Mrs. Das leaves the taxi to take Tina to the bathroom, the narrator stays in the car with Mr. Kapasi, who waits alone while the boys and Mr. Das get out of the car. Even the characters' names reflect the focus on Mr. Kapasi. Instead of calling Mrs. Das by her first name, Mina, as both her husband and her children do, the narrator refers to her exclusively as Mrs. Das, which is how Mr. Kapasi sees her. Likewise, the narrator does not disclose information that Mr. Kapasi would not know. We do not, for example, ever learn the exact ages of Ronny and Tina. We do, however, hear about how Mr. Kapasi has only two suits, the better of the two is the one he wears in the story.

By using this point of view, Lahiri limits the scope of our knowledge about the Das family and emphasizes the disconnection between Mrs. Das and Mr. Kapasi. Although Mr. Kapasi interprets Mrs. Das's comments as flattering and even flirtatious, Mrs. Das likely did not intend her comments to be construed this way. Mr. Kapasi wishes for an intimate connection with Mrs. Das, but when she finally does spill her secrets—her affair, her true feelings about her husband, the heated beginning of their relationship—Mr. Kapasi is overwhelmed and disgusted. She was unaware of how crass and inappropriate her revelations would seem to Mr. Kapasi, just as she is oblivious to how insulting it is for her to expect him to have a "cure" for her pain. Mr. Kapasi thinks he and Mrs. Das have a connection because he recognizes in her situation the distant spouse and troubled marriage from his own life. However, any connection between them is only in his mind.

### Character Development

To develop characters in "Interpreter of Maladies," Lahiri layers small, specific details in her descriptions of each character, giving them depth and richness. From the first paragraph of the story, details such as the bickering about who will accompany Tina to the bathroom and the fact that Mrs. Das does not hold Tina's hand tell us that Mr. and Mrs. Das are at odds, at least in some small way, and that Mrs. Das is a somewhat careless mother. These details are important because the narrator tells us few explicit facts about the Das family. Rather, we must infer information about them from the way they act. We learn about Mr. Das's distance and willful ignorance from his picture taking and absorption in his guidebook, and we learn about the children's insolence through small behaviors, such as Tina's playing with the car locks and Ronny's approaching the goat with gum. Mr. Kapasi infers what he knows about the Das family from the same set of details.

The small pieces of information that we have about Mrs. Das almost overwhelm her big confession toward the end of the story. What we know of her character is based less on the substantial knowledge that she has committed adultery with her husband's friend and borne a child of the affair and more on the less significant fact that she does not share her puffed rice with her children or husband, does not care to be in the photographs they take at the monastery, and wears insensible shoes while she

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goes sightseeing. Mrs. Das is, with Mr. Kapasi, the most important character in the story, but what we know of her comes from the fact that she wears sunglasses, wears a shirt with a strawberry on it, shaves her legs, and carries a large, overstuffed purse. By providing so many small, specific details, Lahiri vividly portrays Mrs. Das but also allows for some ambiguity. Mr. Kapasi perceives the same details but misconstrues what they mean about Mrs. Das, mistakenly believing that she shares with him some problem or connection.

**Culture Clash**

Central themes of all of Lahiri's work, "Interpreter of Maladies" included, are the difficulties that Indians have in relating to Americans and the ways in which Indian Americans are caught in the middle of two very different cultures. We learn quite a few details about where the Das family fits into this cultural divide. Mr. and Mrs. Das were both born and raised in America, although their retired parents have now moved to India to live. The Dases visit every few years, bringing the children with them. They are Indian but not of India, and their dress and manner are wholly American. Although Mr. Kapasi recognizes some common cultural heritage, the Dases are no more familiar with India than any other tourist. Mr. Das relies on a tourist guidebook to tell him about the country through which they are traveling, and Mrs. Das could not be more uninterested in her surroundings if she tried. Although India is their parents' home, Mr. and Mrs. Das are foreigners. Mr. Das even seems to take pride in his status as a stranger, telling Mr. Kapasi about his American roots with an "air of sudden confidence."

Though Mr. Kapasi and the Dases do share an Indian heritage, their marriages reveal the extent of how different their cultures really are. Mr. Kapasi believes that he can relate to Mrs. Das's unhappy marriage because he himself is in an unhappy marriage. He seeks this common ground as a way to find friendship and connection. However, the connection fails because the marriages are so vastly different. Mr. Kapasi's parents arranged his marriage, and he and Mrs. Kapasi have nothing in common. By contrast, Mrs. Das fell in love with Mr. Das at a young age, and although their union was encouraged by their parents, her marriage was not arranged. Mrs. Das's comments about her and Mr. Das's sexual behaviors during their courtship shock Mr. Kapasi, who has never seen his wife naked. Furthermore, Mr. Kapasi is offended by the concept of infidelity in Mrs. Das's marriage. This lack of understanding reflects a differing understanding of duty and family between the two cultures. The two marriages may both be unhappy, but the causes, remedies, mistakes, and results of that unhappiness have no overlap whatsoever. Mr. Kapasi's fantasy of forging a friendship with Mrs. Das is shattered even before he sees his address slip away in the wind. The cultural divide between him and Mrs. Das is, from his view, simply too vast.

**Different Interpretations**

It is the ambiguity of the ending that leads to different interpretations in 'A Temporary Matter'. The marriage of the young couple, Shoba and Shukumar, has fallen apart after the stillbirth of their son. As a result of this tragedy, their previously happy relationship has become dysfunctional to the extent that their marriage seems to be only 'a temporary matter'. Shoba is unable to deal with her disappointment and grief at losing her baby, and has projected her anger and frustration onto her husband because he was absent at the time of her labour. They have lost touch with one another in their relationship, as Shoba silently blames Shukumar for the tragedy; Shoba's increasing workload serves as an outlet for her frustration and further extends the marital discord. Like many mothers in her situation, she is unable to understand that Shukumar is equally grief-stricken. She has become sloppy in her appearance and has abandoned her traditional role as an Indian wife. At the same time, Shukumar, 'still a student at thirty-five', has increasingly allowed himself to use the house as a kind of prison in his despair at both the loss of the child and the breakdown of their marriage. He feels helpless and lonely. When the couple receive a notice that their electricity will be disconnected every evening 'for one hour', Shukumar makes an effort to create a romantic ambience by using candles to illuminate their dinner. They begin to reconnect in the darkness through confessions of 'the little ways they'd hurt or disappointed each other, and themselves'. 'Something happened when the house was dark' and by the fourth night they were able, tentatively, to rekindle their relationship.

## 9.5 Plot Overview

## Notes

The Das family is in India on vacation, and Mr. Das has hired Mr. Kapasi to drive them to visit the Sun Temple. The family sits in the car, which is stopped near a tea stall. Mr. and Mrs. Das are arguing about who should take their daughter, Tina, to the bathroom, and Mrs. Das ultimately takes her. Ronny, their son, darts out of the car to look at a goat. Mr. Das, who closely resembles Ronny, reprimands him but does nothing to stop him, even when he says he wants to give the goat a piece of gum. Mr. Das tells Bobby, the younger of their two sons, to go look after Ronny. When Bobby refuses, Mr. Das does nothing to enforce his order.

Mr. Das tells Mr. Kapasi that both he and his wife were born and raised in the United States. Mr. Das also reveals that their parents now live in India and that the Das family visits them every few years. Tina comes back to the car, clutching a doll with shorn hair. Mr. Das asks Tina where her mother is, using Mrs. Das's first name, Mina. Mr. Kapasi notices that Mr. Das uses his wife's first name, and he thinks it is an unusual way to speak to a child. While Mrs. Das buys some puffed rice from a nearby vendor, Mr. Das tells Mr. Kapasi that he is a middle-school teacher in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Mr. Kapasi reveals that he has been a tour guide for five years.

The group sets off. Tina plays with the locks in the back of the car, and Mrs. Das does not stop her. Mrs. Das sits in the car silently and eats her snack without offering any to anyone else. Along the road, they see monkeys, which Mr. Kapasi says are common in the area. Mr. Das has him stop the car so he can take a picture of a starving peasant. Mr. and Mrs. Das quarrel because Mr. Das has not gotten them a tour guide whose car has air-conditioning. Mr. Kapasi observes that Mr. and Mrs. Das are more like siblings to their children than parents.

Mr. Kapasi tells Mr. Das about his other job as an interpreter in a doctor's office. Mrs. Das remarks that his job is romantic and asks him to tell her about some of his patients. However, Mr. Kapasi views his job as a failure. At one time, he had been a scholar of many languages, and now he remains fluent only in English. He took the interpreting job as a way to pay the medical bills when his eldest son contracted typhoid and died at age seven. He kept the job because the pay was better than his previous teaching job, but it reminds his wife of their son's death. Mr. Kapasi's marriage was arranged by his parents, and he and his wife have nothing in common. Mr. Kapasi, seduced by Mrs. Das's description of his job as "romantic," begins fantasizing about Mrs. Das.

When they stop for lunch, Mrs. Das insists that Mr. Kapasi sit with them. He does, and Mr. Das takes their picture together. Mrs. Das gets Mr. Kapasi's address so that she can send him a copy of the picture, and Mr. Kapasi begins to daydream about how they will have a great correspondence that will, in a way, finally fulfill his dreams of being a diplomat between countries. He imagines the witty things he will write to her and how she will reveal the unhappiness of her marriage.

At the temple, Mrs. Das talks with Mr. Kapasi as they stare at friezes of women in erotic poses. Mr. Kapasi admires her legs and continues to dream about their letters. Dreading taking the Das family back to their hotel, he suggests that they go see a nearby monastery, and they agree. When they arrive, the place is swarming with monkeys. Mr. Kapasi tells the children and Mr. Das that the monkeys are not dangerous as long as they are not fed.

Mrs. Das stays in the car because her legs are tired. She sits in the front seat next to Mr. Kapasi and confesses to him that her younger son, Bobby, is the product of an affair she had eight years ago. She slept with a friend of Mr. Das's who came to visit while she was a lonely housewife, and she has never told anyone about it. She tells Mr. Kapasi because he is an interpreter of maladies and she believes he can help her. Mr. Kapasi's crush on her begins to evaporate. Mrs. Das reveals that she no longer loves her husband, whom she has known since she was a young child, and that she has destructive impulses toward her children and life. She asks Mr. Kapasi to suggest some remedy for her pain. Mr. Kapasi, insulted, asks her whether it isn't really just guilt she feels. Mrs. Das gets out of the car and joins her family. As she walks, she drops a trail of puffed rice.

Meanwhile, the children and Mr. Das have been playing with the monkeys. When Mrs. Das rejoins them, Bobby is missing. They find him surrounded by monkeys that have become crazed from Mrs. Das's puffed rice and are hitting Bobby on the legs with a stick he had given them. Mr. Das accidentally

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takes a picture in his nervousness, and Mrs. Das screams for Mr. Kapasi to do something. Mr. Kapasi chases off the monkeys and carries Bobby back to his family. Mrs. Das puts a bandage on Bobby's knee. Then she reaches into her handbag to get a hairbrush to straighten his hair, and the paper with Mr. Kapasi's address on it flutters away.

## **9.6 Analysis of Major Characters**

### **Mr. Kapasi**

Mr. Kapasi believes that his life is a failure and longs for something more. In his efforts to lift his existence out of the daily, monotonous grind it has become, Mr. Kapasi develops a far-fetched fantasy about the possibility of a deep friendship between himself and Mrs. Das. This fantasy reveals just how lonely Mr. Kapasi's life and marriage have become. His arranged marriage is struggling because his wife cannot recover from her grief over the loss of their young son or forgive him for working for the doctor who failed to save their son's life. His career is far less than what he dreamed it might be. He uses his knowledge of English in only the most peripheral way, in high contrast to the dreams of scholarly and diplomatic greatness he once had. In his isolation, he sees Mrs. Das as a potential kindred spirit because she also languishes in a loveless marriage. He imagines similarities between them that do not exist, yearning to find a friend in this American woman. Not surprisingly, the encounter ends in disappointment. When Mrs. Das does confide in him, he feels only disgust. The intimacy he thought he wanted revolts him when he learns more about Mrs. Das's nature.

In both of Mr. Kapasi's jobs, as a tour guide and an interpreter for a doctor, he acts as a cultural broker. As a tour guide, he shows mostly English-speaking Europeans and Americans the sights of India, and in his work as an interpreter, he helps the ailing from another region to communicate with their physician. Although neither occupation attains the aspirations of diplomacy he once had, Mrs. Das helps him view both as important vocations. However, Mr. Kapasi is ultimately unable to bridge the cultural gap between himself and Mrs. Das, whether it stems from strictly national differences or more personal ones. Mr. Kapasi's brief transformation from ordinary tour guide to "romantic" interpreter ends poorly, with his return to the ordinary drudgery of his days.

### **Mrs. Mina Das**

Mrs. Das's fundamental failing is that she is profoundly selfish and self-absorbed. She does not see anyone else as they are but rather as a means to fulfilling her own needs and wishes. Her romanticized view of Mr. Kapasi's day job leads her to confide in him, and she is oblivious to the fact that he would rather she did not. She persists in confiding even when it is clear that Mr. Kapasi has no advice to offer her. Mrs. Das is selfish, declining to share her food with her children, reluctantly taking her daughter to the bathroom, and refusing to paint her daughter's fingernails. She openly derides her husband and mocks his enthusiasm for tourism, using the fact that they are no longer in love as an excuse for her bad behavior. Although Mrs. Das has been unfaithful, she feels the strain in her marriage only as her own pain. She fails to recognize the toll her affair takes on her husband and children. Rather than face the misery she has caused, Mrs. Das hides behind her sunglasses and disengages from her family. Likewise, when her attempt at confiding in Mr. Kapasi fails, she leaves the car rather than confront the guilt that Mr. Kapasi has suggested is the source of her pain.

Mrs. Das embodies stereotypically American flaws, including disrespect for other countries and cultures, poorly behaved children, and a self-involvement so extensive that she blames others for her feelings of guilt about her infidelity. She is messy, lazy, and a bad parent. She has no concern for the environment or her effect on it and drops her rice snacks all over the ground, riling the local wildlife. She represents what is often called the "ugly American," a traveler who stands out in every situation because of her expansive sense of self-importance and entitlement.

### **Character List**

**Mr. Kapasi** - The Indian tour guide who accompanies the Das family on their trip. Mr. Kapasi was once fluent in many languages but now speaks only English. He once dreamed of being a diplomat but now works as a translator in a doctor's office, a job he acquired when his young son died from

typhoid. Mr. Kapasi lives in a loveless, arranged marriage and no longer sees himself as a potential object of interest for women. He entertains fantasies about Mrs. Das but is ultimately horrified by her confession of infidelity and self-absorption.

### **Shukumar**

Shoba's husband in *A Temporary Matter*. An academic, Shukumar has been avoiding both his dissertation and his wife since the loss of their child. He and Shoba share secrets in the dark during what will become the last week of their marriage. The memory of holding his stillborn son is the final confession.

### **Shoba**

Shukumar's wife in *A Temporary Matter*. She is distant from her husband after the loss of their child. She suggests they play a game of sharing secrets during systematic blackouts, which culminates in her confession that she is moving out of their house.

### **The Bradfords**

Friendly neighbors to Shukumar and Shoba

### **Gillian**

Shoba's friend who drove her to the hospital when she went into premature labor. .

### **Mr. Pirzada**

A Pakistani botanist studying in New England during the breakout of the Indo-Pakistan War in 1971. He watches the news over dinner each night at Lilia's house, looking for news of his family. Mr. Pirzada is generous with Lilia, doting on her because he is unable to speak to his own daughters. He is curious about American customs and Lilia tries to teach him about her culture.

### **Lilia**

The narrator of *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine*. Lilia is ten years old during in 1971, when the story takes place. She is a first generation American of Indian descent. Through the visits of Mr. Pirzada, she learns about the plight of Pakistan, the history of India's violent independence experienced by her parents, and the war between the formerly united countries. From the safety of her home, she worries about Mr. Pirzada's daughters. When he returns, she learns what it is to miss someone who lives across the world.

### **Lilia's Mother**

Lilia's mother is proud that her daughter was born and will be raised in America. She encourages American traditions while maintaining the traditions of her own upbringing in Calcutta.

### **Lilia's Father**

Lilia's father encourages his daughter to learn about India, as it appears she is only taught American history in school. He wants his daughter to know about the world of her parents' upbringing.

### **Dora**

Lilia's American friend. They trick-or-treat together in 1971.

Mrs. Kenyon

Lilia's teacher who chastises her for reading a book about Pakistan.

### **Mr. Kapasi**

The tour guide in *Interpreter of Maladies* who also works for a doctor, translating the symptoms of Gujarati patients. Mr. Kapasi dreamed of being an interpreter for diplomats, but he settled for a mundane career after an unhappy marriage and the death of a son. He takes an Indian-American family to see the Sun Temple of Konark and becomes entranced by the wife, Mrs. Das. They share a dissatisfaction with their respective marriages. She confides in him, but he ultimately cannot absolve her of her guilt.



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**Mrs. Das**

In Interpreter of Maladies, Mrs. Das and her family accompany tour guide Mr. Kapasi to the Sun Temple of Konark. She has fallen out of love with her husband and does not express affection toward her three children. On a whim, she admits to Mr. Kapasi that an affair produced her middle child, Bobby.

**Mr. Das**

Mrs. Das's husband. Both he and his wife are Americans of Indian descent, removed somewhat from the land of their ancestors. He is content with his life and children, blind to the unhappiness of his wife.

**Ronny**

Mr. and Mrs. Das's eldest child. He is precocious and sweet.

**Bobby**

The middle child of the Das's. Unbeknownst to him and his father, his mother had an affair that resulted in his birth. He is braver than his older brother and is clearly favored by Mrs. Das.

**Tina**

The youngest child of Mr. and Mrs. Das. She strains for the attention of her mother.

**Boori Ma**

The main character of A Real Durwan, Boori Ma is an old woman who sweeps the stairs and lives on the roof of a Calcutta apartment building. Her tales of the lost luxuries of her life before Partition entertain the residents, though they suspect that the tales hold on a few elements of truth. Boori Ma is accused of alerting robbers when a recently-installed basin is stolen from the stairwell. She is dependent on the power of her memories (or delusions) and on the kindness of her neighbors. When she loses the latter, she cannot maintain the former.

**Mr. Dalal**

A prosperous salesman of plumbing supplies. He lives with his dissatisfied wife in the building that Boori Ma maintains. The purchasing of basins for the building causes a renovation boom among his neighbors. He tries to appease his wife with lavish gifts and a vacation.

**Mrs. Dalal**

A kind woman who browbeats her husband in A Real Durwan. Despite her soft spot for Boori Ma, she lets her dissatisfaction with her life be known. She is kind to Boori Ma, and offers to buy a new set of bedding for the old woman. But while Mrs. Dalal is a major figure in Boori Ma's life, the old woman is just a footnote for Mrs. Dalal. She forgets about the new bedding after the arrival of the basins. Presumably she would have prevented Boori Ma's expulsion had she not been out of town.

**Mr. Chatterjee**

The eldest resident of the building that Boori Ma maintains. He is regarded as the wisest neighbor, so his recommendation that they need a real durwan is heeded and Boori Ma is thrown out.

**Miranda**

The main character of Sexy. She begins an affair with a married Indian man after moving alone to Boston. He is the first person who acts like a man in her life, the first person to call her sexy. The affair is a taste of the adult love she craves. Though the affair comes to a natural end, Miranda is more confident in her new city and in her skin.

**Dev**

The man with whom Miranda has an affair in Sexy. Dev is elegant, smooth, and masculine, though condescending towards Miranda. When his wife returns from a trip to India, the affair dwindles to a

matter of convenience. It is clear by his actions that he does not think of Miranda as anything more than a mistress.

### **Laxmi**

Miranda's coworker at the public radio station. Laxmi is dismayed by her cousin's marital troubles and gossips about it to Miranda. She denigrates her cousin's husband for having an affair, not knowing that Miranda herself is sleeping with a married man.

### **Rohin**

Rohin is Laxmi's nephew who is dropped off into Miranda's care for one afternoon. The boy is smart and precocious, and he insists on getting his way. He has watched his mother's sadness and anger following his father's departure, and his observations about love appear wise to Miranda. Possibly he is unusually observant, or possibly she is just hearing what she needs to hear.

### **Mrs. Sen**

One of two main characters in Mrs. Sen's. She is a lonely woman who desperately misses Calcutta, her home. Her husband took a job as a professor in a New England town. Life is very different for her there. She refuses to learn to drive because it scares her, but the refusal also limits her experiences in her new country. She becomes a babysitter for Eliot, who comes to her house after school. The two share an unspoken loneliness.

### **Eliot**

Eliot lives with his single mother in a beach house. As the weather grows colder, the town becomes more desolate. His mother arranges for him to be watched by Mrs. Sen, who is just as lonely as Eliot. Without knowing it, Eliot is wiser than his years. He is perceptive to the pain felt by both women in his life.

### **Eliot's Mother**

In Mrs. Sen's, Eliot's mother is separated or divorced from her husband, trying to keep her life intact. Her sadness is evident to Eliot, who knows she skips lunch and drinks too much wine and isolates herself.

### **Mr. Sen**

Mrs. Sen's husband, a professor who moves from Calcutta to teach in New England. He urges his wife to learn how to drive so she can have more independence. He is not oblivious to her pain but neither does he coddle her.

### **Twinkle**

In *This Blessed House*, Twinkle is the wife of Sanjeev. They are newly married after only a four-month courtship. She is childlike and full of wonder, delighted by every leftover religious item she finds in their new home. She is romantic and optimistic.

### **Sanjeev**

In *This Blessed House*, Sanjeev is Twinkle's husband. After many successful but lonely years, Sanjeev has married a woman he barely knows. Moving in together is challenging as she is so different from him. He is analytical and practical. The discovery of religious items fills him with a sort of dread and he is left wondering whether or not he really loves Twinkle. By the end, the anticipation he feels for her cements his love.

### **Bibi Haldar**

The protagonist of *The Treatment of Bibi Haldar*. Bibi suffers from an epilepsy-like illness that causes seizures. She is left in the meager care of her eldest cousin and his wife. Despite her desires, her family does not help her look for a husband. When Haldar's daughter becomes ill, they blame Bibi. When they move away, it is up to the women to assume her care. Bibi withdraws from society until

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the women, fearing she is ill, find her mysteriously pregnant. She soon fixes up her cousin's cosmetics stall and provides for her son. She keeps the identity of the father a secret. Prior to her pregnancy, Bibi was profoundly lonely and depressed, but it is implied that despite the possibly non-consensual conception of her son, his birth gives her life focus and purpose.

**Haldar**

Bibi's cousin. A man who does not concern himself with treatment for Bibi's illness. He and his wife are worried only about their livelihood and share irrational fears of Bibi's effect on their child. Haldar is driven out of business by the women who disagree with his treatment of Bibi. He abandons his cousin by leaving town without a word.

**Haldar's wife**

Bibi Haldar's cousin's wife. She is more concerned about profits than with the health of her cousin-in-law. Out of misguided protection for her child, she banishes Bibi out of their home.

The Narrator of The Third and Final Continent

The narrator chronicles his life in London and his early days in America. From Calcutta, he studies abroad and settles in Cambridge, outside of Boston. For his first six weeks in America, he lives in an apartment in a shared home, awaiting the arrival of his wife. He experiences culture shock, but later thinks fondly of those days when everything was unknown. He is a kind man who ultimately builds a solid home with his wife. He chooses to live out his life in America as it becomes his true home. Through his repeated experience of encountering new worlds, he maintains a sense of wonder.

**Mala**

The narrator's wife in The Third and Final Continent. At first, the separation from her family caused by her wedding saddens her. When she meets her husband in Cambridge six weeks later, she no longer cries but they are still strangers. Through time and shared experience, she becomes accustomed to her new country and new life.

**Mrs. Croft**

Mrs. Croft is the elderly woman who owns the house in Cambridge where the narrator lets a room. Born in 1866, she is amazed by the moon landing as an unthinkable achievement. Mrs. Croft is disdainful towards modern times and manners, and declares the narrator a gentleman and Mala a lady. She is self-sufficient and likely quite stubborn.

**Helen**

Mrs. Croft's daughter. She is more modern in dress and sensibility than her mother and also more practical and distant than the narrator.

**Self-Assessment****I. Choose the correct options:**

- (i) The first and most obvious group of stories are the two that are set in India ..... .
- (a) The Temporary Matter (b) The Treatment of Bibi Haldar  
(c) A Real Durwan (d) b and c  
(e) a and b
- (ii) Who lives in a loveless arranged marriage.
- (a) Shukumar (b) Shoba (c) Mr. Kapasi (d) The Bradfords
- (iii) Shukumar and ..... are friendly neighbours.
- (a) Gillan (b) Shoba (c) Lila (d) Dora.
- (iv) Tina is the youngest child of .....
- (a) Mr. Das (b) Mr. Pirzada (c) Mr. Kapasi (d) Shukumar
- (v) ..... Camera represents his inability to see the world clearly.
- (a) Mr. Kapasi (b) Mr. Pirzada (c) Mr. Das (d) Shukumar

## 9.7 Summary

Notes

- Lahiri's Indian heritage forms the basis for her short stories; stories in which she deals with questions of identity, alienation and the plight of those who are culturally displaced. She vividly shows the estrangement and isolation that often afflict first- and even second-generation immigrants. Although the immigrant experience is central to her work, it is not her exclusive concern: in the title story, she suggests, through her characters, that there are 'maladies' that trouble all of us. This contributes to our understanding of other people and of ourselves.
- As the short story genre uses a wide variety of plot types, several strategies must be employed to gain an overall picture of how different stories are connected. Although each of Lahiri's stories has its own self-contained plot and characters, they are linked in ways that bind the collection together as a complete entity.
- The modern short story is often concerned with making an emotional impact. Writers like Lahiri do not always observe the traditional elements of narrative fiction, such as the inclusion of an introduction, rising action, a climax, falling action and an ending that ties the work together. Her work often features subtle endings that are left open to interpretation, such as that of 'A Temporary Matter', which has two possible resolutions (see 'Different Interpretations' in section 9.3). A short story should be able to be read in a single sitting. This gives the piece unity by focusing on one isolated incident in the life of a character, or on one character's relationship with another or others. An atmosphere is created in which the characters live and function and this, in turn, evokes an emotional response from the reader. The action is an important element of the short story. Something must happen, no matter how small. There must also be a narrative of some kind. However, this narrative is not generally as rigidly structured as a novel would be. Successful short stories usually contain several particular features. Unlike the longer novel form, they must contain an idea that can be worked through within a restricted word limit. Although this does not allow for the creation of an extended psychological study of a character, let alone a number of characters, it is surprising how much information can be conveyed to readers about a character by using deft short phrases instead of extended description.
- The short story's internal structure determines the significance of both its technical and artistic elements, such as themes, symbols and images. The **introduction** must immediately draw the reader in and pique their interest by establishing the emotional tone of the narrative, setting the scene, creating the atmosphere and locating the characters in a specific time and place. One of the most prominent features of Lahiri's stories is her short, to the point opening sentences, which immediately introduce information that is crucial to the rest of the narrative. Take the opening to 'A Temporary Matter', for example - 'The notice informed them that it was a temporary matter' (p.1). While this immediately prompts the question of what this 'temporary matter is - in this case, the electricity being cut off - it also clues us into the wider issue of the estrangement that exists between the married couple Shoba and Shukumar.
- The **body of the story** is where the 'plot' of the story unfolds. Short stories require an organising principle; for example, all of Lahiri's characters are Indian, or of Indian extraction, and thus share similar concerns and values.
- Many of Lahiri's plot lines seem trivial, such as the story 'This Blessed House', about Twinkle's preoccupation with the Christian artefacts left behind by their house's previous owners - an interest which her husband Sanjeev finds annoying. More important, though, is the way that the discovery of each relic sheds new light on the marriage of these seemingly incompatible characters. A deft development of character and plot is central to the short story, and is focused on the conflict around which the story is based. This conflict could be between characters, between characters and their society, or within the psyche of the main character. 'Mrs Sen's', for example, concerns an Indian woman who is unable to assimilate into her adopted country, in contrast to her more socially adept husband. Her friendship with an American boy becomes an opportunity for each to experience the other's alternative culture.
- The **climax** results from the convergence of the separate elements in the story, and the **ending** generally comes from the falling action after the climax.

## Notes

- Lahiri's endings are highly varied: they can often be abrupt, can be either positive or negative, and are often tangential or ambiguous. 'The Treatment of Bibi Haldar', for example, ends with a sense of the mystical because the main character has a baby without ever, to our knowledge, having any association with the opposite sex even though she desires marriage above all things. Equally magically, the pregnancy cures her of epilepsy. Lahiri's endings do not necessarily round off the story neatly. Instead, they encourage us to contemplate the ordinary lives of others and, by doing so, provide us with a possible moment of insight or revelation about our own lives.

## 9.8 Key-Words

- Dora : Lila's American friend
- Miranda : The main character of Sexi
- Boori Ma : The main character of a Real Durwan

## 9.9 Review Questions

- 'Because "The Third and Final Continent" has a first-person narrator, we have a limited understanding of other characters.' Do you agree?
- 'The endings of Lahiri's stories are often ambiguous, and their resolutions are left entirely to the imagination of the reader.' Do you agree?
- 'The loneliness suffered by Lahiri's recent immigrants creates inhibitions that make cultural assimilation difficult.' Discuss.
- 'Lahiri shows that miscommunication and unexpressed feelings lead to misunderstanding and cultural displacement.' Discuss.
- 'The stories in *Interpreter of Maladies* demonstrate that although an immigrant's mores are shaped by the past, tolerance and compassion are universal values that must be learned.' Discuss.
- How does Lahiri show the values that are important in a relationship?
- 'Lahiri shows the vulnerability of people who struggle against a sense of being outsiders.' Discuss.
- At Konarak, the temple "had filled with rubble long ago". 'For Lahiri's characters, the symbols of once-important spiritual principles have disappeared, leaving them with diminished values.' Do you agree?
- A sense of community is evident in Lahiri's stories. What maintains that sense and what disrupts it?
- 'Lahiri shows that our sense of identity does not relate to time or place but stems from the strength we gain from our ability to adapt.' Discuss.
- Lahiri descriptions of the environment often evoke a character's internal state. Choose some examples and discuss.
- Marriage is represented in many different ways in *Interpreter of Maladies*. What do you think is Lahiri's overall view of marriage.?
- Why is the moon landing so important to Mrs. Croft? Why is it so important to the story?

### Answers: Self-Assessment

- (i) (e)                      (ii) (a)                      (iii) (b)                      (iv) (a)                      (v) (a)

## 9.10 Further Readings



Books

- "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
- "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 10 : Poetry : John Donne's "The Good Morrow"

Notes

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Introduction

- 10.1 Poem – The Good Morrow
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- 10.5 Review Questions
- 10.6 Further Readings

### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Know about John Donne.
- Discuss Donne's "The Morrow".

### Introduction

John Donne (1572-1631) is credited with the honour of being the poet who broke the Petrarchan tradition in England and created a new mode of poetry. Rather than a complete breach, Donne's poetry is a widening of the scope of the Elizabethan tradition. He implements already existing modes in every aspect: new metrical schemes (although he will return to the sonnet in his last works), a rich and original imagery, a colloquial, conversational tone, and a mingling of intellect and passion which disconcerted his contemporaries: he and his followers were labeled as "metaphysical poets." Not that Donne's poems have any philosophical intention: his themes are the traditional ones, although renewed by a new attitude: love, religious feeling, satire.

The love poems correspond roughly to the early period of his career. He abandons the rigid Elizabethan conventions, which sprung from Petrarchism, and adds realism, sincerity, psychological penetration and a great variety of moods enhanced with images taken from every field of experience.

Some of his love poems are harsh and cynical; others are nearly ecstatic, and celebrate love as the supreme thing in the world. The most famous among these are "The Sun Rising," "The Dreame" and "The Good-Morrow".

Love as the supreme experience suggests to Donne connections between it and other aspects of reality: everything can be used to try to describe an ineffable feeling. His imagery ranges from the vulgar to the sublime, from daily activities to old scientific theories; it may be of a deplorable bad taste or combine sheer originality with beauty and accuracy. It is never ornamental: the poet seems to think that sensation must be subordinated to thought. Much the same happens with the sound pattern of his poems, which is very far away from the smoothness of previous poets. Rhythm is secondary; at its best, it merely helps to underline ideas.

### 10.1 Poem – The Good Morrow

I WONDER by my troth, what thou, and I  
 Did, till we lov'd? were we not wean'd till then?  
 But suck'd on countrey pleasures, childishly?  
 Or snorted we in the seaven sleepers den?  
 T'was so; But this, all pleasures fancies bee.

**Notes**

If ever any beauty I did see,  
Which I desir'd, and got, t'was but a dreame of thee.  
And now good morrow to our waking soules,  
Which watch not one another out of feare;  
For love, all love of other sights controules,  
And makes one little roome, an every where.  
Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,  
Let Maps to other, worlds on worlds have showne,  
Let us posseesse one world, each hath one, and is one.  
My face in thine eye, thine in mine appeares,  
And true plaine hearts doe in the faces rest,  
Where can we finde two better hemispheares  
Without sharpe North, without declining West?  
What ever dyes, was not mixt equally;  
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I  
Love so alike, that none doe slacken, none can die.

**Paraphrase**

**Stanza 1.** I am surprised—I swear by my faith—what we both did till we fell in love. Perhaps, we were satisfied with our childish pleasures (like sucking mother's milk). May be we enjoyed the simple joys of nature in the country before the realization of true love. Perhaps, we slept for many years like the seven sleepers who slept in the cave. All the former pleasures compared to the present one are just fancies. If I found any beautiful girl whom I killed and got, she was just a shadow or reflection of your beauty.

**Stanza 2.** Now that our souls have awakened to a new-life, let us say 'good morning' to them. Our souls watch each other not out of suspicious or fear but out of love Our love prevents us from running after any other sight or pleasure. Our small room of love is as good as the whole world. Let the navigators roam over the seas and discover new worlds for themselves. Let the maps show to the other people the different worlds that exist. We are happy with the possession of one world—the world of love—where the lovers are united into one.

**Stanza 3.** My face is reflected in your eye and likewise your face is seen in my eye. Our faces reveal to us that our hearts are pure and innocent. We two, between the both of us, constitute two hemispheres which are better than the geographical hemispheres because our first hemisphere is without the slanting North Pole (with its bitter cold), and our second hemisphere is without the declining west (where the sun sets). So, our love is not subject to vagariest of weather or time (decline). We know that only those things die whose constituents are not mixed proportionately. Our two loves are one because they are exactly similar in all respects and as such none of them will die. Our mutual love can neither decrease nor decline nor come to an end. Our love is immortal.

**10.2 Critical Appreciation**

This is one of the finest poems of Donne explaining the complex nature of love. Initially, love has an element of fun and sex. It is like the dark night—an experience which is hot quite clear. But with the dawn, the true nature of things is revealed. The title suggests the dawn of the true love, its essential quality and the mutual understanding and confidence between the souls of the lover and the beloved. This kind of pure love provides a complete world to the lovers—a world without coldness, fear and decay. It is much better than the physical world. This perfect love is neither subject to time nor death.

The Good Morrow' is a typical Donnian love poem, divided into three stanzas. It's one of those love poems in which he praises the spiritual relation and hails it so ardently. "The Good-Morrow" is a poem of twenty-one lines divided into three stanzas. The poet addresses the woman he loves as they awaken after having spent the night together. The poem begins with a direct question from the poet

to the woman. Deliberately exaggerating, the poet expresses his conviction that their lives only began when they fell in love. Before, they were mere babies at their mothers' breasts or were indulging in childish "country pleasures."

In the opening stanza, the poet expresses his wonder as to what he and his beloved did before they fell in love with each other. He becomes surprised remembering their past love experiences. He compares the love experiences of himself and his beloved with 'weaning', 'falsely sucking country pleasures' and 'snorting.' The reference to these three physical activities indicates that they spent a life of worldly enjoyment. But now the poet using the conjunction 'But' makes a contrast and says that all these past physical activities seem to be utterly meaningless. The closing two lines of the first stanza imply that though the poet indulged himself in 'country pleasures', he has never been unmindful to perfect beauty of ideal spiritual love, which he always desired and has finally 'got' in his present beloved.

Obviously there is a shift from physical to spiritual love, sleeping to waking period, sensuous appearances to ideal reality and as if from platonic cave to the world of light in the poet and his beloved. Here the poet seems to have touched the metaphysics of Plato. In his metaphysics, Plato at first takes something concrete such as man, but soon he leaps into abstract namely the Form of man. Similarly Donne also begins with physical love and soon he turns to Platonic or metaphysical love.



Task

What does the title of this poem the Good Morrow mean?

The first stanza contains several Donnian elements. It opens abruptly with an explosive question. This abrupt colloquial beginning, which is so characteristic of Donne startles us and captures our attention. Another noticeable thing is that Donne swears his true relation - 'I wonder by my troth'. Here he is unconventional. Any of his contemporary of Elizabethan poets might swear to God, but Donne has not done it. Then there are the references of physical union and the use of imageries in the following three lines. The fourth line contains a legendary conceit, a legend that tells of seven young men of Ephesus who took refuge in a cave during the persecution of Diocletian and were entombed there. They were found alive two centuries later. Here Donne compares himself and his beloved with the seven sleepers. Here he is cynical when he utters the word 'did'. Surely the word 'did' includes the connotations of sexual doing - what did we ever do with the time?

The second stanza begins with hail and celebration. The unconscious past of flesh is over and a new conscious spiritual relationship begins. So the speaker celebrates the present. "Now good morrow to our waking souls". He also makes declaration that their souls have also learnt not to spy one another. That the married women or men involve in extra-marital affair was a dominant theme in the Elizabethan and Jacobean literature. So, fear only works in sensual lovers as motivation for watching over each other, least the other should become unfaithful to his or her mate. But the speaker and his beloved have overcome this fear and a peaceful satisfaction prevails their love. And for their faithful love they will control the temptations of other things. They love so faithfully and ardently that their love has the force to be merged into the universal love and to move out to become "an every where".

As spiritual lovers, the poet and his beloved are indifferent to earthly pleasures and possessions - let the sea-lovers and map-lovers do what they like to do. The lovers want to be happy with their joint world though they have their individual worlds but their individual worlds are fused into a single world. Now they are the joint owners of a single world.

Here in this stanza, we find the presence of imagery from the contemporary geographical world. That is to say the contemporary geographical interest of the explorers.

The third stanza opens with endearing words from the speaker. The two lovers stand so closely that their respective faces are reflected in each others eyes. The simplicity of their heart is also reflected in their faces, which are conceived as two hemispheres of their world. But their world of love is so unearthly that its hemispheres are free from coldness and decay. They are not afraid of separation or break up of their "relation, because" 'what ever dyes, was not mixt equality'. The ingredients of their



**Notes**

love have been proportionately mixed and there is no ware and woof between them. They have love equally and proportionately.

Thus the poem ends with the establishment of true friendship. After an abrupt beginning, there is calmness at last. The couple has rejected the country pleasures and entered into a true inter-dependent friendship. They have renounced the mundane world in order possess an unearthly world. Experience has thought them that the true happiness can be achieved through a mutual spiritual friendship.

In the first stanza, there is the regret for past doings, in the second stanza the pleasure of discovering something in the last stanza, the prospect/hope of doing better/using the discovery. The abrupt beginning of the poem, the use of conceits form everyday life and myth in the first stanza, the geographical reference of stanza two, the use of scholastic philosophy in stanza three, and ultimately the emphasis of spiritual love continue to make it one of those poems of Donne which combine intellect and emotion. These above motioned qualities have made the poem get a certain place in honored, treasured lyrics written by John Donne.



*Did u know?* John Donne's poem, "The Good Morrow" is a coming-of-age poem that is reminiscent of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet"; the fifteenth-century Reader's Digest version of "The Twilight Saga" love story, minus the vampires.

**Theme**

The central theme in *The Good-morrow* is the nature and completeness of the lovers' world. Donne takes the everyday idea that lovers live in a world of their own with little sense of reality, and turns it right round, so that it is the outside world that is unreal. The intensity of their love is sufficient to create its own reality. When they watch each other, it is not, as in the outside world, out of fear, but to complete themselves, as each one is half of the world needing the other half.

**The subject**

This is one of Donne's best known poems, and a perfect sample of his way. The subject is love, love seen as an intense, absolute experience, which isolates the lovers from reality but gives them a different kind of awareness; a simultaneous narrowing and widening of reality.

**The contents**

The poem is divided in three stanzas:

In the first one the lover rejects the life he led until he met his present love. He describes it as childish ("were we not weaned," "childishly") and unconscious, a kind of sleep ("Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den"?). His past loves must not be considered as serious, since he was not completely aware of himself at the time. So, they are rejected:

... But this, all pleasures fancies be;  
If ever any beauty I did see,  
Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.

The second stanza is, in contrast, a celebration of the present. Each soul has "awakened" to the other, and has discovered a whole world in it. The union is self-sufficient; the "little room" where they are is all the world, "an everywhere." Consequently, the outer world is rejected, under the symbols of maps and discoverers. Up to now, the poet has cut off his superfluous experience; past time (the first stanza), external space (2nd stanza). He seems to be saying "Here and now."

The third stanza shows the perfect sincerity and adequation of both lovers, and it adds a hope for the future to that assertion of the present we have met in the first stanza. This perfect love is not only immortal: it makes the lovers immortal, too:

If our two love be one, or thou and I  
Love so alike that none do slacken, none can die.

## Figure of Speech

## Notes

We are going to examine in the first place those figures of speech that contribute to enhance musicality, not sense; those that could be appreciated on hearing the poem even by a person with no knowledge of English. Of course, the main of these are the metrical scheme and the rhyme, but these are taken almost for granted in a poem of the seventeenth century, and deserve a separate section.

- *Alliteration* is a device frequently used by Donne. There are several instances in our poem:

Line 2: ". . . Were we not wean'd till then?"

Line 4: "Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?"

Here alliteration has an onomatopoeic character; alliteration in - s appears in two words related to sleep, "snorted" and "sleepers", helping thus to underline the sense.

- *Anaphora* in lines 12, 13 and 14; "Let sea-discoverers . . . Let maps . . . let us . . ."

- *Epanadiplosis* in line 1 (though perhaps a chance one):

"I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I . . ."

*Reduplication* (present too in several other instances):

Line 10: "For love all love of other sights controls"

Line 13: "Let maps to others, worlds on worlds have shown"

The word "world" or "worlds" is also present in lines 12 and 14, but the effect is not so conspicuous.

Line 14: "Let us possess one world; each hath one, and is one"

Line 15: "My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears"

(1)      (2)

It is of no consequence that (1) is an adjective while (2) is a pronoun; the effect is the same as far as the ear is concerned.

Line 18: "Without sharp north, without declining west"

Line 21: ". . . love so alike that none do slacken, none can die"

Now for the figures of speech which add to the sense: it is in these that Donne's imagination ran more freely:

- *Rhetorical interrogative* - The first four lines are a series of these:

- "I wonder . . . what thou and I / Did, till we lov'd?"

Were we not wean'd till then?

But sucked on country pleasures, childishly?

Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?"

- *Exclamation*: Line 1: "by my troth"

- *Invocation*: In line 8, the poet addresses himself to his soul and his lover's, and wishes them a "good-morrow". In fact, the whole of the poem is a sort of invocation; the poet is speaking to his lady, who doesn't intervene.

- *Metonymy*: Line 6: "If ever any beauty I did see"

Beauty = beautiful woman. In fact, this is everyday speech. The same occurs in lines 8 (souls = minds, people) and 16 (heart=mind, especially if in love). A far more interesting metonymy is developed in line 14:

"Let us possess one world; each hath one, and is one".

So, each lover is a world for the other. If I consider this a metonymy rather than a metaphor, it is because of Donne's cultural background. At that time it was widely held - it was the traditional belief - that man was a "microcosm": everything was ordered in the "macrocosm" or universe just as it was in man; fluids governed the body just as elements governed the macrocosm; man's destiny was already fixed in the stars. Knowledge of the world was knowledge of man, and vice-versa. So it was

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not difficult for a 17th-century man to think that a person can assume the proportions of a whole world. Love makes the lover's attention focus on a part of that great whole. The part is named with the name of the whole (metonymy).

- *Metaphors* are fairly frequent:

Implicit metaphor in lines 2-3 "*Were we not wean'd till then? But suck'd on country pleasures, childishly?*" The state of the lovers prior to their falling in love with each other is identified with childhood. The explicit metaphor would be "we were babies before we loved".

There is another implicit metaphor in line 4. It runs much in the same way as the other: "Or *snorted* we in the Seven Sleepers' den?"

This time, the previous state of both lovers is identified with sleep. Explicitly: "We were asleep before we loved".

Line 5: "But this, all pleasures fancies be".

Line 6-7: ". . . *any beauty* I did see . . . *was but a dream* of thee".

This metaphor is the direct consequence of the one in line 4: if the lover was asleep, it is altogether fitting that anything he saw should be a dream. It is easy to see how these metaphors enhance the contents of the poem.

Line 8: "And now good-morrow to our *waking souls*".

This is but another extension of the metaphors in lines 3 and 7. We have already seen that the first stanza deals with the past, and that the metaphors were those of unconsciousness (childhood and sleep). The second stanza deals with the present, with the lovers having discovered one another, and, accordingly, this is dealt with with a metaphor of waking in the first line of the stanza. "The "good-morrow" with which Donne addresses the two lovers could be interpreted as a metaphor of the whole of this poem, if we suppose the latter to be autobiographical and as sincere as it seems to be; the "good-morrow" in the poem is the lover's rejoicing because of the love he and his lady have found in each other; "The Good-Morrow" (the poem) amounts to very much the same in real life. The title would be fully justified.

Line 11: "Love . . . makes one little room an everywhere".

This is in the same line as the metonymy "lover = world". The outer world is discarded and the little room becomes an "everywhere".

Line 16: "And true plain hearts do in the faces *rest*".

Sincerity is depicted as a heart "resting" on a face: no secret intentions for the lovers; their faces show their hearts. They are externally and internally just as true to one another.

Lines 17-18: "Where can we find two better *hemispheres*

Without *sharp north*, without *declining west*?"

The lovers were called "worlds" in line 14. Now the idea is rounded off; they are not worlds, they are "hemispheres". This adds three notions to the previous idea. First, the lovers aren't complete by themselves, they need each other. A *hemisphere* is a perfect metaphor for any incomplete thing. Second, once the lovers are together, they form not only a complete body, but a whole world (the word "hemisphere" suggests half of the world). Third, the being they form when they are together is perfect: perfection has been associated with the spheric shape since Greek times (Democritus, Parmenides). So the world they form will have no imperfections, no sharp north or declining west. "Sharp" may stand for quarrels between the lovers, and "declining" for the gradual decay of love because of time. This last metaphor opens the way for the final conceit, which states the idea in a bolder way: immortal love makes the lovers immortal.

This last metaphor is an implicit one. It is quite complicated, for it takes Donne three lines to develop it:

Whatever dies, was not mix'd equally;

If our two loves be one, or thou and I

Love so alike that none do slacken, none can die.

The first line (19) is, poetically speaking, rather superfluous, but it is necessary to make the reader understand the nature of the metaphor that follows. It is an allusion to a scholastic theory concerning matter, which is based on Aristotle's ideas on heavenly and sublunary bodies. According to that theory, heavenly bodies are eternal, they don't change, while sublunary matter is composed of elements in endless changing combinations and warfare. Sublunary matter cannot reach stability because it is not "mix'd equally". Donne applies this as a metaphor of eternal love in lines 20-21. If the total love which is formed with the love of each of the members of the couple is in perfect poise, that love will be a perfect body, a heavenly being, and it will never die. If love can never cease, it means that the couple will go on living and loving each other forever. This image is very typical of Donne, and a perfect sophism.

So much for the figures of speech. One more thing to note: the overtly hyperbolic character of the metaphors, in accordance with the subject of the poem. In line 4, the hyperbole already present in the metaphor of sleep is rounded out with an allusion to the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus; these were seven Christian youths who slept for *two hundred* years in the cave where they had been immured during Decius' persecution (AD 251).

### Development of Thought

In the beginning, the poet examines the nature of the first experiences of love. The first set of experiences is childish – the physical joys of love. The second set of experiences is much richer – it is the experience of spiritual love in which the voices of one soul are echoed by the other soul. The mature experiences of love make one disregard the first foolish acts of love, when so to say, the souls were asleep in the den of seven sleepers. The poet can only dream of true love in the first stage. The atmosphere of sleep, stupor and dream shows the fleeting and unstable nature of this kind of immature love.

### The Dawn of True Love

The past life spent in childish love was a sort of dream and blank. The night of oblivion and unreality is about to end. The dawn of true love is imminent and it awakens the soul of lovers to the meaning of true love. This true love makes them open out their hearts to each other, without any fear or inhibition. Their love for each other is all-absorbing and all-satisfying. They have no delight in other scenes or places. Each is like a world to the other. This world of love is everywhere. The poet is happy with the world of love. Let sailors discover new worlds and make charts and maps of the lands they have discovered. On the other hand, the lovers are content in their own worlds. Each of them has a world, but the two worlds of the two lovers put together, make one world of love.

### The Two Hemispheres

As the lovers look at each other, each of them sees his own image in the other's eyes. Their looks reflect the simplicity, purity and honesty of their hearts. Their two faces may be compared to two hemispheres which together make up a whole world. The two hemispheres of the faces of lovers are better than the geographical hemispheres, because they do not have the 'sharp North' and the 'declining West'. The 'sharp North' implies coldness and indifference – to which their love is not subject – and the 'declining West' symbolises decay and death from which the lovers are free. According to certain philosophers, when different elements, which go into the making of a thing, are not harmoniously mixed, the thing is liable to decay and death. This is not true of their love because their love is harmonious, and is sweet-blooded. As such their love is immortal and beyond the vagaries of time and clime.

### Critical Comments

In his inimitable way, Donne begins the poem with a question – *what thou and I did till we loved?* This rhetoric easily captures the attention of the reader. The poet compares the first stage of love – sex and enjoyment – with the mature type of love, the harmonious relationship of two souls. There is a lot of difference between the two types of love. The poet's wit is seen in his contrast between the two worlds – the worlds of the lovers and the geographical world. There is no 'sharp North' or 'declining West' in the world of lovers. It is a mutual love equal in quality and spirit – balanced and harmonised

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in such a manner that it is not subject to time or decay. The poet proceeds from the night-scene and the experience of sleepy love to the morning of pure love which gives him a new life and makes him discover a world in their little room. No navigator has ever found a world as wonderful as the world of love. This discovery of true love is as welcome as the greeting of a new day.

Donne's manner is that of 'concentration' advancing the argument in stages, reasoning till he is able to prove his point and drive it home to the reader. Like an able lawyer he presses his point in such a manner that it is very hard to refute it. Moreover, he marshalls his images from different sources in such a way that the cumulative effect is irresistible. Grierson rightly points out that the imagery has been drawn from a variety of sources, i.e. myths of everyday life, e.g. 'the seven sleepers' den, 'suck'd on country pleasures' and 'wishing in the morning', 'one-little room'; the geographical world, 'sea-discoveries', 'Maps', 'hemispheres'; and lastly, the scholastic philosophy 'what-ever dyes, was not mixt equally'. The relation between one object and the other is made intellectually rather than verbally. Donne's method in spite of his scholarly references is not pedantic and appeals to the lay reader by its sincerity and sharp reasoning.

### Self-Assessment

1. What kind of poet is John Donne?
2. What figure of speech does the poet use by referring to "the seven sleepers den"?

### 10.3 Summary

- The 'Good Morrow' is a typical Donnean love poem, divided into three stanzas. It's one of those love poems in which he praises the spiritual relation and hails it so ardently. "The Good-Morrow" is a poem of twenty-one lines divided into three stanzas. The poet addresses the woman he loves as they awaken after having spent the night together. The poem begins with a direct question from the poet to the woman. Deliberately exaggerating, the poet expresses his conviction that their lives only began when they fell in love. Before, they were mere babies at their mothers' breasts or were indulging in childish "country pleasures."
- The general characteristics we attributed to Donne's poetry in section 1 are all present in this poem. In section two, we have seen that it follows one of Donne's two optional views of love, love as a nearly mystical experience which defies mutability, in contrast to the cynical attitude of other poems ("The Flea", or "Woman's Constancy" among the best known). In section 3, the metrical scheme has proved itself to be original, although slightly imperfect. Donne's poems gain nevertheless in conversational directness and sincerity what they lack in rhythm. In section 4 we have observed the imagery to be in perfect tune with the contents of the poem. Even figures of speech such as parallelism or chiasm help to underline a sense of reciprocity between the lovers. As for the metaphors and other figures of thought, they carry Donne's seal. It is interesting to compare the last and most important metaphor of the poem to these lines of "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning":
 

Dull sublunary lovers love  
(Whose soule is sense) cannot admit  
Absence, because it doth remove  
Those things which elemented it.
- The allusion is the same and is used in much the same way. It is not difficult to understand why Donne was termed a "metaphysical" poet.
- The poem is a moving one: the emotion it carries can be seen even in the language, which is overtly emphatical; there are three instances of affirmative clauses with "do" in only 21 lines (lines 6, 16, 21). Even the adverb "everywhere" (line 11) is turned into a noun to make the expression stronger. The impression of totality, of closeness and of rejection of the outer world that the poem conveys finds here its perfect expression, although it can be found in other poems by Donne, such as "The Sun Rising", whose last three lines run thus (the poet is also in a room with his lover, addressing the sun):

... since thy duties be  
 To warm the world, that's done in warming us,  
 Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;  
 This bed thy centre is; these walls, thy sphere.

### 10.4 Key-Words

1. Childish pleasure : Like sucking mother's milk
2. Vagaries of weather or time : Decline
3. Declining west : Where the sun sets

### 10.5 Review Questions

1. Donne's use of meter is frequently surprising; he will often apply a regular ABAB rhyme scheme to lines of wildly erratic tempo. What are some of the poems in which he uses this technique? What effect does it have on the poems, either aesthetically or thematically, or both?
2. What is a critical **analysis** of **John Donne** as a poet of love??
3. What is the "seven sleepers den" in the poem **Good Morrow** by **John Donne**?
4. What are the metaphysical qualities we can see in the poem "**Good Morrow**?"
5. How we can discuss the theme of the poem "**The Good-Morrow**" by **John Donne**?

### **Answers: Self-Assessment**

1. Love Poet
2. Metaphor.

### 10.6 Further Readings



Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 11: Poetry: William Wordsworth's Ode on Intimations of Immortality

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### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Know about William Wordsworth
- Understand Ode on Intimations of Immortality composed by William Wordsworth

### Introduction

In 1802, Wordsworth wrote many poems that dealt with his youth. These poems were partly inspired by his conversations with his sister, Dorothy, whom he was living with in the Lake District at the time. The poems, beginning with *The Butterfly* and ending with *To the Cuckoo*, were all based on Wordsworth's recalling both the sensory and emotional experience of his childhood. From *To the Cuckoo*, he moved onto *The Rainbow*, both written on 26 March 1802, and then on to Ode: *Intimation of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*. As he moved from poem to poem, he began to question why, as a child, he once was able to see an immortal presence within nature but as an adult that was fading away except in the few moments he was able to meditate on experiences found in poems like *To the Cuckoo*. While sitting at breakfast on 27 March, he began to compose the ode. He was able to write four stanzas that put forth the question about the faded image and ended, "Where is it now, the glory and the dream?" The poem would remain in its smaller, four-stanza version until 1804.

The short version of the ode was possibly finished in one day because Wordsworth left the next day to spend time with Samuel Taylor Coleridge in Keswick. Close to the time Wordsworth and Coleridge climbed the Skiddaw mountain, 3 April 1802, Wordsworth recited the four stanzas of the ode that were completed. The poem impressed Coleridge, and, while with Wordsworth, he was able to provide his response to the ode's question within an early draft of his poem, *Dejection: an Ode*. In early 1804, Wordsworth was able to return his attention to working on the ode. It was a busy beginning of the year with Wordsworth having to help Dorothy recover from an illness in addition to writing his poems. The exact time of composition is unknown, but it probably followed his work on *The Prelude*, which consumed much of February and was finished on 17 March. Many of the lines of the ode are similar to the lines of *The Prelude* Book V, and he used the rest of the ode to try to answer the question at the end of the fourth stanza.

The poem was first printed in full for Wordsworth's 1807 collection of poems, *Poems, in Two Volumes*, under the title Ode. It was the last poem of the second volume of the work, and it had its own title page separating it from the rest of the poems, including the previous poem *Peele Castle*. Wordsworth added an epigraph just before publication, "paulo majora canamus". The Latin phrase is from Virgil's *Eclogue 4*, meaning "let us sing a somewhat loftier song". The poem was reprinted under its full title Ode: *Intimation of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* for Wordsworth's collection

Poems (1815). The reprinted version also contained an epigraph that, according to Henry Crabb Robinson, was added at Crabb's suggestion. The epigraph was from "My Heart Leaps Up". In 1820, Wordsworth issued *The Miscellaneous Poems of William Wordsworth* that collected the poems he wished to be preserved with an emphasis on ordering the poems, revising the text, and including prose that would provide the theory behind the text. The ode was the final poem of the fourth and final book, and it had its own title-page, suggesting that it was intended as the poem that would serve to represent the completion of his poetic abilities. The 1820 version also had some revisions, including the removal of lines 140 and 141.

### 11.1 Poem-Ode On Intimations of Immortality

The ode contains 11 stanzas split into three movements. The first movement is four stanzas long and discusses the narrator's inability to see the divine glory of nature, the problem of the poem. The second movement is four stanzas long and has a negative response to the problem. The third movement is three stanzas long and contains a positive response to the problem. The ode begins by contrasting the narrator's view of the world as a child and as a man, with what was once a life interconnected to the divine fading away.

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—  
Turn wheresoe'er I may,  
By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no more. (lines 1-9)

In the second and third stanzas, the narrator continues by describing his surroundings and various aspects of nature that he is no longer able to feel. He feels as if he is separated from the rest of nature until he experiences a moment that brings about feelings of joy that are able to overcome his despair:

To me alone there came a thought of grief:  
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,  
And I again am strong:  
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;  
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong; (lines 22-26)

The joy in stanza III slowly fades again in stanza IV as the narrator feels like there is "something that is gone". As the stanza ends, the narrator asks two different questions to end the first movement of the poem. Though they appear to be similar, one asks where the visions are now ("Where is it now") while the other doesn't ("Whither is fled"), and they leave open the possibility that the visions could return:

A single Field which I have looked upon,  
Both of them speak of something that is gone:  
The Pansy at my feet  
Doth the same tale repeat:  
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?  
Where is it now, the glory and the dream? (lines 52-57)  
1804 holograph copy of Stanza III-V by Mary Wordsworth



**Notes**

The second movement begins in stanza V by answering the question of stanza IV by describing a Platonic system of preexistence. The narrator explains how humans start in an ideal world that slowly fades into a shadowy life:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing Boy,  
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,  
He sees it in his joy; (lines 58-70)

Before the light fades away as the child matures, the narrator emphasises the greatness of the child experiencing the feelings. By the beginning of stanza VIII, the child is described as a great individual, and the stanza is written in the form of a prayer that praises the attributes of children:

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie  
Thy Soul's immensity;  
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep  
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,  
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,  
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind, –  
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!  
On whom those truths do rest,  
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,

In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave; (lines 108-117)

The end of stanza VIII brings about the end of a second movement within the poem. The glories of nature are only described as existing in the past, and the child's understanding of morality is already causing them to lose what they once had:

Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,  
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,  
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life! (lines 129-131)

The questions in Stanza IV are answered with words of despair in the second movement, but the third movement is filled with joy. Stanza IX contains a mixture of affirmation of life and faith as it seemingly avoids discussing what is lost. The stanza describes how a child is able to see what others do not see because children do not comprehend mortality, and the imagination allows an adult to intimate immortality and bond with his fellow man:

Hence in a season of calm weather  
Though inland far we be,  
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea  
Which brought us hither,  
Can in a moment travel thither,

And see the Children sport upon the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore. (lines 164-170)

## Notes

The children on the shore represents the adult narrator's recollection of childhood, and the recollection allows for an intimation of returning to that mental state. In stanza XI, the imagination allows one to know that there are limits to the world, but it also allows for a return to a state of sympathy with the world lacking any questions or concerns:

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun  
Do take a sober colouring from an eye  
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;

Another race hath been, and other palms are won. (lines 199-202) The poem concludes with an affirmation that, though changed by time, the narrator is able to be the same person he once was:

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,  
To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears. (lines 203-206)

## 11.2 Critical Appreciation

### Introduction

The *Immortality Ode* is one of the most famous poems in English literature. In the whole series of Wordsworth's poems it is the greatest and that to which all others lead up. Wordsworth reached one of the highest peaks of the English poetry of the Romantic period with this ode. Indeed, it is the high water-mark of poetry in the nineteenth century.

### Title

Originally the poem did not bear any title, being simply designated as Ode. Nothing the uncertainty of some critics Henry Crabb Robinson suggested to Wordsworth that there should be a descriptive title for the work 'to guide the reader to a perception of its drift'. The poet then deliberately chose the title, *Ode: 'Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*, to emphasize what he conceived of the essential meaning.

"An understanding of the poem's imaginative source and meaning is not helped by the sub-title. It can be referred to simply as the *Ode* without risk of confusion with other odes which have their own fuller titles.

### Sources in the Poet Personal Life

Referring to the sources of the ode in his personal life, Wordsworth observes:

"This was composed during my residence at Town-End, Grasmere. Two years at least passed between the writing of the first four stanzas and the remaining part. To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself; but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or experiences of my own mind on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I have said elsewhere:

'A simple child  
That lightly draws its breath,  
And feels its life in every limb,  
What should it know of death !'

But it was not so much from the source of animal vivacity that my difficulty came, as from a sense of the indomitableness of the spirit within me.

**Notes**

I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of mere processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines— *Obstinate Questionings*, etc. to that dreamlike vividness and splendour, which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here: but having in the poem regarded it as a presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the Fall of Man presents an analogy in its favour. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations; and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspirations as regards the world of his own mind? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the 'Immortality of the Soul', I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorising me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet".

**Themes**

The ode has several themes. It depicts the visionary experiences of childhood, the fading of youthful vision with the advance of age, the natural piety that binds our days each to each, and the philosophical compensations of maturity. It also expresses the idea of pre-existence and the hope of immortality— not as an illusion but as a 'master light'. The poet seems to have laid emphasis on the theme of immortality which is placed absolutely in the foreground by the title of the poem. The central theme is the immortal nature of the human spirit, intuitively known by the child, partly forgotten by the growing man, but to be known once more in maturity through intense experience of heart and mind. "But this is not to say that the doctrine of pre-natal existence is set forth deliberately by Wordsworth as an accepted belief. Southey titled the balance away when he called the poem. 'The Ode on Pre-existence—a dark subject darkly handled'. Wordsworth's prosaic and scrupulous statement is a good answer to the question we are often constrained to ask of a poet: Do you really believe what you say? He says that he has not meant to inculcate a belief in a prior state of existence. 'It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith as more than an element in our instincts of immortality'.

**Three Parts**

The poem falls into three parts. The first four stanzas which form the first part put the fact: "There hath passed a glory from the earth"; and in the last two lines of them, ask the explanation of it. Stanza V-VIII constitute the second part. This part gives the explanation in the form of the doctrine of reminiscence. The third part (stanzas IX-XI) is an attempt to vindicate the value of a life from which 'vision' has fled. As Bowra puts it: "The three parts of the Ode deal in turn with a crisis, an explanation, and a consolation, and in all three Wordsworth speaks of what is most important and most original in his poetry."

The three parts of the ode are not harmoniously blended together. Thus the second part of the poem is, in effect, an interpolation, alien to opening and closing sections. The poem is grand in its design, but lacks the seamless unity of *Tintern Abbey*.

**An Autobiographical Poem**

Like so much of the best of Wordsworth, the *Immortality Ode* is a piece of spiritual autobiography. Wordsworth wrote it between 1803 and 1806; so it was partly contemporary with *The Prelude*, of which its

substance might have formed a part. In this ode the poet unlocks his heart and describes a crisis in his intellectual development. In his childhood he lived in 'the glory and the freshness' of the senses, in the immediate report given by the senses of 'principle of joy' in the world. But with advancing years this report comes to be fitful and dim. The things that the poet had seen he now can see no more. Wordsworth's loss of 'vision' marks the decline in poetic power which begins with the ending of the ode.

Referring to Wordsworth's loss of 'vision', Bowra observes: "He lived not only with, but on nature, and what he prized most in it was its capacity to open to him another world through vision. It is this which he has lost, perhaps not entirely, but enough to cause him a deep anxiety. It is idle to ask too closely what Wordsworth means by 'the visionary gleam' or 'the glory and the dream'. If it were simple, he would probably have expressed it in simple words, but because it is complex and unfamiliar, he uses image and symbol."

In the *Immortality Ode* Wordsworth laments the loss of 'vision'; but he makes also the compensating discovery of new and soberer power, springing out of the harsher realities of "man's inhumanity to man":

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun  
Do take a sober colouring from an eye  
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality.

### A Philosophical Poem

Like *Tintern Abbey*, the *Immortality Ode* is a great philosophical poem. The first four stanzas of the poem are lyrical and emotional, offering no reasons or explanations; but in the fifth stanza of the poet embarks upon philosophy. The middle part of the poem gives Wordsworth's philosophy of childhood; here more than anywhere else in his works, he tries to reduce his scattered impressions and convictions into an orderly system.

"His philosophy has been compared to Plato's, but it is in fact less of an abstract system than a description of his own personal experience of life and the process of ageing. Briefly, his theory seems to be something like this: the new born soul does not come from nowhere, out of nothingness, but from some other ill-defined country – from afar', 'from an imperial palace'. (This is a fairly common conviction, held by mystics of various religions.) The little child still has clear memories and visions of this other, heavenly place, but as he grows older they begin to fade. Earth does her best to make him forget this other place, and its glories, and the child himself tries (unwisely) to hurry on this process of forgetfulness, longing to be grown up, playing at being a grown-up, imitating adults in his games. Eventually he does grown up and forget, though he goes through a period when he still has rare glimpses of memory and vision, though unable to keep in constant contact with his sense of glory. When he is fully mature, even these glimpses are lost and 'fade into the light of common day'. On one level, this is a plain description of Wordsworth's own progress from childhood through youth to a somewhat bleak and disillusioned middle age; it is the same story that *The Prelude* tells. It is only Wordsworth's attempts to make his own experiences into a general philosophy, applicable to all men, and true of the whole human condition, that make the *Ode* confusing; Wordsworth was no philosopher, though he felt he ought to be one. His mind never dealt as early in abstract ideas as it did with some massive single physical symbol like the leech gatherer.

### A Difficult Poem

Like *Tintern Abbey*, the *Immortality Ode* is a difficult poem. Many readers have felt the poem to be confused, or not completely unified.

"There are, if we look closely, two quite different 'intimations of immortality'. Whereas one implies the mortality of nature:

questionings  
Of sense and outward things,  
Fallings from us, vanishings;  
Blank misgivings of a Creature  
Moving about in world not realiz'd.....

## Notes

the other implies its immortality:

the primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be.

In stanza IX especially, when Wordsworth says that his thanks-givings are less for the visionary gleam than for the visionary dreariness, and goes on to describe the latter as:

those first affections,

Those shadow recollections,

Which, be they what they may,

Are yet the fountain light of all our day,

Are yet a master light of all our seeing;

it is hard to follow him. He seems to be willfully confusing moments of darkness and fear in which nature seemed alien to the child with moments of splendour and beauty which first developed the child's affections and drew them to nature in a more intimate way."

### Vision of Life Victorious

"The poem is far from easy. The term 'immortality' means 'death negated': it is a dramatic word and may be equated with life itself provided some recognition of death is incorporated. Such recognition our ode gives, celebrating life victorious over death. In poetic study we must never limit too closely a vast unknowable which the poem itself is created to define. So, though Wordsworth's ode, like Shakespeare's *Pericles* or Shelley's *Prometheus*, is a vision of immortality of life victorious, it need have nothing to say about life-after-death. It is rather a vision of essential, all-conquering life. The symbols which carry this over to us are flowers, springtime joy, bird music, all young life, and, pre-eminently, the child.

### Two Childhoods

In this ode we get a double vision of childhood, 'the childhood that we see being busily lived through by children and which we ourselves lived through, and the childhood which we carry within us like a memory, and which while grounded in our earliest years stays with us into adult life for good or evil'.

As Alec King puts it: "These two childhoods may be called, for convenience, visible childhood and invisible childhood. We are mostly aware of the visible childhood in children. It is the mother, as Yeats understood, who knows best the invisible childhood, who in her 'passion, piety, or affection' knows the 'shape upon her lap' as a 'Presence' that symbolises 'all heavenly glory' and that mocks 'man's enterprise'."

The poet has distinguished these two childhoods, not only by what he says of each, but by different languages. The visible childhood of the 'six years' darling of a pigmy size is lived openly for us in the factual language of the seventh stanza. On the other hand, the invisible childhood is referred to, as it must be, in terms of metaphor and myth, especially in the eighth stanza, with its names for a child like 'thou best philosopher', 'thou eye among the blind'.

#### Two Different Ideas about Nature

".....Wordsworth began the Ode at a time when he was exercised by two different ideas about nature. In the first place, the fitful returns of his youthful vision made him ask why they were not more frequent and more secure. This made him anxious and uneasy, and prompted the first stanzas of the Ode. In the second place, he believed that in the moral inspiration of nature he had found something to take the place of his visions, and this discovery gave to the Ode its positive and consoling character. Such, no doubt, was his state of mind when he conceived the outline of the Ode. But we may ask why this issue was forced so powerfully on Wordsworth in the spring of 1802, since he was aware of it when he wrote *Tintern Abbey* four years before. No doubt in the interval he found that his visionary gift was not so dead as he had thought, but still at times returned to him. No doubt, too, he saw more clearly how much comfort was to be found in his moral conception of nature. None the less, something must have happened to press the issue on him with a new and inescapable insistence.

## Platonic Influences

## Notes

“Both Wordsworth and the Platonists emphasize recollection as a basis for believing in the dignity of man’s soul. In Plato’s *Phaedo*, for example, Socrates rebuts Simmias’ epiphenomenalism by appealing to the doctrine of ‘reminiscence’. The argument in this dialogue (a favourite of Wordsworth) is related both to the refutation of materialism and to the hope of immortality. Likewise, in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates maintains that the young soul fresh in the world has the most visionary perceptions. It seems likely that Wordsworth, perhaps under the guidance of Coleridge, would have been attracted to the *Phaedrus*, because it contains much concerning immortality and reminiscence. Similarly, Proclus, who probably influenced the *Ode*, argued that the incorporeality of thought, that is, its independence of the perishable body, is shown by the mind’s turning back upon itself in the act of memory. The very ability to remember, Proclus maintained, is inexplicable upon the basis of a materialistic philosophy. Possibly Wordsworth had in mind this argument when he wrote:

But for those first affections,  
Those shadowy recollections,  
Which, *be they what they may*,  
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,  
Are yet a master light of all our seeing.

Wordsworth evidently felt that his conclusions were valid even if the ‘recollections’ were not ‘reminiscences’ of pre-existence—for it is the mysterious power of memory, and not merely the reminiscence of a previous existence, that attests to the spiritual nature of man.”

## Form

“The *Immortality Ode* is essentially a free Pindaric poem of the type established by Cowley and perfected by Dryden, but the form created for a baroque celebration of public themes has moved into an entirely new dimension. Wordsworth owed much to Dryden’s practice—although he sometimes in his criticism spoke slightly of that poet. The freedom and variety of rhythm which Dryden employed, in *Alexander’s Feast*, to express the varying human passions which the lyre of Timotheus could awaken or allay now becomes the vehicle for the shifting moods of the subjective Romantic poet.”

## Language

The diction of this poem is supply moulded to the poet’s purpose as his thought moves from stage to stage. “Matthew Arnold found something declamatory in the *Ode*, but those phrases which might, taken in isolation, deserve that epithet:

The cataracts blow their trumpets to the steep, —  
The heavens laugh with you in their jubilee, —  
My head hath its coronal,

will be found to be right in their context, where the, poet is forcing a joy which he does not feel, and his language accordingly receives a rhetorical heightening. When he cuts himself short with

But there’s a Tree, of many, one,  
A single Field which I have look’d upon,  
Both of them speak of something that is gone,

he is once more in the vein of bare simplicity in which for him the bare truth is best told. The varied language of the *Ode*, released as it is from the experimental purpose that purged that of the *Lyrical Ballads*, has touches of splendour and of magic that belong to another mode altogether; yet it has upon it the stamp of that earlier ascetic discipline. The words tell him though with a truth and simplicity that remains the groundwork of his poetic style.”\*

## Imagery

The dominant image through which the poet’s sense of loss and recovery is expressed is that of light. Indeed, the imagery of light presides over the whole ode. There are two other major images, those of the sea and flowers. The flower-image in one shape or another keeps threading its way through the ode till it comes to rest in the quiet beautiful lines of the close:

**Notes**

To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

**Conclusion**

The *Immortality Ode* remains not merely the greatest, but the one really, dazzlingly, supremely great thing Wordsworth ever did. "Its theory has been scorned or impugned by some; parts of it have been called nonsense by critics of weight. But, sound or unsound, sense or nonsense, it is poetry, and magnificent poetry, from the first line to the last—poetry than which there is none better in any language, poetry such as there is not perhaps more than a small volume-full in all languages."\*\*

**Interpretation**

Wordsworth's poem expresses the view that the human soul exists first in heaven. When united at birth with a body, it brings with it impressions of heaven, as the following passage from the poem indicates:

The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory

These "trailing clouds" remain in a growing child as "intimations of immortality," or memories of his celestial abode. However, when the child passes into his adolescent and teen years, his increasing exposure to the material world and the beauty of nature dims his memories of his heavenly beginning. By the time he enters adulthood, all but the merest recollection of his previous existence disappears. (In the ancient world, Plato believed that the human soul existed before birth in an incorporeal realm. Although it possessed vast knowledge, its memory of this knowledge failed after it united with a body at birth. A human being then occupied himself with restoring this knowledge through education.) Nevertheless, this faint memory is enough to light for him the path back to heaven:

Those shadowy recollections,  
Which, be they what they may,  
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,  
Are yet a master light of all our seeing

**Themes***Children See the Light*

The speaker of the poem maintains paradoxically that the more a person ages—the more educated and experienced he becomes—the less he knows about heaven and God. A very young child, on the other hand, is a fountain of insight and enlightenment about the supernal world. After all, says the poem's speaker, a child's soul is a recent arrival from paradise. Memories of his heavenly abode are still vivid to him. He still sees the light of the eternal God.

**Faith**

There is in all of us a heavenly spark that can ignite the fire of faith to support us through troubled times, keeping alive the thought of reuniting with the Creator in the celestial realm.

**Ennui**

Humans become jaded and world-weary after losing their childhood innocence and enthusiasm.

**Meter, Feet, and Line Length**

Wordsworth uses iambic feet throughout the poem. An iambic foot (or iamb) consists of a pair of syllables, the first one unstressed and the second stressed. For example, in the fifth line of the first stanza, the first two syllables (*The GLOR*) make up the first iambic foot, and the second two syllables (*y AND*) make up the second iambic foot. The meter of the poem varies from dimeter to hexameter. (A line with two iambic feet makes up a dimeter; three feet, a trimeter; four feet, a tetrameter; five feet, a pentameter; and six feet a hexameter.)

Below is a graphic illustrating the iambic feet and meter of each line in the first stanza. Numbers appear above each iambic foot in the lines on the left. On the right is the name of the meter. Line 1 is in iambic pentameter, line 2 in iambic tetrameter, line 3 in iambic dimeter, and so on.

## Notes

### Title Information

When Wordsworth completed this work in 1804, he called it simply "Ode," and the poem carried this title when it was published in 1807. In 1815, when the poem was republished, Wordsworth expanded the title to "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood." *Intimations* means hints, inklings, or indirect suggestions. Most readers and critics today use the title "Intimations of Immortality" when referring to the poem.

"Intimations of Immortality" is a lyric poem in the form of an ode. A lyric poem presents deep feelings and emotions rather than telling a story; an ode uses lofty language and a dignified tone and may contain several hundred lines.

### Composition and Publication Information

Wordsworth completed the first four stanzas of "Intimations of Immortality" between March and April of 1802. He completed the rest of the poem by early 1804. Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme published the poem at Paternoster Row, London, in May 1807 as part of a collection of Wordsworth's works, *Poems, in Two Volumes*.

### Self-Assessment

- Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: It takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquility. Who defines poetry in these work.
  - Matthew Arnold
  - Coleridge
  - Wordsworth
  - Shelley
- The "Ode on Intimation by Immortality" in the water-mark of English poetry of the ..... period.
  - Victorian
  - Metaphysical
  - Romantic
  - Classical
- Wordsworth started write the ode' in the spring of ..... .
  - 1802
  - 1805
  - 1804
  - 1801
- Stanzas IX-XI is the third part which tries to vindicate the ..... from which the vision is fled.
  - Value of life
  - Value of death
  - Value of vision
  - None of these

### 11.3 Summary

- The entire earth—all its fields and streams and trees—seemed like heaven to me when I was a child. Now, however, as spring begins to unfold its splendor, I no longer perceive the world this way. True, there is much beauty around me: rainbows, roses, moonlight, sunlight, the reflection of the stars on evening waters. But these sights, magnificent as they are, lack the full glory of what I once saw.
- At this moment, while the birds sing and the lambs frolic, my inability to perceive the fullness of this glory makes me sad. But the sounds of nature—the wind and the waterfalls—cheer me as I realize all the earth is happy, land and sea.
- Even the beasts revel in the spirit of spring. Shepherd boy, let me hear your shouts of joy!
- You creatures of the forest, I hear the calls you make to one another, and I hear the heavens laugh with you in your joy. I feel your happiness—all of it. How could I be sullen on such a fine May morning. Children are picking fresh flowers in a thousand valleys, the sun shines brightly, and babies leap in their mother's arms. But even amid all this joy and wonder, there is a tree and there is a field that speak to me of something that is missing. So, too, does the pansy at my feet. Where is that heavenly glory I once perceived?
- When we are born, our souls—which previously existed in the celestial realm—go to sleep momentarily. When they awake to the new world around them, they forget almost everything about their heavenly existence. But a hint of that existence remains in our souls even though the



**Notes**

world begins to enclose us, like prison walls. Still, a growing boy can perceive heavenly light. But when he becomes a man, the light fades. Earth, without malice, further blinds him to the fullness of the glory he once knew by exhibiting its own glory. However, although the glory of nature is not equal to heavenly glory, it is a reflection of it

- A child of six, while enjoying the kisses of his mother and the admiring gaze of his father, already begins to plot out the life he will lead and the events he will take part in – a wedding, a festival, a funeral – and prepares himself for business, love, and strife. He may foresee himself in many roles in imitation of others, even down to the time when old age overtakes him.
- The outward appearance of a child belies the immensity of his soul within. That soul, that inner light, still perceives something of the heavenly presence, still fathoms something of the eternal deep, even as we adults labor in darkness to discover the truths of the eternal realm. You, child, are the best seer, prophet, and philosopher. But why do you, with the memory of the glories of heaven within you, press on so urgently toward adulthood, which dims your inner light and lays its earthly burdens upon your back?
- But how heartening it is to know that at least a glimmer of celestial light yet lies within us as adults and manifests itself in our natural surroundings. I give thanks for my knowledge of how things are and that nothing can entirely eliminate the awareness in us of the immortal sea that brought us to the shore of life. So sing, birds, a joyous song of May. Though the time will come when the glories of spring's fields and flowers will be forever gone from us, we will not grieve; for we know that greater glories await us beyond death.
- I love the fountains, meadows, hills, and brooks – the brilliance of a morning sun and the beauty of a flower. But I know that the flower is only a hint of what is to come.

**11.4 Key-Words**

1. Immortality : Death negated
2. Epiphenomenalism : The theory that mental or conscious processes simply accompany certain neural processes as epiphenomena
3. Impugned : Attack someone with words, dispute the truth, validity, or honesty of (a statement or motive) challenge; call into question

**11.5 Review Questions**

1. Have you ever had "Intimations of Immortality"? If so, explain the nature of them.
2. The poem says a child is a "Mighty prophet" (line 111). What does a child foretell?
3. Give a critical appreciation of "Ode on Intimations of Immortality".
4. In an essay, compare and contrast Plato's belief in the pre-existence of the soul with Wordsworth's belief on the same topic.
5. What is the view of birth, childhood, the child's relationship with nature, and the growth into adulthood in Wordsworth, Ode: Intimations of Immortality? How does the speaker feel about the past and how does he find consolation for his grief.

**Answers: Self-Assessment**

1. (iii)
2. (iii)
3. (i)
4. (iii)

**11.6 Further Readings**

Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 12: Poetry : Nissim Ezekiel's Night of the Scorpion

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### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Introduce Nissim Ezekiel; one of the most important poets whose works occupy significant place in post independence Indian Literature.

### Introduction

This is a poignant poem by one of the India's foremost modern day poets, Nissim Ezekiel. Using imagery relating to the senses of sight, smell, touch and hearing, the poet depicts the selfless love of a mother who is stung by a scorpion. She nearly dies and yet is thankful that the scorpion had spared her children. The poem can also be seen as a comment on a culture where superstitions still play a significant role.

The poet recalls very vividly (clearly) the night when his mother was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours of incessant rain had forced the scorpion to seek refuge in the poet's house (rain water must have flooded its hiding place in the open) It sought refuge under a bag of rice and stung the poet's mother when she went into that room. The viciously wicked creature poured its poison into her in a flash of its devilish tail and ventured out into the rain. On hearing of the unfortunate incident, the peasants rushed to the poet's house with lighted candles and lanterns. They uttered the name of God countless times and prayed to God to immobilise the evil creature. Against the light of the lanterns, the shadows of the crowd cast on the mud walls looked like huge scorpions. The peasants looked for the scorpion everywhere where but it in vain. Being unsuccessful in their attempt to capture the scorpion they clicked their tongues. They were superstitious people and made several observations. They said that with every movement of the scorpion, its poison would also spread/course in the mother's blood. Hence, it was imperative (essential) that the creature should not move at all and remain still. Some peasants said that her pain that night would burn away all her sins of her previous birth. They wished that her present agony should reduce her suffering in the next birth. They hoped that in this illusionary world where evil outweighs good deeds, her pain would diminish the quantum of evil. Some tried to console the mother with the remark that the scorpions poison would purify/cleanse her body of all desires and her soul of sinful ambition. They sat around the mother on the floor. Their faces were calm and peaceful. They believed that the mother's agony was for her good.

More and more neighbours arrived with lanterns and candles. The presence of the insects and the rain added to the chaos. There seemed to be no end to the mother's pain. The rain continued unabated. All this while the poor suffering mother was groaning and writhing in pain as she lay on a mat.

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The poet's father acted differently because he did not believe in prayers, religion and was a man of reason and logic. He was distraught at the sight of his wife's agony and even cast aside his beliefs to somehow reduce her suffering. In his concern for his wife he tried out herbal medicines, magic and prayers to diminish her pain. The child watched helplessly as his father even poured some paraffin on the bitten toe and set fire to it. The flame burned brightly making the mother's pain acute. The poet remained a mute spectator as he watched the holy priest perform his rituals and used spells to curb the poison. But all efforts to diminish the mother's pain proved futile. Her pain subsided after twenty hours. Forgetting all her torment, the self-sacrificing mother uttered words of thanks-giving to God in making the scorpion choose her as a victim, not her children. Thus the poem which begins with pain and anxiety ends on a grateful and optimistic tone.

### 12.1 Life and Works of Nissim Ezekiel

Nissim Ezekiel is one of the foremost Indian Poets writing in English, and he has attracted considerable critical attention from scholars both in India and abroad. Not only that but also by virtue of his critical evaluation, he has brought fame and recognition to a number of Indian English poets.

As a man of letters Nissim Ezekiel is a 'Protean' figure. His achievements as a poet and playwright are considerable. K. Balachandran writes, "The post-Independence Indian poetry saw its new poetry in the fifties. Among the new poets A.K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy, Shiv K. Kumar, Kamala Das, Monica Verma, O.P. Bhatnagar, Gauri Deshpande, Adil Jussawalla, Ezekiel occupies a prominent place. His versatile genius can be found in his poetry, plays, criticism, journalism and translation." Nissim Ezekiel has done a good work in Indian writing in English. He has written many volumes of poems – *A Time to Change* (1952), *Sixty Poems* (1953), *The Third* (1959), *The Unfinished Man* (1960), *The Exact Name* (1965) and others. His plays *Nalini*, *Marriage Poem*, *The Sleep-Walkers*, *Songs of Deprivation* and *Who Needs No Introduction* are already staged and published.

He has also edited books *Indian Writers in Conference* (1964), *Writing in India* (1965), *An Emerson Reader* (1965), *A Martin Luther King Reader* (1965) and *Arthur Miller's All My Sons* (1972). His literary essays published in magazines and papers are innumerable. The notable among them are 'Ideas and Modern Poetry' (1964), 'The Knowledge of Dead Secrets' (1965), 'Poetry as Knowledge' (1972), 'Sri Aurobindo on Poetry' (1972), 'Should Poetry be Read to Audience?' (1972), 'K.N. Daruwalla' (1972), 'Poetry and Philosophy,' 'Hindu Society' (1966). He has written essays on art criticism 'Modern Art in India' (1970), 'How Good is Sabavala?' (1973), and 'Paintings of the Year 1973' (1973). His essays on social criticism 'Thoreau and Gandhi' (1971), 'Censorship and the Writer' (1963), 'How Normal is Normality' (1972), 'Tradition and All That a Case Against the Hippies' (1973), 'A Question of Sanity' (1972) and 'Our Academic Community' (1968) are varied and auto telic of his wide interest.

Ezekiel is an editor of several journals encouraging writing poetry, plays and criticism. He also asked many writers for translation, affecting the theory and practice of the young poets. The writers like Rilke and W.B. Yeats influenced Ezekiel. Like Yeats, he treated poetry as the 'record of the mind's growth.' His poetic bulk indicates his growth as a poet-critic and shows his personal importance. Chetan Karnani states, "At the centre was that sincere devoted mind that wanted to discover itself. In the process, he managed to forge a unique achievement of his own."

The poet Ezekiel has already published several volumes of poems. *A Time to Change* (1952) was his first book of poems. For him poetry-writing was a lofty vocation, a way of life. He treated life as a journey where poetry would be the main source of discovering and organising one's own self. In a sense, poetry to Ezekiel became a way for self-realisation. He calls life a texture of poetry. He identifies himself with poetry. So all of his volumes of verse are well-knit and they are in the poet's view, a continuation of each other. Ezekiel's experiments in prose rhythms and his fine sense of structure and metrical ability. The verse rhythms of T.S. Eliot seem to haunt his mind. Ezekiel's *Sixty Poems* (1953), his second volume of poems was published in 1953. But these poems are loose in structure and they are less appealing.

## The Company I Keep

Notes

Nissim Ezekiel speaks about his contemporaries and the types of poetry appeared during that age. He expects that a poet must keep up the moral, ethics of the age and people. If a poet cannot keep up that moral, then it shows that the poet has a minor talent in writing poetry. This cannot be called a greater curse but having no talent. Just like - ring refers to the groups of poets who write poems. Millions of people find happiness in writing poetry. He is also one among the poets, who enjoys writing poetry. Ezekiel feels that poets are mixing up metaphors and common thoughts. But poetry is not simply mixing up but an expression of deeper thoughts.

Ezekiel, here, tries to condemn out rightly those who just mix metaphors and statements and produce bogus poetry. These unfortunate beings exploit others skill and parade themselves as poets. He curses all those who use other's talents for their own selfish purpose. He also includes the publishers of small magazines and broadcasters of small weather woes. The poet in his indignant mood calls them as seducers of experience. By doing so these men show their lack of imaginative power. He also condemns such practice as saying that they are the victims of their own spontaneous fraud. Ezekiel asks them their last composition of a real poem. He himself answers that they are in hell and they do not know it. But instead they will answer that they have been reviewing as compensation. He asserts that he himself belonged once to as advertising offence. Ezekiel finds faults of not knowing the secret of writing and becoming thoughts which cause a variety of disasters to the mind of people through their poems. This practice is nothing but making the most out of borrowed intelligence, imagination and skill. They really contribute nothing to the world of literature. The occasional rhyme or two coming from such people cannot be a thing of justification at all. This activity is described by the poet as a trail of smoke, that just irritates the people by its small and continuous suffocation.

Thus, the poet gives a warning here of such people. In a relentless vein of critical self-awareness and with downright candour Ezekiel denounces all such poetasters:

No greater curse  
 than a minor talent  
 in the verse ring bull ring, yet  
 millions revel in it,  
 and I am counted  
 one among them, mixing  
 metaphors and platitudes...  
 Damn all you sensitive poets,  
 seducers of experience,  
 self-worshippers and publishers,  
 broadcasters of small weather woes.  
 Victims of your own spontaneous fraud  
 Your only achievement is monumentality of vanity

## Very Poem in Indian

Nissim Ezekiel is one of those Indian poets writing in English who create an authentic flavor of India, by their use of Indian English. Pidgin English or Bazaar English, as it is often called. In this poem, the Indian flavor has been created by stressing the various mistakes which Indians commit in their use of English, by bringing in the hopes and aspirations of free India, and also the attitudes of her two hostile neighbors, China and Pakistan. It is a common India mistake to use the present continuous tense in the place of the simple present.

Ezekiel presents that the new generation is going after 'fashion and foreign things.' He presents the typical Indian make-up. The Indian living conditions are sought to be portrayed. This is a lane of Gandhi and other who have given their best for the sake of the country. Such principles as the truth, Non-Violence and Non-Operation are the real virtues one will have to learn from these leaders. The India of yester years is no longer to be seen here, as modernization and industrialization have speeded up the process of change. The regrettable thing in the modern world is the act of violence and anti-social tendencies proving to be a menace. Still the positive aspects like regeneration, remuneration

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and contraception could be thought of as a way out of the present muddle. One can certainly hope for the better and propagate the best that is thought as unique.

In the second stanza, the readers get a peep into things - Indians as Gandhi's heir, he would opt for peace and non-violence. He is puzzled why others are not following Gandhi's advice - while in this estimate, the ancient Indian wisdom is correct, contrastively the modern generation takes it to whatever is western and fashionable - like other Indians, he too has to improve his English language. The student interest and petty agitations make him feel sickening line Antony's appeal to the Roman mob, he will call upon the fellow citizens to think of the past masters.

Thus in the third stanza, he pronounces, In order to get away from that which is disgusting, he wants to have a cup of wine which is very good for digestion. It can be taken as equivalent to the western wine if only a little salt is added to make it a lovely drink. The poet confesses that he is the total abstainer from drinks while it is taken by addicts to gunch themselves, he for his part would turn to simple drinks like lassi. Thus, the poet tries to receive the old Gandhi an days. In the fourth stanza, the poet is able to think aloud and offer his comments on the world situation today. The present conditions all over the world speak of a bad trend that give an edge to the production of dangerous weapons and try to be superior to others. The countries of the world often tie with each other in keeping themselves ahead of others in this mad competitive world. This retrace often leads to conflicts resulting in loss of precious human lives. If only one considers the other as the brother; the trend could be changed.

India is a land where the principle of 'unity in Diversity' is practiced. Here many communities live together even though there are some problems. This ideal situation in which one Co-exists with the other is described as Ram Rajya by the poet. He gives the hand of friendliness to the visitor and expects him to come again. The poet is optimistic when he says that he enjoys every moment of good company. So, he ends the poem by saying that he does not feel the necessity of celebrating ceremonies

### Poet, Lover, Bird Watcher

The best poem of this volume 'Poet, Lover, Bird-watcher' displays Ezekiel's views on poet's problems. He thinks the best poets wait for words, like ornithologists sitting in silence to see birds. Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher is one of the better known poems of Ezekiel and has received considerable critical attention. It epitomizes the poet's search for a poetics which would help him redeem himself in his eyes and in the eyes of the god. Parallelism is drawn between the poet, the lover and the Birdwatcher. All the three have to wait patiently in their respective pursuits, indeed their 'waiting' is a sort of strategy, a plan of action which bear fruit it persisted in and followed with patience. It is patient waiting which crown the efforts of all the three with success.

Ezekiel attempts to define the poet in terms of a lover and the birdwatcher. There is a close resemblance among them in their search for love, bird and word. All the three become one in spirit, and Ezekiel expresses this in imagery noted for its precision and decorum:

The hunts is not an exercise of will  
But patience love relaxing on a hill  
To note the movement of a timid wing.

There is no action, no exercise of will in all the three cases, but 'Patient waiting' is itself strategy., a kind of planned action to reach the goal. The patience of the birdwatcher is rewarded when the timid bird is suddenly caught in the net; the patience of the lover is rewarded, when the woman loved, risks surrendering. Similarly, if the poets wait still the moment of inspiration, he achieves some noble utterance. "Bird - beloved - poem syndrome runs throughout the lyric". The Second-stanza stresses the fact that slow movement is good. One has to go to remote place just as one has to discover love in a remote place like the heart's dark floor. It is there, that women look something more than their body, and that they appear like myths of light. And the poet, in zigzag movements, yet with a sense of musical delight, manages to combine movements, yet with a sense of musical delight, manages to combine sense and sound in such a way that 'deaf can hear, the blind recover sight'. Highest poetry is remedial in its action, it cures human apathy and deadness of spirit, activates human sense, and makes man see and hear much more than he would have otherwise done.

At the end of this wait, the poetic word appears in the concrete and sensuous form of a woman, who knows that she is loved and who surrenders to her lover at once. In this process, poetry and love, word and woman become intertwined. But this "slow movement" of love and poetry, which shows no irritable haste to arrive at meaning, does not come by easily. In order to possess the vision of the rarer birds of his psyche, the poet has to go through the "deserted lanes" of his solitary, private life; he has to walk along the primal rivers of his consciousness in silence, or travel to a far off shore which is like the heart's dark floor. The poet, then, gloats on the slow curving movements of the women, both for the sake of their sensuousness and the insights they bring. He creates his poetry out of these "myths of light" whose essential darkness or mystery remains at the entire of creation itself. But the poet finds the greatest sense or meaning in his own creativity which eventually liberates him from "crooked restless flight" of those moments when struggles to find the poetic idiom. The poetry which releases the poet from suffering is the medium through which the deaf can hear and the blind see.

This is a justly celebrated poem, containing a beautiful worked set of images moving as the title suggests, on three interpenetrating levels.



Did u know?

In this poem, the poet has made use of various types of imagery:

**Visual imagery**

- scorpion crawling beneath a sack of rice
- peasants came like swarms of flies

**Smell imagery**

- smell of candles
- smell of burning oil in the lanterns

**Tactile experience**

- scorpion biting the mother
- father pouring paraffin on the toe.

**Internal sensation**

- fear
- pain

**Sound imagery**

- buzzed the name of god a hundred times
- they clicked their tongues

## 12.2 Night of the Scorpion

'Night of the Scorpion', in which Ezekiel recalls the behaviour of 'the peasants', his father, his mother and a holy man when his mother was poisoned by a scorpion's sting. Here the aim is to find poetry in ordinary reality as observed, known, felt, experienced rather than as the intellect thinks it should be. While the peasants pray and speak of incarnations, his father, 'sceptic, rationalist', tries 'every curse and blessing, powder, mixture, herb and hybrid' and a holy man performs a rite. After a day the poison is no longer felt and, in a final irony, his mother, in contrast to the previous feverish activity centred upon her, makes a typical motherly comment:

My mother only said  
Thank God the scorpion picked on me  
and spared my children.

The 'Thank God' is doubly ironic as it is a commonplace expression of speech in contrast to all the previous religious and superstitious activity. Ezekiel's purpose is not, however, an expression of

## Notes

scepticism but rather the exact notation of what he saw as a child. The aim is not to explain but to make real by naming, by saying 'common things'. The poem is a new direction, a vision of ordinary reality, especially of Indian life, unmediated by cold intellect. The new purpose is seen in the poem's style, unrhymed, with line lengths shaped by natural syntactical units and rhythm created by the cadences of the speaking voice into a long verse paragraph, rather than the stanzaic structure used in earlier poems.

In his poetry there is the truth of acknowledging what is felt and experienced in its complexity, contradictions, pleasures, fears and disillusionments without preconceived ideas of what poetry should say about the poet and life.

Nissim Ezekiel's 'Night of The Scorpion' is much appreciated by the critics and it has found place in many anthologies for its excellence. Critics, commenting on its aesthetic beauty expressed different views. In their critical sweep, they brought everything from superstitious ritualism to modern rationalism. One can find that in the poem superstitious ritualism or sceptic rationalism or even the balance of the both with expression of Indian ethos through maternal love in the Indian way, is nothing but scratching the surface.

The poem has something more gigantic than its face value, which as I find is the symbolic juxtaposition of the forces of darkness and light that is intrinsically centripetal in the poem.

It is 'Night' of 'The Scorpion' with the first word absorbing accent. It seems to have been implicitly contrived here that 'Night' should stand as a symbol of darkness with the 'Scorpion' as the symbol of evil. Such ingenuity in craftsmanship takes the poem to the higher level of understanding. Prof. Birje Patil is right in putting that in "Night of The Scorpion", where evil is symbolized by the scorpion, "The reader made to participate in the ritual as well as suffering through" a vivid evocation of the poison moving in the mother's blood'. And evil has always been associated with darkness, the seamy side of our life, in human psyche. It has always been the integral part of theology, in whatever form it has manifested that suffering helps in removing that darker patch in human mind, the patch that has been a besetting sin of man's existence.

May the sum of evil balanced in this unreal world against the sum of good become diminished by your pain, they said. These lines amply testify that the poem aims at achieving something higher than its narrative simplicity. The choric refrain 'they said' in the chain of reactions made by the village peasants is undoubtedly ironic, but the poet hasn't as much to stress the concept of sin, redemption or rebirth as he has to insinuate the indomitable force of darkness gripping the minds of the unenlightened. Going through the poem attentively more than once, it can't fail catching our notice that modern rationalism is also equally shallow and perverse. It is also a road leading to confusion where through emerges scepticism, the other darker patch on our modernized existence. The image of the father in this poem speaks volumes for this capsizing modernism which sandwiches in its arm-space the primitive and the perverted. The "sceptic rationalist" father trying 'powder, mixture, herb and hybrid' bears upon human primitivism and when he experiments with 'a little paraffin upon a bitten toe and put a match to it he becomes a symbol of perversion in the modern man's psyche.

Christopher Wiseman puts it, "...a fascinating tension between personal crisis and mocking social observation"; neither there is any personal crisis. On the other hand there is spiritual compassion and an intense urge for getting rid of this psychological syndrome that the whole modern world has been caught, the slow-moving poison of this syndromic scorpion into the very veins of creation, the image of the mother in agony nullifying the clear vision of human thought and enveloping the whole of humanity. In the darker shades of confusion more chaotic, troubles the poet as much sharply as the sting of the poisonous worm. There is crisis, but it is the crisis of human existence that needs to be overcome. The poet, though a distant observer, doesn't take a stance of detachment. On the exact opposite, he watches with curiosity "the flame feeding on my mother", but being uncertain whether the paraffin flame would cleanse her of the agony of the absorbing poison, he loses himself in a thoughtful trance. The whole poem abounds with these two symbols of darkness and light. In the very beginning the poet

has ushered in this symbolic juxta position and then as the poem advanced, built upon it the whole structure of his fascinating architecture in the lines. Ten hours of steady rain had driven him to crawl beneath a sack of rice parting with his poison - flash of diabolic tail in the dark room he risked the rain again. The incessant rain stands for the hope and regeneration where with is juxtaposed the destructive hurdles to fruitify that hope. But the constructive, life giving rain continues and the evil, having fulfilled its parts, departs. Then afterwards other hurdles more preying than the first, come in. More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours more insects, and the endless rain. My mother twisted through and through groaning on a mat. The symbols of light and darkness, candles lanterns, neighbours and insects and rain again are noteworthy. But the force of light gains a width handover the evil force and life is restored once again in its joyous stride and this life long struggle between forces of darkness and light reaches a crescendo when - after twenty hours It lost its sting. Here, In the above lines, lies the beauty of the poem, when the ascending steps of darkness, being chased by the force of following light are ripped down; when at last on the peak the chaser wins and the chased slips down.

The man who has not understood what motherhood is. might be taken in by such expression of motherly love. But I convincingly feel that any woman would have exclaimed the same thing as the mother in this poem did. In my view, it would have been truly Indian had the mother in her tortures remembered her children and though helplessly, had she desired to protect them lest the scorpion might catch them unaware. Anyway, the beauty of the poem remains- unmarred by such revision. The poem is a thing of beauty par excellence.

The poem "Night of the Scorpion" can be classified as poetry of situation - an art in which Browning and Robert Frost excelled. It presents a critical situation in which a mother is bitten by a scorpion. It involves a typical Indian Situation in which an entire village community identifies itself with a sad domestic happening. It pictures the traditional Indian society steeped in ignorance and superstition.

The poem is set against the backdrop of Indian rural setting. The rural habit of Storing rice in gunny bags is referred to in the phrase, " a sack of rice". The rural practice of building huts with mud walls is captured in the phrase "mud backed walls". The absence of rural electrification in Indian villages before independence is hinted at in a string of images, "dark room" and " Candles and lanterns". "Darkness" has the extended meaning of Indian villages being steeped in ignorance.

The situation of a scorpion-stung mother is encountered in different ways of prayer, incantation and science. Not one stays at home when the peasants hear of a mother bitten by a scorpion. They rush buzzing the name of God times without number. With candles and lanterns, they search for him. He is not found. They sit on the floor with the mother in the centre and try to comfort her with words of philosophy. Their prayer brings out their genuine concern for the suffering mother. The father, through a skeptic and a rationalist, does not differ in the least from the ignorant peasants. He tries both medicine and "mantra" drugs and chants as seen in the phrase "trying every way and blessing". A holy man is brought to tame the poison with an incantation.

It is the belief of the village community that buzzing " the name of God a hundred times" will bring about relief to the mother stung by the scorpion. The action of the rural folk brings out their firm faith in God and in the efficiency of prayer. It is the belief of the rural community that the faster the scorpion moves, the faster the poison in the mother's blood will move. In equating the movement of the scorpion and that of the poison in the blood stream, the peasant betrays their superstition.

The peasants sit around the mother groaning in pain and they try to console her offering remedial advice of a strong ritualistic and faith - healing kind. Some peasants say that as she has suffered now, in the next birth she will experience less troubles. She will now be in a balanced state whereby her body is rid of disease and her spirit of ambition. The incantatory utterances made by the peasants smack of their belief in the Hindu law of "Karma", in the Hindu doctrine of rebirth and in the 13 Hindu concept of the world as one of illusion and the physical suffering bringing about spiritual rejuvenation.



**Notes**

The poem is remembered particularly for its 'memorable close' - the last three lines:

My Mother only said  
Thank God the scorpion picked on me  
And spared my children.

The use of the restricted adverb 'only' distinguishes the mother from the peasants, the father and the holy man. The other does not blame God but she thanks God because the scorpion stung her and spared her children. Her agony would have been greater if any of her children were bitten. Ultimately, it assumes universal dimensions. The poet throws light on the selfless love of the Indian mother.

**Self-Assessment****1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:**

"I remember the night my mother. He risked the rain again".

- (i) Who does "he" refer to?
- (ii) Why did he come inside the house? Where did he hide?
- (iii) Why does the poet refer to his tail as diabolic?

**12.3 Summary**

- "Night of the scorpion" is a poem that can be understood at two levels. At one level, the poet describes how, on a rainy day the narrator's mother is bitten by a scorpion and what are the chain reactions to it. At another level, it depicts the Indian ethos and cultural richness through a simple incident and epitomizes the typical Indian motherhood which depicts sacrifice and affection.
- The narrator remembers the night when the scorpion had bitten his mother. The heavy rain had driven the scorpion to crawl under a sack of rice and unexpectedly had bitten his mother's toe; flashing its devilish tail and parting with its poison.
- The peasants or villagers came into their hut "like swarms of flies" to sympathize with the family. The neighbours buzzed the name of god hoping to paralyse the scorpion as they believed that if the mother moved the poison would spread. They searched for the scorpion with candles and lanterns. They clicked their tongues that the mother's sufferings may decrease "the misfortunes of her next birth". They also prayed that the sum of evil may be balanced in this unreal world against the sum of good that she had done. They prayed that the poison would purify her of her desires and ambitions.
- All the people sat around, the mother in the centre, while she continued to groan and twist with pain, on the mat.
- The narrator's father who was normally a rationalist and a practical man, also gave in to the superstitious beliefs of the villagers and joined them in their cursing and praying then putting a mixture of powders and herbs on her toe, a little paraffin on the bite and lit it with a match - hoping to burn the poison away. The narrator saw his mother's toe on fire and must have felt afraid. A holy man, the priest, performed some rites to probably tame the poison. Only after (20) twenty hours did the poison subside the mother was relieved of the pain, and thanked god that the scorpion bit her and spared her children.
- The poem thus brings out the mother's love and sacrificial thoughts - the maternal instinct, as well as beautifully describes the superstitions and ignorant practices followed by the villagers. The title of the poem thus is very deceptive, as it does not focus on the scorpion at all.

**12.4 Key-Words**

1. Incarnation : embodied in flesh or taking on flesh
2. Ingenuity : It is the quality of being clever, original and inventive, often in the process of applying ideas to solve problems of meet challenges
3. Craftmanship : A man who practices a craft with great skill

## 12.5 Review Questions

Notes

1. Consider Nissim Ezekiel as a poet?
2. Write a critical appreciation of The Night of The Scorpion.
3. What are the remarkable features of the poetry of Nissim Ezekiel' the night of scorpion?

### **Answers: Self-Assessment**

1. (i) "He" refers to the scorpion.  
(ii) He came inside the house to seek protection and shelter from the rain. He hid himself beneath a sack of rice.  
(iii) The sting of the scorpion's tail caused much pain to the poet's mother. He is therefore calling its tail diabolic or devilish.

## 12.6 Further Readings



Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 13: Vocabulary and Usage: One-Word Substitution

### CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

13.1 One-Word Substitution

13.2 Review Questions

13.3 Further Readings

### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Learn one-word substitution

### Introduction

Brevity is the soul of wit, says William Shakespeare. Precision in expression helps to express ideas and sentiments more effectively.

In English, there are certain words which may be used for a group of words. A mastery in the art of substitution will enable the students to learn the art of precis-writing and of sentence completion.

### 13.1 One-Word Substitution

Given below are a number of phrases and a single-word substitute for each of them.

|   |   |                     |
|---|---|---------------------|
| 1. One who knows many languages.  | — | <b>Linguist</b>     |
| 2. Being unable to pay one's debts.   | — | <b>Insolvent</b>    |
| 3. Having an evil reputation.   | — | <b>Notorious</b>    |
| 4. One who leaves his country to settle elsewhere.  | — | <b>Emigrant</b>     |
| 5. A person who lives at the same time as another.  | — | <b>Contemporary</b> |
| 6. A person who can neither read nor write.   | — | <b>Illiterate</b>   |
| 7. A person who spends his money recklessly.  | — | <b>Spendthrift</b>  |
| 8. A person who lives by himself.   | — | <b>Recluse</b>      |
| 9. A woman whose husband is dead.   | — | <b>Widow</b>        |
| 10. A man whose wife is dead.   | — | <b>Widower</b>      |
| 11. A child whose parents are dead.   | — | <b>Orphan</b>       |
| 12. A minister representing a sovereign or state in a foreign country.                    | — | <b>Ambassador</b>   |
| 13. A person sent on a mission (usually official).  | — | <b>Emissary</b>     |
| 14. A person who is indifferent to pleasure or pain.                                      | — | <b>Stoic</b>        |
| 15. One who defends or is zealous for his country's freedom or rights.                    | — | <b>Patriot</b>      |
| 16. One who makes an eloquent public speech.  | — | <b>Orator</b>       |
| 17. One who undergoes penalty of death for sticking to his faith.                         | — | <b>Martyr</b>       |
| 18. One who abandons his religious faith.   | — | <b>Apostate</b>     |
| 19. One who is given to questioning the truth of facts and the soundness of inferences.   | — | <b>Sceptic</b>      |
| 20. Belonging to all parts of the world; a person familiar with many different countries. | — | <b>Cosmopolitan</b> |

|  |                                      |                        | Notes |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| 21. One who resides in a country of which he is not a citizen.                                     | —                                    | <b>Alien</b>           |       |
| 22. One who comes as a settler into a foreign country.   | —                                    | <b>Immigrant</b>       |       |
| 23. Being present everywhere.  | —                                    | <b>Omnipresent</b>     |       |
| 24. Being all-powerful.  | —                                    | <b>Omnipotent</b>      |       |
| 25. One who knows everything.  | —                                    | <b>Omniscient</b>      |       |
| 26. Beyond making a mistake.   | —                                    | <b>Infallible</b>      |       |
| 27. One who eats human flesh.  | —                                    | <b>Cannibal</b>        |       |
| 28. One who looks at the dark side of things.  | —                                    | <b>Pessimist</b>       |       |
| 29. One who looks at the bright side of things.  | —                                    | <b>Optimist</b>        |       |
| 30. Not being able to be elected or selected under the rules.                                      | —                                    | <b>Ineligible</b>      |       |
| 31. One who loves and works for his fellow men.  | —                                    | <b>Philanthropist</b>  |       |
| 32. One who hates mankind.   | —                                    | <b>Misanthropist</b>   |       |
| 33. One who lives on vegetables.   | —                                    | <b>Vegetarian</b>      |       |
| 34. One who has belief in the existence of God.  | —                                    | <b>Theist</b>          |       |
| 35. One who has no belief in the existence of God.   | —                                    | <b>Atheist</b>         |       |
| 36. One who believes in fate.  | —                                    | <b>Fatalist</b>        |       |
| 37. One who plays a game for pleasure and not professionally.                                      | —                                    | <b>Amateur</b>         |       |
| 38. One who has grown old in or has long experience of (specially military) service or occupation. | —                                    | <b>Veteran</b>         |       |
| 39. One who lends money at exorbitant rates of interest.   | —                                    | <b>Usurer</b>          |       |
| 40. A member of a council.   | —                                    | <b>Councillor</b>      |       |
| 41. The practice of having more than one wife at the same time.                                    | —                                    | <b>Polygamy</b>        |       |
| 42. A general pardon of political offenders.   | —                                    | <b>Amnesty</b>         |       |
| 43. Fond of entertaining guests.   | —                                    | <b>Hospitable</b>      |       |
| 44. One who totally abstains from alcoholic drinks.  | —                                    | <b>Teetotaler</b>      |       |
| 45. One who walks on foot.   | —                                    | <b>Pedestrian</b>      |       |
| 46. Taking of one's own life.  | —                                    | <b>Suicide</b>         |       |
| 47. Murder of a king.  | —                                    | <b>Regicide</b>        |       |
| 48. Murder of a new-born infant.   | —                                    | <b>Infanticide</b>     |       |
| 49. Murder of one's own father/mother/brother.   | <b>Patricide/Matricide/Fatricide</b> |                        |       |
| 50. The killing of human beings.   | —                                    | <b>Homicide</b>        |       |
| 51. A child born after the death of his father or a book published after the death of its author.  | —                                    | <b>Posthumous</b>      |       |
| 52. Forbidden, prohibited by law.  | —                                    | <b>Illicit</b>         |       |
| 53. A man whose manners are more like those of a woman.  | —                                    | <b>Effeminate</b>      |       |
| 54. A medicine to counteract the effect of poison.   | —                                    | <b>Antidote</b>        |       |
| 55. A speech made without preparation.   | —                                    | <b>Extempore</b>       |       |
| 56. A language that is no longer spoken.   | —                                    | <b>Dead</b>            |       |
| 57. The word which is no longer in use.  | —                                    | <b>Obsolete</b>        |       |
| 58. The motive merely to get money.  | —                                    | <b>Mercenary</b>       |       |
| 59. Existing for ever — without any beginning or end.  | —                                    | <b>Eternal</b>         |       |
| 60. Subject to death.  | —                                    | <b>Mortal</b>          |       |
| 61. Resulting in death.  | —                                    | <b>Fatal or mortal</b> |       |

|              |  |   |                          |
|--------------|--|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Notes</b> | 62. Property inherited from one's father or ancestors.   | — | <b>Patrimony</b>         |
|              | 63. A paper written by hand.   | — | <b>Manuscript</b>        |
|              | 64. The result of the match where neither party wins.  | — | <b>Draw</b>              |
|              | 65. Animals which give birth to babies and feed them with their milk.  | — | <b>Mammals</b>           |
|              | 66. Method of sending messages without the help of wires.  | — | <b>Wireless or radio</b> |
|              | 67. A place for burial of dead bodies.   | — | <b>Cemetery</b>          |
|              | 68. Counterfeiting of document.  | — | <b>Forgery</b>           |
|              | 69. Of one's own free will.  | — | <b>Voluntary</b>         |
|              | 70. Give tit for tat.  | — | <b>Retaliate</b>         |
|              | 71. The cessation of warfare before a treaty is signed.  | — | <b>Armistice</b>         |
|              | 72. The science of reasoning.  | — | <b>Logic</b>             |
|              | 73. Belonging to all parts of the world.   | — | <b>Universal</b>         |
|              | 74. A figure with many angles or sides.  | — | <b>Polygon</b>           |
|              | 75. An instrument for measuring temperature.   | — | <b>Thermometer</b>       |
|              | 76. Compulsory enlistment for military or other services.  | — | <b>Conscription</b>      |
|              | 77. A place where young plants are reared.   | — | <b>Nursery</b>           |
|              | 78. The absence of government in a country.  | — | <b>Anarchy</b>           |
|              | 79. A state in which the Government is carried on nominally, and also, by the people or their elected representatives without a monarch. | — | <b>Republic</b>          |
|              | 80. Government carried on by an absolute ruler.  | — | <b>Dictatorship</b>      |
|              | 81. Government by the representatives of the people.   | — | <b>Democracy</b>         |
|              | 82. Government by officials.   | — | <b>Bureaucracy</b>       |
|              | 83. An absolute government.  | — | <b>Autocracy</b>         |
|              | 84. The life history of a person written by another.   | — | <b>Biography</b>         |
|              | 85. The life history of a person written by himself.   | — | <b>Autobiography</b>     |
|              | 86. Conferred as an honour, or performed without pay.  | — | <b>Honorary</b>          |
|              | 87. The yearly return of a date.   | — | <b>Anniversary</b>       |
|              | 88. Of unknown or unadmitted authorship.   | — | <b>Anonymous</b>         |
|              | 89. Allowing the passage of rays of light.   | — | <b>Transparent</b>       |
|              | 90. Not allowing the passage of light.   | — | <b>Opaque</b>            |
|              | 91. A substance that kills insects.  | — | <b>Insecticide</b>       |
|              | 92. Occurring at the same time.  | — | <b>Simultaneous</b>      |
|              | 93. An assembly of worshippers.  | — | <b>Congregation</b>      |
|              | 94. An assembly of listeners.  | — | <b>Audience</b>          |
|              | 95. A substance that kills germs.  | — | <b>Germicide</b>         |
|              | 96. A cure for all diseases.   | — | <b>Panacea</b>           |
|              | 97. All of one mind.   | — | <b>Unanimous</b>         |
|              | 98. Contrary to law.   | — | <b>Illegal</b>           |
|              | 99. Not definitely or clearly expressed.   | — | <b>Inexplicit</b>        |
|              | 100. That which cannot be excused.   | — | <b>Inexcusable</b>       |
|              | 101. That which cannot be taken by force of arms.  | — | <b>Impregnable</b>       |
|              | 102. That which cannot be admitted or allowed.   | — | <b>Inadmissible</b>      |
|              | 103. That which cannot be reached.   | — | <b>Inaccessible</b>      |

|  |   |                       | Notes |
|--|---|-----------------------|-------|
| 104. That which cannot be perceived by sense.  | – | <b>Imperceptible</b>  |       |
| 105. That which cannot be destroyed.   | – | <b>Indestructible</b> |       |
| 106. That which cannot be altered or recalled.   | – | <b>Irrevocable</b>    |       |
| 107. That which cannot be dispensed with.  | – | <b>Indispensable</b>  |       |
| 108. That which cannot be burnt.   | – | <b>Incombustible</b>  |       |
| 109. That which cannot be divided.   | – | <b>Indivisible</b>    |       |
| 110. That which cannot be reconciled.  | – | <b>Irreconcilable</b> |       |
| 111. That which cannot be recovered.   | – | <b>Irrevocable</b>    |       |
| 112. That which cannot be seen.  | – | <b>Invisible</b>      |       |
| 113. That which cannot be read.  | – | <b>Illegible</b>      |       |
| 114. That which cannot be heard.   | – | <b>Inaudible</b>      |       |
| 115. That which cannot be conquered.   | – | <b>Invincible</b>     |       |
| 116. That which cannot be wounded.   | – | <b>Invulnerable</b>   |       |
| 117. That which cannot be believed.  | – | <b>Incredible</b>     |       |
| 118. That which can be easily set on fire.   | – | <b>Inflammable</b>    |       |
| 119. That which can not be avoided.  | – | <b>Unavoidable</b>    |       |
| 120. That which cannot be expressed in words.  | – | <b>Inexpressible</b>  |       |
| 121. The only one of its type.   | – | <b>Unique</b>         |       |
| 122. A man who is the head of a monastery or an abbey.   | – | <b>Abbot</b>          |       |
| 123. A form of a word, phrase, etc. that is shorter than the full form.                          | – | <b>Abbreviation</b>   |       |
| 124. A quantity that is more than enough.  | – | <b>Abundance</b>      |       |
| 125. A word formed from the first letters of a group of words.                                   | – | <b>Acronym</b>        |       |
| 126. A public notice offering or asking for goods, services, etc.                                | – | <b>Advertisement</b>  |       |
| 127. Planting areas of land with trees to form a forest.   | – | <b>Afforestation</b>  |       |
| 128. A building without a roof containing rows of seats rising in steps round an open space.     | – | <b>Amphitheatre</b>   |       |
| 129. The loss of ability to feel pain while still conscious.                                     | – | <b>Analgnesia</b>     |       |
| 130. A part of the sea, or of a large lake, enclosed by a wide curve of the shore.               | – | <b>Bay</b>            |       |
| 131. A stretch of sand or stones along the edge of the sea or a lake.                            | – | <b>Beach</b>          |       |
| 132. The driver of a taxi.   | – | <b>Cabby</b>          |       |
| 133. Entertainment provided in a restaurant or club while the customers are eating and drinking. | – | <b>Cabaret</b>        |       |
| 134. A person who draws maps and charts.   | – | <b>Cartographer</b>   |       |
| 135. A person, an animal or a plant that lives, grows or is often found in a particular place.   | – | <b>Denizen</b>        |       |
| 136. The medical study of the skin and its diseases.   | – | <b>Dermatology</b>    |       |
| 137. A shopkeeper selling cloth and clothing.  | – | <b>Draper</b>         |       |
| 138. A sudden serious event or situation requiring immediate action.                             | – | <b>Emergency</b>      |       |
| 139. A false or mistaken belief.   | – | <b>Fallacy</b>        |       |
| 140. A long pole on which a flag is flown.   | – | <b>Flagstaff</b>      |       |
| 141. All the plants of a particular area or period of time.                                      | – | <b>Flora</b>          |       |
| 142. A state of extreme excitement.  | – | <b>Frenzy</b>         |       |

|              |   |   |                     |
|--------------|---|---|---------------------|
| <b>Notes</b> | 143. Injury to the nose, fingers or toes, caused by extreme cold.                           | – | <b>Frostbite</b>    |
|              | 144. A room or building for showing works of art.   | – | <b>Gallery</b>      |
|              | 145. To play games of chance, etc. for money.   | – | <b>Gamble</b>       |
|              | 146. A drug that causes one to hallucinate.   | – | <b>Hallucinogen</b> |
|              | 147. Existing only in the mind.   | – | <b>Imaginary</b>    |
|              | 148. A manager or director of a ballet, a concert, a theatre or an opera company.           | – | <b>Impresario</b>   |
|              | 149. A newspaper or magazine that deals with a particular subject or professional activity. | – | <b>Journal</b>      |
|              | 150. A person sent to teach the Christian religion to people who are ignorant of it.        | – | <b>Missionary</b>   |

### Now Answer the following:

Fill up the blanks in the following sentences using an appropriate one-word substitution for each:

1. Coining a new word is .....
2. .... denotes undue favour to one's relatives.
3. .... is the one who believes in the philosophy that nothing has real existence.
4. .... is the science that treats of coins and medals.
5. .... is a definite system of names, especially in classification.
6. .... is Government by the few.
7. .... is the science regarding the study of birds.
8. .... is the art of spelling words correctly.
9. .... is the science of languages.
10. .... is the doctrine that God is everything and everything is God.
11. The science of diseases is .....
12. .... is the science of dealing with stamp collection.
13. .... is the science of vocal natural sounds.
14. .... is a statement showing remarkable degree of prediction.
15. .... is the study of ancient writings and inscriptions.
16. That which relates to the common people is .....
17. One indifferent to art and literature is .....
18. Artificial rearing of fish is .....
19. Government by the rich is known as .....
20. A literary theft is .....
21. .... is the science regarding principles of classification.
22. .... is the art of preparing and mounting skins of animals in life-like manner.
23. That which relates to a barber or his work is .....
24. .... is the representation on map of natural and artificial features of a town/district, etc.
25. A student who runs away from the class or the school without permission is .....
26. One who easily gives up his party or principles is a .....
27. Happening once in three years is denoted by .....
28. A truth which is often repeated is .....

29. .... is the theory that actions are right because they are useful.
30. An ideal state is called a ..... state.
31. Broadcast report of a public event or news of an invalid's condition is a .....
32. A rule of law which is applicable to the past is .....
33. An appointed place of meeting, specially of troops is .....
34. .... is fear of being enclosed in a small closed space.

Notes

## ANSWERS

- |                 |                   |                    |                    |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. neologism    | 2. Nepotism       | 3. Nihilist        | 4. Numismatics     |
| 5. Nomenclature | 6. Oligarchy      | 7. Ornithology     | 8. Orthography     |
| 9. Philology    | 10. Pantheism     | 11. pathology      | 12. Philately      |
| 13. Phonology   | 14. Prophecy      | 15. Palaeography   | 16. plebian        |
| 17. philistine  | 18. pisciculture  | 19. plutocracy     | 20. plagiarism     |
| 21. spinster    | 22. telepathy     | 23. Taxology       | 23. Taxidermy      |
| 24. tonsorial   | 25. Topography    | 26. truant         | 27. turncoat       |
| 28. triennial   | 29. truism        | 30. Utilitarianism | 31. utopian        |
| 32. bulletin    | 33. retrospective | 34. rendezvous     | 35. Claustrophobia |

**13.2 Review Questions**

In questions given below out of four alternatives, choose the one which can be substituted for the given word/sentence.

- Extreme old age when a man behaves like a fool  
(i) Imbecility (ii) Senility (iii) Dotage (iv) Superannuation
- That which cannot be corrected  
(i) Unintelligible (ii) Indelible (iii) Illegible (iv) Incurable
- The study of ancient societies  
(i) Anthropology (ii) Archaeology (iii) History (iv) Ethnology
- A person of good understanding knowledge and reasoning power  
(i) Expert (ii) Intellectual (iii) Snob (iv) Literate
- A person who insists on something  
(i) Disciplinarian (ii) Stickler (iii) Instantaneous (iv) Boaster
- State in which the few govern the many  
(i) Monarchy (ii) Oligarchy (iii) Plutocracy (iv) Autocracy
- A style in which a writer makes a display of his knowledge  
(i) Pedantic (ii) Verbose (iii) Pompous (iv) Ornate
- List of the business or subjects to be considered at a meeting  
(i) Schedule (ii) Timetable (iii) Agenda (iv) Plan
- Leave or remove from a place considered dangerous  
(i) Evade (ii) Evacuate (iii) Avoid (iv) Exterminate
- A prima facie case is such  
(i) As it seems at first sight (ii) As it is made to seem at first sight  
(iii) As it turns out to be at the end  
(iv) As it seems to the court after a number of hearings



## Notes

11. A person pretending to be somebody he is not  
(i) Magician      (ii) Rogue      (iii) Liar      (iv) Imposter
12. A person who knows many foreign languages  
(i) Linguist      (ii) Grammarian      (iii) Polyglot      (iv) Bilingual
13. One who has little faith in human sincerity and goodness  
(i) Egoist      (ii) Fatalist      (iii) Stoic      (iv) Cynic
14. One who possesses many talents  
(i) Versatile      (ii) Nubile      (iii) Exceptional      (iv) Gifted
15. Words inscribed on tomb  
(i) Epitome      (ii) Epistle      (iii) Epilogue      (iv) Epitaph
16. One who eats everything  
(i) Omnivorous      (ii) Omniscient      (iii) Irrestible      (iv) Insolvent
17. Malafide case is one  
(i) Which is undertaken in a good faith  
(ii) Which is undertaken in a bad faith  
(iii) Which is undertaken after a long delay  
(iv) Which is not undertaken at all
18. The custom or practice of having more than one husband at same time  
(i) Polygyny      (ii) Polyphony      (iii) Polyandry      (iv) Polychromy
19. Tending to move away from the centre or axis  
(i) Centrifugal      (ii) Centripetal      (iii) Axiomatic      (iv) Awry
20. Teetotaler means  
(i) One who abstains from theft      (ii) One who abstains from meat  
(iii) One who abstains from taking wine      (iv) One who abstains from malice
21. A person interested in collecting, studying and selling of old things  
(i) Antiquarian      (ii) Junk-dealer      (iii) Crank      (iv) Archeologist

## ANSWERS

1. (iii) 2. (iv) 3. (ii) 4. (ii) 5. (ii) 6. (ii) 7. (i) 8. (iii) 9. (ii) 10. (i)  
 11. (iv) 12. (i) 13. (iv) 14. (i) 15. (iv) 16. (i) 17. (ii) 18. (iii) 19. (i) 20. (iii)  
 21. (i)

**13.3 Further Readings**

Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 14: Synonyms and Antonyms

### CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

14.1 Synonyms

14.2 Antonyms

14.3 Review Questions

14.4 Further Readings

### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Know Synonyms and Antonyms

### Introduction

Vocabulary is the total number of words in a language. It is the collection of words known to a person or used in a particular books, subject etc. A person's range of a language is known by his vocabulary. Synonyms are the words that are similar or nearly in meaning. A synonym thus, has a literal meaning while its implied meaning may be different.

### 14.1 Synonyms

A Synonym is a word which conveys a meaning similar to the given word. While giving a synonym, a student should always remember that a synonym should be in the same part of speech in which the given word is. For examples,

The correct synonym of envy is jealousy and not jealous because envy and jealousy are nouns while jealous is an adjective.

1. **Adaptation** – conformation, harmonization, synchronization.
2. **Apt** – applicable, germane, appropriate, pertinent.
3. **Adjust** – fit, suit, adapt, accommodate, conform, synchronize, attune.
4. **Accelerate** – intensify, redouble, step up, stimulate, energize,
5. **Add** – sum, total.
6. **All** – aggregate, total, whole, gross, sum.
7. **Accumulation** – agglomeration, conglomeration, aggregation, concentration,
8. **Accuse** – calumniate, slander, malign, denigrate, blacken, tarnish, sully.
9. **Abnormal** – unnatural, aberrant, freakish, eccentric, anomalous.
10. **Apathetic** – unenthusiastic. unambitious, unstimulated, unimpassioned, uninspired, unmoved.
11. **Authoritarian** – masterful, domineering, lordly, bossy, autocratic, dictatorial.
12. **Association** – league, alliance, axis, federation.
13. **Abandon** – desertion, defection, secession, withdrawal.
14. **Breeze** – zephyr, gale, wind.

|       |                   |   |
|-------|-------------------|---|
| Notes | 15. Beseech       | – appeal, implore, crave, beg.  |
|       | 16. Beauty        | – elegance, grace, charm, attractiveness.                                 |
|       | 17. Babble        | – nonsense, bombast, jargon.  |
|       | 18. Bandit        | – robber, plagiarist.   |
|       | 19. Bashful       | – reserve, shy, coy, demure.  |
|       | 20. Bemoan        | – lament, mourn, grieve, weep over.                                       |
|       | 21. Booty         | – spoil, plunder, prey.   |
|       | 22. Burnished     | – polished, sleek, glossy.  |
|       | 23. Circumstance  | – factor, situation, condition.   |
|       | 24. Copy          | – reproduction, replica, facsimile, tracing, transcription, impression.   |
|       | 25. Compensatory  | – compensating, countervailing, balancing.                                |
|       | 26. Connect       | – attach, annex, tag, clip, contact.                                      |
|       | 27. Continuity    | – cohesion, connectedness, tenaciousness.                                 |
|       | 28. Comprehensive | – omnibus, encyclopaedic, all-embracing, full-length.                     |
|       | 29. Constitute    | – compose, form, make, construct, organise, build.                        |
|       | 30. Complex       | – intricate, complicated, mazy, winding.                                  |
|       | 31. Curial        | – judicial, inquisitorial.  |
|       | 32. Caress        | – love, fondle, dandle, pat, hug.   |
|       | 33. Contend       | – combat, strive, struggle, fight, campaign, tussle, wrestle, grapple.    |
|       | 34. Co-operation  | – reciprocity, sympathy, co-existence, league, amity, compatibility.      |
|       | 35. Cajole        | – flatter, wheedle, inveigle.   |
|       | 36. Celibacy      | – bachelorhood, chastity.   |
|       | 37. Cling         | – stick, adhere, hug.   |
|       | 38. Calamity      | – disaster, affliction, distress.   |
|       | 39. Cheerless     | – dejected, gloomy, mournful, sad.  |
|       | 40. Competent     | – capable, learned, efficient, clever.                                    |
|       | 41. Degree        | – proportion, ratio, scale.   |
|       | 42. Disjoin       | – disunite, dissociate, divorce, part, sever, disconnect, unplug.         |
|       | 43. Disorder      | – incoordination, muddle, chaos, anarchy.                                 |
|       | 44. Disclose      | – reveal, expose, unveil, unfold.   |
|       | 45. Dislike       | – repugnance, detestation, loathing, abhorrence, disfavour, disaffection. |
|       | 46. Degrading     | – lowering, demeaning, ignominious, derogatory.                           |
|       | 47. Dangerous     | – dreadful, fearsome, awesome.  |
|       | 48. Defiant       | – proud, provocative, bellicose, militant, disobedient                    |
|       | 49. Disfigure     | – deform, cripple, maim, deface.  |
|       | 50. Damn          | – curse, swear, scold, denounce.  |
|       | 51. Dandy         | – coxcomb, puppy, man about town.   |
|       | 52. Deceit        | – fraud, bluff, guile, knavery.   |
|       | 53. Deity         | – omnipotence, providence, God.   |
|       | 54. Demise        | – death, decease, eternal rest, expiry.                                   |
|       | 55. Devoid        | – release, exempt from, immune from, empty.                               |
|       | 56. Existence     | – life, being, absoluteness.  |
|       | 57. Ethnic        | – racial, tribal, phyletic, clannish.                                     |

|                    |   | Notes  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| 58. Equilibrium    | – | equipoise, balance, steadiness, poise.                                 |
| 59. Extensive      | – | far-ranging, far-flying, far-reaching, far-stretching, vast.           |
| 60. Enormous       | – | immense, vast, colossal, monumental.                                   |
| 61. Ending         | – | final, terminal, last, ultimate, extreme, polar, conclusive, crowning. |
| 62. Ecclesiastical | – | ecclesiastic, churchly, theocratic, heavenly.                          |
| 63. Endorse        | – | legislate, pass, enact, ordain, en-force, agree.                       |
| 64. Enrage         | – | upset, discompose, ruffle, irritate, annoy, vex, anger.                |
| 65. Erotic         | – | aphrodisiac, erotogenic, amatory.                                      |
| 66. Excellent      | – | overwhelming, awesome, awe-inspiring, breath-taking.                   |
| 67. Enchant        | – | fascinate, bewitch, captivate, enrapture.                              |
| 68. Earnest        | – | serious, solemn, impressive.   |
| 69. Elevation      | – | eminence, loftiness, sublimity, height, zenith, culmination.           |
| 70. Eccentricity   | – | informality, anomaly, peculiarity, exception.                          |
| 71. Effulgence     | – | arrogance, haughtiness, shamelessness.                                 |
| 72. Extempore      | – | at once, on the spur of the moment.                                    |
| 73. Fragmentary    | – | broken, brashy, crumbly, in bits, in pieces.                           |
| 74. Foreigner      | – | alien, stranger, outlandish, expatriate.                               |
| 75. First          | – | initial, maiden, starting, natal, original.                            |
| 76. Forgiving      | – | placable, condoning, unresentful, forbearing.                          |
| 77. Flatterer      | – | sycophant, sponger, hanger-on.   |
| 78. Feelingly      | – | unctuously, earnestly, devoutly, sincerely.                            |
| 79. Fervent        | – | fervid, passionate, intense, earnest, impassioned.                     |
| 80. Fatigue        | – | overtax, extort, suck, squeeze, grind, tiredness, exhaust              |
| 81. Fat            | – | stout, plump, obese, chubby.   |
| 82. Frigid         | – | cold, chilly, biting, nipping, shivering.                              |
| 83. Fructify       | – | generate, impregnate, multiply.  |
| 84. Fame           | – | reputation, glory, renown.   |
| 85. Feeble         | – | frail, languid, faint, weak.   |
| 86. Fickle         | – | changeable, wavering, irresolute, unsteady, amenable.                  |
| 87. Fraud          | – | imposture, impostor, deception. duplicity.                             |
| 88. Greatness      | – | largeness, bigness, vastness, gigantism, enormousness.                 |
| 89. Group          | – | constellation, galaxy, cluster, bevy, flock, team.                     |
| 90. Generalise     | – | broaden, widen, universalise.  |
| 91. Gluttony       | – | greediness, rapacity, insatiability, voracity, gulosity.               |
| 92. Grave          | – | serious, sober, solemn, sedate, staid, demure, stern.                  |
| 93. Given          | – | bestowed, gifted, gratuitous, gratis.                                  |
| 94. Gab            | – | jabber, chatter, prattle, twaddle.                                     |
| 95. Gesticulate    | – | wink, nod, beck, nudge, gesture,                                       |
| 96. Grasp          | – | hold, seize, snatch, grip, grab.                                       |
| 97. Generous       | – | liberal, bountiful, magnanimous.                                       |
| 98. Gratitude      | – | thankfulness, gratefulness, indebtedness.                              |
| 99. Hymn           | – | song, religious lyric, psalm, anthem, paeon.                           |
| 100. Heathen       | – | amoralist, materialist, worldling, rude, barbarous.                    |

|       |                    |   |  |
|-------|--------------------|---|--|
| Notes | 101. Hypocritical  | – | traitorous, treasonous, disloyal.  |
|       | 102. Hard          | – | harsh, rigorous, intolerant, severe, cruel, difficult.   |
|       | 103. Humbled       | – | unimportant, withered, tarnished.  |
|       | 104. Hire          | – | rent, lease, charter.  |
|       | 105. Hindrance     | – | impediment, obstruction, restriction, hampering, barrier.  |
|       | 106. Hallucination | – | delusion, illusion, dream.   |
|       | 107. Hoodwink      | – | mystify, puzzle, deceive, lead astray.   |
|       | 108. Handsome      | – | beautiful, graceful, elegant, exquisite.   |
|       | 109. Henpecked     | – | enslaved, under one's thumb, tied to one's apron string.   |
|       | 110. Heap          | – | pile, gather, collect, board, store.   |
|       | 111. Harass        | – | trouble, afflict, inflict.   |
|       | 112. Imitate       | – | ape, parrot, flatter, echo, mirror, reflect.   |
|       | 113. Inaptitude    | – | unfitness, incapacity, incompetence.   |
|       | 114. Innocent      | – | blameless, sinless, guiltless.   |
|       | 115. Intact        | – | untouched, unaffected, unbroken, unimpaired, unabridged.   |
|       | 116. Illegal       | – | illegitimate, illicit, contraband, impermissible.  |
|       | 117. Indict        | – | impeach, arraign, complain, charge, convict.   |
|       | 118. Insolence     | – | hubris, arrogance, naughtiness, loftiness.   |
|       | 119. Inimical      | – | unfriendly, loveless, unsympathetic, disenchanting.  |
|       | 120. Intolerable   | – | insufferable, impossible, unendurable, unbearable, extreme.                                      |
|       | 121. Join          | – | conjoin, yoke, hyphenate, assemble, unite.   |
|       | 122. Jolly         | – | merry, jubilant, lively, festive, gay, jovial, mirthful, hilarious, joyous.                      |
|       | 123. Justice       | – | impartiality, equity, fairness, right, integrity, justness.                                      |
|       | 124. Kinship       | – | relationship, alliance, ties of blood.   |
|       | 125. Keen          | – | sharp, acute, penetrating, eager.  |
|       | 126. Kill          | – | murder, assassinate, destroy, slay, massacre, butcher, slaughter.                                |
|       | 127. Knowledge     | – | scholarship, erudition, learning, attainments, education, acquirements.                          |
|       | 128. Lifelike      | – | realistic, photographic, exact, verisimilitude, natural.   |
|       | 129. Large         | – | substantial, considerable, sizeable, bulky, massy, massive.                                      |
|       | 130. Lenient       | – | gentle, tender, squeamish, placable, unhardened, tolerant, mild.                                 |
|       | 131. Lax           | – | loose, slack, disorganized.  |
|       | 132. Mismatch      | – | mismatch, misadapt, misfit, miscast.   |
|       | 133. Middle class  | – | bourgeois, black-coat worker, white-collar worker.   |
|       | 134. Mixture       | – | mingling, blending, harmonization, interpolation.  |
|       | 135. Modesty       | – | lowliness, unpretentiousness, meekness, resignation, self-depreciation, self-effacement, humble. |
|       | 136. Miscarry      | – | abort, misfire, fizzle out, crash.   |
|       | 137. Native        | – | indigenous, original, inbred, real primitive, intrinsic.   |
|       | 138. Natural       | – | normal, usual, consistent, regular, inevitable.  |
|       | 139. Necessary     | – | needful, indispensable, expedient, requisite, essential, unavoidable, inevitable.                |
|       | 140. Neighbouring  | – | adjacent, near to, contiguous, bordering, close to, proximate.                                   |
|       | 141. Nervous       | – | timorous, shaky, timid, hesitant.  |

|                  |   | Notes |
|------------------|---|-------|
| 142. Noble       | – stately, dignified, magnanimous, elevated, exalted, lordly                  |       |
| 143. Overstep    | – exceed, pass, surpass, overtrump, outshine, eclipse, overshadow.            |       |
| 144. Orderless   | – disordered, disorganised, jumbled, in disarray.                             |       |
| 145. Occultist   | – mystic, transcendentalist, esoteric, theosophist, spiritualist, alchemist.  |       |
| 146. Offender    | – villain, scoundrel, crook, imposter.  |       |
| 147. Ornamental  | – decorative, fancy, glamorous, picturesque, quaint.                          |       |
| 148. Oppress     | – tyrannize, overawe, intimidate, terrorize.                                  |       |
| 149. Obstruct    | – shield, hinder, armour, fortify.  |       |
| 150. Opposition  | – disharmony, dissonance, jar, recrimination, bickering, friction, hostility. |       |
| 151. Opponent    | – opposer, adversary, antagonist.   |       |
| 152. Plenitude   | – fullness, maximum, saturation, abundance.                                   |       |
| 153. Precursor   | – predecessor, ancestor, forbear.   |       |
| 154. Profane     | – unholy, unsanctified, sacrilegious, God-forsaken, infidel, pagan, gentile.  |       |
| 155. Pietistic   | – fervent, seraphic, inspired, austere.                                       |       |
| 156. Plebeian    | – common, simple, untitled, ignoble.  |       |
| 157. Promote     | – help, raise, exhort, advocate, elevate.                                     |       |
| 158. Patience    | – forbearance, endurance, tolerance, sufferance.                              |       |
| 159. Prodigal    | – spender, waster, spendthrift, squanderer.                                   |       |
| 160. Quantify    | – allot, rate, ration.  |       |
| 161. Quake       | – shake, tremble, quiver, shiver, shudder, stutter.                           |       |
| 162. Queer       | – eccentric, abnormal, strange, whimsical, wayward, odd, quaint, peculiar.    |       |
| 163. Relation    | – reference, respect, regard, rapport.  |       |
| 164. Referral    | – allusion, mention, citation, quotation.                                     |       |
| 165. Remainder   | – residue, residuals, result, left over.                                      |       |
| 166. Ritualistic | – ceremonious, formalistic, sabbatarian, liturgical.                          |       |
| 167. Repentant   | – contrite, remorseful, regretful, apologetic, sorry.                         |       |
| 168. Ridiculous  | – sardonic, derisive, sarcastic, ironical, quizzical.                         |       |
| 169. Relinquish  | – retire, disclaim, surrender.  |       |
| 170. Retaliatory | – retaliative, retributive, revengeful.                                       |       |
| 171. Repulsive   | – ugly, repelling, odious, revolting, offensive, loathsome.                   |       |
| 172. Renounce    | – abandon, discard, leave, abdicate.  |       |
| 173. Rumour      | – hearsay, scandal.   |       |
| 174. Similarity  | – resemblance, likeness, similitude, semblance.                               |       |
| 175. Superiority | – sublimity, transcendence, loftiness.  |       |
| 176. Shortening  | – severance, detraction, amputation, excision, curtailing.                    |       |
| 177. Suitable    | – appropriate, eligible, relevant, befitting, convenient.                     |       |
| 178. Scission    | – section, cleavage, division, dichotomy.                                     |       |
| 179. Sequent     | – following, succeeding, incoming ensuing, next.                              |       |
| 180. Sort        | – type, variety, kind.  |       |
| 181. Sorcery     | – witchery, spellbinding, magic, wizardry.                                    |       |
| 182. Sensual     | – earthly, gross, unspiritual.  |       |
| 183. Selfish     | – ego-centric, egoistic, self-absorbed, narcissistic.                         |       |

|       |                  |  |
|-------|------------------|--|
| Notes | 184. Secluded    | – private, sequestered, retired, hidden, buried.   |
|       | 185. Stimulate   | – provoke, urge, instigate, incite.  |
|       | 186. Spontaneous | – instinctive, unrestricted, natural, unchecked.   |
|       | 187. Suppress    | – check, impede, restrain, bridle.   |
|       | 188. Temperament | – temper, humour, disposition, mood, spirit.   |
|       | 189. Turmoil     | – turbulence, tumult, frenzy, storm, upheavel, convulsion.                               |
|       | 190. Terminate   | – conclude, close, determinate, finish, consummate.                                      |
|       | 191. Trustworthy | – reliable, dependable, trusty, faithful, loyal.   |
|       | 192. Unfair      | – unjust, wrongful, dishonest, partial, dishonourable.                                   |
|       | 193. Urge        | – spur, incite, prompt, impel, goad, stimulate, drive, force.                            |
|       | 194. Use         | – exercise, employ, utilise, practise.   |
|       | 195. Unconcerned | – apathetic, indifferent, cool, disinterested.   |
|       | 196. Vice        | – fault, demerit, infirmity, frailty, foible.  |
|       | 197. Virtuous    | – law-abiding, honest, scrupulous, principled, soul-searching, incorruptible, stainless. |
|       | 198. Value       | – appreciate, prize, esteem, treasure.   |
|       | 199. Vacant      | – empty, unoccupied, void, unfulfilled, exhausted.                                       |
|       | 200. Weighty     | – ample, voluminous, capacious.  |
|       | 201. Whole       | – total, universal, holistic, integral.  |
|       | 202. Worship     | – honour, revere, venerate, adore.   |
|       | 203. Wicked      | – bad, unvirtuous, immoral.  |
|       | 204. Wooing      | – courting, spooning, flirting.  |
|       | 205. Wonderful   | – wondrous, marvellous, miraculous, phenomenal, stupendous.                              |
|       | 206. Warlike     | – militaristic, bellicose, aggressive, combative, unpacific, chaotic.                    |
|       | 207. Wealth      | – riches, abundance, fortune, plenty.  |
|       | 208. Warmth      | – fervour, ardour, affection.  |
|       | 209. Yield       | – forego, surrender, concede.  |
|       | 210. Zenith      | – summit, acme, pinnacle, culmination, height, top, apex, climax.                        |
|       | 211. Zero        | – nought, nil, nothing, cipher.  |

### Synonyms (Objective Multiple Choice Type)

Directions : Choose the word from among the four options (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) which is nearest in meaning to the given word.

#### 1. Abject

- (i) cast away                      (ii) mean                      (iii) worthless                      (iv) grovelling

#### 2. Absolve

- (i) to set free                      (ii) to pardon                      (iii) to acquit                      (iv) to accomplish

#### 3. Absonant

- (i) discordant                      (ii) absurd                      (iii) unnatural                      (iv) contrary to reason

#### 4. Abstract

- (i) to draw away                      (ii) to separate  
(iii) to remove quietly                      (iv) a thing existing only in India

#### 5. Acclimatize

- (i) announce                      (ii) accustom                      (iii) approve                      (iv) make tall claims

- 6. Accrue**  
 (i) to keep hold of (ii) to overcome (iii) to obtain secretly (iv) to accumulate
- 7. Acme**  
 (i) the top (ii) highest point (iii) the culmination (iv) zenith
- 8. Acquiesce**  
 (i) to rest satisfied (ii) not making any opposition to a situation  
 (iii) to assent (iv) quiet submission
- 9. Accumulate**  
 (i) overcome (ii) spread (iii) collect (iv) disperse
- 10. Accurate**  
 (i) apprehend (ii) guess (iii) improve (iv) exact
- 11. Addiction**  
 (i) remainder (ii) long discourse (iii) total (iv) slavish habit
- 12. Admonish**  
 (i) to warn (ii) to reproof (iii) to counsel (iv) to advise
- 13. Adumbrate**  
 (i) to give a faint shadow of (ii) to shadow forth  
 (iii) to fore-shadow (iv) to over shadow
- 14. Adulation**  
 (i) fawning (ii) praise (iii) embarrassment (iv) veneration
- 15. Adversary**  
 (i) companion (ii) accomplice (iii) opponent (iv) partner
- 16. Agrarian**  
 (i) relating to land (ii) conserving the management of land  
 (iii) land distribution (iv) cultivation of land
- 17. Alight**  
 (i) to dismount (ii) to descend (iii) to perch (iv) to settle
- 18. Alleviate**  
 (i) to dilute (ii) to lessen (iii) to humiliate (iv) to make excuses
- 19. Ameliorate**  
 (i) to appease (ii) to make endurable  
 (iii) to humiliate (iv) to release
- 20. Ambient**  
 (i) going round (ii) surrounding  
 (iii) that which encompasses (iv) the air or sky
- 21. Ample**  
 (i) unlimited (ii) extravagant (iii) abundant (iv) scanty
- 22. Amnesty**  
 (i) approval (ii) acquittal (iii) eloquence (iv) general pardon.
- 23. Annulment**  
 (i) ignorance (ii) boredom (iii) abolition (iv) numbness
- 24. Annihilate**  
 (i) to reduce (ii) to put out of existence  
 (iii) to crush by word (iv) to wither by look



## Notes

**25. Anomaly**

- (i) irregularity (ii) deviation from the rule  
 (iii) incongruous (iv) an oddity

**26. Averruncate**

- (i) to ward off (ii) to uproot (iii) to avert (iv) to weed out

**27. Axiom**

- (i) a self-evident truth (ii) universal principle  
 (iii) a postulate assumption (iv) true worth

**28. Banal**

- (i) hostile (ii) commonplace (iii) forbidden (iv) genial

**29. Baffle**

- (i) annoy (ii) irritate (iii) puzzle (iv) destroy

**30. Balm**

- (i) consolation (ii) painful (iii) soft (iv) cool

**31. Barbarous**

- (i) quarrelsome (ii) savage (iii) rough (iv) civilized

**32. Beguile**

- (i) benefit (ii) betray (iii) deceive (iv) beware

**33. Beleaguer**

- (i) blacken (ii) besiege (iii) bereft (iv) surrender

**34. Benign**

- (i) radiant (ii) religious (iii) kindly (iv) hopeful

**35. Benevolence**

- (i) active kindness (ii) troublesome (iii) honesty (iv) respectful

**36. Beseech**

- (i) deceive (ii) entreat (iii) advise (iv) betray

**37. Berserk**

- (i) clever (ii) happy  
 (iii) noisy (iv) uncontrollably wild

**38. Congenial**

- (i) kindred spirit (ii) cold  
 (iii) existing at or from birth (iv) weak in character

**39. Concomitant**

- (i) the which accompanies or attends (ii) agreeable friend  
 (iii) contestant (iv) collaborator

**40. Contour**

- (i) rout (ii) appearance (iii) outline (iv) frame

**41. Cogitate**

- (i) to turn a thing over in one's mind (ii) to meditate  
 (iii) to ponder (iv) to think deeply

**42. Cognition**

- (i) knowledge (ii) apprehension  
 (iii) knowing in the widest sense (iv) to be conscious of

- Notes**
- 43. Commodious**  
 (i) suitable            (ii) convenient            (iii) roomy            (iv) spacious
- 44. Complaisant**  
 (i) desirous of pleasing            (ii) obliging  
 (iii) facile            (iv) ready to condone
- 45. Compunction**  
 (i) guilt            (ii) pricking of conscience  
 (iii) remorse            (iv) regret tinged with pity
- 46. Concur**  
 (i) to run together            (ii) to meet on one point  
 (iii) to coincide            (iv) to act together
- 47. Confound**  
 (i) to overthrow            (ii) to confuse  
 (iii) to throw into disorder            (iv) to defeat in argument
- 48. Consecrate**  
 (i) to render holy            (ii) venerable            (iii) hallowed            (iv) devoted
- 49. Contingent**  
 (i) dependent on something else            (ii) liable  
 (iii) not certain to happen            (iv) accidental
- 50. Contraband**  
 (i) excluded by law            (ii) prohibited            (iii) illegal traffic            (iv) smuggled goods
- 51. Corollary**  
 (i) an easy inference            (ii) a consequence            (iii) result            (iv) a supplement
- 52. Corroborate**  
 (i) to confirm            (ii) to make certain            (iii) to ascertain            (iv) to ensure
- 53. Craven**  
 (i) cowardly            (ii) a spiritless fellow  
 (iii) to surrender            (iv) one who gives in without a fight
- 54. Daunt**  
 (i) discourage            (ii) disable            (iii) terrify            (iv) tackle
- 55. Dank**  
 (i) damp            (ii) dark            (iii) gloomy            (iv) ill
- 56. Dastard**  
 (i) a coward  
 (ii) one who does a brutal act without giving his victim a chance  
 (iii) shrinking from danger            (iv) lack of courage
- 57. Diatribe**  
 (i) variety            (ii) bitter and violent attack in words  
 (iii) confusing            (iv) rubbish
- 58. Dirge**  
 (i) prophecy            (ii) music of mourning  
 (iii) curfew            (iv) scarcity

## Notes

**59. Disparate**

(i) radically different (ii) discouraged (iii) reckless (iv) stingy

**60. Discourse**

(i) conversation (ii) reasoning faculty  
(iii) a treatise (iv) a process of combat

**61. Dissimulate**

(i) to pretend (ii) to conceal (iii) to disguise (iv) to dissemble

**62. Dogmatic**

(i) angry (ii) powerful  
(iii) vicious (iv) excessively opinionated

**63. Doughty**

(i) strong and able (ii) coarse (iii) foolish (iv) impudent

**64. Dubious**

(i) treacherous (ii) doubtful (iii) demanding (iv) delighted

**65. Duress**

(i) stress (ii) pressure (iii) threat (iv) risk

**66. Drivel**

(i) to slaver like a child (ii) to be foolish  
(iii) to speak like an idiot (iv) to talk nonsense

**67. Ecstasy**

(i) a state of temporary mental alienation (ii) altered or diminished consciousness  
(iii) excessive joy (iv) exalted feeling

**68. Edifice**

(i) pride (ii) imposing building  
(iii) strength (iv) beauty

**69. Edacious**

(i) given to eating (ii) gluttonous (iii) fond of eating (iv) greedy for food

**70. Effeminate**

(i) womanish (ii) unmanly (iii) weak (iv) voluptuous

**71. Effete**

(i) exhausted (ii) degenerate (iii) decadent (iv) become barren

**72. Impetus**

(i) courage (ii) impatience (iii) arrogance (iv) driving energy

**73. Impeach**

(i) accuse (ii) to remove from office  
(iii) to slander (iv) to put in jail

**74. Impasse**

(i) unpassable (ii) insurmountable (iii) hurdle (iv) deadlock

**75. Incense**

(i) to worship (ii) to enrage (iii) to stimulate (iv) to inhale

**76. Infringe**

(i) to encroach (ii) to surround (iii) to decorate (iv) to limit

|                        | Notes                          |                     |                                  |                   |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>77. Ingenuous</b>   | (i) skillful                   | (ii) intelligent    | (iii) artless                    | (iv) genius       |
| <b>78. Inexorable</b>  | (i) angry                      | (ii) liable         | (iii) exit                       | (iv) relentless   |
| <b>79. Inquisition</b> | (i) punishment                 |                     | (ii) long speech                 |                   |
|                        | (iii) thorough investigation   |                     | (iv) curiosity                   |                   |
| <b>80. Invidious</b>   | (i) deceptive                  | (ii) malicious      | (iii) hypercritical              | (iv) stealthy     |
| <b>81. Insinuate</b>   | (i) pierce                     | (ii) sinful         | (iii) suggest                    | (iv) low          |
| <b>82. Incubus</b>     | (i) interior                   | (ii) nightmare      | (iii) apparatus                  | (iv) imposing     |
| <b>83. Inordinate</b>  | (i) unruly                     | (ii) disorderly     | (iii) excessive                  | (iv) elusive      |
| <b>84. Inscrutable</b> | (i) mysterious                 | (ii) insurmountable | (iii) dull                       | (iv) impenetrable |
| <b>85. Instigate</b>   | (i) involve                    | (ii) interpret      | (iii) unhinge                    | (iv) incite       |
| <b>86. Intimidate</b>  | (i) mislead                    | (ii) misplace       | (iii) frighten                   | (iv) demoralize   |
| <b>87. Jubilant</b>    | (i) joyful                     | (ii) excited        | (iii) triumphant                 | (iv) enticing     |
| <b>88. Usurp</b>       | (i) acquire                    | (ii) achieve        | (iii) acquire wrongfully         | (iv) capture      |
| <b>89. Vacillate</b>   | (i) waver                      |                     | (ii) to shake violently          |                   |
|                        | (iii) to feel elated           |                     | (iv) to lose control             |                   |
| <b>90. Vanquish</b>    | (i) threaten                   | (ii) terrify        | (iii) defeat                     | (iv) deceive      |
| <b>91. Venerate</b>    | (i) regard suspiciously        |                     | (ii) regard humorously           |                   |
|                        | (iii) regard with deep respect |                     | (iv) worship                     |                   |
| <b>92. Waft</b>        | (i) to dream                   |                     | (ii) to move gracefully          |                   |
|                        | (iii) to pass by               |                     | (iv) to convey by floating       |                   |
| <b>93. Wrought</b>     | (i) made or fashioned          |                     | (ii) broken                      |                   |
|                        | (iii) complicated              |                     | (iv) strengthened                |                   |
| <b>94. Wreak</b>       | (i) to twist                   |                     | (ii) to emit an unpleasant odour |                   |
|                        | (iii) to inflict               |                     | (iv) to sweat                    |                   |
| <b>95. Yokel</b>       | (i) horn                       | (ii) plough         | (iii) rustic                     | (iv) devoid       |

## Notes

96. **Yonder**  
 (i) past (ii) over there (iii) beyond (iv) after
97. **Zap**  
 (i) guild (ii) mourn (iii) mystify (iv) defeat
98. **Zeal**  
 (i) enthusiasm (ii) lukewarm (iii) unwilling (iv) pleasure
99. **Zenith**  
 (i) low (ii) depth (iii) highest point (iv) defeat
100. **Zest**  
 (i) energy (ii) weakness (iii) gain (iv) gusto

## ANSWERS

1. (iii) 2. (i) 3. (ii) 4. (i) 5. (ii) 6. (iv) 7. (iv) 8. (iv) 9. (iii) 10. (iv)  
 11. (iv) 12. (i) 13. (ii) 14. (i) 15. (iii) 16. (i) 17. (ii) 18. (ii) 19. (ii) 20. (ii)  
 21. (iii) 22. (iv) 23. (iii) 24. (ii) 25. (i) 26. (i) 27. (i) 28. (ii) 29. (iii) 30. (i)  
 31. (ii) 32. (iii) 33. (ii) 34. (iii) 35. (i) 36. (ii) 37. (iv) 38. (i) 39. (i) 40. (iii)  
 41. (ii) 42. (iii) 43. (i) 44. (i) 45. (ii) 46. (iii) 47. (i) 48. (i) 49. (iv) 50. (iv)  
 51. (ii) 52. (i) 53. (i) 54. (i) 55. (i) 56. (i) 57. (ii) 58. (ii) 59. (ii) 60. (i)  
 61. (i) 62. (iv) 63. (iv) 64. (i) 65. (ii) 66. (iii) 67. (iv) 68. (iv) 69. (ii) 70. (ii)  
 71. (i) 72. (i) 73. (iv) 74. (i) 75. (iv) 76. (ii) 77. (i) 78. (iii) 79. (iv) 80. (iii)  
 81. (ii) 82. (iii) 83. (ii) 84. (iii) 85. (i) 86. (iv) 87. (iii) 88. (i) 89. (iii) 90. (i)  
 91. (iii) 92. (iii) 93. (iv) 94. (i) 95. (iii) 96. (iii) 97. (ii) 98. (iv) 99. (i) 100. (iii)

**14.2 Antonyms**

An antonym is often defined as a word that is contrary in meaning to another; Hot is the antonym of cold. Remember that an antonym must be in the same part of speech in which the given word is.

Also the answer should be in the same tense form in which the key-word is. The correct answer is that which is similar in voice to the key-word.

**Examples**

The correct antonym of Fidelity is disloyalty and not disloyal because fidelity and disloyalty are in the same part of speech the noun while disloyal is the adjective.

1. **Adapt** – differ, misfit, disagree, irregularise.
2. **Admiration** – hate, condemnation.
3. **Ample** – meagre, scanty, insufficient, limited.
4. **Amuse** – annoy, tire, bore.
5. **Atrocious** – noble, excellent, worthy, laudable.
6. **Attract** – reject, repulse, repel, rebuff.
7. **Awareness** – ignorance, innocence, foolishness.
8. **Awake** – dormant, asleep, latent, slumbering.
9. **Backward** – forward, advance, onward, prompt.
10. **Beautiful** – loathsome, horrible, ugly.
11. **Before** – after, subsequently, succeeding.
12. **Beg** – challenge, claim, demand, contend.
13. **Belief** – disbelief, suspicion, misgiving, distrust.

|                 |  | Notes |
|-----------------|--|-------|
| 14. Benevolence | – malice, venom, enmity, hatred.               |       |
| 15. Beseech     | – challenge, insist, demand, contend.          |       |
| 16. Bewilder    | – illuminate, edify, enlighten.                |       |
| 17. Bitter      | – mellow, genial, sugary, sweet.               |       |
| 18. Blame       | – extol, praise, applaud, compliment.          |       |
| 19. Bliss       | – sorrow, affliction, woe, distress.           |       |
| 20. Bold        | – fearful, diffident, timid, afraid.           |       |
| 21. Breed       | – annihilate, murder, destroy, kill.           |       |
| 22. Brutal      | – humane, tender, compassionate, merciful.     |       |
| 23. Bright      | – opaque, cloudy, dull, tarnished.             |       |
| 24. Brief       | – diffuse, verbose, long, detailed.            |       |
| 25. Busy        | – inactive, indolent, lazy, idle.              |       |
| 26. Calamity    | – fortune, peace, happiness, joy.              |       |
| 27. Calm        | – excite, perturb, agitate, disturb.           |       |
| 28. Cancel      | – confirm, establish, endorse, ratify.         |       |
| 29. Careless    | – cautious, thoughtful, vigilant, attentive.   |       |
| 31. Confide     | – suspect, doubt, apprehend, distrust.         |       |
| 32. Dainty      | – coarse, vulgar, crude, rough.                |       |
| 33. Decide      | – hesitate, vacillate, waver, falter.          |       |
| 34. Defeat      | – triumph, vanquish, prevail, win.             |       |
| 35. Delicacy    | – roughness, robustness, crudeness, heaviness. |       |
| 36. Delight     | – grief, anguish, displeasure, sorrow.         |       |
| 37. Deny        | – verify, confirm, comply, endorse.            |       |
| 38. Desire      | – detest, hate, despite, loathe.               |       |
| 39. Deviate     | – abide, persist, converge, perpetuate.        |       |
| 40. Diligent    | – idle, slack, slothful, lazy.                 |       |
| 41. Disclose    | – conceal, veil, cloak, suppress.              |       |
| 42. Disgust     | – please, delight, charm, gratify.             |       |
| 43. Dishonest   | – reliable, just, fair, trustworthy.           |       |
| 44. Dispute     | – consent, comply, agree, accede.              |       |
| 45. Dutiful     | – defiant, seditious, rebellious.              |       |
| 46. Enchanted   | – disgusted, repulsed, nauseated.              |       |
| 47. Encourage   | – discourage, depress, dishearten.             |       |
| 48. Endanger    | – protect, defend, shield, safeguard.          |       |
| 49. Entice      | – rebuff, repel, defer, repulse.               |       |
| 50. Error       | – accuracy, verify, exactitude.                |       |
| 51. Hesitate    | – decide, resolve, settle, determine.          |       |
| 52. Horrible    | – agreeable, pleasant, delightful, charming.   |       |
| 53. Humble      | – vain, proud, brazen, immodest.               |       |
| 54. Ignorant    | – cultured, educated, literate, knowledgeable. |       |
| 55. Impartial   | – partial, biased, unjust, unfair.             |       |
| 56. Impede      | – expedite, hasten, quicken, urge.             |       |
| 57. Impulsive   | – cautious, heedful, thoughtful, wary.         |       |
| 58. Innocent    | – wicked, guilty, criminal, culpable.          |       |

|       |               |  |
|-------|---------------|--|
| Notes | 59. Irritate  | – calm, appease, soothe, pacify.             |
|       | 60. Jolly     | – gloomy, dismal, unhappy, sad.              |
|       | 61. Just      | – unfair, partial, biased, prejudiced.       |
|       | 62. Kind      | – cruel, hard, callous, harsh.               |
|       | 63. Kill      | – create, produce, originate.                |
|       | 64. Lasting   | – transient, transitory, evanescent.         |
|       | 65. Lead      | – mislead, misguide, misdirect, deceive.     |
|       | 66. Liberty   | – service, bondage, submission, slavery.     |
|       | 67. Loyalty   | – disloyalty, perfidy, treachery.            |
|       | 68. Majestic  | – insignificant, paltry, abject.             |
|       | 69. Malice    | – charity, benevolence, humanity.            |
|       | 70. Mild      | – savage, wild, fierce, ferocious.           |
|       | 71. Miserable | – joyous, happy, cheerful, blissful.         |
|       | 72. Modern    | – old, ancient, obsolete, primitive.         |
|       | 73. Modest    | – arrogant, haughty, proud, disdainful.      |
|       | 74. Muscular  | – feeble, weak, frail, infirm.               |
|       | 75. Narrow    | – wide, spacious, broad, extensive.          |
|       | 76. Neat      | – untidy, disorderly, slovenly, unkempt.     |
|       | 77. Nervous   | – bold, fearless, valiant, undaunted.        |
|       | 78. Noisy     | – peaceful, quiet, placid.                   |
|       | 79. Notorious | – reputable, famous, noted.                  |
|       | 80. Precious  | – cheap, useless.                            |
|       | 82. Preserve  | – destroy, demolish, eradicate, desolate.    |
|       | 83. Pretty    | – ugly, loathsome, uncomely.                 |
|       | 84. Prevent   | – help, assist, aid, abet.                   |
|       | 85. Pride     | – modesty, humility, humbleness.             |
|       | 86. Profuse   | – scanty, insufficient, meagre, limited.     |
|       | 87. Sad       | – cheerful, happy, joyous, mirthful.         |
|       | 88. Scanty    | – profuse, ample, sufficient, abundant.      |
|       | 89. Scatter   | – hoard, amass, store, accumulate.           |
|       | 90. Scold     | – compliment, praise, commend, applaud.      |
|       | 91. Scorn     | – revere, respect, esteem, venerate.         |
|       | 92. Selfish   | – generous, liberal, lavish, charitable.     |
|       | 93. Serious   | – gay, cheerful, jovial, merry.              |
|       | 94. Shocking  | – pleasant, charming, delightful.            |
|       | 95. Shy       | – bold, confident, audacious, assuming.      |
|       | 96. Silence   | – uproar, disorder, turmoil, noise.          |
|       | 97. Similar   | – different, dissimilar, diverse, differing. |
|       | 98. Simple    | – complex, intricate, complicated.           |
|       | 99. Sin       | – virtue, integrity, purity, morality.       |
|       | 100. Skilful  | – clumsy, incompetent, awkward, unskilful.   |
|       | 101. Slander  | – praise, laud, extol, applaud.              |
|       | 102. Slender  | – plump, fat, buxom, stout.                  |
|       | 103. Slow     | – active, alert, prompt, swift.              |
|       | 104. Smooth   | – uneven, rough.                             |

|                 |   |  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| 105. Soft       | – | hard, inflexible, rigid, firm.                 |
| 106. Thin       | – | fat, corpulent, stout, obese.                  |
| 107. Thoughtful | – | carefree, remiss, reckless.                    |
| 108. Tie        | – | unfasten, loosen, disconnect, unbind.          |
| 109. Timid      | – | bold, courageous, unafraid.                    |
| 110. Torture    | – | allay, relief, ease, comfort.                  |
| 111. Tough      | – | soft, tender, fragile, delicate, feeble.       |
| 112. Universal  | – | sectional, factional, sectarian.               |
| 113. Uncertain  | – | certain, definite, undoubted, indisputable.    |
| 114. Unfair     | – | just, fair, honest.                            |
| 115. Untidy     | – | neat, tidy, immaculate, smart.                 |
| 116. Unusual    | – | usual, common, everyday, hackneyed.            |
| 117. Utility    | – | worthless, useless.                            |
| 118. Urgent     | – | petty, trivial, insignificant.                 |
| 119. Usual      | – | unusual, uncommon, rare, singular.             |
| 120. Vain       | – | modest, unassuming, unpretentious.             |
| 121. Valuable   | – | worthless, cheap, base.                        |
| 122. Versatile  | – | steady, constant, permanent, invariable.       |
| 123. Violent    | – | quiet, placid, peaceful, calm.                 |
| 124. Wakeful    | – | lethargic, asleep, inactive.                   |
| 125. Yield      | – | withhold, restrain, resist, withstand, oppose. |
| 126. Zenith     | – | base, basis, nadir, bottom.                    |

Notes

### Antonyms (Objective Multiple Choice Type)

Directions : Below are given some words followed by four answers. Tick (√) the answer which you believe gives the opposite meaning of the word.

**1. Stigma**

- (i) obstinacy      (ii) honour      (iii) disgrace      (iv) vision

**2. Recoup**

- (i) to worsen      (ii) to strengthen      (iii) to trap      (iv) to recover

**3. Slacken**

- (i) to activate      (ii) to quench      (iii) to delight      (iv) to muse

**4. Irrevocable**

- (i) solid      (ii) fast      (iii) transitional      (iv) interruption

**5. Rotundity**

- (i) erect      (ii) deviate      (iii) angular      (iv) arch

**6. Scepticism**

- (i) doubt      (ii) assent      (iii) confess      (iv) gullibility

**7. Salient**

- (i) chief      (ii) insignificant      (iii) lend      (iv) supernatural

**8. Redundance**

- (i) paucity      (ii) bare      (iii) rejection      (iv) crucial

**9. Valorous**

- (i) discretion      (ii) parasite      (iii) fascinating      (iv) timid



## Notes

- 10. Indiscretion**  
 (i) circumspection (ii) magnitude (iii) inclination (iv) ambition
- 11. Dexterous**  
 (i) courageous (ii) dumb (iii) clumsy (iv) empty
- 12. Guile**  
 (i) forsake (ii) innocence (iii) paradox (iv) hard
- 13. Facilitate**  
 (i) to hinder (ii) to recommend (iii) to serve (iv) to correct
- 14. Opponent**  
 (i) freedom (ii) liberation (iii) restraint (iv) auxiliary
- 15. Boisterous**  
 (i) frenzied (ii) sobriety (iii) casual (iv) harmful
- 16. Complacency**  
 (i) worse (ii) corrode (iii) destroy (iv) dissatisfaction
- 17. Aggravate**  
 (i) humorous (ii) soothing (iii) fragrance (iv) painful
- 18. Exhilaration**  
 (i) modern (ii) worthy (iii) despondency (iv) elation
- 19. Pensive**  
 (i) penetrate (ii) subject (iii) glum (iv) jubilant
- 20. Adornment**  
 (i) blemish (ii) perfect (iii) sincere (iv) approve
- 21. Refinement**  
 (i) spotless (ii) courage (iii) vulgarity (iv) poverty
- 22. Optimism**  
 (i) dread (ii) despair (iii) abandon (iv) straightforward
- 23. Laud**  
 (i) to censure (ii) to respect (iii) to connive (iv) to descend
- 24. Reverence**  
 (i) rejection (ii) disdain (iii) dislike (iv) honour
- 25. Sycophant**  
 (i) psychic (ii) elegant (iii) slanderer (iv) arrangement
- 26. Ignominious**  
 (i) selfish (ii) villain (iii) honorable (iv) victorious
- 27. Magnanimous**  
 (i) dishonest (ii) covetous (iii) gracious (iv) faithful
- 28. Penitence**  
 (i) penniless (ii) cowardice (iii) naughty (iv) remorseless
- 29. Asceticism**  
 (i) gambler (ii) austere (iii) sinister (iv) debauchery
- 30. Famish**  
 (i) famous (ii) pure (iii) devouring (iv) mistake

|                        | Notes                  |                      |                     |                         |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>31. Chastity</b>    | (i) injustice          | (ii) grossness       | (iii) discourage    | (iv) enlighten          |
| <b>32. Purgatory</b>   | (i) reward             | (ii) flawless        | (iii) celestial     | (iv) proximity          |
| <b>33. Veneration</b>  | (i) sacrilege          | (ii) static          | (iii) downfall      | (iv) religious          |
| <b>34. Allegiance</b>  | (i) accuse             | (ii) confer          | (iii) violation     | (iv) puny               |
| <b>35. Zenith</b>      | (i) colossal           | (ii) weak            | (iii) nadir         | (iv) break              |
| <b>36. Aromatic</b>    | (i) reeking            | (ii) unscrupulous    | (iii) assist        | (iv) mean               |
| <b>37. Augment</b>     | (i) atone              | (ii) decrease        | (iii) irregular     | (iv) ugly               |
| <b>38. Ensnore</b>     | (i) evade              | (ii) recover         | (iii) active        | (iv) to be ill at ease  |
| <b>39. Inimical</b>    | (i) celebrity          | (ii) friendly        | (iii) speedy        | (iv) radiant            |
| <b>40. Inopportune</b> | (i) right              | (ii) truthful        | (iii) harsh         | (iv) timely or suitable |
| <b>41. Phrenetic</b>   | (i) intense            | (ii) composed        | (iii) deteriorative | (iv) eccentric          |
| <b>42. Inchoate</b>    | (i) terse              | (ii) implicit        | (iii) chaotic       | (iv) developed          |
| <b>43. Fragmented</b>  | (i) undivided or whole |                      | (ii) temporary      |                         |
|                        | (iii) crumbled         |                      | (iv) partial        |                         |
| <b>44. Nascent</b>     | (i) budding            | (ii) mature          | (iii) elderly       | (iv) initial            |
| <b>45. Yearn</b>       | (i) struggle           | (ii) stubborn        | (iii) loathe        | (iv) none of the above  |
| <b>46. Harmony</b>     | (i) discord            | (ii) similar         | (iii) peace         | (iv) differ             |
| <b>47. Morbid</b>      | (i) diseased           | (ii) languid         | (iii) rigid         | (iv) healthy            |
| <b>48. Pathetic</b>    | (i) sympathetic        | (ii) hale and hearty | (iii) healthy       | (iv) farcical           |
| <b>49. Endear</b>      | (i) cheap              | (ii) attach          | (iii) alienate      | (iv) help               |
| <b>50. Voluminous</b>  | (i) bulky              | (ii) slight          | (iii) compulsory    | (iv) voluntary          |
| <b>51. Mellifluous</b> |                        |                      |                     |                         |

|                         |                      |                    |                        |                    |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Notes                   | (i) mutual           | (ii) common        | (iii) hoarse           | (iv) contented     |
| <b>52. Pastime</b>      | (i) entertain        | (ii) leisure       | (iii) future           | (iv) work          |
| <b>53. Cupidity</b>     | (i) wine-worshipping |                    | (ii) atrocity          |                    |
|                         | (iii) clarity        |                    | (iv) generosity        |                    |
| <b>54. Brunette</b>     | (i) brown            | (ii) bland         | (iii) blonde           | (iv) thorny        |
| <b>55. Callow</b>       | (i) hollow           | (ii) sallow        | (iii) experienced      | (iv) fertile       |
| <b>56. Esoteric</b>     | (i) concentric       | (ii) exoteric      | (iii) meteoric         | (iv) categoric     |
| <b>57. Debilitate</b>   | (i) strengthen       | (ii) rehabilitate  | (iii) torture          | (iv) soothe        |
| <b>58. Sparse</b>       | (i) assault          | (ii) dense         | (iii) point            | (iv) deficient     |
| <b>59. Juvenile</b>     | (i) senile           | (ii) trope         | (iii) delinquent       | (iv) kneel         |
| <b>60. Insipid</b>      | (i) separate         | (ii) inhale        | (iii) interesting      | (iv) initial       |
| <b>61. Abridge</b>      | (i) summarise        | (ii) dilate        | (iii) over-bridge      | (iv) curb          |
| <b>62. Predilection</b> | (i) proposal         | (ii) previous      | (iii) aversion         | (iv) boisterous    |
| <b>63. Nebulous</b>     | (i) stars            | (ii) curved        | (iii) homesickness     | (iv) crystal clear |
| <b>64. Reminisce</b>    | (i) remind           | (ii) retrace       | (iii) forget           | (iv) curtail       |
| <b>65. Erudite</b>      | (i) eradicate        | (ii) ignorant      | (iii) pendant          | (iv) pauper        |
| <b>66. Alienate</b>     | (i) enliven          | (ii) endear        | (iii) leaning          | (iv) uprising      |
| <b>67. Accomplice</b>   | (i) opponent         | (ii) escort        | (iii) accessory        | (iv) desertion     |
| <b>68. Apocalyptic</b>  | (i) high-sounding    | (ii) appealing     | (iii) concealed        | (iv) poetic        |
| <b>69. Ardent</b>       | (i) eager            |                    | (ii) casual            |                    |
|                         | (iii) fierce         |                    | (iv) none of the above |                    |
| <b>70. Avant-garde</b>  | (i) up-to-date       | (ii) old fashioned | (iii) rise-up          | (iv) boasting      |
| <b>71. Absolve</b>      |                      |                    |                        |                    |

|                          |                   |                  |                        | Notes             |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
|                          | (i) free          | (ii) blame       | (iii) absorb           | (iv) total        |
| <b>72. Brusque</b>       |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) sweep         | (ii) sudden      | (iii) obsequious       | (iv) immediate    |
| <b>73. Benefactor</b>    |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) beneficent    |                  | (ii) benediction       |                   |
|                          | (iii) beneficiary |                  | (iv) none of the above |                   |
| <b>74. Brag</b>          |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) show off      | (ii) proud       | (iii) laud             | (iv) humble       |
| <b>75. Benign</b>        |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) novice        | (ii) sympathetic | (iii) malignant        | (iv) beginning    |
| <b>76. Credulous</b>     |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) innocent      | (ii) creditable  | (iii) unbelieving      | (iv) worth        |
| <b>77. Curb</b>          |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) help          | (ii) incite      | (iii) restrain         | (iv) aggravate    |
| <b>78. Calumny</b>       |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) pillar        | (ii) slander     | (iii) praise           | (iv) lump         |
| <b>79. Churlish</b>      |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) quarrelsome   | (ii) curly       | (iii) suave            | (iv) curvy        |
| <b>80. Conservative</b>  |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) reactionary   | (ii) orthodox    | (iii) iconoclast       | (iv) saving       |
| <b>81. Complaint</b>     |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) obliging      | (ii) inhabitant  | (iii) misfit           | (iv) recalcitrant |
| <b>82. Cryptic</b>       |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) wail          | (ii) manifest    | (iii) underground      | (iv) rude         |
| <b>83. Contemptible</b>  |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) foolish       | (ii) unworthy    | (iii) dull             | (iv) likeable     |
| <b>84. Distinguished</b> |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) ordinary      | (ii) marked      | (iii) confused         | (iv) straightened |
| <b>85. Disparage</b>     |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) eject         | (ii) appreciate  | (iii) compare          | (iv) jump         |
| <b>86. Droll</b>         |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) roller        | (ii) shout       | (iii) customary        | (iv) whimsical    |
| <b>87. Dissipate</b>     |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) upgrade       | (ii) lavish      | (iii) spit             | (iv) economise    |
| <b>88. Debonair</b>      |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) unelegant     | (ii) safe        | (iii) fashionable      | (iv) fresh        |
| <b>89. Dainty</b>        |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) delicate      | (ii) polished    | (iii) coarse           | (iv) plain        |
| <b>90. Delicious</b>     |                   |                  |                        |                   |
|                          | (i) pleasant      |                  | (ii) odious            |                   |
|                          | (iii) sweet       |                  | (iv) none of the above |                   |

## Notes

- 91. Deviate**  
 (i) stray (ii) conform (iii) abide (iv) change
- 92. Diligent**  
 (i) careful (ii) lazy (iii) intelligent (iv) harmless
- 93. Emerge**  
 (i) disappear (ii) outcome  
 (iii) appear (iv) none of the above
- 94. Effeminate**  
 (i) virile (ii) feminine (iii) philogynist (iv) misogynist
- 95. Epilogue**  
 (i) epigraph (ii) prologue (iii) prelude (iv) vogue
- 96. Extolled**  
 (i) condemned (ii) sang (iii) criticized (iv) praised
- 97. Ennui**  
 (i) introduce (ii) excitement (iii) powerless (iv) tiredness
- 98. Esoteric**  
 (i) concentric (ii) categoric  
 (iii) rhetoric (iv) none of the above
- 99. Endemic**  
 (i) epidemic (ii) hateful (iii) assaulting (iv) lethargic
- 100. Ephemeral**  
 (i) temporal (ii) everlasting (iii) polite (iv) temporary
- 101. Fickle**  
 (i) steadfast (ii) independent (iii) permanent (iv) silly
- 102. Fatuous**  
 (i) predestined (ii) impatient (iii) purposeful (iv) silly
- 103. Firmament**  
 (i) earth (ii) hell (iii) sky (iv) heaven
- 104. Fetish**  
 (i) object of love (ii) object to hate (iii) object to harm (iv) object of dispute
- 105. Vindicate**  
 (i) censure (ii) favour (iii) indicate (iv) eradicate
- 106. Versatile**  
 (i) volatile (ii) variable (iii) constant (iv) moody
- 107. Violent**  
 (i) impetuous (ii) placid (iii) ruthless (iv) none of the above
- 108. Vivid**  
 (i) clear (ii) dim (iii) glare (iv) sharp
- 109. Vital**  
 (i) trivial (ii) essential (iii) significant (iv) none of the above

|                        | Notes          |                |                    |                        |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <b>110. Vociferate</b> | (i) bore       | (ii) plough    | (iii) whisper      | (iv) level             |
| <b>111. Verbose</b>    | (i) oral       | (ii) final     | (iii) epigrammatic | (iv) grammatical       |
| <b>112. Whimsical</b>  | (i) freakish   | (ii) staid     | (iii) laughter     | (iv) normal            |
| <b>113. Wizenod</b>    | (i) shrewd     | (ii) foolish   | (iii) smooth       | (iv) zooming           |
| <b>114. Wellbred</b>   | (i) coarse     | (ii) polite    | (iii) ugly         | (iv) none of the above |
| <b>115. Wizard</b>     | (i) crook      | (ii) magician  | (iii) ordinary     | (iv) villain           |
| <b>116. Wilt</b>       | (i) weaken     | (ii) die       | (iii) revive       | (iv) to limp           |
| <b>117. Worthy</b>     | (i) despicable | (ii) laudable  | (iii) bad          | (iv) foolish           |
| <b>118. Yearn</b>      | (i) struggle   | (ii) stubborn  | (iii) loathe       | (iv) none of the above |
| <b>119. Yield</b>      | (i) withhold   | (ii) abandon   | (iii) denounce     | (iv) distribute        |
| <b>120. Vibrant</b>    | (i) dull       | (ii) lively    | (iii) bright       | (iv) none of the above |
| <b>221. Vulgar</b>     | (i) cheap      | (ii) expensive | (iii) refined      | (iv) impure            |

## ANSWERS

1. (ii)    2. (i)    3. (i)    4. (iii)    5. (i)    6. (iv)    7. (ii)    8. (i)    9. (i)    10. (i)  
 11. (iii)    12. (ii)    13. (i)    14. (iv)    15. (ii)    16. (iv)    17. (ii)    18. (iii)    19. (iv)    20. (i)  
 21. (iii)    22. (ii)    23. (i)    24. (ii)    25. (iii)    26. (iii)    27. (ii)    28. (iv)    29. (iv)    30. (iii)  
 31. (ii)    32. (iii)    33. (i)    34. (iii)    35. (iii)    36. (i)    37. (ii)    38. (iv)    39. (ii)    40. (iv)  
 46. (ii)    47. (iv)    48. (i)    49. (ii)    45. (iii)    46. (i)    47. (iv)    48. (iv)    49. (iii)    50. (ii)  
 51. (iii)    52. (iv)    53. (iv)    54. (iii)    55. (iii)    56. (i)    57. (i)    58. (ii)    59. (ii)    60. (iii)  
 61. (ii)    62. (iii)    63. (iv)    64. (iii)    65. (ii)    66. (ii)    67. (iii)    68. (iii)    69. (ii)    70. (ii)  
 71. (ii)    72. (iii)    73. (iii)    74. (iv)    75. (iii)    76. (iii)    77. (iv)    78. (iii)    79. (iii)    80. (iii)  
 81. (iv)    82. (ii)    83. (iv)    84. (i)    85. (ii)    86. (iii)    87. (iv)    88. (i)    89. (iii)    90. (ii)  
 91. (iii)    92. (ii)    93. (i)    94. (i)    95. (ii)    96. (i)    97. (ii)    98. (iv)    99. (i)    100. (ii)  
 101. (i)    102. (iii)    103. (i)    104. (ii)    105. (i)    106. (iii)    107. (ii)    108. (ii)    109. (i)    110. (iii)  
 111. (iii)    112. (iv)    113. (iii)    114. (i)    115. (iii)    116. (iii)    117. (i)    118. (iii)    119. (i)    120. (i)  
 121. (iii)

Notes

### 14.3 Review Questions

**I. Find the antonyms of the following words.**

- |              |                 |               |              |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| (i) Gumption | (ii) Insipid    | (iii) Marine  | (iv) Noxious |
| (v) Nervous  | (vi) Cordiality | (vii) Protege |              |

**II. Find the synonyms of the following words:**

- |             |               |                |               |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| (i) Propane | (ii) Prodigal | (iii) Relation | (iv) Turmeric |
| (v) Sorcery | (vi) Warmth.  |                |               |

### 14.4 Further Readings



*Books*

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 15: Vocabulary and Usage : Words often Confused and Misused

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Objectives

Introduction

15.1 A list of some words often confused

15.2 Review Questions

15.3 Further Readings

### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Understand the words which appear similar but have different meanings.

### Introduction

There are certain words and phrases the usage of which generally confuses us. Two words in English language may have the same meaning while their implied meanings may be different. Good writing and speaking depend largely on one's ability to select the right word in the given context. The students are very often confused when they find two or more words for the same meaning. But these words differ in usage. For example, in the English language we have two words for the same meaning, e.g. **Crime** and **Sin**. The word **crime** means 'an offence, for which there is severe punishment by law'. Hence we say: 'The business of the law court is to punish **crime**'. While **sin** means 'an offence against the principle of morality'. So we say " 'Man is liable to **sin**'.

The users of English should be competent to find the correct word or expression that best suits in a particular context. This part of the book will enable the students to learn this efficiency. The following is a list of some commonly confused words. Their meaning and correct usage will be of great help to all the students.

### 15.1 A List of Some Words Often Confused

1. **Ability** (physical or mental power or skill which can be acquired and developed): He has an **ability** to be a good carpenter.  
**Capacity** (power which is usually inborn): He has a wonderful **capacity** for mathematics.
2. **Allow** (not to refuse): The principal **allowed** the children to use the calculators in the exams.  
**Permit** (to agree to some action): He was **permitted** to join the Computer classes.
3. **Abstain** (from a thing): He **abstains** from beer and wine.  
**Refrain** (from an action): One should **refrain** oneself from abusing.
4. **Answer** (a question is answered): The examiner posed some very difficult questions which the average students could not **answer**.  
**Reply** (a letter or a charge is replied to): I immediately **replied** to his urgent letter.
5. **Ancient** (opposite of modern): There are several good books on the history of **ancient** India in our library.  
**Old** (opposite of new): **Old** is gold.



## Notes

6. **Admit** (give assent to); He **admitted** that smoking is a bad habit.  
**Confess** (not only to admit something wrong but also to acknowledge guilt): He **confessed** that he had stolen money.
7. **Astonish** (extreme surprise): I was **astonished** to see my friend after a long gap of 5 years.  
**Surprise** (feeling caused by something new or unexpected): His failure was not a great **surprise**.  
**Wonder** (Surprise combined with admiration): The tourists are filled with **wonder** when they look at the Taj Mahal.
8. **Anxious** (feeling anxiety): I am **anxious** about my son's safety at his non-arrival.  
**Eager** (strongly desirous): He is **eager** for his success.
9. **Bravery** (ready to face danger, pain and suffering): He is as **brave** as a lion.  
**Courage** (lies in the mind and is a lofty sentiment): He has the **courage** to do what he feels right.  
**Daring** (pushing forward without hesitation; adventurous): The **daring** of the mountaineers deserves praise.  
**Valour** (bravery esp. in war): The Indian warriors were known for their deeds of **valour**.  
**Boldness** (usually transient): He showed **boldness** in rescuing a drowning child.  
**Audacity** (Foolish boldness or imprudence in daring): His **audacity** provoked me much.
10. **Battle** (fight esp. between organized and armed forces): The **battle** of Philippi resulted in the death of many valiant Romans.  
**War** (a series of contests between two armies): **War** between Troy and Greece was fought for the beautiful Helen.  
**Fight** (a combat between small number of persons): Indians **fought** for their freedom.
11. **Beautiful** (used for the beauty of women): She is known as the most **beautiful** woman of her city.  
**Handsome** (fine appearance of men): He is a **handsome** fellow.
12. **Behaviour** (treatment shown towards others): Tom is liked by all his classmates for his good **behaviour**.  
**Conduct** (behaviour esp. moral): A good **conduct** prize was given to a child at school.  
**Deportment** (manners): Young ladies used to have lessons in **deportment**.
13. **Blemish** (a stain that spoils the beauty or perfection; some moral defect): He bears a good character without any **blemish**.  
**Defect** (fault or imperfection): There are many **defects** in our system of education.  
**Flaw** (a defect which is continued such as a crack): Shakespearean tragic heroes often suffer from some tragic **flaw**.
14. **Begin** (used on all occasions): The meeting will **begin** at 8 o'clock.  
**Start** (beginning of a journey, activity etc.): He decided to **start** a newspaper.  
**Commence** (used only in formal and official language): The winter-session of Parliament will **commence** on 2nd December.
15. **Custom** (generally accepted behaviour among members of a social group): We should not be slave to **customs**.  
**Habit** (some settled practice esp. that cannot be easily given up): We should not fall into bad **habits**.
16. **Cite** (mention as an example esp. by quoting from a book to support an argument etc.): He **cited** the authority of Abraham Lincoln who stands for his perseverance and hard-working.  
**Quote** (repeat words used by another): He **quoted** a verse from the Bible.
17. **Contentment** (a state of mind where one does not want more): **Contentment** is the theme of Pope's famous poem 'Ode On Solitude'  
**Satisfaction** (fulfilment of one's expectations): Children's success is a great **satisfaction** to their parents.

18. **Ceiling** (under surface or overhead lining of a room): He has beautified the **ceiling** of his room.  
**Roof** (top covering of a building, tent, bus or car): The children are playing on the **roof** of their house.
19. **Careful** (paying attention to what one does or says): One should be **careful** to what one does.  
**Meticulous** (showing great attention to detail): He is very **meticulous** in his choice of words.  
**Scrupulous** (adherence to what one knows to be true, correct or exact etc.): The newly appointed Chief Justice is quite **scrupulous** in dispensing justice.
20. **Certain** (something beyond question or doubt): It is **certain** that two and two make four.  
**Inevitable** (that cannot be avoided): Death is an **inevitable** end of all the mortals.  
**Necessary** (which has to be done): Sleep is **necessary** to heal.
21. **Curious** (eager to know): He is very **curious** about his future.  
**Inquisitive** (inquiring into other people's affairs): He is **inquisitive** about his neighbour's income.
22. **Charitable** (helping the poor): The **charitable** institutions help the poor and helpless persons.  
**Benevolent** (kind and helpful): He is **benevolent** towards all the needy people.  
**Philanthropic** (lover of mankind who gives money on large scale): His **philanthropic** attitude motivates him to donate large amounts of money for the orphans, widows, disabled and the poor.  
**Altruistic** (unselfish): He is **altruistic** in serving mankind.
23. **Common** (belong to, used or done by all or nearly all members of a group or society): In multi-lingual countries, English is a **common** language.  
**Ordinary** (usual or customary): She went to the party in **ordinary** dress.  
**Vulgar** (ordinary but coarse): He delivered a speech in the **vulgar** tongue.  
**Familiar** (acquainted): I am not very **familiar** with the modern mathematics.
24. **Communicate** (pass on news, information, feeling etc.): Often the children are not able to **communicate** with their parents.  
**Impart** (pass on a secret or news): I have nothing to **impart** to you today.
25. **Contagious** (disease spreading by contact): Small-pox is a **contagious** disease.  
**Infectious** (disease spreading through bacteria carried in the atmosphere or in water): Typhoid is an **infectious** disease.
26. **Correct** (freedom from error): We learnt the **correct** pronunciation.  
**Accurate** (careful and exact): His knowledge of phonology is **accurate** to certain extent.  
**Right** (something, just and true): We should know the difference between **right** and wrong.
27. **Deny** (disown or refuse to acknowledge): I **denied** the charge of having any hand in the M.P.'s murder.  
**Refuse** (say 'no' to a request or offer): Her **refused** to help me.
28. **Explore** (inquire into or examine a country etc. by going through it): The navigators **explored** the ocean's depth for a good knowledge of it.  
**Discover** (find out something that existed before): Columbus **discovered** America.  
**Invent** (create or design something not existing before): Graham Bell **invented** the telephone.
29. **Declare** (make known clearly or formally): The President of the athletic association **declared** the athletic meet open.  
**Announce** (make known for the time): His engagement with Sony is ultimately **announced**.  
**Advertise** (make known to people by printing notices in newspapers): The manufactures **advertise** their goods in the leading newspapers in order to grip the market.  
**Proclaim** (make known publicly by some formal declaration): He **proclaimed** his nephew his legal heir.

Notes

- Promulgate** (announce officially a decree or a law): A new law is **promulgated** by the new government.
30. **Doubt** (incline to disbelieve): Please, don't **doubt** my word.  
**Suspect** (have an idea or feeling [concerning the possibility or likelihood]): I **suspect** that he is a liar.
31. **Difficulty** (quality of being difficult): Do you have any **difficulty** in understanding the lectures in History?  
**Hardship** (severe suffering): The soldiers bear **hardship** during a war without complaining.
32. **Disaster** (great or sudden misfortune): His over-confidence had led him to **disaster**.  
**Catastrophe** (final and unhappy event that brings a change): His failure in the examination was a **catastrophe**.
33. **Desire** (long for; want something earnestly): I **desire** to possess immense wealth.  
**Want** (wish for something lacking or absent): I don't **want** such friends who meddle in my affairs.  
**Need** (need something that is lacking and necessary): We **need** nutritive food for good health.  
**Wish** (have a desire that cannot be fulfilled): I **wish** I were a bird.
34. **Distress** (subjected to strain, anxiety or unhappiness): Brutus was much **distressed** to hear the news of his wife's death.  
**Suffering** (subjected to pain, loss, grief, punishment, wrong etc.) I have been **suffering** from fever for the last two days.  
**Agonize** (subjected to unbearable physical or mental anguish): She was greatly **agonized** at her child's sufferings.
35. **Envy** (feeling of ill-will at another's better fortune): Her friend was filled with **envy** at her success.  
**Jealousy** (feeling of ill-will because of possible or actual loss of rights or love): Othello's **jealousy** made him to strangle his beloved wife.
36. **Error** (deviation from correct or accurate result): Brutus suffered on account of this **error** of judgement.  
**Mistake** (wrong idea or act): We all make **mistakes** occasionally.  
**Blunder** (stupid or careless mistake): The student was punished for committing **blunders**.  
**Lapse** (slight error in speech or behaviour): He is criticized for his **lapse** from virtue.
37. **Expect** (think or believe that something will come or happen): I **expect** that she will come today.  
**Hope** (expectation of something desired): I live in **hopes** of better times.
38. **Event** (happening usually something important or memorable): The last two years in India have been full of **events**.  
**Incident** (event but of less importance): The **incidents** of theft have now become common in the metropolitan cities.  
**Accident** (happening unfortunate and undesirable): Many passengers died in a recent terrible railway **accident**.
39. **False** (untrue or incorrect): He is **false** to his word.  
**Wrong** (not morally right): Two **wrongs** don't make a right.
40. **Forbid** (not allow something to be used or done): God **forbade** Adam to eat the apple of the tree of knowledge.  
**Prohibit** (forbid an action by rules or regulations): In schools and colleges, smoking is strictly **prohibited**.  
**Ban** (order with authority that something must not be done): The censor-board has **banned** the latest multi-starred film.

41. **Freedom** (without restraint): Children should be granted the **freedom** of speech.  
**Liberty** (free from slavery, imprisonment or despotic control): Brutus killed Caesar in order to grant **liberty** to the Romans.
42. **Famous** (used in good sense): Michael Jackson has become **famous** as a pop-singer.  
**Notorious** (used in bad sense): A **notorious** dacoit was killed by the police in a fake encounter.  
**Renowned** (heaving dignified kind of reputation): Shakespeare is a **renowned** English dramatist.
43. **House** (building for human habitation): The government provides loans for building a new **house**.  
**Home** (native land of oneself or one's ancestors): Cement and bricks cannot make houses the **homes**.
44. **Humble** (having a modest opinion of oneself): He is aware of his **humble** birth.  
**Meek** (mild and patient or somewhat weak): She is as **meek** as a lamb.  
**Modest** (not showing too high opinion of one's abilities): He is **modest** about his achievements and possession.
45. **Idle** (doing no work due to certain circumstances): Owing to the strike, the machines in the factory are **idle**.  
**Lazy** (doing no work due to habit): He is a **lazy** fellow.
46. **Infer** (conclude, reach to an opinion): I **inferred** from your remarks that he was a fool.  
**Imply** (give or make a suggestion): His words **implied** that he was not telling the truth.
47. **Limit** (confine within limits; restrict): We must **limit** our needs in proportion to our means.  
**Circumscribe** (marking the limit which intensifies the suggestion of restraint): He is asked to **circumscribe** his interests.  
**Confine** (emphasize the limits which cannot be passed): He is **confined** to bed by illness.
48. **Offend** (do wrong): Loud noise **offends** the ears.  
**Outrage** (offended beyond endurance): He was **outraged** at his misbehaviour.  
**Affront** (insult): The son **affronted** the father.
49. **Pleasure** (sensuous enjoyment): Do me the **pleasure** of dining with me.  
**Delight** (great pleasure): The romantic poets find **delight** in the lap of nature.  
**Bliss** (perfect joy; a state of being in heaven): Serving mankind is a **bliss** to the virtuous souls.
50. **Place** (to put): Please **place** the lamp on the table.  
**Keep** (maintain in order): **Keep** the books properly in the shelf.
51. **Perform** (do a piece of work one is ordered to do): One should **perform** one's duties properly.  
**Execute** (carry plan, command, law etc.) The proper **execution** of the law is more important than its formation.  
**Accomplish** (complete a task or anything): He **accomplished** his aims successfully.
52. **Power** (faculty of body or mind): He is a man of great intellectual **power**.  
**Force** (power of body or mind which accelerates the action): Christianity has been a **force** for good in the lives of many people.  
**Energy** (capacity to do things and get things done): He has so much of **energy** that he can do the work of three men.  
**Strength** (quality of being strong): God is our real **strength**. **Might** (physical strength): **Might** is right.
53. **Possible** (that can exist or happen): Frost may be **possible** even in the month of May.  
**Probable** (That may be expected to happen or prove true): Frost may be possible though not **probable** in the month of May.

## Notes

54. **Praise** (commend the merit of): He is **praised** for his courage.  
**Admire** (regard with pleased surprise): The beautiful girl is **admired** by all.
55. **Rob** (take property from a place unlawfully and often by force): She was **robbed** of her ring.  
**Steal** (take property secretly without right): My watch had been **stolen**.
56. **Remark** (give casual expression): He **remarked** that he had become very naughty.  
**Comment** (give some opinion): I am not going to **comment** on this book.
57. **Recollect** (call back to the mind): She **recollects** her childhood days.  
**Remember** (remember something after a lapse): I could not **remember** his name.
58. **Rescue** (set free): He **rescued** a child from drowning.  
**Redeem** (deliver from sin or set free by payment): The terrorists at last **redeemed** the prisoners on certain conditions.  
**Reclaim** (reform a person): He **reclaimed** him from vice.
59. **Sober** (sane or tranquil): He is a **sober** man.  
**Solemn** (serious and awe inspiring): There was a **solemn** silence in the graveyard.  
**Serious** (not given to pleasure seeking): One should be **serious** to one's work.
60. **Spectator** (on looker esp. of a show or game): The **spectators** took a lot of interest in the football match.  
**Beholder** (who takes notice of something unusual): The **beholder** was enchanted by her beauty.  
**Observer** (one who watches carefully): He was sent there as an **observer**.
61. **Substitute** (acting for or serving for another): Tea can be a good **substitute** for coffee.  
**Replace** (put back in its place; take the place of): Nothing can **replace** a mother's love and care.
62. **Say** (utter): He **said** that the name of his sister was Jane.  
**Speak** (hold conversation): I request you to **speak** slowly.  
**Talk** (converse): They were **talking** about their business.  
**Tell** (give detailed account of): He **told** me about his future plans.
63. **Sight** (anything seen): It is a beautiful **sight** for the pets.  
**Scenery** (the view of a landscape): The beautiful **scenery** of Kashmir fascinates the visitors.  
**Scene** (description of an incident): The historian has truly described the **scene** of a great battle.
64. **Seem** (appear to be): What **seems** easy is often very difficult. **Appear** (become visible): The stars **appear** in the cloudless sky.
65. **Shade** (comparative darkness caused by cutting off the direct rays of light): The trees give a pleasant **shade** to the weary travellers.  
**Shadow** (area or shade; dark shade thrown on the ground, a wall, floor etc.) The earth's **shadow** when falls on the moon causes lunar eclipse.
66. **See** (use the power of sight without effort): A blind-man cannot **see** anything.  
**Look** (try to see): I **looked** at the picture but could not find anything beautiful in it.  
**Watch** (see closely): The boy was **watching** the television.
67. **Teach** (give instruction to, cause to know or be able to do): He **taught** me French.  
**Educate** (give intellectual and moral training): To Wordsworth, Nature can **educate** man.  
**Train** (give teaching and practice to someone in order to bring to a desired standard of behaviour): The children should be **trained** to be good citizens.
68. **Trifle** (thing, event esp. of little value or importance): It is silly to quarrel over **trifles**.  
**Trivial** (something trifling and lacking seriousness): Their objectives for future plans were quite **trivial**.

69. **Understand** (know the meaning of): He didn't **understand** French.  
**Comprehend** (understand fully; grasping with the mind): He **comprehends** the Aristotelian theory of imitation.  
**Appreciate** (understand and enjoy): We can't **appreciate** Wordsworth's poems unless we understand his love of nature. **70. Unite** (join): **United** we stand, divided we fall.  
**Combine** (join together): We can't always **combine** work with pleasure.  
**Co-operate** (work or act together in order to bring about a result): A country cannot progress unless its people **co-operate** with the government.
71. **Use** (employ for a purpose): A knife is **used** to cut bread. **Employ** (give work to, usually for payment): He is **employed** in a school.  
**Utilize** (use a thing for some profit): Life can be a bed of roses if we learn to **utilize** the opportunities we get in our life.
72. **Vigorous** (strong, energetic): He delivered a **vigorous** speech.  
**Strenuous** (using or needing great effort): He remains busy from dawn to dusk and leads a very **strenuous** life.
73. **Vacant** (not occupied by anyone): I have applied for a **vacant** post in the Royal Hotel.  
**Empty** (having nothing inside): The famous big house on the Mall Road is now **empty**.
74. **Wise** (ability of sound judgement): Only **wise** man can see the things in advance.  
**Sage** (having the wisdom of experience [often ironic]) He behaves just like a **sage**.  
**Prudent** (acting only after careful planning): A **prudent** man takes up a project after careful forethoughts.
75. **Witty** (things that are brilliantly or sparkingly amusing): A **witty** comment always appeals to the mind.  
**Humorous** (having a sense of humour): Mark Twain is a famous **humorous** writer.  
**Ludicrous** (ridiculous; exciting or deserving derision): His comments are generally **ludicrous**.  
**Farcical** (extremely ludicrous or futile): His behaviour was **farcical**.
76. **Womanly** (befitting a woman): She possesses all **womanly** qualities.  
**Womanish** (weak; like women): The boys of **womanish** qualities cannot stand firm before dangers

## 15.2 Review Questions

### I. Supply from the brackets correct words in the spaces left blank in the following sentences.

- Lalita ..... to me for a long time, (talked, spoke)
- He is ..... of his friend's wealth. (Jealous, envious)
- I do not know whether the fruits are ..... or not. (fresh, new)
- There lies a ..... post of a Hindi teacher in our college. (empty, vacant)
- Yesterday I ..... a big bird, flying high in the sky. (looked, saw)
- Sonia purchased a ..... book from the book fair. (little, small)
- The ..... of Kashmir is extremely beautiful. (scenes, scenery)
- James is a ..... fellow. (handsome, beautiful)
- He ..... that he is a smoker. (admitted, confessed)
- He lives in his ..... house. (ancient, old)

### II. Choose the correct word from the bracket:

- Cats live in ..... (homes, houses)
- He was rewarded for his good ..... (behaviour, conduct)
- Death is the wages of ..... (crime, sin)

Notes

4. To err is human; to ..... divine, (pardon, forgive)
5. Balanced diet and light exercises are ..... to health. (necessary, certain)
6. The cat was jumping on the ..... of the car. (ceiling, roof)
7. The young people should always be humble and avoid ..... words. (vulgar, ordinary)
8. .... is the soul of happy life. (Contentment, Satisfaction)
9. Drinking is ..... by the government. (prohibited, forbidden)
10. Adam ate the ..... fruit of the tree of knowledge. (forbidden, prohibited)

ANSWERS

I

- |              |            |            |             |
|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 1. talked    | 2. envious | 3. fresh   | 4. vacant   |
| 5. saw       | 6. small   | 7. scenery | 8. handsome |
| 9. confessed | 10. old    |            |             |

II

- |               |               |           |                |
|---------------|---------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1. houses     | 2. conduct    | 3. sin    | 4. forgive     |
| 5. necessary  | 6. roof       | 7. vulgar | 8. contentment |
| 9. prohibited | 10. forbidden |           |                |

**15.3 Further Readings**



*Books*

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 16: Vocabulary and Usage: Idioms and Idiomatic Phrases and Their Usages

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16.2 Idioms and Phrases (Objectives Multiple Choice Type)

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### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of Idioms and Phrases and their usages.

### Introduction

A phrase is a group of words without a verb, especially one that forms part of a sentence. In short, it is a group of words forming a short expression. An idiom is a phrase or group of words, the meaning of which is not clear from the meaning of its individual words and which must be learnt as a whole unit.

Idioms and phrases are relative terms and both terms imply almost the same meaning. Idioms and phrases beautify and adorn a sentence.

### 16.1 Idioms and Phrases (Meaning and Usage)

1. **To back up** (to support): He *backed up* the ruling party to gain their favour.
2. **Blow over** (pass off): The present unfavourable tide will soon *blow over*.
3. **To bear out** (substantiate): The police produced evidence *to bear out* the charge of murder.
4. **To dispose of** (sell): I am going to *dispose of* my furniture as soon as possible.
5. **To close with** (accept): I readily *closed with* his offer.
6. **To eat away** (corrode): Too many chocolates have *eaten away* my teeth completely.
7. **To grow upon** (have stronger and stronger hold over): The habit of smoking is steadily *growing upon* him.
8. **Hear someone out** (to hear upto the end): The teacher pleaded with the students to *hear him out*.
9. **To hit upon** (to find): She *hit upon* the perfect title for her new novel.
10. **To keep hanging about** (loitering about): Most of the students in our college *keep hanging about* the campus even after the completion of classes.
11. **Led up to** (culminated in): The continuous tension between the two groups finally *led up to* a communal war.
12. **To shake off** (get rid of): She has been trying to *shake off* some of her weight.
13. **Long for** (desire): Throughout his life, he has *longed for* a good friend in whom he could confide.
14. **Stave off** (prevent, avert): He is the only person who can *stave off* violent encounter between the two brothers.



## Notes

15. **Trump up** (concocted, fabricated): The details of his various escapades seem *trumped up*.
16. **To be well of** (in comfortable circumstances): Despite her *being so well off*, she thinks twice before spending even a penny.
17. **Bore away** (won): The soldier *bore away* many prizes for bravery.
18. **To break into** (enter by force): The students *broke into* the Vice Chancellor's office and smashed all the windows.
19. **Break with** (quarrel with): I gave him no cause to *break with* me.
20. **Brought about** (caused): The income tax he paid, *brought about* his ruin.
21. **Brings in** (yield as rent): His agricultural output *brings in* at least a thousand rupees a month.
22. **Call off** (withdraw): The strike was finally *called off* after a month with everyone feeling contented.
23. **Come by** (get): How did he *come by* this book?
24. **Come to grief** (suffer): He will certainly *come to grief* if he does not mend his ways now.
25. **Done to death** (murdered): He was *done to death* by the dacoits.
26. **Draw over** (win over): The politician was trying to draw over the votes of the poor people.
27. **Get the better of** (advantage over): He *got the better of* his partner in that business.
28. **Give out** (proclaim): It was *given out* that the fort had been captured.
29. **Given to** (addicted): My uncle is *given to* drinking.
30. **Go in for** (compete for): Are you *going in for* the M.A. degree?
31. **Hold to** (adhere to): She always *holds to* her principle.
32. **Intrude on or upon** (encroach upon): Hope I am not *intruding upon* your privacy.
33. **Keep back** (conceal): She *keeps back* nothing from me.
34. **Look upon** (regard): We *look upon* her as our mother.
35. **Make over** (transfer): I want to *make over* my house to my daughter.
36. **Pull through** (recover from illness): The psychology of the patient helps him a lot to *pull through* his illness.
37. **Put by** (save): My grandmother always urged my mother to *put by* something for old age.
38. **Put off** (postponed): The marriage was *put off* owing to the sudden demise of a close relative.
39. **Run through** (waste): Do not *run through* your savings.
40. **See through** (discern): He was too innocent to see through any of her tricks.
41. **Set about** (begin): He *set about* his job assiduously.
42. **Set in** (start): Winter has begun to *set in*.
43. **Take after** (resemble): The baby has *taken after* her grandmother.
44. **Take down** (note): Please *take down* these points.
45. **Turn down** (reject): The officer *turned down* my request.
46. **Work on** (influence): We tempted him with many promises, but nothing would *work on* him.
47. **Work up** (excite, agitate): He gets extremely *worked up* if his daughter gets back late from college.
48. **Throw over** (abandon or desert): When he became rich, he *threw over* all his old friends.
49. **Set apart** (reserved): These seats are *set apart* for ladies.
50. **Run up** (increased): Recently, my expenses have *run up* considerably.
51. **Done for** (ruined): If this business venture fails, then I'm *done for*.
52. **A wild goose chase** (fruitless task/endeavour): His trying to go abroad for studies is a *wild goose chase*.
53. **A red letter day** (an important day): It was a red letter day in the history of the nation.

54. **Kith and kin** (relatives and friends): I should look after my *kith and kin* whatever be the circumstances.
55. **A hard nut to crack** (difficult thing/person to deal with): Our principal is a *hard nut to crack* in matters concerning discipline.
56. **A cold reception** (a welcome, lacking affection or warmth): He was given a *cold reception* at the party.
57. **Black sheep** (bad person): He is the *black sheep* of our family.
58. **A bird's eye view** (a general view): I had a *bird's eye view* of the Himalayas recently, while I was flying to Sri nagar.
59. **A burning question** (issue keenly discussed): The budget presented recently, is a *burning question* now-a-days.
60. **A bed of roses** (easy and comfortable): Do not consider life *to be a bed of roses*.
61. **Bad blood** (a feeling of enmity): The cricket match ended up creating *bad blood* between the two teams.
62. **A bookworm** (one who is always busy with his studies): In spite of being a *bookworm*, he barely manages to pass.
63. **A fair weather friend** (a friend only during the times of prosperity): That *fair weather friend* of mine was not to be seen during my days of adversity.
64. **To add fuel to the fire** (to aggravate the matter): His blatant lies after stealing the money only *added fuel to the fire*.
65. **To be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth** (to be born in a rich family): Not many are privileged *to be born with a silver spoon in their mouths*.
66. **To blow one's own trumpet** (to boast): He keeps on *blowing his own trumpet* and in the process, makes a fool of himself.
67. **A bolt from the blue** (an unexpected disaster): The news of his brother's death was a *bolt from the blue* for him.
68. **To beat black and blue (to beat mercilessly)**: The pick-pocket when caught red-handed, was *beaten black and blue* by the co-passengers.
69. **To cast an aspersion** (bring discredit to): The official's involvement in the corruption case has *cast an aspersion* on the integrity of his character.
70. **To change hands** (to pass to a different owner): Soon after the millionaire's death, his bungalow *changed hands*.
71. **To cry over spilt milk** (to feel sorry for what has already happened): Brooding after failing in the examination is like *crying over spilt milk*.
72. **To die hard** (to change or disappear very slowly): Old habits *die hard*.
73. **To end in smoke** (fail): All his proposals *ended in smoke* for want of popular support.
74. **To cut a sorry figure** (to make a poor impression): She *cut a sorry figure* when she could not speak correct English in front of her teachers.
75. **To go to the dogs** (to be ruined): The institution will *go to the dogs* if someone does not stop this corruption.
76. **To hang in the balance** (to be undecided): The fate of the accused will *hang in balance* till the court resumes its proceedings.
77. **To hit the nail on the head** (to do the right thing at the right time): By accepting this job, you have *hit the nail on the head*.
78. **To have the upper hand** (to have more say or influence): The English *had the upper hand* in everything while they ruled over India.
79. **To hold water** (sound logical): His explanation does not *hold water* any more.

## Notes

80. **To leave no stone unturned** (to try one's level-best): He *left no stone* unturned to secure a seat for his son in one of the prestigious colleges.
81. **To live from hand to mouth** (to have a scarce living): Many families in India have *to live from hand to mouth* on account of economic backwardness.
82. **To lose heart** (to be disheartened): Do not *lose heart* because you have lost your job, you can always get another.
83. **To make up one's mind** (decide): She has *to make up her mind* about whom she wants to marry.
84. **To make both ends meet** (to live within one's means): He can hardly *make both ends meet* with his present income.
85. **To move heaven and earth** (to go up to the extreme): He *moved heaven and earth* to see his son married to the industrialist's daughter.
86. **To see eye to eye with** (agree): The manager and the accountant do not *see eye to eye* at the time when accounts are prepared.
87. **To play ducks and drakes** (waste): The young man *played ducks and drakes* with his inherited money.
88. **To put the cart before the horse** (to do a thing in a wrong way): Having a baby first and getting married afterwards, is like *putting the cart before the horse*.
89. **To have too many irons in the fire** (to have too many things in hand): Studying, working and looking after the house at the same time means she has *too many irons in the fire*.
90. **To kill two birds with one stone** (to accomplish two tasks in one attempt): If you are a little more tactful, you will hear more and make a better image of yourself, thereby *killing two birds with one stone*.
91. **To read between the lines** (to try to understand the hidden meaning): The letter is to be *read between* the lines.
92. **To turn over a new leaf** (to change for the better): After his defeat in the match, he has *turned over a new leaf*.
93. **To take the bull by the horns** (to face difficulty boldly): He is a young man of great courage and will *take the bull by the horns*.
94. **To win laurels** (distinguish oneself): Sunil Gavaskar has *won many laurels* as one of the greatest cricketers.
95. **A storm in a tea cup** (used derisively to indicate a great fuss about a trifle): A fight in the bus for a window seat, is like raising a *storm in a tea cup*.
96. **Not worth his salt** (a good-for-nothing fellow): He is *not worth his salt* if he fails at this juncture.
97. **To play up** (to try to make something appear more important than it is): She *played up* her past achievements just to impress us.
98. **To put a spoke in one's wheel** (to obstruct progress, to prove a serious barrier or hindrance): Brown was getting on well in business till Robinson opened a rival establishment, and that *put a spoke in Brown's wheel*.
99. **To set Thames on fire** (to do something extraordinary or brilliant): He is a steady worker, but never likely to *set Thames on fire*.
100. **To take people by storm** (to captivate): His singing *took the audience by storm*.
101. **To fight shy of** (trying or attempting to avoid a person): He tried to draw me into partnership with him in business, but I *fought shy of him*.
102. **To gild the pill** (cover a disagreeable thing with something pleasant): They demanded a large war indemnity from us and *gilded the pill* by offering us two warships.
103. **To nip in the bud** (to destroy in early stages of growth, to kill in infancy): Diphtheria is a disease which *nips many a life in the bud*.

104. **Other fish to fry** (more important work to attend to): Please be as brief as you can, I have *other fish to fry*.
105. **Go to roost** (retire for the night): I am in the habit of *going to roost* early.
106. **Pen and ink** (in writing): Unless you issue orders in *pen and ink*, no one is likely to follow them.
107. **Without fear and favour** (impartially): At your position, it is expected that you act *without fear and favour*.
108. **Judas kiss** (false love): His wife's love was after all a *judas kiss*.
109. **Is on the knees of gods** (yet uncertain): Success in examination is still *on the knees of gods*.
110. **Neck and crop** (completely): The earthquake has devastated the town *neck and crop*.
111. **Black ox** (misfortune): His failure in life can be attributed only to the *black ox*.
112. **To be at the zenith of** (to be at the highest point of fame, glory, etc.): Sunil Gavaskar has *been at the zenith* of his career for the past couple of years.
113. **All and sundry** (everyone without distinction): She invited *all and sundry* to the birthday party.
114. **At death's door** (about to die): Her grandfather is *at death's door*, so we must go and see him.
115. **Donkey's years** (after a long time): I have struggled for *donkey's years* to come to this position.
116. **Eagle-eyed** (keen sighted): You indeed are *eagle-eyed* to be able to spot Ramesh amidst the crowd.
117. **An old flame** (sweetheart): She was *an old flame* of my brother.
118. **Gate crasher** (uninvited intruder): Sorry for *gate crashing* like this, but we could not help it.
119. **Gift of the gab** (power of talking): It was only through his *gift of the gab* that he managed to win the elections.
120. **Heart to heart** (frank and free): It was only after a *heart to heart* talk with Leela that we were able to sort out our differences.
121. **Not cricket** (unfair): It is definitely *not cricket* to cheat in exams.
122. **To pick a quarrel** (to seek fight): I would rather not tell him about Arun's behaviour for he is quick *to pick a quarrel* with anyone.
123. **Penny wise pound foolish** (to bother about small coins and to throw bundles of rupees carelessly): Strange it is but nevertheless true that there should be *penny wise pound foolish* people in the world.
124. **Once in a blue moon** (rarely): One comes across a real good Hindi movie only *once in a blue moon*.
125. **Maiden speech** (first speech of an individual): Most people cut a sorry figure in their *maiden speech*.
126. **To while away** (to spend time uselessly): Those who *while away* time at the sowing season cannot hope to reap the harvest.
127. **Yearn for** (to crave for): The modern youth badly *yearns for* recognition, which certainly is not easy to get.
128. **Yeoman's service** (excellent work done): Lincoln certainly rendered *yeoman's service* to humanity by eradicating slavery from his country.
129. **To tax one's patience** (to test one's patience): Dull and long speeches *tax the patience* of the audience.
130. **Ups and downs** (bad and good days): Almost everyone must have seen *ups and downs* in life.
131. **Utopian scheme** (unpracticable, unattainable ideal): The scheme of Family Planning Ministry to check the population explosion in a year's time, appears *utopian*.
132. **To throw mud at** (to accuse wrongly): Pakistan always keeps on *throwing mud at* our country.
133. **To take french leave** (to take leave without permission or information): Gone are the days when the government servants *took french leave* very often.

## Notes

134. **Through thick and thin** (under all circumstances): If you develop friendship with an individual, you must stand by him *through thick and thin*.
135. **Spick and span** (neat and clean): Do you expect a bachelor's flat to be *spick and span*?
136. **A square deal** (justice): The youth of the country must be given a *square deal* by the government.
137. **To save one's skin** (to protect oneself): Most of the invigilators do not check the students from using unfair means as they are only concerned *about saving their skin*.
138. **Small fry** (ordinary): Nobody in life cares for *small fries*.
139. **Scapegoat** (one who is made to bear the blame): When something goes wrong, everybody wants to make someone else the *scapegoat*.
140. **A stepping stone** (source of advancement): Your success in this examination should only be a *stepping stone* for your future plans.
141. **A thankless task** (a job with no satisfaction or reward): Many lecturers consider teaching to be a *thankless task*.
142. **Snake in the grass** (a hidden enemy): One must be cautious in life, as there are many *snakes in the grass* in this world.
143. **Lion's share** (major part): The Punjab wants a *lion's share* in the Beas river water.
144. **Lame excuse** (false excuse): The teachers are used to hearing *lame excuses* of the students.
145. **To keep abreast of** (to keep in touch): One must *keep oneself abreast of* the latest developments in the world.
146. **Losing ground** (becoming less powerful or acceptable): All the superstitious beliefs are *losing ground* with technological advancements.
147. **Jack of all trades** (one who knows a little about many things): In our world of specialisation, a *jack of all trades* cannot be successful.
148. **An iron will** (strong determination): Our Prime Minister has shown that he has *an iron will*.
149. **A herculean task** (a work which needs tremendous efforts): Checking population growth is really a *herculean task*.
150. **To hold one's tongue** (to be quiet): Many critics of the Prime Minister are *holding their tongues* out of fear.

## 16.2 Idioms and Phrases (Objectives Multiple Choice Type)

Below are given idioms followed by four alternative meanings, marked (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv). Tick (✓) the one which you think is the most appropriate.

### 1. Fling away

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| (i) to have an affair          | (ii) to flase up |
| (iii) to throw aside violently | (iv) to swing    |

### 2. To plough the sands

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| (i) to be extremely accompanied | (ii) to be resourceful                            |
| (iii) to be dejected            | (iv) to busy oneself in an unprofitable position. |

### 3. Long in the tooth

- |                     |                 |               |            |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
| (i) distant journey | (ii) rather old | (iii) ailment | (iv) young |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|

### 4. Knit one's brows

- |                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (i) to disappoint somebody | (ii) to frown                  |
| (iii) to have a headache   | (iv) to express discontentment |

- 5. Elbow room**  
 (i) opportunity for freedom of action (ii) special room for the guest  
 (iii) to give enough space to move or work in  
 (iv) to add a new room to the house French leave
- 6. French leave**  
 (i) a person who does not take leave (ii) leave without permission  
 (iii) to take long leave (iv) to take a day off and have fun
- 7. To call a spade a spade**  
 (i) to play cards (ii) to be arrogant  
 (iii) to speak plainly without mincing matters (iv) to be confident about everything one does
- 8. To commit to memory**  
 (i) to learn by heart (ii) to tax one's memory  
 (iii) to be forgetful (iv) to commit oneself totally to a task
- 9. To burn a hole in the pocket**  
 (i) to steal from someone's pocket (ii) to destroy other's belongings  
 (iii) to be very miserly (iv) money that is spent quickly
- 10. To bury the hatchet**  
 (i) to have found a treasure (ii) to make peace  
 (iii) to purchase something without discretion (iv) to act in a suspicious manner
- 11. To beggar description**  
 (i) something of least importance (ii) something beyond description  
 (iii) to describe a beggar (iv) an accurate description
- 12. To beat the air**  
 (i) efforts that are vain, useless (ii) to be satisfied with one's performance  
 (iii) to be extremely relieved (iv) to be very happy
- 13. To provide against a rainy day**  
 (i) to provide plentiful (ii) to provide for the whole family  
 (iii) to store in case of any difficulty (iv) to store for the rainy season
- 14. A bone of contention**  
 (i) area of agreement (ii) act of submission  
 (iii) act of gratitude (iv) subject of dispute
- 15. To be all eyes**  
 (i) to be cautious (ii) watching closely and attentively  
 (iii) to be amazed (iv) to be non-plussed
- 16. Swollen headed**  
 (i) to be suffering from illness (ii) to be conceited  
 (iii) to be narrow-minded (iv) to be dumb
- 17. To be like a fish out of water**  
 (i) to be face to face with death (ii) to be in a strange situation  
 (iii) to be in want of a house (iv) to be determined to live
- 18. To stir up a hornet's nest**  
 (i) to excite the hostility of people (ii) to do some social service  
 (iii) to be totally at a loss in a situation (iv) to be bankrupt

## Notes

**19. My hands are full**

- (i) I am having a lot of things to carry      (ii) I am having lots of money  
(iii) I am very busy      (iv) I am anxious

**20. To be at sea**

- (i) to be a sailor      (ii) to be a steward  
(iii) to be occupied      (iv) to be perplexed

**21. No love lost between them**

- (i) to have a fight      (ii) to dislike each other  
(iii) to be as friendly as ever      (iv) to be upset

**22. To be hand and glove with someone**

- (i) to be social      (ii) to be playful  
(iii) to be annoyed      (iv) to be intimate

**23. To play fast and loose**

- (i) to deceive someone      (ii) to be agile  
(iii) say one thing and do another      (iv) to be efficient

**24. To take stock of**

- (i) to imagine      (ii) to supply  
(iii) to survey      (iv) to attract

**25. A man of straw**

- (i) a man of no substance      (ii) a man without means  
(iii) a man of character      (iv) a generous man

**26. Wolf in sheep's clothing**

- (i) to act on the sly      (ii) to be a good actor  
(iii) to be a hypocrite      (iv) to be money-minded or materialistic

**27. To cut someone short**

- (i) to oblige someone      (ii) to assist someone  
(iii) to interrupt someone      (iv) to insult someone

**28. To stick to one's colours**

- (i) to refuse to yield      (ii) to be patriotic  
(iii) to be notorious      (iv) to be straightforward

**29. An old head on young shoulders**

- (i) to be old before one's age      (ii) to be wise beyond one's age  
(iii) to be youthful in spite of one's old age      (iv) to maintain good health

**30. To snap one's fingers at**

- (i) to honour someone      (ii) to greet someone  
(iii) to beckon someone      (iv) to defy

**31. By fits and starts**

- (i) irregularly      (ii) mostly  
(iii) after a short time      (iv) regularly

**32. Falling foul of**

- (i) quarrelling with      (ii) becoming friends with  
(iii) being dishonest with      (iv) being scared of

**33. To show a clean pair of heels**

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| (i) to admonish   | (ii) to reject   |
| (iii) to announce | (iv) to run away |

**34. Harp on the same string**

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| (i) to play music     | (ii) to dwell tediously on the same subject |
| (iii) to beat someone | (iv) to acknowledge                         |

**35. Keep a good table**

- |                                 |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| (i) to have artistic taste      | (ii) to throw a party  |
| (iii) to provide luxurious food | (iv) to be extravagant |

**36. Take up the cudgels**

- |                                    |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (i) to take notice                 | (ii) to accept a present   |
| (iii) to defend someone vigorously | (iv) to accept a challenge |

**37. Splitting hairs**

- |                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (i) to be worried        | (ii) to be venturesome            |
| (iii) to trouble someone | (iv) to dispute over petty points |

**38. A great hand at**

- |                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| (i) to be a good artist   | (ii) to be an expert |
| (iii) to be a good player | (iv) to be generous  |

**39. To make a pile**

- |                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| (i) to make a fortune     | (ii) to make a mess |
| (iii) to be absent-minded | (iv) to be corrupt  |

**40. Under someone's wing**

- |                           |                                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (i) to work under someone | (ii) to be under someone's protection |
| (iii) to be alert         | (iv) to be in the army                |

**41. To sow one's wild oats**

- |                                      |                       |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (i) to swear                         | (ii) to be at ease    |
| (iii) to engage in youthful excesses | (iv) to till the land |

**42. An olive branch**

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| (i) an offer of peace | (ii) an idea         |
| (iii) a lady          | (iv) a wicked person |

**43. Not worth a rap**

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| (i) worth nothing | (ii) very expensive  |
| (iii) worth a lot | (iv) modestly priced |

**44. In merry pin**

- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| (i) perplexed     | (ii) merry making      |
| (iii) embarrassed | (iv) in a merry humour |

**45. To leap the pale**

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| (i) to throw a bucket                                  |                     |
| (ii) to get into debt, to spend more than one's income |                     |
| (iii) to have much of fear                             | (iv) to become pale |

**46. To cut the gordian knot .**

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| (i) to perform the opening ceremony | (ii) to be present at the opening ceremony |
| (iii) to solve a difficult problem  | (iv) to get a sharp cut                    |



## Notes

- 47. To sow the wind and reap the whirlwind**  
 (i) to enjoy the fruits of hard work (ii) to be deprived of one's reward  
 (iii) to act wisely (iv) to suffer for one's foolish conduct
- 48. To play possum**  
 (i) to play hide and seek (ii) to feign ignorance  
 (iii) to cheat somebody (iv) to play seriously
- 49. A grass widow**  
 (i) a young widow  
 (ii) widow who has illicit relations with men  
 (iii) a woman whose husband is temporarily away from her  
 (iv) a working old woman
- 50. Mad as a March hare**  
 (i) sane (ii) intoxicated  
 (iii) as mad as a hare in spring (iv) slightly touched in the brain
- 51. Halcyon days**  
 (i) long days (ii) short days  
 (iii) happy and peaceful days (iv) disturbed days
- 52. Mother wit**  
 (i) to have an intelligent mother (ii) university  
 (iii) silly (iv) commonsense
- 53. A blind date**  
 (i) a cloudy day (ii) unknown future  
 (iii) meeting with someone you do not know (iv) death-day
- 54. Much ado about nothing**  
 (i) to take something seriously (ii) to play false  
 (iii) to make fuss (iv) to add
- 55. Judas' kiss**  
 (i) wooing (ii) a narrow escape  
 (iii) hypocritical affection (iv) a religious person
- 56. To have no truck with**  
 (i) have no means of conveyance (ii) scientifically backward  
 (iii) to have no trade with (iv) to have no dealings with
- 57. To clean the Augean stables**  
 (i) to purge the administration of its abuses (ii) to buy horses  
 (iii) to sell horses (iv) to improve working conditions
- 58. A fly in the ointment**  
 (i) to clean a thing (ii) to sterilise  
 (iii) a problem in a situation (iv) an unsuccessful attempt
- 59. Of the deepest dye**  
 (i) of the worst type (ii) of the best type  
 (iii) of the most colourless type (iv) of the colourless type
- 60. To throw up the sponge**  
 (i) to accept the challenge (ii) to forget the past offences  
 (iii) to admit defeat (iv) to send message

**61. To rule the roost**

- (i) to measure the height of something      (ii) to measure the depth  
(iii) to strike with a stick      (iv) to dominate

**62. Bats in the belfry**

- (i) to be mad      (ii) something needing cleanliness  
(iii) an impending danger      (iv) to be deceived

**63. To have a jaundice eye**

- (i) to have jaundice      (ii) to have fever  
(iii) to be prejudiced      (iv) to lose colour

**64. To go leeward**

- (i) to make up for the lost time      (ii) to move in the direction the wind blows  
(iii) to think that law is unnecessary  
(iv) to have a disregard for law and order and do as one likes

**65. To egg on**

- (i) to egg on slowly      (ii) to destroy slowly  
(iii) to give a walk over      (iv) to instigate to proceed further

**66. To haul over the coals**

- (i) to walk over the fire      (ii) to burn  
(iii) to scold for something done wrong      (iv) to throw into fire

**67. To draw a bead on**

- (i) to say prayers      (ii) to count the beads  
(iii) to do one's best      (iv) to take aim at

**68. Fabian policy**

- (i) dictatorial policy      (ii) democratic policy  
(iii) systematic policy      (iv) policy of cautious persistence

**69. At one's beck and call**

- (i) to climb the back      (ii) to call from behind  
(iii) to be always at one's service or command  
(iv) not to care for anybody

**70. To play to the gallery**

- (i) to try to get the appreciation from the least intelligent people  
(ii) to try to win appreciation of intelligent people  
(iii) to play in the gallery  
(iv) to disturb people sitting in the gallery

**71. On the Greek calendars**

- (i) the old calendar of the Greeks      (ii) the new calendar of the Greeks  
(iii) something within easy reach      (iv) something which is impossible

**72. Jog on**

- (i) to continue at a slow pace      (ii) sleep  
(iii) to neglect duty      (iv) to mishandle the case

**73. To bite one's lips**

- (i) to feel sorry      (ii) to be angry  
(iii) laugh at others      (iv) to have doubt

## Notes

**74. Nail to the counter**

- (i) to expose publicly as false
- (ii) to be firm
- (iii) to be unsure
- (iv) to touch the exact point

**75. To cool one's heels**

- (i) to give a cold treatment to somebody
- (ii) to be kept waiting for sometime
- (iii) a closed chapter
- (iv) a hot issue

**76. Bag of bones**

- (i) a bag full of bones
- (ii) a dead person
- (iii) a person about to die
- (iv) an extremely weak person

**77. All moonshine**

- (i) show
- (ii) lighted only by moon
- (iii) false
- (iv) far from reality

**78. To shake the dust off one's feet**

- (i) to wash feet
- (ii) to walk fast
- (iii) to leave a place with a sense of resentment
- (iv) to rest after a long journey

**79. To worm oneself into favour**

- (i) to win favour by flattery
- (ii) to win favour by bribery
- (iii) to win favour slowly and gradually
- (iv) to win favour fast .

**80. A bird of passage**

- (i) a flying bird
- (ii) an unreliable person
- (iii) one who stays for a short time
- (iv) bad time

**81. Thanks to**

- (i) be grateful
- (ii) as a result of
- (iii) ceremonially
- (iv) to wait for the benefactor

**82. With a string**

- (i) not to give any aid
- (ii) to give unconditional aid
- (iii) gift or aid with condition
- (iv) to accept aid

**83. To set stores by**

- (i) to value highly
- (ii) to hoard a large quantity of something
- (iii) to set up store
- (iv) fix a price

**84. To draw the long bow**

- (i) to shoot
- (ii) to exaggerate
- (iii) to criticize
- (iv) to admire

**85. To know the ropes**

- (i) to recognize the lost things
- (ii) to do rigging
- (iii) to know the procedure of doing a job
- (iv) to flog

**86. To give the devil his due**

- (i) to be just to a person even though he does not deserve such treatment
- (ii) to surrender oneself willingly when one's mistake is detected
- (iii) to punish an innocent person
- (iv) to punish a guilty person

**87. In the swim**

- (i) knowing latest current things
- (ii) to cross a river by a boat
- (iii) to cross a river by swimming
- (iv) to be in the river

- 88. To knuckle under**  
 (i) to be in a crisis (ii) to submit  
 (iii) to take rest (iv) to go to bed
- 89. To have a dig at**  
 (i) to criticise someone (ii) to sow seeds  
 (iii) to weed out (iv) to praise someone
- 90. All the go**  
 (i) in fashion (ii) fair  
 (iii) smooth (iv) total absence
- 91. Three R's**  
 (i) radiogram, radiograph, radio telescope (ii) rabble, rattle, razzle  
 (iii) reading, writing, arithmetic (iv) rail, radar, raft
- 92. A wild goose chase**  
 (i) foolish and useless enterprise (ii) to hunt  
 (iii) a violent chase (iv) to speak harshly
- 93. To rest on one's laurels**  
 (i) to cease to strive for further glory (ii) to be lazy  
 (iii) to be proud of one's victory (iv) to die
- 94. Raw deal**  
 (i) unjust treatment (ii) unripe fruit  
 (iii) early stage of business (iv) contract not yet finally decided
- 95. A forlorn hope**  
 (i) a plan which has remote chances of success  
 (ii) hope about unforeseeable future  
 (iii) hope of a single person  
 (iv) hope of a silly person
- 96. Printer's devil**  
 (i) messenger boy in a printing office (ii) blunder  
 (iii) low type of printed material (iv) delay in printing
- 97. To be on the carpet**  
 (i) subject to criticism (ii) under consideration  
 (iii) a heartfelt welcome (iv) on the ground
- 98. To bring the house down**  
 (i) to appeal greatly to the audience (ii) to pull down a building  
 (iii) to defame one's family (iv) to pass a bill unanimously
- 99. To have an edge on**  
 (i) to cut with a knife (ii) to threaten to wound  
 (iii) to be slightly better than (iv) to be in a dangerous situation
- 100. Sackcloth and ashes**  
 (i) to cremate (ii) penitence  
 (iii) dirty clothes (iv) cheap clothes

## Notes

## ANSWERS

1. (iii) 2. (iv) 3. (ii) 4. (ii) 5. (iii) 6. (ii) 7. (iii) 8. (i) 9. (iv) 10. (ii)  
 11. (ii) 12. (i) 13. (ii) 14. (iv) 15. (ii) 16. (ii) 17. (ii) 18. (i) 19. (iii) 20. (iv)  
 21. (ii) 22. (iv) 23. (iii) 24. (iii) 25. (i) 26. (iii) 27. (iii) 28. (i) 29. (ii) 30. (iv)  
 31. (i) 32. (i) 33. (iv) 34. (ii) 35. (iii) 36. (iii) 37. (iv) 38. (ii) 39. (i) 40. (ii)  
 41. (iii) 42. (i) 43. (i) 44. (iv) 45. (ii) 46. (iii) 47. (iv) 48. (ii) 49. (iii) 50. (iii)  
 51. (iii) 52. (iv) 53. (iii) 54. (iii) 55. (iii) 56. (iv) 57. (i) 58. (iii) 59. (i) 60. (iii)  
 61. (iv) 62. (i) 63. (iii) 64. (ii) 65. (iv) 66. (iii) 67. (iv) 68. (iv) 69. (ii) 70. (i)  
 71. (iv) 72. (i) 73. (ii) 74. (i) 75. (ii) 76. (iv) 77. (iv) 78. (iii) 79. (i) 80. (iii)  
 81. (i) 82. (iii) 83. (i) 84. (ii) 85. (iii) 86. (i) 87. (i) 88. (ii) 89. (i) 90. (i)  
 91. (iii) 92. (i) 93. (i) 94. (i) 95. (i) 96. (i) 97. (ii) 98. (i) 99. (ii) 100. (ii)

**16.3 Idiomatic Expressions**

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences choosing appropriate idiomatic expressions from among those given below. Make necessary changes in the idioms to suit the sentences.

I. By and large; (to) carry weight; (to) cut a sorry figure; (to) look into; (to) look for; (i) lion's share; (to) make both ends meet; (to) make head or tail of; (i) man of straw; (i) man of letters.

1. He was informed that the police were \_\_\_\_\_ the matter.
2. You do not care much for him. It means you think him to be \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Since morning, I have been \_\_\_\_\_ my lost watch.
4. Indian masses are \_\_\_\_\_ uneducated and ill-informed.
5. He spoke for about two hours, but I could \_\_\_\_\_ what he said.
6. Tagore is remembered as \_\_\_\_\_.
7. This argument of yours (not) \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Being the eldest son, he is sure to get \_\_\_\_\_ of his father's property.
9. He \_\_\_\_\_ in his maiden speech.
10. In these days of rising prices, an average middle class family with its limited resources finds it difficult \_\_\_\_\_.

## ANSWERS

1. He was informed that the police were *looking into* the matter.
2. You do not care much for him. It means you think him to be *a man of straw*.
3. Since morning, I have been *looking for* my lost watch.
4. Indian masses are *by and large* uneducated and ill-informed.
5. He spoke for about two hours, but I could *make neither head nor tail of* what he said.
6. Tagore is remembered as *a man of letters*.
7. The argument of yours *carries no weight*.
8. Being the eldest son, he is sure to get *the lion's share* of his father's property.
9. He *cut a sorry figure* in his maiden speech.
10. In these days of rising prices, an average middle class family with its limited resources finds it difficult *to make both ends meet*.

II. (To) come of; (to) stand by; (to) play the second fiddle; (to) burn the midnight oil; (i) man of parts; by dint of; by and by; (to) take stock of; (to) take to task; (to) throw mud at.

Notes

1. You are my friend. I shall \_\_\_\_\_ you through thick and thin.
2. You cannot expect her to take such a mean step. She \_\_\_\_\_ a royal family.
3. He is resolved to get first division marks. So, he \_\_\_\_\_.
4. He is sure to make his mark in life because he is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Don't lose patience; things will improve \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Modern educated wives are not prepared \_\_\_\_\_ to their husbands.
7. He has made a fortune \_\_\_\_\_ hard work and honesty.
8. A meeting of the students' leaders will be held at 10 A.M. \_\_\_\_\_ the situation in the campus.
9. You have to be cautious in dealing with him. He is in the habit of \_\_\_\_\_ others.
10. You will \_\_\_\_\_ for saying so.

## ANSWERS

1. You are my friend. I shall *stand by* you through thick and thin.
2. You cannot expect her to take such a mean step. She *comes of* a royal family.
3. He is resolved to get first division marks. So, he *burns the midnight oil*.
4. He is sure to make his mark in life because he is a *man of parts*.
5. Don't lose patience; things will improve *by and by*.
6. Modern educated wives are not prepared *to play a second fiddle* to their husbands.
7. He has made a fortune *by dint of* hard work and honesty.
8. A meeting of the students' leaders will be held at 10 a.m. *to take stock of* the situation in the campus.
9. You have to be cautious in dealing with him. He is in the habit of *throwing mud at* others.
10. You will *be taken to task* for saying so.

## 16.4 Review Questions

I. Below are written certain Idioms/phrases. Give the meaning of each phrase/Idiom.

- |                                 |                             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. An apple of somebody's eyes. | 2. To get into hot water.   |
| 3. A bone of contention.        | 4. A red carpet welcome.    |
| 5. To put up with.              | 6. By fits and starts.      |
| 7. A bolt from the blue.        | 8. To lay one's fingers on. |
| 9. To turn a deaf ear.          | 10. To poke one's nose.     |
| 11. A swan song.                |                             |

II. Write the meaning Of the following idioms/phrases. Also use each idiom/phrase in sentence of your own:

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. All and sundry.                     | 2. Pros and cons.                     |
| 3. Bird's eye view.                    | 4. To cry over spilt milk.            |
| 5. Nine times out of ten.              | 6. In a nutshell.                     |
| 7. A cat and dog life.                 | 8. A fair weather friend.             |
| 9. Ins and outs.                       | 10. A blessing in disguise.           |
| 11. A silver lining in the dark cloud. | 12. Hand to mouth.                    |
| 13. To have one's eggs in one basket.  | 14. To kill two birds with one stone. |
| 15. To turn the table.                 | 16. To fight tooth and nail.          |

Notes

ANSWERS

I

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Very dear to someone.                            | 2. To get into trouble.         |
| 3. Some issue of dispute.                           | 4. Welcome warmly.              |
| 5. To endure.                                       | 6. Working irregularly.         |
| 7. Unexpected thing.                                |                                 |
| 8. To point out precisely where something is wrong. |                                 |
| 9. To pay no attention.                             | 10. To interfere unnecessarily. |
| 11. The end .                                       |                                 |

II

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Everyone without distinction.           | 2. Arguments for and against.              |
| 3. General view.                           | 4. A loss for which there is no remedy.    |
| 5. Generally.                              | 6. In brief.                               |
| 7. To live a life full of quarrels.        | 8. A friend who deserts you in difficulty. |
| 9. All the secrets.                        | 10. A hidden favour.                       |
| 11. A ray of hope in misery.               | 12. Living on daily earning.               |
| 13. To risk one's all in a single venture. | 14. To achieve two things by one effort.   |
| 15. Reverse the original position.         | 16. To make every possible effort to win.  |

**16.5 Further Readings**



*Books*

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 17: Explanation of Unseen Passages in Verse

Notes

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Objectives

Introduction

17.1 Solved Explanations

17.2 Review Questions

17.3 Further Readings

### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Understand explanations of unseen verse.

### Introduction

In this section various unseen passages have been given for the students to evaluate their skill and develop their understanding. Some of these passages have been provided along with their explanations. While reading these passages students will be able to understand and explain easily.

### 17.1 Solved Explanations

#### 1. Read the following passages carefully and explain them:

St. Agnes' Eve – Ah, bitter chill it was!  
 The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;  
 the limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,  
 And silent was the flock in woolly fold:  
 Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told  
 His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
 Like pious incense from a censer old,  
 Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death.  
 Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.  
 His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;  
 Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,  
 And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,  
 Along the chapel aisle by slow degress:  
 The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,  
 Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:  
 Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries  
 He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails  
 To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

**Explanations:** These lines have been taken from the poem *St. Agnes Eve*, composed by John Keats. The poet begins with a description of the winter season and suggests some powerful pictures while depicting the effect of the season on animals and birds and then on man.

Keats begins the poem with the description of intense cold in winter on January 20th and mentions its uncomfortable effect on birds, animals and human beings. The owl, though protected by thick



## Notes

plumes, was very cold: the hare felt stiff in legs and so could not run easily on the stiff grass, and the flock of sheep in its fold made no bleating sound. Inside a beadsman was counting his prayers on a rosary, but his fingers were numb with cold, and his condensed breath, like vapour, was rising before the picture of Virgin Mary, as if it was smoke coming out of the burning incense in a censer, or like the soul of man rising to heaven, though nobody died. That day was sacred to St. Agnes.

It was night time and there was darkness inside the chapel where the beadsman had just finished his prayers. This stanza makes the inside of the chapel vivid to our eyes and at the same time creates the spirit of medieval life and faith in the Roman Catholic church. After finishing his prayer the beadsman stood up from his kneeling posture and taking a lamp in his hand, he left the spot. He looked weak and thin, and was barefoot and pale. Slowly he passed that part of the chapel where there were statues and effigies of knights and ladies of the tombs in which they were buried. These tombs were marked off by an iron railing, as if the place was their purgatory for the purification of their souls, which were biding their time by praying to escape from that gloomy cold place were. The beadsman shuddered to think what these knights and ladies in marble should be feeling, encased in cold stone as they. To the beadsman's imagination they were like living beings. And hence his sympathy for them in the purgatory of cold.

**2. Read the following passages carefully and explain them:**

My Life has stood – a Loaded Gun  
 In Corners – till a Day  
 The Owner passed – identified –  
 And carried Me away –  
 And now We roam in Sovereign Woods –  
 And now We hunt the Doe –  
 And every time I speak for Him –  
 The Mountains straight reply –  
 And do I smile, such cordial light  
 Upon the Valley glow –  
 It is as a Vesuvian face  
 Had let its pleasure through –  
 And when at Night – Our good Day done –  
 I guard My Master's Head –  
 'Tis better than the Eider-Duck's  
 Deep pillow – to have shared –  
 To foe of His – I'm deadly foe –  
 None stir the second time –  
 On whom I lay a Yellow Eye –  
 Or an emphatic Thumb –  
 Though I than He – may longer live  
 He longer must – than I –  
 For I have but the power to kill,  
 Without – the power to die –

**Explanations:** These lines have been taken from the poem "My Life had Stood – A Loaded Gun" composed by Emily Dickinson.

The poem begins with a brilliant conceit. Fused from the ambiguous abstraction "life" and the explicit concretion "loaded gun", it expresses the charged potential of the human being who remains dormant until "identified" into conscious vitality. The paradox of finding oneself through losing oneself in love is rendered in the poem by one word: she achieves south, and a hurricane rages overhead in the

sky. The poem is thus pictorial on a Miltonic scale and comparably terrific in revealing the crescent soul surrounded in every direction except the east by the blackness of darkness. A revealing gloss may be cited in Venerable Bede's comparison of the life of man to the sparrow that flies from the storm of winter into one window of a warm bright hall and out of another window into the black snow-filled night again. The difference of course is that Dickinson's vision is informed by terror as well as pathos.

The first stanza of the poem presents a tightly knit unit. Its shock value derives from the extreme disparity between the two things compared, incongruous in all respects except the startling points of resemblance that can be discovered. The trap lies in the great precision needed to avoid confusing them, the vital but subjective "life" and the objective but inanimate "gun". If she had used the strict method of metaphysical poetry, the succeeding stanzas would have been devoted to complicating and reconciling these disparities until they coalesce violently in the end.

### 3. Read the following passages carefully and explain them:

At length did cross an Albatross,  
Through the fog it came;  
As if it had been a Christian soul,  
We hailed it in God's name.

**Explanation:** These lines have been taken from Coleridge's famous poem, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. The poem is based on a dream story told by a friend of Coleridge. It was composed when Coleridge accompanied Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy on a tour. Some of the lines of this poem were suggested by Wordsworth.

The Ancient Mariner relates his voyage and the hardships he had to bear to a person who was on his way to attend a marriage feast. The voyage starts pleasantly but a storm hit them from the rear. They were helpless and were pushed down south till they reached the foggy and icy region of the South Pole. Their ship was hedged by ice on all sides.

During the icy-siege, when they were engulfed by fog, mist and snow, cut-off from all the living things of the world, they were overjoyed to see a sea-bird, an Albatross that came to the ship through the fog. It came to them as a good-omen. The sailors considered the bird a Christian soul which brings hope and happiness, and therefore, they greeted it as a good will message from God. They were sure that the bird was the harbinger of joy and their troubles would soon end.

### 4. Read the following passages carefully and explain them:

O happy living things! no tongue  
Their beauty might declare  
A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
And I blessed them unaware:  
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
And I blessed them unaware.

**Explanation:** These lines are from Coleridge's famous Ballad 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. In this Ballad (based on a dream of a friend and written in the company of Wordsworth) the poet elaborates on a Christian theme i.e. of redemption through penance and the grace of God. The theme is presented through the story of a Mariner who kills an innocent bird. For this sin he is punished by heat, thirst and loneliness. His companions die and he is left alone in the midst of a vast silent ocean. He tries to pray but finds himself unable to do so. After a very long agonising period he sees colourful water snakes. The lines given above tell us about his reactions.

While watching these beautiful creatures, love is kindled in his heart. Without being aware of it, he blesses them. This act of showing love is a redeeming act. For immediately afterwards the Mariner is able to pray. He experiences a sense of relief. This change he attributes to the benevolence of the saint whom he worships. In the next stanza we are told that the dead Albatross around his neck slips off and falls into the sea.

## Notes

**5. Read the following passages carefully and explain them:**

Day after day, day after day,  
 We stuck, nor breath, nor motion;  
 As idle as a painted ship

**Upon a painted ocean.**

**Explanation:** These lines have been taken from Coleridge's famous ballad 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. The ballad according to Coleridge is based on a dream of his friend Mr. Crick shank. It was composed during a walking tour with Wordsworth and Wordsworth's sister Dorothy. Wordsworth himself contributed a few lines and some suggestions.

The ballad tells a story of sin, punishment, penance and redemption. It tells us how a ship sailed to the Equator, how an Albatross hovered over it bringing hope and good cheer to the sailors, how an old Mariner thoughtlessly killed it with his crossbow, how the old Mariner had to suffer for his crime and to obtain absolution after very hard penance.

The bulk of the story is told through the Mariner's point of view. The Mariner narrates the most significant and agonising incident of his life. Overcome by a terrible urge, the Mariner stops a guest going to a wedding celebration and tells him the story. He tells him how his ship was driven by a storm towards the South Pole. The ship was struggling through a sea full of ice when an Albatross descended from the foggy sky. The men welcomed it as a good omen, as if it is 's Christian soul'. The bird cheered them up. But on an impulse, the Mariner shot it down with his crossbow.

The men at first cursed the Mariner for killing the bird of good omen. But when they the weather as fine as before they said that the Mariner had done nothing wrong by killing the bird. They thus become a party to the crime. The ship moves on but suddenly the Mariners find themselves in a calm and silent sea. The breeze stops blowing. The sails drop down and the ship stands still. Only the voices of the crew break the silence of the sea. The given lines tell us of the maddening stillness and silence of the ship and the sea.

Day after day their ship stood still. There was not the slightest movement, not even a breath of moving air. The ship stood as a painted ship in a picture of an ocean.

**6. Read the following passages carefully and explain them:**

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,  
 The furrow followed free;  
 We were the first that ever burst  
 Into that silent sea.

**Explanation:** These lines are from Coleridge's famous Ballad 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. Coleridge based this Ballad on a dream of one of his friends and composed it in the company of Wordsworth.

In this Ballad the poet tells the story of a Mariner who impulsively shot a kind innocent Albatross. He had to suffer a great deal on account of this. Only after hard penance he is set free from the burden of sin.

The story of the Mariner begins with a ship which sets sail for the Equator. It is driven by a storm towards the South Pole. While struggling through fog and ice it is greeted by a friendly Albatross. Its presence comforts the crew of the ship. The Mariner (the narrator of the story) impulsively kills the Albatross. The ship moves swiftly and steadily for sometimes but suddenly finds itself in a silent and calm sea. The lines given above give an account of this.

For sometimes the breeze blows and the ship forges ahead with form rising at its wake. It leaves a furrow of foam behind it suddenly the ship enters into a 'silent sea'. Its free motion is suddenly arrested. The Mariners seem to be the first to ever enter into such a region.

## 17.2 Review Questions

### 1. Read the passage given below and explain the following lines:

[Hints: Poem-Basben Adhem, Poet, Ogden Nash.]

My fellow man I do not care for.  
 I often ask me. What's he there for?  
 The only answer I can find  
 Is, Reproduction of his kind.  
 If I'm supposed to swallow that,  
 Winnetka is my habitat.  
 Isn't it time to carve Hic Jacet  
 Above that Reproduction racket?  
 To make the matter more succinct;  
 Suppose my fellow man extinct.  
 Why, who would not approve the plan  
 Save possibly my fellow man?  
 Yet with a politician's voice  
 He names himself as Nature's choice.

### 2. Read the poem given below and Explain the following lines:

[Hints: Poem-Mending Mall, Poet-Robert Frost]

Something there is that doesn't love a wall.  
 That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,  
 And spills the upper boulders in the sun,  
 And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.  
 The work of hunters is another thing:  
 I have come after them and made repair  
 Where they have left not one stone on a stone,  
 But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,  
 To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,  
 No one has seen them made or heard them made,  
 But at spring mending-time we find them there.  
 I let my neighbour know beyond the hill  
 And on a day we meet to walk the line  
 And set the wall between us once again.  
 We keep the wall between us as we go.  
 To each the boulders that have fallen to each.  
 And some are loaves and some so nearly balls  
 We have to use a spell to make them balance:  
 'Stay where you are until our backs are turned!  
 We wear our fingers rough with handling them.  
 Oh, just another kind of out-door game,  
 One on a side. It comes to little more:

### 3. Read the poem given below and explain the following lines:

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
 That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
 When all at once I saw a crowd,

Notes

A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.  
Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.  
The waves beside them danced, but they  
Out-did the sparkling leaves in glee;  
A poet could not be but gay,  
In such a jocund company!  
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:  
For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

4. Read the passage given below and Explain the following lines:

[Hints: Poem, Upon Westminster Bridge, Poet-William Wordsworth]

Earth has not anything to show more fair:  
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
A sight so touching in its majesty:  
This City now doth like a garment wear  
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.  
Never did sun more beautifully steep  
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;  
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!  
The river glideth at his own sweet will:  
Dear God! The very houses seem asleep;  
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

### 17.3 Further Readings



Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 18: One Act Play: Chitra by Rabindranath Tagore: Background of the Text

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Objectives

Introduction

18.1 Chitra's Background and Its Importance

18.2 Summary

18.3 Key-Words

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18.5 Further Readings

### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Know about Rabindranath Tagore.
- Discuss the Background of the Play Chitra.

### Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali polymath, becoming the initial non-European to win the 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature. He played a substantial function in bringing about a new awakening in India in the latter half of the nineteenth century. His lifestyle and inventive function supplied the then Indian society with a objective, path and a programme. The influence of his character transcended his native Bengal and came to be felt not only in other components of India but also abroad.

Tagore was a genius with a numerous-sided character. He was a poet, novelist, dramatist, musician, quick-story author, teacher, painter, educationist, philosopher and humanist. Shri Khanolkar, his biographer, describes his lifestyle as 'a extended dream of Color and music, of elegance and heavenly genius, this kind of as this globe has in no way identified before'.

Possibly no other modern Indian had this kind of diverse interests as Tagore had. He was a seeker. He desired to realize himself; and that he could only do by expressing himself. As the experiences and feelings differed, the media also varied. That is how we have Tagore the poet, Tagore the composer, Tagore the painter and so on.

Though a staunch nationalist, Tagore was a champion of internationalism, touring different nations and pleading for 'one planet'.



*Did u know?* Rabindranath Tagore has two of his songs - Jana Gana Mana and Amar Sonar Bangla - adopted as the national anthem of two nations, India and Bangladesh respectively. Shanti-Niketan stands to this day as a residing monument to the Gurudev. He composed above 4,000 songs. His compositions have come to be identified as Rabindra Sangeet.

Rabindranath Tagore is one of the best Indian writers in English. He primarily wrote in Bengali but his fame reached its zenith by his writings in English. He has proved himself in drama, short stories, poetry and so on. He was a versatile writer, with immense vitality. He was inspired by many writers in English like Shakespeare, the writers of Victorian age and the Romantic age. Born in an aristocratic

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family he acquired great knowledge from books and his antecedents. He had great access to the sources of literature. His works include – *The Sea Waves* in 1887, *Gitanjali* in 1912 for which he won the Nobel Prize, *Gora* in 1923 and many more. In the words of Edward Thompson, “*He had summed up in himself a whole age in which India had moved into the modern world*”.

Symbolism in the broader sense signifies something else, which is not told directly for instance peacock symbolizes pride, rising sun birth and setting sun with death. Shelly and Keats used a lot of symbolism. The French and the American writers used a lot of symbolism in their writing. English and European since World War I has been a notable era of symbolism in literature. Eliot’s *waste land* is a fine example of symbolism. Tagore is an Indo Anglian writer who has exuberantly offered a symbolism in ‘*Chitra*’ and ‘*The Post Office*’. Symbolism is an important aspect of his plays.

Symbolism is of two kinds: traditional and personal. *Yeats says “symbolism gives dumb things voices and bodiless things bodies”.*



## Notes

*Chitra* is the story of a young lady who is in guise of a warrior she experiences womanhood for the first time when she confronts Arjuna in a forest. She tries to win his heart by hook or by crook and so takes the help of the gods of spring and love or Vasantha and Madana respectively. Arjuna who is undergoing a penance falls for her but everything remains crystal clear when illusion vanishes.

Madana symbolizes love and it is through him that the love of Chitra becomes even more strong. In the opening lines of the play he says ‘*I am her who was the first born in the heart of the creator. I bind in bonds of pain and bliss the lives of men and women*’ Chitra falls in love because of the darts of Madana. Throughout the play there is a help to Chitra from Madana until she gets married.

Vasantha symbolizes spring or new life beauty, strength, vigour and youth. Vasanta in the opening lines of the play says ‘*I am eternal youth*’ she grants the boon of beauty to Chitra for a span of a year in order to win the heart of Arjuna through her physical attraction.

Passion or love is symbolized with fire Chitra says to the God of love and beauty that she felt for the first time the presence of man and love arose in her like a tongue of fire from ashes. She sees Arjuna and at once discards her man’s attire. She dresses up herself with ornaments like bracelets, anklets, waist chain and purple red saree which symbolizes womanhood and beauty, delicacy and exquisiteness.

The diverted mind of Arjuna from the penance to the physical attraction of Chitra is symbolized with the moon that dissolves the night’s row of obscurity. His extreme desire for her is further known when he says “*You are the wealth of the world and the end of all poverty and the goal of all efforts.*”

Chitra is dejected when she knows that Arjuna loved her borrowed beauty. The illusion is symbolized with the borrowed beauty. She compares that to a kinsuka flower which must die at one time or the other, with a brief span of life. She knows that this borrowed beauty will naturally fall like petals from an over blown flower. She gets vexed dressing up herself daily and asks Vasantha to take back the boon. The Goddess consoles her saying “*with the advent of autumn the flowering season is over then comes the triumph of fruitage*”.

When the year ends her beauty is renewed and is symbolized with Asoka leaves, white glow and the fragrance of jasmine. Now Arjuna hears about the warrior Chitra and is anxious to know about her. His anxiety is symbolized to a traveller who comes to a strange land and is eager to get some information about it.

But everything is reconciled illusion to truth, finite to infinite.

The final transformation or the realization from physical attraction to spiritual love of Arjuna and the disguised Chitra shedding off her boon and revealing her trueself is symbolized with a bloomed flower loading to fruitage Arjuna says “*Beloved, my life is full*”

## 18.1 Chitra's Background and Its Importance

Notes

Chitra: A Play in One Act is a play written by Bengali poet and Indian guru Rabindranath Tagore. Works by Tagore were largely based on classic Indian literature and ancient Sanskrit scriptures. Chitra is based on a story from the Mahabharata and is about the characters Arjuna and the king's daughter, Chitrangada. Arjuna asks the king, Chitravahana, for his daughter's hand in marriage. Arjuna and Chitrangada set out to have a child who will in the future take the throne and one day be king. Chitra is a highly recommended play for those who are interested in the writings of author Rabindranath Tagore and also for those who enjoy works based on ancient Indian stories.

In the play Chitra by Rabindranath Tagore, the stage directions have been omitted on purpose according to Tagore's wishes if the play were to ever be put into print. The setting is very minimal which is noted at the beginning of the play when the editor says, "The dramatic poem "Chitra" has been performed in India without scenery—the actors being surrounded by the audience". With this type of play, I think it would be beneficial to create a vast, beautiful setting as described by the characters' thoughts and what they say during the play. Making this shorter play into a movie would also create a bigger audience and give more room for creativity. By doing these two things the Western audience would have a better understanding of the meaning of the play and it would create a wider viewing area so the play would become more visible in the drama world. (I will mainly talk about the setting as if it was being directed on a stage, but I will add in parts about directing a movie as well).

Since Tagore opted for no stage directions, there is no exact setting mentioned in the preface to Scene I. In Arjuna's character description, the reader finds that he is of "warrior caste," and during the action is living as a Hermit retired in the forest." Having no specific setting can change a play drastically but it also has no limitations on what a director can do with the play to make it more entertaining. Going through the play scene by scene, the setting can be changed many times from a lavish forest or a sparkling river to a place in the sky where humans can meet and talk to their gods.

Scene I starts with Chitra speaking with two gods, Madana and Vasanta to which no setting is clear because the characters do not give a description in their dialogue. For this scene, I would create a stage with colorful blue, pink, yellow, and white clouds completely covering the floor. Madana and Vasanta would be walking together towards the center of the stage and Chitra would meet them halfway, speaking her first line as both parties stop in the middle. There would be a background screen showing the different seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter at a very fast pace. The background represents Vasanta who is "Lord of the Seasons" and the year that Chitra has to be beautiful. The clouds give a depth to the meaning that Madana and Vasanta are not mortal and they represent Madana who is "Lord of Love." The clouds and the background would help the Western audience understand that the gods are not human and the setting is not on Earth.

Scene II begins with Arjuna saying, "Was I dreaming or was what I saw by the lake truly there?" In this scene, I would re-create as realistic a lake as I could on a stage. Putting grass around the stage would be pertinent because I think that it would make the beauty of the new Chitra stand out while it reflected on the lake. The lake would be made of mirrors since Arjuna says, "She bowed herself above the shining mirror of the lake and saw the reflection of her face,". The mirrors could show the reflection perfectly and in turn, the audience would know that the play was about self confidence. The grass would reflect in the mirror lake as well and create a beautiful scene which would represent Chitra's transformation from a woman who was boyish, to a very feminine figure. This scene feels as if it takes place in the late afternoon as the sky turns to dusk so on the background screen I would have a sun slowly setting as Chitra and Arjuna spoke with each other to show the passing of time. The scene ends with a bit of a fight between the two, so I would have the stage darken to show the feelings between Chitra and the man she is in love with.

Scene III has Chitra speaking with the gods again, so I would bring back the scenery from scene I, but I would have fire on the background screen to emphasize Chitra's anger toward her own decision to become beautiful. Chitra says, "Ah, god of love, what fearful flame is this with which thou hast enveloped me!". The vast array of clouds from scene I would be included, but the stage would be a bit darker as to downcast them so the focus would be on the fire in the background. Also, in scene III, Chitra describes what happened the previous night with Arjuna which is very important. If this were



**Notes**

a movie instead of a play I would have the actors re-create this scene before scene III actually happened so the audience could see the relationship between Chitra and Arjuna forming. By showing this scene it would also help the audience understand the passing of time.

Scene IV begins with Arjuna and Chitra sitting together and Chitra is weaving a garland. I would make the garland full of beautiful flowers such as white lilies and pink roses to reinforce Chitra's newfound beauty as well as her innocence (the white lilies) and her feminine features (pink roses). I would keep the setting the same as in scene II because of the lake and its beauty and the grass would contrast well with the garland. At the end of the scene, prayer bells begin to ring, so to show that the scene was ending, I would dim the lights and sound prayer bells to cast a bit of an eerie effect on the audience to keep their attention.

Scene V is extremely short with just a few lines between Madana and Vasanta. For this scene, I would have the actors of the two gods on the stage, but the stage would be completely blackened so only the outlines of the figures could be seen. This would keep with the eerie effect at the end of scene IV and also add to the effect that these two are not mortal and they are a step above humans. Time has been fleeting and soon the year of Chitra's beauty will be up. To emphasize this, I will have a clock on the background screen with the hands moving very fast after the gods have spoken to show the Western audience that the play isn't in the span of just a few days, but a whole year.

Scene VI is another scene with Chitra and Arjuna speaking to one another. It is a shorter scene, so I would keep the stage clear of most items and use the background screen for effect. On the screen I would have pictures of flowers blooming then dying because of the lines that Chitra says at the end of the scene involving the death of flowers. The stage would be dimly lit and only the actors and background screen would be visible so the audience would focus on the dialogue which is very important in this particular part of the play.

Scene VII are the gods and Chitra talking about how her beauty will be ending that night. The stage will remain dimly lit and the gods will be on ladders, only their outlines visible to the audience. Chitra will be below them on her knees begging for her beauty while a moon is present in the background. A spotlight will remain on Chitra encasing her beauty to the audience and letting it radiate because it is her last night.

Scene VIII is when Arjuna meets the villagers so I would have a path of stone on the stage with grass surrounding it where the villagers and Arjuna meet on the path and have their discussion. Chitra and Arjuna would then be sitting together after a quick scenery change in a tent where they discuss that he will not be with her that night. I would have a spotlight on the tent so the audience focuses on the couple and what they are saying, but they won't be able to see the couple speaking; they will only be able to hear them. As he leaves her from the tent the stage grows dark and Chitra weeps.

Scene IX ends the play and is important because the audience finds out that Arjuna accepts Chitra as she is because she is a great leader and he finds her beautiful anyway. Arjuna and Chitra would be standing on the stage with no props and just a few lights so the audience can make out the actors. They would say their lines and the background would change to clouds floating in a blue sky to create a sense of calm and serenity for the audience to show acceptance and love.

The staging that I have created for the drama Chitra is important to the understanding of the Western viewing audience so they can perceive the moral of the story much easier. With more scenery and props used as well as a background screen it helps viewers who aren't familiar with Indian culture and traditions incorporate the meaning into their culture. Every culture has women who think like Chitra; as if they aren't good enough for the person they love. This play shows that no matter what your culture is, you are not alone and staging can help enforce this concept.

**Self-Assessment****1. Fill in the blanks**

- (i) Tagore has the special distinction of becoming the only poet to have two songs as National Anthem, one is ..... and the other is Amar Sonar Bangla.
- (ii) Rabindranath Tagore won Nobel Prize in ..... for literature.
- (iii) Symbolism is of two kinds, Traditional and .....
- (iv) Vasanta symbolizes .....

## 18.2 Summary

Notes

- Rabindranath Tagore's poetry, his plays, his fiction, and his prose are all infused with the writer's belief that the goal of human life is union with the divine, a being who is always accessible in prayer and in nature. An obsession with material goods, social status, or power shrinks the soul and harms both other individuals and society as a whole. So do rampant nationalism and narrow adherence to religious creeds. Even though Tagore recognizes the fact that in this world the righteous often suffer, he believes that only a soul that is unpolluted can know the joy of that mystic union. His Bengali writings brought Tagore recognition as the father of modern Bengali literature. His English works and his translations made him famous throughout the world. However, it is not just his originality and his lyricism that account for the high regard in which he is still held. Above all, he is valued as a profound thinker and a deeply spiritual man.
- This play is an enactment of the ancient legend of Arjuna and Chitrangada, daughter of the king of Maripur, as originally told in the Mahabharata. She was raised as a boy, since her father had no male heir. She was a great warrior, the protector and defender of her kingdom and its people. She fell in love with Arjuna, himself a great warrior and a hero, who had gone into the forest to meditate and to fulfill his vows – one of which was for twelve years of celibacy. She goes to the gods Madana (Eros), the god of love and Vasanta (Lycoris) the god of springtime and eternal youth. She begs for perfect beauty for one night of love with Arjuna. The gods grant her one full year. She becomes a vision of divine loveliness and perfect grace. Arjuna falls helplessly in love with her, and they spend a year in dalliance and joy. Eventually he meets some of her people, however, who are terrified of the bandits who are pouring over the borders to attack since she is gone to fulfill her vows. He is curious about Chitra, and comes to long for a woman who can be a boon companion as well as a lover. Chitra's year of beauty and femininity is over, and she reveals her true self; they are united (a beautiful gift from the god of love, don't you think?) In time, according to the prologue, he gives her and her father the son they need for the succession, and the consequent well-being of their people, to be king after them. He then embraces her and departs, going on his way to continue his travels.
- Some of the insights in the play are amazing considering that the author is a man dealing with a woman's psychology. She berates her beautiful body as being her own rival – she does not feel at home in it, and does not feel comfortable or loved by Arjuna for herself. It is a veil to her true self, and one she can scarcely bear to wear for the year of their love and her inner loneliness, knowing it is transient, and believing he will not care for her at all once her true self and form is revealed. The fact that the exact opposite is true must have come as a joyous and beautiful surprise to her, and perhaps (though the story does not say so) to him as well. Their are speeches of unsurpassed beauty, in praise of each other, and of the transience and beauty of love that are well worth reading the play for themselves, aside from all other considerations.

## 18.3 Key-Words

1. Penance : An act of self-mortification
2. Vasanta : Spring
3. Her innocence : White Lilies
4. Vanvas : Forest life exile

## 18.4 Review Questions

1. Discuss Rabindranath Tagore as a poet.
2. Explain the Background of the text 'Chitra'.
3. Write a critical appreciation of 'Chitra'.

Notes

**Answers: Self-Assessment**

1. (i) Jana Gana Mana (ii) 1913  
(iii) Personal (iv) Spring, new life beauty

**18.5 Further Readings**



*Books*

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 19: Chitra by Rabindranath Tagore: Detailed Study

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Objectives

Introduction

19.1 Tagore's play Chitra with Critical Remarks

19.2 Summary

19.3 Key-Words

19.4 Review Questions

19.5 Further Readings

### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Introduce the play 'Chitra'.
- Discuss the Play 'Chitra'.

### Introduction

Chitra is doubtless the most fascinating and the most satisfying of Tagore's plays. It is his loveliest drama, a lyrical feast. It is beautiful, touching, of one texture of simplicity throughout and within its limits a perfect piece of art. Behind the apparent simplicity of structure there is clarity of vision and maturity of art.

Chitra is not a play of action, but a play of feeling, a play of carnival delight and external identity. The central theme of the play is love. It is in this fullness of love in which man and woman share equally that the message of the drama 'Chitra' is contained. The play is marked by a subtle interplay of mood within mood. It is a genuine symbolic play, yielding more meaning at every successive reading. The world of Chitra is the world of mythology and tradition. It is a drama of youth; it is a drama of growth.

Tagore represents the symbolism in Chitra – namely the symbolism of the human psyche of youth and growth. He refers to the symbols – “The organic world” of flower and fruit and plant and creature. There are also the symbols of metaphysical passions of “illusion and reality.” Again he has also stated the symbols of mythological consciousness of Madana and Vasanta and the beloved elves. The whole point of the play is that youth itself is a sudden spring-time miracle, for it comes as it were suddenly and fades away as suddenly, as unaccountably. This lyrical drama is based on the following story of the Mahabharata.

In the course of his wanderings, in fulfilment of a vow of penance, Arjuna comes to Manipur. There he sees Chitrangada, the beautiful daughter of Chitravahana, the king of the country. Smitten with her charms, he asks the king for the hand of his daughter in marriage. Chitravahana asks him who he is and learning that he is Arjuna, the pandava tells him that Prabhanjana, one of his ancestors, in the kingly line of Manipur, had, long been childless. In order to obtain an heir, he performed severe penances. Pleased with these austerities, the God Shiva gave him the boon that he and his successors shall each have one child. It so happens that the promised child has invariably been a son. He, Chitravahana, is the first to have only a daughter. Chitrangada to perpetuate the race. He has therefore always treated her as a son and has made her his heir. Continuing, the king says : “The one son that will be born to her must be the perpetuator of my race. That son will be the price that I shall demand for this marriage. You can take her if you like, on this condition.”

Arjuna promises and takes Chitrangada to wife and lives in his father's capital for three years. When a son is born to them, he embraces her with affection, and taking leave of her and her father sets out again on his travels.

**Notes**

The theme unfolds itself, in Tagore's play, in nine scenes. The first scene deals with the rejection of Chitra by Arjuna, while the second with the rejection of Arjuna by Chitra. The third describes the delicious union of the hero and the heroine. In the fourth scene Tagore refers to the decline of Arjuna's infatuation. It is followed by an interlude in the fifth scene. While the sixth scene describes the further decline of Arjuna's infatuation, there is an interlude again in the seventh scene. In the eighth scene, Arjuna comes across the "other" Chitra and the last scene represents the course of events from the "Lie" to the "Truth".

In 'Chitra' the chief symbol is the offer of beauty to Chitra by the Gods, Madana and Vasanta, for the period of a year. The symbol is not deliberately displayed. It grows naturally and spontaneously out of the story so that it is not observed as a symbol in the beginning at all. There is neither conflict nor clash between the realistic level and the symbolic meaning. There is a fusion between infinite and finite, truth and illusion, spirit and body, love and desire, joy and pain, peace and restlessness, true self and false self.

Tagore must have been influenced by the Irish Literary Movement of W.B. Yeats, although nothing concrete can be said about the influence of the symbolist movement in Europe. His use of symbolism is the result of his conception of drama, more particularly with poetic drama. In this play 'Chitra' all the symbols are sustained throughout by the controlling allegory of the two ashrams of Kalidasa's Shakuntala. Tagore has created for himself a wonderfully, rounded form, for a play racing the passage of the human soul through the eternal cycle of innocence and experience and consummation.

Thus Tagore has wonderfully conveyed in this short drama with consummate skill "an endless meaning in the narrow span of a song." He has the original gift of spreading the atmosphere of the ideal world over fanitair forms and incidents. Prof. Jadnath Shankar says, "Chitra is no mere tale of joys and pains of a lass. It is a criticism of life."

### **19.1 Tagore's Play Chitra' with Critical Remarks**

#### **Scene I**

Tagore makes use of the mode of retrospective narration in this play. Chitra meets Madana, the god of love in whose bonds the lives of men and women with their pains and bliss are bound closely. She also meets Vasanta, the king of the seasons and the eternal youth. Vasanta is also the friend of Madana. The Gods ask her who she is and the reason for her immersing in strict penance and mortification. She replies that she is the daughter of the kingly house of Manipur. She further states that Lord Shiva has granted to his great, great grandfather a continuous line of male progeny. Her nature is so invincible that God's word also proves powerless in changing the sex in her. So she is always dressed as a man and she is brought up carefully as a son by her father. She is not aware of the feminine tricks of winning men's heart. She has very strong hands with which she can bend the bow. But she is not at all an expert in Cupid's archery, which is meant the play of eyes.

She explains to Madana that one day he (she) wanders alone in the forest on the bank of the Puma river in search of game. Then she comes across a man lying on a bed of dried leaves. She seriously asks him to step aside. But he does not pay any attention to her at all. He pricks her with the sharp end of her arrow in contempt. He rages and leaps up like a sudden tongue of fire from a heap of ashes. But he stares at her with a lovely smile on seeing her boyish looks. On seeing him, she feels for the first time like a woman. She becomes conscious of the fact that a man is standing before her. Madana asks Chitra about the subsequent developments. On being asked his whereabouts Arjuna replies that he is Arjuna of the well-known Kuru clan. She stands aghast like a statue and forgets to pay homage to him. He is the great ideal of her dreams and it is known that he has taken a vow of celibacy for twelve years. She dreams of having a single combat with him. He leaves her keeping her in her thoughts and disappears among the trees. She does not greet him, does not speak to him. She does not even beg excuse of him, but stands there like an uncivilised rustic. The next morning she changes her male dress and puts on the dress of a woman, wearing bracelets, anklets, waist-chain and silk dress. She goes in search of Arjuna and finds him in the forest temple of Shiva.

She feels shameful and cannot remember the conversation with Arjuna. She remembers the only words uttered by him. "I have the vow of celibacy. I am not fit to be thy husband". His words came

upon her ears like red-hot needles. It was like a bolt from the blue and she broke her vow into two pieces and she also threw away her arrows in the fire. She begged Madana (the God of Love) to impart to her the lesson apt to the occasion and provide her the weapon of the unarmed hand so as to enable her to make Arjuna a captive in love.

She knows that there is a long hard way of winning him. It is the labour of a life-time to make one's true self known and honoured. So she tries the short and easy way. She prays to Madana and his companion Vasanta (the lord of the Seasons) to grant her the gift of physical beauty just for one brief day. Her prayer is granted not for just twenty four hours, but for the span of a whole year. But she does not have the patience to wait for so long a time.

### Critical Remarks

The main characters in the play-Chitra and Arjuna-are first introduced. The first scene is the key-note of the play. The main essence of the story namely the love of Chitra for Arjuna, his rejection and the consequences that follow are highlighted here. Chitra's love-suit is rejected by Arjuna not for once, but two times-when she is dressed like a warrior and when she is casually dressed as a woman. So she seeks the help of Madana (the god of love) and his companion (Vasanta, the God of Seasons).

It is a play of passion and romance. The gods form an integral part of the play. They grant her physical beauty and charm, not for a day as solicited by her, but for a whole year.

The play makes the fact clear that Tagore has written it in his youth and hence he introduces Madana and Vasanta, as everything in his neighbourhood then is fresh, youthful and charming. A sense of sensuousness pervades the whole play.

The play also exposes the features of the characters of both Arjuna and Chitra. She forgets everything on seeing him and desires to win the heart of Arjuna, who is tall, handsome and masculine. He has taken a vow of celibacy for twelve years and nothing can shake him.

### Scene II

#### *Rejection of Arjuna by Chitra*

There is a complete transformation of Arjuna in this scene. He is introduced as loudly thinking in a soliloquy about an "apparition of beauty in the perfect form of a woman". She is found standing on a white slab of stone at the edge of water. The Earth must be feeling quite joyful under her bare white feet. As the sky gets cleared off in the early dawn, the "Vague veilings" of her body would melt into air. She looked into the mirror of the lake and found the reflection of her face. She stood still smiling, loosening her hair and allowing it to lie on the earth at her feet.

She kept her bosom bare and had a look at her arms faultlessly framed. A feeling of delight dawned on her as she looked at her blooming youth and lustrous skin. She had a sweet smile coupled with a shade of sadness. She bound her coils of hair, covered her arms with the veil and slowly drifted away like the splendid evening slipping into the night.

Arjuna was struck with the bliss of desire which touched him like a flash and then disappeared. He strongly wished to possess this apparition of beauty. It was that of Chitra, the incarnation of all charms provided by Madana and Vasanta. He stood there defeated, arrested by her beauty. He forgot all the vows of his celibacy and begged her to accept him as her own. There was a sudden change in the situation. Gods came to her rescue and made Arjuna her captive. Arjuna's soul was defeated and his body won the victory.

Chitra dressed herself as a woman and tapped the door of Arjuna, who introduced himself as a Kshatriya. Chitra greeted him and said that he was her honoured guest. She informed him that she lived in that temple. She expressed her inability by stating that she did not know in what way she could show him hospitality. But Arjuna replied that her very sight (presence) was indeed the highest hospitality. He implored her permission and asked why she chose to live in that solitary temple depriving all mortals of a vision of such extraordinary beauty and loveliness.

Chitra replied that she harboured a secret desire in her heart and that she had been offering daily prayers to Lord Shiva for the fulfilment of her desire. Arjuna could not understand what she could desire, when she herself was the centre of attraction and the desire of the entire world. He went on

## Notes

explaining that he had travelled from one corner of the world to the other end of the world. He had seen all the most precious, most beautiful and greatest things on the earth. He would reveal his knowledge to her whether it be regarding objects or person. Chitra answered that the person whom she sought after was known to everybody.

Arjuna felt inwardly glad and asked her who that fortunate, favourite and reputed person was that captured her heart. She answered that the object of her love had originated from the highest of all royal houses and that he was the greatest of all heroes. Arjuna suggested to her that she should not offer such wealth of beauty as she possessed, on the altar of false reputation. He made it clear to her that "Spurious (false) fame spreads from tongue to tongue like the fog of the early dawn before the sun rises". He once again asked her who that supreme hero, in the highest of kingly lines was. Chitra remarked that he was envious of the fame of other men. She would ask him whether he was not aware of the fact that the royal house of the Kurus was the most famous all over the world. Arjuna simply explained at it when she asked him whether he had never heard of the greatest name of that far-famed house (of Kurus). Arjuna wanted to hear the name from her own lips. Chitra replied that he was Arjuna the conqueror of the world. She had culled that imperishable name from the mouths of the multitude and hidden it with care in her maiden heart. As she uttered these words, she found a disturbed look in the hermit Arjuna. She was afraid whether that name had only a deceptive spark. If it were so, she would not hesitate to break that casket of her heart and throw the false gem to the dust. At this, Arjuna, known for his name and fame, bravery and prowess, prostrated at her feet and humbly begged her not to banish him from her heart. He thus revealed his identity, by stating that he himself was Arjuna, the love-hungered guest at her door.

Chitra then asked him whether it was not a fact that Arjuna had taken a vow of celibacy for twelve long years. He replied that his vow of chastity (celibacy) was dissolved as the moon dissolved the night's vow of obscurity. She remarked that it was shameful on his part to make himself false, by looking at her dark eyes and milk white arms. She felt that it was not the way in which man's highest homage to woman should be exhibited. She was surprised why that "frail disguise, the body, should make him blind to the light of the deathless spirit. She then stated the fame of his heroic manhood was false.

Arjuna exclaimed and confessed that fame, the pride of prowess was vain. Everything seemed to him nothing more than a dream. She (Chitra) alone was perfect. She was the wealth of the world, the end of all poverty, the goal of all efforts, the one woman. He extols her by saying "Others there are who can be but slowly known. While to see you for a moment is to see perfect completeness once and for ever".

Then Chitra advised Arjuna that she was not what she looked to be (a mere shadow) and that she was the deceit of a god. She further directed him to leave the spot and remarked that he should not woo falsehood and that he should not offer his great heroic heart to an illusion.

## Critical Remarks

The keynote of this scene is that the body wins over the soul. Arjuna falls a victim to the apparition of perfect beauty namely Chitra, who enjoys the bliss of loveliness endowed by the Gods. She reveals to him her identity by stating that she is falsehood, an illusion and a deceit of god. She is more saddened than elated. As far as Arjuna is concerned, everything appears to be a mere dream. He is stricken with love on seeing her extraordinary charms and forgets his vow of celibacy (chastity). He is prepared to lose himself in the world of dreams rather than listen to Chitra's advice.

Chitra makes use of all possible tricks to win over her lover. She makes Arjuna her captive and he desires to drink deep into the joys of her . beauty and charms. There is development in the plot and the story. The blessings of the Gods are evidently seen in the bliss of Chitra.

## Scene III

Chitra feels herself restless to send him (Arjuna) away like a (beggar), haying felt his heart struggling to break its bounds, urging its passionate cry through the entire body. She felt after meeting Arjuna, as though she was enveloped with a fearful flame, which was burning her. She, in her turn, also burnt everything that she touched.

Madana and Vasanta made their appearance again. Madana desired to know what had happened the previous night. Chitra related that the previous evening she lay down on a grassy bed covered with the petals of spring flowers. She started recollecting the wonderful praise of her beauty as she had heard from Arjuna. drinking drop by drop the honey that she had stored during the long day. She forgot the history of her past life like that of her previous births. She felt "like a flower which had but a few fleeting hours to listen to all the humming flatteries and whispered murmurs of the woodlands and then must lower its eyes from the sky, bend its head and at a breath give itself up to the dust without a cry thus ending the short story of a perfect moment that has neither past nor future. On listening to this, Vasanta made a comment that a limitless life of glory could bloom and spend itself in a morning. Madana continued the comparison by stating that it was like an endless meaning in the narrow span of a song.

Chitra proceeded with the narration of the events that took place subsequently. The "Southern breeze cajoled her to sleep. Silent kisses dropped over her body from the flowering malati bower overhead. Each flower chose her hair, her breast, her feet as a bed to lie on. She slept and during the course of her sleep, she felt as if some deep and curious look, like tapering fingers of flame touched her slumbering body. She was startled to see a Hermit standing before her. The moon Goddess felt shy and moved on to the western side, gazing at "This wonder of divine art wrought in a fragile human frame".

The air was filled with sweet-scented perfume. The silence of the night was vocal with the chirping of the crickets (small singing creatures). The reflections of the trees hung motionless in the lake. Arjuna, with his stick in the hand, stood tall and straight and silent like a forest tree. She felt as though she was away from the realities of life, and underwent a dream birth into a shadow land. Shame slipped to her feet like loosened clothes". She heard him call her "his most beloved". She felt as if all her forgotten lives united as one and responded to it. She extended her arms to him and offered herself to him appealing to him to take her, to take all that she was.

Soon the moon set behind the trees and one curtain of darkness covered everything. Heaven and earth, time and space, pleasure and pain, death and life combined themselves in an immeasurable ecstasy. She woke up with the first ray of light, the first chirping of birds, and sat leaning on her left arm. She found him (Arjuna) still asleep with an unclear smile about his lips like the crescent moon in the morning. The rosy red spark of the dawn fell upon his noble forehead. She sighed and stood up. She looked about her and found the same old earth. She began to recollect her past and started running like a deer, that was afraid of her own shadow, through the forest-path scattered with sheppali flowers. She came across a lonely corner and sitting down, covered her face with both hands. She tried to weep and cry. but no tears came rolling down her eyes.

Madana addressed Chitra as the daughter of mortals and impressed upon her that he had stolen the fragrant wine of heaven from the divine store-house, filled with it one earthly night to the brim, and placed it in her hand to drink. But still there was cry of anguish (misery) in her. Chitra bitterly answered that she was no doubt offered the first union of love, but that was taken away from her grasp. She became conscious that her borrowed beauty, the falsehood in which she was entwined, would soon vanish, like the petals from an over-blown flower, leaving her ashamed of her naked poverty and making her weep day and night. Chitra further stated that she was pursued by this cursed appearance like a demon robbing her of all the prizes of love and all the kisses for which her heart was thirsty. Then Madana showered sympathy on her by remarking that her single night had gone in vain. The barque (ship or boat) of joy came in sight, but the waves would not permit it to touch the shore.

Chitra felt that Heaven came so close to her hand that she forgot for a moment that it had not reached her. But when she woke up in the morning from her dream, she found that her body had become her own rival. It was her hateful task to decorate her body every day, to send to her beloved and enable her to be caressed by him. So she appealed to the Gods to take back their boon.

Madana then asks Chitra how she could stand before her lover if the boon were withdrawn from her. Moreover it would be cruel to take away by force, the cup from his lips when he had not even enjoyed the first draught of pleasure. She would be treated with any amount of resentful anger in such a situation.



**Notes**

Then Chitra remarked that such a state would be better than the present predicament in which she was placed. Then she would reveal her true self to him, which could be nobler than the present disguise (falsehood) of beauty. Then even if he rejected her or hated her or broke her heart, she would be able to bear that silently.

Vasanta then asked her to cool down and listen to his advice. With the on-set of autumn, the flowering season would be followed by the wealth of fruits. An appropriate time would definitely come when the heart-cloyed bloom of the body would bend down and Arjuna would gladly accept the abiding fruitful truth in her. So Vasanta advises her to go back and indulge in her mad festival.

**Critical Remarks**

The physical union of Arjuna and Chitra is referred to here. But it results in the anguish of her soul. She is conscious of the fact that her physical beauty is a borrowed one. So it is bound to slip away soon and she will be left weeping day and night. The barque (boat) of joy is in sight but the waves will not permit it to touch the shore. As the flowering season comes to a close, it leads to the success of fruitage. The cycle of seasons thus move on in this world.

Tagore presents the finest possible evocative poetry with all its lyrical excellence and splendour in the description of the consummation of the union of Chitra and Arjuna.

The action of the play is revealed through the dialogues with Madana and Vasanta. The poet makes the readers know about the symbolical meaning of the play. Man is not just satisfied with the earthly happiness, but deeply desires a bliss of the highest type relating to the spirit.

The language is highly poetic and romantic and the whole atmosphere gets permeated with poetic and romantic splendour. The theme and language are perfectly fused. The conflict in Chitra's mind is also made evident through her dialogue with Madana and Vasanta. She enjoys the bliss of earthly happiness in the physical union with Arjuna, but suddenly becomes aware of the fact that her beauty is a borrowed one. She is tossed between hope and despair. She is however optimistic that Arjuna will gladly accept the abiding fruitful truth in it. Chitra feels that her body has become her own rival.

**Scene IV**

There is a perceptible decline in Arjuna's infatuation. As the days pass, Arjuna's ardour and enthusiasm get diminished. He has time to watch and think. Chitra, having observed the warrior Arjuna watching her, asks him why he does so. Arjuna replies that he is watching her weaving the garland. He appreciates her skill and grace of her finger-tips in weaving the garland. While watching her, he also goes on thinking. Chitra asks him what he has been thinking. He feels that by weaving the garland, she is weaving his days of exile into an immortal wreath (garland of flowers) to crown him when he decides to return home. Chitra is dumbfounded with astonishment on hearing the word 'home' and remarks that their love is not meant for a home. Arjuna asks again why it is not intended for home. Then she asks Arjuna not to talk of a home. She wants him to take to his home what is permanent and strong. She further asks him to leave the little wild flower where it was born. She again asks him to leave it beautifully to die among all fading blossoms and decaying leaves at the end of the day. She requests him not to take it to his palace hall to throw it away on the stony floor which has not pity for the things that fade away and are simply forgotten.

Arjuna is highly puzzled at her reactions and enquires of her whether their love belongs to that kind. She replies in the positive and stresses that their love is no other than what she has pointed out earlier. She states that there is no need for regretting it since what is meant for idle days does not outlive them. She remarks that joy turns into pain when the door by which it should depart is shut (closed) against it. She advises him to take it (love) and keep it as long as it exists. Physical enjoyment begets satisfaction after indulging in it for sometime. But it is not permanent. One desires it again and again. She points out that the evening has set in and asks him to wear the garland in his neck.

Chitra feels tired. She asks Arjuna to take her into his arms and embrace her. She assures him that all fruitless obstacles of discontentment should disappear at the sweet meeting (mating) of their lips. Arjuna feels otherworldly and asks her to be silent. He asks his beloved Chitra to listen to the sounds of prayer bells from the distant village, stealing upon the evening air across the silent trees.

## Critical Remarks

## Notes

There is a decline in Arjuna's infatuation. He dreams of 'home'. Chitra points out that such evanescent love as theirs is not meant to be taken home. Perhaps she is too self-conscious or too distrustful of the out-come of their love.

The sound of the prayer bells from the distant village-temple is a sort of a knell for Arjuna to wake him from the shadowy-world to the world forever and he has to return to the dry realities. He realises gradually that he is in the company of Chitra under the guise of borrowed beauty.

Arjuna remarks that Chitra is weaving the garland of flowers skilfully and this indicates that she is weaving his days of exile into an immortal wreath. But Chitra contradicts his statement by saying that the kind of love which he carries in his mind is not meant to be taken home. He can take home only that which is everlasting and powerful. She adds that the wild flower (Chitra) will be left to her fate at the very place of its (her) birth. It (she) will be left to die at the close of the day along with all fading flowers and decaying leaves.

Chitra's remark that "That which was meant for idle days should never outlive them" is highly significant. She further states "Take it and keep it as long as it lasts. Let not the satiety (satisfaction) of your evening claim more than the desire of your morning could earn". Physical enjoyment brings satisfaction after blissful partaking in it.

## Scene V

### Interlude

The enthusiasm of Vasanta (Youth and beauty) cannot keep pace with the demands of Madana (love). As spring season comes to a close, it becomes obviously weak. Vasanta admits that he is unable to keep his speed with Madana. He feels terribly tired. It is indeed a tough task for him to keep alive the fire (The passion of bodily love) for long. He is overtaken by sleep and the fan drops from his hand. The brightness of the fire (bodily love) is covered with ashes. But he wakes up from his deep sleep and rescues the weary flame by making use of his full strength, but fact is that it cannot continue forever.

Madana makes it clear that he is aware that Vasanta is as fickle (changing the mind often) as a child. He also remarks to Vasanta that his play (part) is always restless both in heaven and on earth. All those things which he had built with scrupulous care and endless details, are destroyed by him in a short time without any feeling of regret or remorse, but their work (namely the granting of the boon of beauty to Chitra) is coming to a close (an end) soon. The days which are filled with winged pleasure are flying speedily. Moreover the year which is almost at its close, falls into a swoon (falls into a sleep) in a bliss of joy and rapture.

## Critical Remarks

Madana and Vasanta make their appearance for the third time. They form an integral part of the play. They carry the action forward with a suggestion that the earthly happiness of Chitra and Arjuna, having reached its apex (climax) is almost coming to a close.

Physical happiness like God Madana, is as fickle (ever-changing) as a child. It is restless. All that is built up with great care and minute details is shattered to pieces in a short while. The language made use of by the poet is full of lyrical excellence. The scene is embedded with poetic, romantic and sensuous splendour.

## Scene VI

### Further Decline in Arjuna's Infatuation

Arjuna who readily changed from asceticism to love, now longs for the old days when he hunted in his brother's company. Introspection puzzles him. He wonders who his beautiful companion is-and where her home, and who her parents might be. He says "Give me something to clasp, something that can last longer than pleasure, that can endure even through suffering".

Arjuna, on waking in the morning, finds out that his dreams have distilled a gem. He has no box to keep it safe (safeguard it). He has no crown to fix it upon. He has no chain from which to hang it.

### Notes

However, he has no heart (no intention) to throw it away. As his royal right arm is idly occupied in holding it (the gem), he forgets his duties.

Meanwhile Chitra enters and asks him to convey his thoughts to her. Arjuna informs her that his mind is busy with the thoughts of hunting that day. There is torrential downpour of rain fiercely beating the hill-side. The forest is thickly enveloped with the dark shadow of the clouds. The overflowing stream crosses all barriers (obstacles) with mocking laughter. On such occasions of rainy days, all the five brothers (the Pandavas) used to go to the Chitraka forest to hunt the wild animals.

Arjuna feels happy to remember those good old days. Their hearts used to dance in tune with the drum-beat of the rumbling clouds. The woods were resounding with the screeching sounds of peacocks. The timid deer were unable to hear their approaching steps on account of the sound of the showering rain and the noise of water-falls. The leopards used to leave their tracks on the wet land, betraying their lairs. After the completion of their sport (hunting), they would dare each other to swim across the turbulent streams on their way back home. Arjuna clearly states that his spirit is restless and that he deeply desires to go on hunting.

Chitra advises him to first run down the quarry that he has been following. She doubts whether he can catch the enchanted deer that he pursues. She feels that he cannot, since the wild creature (the deer) eludes his grasp, while it most nearly seems to be his. Like the wind chased by the mad rain that lets loose thousand arrows after it, the deer goes free and unconquered (un-caught). She points out that their love is similar to that. He pursues the fleet-footed spirit of beauty making use of every possible arrow available in his hands. In spite of that, she says that this magic deer runs ever free and untouched.

Arjuna asks his beloved whether she has no home, where kind hearts await her return—a home which was once made sweet with her gentle service and the brightness of which withered away when she left it for this forest. Chitra is puzzled at these questions of Arjuna who is fed up with the repetition of the physical pleasures. She understands that in his view, she is no more than what he sees before him and that there is no prospect before him. Her love is like the perfect bead of dew that hangs on the tip of the petal of kinsuka flower. The dew does not have any name or destination and it can offer no answer to any question.

Arjuna then asks Chitra whether she has no ties (connections) with the world. He wonders whether she is like a piece of heaven dropped on the earth through the carelessness of a playful God. Chitra replies in the positive and asserts—it. Then Arjuna frankly admits to Chitra, that on this account only, he seems to be losing her. His heart is full of dissatisfaction and it enjoys no peace. She seems to be beyond reach and wants her to come closer to him. He appeals to her to surrender herself to him with the bonds of name, home and parentage. He strongly desires that his heart should feel her on all sides and live with her in the peaceful security of love.

Chitra feels sorry why Arjuna should make these purposeless efforts to catch and keep the colours of the clouds, the dance of the waves and the smell of the flower. Arjuna appeals to Chitra not to try to adjust his love with airy nothings. He wants her to give him something to grasp. Something that can exist longer than pleasure and that which can endure even through suffering.

Chitra addresses him as her hero and remarks that he is already exhausted though the year has not come to a close. The life span of flowers and youth is short-lived as decreed by God (Heaven). She feels that if her body had dropped down and died along with the flowers of the last spring season, it would certainly have died with honour. However its days are numbered. Her body should not be spared and he should press it dry of all honey (sweetness). "otherwise his heart would come back to it again and again with unsatisfied desire, like a thirsty bee when summer flowers lie dead in the dust.

### Critical Remarks

The character of Arjuna is developed here. He wakes from his dreamy world and turns to the realities of his duties. His mind gets preoccupied with the thoughts of hunting and he is reminded of his brothers. There is a perceptible change in his mood, different from that of the earlier one of unthinking pleasure' indulged by him. He wishes to hold on to something permanent. Though the year has not

come to an end, he feels terribly tired. All this indicates that indulgence in physical and sensuous pleasures leaves a man unsatisfied, the more and more he partakes in them, Chitra suggests that such pleasures should not be left unsatisfied, but should be pressed dry of their honey.

Arjuna is gradually losing interest in physical pleasures and is getting fed up with it. It is thus a prelude to what is to take place subsequently. Again Chitra's comparison to a bead of dew suggests that she has no fixed destination, no name and that she is a mere wanderer. She has no connections with the world. Having fully enjoyed life, she droops silently, without any regrets.

## Scene VII

### Interlude

Madana grants Chitra's wish that her beauty shall flash brightest on that last night of the spring season. He tells Vasanta that it was his last night. Vasanta says that the loveliness of Chitra's body would return to the inexhaustible stores of the spring, the next day. The red colour of her lips freed from the memory of Arjuna's kisses will blossom afresh as a pair of fresh Asoka leaves. The tender white spark of her skin will be born again in a hundred sweet-scented Jasmine flowers.

Chitra requests Madana to grant her one more prayer (which is her last boon) that her beauty should shine in its brightest on that night like the final glow of a dying flame. Her prayer is granted by Madana.

### Critical Remarks

This is the last scene where Madana and Vasanta make their appearance. The last night of her boon of loveliness has arrived. The spirit of beauty is perennial and it has no death. It only changes shapes like the ruddy colour of the lips of Chitra (freed from Arjuna's lips) will flower afresh like the Asoka leaves.

Moreover the soft white shining of her skin will be born again in several bunches of sweet-smelling Jasmine flowers.

## Scene VIII

The villagers are afraid of some prospective danger from some robbers. They ask Arjuna as to who would protect them in such a situation. Then Arjuna asks them by what danger they were threatened. The villagers inform him that the robbers were pouring from the northern hills like a mountain flood to demolish their village. Arjuna then asks them if they had no warden (Protector) in that kingdom. They reply that princess Chitra, the terror of evil-doers was their warden. As long as she was in that land, they had absolutely no fear, except natural deaths. But she has gone on a pilgrimage and nobody knows where to find her.

Arjuna enquires of them whether the warden of that country was a woman. The villagers answer with pleasure that she was both father and mother combined in one.

Soon after Chitra enters the scene and asks Arjuna why he is sitting alone. Arjuna tells her that he is trying to imagine what kind of woman princess Chitra may be. He has heard several stories from all sorts of men about her. Chitra wonders and states that Chitra (The other Chitra) is not at all beautiful. She does not have those lovely dark eyes as she possesses. She is capable of penetrating any object, but not the heart of their hero. Arjuna then points out that people say that she (the other Chitra) was a man in prowess (strength) and a woman in tenderness.

Chitra emphasises that that feature has proved to be her greatest misfortune (bad luck). A woman feels happy only when she lives the life of a woman simply. She feels really delighted when she endears herself, round a man's heart with her smiles, sobs, services and caresses. Scholarship and highest achievements are of no avail to her. If only he had met her yesterday in the inner yard of Lord Shiva's temple beside the forest path, he would have simply passed by without even caring to look at her. But these days he has grown very tired of woman's beauties that he seeks in her for the strength of a man. Chitra continues to say that she has prepared their noon-day bed in a dense dark cave with green leaves wet from the scattering showers of the foaming water fall. There the cooling sensation of the soft green thick mosses on the black stone kisses his eyes to go to sound sleep. She offers her help to take him to that spot.

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Arjuna does not like to go there that day. Chitra asks the reason for it. Arjuna replies that he has heard that a band of robbers have occupied the plains nearby. Therefore he must necessarily go and prepare his weapons in order to protect the frightened villagers. Chitra assures him that he need not entertain such fears for the villagers since princess Chitra had made arrangements by setting strong guards at all the frontier passes (border areas) before she had started on her pilgrimage.

But Arjuna requests her to permit him for a short time to perform the work of a Kshatriya. He assures her that he will ennoble his idle arm with fresh glory and prepare out of it a pillow more worthy of her head. Chitra asks him what he would do if she refused to give him permission to leave the place and found him in her arms. She also asks him whether he would rudely snatch himself free and leave her. If it were so, she asks him to go away. She makes it clear to him that when once the 'liana', is broken into two parts, it will never join again. She demands him to go away, if his thirst (desire) for her is quenched (satisfied). Otherwise, he should remember that the goddess of pleasure is momentary and does not wait for any man. She addresses him as her lord and appeals to him to sit for some time. She requests him to tell her all those unpleasant thoughts that trouble him. She enquires as to who occupied his mind that day and whether it was Chitra.

Arjuna replies in the positive and states that it is Chitra, the warrior (that has occupied his mind). He wonders why and for what fulfilment she has gone on a pilgrimage. He feels that she need not have to entertain the need for anything. Chitra remarks that she is an unfortunate creature with all unfulfilled needs. Her very qualities are like prison walls, shutting her woman's heart in an open cell. She is made dim and dull. Her womanly love must satisfy itself with ragged dress, since she is deprived of beauty. She does not want to be enquired of her life, as it will never connote sweetness to any man's ear. She points out that Chitra is like the spirit of an unpleasant (unhappy) morning, sitting upon the stony mountain top, all her brightness being covered by dark clouds.

Arjuna feels quite curious to learn everything about her. He feels himself as a traveller that has come to a new city at midnight. Domes, towers, and garden-trees appear unclear and shadowy to him. He hears the moaning sound of the sea coming through the silence of sleep. He anxiously awaits the morning to reveal to him all the strange wonders. He asks her to tell him all details about her (story). Chitra feels that there is nothing more to tell (about her).

Arjuna tells her that he is able to see her in his imagination, riding on a white horse, proudly holding the reins in her left hand and a bow in her right hand. She goes about like the goddess of victory scattering joyful hope all around her. She protects the litter like a watchful lioness. The hands of a woman, possessing powerful strength, though unadorned, look beautiful. He informs her that his heart is restless, like a snake rejuvenating from its long winter's sleep. He expresses his desire that both of them should ride on galloping horses, side by side, like twin orbs of light, fast moving through space. He wants to get away from this dark, slumbrous prison which is quite suffocating.

Chitra asks him if he can endure the truth, if she reveals the reality to him. If she shakes herself free from her arresting tenderness and timid bloom of beauty and throws her beauty like borrowed clothes, he will not be able to bear it. She will be of no appeal to man's eye, if she holds her head like a tall young mountain fire, and stand up straight and strong. She feels that it is better for her to scatter all the beautiful features of her youth all around her body and wait for him in patience. As and when he returns, she will be able to offer the essence of pleasure in the cup of her beautiful body. Soon after he gets satisfied, he can go back either to work or play. She too, after getting old, will humbly accept any corner provided to her. She is afraid if the playmate of the night desires to be the helpmate of the day and if the left arm learns to share the burden of the proud right arm.

Arjuna does not seem to place her correctly (to identify her properly). She appears to him, like a hidden goddess within a golden image. He cannot touch her. He cannot pay her dues in return for her priceless gifts. Thus his love is incomplete. At times, in the strange depth of her looks, he sees glimpses of her grace and smiles. Illusion is the first appearance (look) of truth. He feels that she advances towards her lover in disguise. But certainly a time comes when she throws aside her ornaments and veils and reveals her true identity. He awaits such a time, that bare simplicity of truth.

Chitra is surprised to find tears in the eyes of Arjuna. She finds him covering his face with his hands. She feels sorry if she has caused pain and troubled him. She requests him to forget all that has taken

place. She assures him that she will be content with the present. She also tells him that each separate moment of beauty comes to her like a mysterious bird from its unseen nest in the dark, bearing a message of music. She would sit always with hope on the edge of realisation and thus end her days (spend her span of life).

### Critical Remarks

Arjuna has been idling away his time in a dreamy world of romance and love. After meeting the villagers, he comes to realities. His mind is completely occupied with the thoughts of princess Chitra whose arms with their beauty of strength are a terror to the robbers. He throws the 'Challenge' that they too-he and the beautiful woman by his side should leave the arbour of love and race on their horses to the field of action. He finds in her a Goddess of victory scattering all around joyful hope, riding on a white horse, proudly holding the reins in her left hand. He strongly feels that woman's arms though not adorned with anything, look beautiful. His heart is restless. He feels like racing with her on swift horses side by side like twin orbs of light sweeping through space. After getting satisfied that Arjuna has accepted her both as the playmate of the night and the helpmate of the day. Chitra feels glad to reveal her identity. Earlier he was in an illusion and now he has realised the truth.

The action of the play shows development and it is slowly reaching its climax. There is a fine depiction of the feelings of both Arjuna and Chitra. The concept that illusion is the first appearance of Truth is indeed unique.

### Scene IX

#### *From the "Lie" to the "Truth"*

Chitra returns to Arjuna as she had been when she first met him. Yet she is not quite the same because she is also the prospective mother of Arjuna's son. Arjuna is content, and has a sense of complete fulfillment.

Chitra and Arjuna arrive on the scene. Chitra asks Arjuna if the cup (of the pleasure of life) has been drained (exhausted) to the last drop. She wonders whether it is really the end (final stage). She will not accept such a situation, but states that when everything is completed, something still remains and that indeed is her last sacrifice at his feet.

She begins to narrate that she brought flowers of unequalled beauty from the garden of heaven in order to worship him, the lord of her heart. If after the rites are completed, the flowers get faded, they should be thrown out of the temple.

Revealing herself in her original male dress, she asks him to look at his worshipper with graceful eyes. She further states that she is not as perfect as the flowers with which she has worshipped him. She admits that she has several defects and short-comings. She is a traveller in the path of the great world. Her clothes have become untidy and her feet are bleeding with thorns. She brings to him the gift (boon) of the heart of a woman, the embodiment of pains and joys, hopes and fears and shames of the daughter of the dust. Her imperfection, whatever it be its state is noble and grand. She requests her master, to accept her as his servant in future, soon after the flower-service is completed.

She now makes it clear to Arjuna that she is Chitra, the daughter of the king. She reminds him of the day (in the past) when a woman came to him in the temple of Shiva, her body decorated with jewels and clothes. Shamelessly she came to court (love) him as though she were a man. He did act quite suitably by rejecting her. She pointedly reminds her lord that she was that woman, in disguise. Then by the grace and blessings of God, she got the brightest form (of beauty) that ever was possible for a mortal, and it was granted for a year. In that attractive form, she was able to arrest that attention of Arjuna. But at present she is not definitely that woman.

She informs him that she was only Chitra. She further states that she was no goddess to be worshipped. For that matter, she was not even the object of common pity to be set aside like a moth with sheer indifference. He will be able to know her true (real) self if he permits her to be by his side in the path of danger and daring (critical and extraordinary situations) and if he allows her to share the great duties of his life. She makes it clear that she is nourishing (feeding) a child in her womb and if luckily if the child were to be a son, she would herself teach him to be a second Arjuna and send him

## Notes

(the son) to him (Arjuna) at the appropriate time. It is only then that Arjuna will be able to know her true self. For the present, she is only Chitra, the daughter of a mere king.

On listening to all this patiently, Arjuna is really moved by her words and conveys to his beloved that his life is full (complete and fruitful).

### Critical Remarks

Tagore presents the climax here. Chitra reveals her true self to Arjuna by reminding him of her first meeting with him which leads to rejection. She had to seek the help of the Gods later, to grant her a boon of splendour and loveliness in order to ensnare him.

She is simply Chitra, the daughter of a king. She is neither a Goddess to be worshipped nor a pitiable object to be brushed aside carelessly. Arjuna will be able to know her real self, if he permits her to be beside him in all dangerous and daring tasks and if he allows her to share duties of his life.

Tagore brings out the message here that woman is not simply a plaything, but a true helpmate and supporter of man. The conclusion of the play with Arjuna's words "Beloved, my life is full", is highly significant and truly relevant. The readers are reminded of the earlier statement that 'Illusion is the first appearance of Truth.' Arjuna wakes from the dreary world to the rugged realities.

### Self-Assessment

#### 1. Fill in the blanks:

- (i) Chitra meets ..... the god of love.
- (ii) Chitra is not at all an expert in ..... archery.
- (iii) Chitra goes in search of Arjuna and finds him in the forest temple of .....
- (iv) Chitra dressed herself as a woman and tapped the door of .....

## 19.2 Summary

- The play 'CHITRA' is Tagore's interpretation of an episode from the MAHABHARATA. Chitra, daughter and only child of the king of Manipur, has been brought up like a boy. She is proud of her prowess and 'manliness' till she falls in love with Arjuna, who spurns her.
- Broken-hearted, Chitra realises the '*Vain pride of her manlike strength*' and prays to the gods for a brief '*day of perfect beauty*' to ensnare Arjuna. Her wish is granted for a year. But Chitra soon realises that her body had become her enemy, for Arjuna has been attracted by "*borrowed beauty*" and Chitra cannot reveal her true self.
- Tagore has handled this delicate story with great charm and the play is embedded with sheer poetry. This lyrical drama was written in 1913. It is based on the following story from the MAHABHARATA.
- In the course of his wanderings, in fulfilment of a vow of penance. Arjuna came to Manipur. There he saw Chitrangada, the beautiful daughter of Chitravahana, the king of the country. Smitten with her charms, he asked the king for the hand of his daughter in marriage. Chitravahana asked him who he was, and learning that he was Arjuna the Pandava, told him that Prabhanjana, one of his ancestors in the kingly line of Manipur, had long been childless. In order to obtain a heir, he performed severe penances. Pleased with his austerities, the God Shiva gave him this boon, that he and his successors should each have one child. It so happened that the promised child had invariably been a son. He, Chitravahana, was the first to have only a daughter – Chitrangada to perpetuate the race. He had therefore, always treated her as a son and had made her his heir. Continuing, the king said :
  - "*The one son that will be born to her must be the perpetuator of the race. That son will be the price that I shall demand for this marriage. You can take her if you like, on this condition*".
  - Arjuna promised and took Chitrangada to wife, and lived in the father's capital for three years. When a son was born to them, he embraced her with affection, and taking leave of her and her father, set out again on his travels.

- The play opens with Chitra meeting Madana, the God of love and Vasanta, the God of Spring. She tells them that while following a deer along the bank of the river, she has caught sight of a man lying on a bed of leaves. He is no other than Arjuna. She feels instantaneously that she is a woman. She remembers that Arjuna has taken the vow of celibacy.
- She removes her man's attire and proceeds quickly to meet Arjuna in the temple of Shiva. She begs the God of Spring to grant her one brief day of perfect beauty. Her prayer is granted and Arjuna too, having come under the spell of Madana, is smitten with love for Chitra. But their love is not for a home. She asks Arjuna to take the garland of flowers. She feels tired and appeals to him to take her into his arms. The sound of the prayer bells is heard from the distant village-temple as twilight approaches.
- Their physical enjoyment is full to the brim and they have no regrets. She comes down from the world of dreams, poetry and romance to the world of reality. Arjuna considers her Goddess hidden within a golden image. In spite of her imperfection, he finds in her an incarnation of nobility and grandeur. Arjuna feels that his life is full. (It is fruitful and complete). Chitra feels that she is simply the daughter of a king.

### 19.3 Key-Words

1. Spurious : False
2. Chastity : Celibacy
3. Barque : Ship or boat
4. Crickets : Small singing creatures

### 19.4 Review Questions

1. Explain the following lines:
  - (i) The barque of joy came in sight but the waves would not let it touch the shore.
  - (ii) A limitless life of glory can bloom and spend itself in a morning.
2. Explain Tagore's play as a lyrical drama.
3. "Chitra" is a play built and many levels. It is a drama of youth, it is a drama of growth. Explain.
4. "Chitra" is a thing of beauty. It presents an evolution of human love from the physical to the spiritual. Elucidate.

### Answers: Self-Assessment

1. Madana
2. Cupid's
3. Shiva
4. Arjuna

### 19.5 Further Readings



Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.



## Unit 20: 'Chitra' by Rabindranath Tagore: Characterisation

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### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Understand Chitra Character
- Discuss the symbolism in Chitra
- Explain characterisation
- Know the variations in Tagore's Chitra

### Introduction

Characterisation is really the fundamental and lasting element in the greatness of any dramatic work. Chitra has only four *dramatis personae*, for the villagers are lay figures; and of these four, two are immortals and the other two are mortals. The two gods come into view at usual intervals and are directly responsible for the physical union of Chitra and Arjuna. There is a gradual development of the character of Chitra; the gods also appear at regular intervals; there is a subtle inter-play of mood within mood and that although Chitra and Arjuna both experience the joys of sensuous love and both tire of it, their reactions to this experience are widely divergent. As the play opens, two meetings between Chitra and Arjuna take place. In the first meeting she meets him in the disguise of a man and in the second, as a beautiful woman. Chitra captivates Arjuna. Her dream is fulfilled and she grasps what may be called absolute joy, but she suddenly discovers that the dream is not as sweet as expected. She feels that she has degraded Arjuna by ensnaring him in the toils of mere physical beauty. She becomes painfully conscious that the rapturous embrace for which she hungered has been withdrawn by the disguise upon her. She herself begged it as a boon from the gods, but at that time she could not foresee what reaction the fulfilment of her dream would awaken in her own soul. Thus, the gods help in the development of the drama as well as in the growth of the two human characters. Edward Thompson states that "these divine actors are as adequately present as Shakespeare's elves in his enchanted woodland; they mingle in human affairs with friendly half-amused grace."

Chitra gradually realizes that what is easily won may be even more easily lost. She is fully aware that there is the longer surer way – the way of devotion, *tapasya*, but she chooses the quicker way of borrowed beauty to make the assault on Arjuna's senses, rather than achieve conquest of the whole man. Arjuna too is likewise ready, (although he knows nothing about her except that she is physically alluring), to give up his vow and surrender to the moment. No wonder she is discontented and he also is

unhappy. It is natural enough that beauty or glamour should attract in the first instance man to woman or woman to man; but this attraction has still to pass other tests before it can acquire the name and true nature of love. With man and woman the attraction, the coming together, is not the end, but only the beginning. It has to survive shared trials, shared sorrows, shared gradual failure of the bodily functions. Chitra belongs to the earth and undergoes tremendous change in her encounter with harsh reality of life. She is full of self-respect and self-confidence.

As in the handling of plot, so also in characterization the first condition of dramatic art is brevity. The dramatist has to deal with motive and character within the narrowly circumscribed area of a comparatively few scenes, in which at the same time he has to be more or less concerned with the progress of his story. Tagore, within the short span of nine scenes has successfully dealt with his motive and has remarkably portrayed his characters. He clearly draws the error of Chitra and finally her realization of the truth of life.

## 20.1 Character of Arjuna

Arjuna's role in Tagore's play CHITRA is of paramount importance. He does have significant part in the development of the incidents in the play. He is one of the five Pandavas of the "Mahabharata" and he is a reputed warrior. He is known to all as a person well-versed in his skill of archery and has displayed his prowess during and before the war of Mahabharata. His name is closely linked up with Lord Krishna who conveys to him the golden message of the Gita", the lesson of action", at a time when he was lost in despair and disillusionment. In this play 'Chitra', Arjuna is presented in the following situation.

In the course of his wanderings, in fulfilment of a vow of penance, Arjuna comes to Manipur. There he sees Chitrangada, the beautiful daughter of Chitravahana, the king of the country. Smitten with her charms, he asks the king for the hand of his daughter in marriage. Chitravahana asks him who he is and learning that he is Arjuna, the Pandava tells him that Prabhanjana, one of his ancestors in the kingly line of Manipur, had, long been childless. In order to obtain an heir, he performed severe penances. Pleased with these austerities, the God Shiva gave him the boon that he and his successors shall each have one child. It so happens that the promised child has invariably been a son. He, Chitravahana, is the first to have only a daughter Chitrangada to perpetuate the race. He has, therefore, always treated her as a son and has made her his heir. Continuing, the king says: "The one son that will be the price that I shall demand for this marriage. You can take her if you like, on this condition."

Arjuna promises and takes Chitrangada to wife and lives in her father's capital for three years. When a son is born to them, he embraces her with affection and taking leave of her and her father sets out again on his travels.

A close study of the nine scenes of the play reveals the nature of Arjuna's character. The theme unfolds itself in this play, in nine scenes. This first scene deals with the rejection of Arjuna by Chitra. The third describes the delicious union of the hero and the heroine. In the fourth scene, Tagore refers to the decline of Arjuna's infatuation. It is followed by an interlude in the fifth scene. While the sixth scene describes the further decline of Arjuna's infatuation, there is an interlude again in the seventh scene. In the eighth scene Arjuna comes across the (Other' Chitra) and the last scene represents the course of events from the "Lie" to the "Truth".

Arjuna is of the Kshatriya or "Warrior Caste", and during the action is living as a hermit retired in the forest. Chitra is the daughter of the king of Manipur. Their speeches burn with passion and light up the way from truth to illusion and again from illusion to truth. The truth is that Chitra is no Goddess to be worshipped, nor yet the object of common pity to be brushed aside like a moth with indifference. She is a woman and a mother and Arjuna is content and says simply", Beloved, my life is full."

Arjuna is found fickle. He sees an apparition of beauty in the perfect form of a woman. He thinks that the vague veilings of her body should melt in ecstasy into air as the golden mist of dawn melts from the snowy peak of the eastern hill. The intensity of pathos overwhelms the readers when each of them passes through an inner struggle in trying to understand the other.

## Notes

Arjuna is enthralled by her beauty when he sees her in the temple. She keeps him completely in the grip of her bodily charms. She has made him her captive. His vow of exile for a period of twelve years dissolves as the moon dissolves the night's vow of chastity. In a mood of infatuation, Arjuna remarks that she alone is perfect. He further states that she is the wealth of the world, the end of all poverty, the goal of all efforts. Other women can be known slowly, but one single glance at Chitra is to see perfect completeness.

Arjuna is ensnared by Chitra's beauty and he has lost his reasoning power. Arjuna and Chitra together drink the joys of sensuous love. Both get tired of it and their reactions are different. She enjoys absolute happiness in his loving embraces.

She feels that she has degraded Arjuna by dragging him into the coils of physical beauty. But she feels sorry that it is all in her disguise. Arjuna in the midst of his attraction, rouses to a sense of manly duties and enquires of the warrior princess Chitra. She stops him asking him to drink the moment's pleasure to the fullest extent. He begins to get tired of the sensuous charm.

Arjuna soon realises that he must go back home. His attention is arrested by the sound of prayer-bells from the village temple, which indicated that he should go back to his normal routine. His mind gets occupied with the thoughts of hunting and longs for the peaceful security of a home. He desires to possess something that can last longer than pleasure that can endure even through suffering.

Thus there is to be seen in Arjuna a transformation from what he is in the beginning and what he is at the end. He is a lover who falls a prey to beauty, but is not blind to the realities. He is awakened to his manly duties to be performed from his earlier enchantment.

## **20.2 Characters of Madana (God of Love) and Vasanta (God of Spring)**

Dr. Iyengar feels that "the supernatural machinery-Vasanta, Madana and their gifts to Chitra-is strictly superfluous to the play's uiner causation. The whole point of the play is that youth itself is a sudden spring-time miracle, for it comes as it were suddenly and fades away as suddenly, as unaccountably. The play is primarily about Chitra, about woman. Motherhood achieves the miracle of continuity, the beyonding of "death" itself. Beauty and youth, although they may be transient and hence illusory, are yet a part of our experience. Tagore has stated the symbols of mythological consciousness of Madana and Vasanta and the beloved elves.

Madana (EROS or the god of love) and Vasanta (God of spring) play a very significant role in Tagore's play CHITRA. Madana, otherwise known as cupid, according to Hindu mythology, is the God of love with five arrows. He is supposed to have been the first born in the heart of the creator. Whoever is struck with his arrows, falls in love at first sight. Love sprinkles in their hearts untaught. He teaches both man and woman the greatest lesson to know what they are. Chitra knows in the presence of Arjuna, that she is a woman. She is struck with the impulse of passion of love for the first time.

Madana is represented in this play as a type. He is not drawn here as a man of flesh and blood. He comes to the succour of those that way to him to grant the desire of their heart. Chitra begs Madana to grant her one brief day of perfect beauty. He grants her prayer, not for one briefday but for one whole year.

Madana appears thrice in the play-in the first scene, the third scene and the fifth scene. Chitra meets Madana, in whose bonds, the lives of men and women, with their pains and bliss are bound closely. She also meets Vasanta, the king of the seasons and the eternal youth. Vasanta is also the friend of Madana. The gods ask her who she is and the reason for her in strict penance and mortification. She replies that she is the daughter of the kingly house of Manipur. She further states that lord Shiva has granted to his great, great grand-father a continuous line of male progeny, So she is always dressed as a man and she is brought up carefully as a son by her father. She is not at all an expert in Cupid's archery, which is meant the play of eyes.

She explains to Madana that one day he (she) wanders alone in the forest on the bank of the Purna river in search of game. She comes across a man lying on a bed of dried leaves. On seeing him she feels for one first time like a women. She learns from him that he has taken a vow of celibacy. She

begs Madana to impart to her the lesson apt to the occasion to make Arjuna a captive in love. Her prayer to Madana and Vasanta become fruitful and Chitra is granted the span of a whole year.

Madana addresses Chitra as the daughter of mortals and impresses upon her that Arjuna has stolen the fragrant wine of heaven from the divine store-house and places it in her hand to drink. She becomes conscious that her borrowed beauty would soon vanish, like the petals from an over-blown flower. Madana showers sympathy on her by remarking that her single night has gone in vain. She appeals to the Gods to take back their boon.

Madana then asks Chitra how she can stand before her lover if the boon is withdrawn from her. Moreover it will be cruel to take away by force the cup from his lips when he has not even enjoyed the first draught of pleasure. Then Chitra will be treated with any amount of resentful anger. Then she remarks that such a state would be better than the present predicament in which she is placed.

Vasanta then advises her to cooldown and listen to his advice. With the on set of autumn, the flowering season would be followed by the wealth of fruits. An appropriate time would definitely come when the heat-cloyed bloom of the body would bend down and Arjuna would gladly accept the abridging fruitful truth in her. So Vasanta advises her to go back and indulge in her mad festival.

The enthusiasm of Vasanta (Youth and Beauty) cannot keep pace with the demands of Madana (Love); As spring season comes to a close, it becomes obviously weak. Vasanta feels terrified and tired. It is indeed a tough task for him to keep alive the fire (the passion of bodily love) for long. He is overtaken by sleep and the fan drops from his hand. The brightness of the fire (bodily Love) is covered with ashes. But he wakes up from his deep sleep and rescues the weary flame by making use of his full strength. But the fact is that it cannot continue forever.

Madana makes it clear that he is aware that Vasanta is as fickle as a child. He also remarks to Vasanta that his part is always restless both in heaven and on earth. All those things that he has built with scrupulous care and endless details are destroyed by him in a short time without any feeling of regret or remorse. But their work (namely the granting of the boon of beauty to Chitra) is coming to an end soon. The days which are filled with winged pleasure are flying speedily. Moreover the year which is almost at its close, falls into a swoon in a bliss of joy and rapture.

Madana and Vasanta thus make their appearance for the third time. They make an integral part of the play. They carry the action forward with a suggestion that the earthly happiness of Chitra and Arjuna, having reached its climax, is almost coming to a close.

### 20.3 Chitra's Character

Tagore is an inheritor of the great literary tradition of Bengal, which regarded a woman as the primordial energy of the universe. Tagore's heroines belong to two broad categories, the type of feminine charm and the type of feminine grace, serene in her self-assurance and radiating a tranquil charm and silent power over the human heart. One is Urvashi and the other Lakshmi. Tagore's women characters display remarkable vivacity and dazzling variety. He considers the aura of dream surrounding many of the women characters as not merely the creation of God but also of man. They are not abstract entities, but creations of flesh and blood, pulsating with convincing liveliness. In his works women appear as mother, sister, daughter, wife, beloved, *Prakriti* in search of *Purusa*, and woman symbolizing the *Jivaatma*, who seeks union with the *Parmaatma*. There are also mythical, historical, religious, social, realistic and romantic characters, placed in several of his dramas, short stories and novels. He represents them as facing typical Indian problems and he explores deep into their hearts, with his keen psychological insight. His women characters are dynamic and are not the products of mere artistic control or manipulation.

Tagore's heroines are both feminine and unfeminine. They belong to the earth but they undergo tremendous changes in their encounter with harsh reality. Sometimes the two types – the emotional and the tranquilizing get fused as in *Chitra*. The diverse types of his women are basically human. They are enthroned as queens of the house, full of self-respect and self-confidence, exhibiting various moods.

Notes

There is an evolution in the character of Chitra which can be traced from dream to reality and the transition from the fire of flowery spring to the mellow fruitfulness of autumn. We find in her, as in Kalidasa's *Abhigyanashakuntalam*, the flowers of spring and the fruits of autumn. She advances from the paradise of sensual rapture to the ecstasy of illumination and the sustaining delight of wisdom. She has certainly lost one paradise, but she has gained another, which is the real paradise where woman holds undisputed sovereignty as a devoted wife and mother.

Chitra is the princess of Manipur. She is brought up as a warrior. When she glances at Arjuna in his ascetic robes for the first time, she becomes conscious of the fact or reality of her being a woman. She considers that she is beautiful enough to win his heart. She woos Arjuna but in vain, for he rejects her on the ground of his vow of celibacy. She does not abandon her love for she is not the kind of woman who nourishes her despair in lonely silence feeding it with nightly tears and covering it with the daily patient smile. In fact, Tagore has pointed out that the flower of her desire refuses to droop before it has been ripened into a fruit. She finds:

It is the labour of a life-time to make one's true self fully known and honoured.

She consequently chooses the easy path of illusion, i.e., the acquired dazzle of beauty bestowed on her by the gods, Madana (god of Love) and Vasanta (god of Spring). In this role she fascinates and wins the heart of Arjuna who kneels down at Chitra's feet and begs for her love. He says:

You alone are perfect; you are the wealth of the world, the end of all poverty, the goal of all efforts, the one woman!

From this point in the drama, we tread on the path of transition as Chitra through experience makes an effort to obtain self-knowledge. Gradually she realizes:

Surely, this cannot be love, this is not man's highest homage to woman! Alas that this frail disguise, the body, should make one blind to the light of the deathless spirit!

Again she says:

Woo not falsehood, offer not your great heart to an illusion. Go.

Thus, with the progress of time Chitra's practical experiences instruct her into self-knowledge.

Chitra is fully conscious that her procured beauty would shortly vanish, as the petals fall from an overblown flower, the only moment of her sweet union would slip from her, leaving her ashamed of her exposed poverty, which she will spend weeping day and night. It is impossible for her to keep her disguise and she prefers to accept the hard truth sooner than the false happiness.

There is another aspect of Chitra's personality as a terror of evil doers and as father and mother to her people. It lies in the fact of her being a brave girl. She is a man in valour, but all woman in tenderness. Arjuna thinks of her as the goddess of Victory:

Like a watchful lioness she protects the litter at her dugs with a fierce love. Woman's arms though adorned with nought, but unfettered strength, are beautiful! My heart is restless, fair one, like a serpent, reviving from his long winter's sleep. Come, let us both race on swift horses side by side, like twin orbs of light sweeping through space.

Chitra seems to him like a goddess hidden within a golden image, notwithstanding what she is beneath the disguise. The flowers of Spring have already matured into the mellow fruits of autumn and the bell for them to part has rung. The day when they would part arrives. The illusion is shattered and Chitra, the playmate of Arjuna's night, appears as the helpmate of the day showing her true self. Chitra says:

The gift that I proudly bring you is the heart of a woman. Here have all pains and joys gathered, the hopes and fears and shames of a daughter of the dust; Here love springs up struggling towards immortal life. Herein lies an imperfection which yet is noble and grand. If the flower-service is finished, my master, accept this as your servant for the days to come!

Thus before parting from Chitra, Arjuna accepts her in bliss when she casts on him a tranquilizing spell. Chitra becomes all the more beautiful because she has known love, and because she is now a prospective mother.

## 20.4 Symbolism in Chitra

In *Chitra*, symbolism plays an important role. It is based on the well-known *Mahabharata* story of Chitrangada and Arjuna. *Chitra* essentially contains the history of a development – the development of flower into fruit, of earth into heaven, of matter into spirit.

There are two unions in *Chitra*. The first union takes place in the second scene. And the next union takes place in the ninth scene of the play. This play was not meant for dealing with a particular passion but for translating the whole subject from one world to another – to elevate love from the sphere of physical beauty to the eternal heaven of moral beauty.

The central symbol in *Chitra* is the offer of beauty to Chitra by the gods, Madana and Vasanta, for the span of a year. The symbol is not deliberately exhibited, it grows naturally and spontaneously out of the story. Chitra has been brought up as a son by her father. She falls in love with Arjuna, who however does not reciprocate her love. He on the contrary says:

I have taken the vow of celibacy. I am not fit to be thy husband.

Nonetheless, Chitra feels desperate on being scorned like this and seeks the help of the gods, Madana and Vasanta, to whom she says:

Had I but the time needed, I could win his heart by slow degrees, and ask no help of the gods.

She also states:

But it is the labour of a life time to make one's true self known and honoured.

But, she is prompted by her desire to be immediately satisfied. She, therefore, requests to the gods:

For a single day make me superbly beautiful, even as beautiful as was the sudden blooming of love in my heart. Give me but one brief day of perfect beauty, and I will answer for the days that follow.

Her prayer is granted with a significant qualification:

Not for the short span of a day, but for one whole year the charm of spring blossoms shall nestle round thy limbs.

On this being accepted, the action moves on in a poetic-realistic mood, and presents a spectacle of Arjuna's obsession; their living together in perfect bliss; Arjuna's boredom and his longing for the other, real Chitra; the falling off of Chitra's mask of beauty at the end of the year; Arjuna's happy and proud acceptance of the real Chitra and the final spiritual fulfilment. There is no conflict between the surface-realistic level and the deeper symbolic meaning. The symbolic meaning is related to the essential duality of life, which in the story expresses itself as the duality of love. There is no contradiction between Infinite and Finite, Truth and Illusion, Spirit and Body, Love and Desire, joy and Pain, Peace and Restlessness, True self and False self, but what is most remarkable in the play is that the latter i.e., Finite, Illusion, Body, Desire, Pain, Restlessness, False self are transmitted into the former i.e., Infinite, Truth, Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, and True self. This transformation occurs primarily because of Time, which plays, a crucial part in the entire play.

The time factor plays a significant part in the form of the gods' offer of beauty to Chitra for a year. This central symbol fully and organically set in the play is assisted by the symbolic gods, Madana, the body-less god of abiding love and Vasanta, the time-bound god of spring. The symbol is assisted by images of flower and fruit and by the image of flame, which symbolizes the upward, restless, and burning process of love.

In short, Chitra stands for human desire; Arjuna stands as the seeker of love; the gods Madana and Vasanta stand for love and youth and beauty respectively.

The symbols in *Chitra* are an organic part of the theme. *Chitra* combines the flowers of spring with the fruits of autumn. It also combines heaven and earth. Truly, in *Chitra* there is one Paradise Lost and another Paradise Regained.

## 20.5 Variations in Tagore's Chitra

Like Shakespeare, Kalidas, and Shelley, Tagore deviated from the original story to suit his requirements. The following are the variations that are observed in the text of Tagore from the *Mahabharata*:

## Notes

1. The Chitrangada-Arjuna episode in the *Mahabharata* runs up to 15 verses, (beginning from stanza no. 13 to stanza no. 27), while Tagore's drama involves nine scenes.
2. In the *Mahabharata*, Arjuna meets Chitravahana, the King of Manipur, whereas in Tagore's *Chitra*, Arjuna never encounters the King.
3. In the *Mahabharata*, Arjuna accidentally meets Chitrangada while in Tagore's *Chitra*, it is Chitra who sees Arjuna accidentally.
4. In the *Mahabharata*, Chitrangada has been depicted as a youthful damsel of exquisite beauty. She is *Charudarsana* and *Vararoha*, whereas in Tagore's *Chitra*, Chitra is unattractive and plain. The whole plot of the drama hinges on this point. Had Chitra been a beautiful woman she would not have approached Madana (Eros) and Vasanta (Lycoris) for lending her charm and grace even for a day, so that she might win the heart of Arjuna.
5. In the *Mahabharata*, Arjuna makes up his mind to have Chitrangada as his wife and therefore he goes to the King and seeks his permission for the hand of Chitrangada, whereas in Tagore's *Chitra*, Arjuna does not seek her hand in marriage with the permission of her father or any of her guardians.
6. In the *Mahabharata*, Arjuna lives with Chitrangada in Manipur for three years, while in Tagore's *Chitra*, Arjuna stays with her for only a year.
7. In the *Mahabharata*, Chitrangada gives birth to a boy-child and Arjuna leaves after having presented the son to the father of Chitrangada, whereas in Tagore's *Chitra*, Arjuna is illuminated with revelation after a year and is reminded of his home. Here Chitra offers the last sacrifice at Arjuna's feet (i.e., flowers of incomparable beauty from the garden of heaven and tells Arjuna that she will teach her child to be a second Arjuna).
8. In the *Mahabharata*, Chitrangada is observed as a submissive daughter and wife. She accepts anything and everything, while in Tagore's *Chitra*, Chitra is a strong-willed daughter and a fierce individual.

**Self-Assessment**

1. Tick (✓) the correct option:

- (i) In this play the first scene deals with the rejection of Arjuna by Chitra.
- (ii) Madana addresses Chitra as the daughter of mortals.
- (iii) Tagore's *Chitra* Arjuna never encounters the king.
- (iv) Arjuna stays with Chitra for only a year.
- (v) Chitra is a strong-willed daughter and a fierce individual.

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**20.6 Summary**

- Characterisation is really the fundamental and lasting element in the greatness of any dramatic work. Chitra has only four *dramatis personae*, for the villagers are lay figures; and of these four, two are immortals and the other two are mortals. The two gods come into view at usual intervals and are directly responsible for the physical union of Chitra and Arjuna. There is a gradual development of the character of Chitra; the gods also appear at regular intervals; there is a subtle inter-play of mood within mood and that although Chitra and Arjuna both experience the joys of sensuous love and both tire of it, their reactions to this experience are widely divergent. As the play opens, two meetings between Chitra and Arjuna take place. In the first meeting she meets him in the disguise of a man and in the second, as a beautiful woman. Chitra captivates Arjuna. Her dream is fulfilled and she grasps what may be called absolute joy, but she suddenly discovers that the dream is not as sweet as expected. She feels that she has degraded Arjuna by ensnaring him in the toils of mere physical beauty. She becomes painfully conscious that the rapturous embrace for which she hungered has been withdrawn by the disguise upon her. She

herself begged it as a boon from the gods, but at that time she could not foresee what reaction the fulfilment of her dream would awaken in her own soul. Thus, the gods help in the development of the drama as well as in the growth of the two human characters. Edward Thompson states that "these divine actors are as adequately present as Shakespeare's elves in his enchanted woodland; they mingle in human affairs with friendly half-amused grace."

- Tagore could start the play, strike the opening chords, name the characters and memory and imagination would do the rest. This short play of one Act contains none of the attractions of Variation in scene, action and characters. There is no complexity in the plot. There is no feeling of vagueness bordering on dissatisfaction as one finishes the book. The blending of fine shades of thoughts in a single theme is rendered with a rare intuition and skill.
- Chitra is the daughter of the king of Manipur. Arjuna is "of the Kshatriya or Warrior caste" and during the action is living as a hermit retired in the forest. Dr. Iyengar feels that "Chitra is the quintessence of romance. The speeches burn with passion and light up the way from truth to illusion and again from illusion to truth." The truth is that Chitra is no Goddess to be worshipped, nor the object of common pity to be brushed aside like a moth with indifference. She is a woman and a mother and Arjuna is content and says simply, "Beloved, my life is full".
- Chitra is not a Goddess hidden in a golden image. Her noble ambition is to meet the greatest hero of the five pandava brothers. She responds to the call of love and places herself in the hands of Arjuna murmuring to him "Take me, take all I am". There is a real conflict at first in her, but she slowly yields to the compromising attitude and is ready to make her last sacrifice at Arjuna's feet. As K. Chandrasekharan says "the final revelation of her true self, so sudden and so impressive cannot but leave a ringing touch even long after play is over. Chitra is certainly greater than man and woman put together, though by a strange irony of fate, she happens to be both." As one representing the ideal of woman-hood, Chitra shows that a woman is not merely a passive follower of her husband. Chitra, typifying faith, purity, love and sacrifice embodies the noblest virtues of womanhood.

## 20.7 Key-Words

1. Woos : To seek the affection of with intent to romance
2. Quintessence of romance : Perfect or typical example of a quality or class of romance
3. Alive the fire : The passion of bodily love
4. Infatuation : It is the state of being completely carried away by unreasoned passion or love.

## 20.8 Review Questions

1. Give an appreciation of 'Chitra'.
2. Briefly describe the character sketch of Arjuna.
3. Chitra is a genuine symbolic play yielding more meaning at every successive reading. Explain.

### Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (i)  (ii)  (iii)  (iv)  (v)

## 20.9 Further Readings



Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.



## Unit 21: 'Chitra' by Rabindranath Tagore: Theme and Plot Construction

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### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Understand Chitra's theme.
- Discuss Plot Construction of 'Chitra'

### Introduction

Tagore was seized by the idea of presenting the evolution of human love from the physical to the spiritual. He also found an appropriate story. In the Mahabharata, Arjuna during his travels weds Princess Chitrangada of Manipur, and their son becomes the longed-for male heir of the King. When Tagore fused the soul of the idea with the body of the story, it became the play *Chitrangada* and in the English form it is a somewhat shortened dramatic sequence in nine scenes.

Chitra, the princess of Manipura, brought up as a warrior, for the first time feels that she is a woman when Arjuna in his ascetic robes glances at her. She becomes conscious of the fact that she was not beautiful enough to win the heart of Arjuna. She vainly woos Arjuna but is rejected by him on grounds of his vow of celibacy. She does not give up her love. She is not the kind of woman who nourishes her despair in lonely silence.

Tagore in an aptly symbolic way shows how the flower of her desire refuses to drop before it has ripened into a fruit. Chitra finds that it is the labour of a life time to make one's true self fully known and honoured. Therefore she chooses the easy path of illusion which is the first step to reality that is the acquired splendour of beauty, bestowed upon her by the gods Madana and Vasanta. This is the phase where Chitra fascinates and wins the heart of Arjuna.

As has been aptly pointed out by a critic, "*Chitra is a play built on many levels. It is a drama of youth; it is a drama of growth. One can actually hear the sure but silent flowering of the Dryad girl and her fruition into a sublime order of self-consciousness adjusting itself to the ambivalence of illusion and reality.*"

We have in Chitra a realisation of the diviner element of life and soul, a heaven-sent message to the human soul as to what is the meaning of love in the true sense of the term.

The play is not only a thing of beauty in itself, but reveals to us what artistic possibilities lie in our Purans, if only we have in us the selective and creative genius and learn the message of Puranic stories and seek to steep them in the height of our imagination and reveal them to the world for the uplift and delight of mankind.

Tagore explains that love founded on the physical beauty alone is built on insecure foundation. Beauty in human face and form is like the glow of sunset on evening clouds, glorious, fleeting and mysterious. The beauty of the soul is immortal as the soul itself is immortal, so the love built on the beauty of soul is built on a rock and endures for ever. Dr. Iyengar says that *"the Sensual is transcended in the Spiritual, and the union is sanctified at last."*

Chitra is doubtless the most fascinating and the most satisfying of Tagore's plays. Krishna Kripalani regards it to be Rabindranath's most beautiful plays, perhaps the only one that is flawless. Edward Thompson considers it *"His loveliest drama, a lyrical feast"*. M.V. Iyengar calls it *"a thing of beauty"*. It presents an evolution of human love from the physical to the spiritual.

J.C. Rollo remarks that He further remarks *"Here you have no particular people. Arjuna and Chitra are Every man, Every woman and the problem facing them is that of human wives and husbands from the beginning to the end of time"*.



*Did u know?* "Chitra is no less masterly than Gitanjali and The Gardner'. There is the same beauty of phrasing, the same flowing, ever-satisfying rhythm and in its thought, there is the same firm hold upon reality, the same truth of feeling, and of sympathy and the same arresting power of symbolism.

Dr. Iyengar feels that *"the supernatural machinery – Vasanta, Madana and their gifts to Chitra is strictly superfluous to the play's inner causation. The whole point of the play is that youth itself is a sudden spring-time miracle, for it comes as it were suddenly and fades away as suddenly, as unaccountably."* The play is primarily about Chitra, about woman. Motherland achieves the miracle of continuity, the beyonding of death itself. Beauty and youth, although they may be transient and hence illusory, are yet a part of experience. This lyrical drama is based on the following story of the Mahabharata.

In the course of his wanderings, in fulfilment of a vow of penance. Arjuna comes to Manipur. There he sees Chitrangada, the beautiful daughter of Chitravahana, the king of the country. Smitten with her charms, he asks the king for the hand of his daughter in marriage. Chitravahana asks him who he is and learning that he is Arjuna, the Pandava tells him that Prabhanjana, one of his ancestors in the kingly line of Manipur, had, long been childless. In order to obtain an heir, he performed severe penances. Pleased with these austerities, the God Shiva gave him the boon that he and his successors shall each have one child. It so happens that the promised child has invariably been a son. He Chitravahana, is the first to have only a daughter Chitrangada to perpetuate the race. He has therefore, always treated her as a son and has made her his heir. Continuing, the king says: *"The one son that will be born to her must be the perpetuator of my race. That son will be the price that I shall demand for this marriage. You can take her if you like on this condition."*

Arjuna promises and takes Chitrangada to wife and lives in her father's capital for three years. When a son is born to them, he embraces her with affection and taking leave of her and her father sets out again on his travels.

K. Chandrasekharan says that *"Chitra is a play, nay, a playlet inspired by the Mahabharata. It is Tagore's miniature version of Kalidas's Shakuntala. Chitra and Arjuna gain a sensual earthly paradise first, but gain later the higher heavens of total trust and understanding and fulfilment"*

The theme unfolds itself, in Tagore's play in nine scenes. The first scene deals with the rejection of Chitra by Arjuna, while the second with the rejection of Arjuna by Chitra. The third describes the delicious union of the hero and heroine. In the fourth scene Tagore refers to the decline of Arjuna's infatuation. It is followed by an interlude in the fifth scene. While the sixth scene describes the further

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decline of Arjuna's infatuation, there is an interlude again in the seventh scene. In the eighth scene Arjuna comes across the 'other' Chitra and the last scene represents the course of events from the "Lie" to the "Truth".

Tagore could start the play, strike the opening chords, name the characters and memory and imagination would do the rest.

This short play of one Act contains none of the attractions of variation in scene, action and characters. There is no complexity in the plot. There is no feeling of vagueness bordering on dissatisfaction as we finish the book. The blending of fine shades of thoughts in a single theme is rendered with a rare intuition and skill.

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Chitra is not a goddess hidden in a golden image. Her noble ambition is to meet the greatest hero of the five pandava brothers. She responds to the call of love and places herself in the hands of Arjuna murmuring to him "*Take me, take all I am.*" There is a real conflict at first in her, but she slowly yields to the compromising attitude and is ready to make her last sacrifice at Arjuna's feet. As K. Chandrasekharan says: "*The final revelation of her true self, so sudden and so impressive cannot but leave a ringing touch even long after the play is over. Chitra is certainly greater than man and woman put together, though by a strange irony of fate she happens to be both.*" As one representing the ideal of womanhood, Chitra shows that a woman is not merely a passive follower of her husband. Chitra, typifying faith, purity, love and sacrifice embodies the noblest virtues of womanhood.

Arjuna claims our attention next. He is found fickle. He sees an apparition of beauty in the perfect form of a woman. He thinks that the vague veilings of her body should melt in ecstasy into air as the golden mist of dawn melts from the snowy peak of the eastern hill. The intensity of pathos overwhelms us when each of them passes through an inner struggle in trying to understand the other.



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Tagore finally represents the symbolism in Chitra namely the symbolism of the human psyche of youth and growth. He refers to the symbols, "the organic world" of flower and fruit and plant and creature. There are also the symbols of metaphysical passions of illusion and reality.

Again he has also stated the symbols of mythological consciousness of Madana and Vasanta and the beloved elves.

All these symbols are sustained throughout by the controlling allegory of the two ashrams of Kalidas as *Shakuntala*. Tagore has created for himself a wonderfully rounded form for a play racing the passage of the human soul through the eternal cycle of innocence and experience and consummation.

Thus Tagore has wonderfully conveyed in this short drama with consummate skill an endless meaning in the narrow span of a song. He has the original gift of spreading the atmosphere of the ideal world over familiar forms and incidents. Prof. Jadnath Shankar says, "*Chitra is no mere tale of joys and of a lass. It is a criticism of life.*"

### 21.1 Chitra as a Play

*Chitra* was performed in India without scenery and the audience surrounded the actors. All the other necessary components for writing and producing the drama, such as playwriting, acting, costume and scenic design were attended to by Tagore. *Chitra* is based on the *Chitrangada-Arjuna* episode in

the *Mahabharata*. Tagore filled this skeleton with flesh and blood of an enchanting romance, full of deep psychological insight into the relationship of man and woman. It is a dramatic sermon on the theme of true love. Arjuna, the Pandava prince spurns the princess Chitra, the daughter of the King of Manipur. Later when transformed into beautiful damsel by a boon from the god of Love and god of Spring, she approaches Arjuna again. He is infatuated. But Chitra conquers her unease by boldly revealing the truth about her. The false woman redeems herself as the true mother-to-be. The sensual is transcended in the spiritual, and the union is consecrated at last.

Tagore's *Chitra* has a compact and neat structure. Its principal characters tend to be symbolic. Tagore's drama is firmly rooted in the Indian ethos in its themes and characters and eminently expressive of his deepest convictions in creative terms. It is interesting to know the genesis of the play. Once after one of Tagore's early visits to Shantiniketan while he was returning to Calcutta and watching the receding landscape from the window of his railway coach, he was struck by the profusion of flowers on the wild shrubs and trees that lined both sides of the track in the month of April. "These flowers so fragrant and lovely to look at would soon wither and fall in the burning heat of the sun and in their stead the trees among which were many mango trees would bear fruit. The flowers were merely the play of spring-nature's trick to induce the fruit." Musing on this the young poet said to himself: "If a sensitive woman felt that her lover was bound to her solely on account of her physical charms, which were external and short-lived, and not by any qualities of her heart and the need of her life-long companionship, she would discover in her body not an asset but a rival." This idea intrigued the poet and he felt like giving it a dramatic form. At the same time an episode from the *Mahabharata* floated into his mind. The two jostled in his consciousness until several years later the present drama emerged during his sojourn in a small village in Orissa, called Pandua, where he had gone to inspect his family estates.

*Chitra* is a play in one act and nine scenes in the English version and eleven scenes in the Bengali version. The eleven scenes in the original Bengali version have been reduced to nine keeping in view the interests of the English-speaking public. The scenes vary in length from one another keeping in view their plausibility and requirement in the development of the story. *Chitra* has been performed in India without scenery – the actors being surrounded by the audience.

The forthcoming paragraphs consider *Chitra* as a drama in terms of (i) Plot Construction (ii) Character (iii) Dialogue (iv) Conflict (v) Theme (vi) Supernatural Device (vii) Soliloquy (viii) Intensity of emotion and Lyrical quality in terms of Diction.

## 21.2 Plot Construction

*Chitra* is a play in one act and nine scenes. Freytag pointed out that the plot of a play may be symbolized as a "pyramidal structure," its diagram consists of the exposition, the initial incident, its development, the conflict, the resolution and the catastrophe. *Chitra* also consists of the exposition, the initial incident, its development, crisis, falling action and catastrophe. In the first scene, there is the rebuff of Chitra by Arjuna. Chitra tells Madana (god of Love) and Vasanta (god of Youth and Beauty) how, on seeing Arjuna, she had broken her bow and cast away her arrows, changed her boy's attire to a woman's, and approached him – only to be rejected, because of his vow of celibacy. While she knows there is a long hard way of winning him, she contemplates to take recourse to an easy way by asking for the gift of physical beauty from the gods. She then acquires it for the span of a whole year.

According to William Henry Hudson, "The plot" must have "a beginning, middle and an end." In *Chitra*, the exposition which should be clear, brief, dramatic and of absolute naturalness and spontaneity, consists at first the rejection of Chitra's suit by Arjuna; her sense of inferiority due to the lack of feminine graces and charms, and her seeking the help of Madana and Vasanta. The machinery of the gods constitutes an integral part of the plot of action. It is not merely a decorative appendage. The gods granted her prayer of being endowed with beauty and extraordinary charms for a year. The playwright thus prepares a background of passion, love, romance and beauty in the very beginning against which the action here would develop. Moreover, insight into Chitra and Arjuna's character is also given here. Chitra, in spite of being attired as a warrior, with her sinews hardened is a woman after all. Arjuna who is handsome, tall and masculine turns himself away from her, for he does not

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find in her anything, which can entice him to her. He had taken a vow of celibacy for twelve years, which he could not violate. The charms of her body were not such as to lead him away from his resolution. The exposition of the action of *Chitra* is thus made in this scene.

In the second scene, there is the spurning of Arjuna by Chitra. When Arjuna, unmindful of his vows, seeks the new Chitra in the temple, she is more saddened than elated. And consequently she rejects Arjuna.

The story develops with Arjuna's sudden acceptance of Chitra later on, due to Chitra having been endowed with beauty and grace for a year by the gods of Love and Spring. Their amours and blissful spending of the time in the forest in a romantic setting is depicted in this scene. The triumph of the body over the soul is revealed here. Arjuna falls a prey to the appearance of perfect beauty. The Other Chitra is falsehood, an illusion, a deceit of a god. Chitra admits this to Arjuna and reveals to him obliquely her true identity. But to Arjuna everything seems to be a dream; he forgets his vow of celibacy and perceives the appearance of beauty which is now before him. She makes him a captive of her love and beauty and he desires to drink deep into the joys of her beauty and charms. The action in the story develops due to the help of the gods.

In the third scene, one sees the physical union of Chitra and Arjuna. Then Chitra tells Madana and Vasanta that during the previous night Arjuna had come and made love to her. Yet she is full of remorse because Arjuna had not loved her but only her borrowed beauty. Her body has thus become her own enemy.

Chitra and Arjuna's union does not give Chitra a sense of satisfaction, but on the contrary it brings out the dormant anguish of her soul. Her physical beauty is a temporary one. As such it would slip away from her and she would be left to sit and weep day and night when she would be put to shame at her naked poverty. The body triumphs, but its triumph is only momentary, for it would soon fade away into nothingness. With the close of the flowering season the triumph of fruitage would follow, when the heat-cloyed bloom of the body would droop and the abiding fruitful truth would be accepted. Earthly bliss brings in its train satiety in the consummation, which the union of the two bodies enjoys. Behind this is concealed a cry of agony. This has been described in a subtle manner, which speaks of the great artistic sensibility of the poet. The two gods appear for the second time in the scene. It is through Chitra's dialogue with them that the action the drama is further unfolded and the symbolic meaning of the play is revealed that, Man is not content with the earthly bliss (which is temporal) and he essentially longs for a bliss, which is of a higher type (which is permanent). The entire atmosphere in the scene is romantic and passionate. The language used is also romantic and poetic. There is thus perfect fusion between the theme and the language.

In the fourth scene, the decline of Arjuna's passion is described. As the days pass, there is a sharp decline in Arjuna's zeal. Now, he dreams of home. He wonders when Chitra says that such ephemeral love is not meant for familial happiness. It is difficult to say whether it is Chitra that is giving Arjuna eyes to see that mundane unfolding truth, or whether she is too self-conscious, too suspicious of the consequence of their love. When she invites him again to partake of love's excess, he calls her attention to the prayer-bells from the distant temple. To Arjuna love is more than a mere reverie of the senses.

The scene shows that Arjuna is gradually awakening into his real self from the world of shadows and dreams because dreams cannot enwrap a man forever; they are to vanish and their place is to be taken by the realities of life. Chitra's remark is significant as it has a prominent bearing on the meaning of the play. Physical enjoyments beget satiety after indulgence in it for sometime. It is not abiding and one feels like turning away from it has been drunk to the lees.

The fifth scene is an Interlude. The fervour of Vasanta. (Youth and Beauty) cannot keep pace with the demands of Madana (Love). There is the inevitable awakening of spring, as it draws to a close.

Madana and Vasanta appear for the third time in this scene. They carry the action further by a comment that the earthly bliss of Chitra and Arjuna, having reached the highest point, is almost at its end. The language here is poetic, romantic, sensuous and full of passion.

In the sixth scene, further decline of Arjuna's obsession is depicted. Arjuna who readily switched over from asceticism to love now longs for the old days when he used to hunt with his brothers. Contemplation entangles, and he wonders about his companion, her home and parents.

The scene shows the development in Arjuna's character whose mind is now full of the thoughts of hunting and he reminisces. He thinks of a home where kind hearts wait for his return. His heart is dissatisfied and he expresses the need to hold on to something permanent. The year is not yet complete and he is tired. All this shows that indulgence in sensuous and physical pleasures leave a man dissatisfied. Chitra is wayward. She has no name and fixed destination. She has no ties with the world and when the time comes she droops silently without feeling sorry, for she has had the fullest in her life.

The seventh scene witnesses another interlude. Madana grants Chitra's wish that her beauty shall flash brightest on the last night of Spring. The playwright wants to suggest that the spirit of beauty is eternal. It never dies. It only changes shapes. Similarly the beauty of the spirit is also eternal.

In the eighth scene, the real Chitra comes to light. Arjuna hears from wandering villagers about the princess Chitra now gone on a journey. So he ponders about the real Chitra, whose arms with beauty of strength is a fright to the robbers. He throws the formidable task that they too – he and the beautiful woman by his side – should leave the unbearable thicket of love and race on their horses to the field of action. And this challenge provokes the appropriate response.

In this scene, Arjuna's mind is fully occupied with the thoughts of princess Chitra. He sees in her a goddess of victory, dispensing glad hope all around her. She is like a watchful lioness that protects her villagers with her fierce love. Arjuna is a changed man now. He accepts Chitra, the same from whom he had recoiled in the earlier part as she is in actual life, a warrior, denuded from womanly graces. The action shows progression and is gradually reaching to its climax.

The ninth scene leads us from falsehood to truth. Chitra returns to Arjuna as she had been when she first met Arjuna. Yet she is not quite the same, for she is also the prospective mother of Arjuna's son. Arjuna is satisfied, and has a sense of complete fulfilment and even Chitra has no remorse.

Thus, Chitra reveals herself to Arjuna in this scene and reminds him of her first meeting with him. She clarifies that woman is a helpmate of man and is not merely his plaything. This is what Tagore has visualized in the character of Chitra. Arjuna and Chitra fully wake to reality at the end of the play.

Chitra musters up courage and successfully persuades Arjuna to take the course which he thinks is the best and the truest. However Arjuna expresses satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment at what has happened. When finally they part towards the close of the play real love emerges from the ashes of their transient love. The denouement is just mentioned and the play ends. *Chitra* has a poetic beginning and it has an abrupt and unexpected end. The revelation of the real identity of Chitra does not make Arjuna feel sorry but makes him filled with a sense of contentment. Chitra and Arjuna realize that mere love and beauty cannot be the ultimate value of life. The playmate of the night claims her place as the helpmate of the day. The two together make up the complete wife. Thus, complete love is a fusion of both sensuous enjoyment and life's sterner duties.

There is no complexity in the plot. Various moods of Chitra and Arjuna are drawn sharply. The beauty of the play lies in its presentation and message than in the story. The play is not only a thing of beauty in itself but reveals to us what artistic possibilities lie in the Puranas, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. If only we have in us the selective and creative genius of great poets like Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Aurobindo, and Tagore can we learn the message of such stories in the right spirit. One can then seek to steep in these stories the light of one's imagination and reveal them to the world for its uplift and delight. The great peculiarity in the case of stories of India is that they are still a living force in the hearts of men, that the persons dealt within them are still our ideals who dominate and direct our lives and our thoughts; and that a new interpretation of such stories in a vivid manner will help to unify and intensify our national life and make our land full of dynamic love and achievement.

### 21.3 Dialogue

The dialogues of the play express the ideas and emotions of the characters and thereby the intention of the playwright. "Dialogue becomes an essential adjunct to action or even an integral part of it. The story moving beneath the talk and being staged stage by stage, elucidated by it." The dialogues in

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*Chitra* are radiant with the light of poetry and romance. They suggest the gradual development of the characters. The dialogue by *Chitra* in the last scene of the play is a fine example of how the character of *Chitra* has grown since the first scene. She says:

I am *Chitra*. No goddess to be worshipped, not yet the object of common pity you brushed aside like a moth with indifference. If you deign to keep me by your side in the path of danger and daring, if you allow me to share the great duties of your life, then you will know my true self. If your babe whom I am nourishing in my womb, be born a son, I shall myself teach him to be a second *Arjuna*, and send him to you when the time comes, and then at last you will truly know me.

Here, an Egoistic *Chitra* gives place to a devotional *Chitra*. Her ego has melted away. Her sacrifice marks out her maturity and understanding power. This love of *Chitra* is born of deep understanding. She is content and realizes that she is both a woman and a mother. Now she has a clear vision of life. Her passion has taught her the real meaning of love. Similarly *Arjuna's* mental growth and spiritual development is seen in the following lines:

Why these tears my love? Why cover your face with your hands? Have I pained you, my darling? Forget what I said. I will be content with the present. Let each separate moment of beauty come to me like a bird of mystery from its unseen nest in the dark bearing a message of music. Let me for ever sit with my hope on the brink of its realization and thus end my days.

This dialogue points out a gradual rise from the early immature judgement to the ripe understanding of the character (regarding love and life). *Chitra* and *Arjuna* uplift themselves from the physical level. They understand gradually that the body is only the temple of the soul, and not the God Himself. It is temporary, changeable and visible. But the principle element is the soul that is immortal, constant and abstract. They realize:

Atma va are drashtavyaha shrotavyo mantavyo nididhyasitavyon maitreyatmano va are darshanen shraavanen matya vigyaneneda sarve viditam.

(Neither the body nor anything else is worthy of contemplation. It is only the soul that is worth seeing, listening, and meditating.)

Thus, the play is a play of passion, love and real love and therefore the dialogues are radiant with the light of romance and poetry.

## 21.4 Conflict

Conflict is the soul of a drama. It is the datum and very backbone of a dramatic story. "The dramatic action develops as a result of the conflict – some clash of opposed individuals, or passions, or interest." The conflict may be external or internal. *Chitra* has both the kinds of conflict – external and internal. For instance, the external conflict is visible in the beginning of the play, when *Arjuna* does not pay attention to the suit of the love of *Chitra* on the plea that he was in exile and that the vow of celibacy forbade him to respond to the beauty and charms of a lady. It is with this external conflict that the play starts. Then *Chitra* in her conversation with *Madana* tells him to teach her his lessons; give her the power of the weak and the weapon of the unarmed hand.

There is an internal conflict too, which is always there in *Chitra's* mind when she entices *Arjuna* by the charms and graces bestowed on her by the gods. She is fully aware of the fact that the gods have granted to her this beauty for a year only and therefore she decides that after the end of the period when she would appear in her real self before *Arjuna*, she would then eventually repulse him. She therefore enjoys the period granted with fullness, but thinks continuously that *Arjuna* does not love her. It is her borrowed beauty that is loved by him. This inward conflict becomes pronounced when she ultimately decides that before the expiry of the period of one year she would tell *Arjuna* all the facts and thus lift the heavy burden off her mind by this act of penitence. Otherwise, her dream to clasp *Arjuna* shall get shattered. Therefore *Chitra* asks:

Would it please your heroic soul if the playmate of the night aspired to be the helpmeet of the day, if the left arm learnt to share the burden of the proud right arm?

Thus, Chitra realizes that complete love is a fusion of both physical enjoyment and life's unsympathetic obligations. It is this internal conflict which makes the play as one of the best plays of Tagore.

## 21.5 Theme

*Chitra* exhibits a realization of the diviner elements of life and love; a heavenly message to the human soul as to what is the meaning of love in the truest sense of the term. In *Chitra*, Tagore discusses the evolution of human love from the physical to the spiritual. In the last scene Chitra tells Arjuna:

The gift that I proudly bring you is the heart of a woman. Here have all pains and joys gathered, the hopes and fears and shames of a daughter of the dust; here love springs up struggling towards immortal life. Herein lies an imperfection which yet is noble and grand.

Chitra makes her last sacrifice at Arjuna's feet. She brings from the garland of heaven the flowers of incomparable beauty to worship him. She is not as perfect as the flowers with which she worships him. She brings to him the gift of a heart of a woman, which is full of pains and pleasures, the hopes and fears and shames of a daughter of the dust. The imperfection, in spite of what it is, is noble and grand.

Further, the physical relationship between man and woman is the foundation of love, its composition is provided by their spiritual relationship. Love will find its fruition only when the mind and the heart of the lover and the beloved are completely united. This theme of transcendent love in *Chitra* is best explained through suggestion, which is the keynote of dramatic art. So Tagore instead of evidently telling so many things in so many words, merely suggests by way of symbols and images. In *Chitra* the central symbol is the offer of beauty to Chitra by the gods. She desires to win the love of Arjuna in a short span. However, that which is secured in a short duration also vanishes in a short duration. Chitra and Arjuna both gain and lose their attachment for each other as they had adopted the wrong mode of winning each other. But once they become conscious of their folly they begin to make amends. When at last they meet, Chitra tells Arjuna that their love is not for home. "Not for a home asks Arjuna. And Chitra responds saying:

No. Never talk of that. Take to your home what is abiding and strong. Leave the little wild flower where it was born; leave it beautifully to die at the day's end among all fading blossoms and decaying leaves. Do not take it to your palace hall to fling it on the stony floor which knows no pity for things that fade and are forgotten.

Arjuna then exclaims, "Is our that kind of love?" And Chitra confidently responds saying, "Yes." She believes that if it implies the assertion of truth it should not be accompanied by any sense of regret whatsoever. And that what was meant for idle days should never outlive its destined span of life. One has to enjoy and rest satisfied till it lives or survives. Arjuna then exclaims that there is something amiss as he experiences having not obtained the real Chitra and then Chitra reveals her true identity. The fulfilment of love thus occurs in the last scene of the play when Arjuna meets the real Chitra with all her physical blemishes and exclaims in joy, "Beloved, my life is full." Arjuna's reply is brief but perfect. Thus, when the time comes for the lovers to separate, they have no regrets for life has given them all it has to give. The poet does not place an exclusive value on mere love and beauty but that does not mean that they are less important because the responsibility of fatherhood and motherhood go side by side and one cannot be isolated from the other in a concept of pleasant existence. The play conveys the message of the fullness of love.

Thus, the purpose of the play is not the glorification of sexual surrender. Tagore has in reality an encyclopedic view of life and he is as much a poet of love and passion as he is a poet of God and religion. In *Chitra* he deals with the theme of human love that goes beyond its physical limitations in order to realize its full significance. The merger of man and woman is the marriage of true minds, an entire compass ranging from the sensual to the spiritual. It is not to be got simply or purchased but to be attained through *tapasya*. Youth and beauty are fleeting and death is inescapable; yet marriage achieves the wonder of 'beyonding' youth and beauty, and motherhood and fatherhood to achieve the miracle of continuity, the 'beyonding' of death itself. Before the gods deck her with captivating



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grace, Chitra is but a plain unselfconscious girl wearing a boy's attire. When the obtained grace has been shed, Chitra is still beautiful because she has known love, because she is now an expected mother.

Beauty and youth, although they may be transient are yet parts of our experience. "Wisdom lies in neither looking upon the body and its beauty as ends in themselves nor in imagining that our life could be wholly separated from the physical base. Tagore rejected both the negations. The ascetic's denial of life as well as the sensualist's denial of the spirit. The blinding maddening ecstasy of the physical union is not denied in *Chitra*, but its transience is also recognized.

The poet's wonderful art and his power of conveying an endless world of meaning in the narrow span of a sentence are seen in the wonderful reply of Arjuna ("Beloved, my life is full"). The message of the play is the idea so beautifully expressed in Carew's poem on *True Beauty*:

He that loves a rosy cheek  
Or a coral lip admires  
Or from star-like love doth seek  
Fuel to maintain his fires;  
As old Time maketh these decay,  
So his flames must waste away.  
But a smooth and steadfast mind,  
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,  
Hearts with equal love combined  
Kindle never dying fires:  
Where these are not, I despise  
Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes!

The poet teaches us that the love that is founded on beauty of body alone is built on insecure foundations. Beauty in human face and form is glorious, fleeting and mysterious. To the man with true vision, beauty, grace and charm that raptures the lover in his beloved's face is but a dim reflection – an imperfect revelation of the wondrous vision – of the light of the soul behind the veil of the mortal flesh. The beauty of the soul is immortal, as the soul is immortal. Love built on the beauty of the soul is built on a rock and endures forever.

Tagore is a true child of his great poetic ancestors. He has recognized and expressed the true glory of love in his works. His insight into Indian ideals and conceptions of love is very well shown in the essays that he has written interpreting the genius of Kalidasa. He says:

The poet has shown here, as in *Kumarsambhava*, that the Beauty that goes hand in hand with Moral law is eternal, that the calm, controlled and beneficent form of Love, is its best form, that Beauty is truly charming under restraint and decays quickly when it gets wild and unfettered. This ancient poet of India refuses to recognise as its own highest glory; he proclaims that goodness is the final goal of love. He teaches us that the love of man and woman is not beautiful, not lasting, not fruitful, – so long as it is self-centred, so long as it does not beget goodness, so long as it does not defuse itself in society over son and daughter, guests and neighbours [...]. But on the altar of devotion (*tapasya*) India sits alone [...]. The Beauty that he adores is lit up by grace, modesty, and goodness; in its intensity it is true to one forever; in its range it embraces the whole universe. It is fulfilled by renunciation, ratified by sorrow and rendered eternal by religion [...]. Therefore is such love higher and more wonderful than wild and unrestrained Passion.

The remarks that Tagore has made in respect to Kalidasa hold true for the poet himself. Moreover Krishna Kriplani also opines that "the play is very characteristic of the author. It represents a basic and permanent attitude of his mind and philosophy – his unification of man and nature, the latter almost an active participant in the drama of life and his concern with the perennial question, what is beauty; what is love; what is the true and enduring basis of man-woman relationship?"

## 21.6 Supernatural Devices

The supernatural devices in the form of the gods are employed as an indispensable part of the plot. The two gods – Madana – the god of Love and Vasanta – the god of Spring are introduced in three scenes out of the total nine. They are not artistic pieces only, but have a distinctly important role, which is necessary for the development of action in the play. They grant Chitra a blessing of beauty for the span of a year with the help of which she captivates Arjuna. Vasanta says in the first scene:

Not for the short span of a day, but for one whole year the charm of spring blossoms shall nestle round thy limbs.

Arjuna then meets this beauty seated by a lake looking at the image of her newborn heavenly loveliness. Similarly when Chitra asks Madana to grant her the prayer that her derived beauty should flame at its brightest on the last night, he responds by saying:

Thou shalt have thy wish.

Thus, the lovers Chitra and Arjuna could meet and understand the transient nature of physical love, which is ephemeral and fleeting, because of the two gods. Chitra then tells Arjuna the story of her innate love and her reclaimed radiance and offers her heart at his feet. Chitra's purity, tenderness, nobility, ability, dedication, dignity and beauty of her soul then charm Arjuna.

Prof. Tolman points out that "only those characteristics of the hero should be made prominent which really influence the course of the action and that these characteristics should be unmistakable." In *Chitra*, Tagore has made only those characteristics prominent which affect the course of the action in the real sense of the term. That is her passionate longing for Arjuna is ultimately transformed into a deeper and real love for Arjuna. She is able to do so because of the two gods. Madana and Vasanta constitute not only a significant but also an integral part of the play. They are not merely means of adornment but rather are instrumental in making Chitra experience the meaning of real love.

## 21.7 Soliloquy

Soliloquy is the dramatist's means of taking us down into the hidden labyrinths of a person's nature, and of revealing those springs of conduct which ordinary dialogue provides him with no adequate opportunity to disclose.

Tagore has used the device of soliloquy in *Chitra* and thereby has turned it into an appealing and effective play. The soliloquies reveal the minds of his characters. Arjuna speaks two soliloquies, while Chitra has only 'one in the entire play. In the second scene Arjuna speaks:

Was I dreaming or was what I saw by the lake truly there? Sitting on the mossy turf, I mused over bygone years in the sloping shadows of the evening, when slowly there came out from the folding darkness of foliage an apparition of beauty in the perfect form of a woman, and stood on a white slab of stone at the water's brink [...]. To me the supreme fulfilment of desire seemed to have been revealed in a flash and then to have vanished [...].

This indicates the inner recesses of the heart of Arjuna. Chitra in man's attire cannot attract him but her newly born heavenly loveliness bewitches him and breaks his vow of celibacy. He, at once, falls in love with the Other Chitra. In the third scene, Chitra speaks:

No, impossible. To face that fervent gaze that almost grasps you like clutching hands of the hungry spirit within; to feel his heart struggling to break its bounds urging its passionate cry through the entire body – and then to send him away like a beggar – no, impossible [...].

This is the yearning cry of Chitra that prepares her to move a step further in the process of realizing her true potential. Similarly, in the sixth scene Arjuna speaks:

I woke in the morning and found that my dreams had distilled a gem. I have no casket to enclose it, no king's crown whereon to fix it, no chain from which to hang it, and yet have not the heart to throw it away. My Kshatriya's right arm, idly occupied in holding it, forgets its duties.

Thus begins Arjuna's yearning to get nearer to Chitra's soul. He also longs to go back and resume his royal duties of being helpful to his subjects though his love for the Other Chitra is still the dominant

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passion of his heart. But gradually, he rises to a more elevated level of love. In essence, the soliloquies reveal the innermost ideas of the characters. Further, it is well known that soliloquies are an integral part of the form of drama and hence (as exemplified by these illustrations) its inclusion in *Chitra* as an effective dramatic medium justifies the play as being categorized as a play with lyrical qualities.

**Self-Assessment****1. Fill in the blanks:**

- (i) Chitra is a play in One Act and ..... scenes.
- (ii) Chitra is the quintessence of .....
- (iii) The Chitra is not a lyrical drama as it is not written in .....
- (iv) Chitra is a succinct Tagorean version of Kalidasa's .....

**21.8 Summary**

- We find in these illustrations almost all the lyrical qualities that have been stated above. "*Chitra* is the quintessence of romance. The speeches burn with passion, and light up the way from truth to illusion and gain the arduous climb from illusion to truth." It is a wonderful piece of work as beautiful in its thought as in its expression. It begins as a play of passionate love and rises to the height of pure love. It is a love-idyll. E.J. Thompson opines that the English version titled as *Chitra* "has a swiftness of action which the Bengali text lacks."
- The third scene abounds in beautiful passages suggestive of a romantic atmosphere and containing expressions of passionate love. Tagore's description is marked by an unusual kind of restraint. The description of the physical features of Chitra is rather strictly limited and his description more or less relates to the natural environment. There cannot be better and a more dignified manner of expressing the supreme fulfilment of love.
- Thus, *Chitra* is not a lyrical drama, as it is not written in verse. It can be called a drama with lyrical quality, as sometimes the expressions are musical and passionate. Whereas *Chitrangada*, the original Bengali text is a lyrical drama written in blank verse. In other words, *Chitra* is a "succinct Tagorean version of Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*." The play is doubtlessly one of the most fascinating and the most satisfying of Tagore's plays.

**21.9 Key-Words**

1. Vasanta : Youth and Beauty
2. Devotion : Tapasya

**21.10 Review Questions**

1. What is the plot construction of Chitra? Discuss.
2. Discuss the theme in the play 'Chitra'.
3. What conflict and soliloquy do you see in Chitra? Discuss.
4. Explain intensity of emotion and lyrical quantity.

**Answers: Self-Assessment**

1. (i) 9 (ii) romance (iii) verse (iv) Shakuntala

**21.11 Further Readings**

Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 22: Precis Writing from Seen and Unseen Passages

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### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Know the Rules of Precis Writing.
- Understand Writing a Precis.

### Introduction

The word *precis*, though now part of the English language, is a French word signifying *summary, substance, abridgement, abstract, condensed statement or epitome* (Greek *epi-tom-e*). All these words convey the same meaning.

To understand the requirements and techniques of precis writing, the following points should be taken into consideration.

1. **Precis is the expression of the original in condensed terms:** A precis has to be a shorter re-statement of the original. In the examination, the length of the precis is stipulated, and the precis should not exceed or fall short of the prescribed length by more than five words. In case the length has not been prescribed, precis should be one-third of the original.
2. **The principal contents:** The pruning of the original would not spare anything but the bare essentials. Metaphors, similes, hyperboles, conceits, epigrams will have to be left out. Illustrations, reasons and arguments should be omitted too. If the passage contains dialogues or direct speech, this must be put into indirect speech and only a brief extract of it need be given.
3. **A precis should be the writer's own words:** A precis should stand on its own. Although a concise and faithful account of the original passage, it should be self-contained and independent as a piece of writing. Naturally, a precis writer will have to rely on his own words rather than use terms from the original passage.
4. **Central idea:** A precis should set forth briefly the central idea of the original. This idea should be brought out succinctly.
5. **Orderly condensation:** A precis should be an orderly abridgement which means that it should remove all redundancies and state the import of the original as an organised and systematic whole. A precis is an independent piece of writing in which the sequence of ideas or arguments lead to the conclusion or the central idea. Care should be taken to preserve the tone of the original passage.

### Rules of Writing a Precis

1. You should read the passage carefully two or three times, until you have a clear idea of its general purport.
2. When you are satisfied as to the main idea, consider the passage in detail. On careful reading, you will find that the argument generally resolves itself into certain well-defined sections. Observe carefully the connections between them and write down a suitable heading for each section.
3. Note down the important points and number them at the side. Otherwise you may miss something important. When all the points are numbered, go through them and strike out which are really

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not essential to the meaning. You may find that there are repetitions or what are called redundant expressions. You may find illustrations which are not necessary to the meaning. Or you may find that there are stylistic effects, such as exaggeration or expansion or bombast or lack of restraint, which have to be removed.

4. No additional matter should be inserted by way of personal comment or historical explanation.
5. All superfluous details such as long quotations or lengthy enumerations, added merely to illustrate the argument, must be omitted.
6. When the process of selection and elimination is completed, proceed to weave the various ideas into a concise and lucid narrative. To do this effectively requires considerable experience in the use of felicitous and comprehensive words.
7. Now, you also see whether the points are arranged in the best possible way in the passage before you. For it is the arrangement which gives point or emphasis to what you want to say.
8. Before you begin to write, you must remember that you are going to translate the ideas and the spirit. Every writer has his own style, and your own style too is different from that of the writer of the passage. You will be tempted to reproduce the style as well as the matter, but if you do reproduce the whole phrase in your precis, you are not likely to score high marks. Further, your precis will not be lucid unless the principle of continuity is observed. It is not sufficient that the sentences should express the ideas of different sections as briefly as possible, but they must also follow each other in logical sequence, and welded together by means of suitable connectives into a vigorous and organic whole.
10. In the competitive examinations, the incidents of the passage given for making a precis refer to the past and therefore, the past tense should be used throughout. It is advisable to use third person unless it is found that the form of the original extract does not admit of its being converted into indirect speech.
11. A precis is always in indirect form of speech except in very rare cases where it is necessary to incorporate a few words in the precis in their original form so that the meaning is not distorted.
12. Finally, the cardinal requirements of a good precis may be summed up in three words: clarity, coherence and brevity.

**Title:** A title must be assigned to a precis whether asked or not. Fielden says, "Title shall be, in effect, a precis of the precis." The title of a precis should give the central idea of the precis. It should not exceed five or six words. A precis title neither contains a verb nor forms a question.

## 22.1. Solved Examples

Some solved precis of the passages have been given below. Read these passages and evaluate their skills.

### **Example: 1**

It is physically impossible for a well-educated or brave man to make money the chief object of his thoughts, just as it is for him to make his dinner the principal object of them. All healthy people like their dinners, but their dinner is not the main object of their lives. So, all healthy-minded people like making money – ought to like it and enjoy the sensation of winning it; is something better than money. A good soldier, for instance, mainly wishes to do his fighting well. He is glad of his pay – very properly so, and justly *grumbles* when you keep him ten years without it – still his main *notion* of life is to win battles, not to be paid for winning them. So with *clergymen*. The clergyman's object is essentially to *baptize* and *preach*, not to be paid for preaching. So with doctors. They like fees no doubt – ought to like them; yet if they are brave and well-educated, the entire object of their lives is not fees. They, on the whole, desire to cure the sick, and, if they are good doctors, and the choice were fairly put to them, would rather cure their patient and lose their fee than kill him and get it. And so with all the other brave and rightly trained men; their work is first, their fee second – very important always, but still second. (233 words)

### **Key-words**

*Grumble* : show dissatisfaction  
*Notion* : idea, belief, opinion

|                  |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| <i>Clergyman</i> | : | a Christian priest   |
| <i>Baptize</i>   | : | to perform the Christian religious ceremony in which a person is touched or covered with water to make him pure and show that he has been accepted as a member of the church |
| <i>Preach</i>    | : | to make known (a particular religion and/or its teachings) by speaking in public   |

Notes

## Points for Precis making

1. Money-making is not the chief object of the well-educated, intellectual, or brave men.
2. A noble soldier fights bravely; to him, pay is of secondary importance.
3. A clergyman cares more for the welfare of the humanity than for his pay.
4. A sincere doctor desires to cure his patient far more than to get his fee.
5. Thus, for all cultured men, their duty comes first, their fee second.

**Precis**

Money-making is not the sole object of the well-educated, intellectual, or brave men. A brave soldier's main notion of life is to fight to win battles, not to be paid for winning them. A noble clergyman is concerned more with the welfare of the humanity than his pay. A good doctor desires far more to cure his patient than to get his fee. Thus, for all cultured people, their duty comes first, then their fee.

(75 words)

## Title

1. Duty First, Fee Afterwards
2. **Role of Money**

**Example: 2**

From time *immemorial*, the weak have always suffered at the hands of the strong. Their *pleas* for justice and equality have been *ignored* time and again because the ruling principle in the world since the dawn of history has been 'Might is Right'. This is being followed in the world of today also where the have-nots are always at the mercy of the haves; the underdeveloped and developing countries *look askance* at the highly developed and industrialised countries; the poor *beseech*, the rich to give them equal Opportunities, and the Blacks suffer untold miseries and humiliations in South Africa simply because of their complexion. The weak are *herded* like sheep and used as tools in the hands of the strong to serve the latter's ends whether it be in politics, economics, warfare or social *transactions*. The *adage* that the *meek* shall inherit the earth is still a far cry in the advanced world of today because it still belongs to the strong and the mighty. The two superpowers, Russia and America, are keeping the world *on the edge of precipice* by their warlike postures and nuclear armament. The Big Five have the power of veto in the United Nations to turn down any resolution supported by a majority of the weak or the third world countries. The weak always *go to the wall*. (225 words)

**Key-words**

|                                 |   |                                     |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Immemorial</i>               | : | beyond memory or record             |
| <i>Pleas</i>                    | : | appeals, entreaties                 |
| <i>Ignore</i>                   | : | disregard, refuse to take notice of |
| <i>Look askance</i>             | : | view suspiciously                   |
| <i>Beseech</i>                  | : | entreat                             |
| <i>Herded</i>                   | : | treated, driven                     |
| <i>Transactions</i>             | : | dealings                            |
| <i>Adage</i>                    | : | proverb                             |
| <i>Meek</i>                     | : | humble                              |
| <i>On the edge of precipice</i> | : | on the verge of ruin                |
| <i>Go to the wall</i>           | : | to fail, to be defeated             |

## Notes

## Points for Precis making

1. History is witness to the fact that the weak have always been exploited by the strong.
2. 'Might is Right' holds true even in the advanced world of today.
3. The exploitation of the weak and the poor, be it a person, class or a nation, continues by the rich and strong for their own selfish ends.
4. The world is virtually held to ransom by the big five industrialised countries.
5. They appear to conspire together to put down any attempt of the third world countries to improve their position.
6. It is indeed sad to see the weak and the poor in a hopeless situation.

**Precis**

History shows that the weak, have always been exploited by the strong since time immemorial. 'Might is Right' holds true even today. The exploitation of the weak and poor, be it a person, class, or a nation; by the rich and strong for their own selfish ends continues. The world is virtually dominated by the big five industrialised countries, who suppress attempts of the third world to improve their plight. The cause of the weak and poor is always defeated. (80 words)

**Title**

1. Might is Right
2. **The Plight of the Weak**

**Example: 3**

In India, the Khilafat Movement and the Jallianwala Bagh *Massacre* brought Mahatma Gandhi into prominence. His non-cooperation *campaigns* of 1921, his Salt Satyagraha in 1930 and finally his 'Quit India' movement in 1942 alongwith the developments back home forced the British to grant us independence, and sovereignty to India. In this process, not a single action using force and violence can be *cited* which Gandhiji or one of his millions of followers indulged in. The splinter groups in the Indian National Congress who did not agree on this method of achieving independence and thought violence to be the only method leading to the country's freedom broke away from Gandhiji and the Congress, but Gandhiji did not compromise his ideals at the expense of expediency. For him, the *end* justified the means and since the end of India's independence was something noble and unique, it had to be achieved through noble and peaceful means.

Gandhiji was basically a social reformer who spiritualised the *arena* of politics. He fought hard to uplift the *downtrodden* masses of India. The under-privileged, the Harijans and members of other scheduled and backward classes were equal to Gandhiji. He *championed* the movement to remove untouchability and exploitation from the country. To identify himself with the poverty-stricken masses of India, he wore the dress of a common man. He always travelled in the third class. To give a *vocational bias* to our education, he evolved the 'Nai Talim'. Drinking, he held, was an evil akin to or even worse than prostitution. He highlighted it in all its gory after-effects on the person, the family and the society and gave a call to all Indians to give up drinking as a habit.

The Light has indeed gone out of Indian politics after the Mahatma's death. 'The living flames' of his ideals which Nehru said, in his funeral *oration*, have long been dead in our hearts. (317 words)

**Key-words**

|                    |   |  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <i>Massacre</i>    | : | general killing, slaughter                           |
| <i>Campaigns</i>   | : | organised course of action to arouse public interest |
| <i>Cited</i>       | : | quoted   |
| <i>End</i>         | : | result   |
| <i>Arena</i>       | : | a place or scene of activity or conflict             |
| <i>Downtrodden</i> | : | trampled on, tyrannised over                         |
| <i>Championed</i>  | : | supported, defended                                  |

|                   |   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|
| <i>Vocational</i> | : | occupational  |
| <i>Bias</i>       | : | leaning to one side, any special influence                                  |
| <i>Oration</i>    | : | a formal speech made on a public occasion, especially as part of a ceremony |

Notes

Points for Precis making

1. Mahatma Gandhi became popular after some movements.
2. These movements forced the Britishers to grant India independence.
3. For Gandhiji, the end justified the means.
4. Therefore, he alongwith his followers never indulged in violence.
5. Gandhiji was a social reformer and after entering the politics he fought for the poor and the oppressed.
6. He was in favour of total prohibition.
7. His death caused a big void.

### Precis

Various movements started by Gandhiji compelled the British to leave India. Gandhiji and his followers followed the principle of non-violence throughout the freedom struggle. For him, the end justified the means, and therefore, he never compromised when the splinter groups did not agree on this method of attaining freedom and broke away from Gandhiji. He was basically a social reformer and, when he entered politics, did a lot to improve the lot of the oppressed, tried to remove untouchability and gave a new educational idea. He regarded drinking the worst evil and campaigned against it. His death caused a big void in Indian politics. (104 words)

### Title

1. Mahatma Gandhi: Champion of the Downtrodden
2. **The Mahatma and his Ideals**

## 22.2 Examples for Practice

Make a precis of the following passages and suggest a suitable title for the precis.

### Exercise: 1

The university, everywhere in the world, is an important institution for the advancement of the people. The traditional view of a university which was regarded as a place where students would carry on their scholarly activities and build themselves as *intellectuals*, as *isolated* from rest of the society, has to be changed to a place where it becomes an institution fully *conscious* of the changes taking place in society and making due contribution to this change.

Universities in India have been functioning under several pressures, viz. excessive specialisation, overcrowding, highly expensive organisation, *conflicting* political interference. The fast development that is taking place in society thus makes university life complex. The student now finds himself a *victim* of sudden breaking of social ties – family, village and culture. He finds that his studies have no roots in his own culture and his university education, based on foreign standards, is cracking. The solution lies in better understanding of the purpose of university education among the teachers and the taught and in the creation of a sense of community. The students and teachers are supposed to be mindful of the real purpose of education and *reorient* it to suit the changed conditions. The university authorities should, on their part, be careful not to *assume* that new techniques of teaching are good simply because they are new. (223 words)

### Key-words

|                      |   |                          |
|----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <i>Intellectuals</i> | : | educated and wise people |
| <i>Isolated</i>      | : | separated                |
| <i>Conscious</i>     | : | aware, knowing           |



## Notes

|                    |   |                                      |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Conflicting</i> | : | opposing                             |
| <i>Victim</i>      | : | prey, a person who is made to suffer |
| <i>Reorient</i>    | : | to change                            |
| <i>Assume</i>      | : | take as being true                   |

## Points for Precis making

1. University is an important place for the development of people.
2. The old view that university is separated from the society must change.
3. Universities have been working under certain pressures.
4. The fast development has changed the functions of university.
5. Better understanding of the aim of university education among the teachers and the students is needed.

**Exercise: 2**

In *affluent* circumstances, it is very easy for anyone to do his best. It is only under circumstances of *adversity* that the solidity of a person is known. A man of character, of noble intentions, of strong and *sturdy* physique and virtues, of selfless service to others, proves his worth even in times of adversity. He makes the events turn with his strong will, *perseverance*, ambition and determination. If he has a will to do a thing, nothing can stand in his way. He can conquer all *obstacles* to achieve his mission, since his objective is noble and worthy. The world has produced the best heroes during their trials of adversity. Some of them even had to go without food for days together. There were also worst trials and *tribulations* they had to go through. But they stood like a rock behind their mission and stood steadfast to their principles.

In the days of *prosperity* and pleasure, we sleep and enjoy and know not what we are. But in adversity, the inner man wakes up and we come to know our real strengths and weaknesses. History tells us that all great men are *hardy* and brave people who worked their way up through difficulties and obstacles. They stuck to their guns under all circumstances, never *stooping* low in their principles. Harder the circumstances, suffer the opposition, better they shone and brought out their virtue to the forefront.

Adversity has another great use. It gives us a chance to try our friends and foes and tells us who is who. False friendships based on motives of temporary benefits and comprising casual *flatters* are all exposed whereas true friends even though they may be previously in the background come to the forefront and prove their worth. Adversity is a great human teacher. It inspires understanding of the problems of the poorer and the underdog. It teaches us to feel for others and be grieved at a suffering for unless a person has gone to adversity himself he cannot know the real feelings of others. Human life is a mixture of joys and sorrows. It has its comedies and tragedies. After bright days, the dark days may come. For the strong man darkness vanishes quickly and happiness returns since he has lived in the dark days gloriously and bravely. (387 words)

**Key-words**

|                     |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| <i>Affluent</i>     | : | wealthy, rich, abounding                                  |
| <i>Adversity</i>    | : | misfortune, adverse circumstances                         |
| <i>Sturdy</i>       | : | firm, strong, robust                                      |
| <i>Perseverance</i> | : | not giving over, a steady effort till success is met with |
| <i>Obstacles</i>    | : | hindrances, difficulties                                  |
| <i>Tribulations</i> | : | distress, severe affliction                               |
| <i>Prosperity</i>   | : | success, good fortune                                     |
| <i>Hardy</i>        | : | daring, confident   |
| <i>Stooping</i>     | : | submitting, surrendering                                  |
| <i>Flatters</i>     | : | false praises   |

## Points for Precis making

1. Every man is at his best when he has no problem.
2. A physically and mentally strong man remains at his best even during misfortune.
3. Such a person conquers all difficulties in his way.
4. Man's real strengths and weaknesses are known only during adversity.
5. Misfortune also gives us a chance to try our friends.
6. It is a great human teacher.

**Exercise: 3**

I have often thought that a storyteller is born, as well as a poet. It is, I think, certain that some men have such a peculiar cast of mind that they see things in another light than men of grave *dispositions*. Men of a lively imagination and a mirthful temper will represent things to their hearers in the same manner as they themselves were affected with them; and whereas serious spirits might perhaps have been disgusted at the sight of some odd occurrences in life, yet the very same occurrences shall please them in a well-told story, where the disagreeable parts of the images are concealed, and those only which are pleasing exhibited to the *fancy*. Storytelling is therefore not an art, but what we call a '*knack*', it does not so much *subsist* upon wit as upon humour, and I will add, that it is not perfect without proper *gesticulations* of the body, which naturally attend such merry emotions of the mind. I know very well that a certain gravity of *countenance* sets some stories off to advantage, where the hearer is to be surprised in the end; but this is by no means a general rule, for it is frequently convenient to aid and assist by cheerful looks and *whimsical agitations*. I will go yet further and affirm that the success of a story very often depends upon the make of body and formation of the features of him who *relates* it. I have been of this opinion ever since I criticised upon the chin of Dick Dewlap. I very often had the weakness to *repine* at the prosperity of his *conceits*, which made him pass for a wit with the window at the coffee-house, and the ordinary mechanics that frequent in, nor could I myself *forbear* laughing at them most heartily, though upon examination, I thought most of them very flat and *insipid*. I found after some time, that the merit of his wit was founded upon the shaking of a fat paunch, and the *tossing* up of a pair of rosy *jowls*. Poor Dick had a fit of sickness, which robbed him of his fat and his fame at once, and it was full three months before he regained his reputation, which rose in proportion to his *floridity*. He is now very jolly and *ingenious*, and has a good constitution for wit. (402 words)

**Key-words**

|                       |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| <i>Dispositions</i>   | : | a general tendency of behaviour                  |
| <i>Fancy</i>          | : | imagination                                      |
| <i>Knack</i>          | : | skill  |
| <i>Subsist</i>        | : | to keep alive                                    |
| <i>Gesticulations</i> | : | bodily movements to express something            |
| <i>Countenance</i>    | : | expression of the face                           |
| <i>Whimsical</i>      | : | with strong ideas                                |
| <i>Agitation</i>      | : | movements, shaking                               |
| <i>Relates</i>        | : | narrates   |
| <i>Repine</i>         | : | complain silently                                |
| <i>Conceits</i>       | : | abilities  |
| <i>Forbear</i>        | : | to restrain oneself                              |
| <i>Inspid</i>         | : | lacking taste                                    |
| <i>Tossing</i>        | : | moving   |
| <i>Jowls</i>          | : | loose skin and flesh near the lower jaw          |
| <i>Floridity</i>      | : | richness of fat                                  |
| <i>Ingenious</i>      | : | showing cleverness at making or investing things |

**Notes**

Points for Precis making

1. A storyteller is born and not made.
2. But storytelling is more a 'knack', a 'skill', than an 'art'.
3. For its effect, it relies on humour rather than on intelligence.
4. The success of a story depends very much upon the make of the body, formation of the features and gesticulations of the storyteller.
5. For example, the merit of the storyteller Dick Dewlap was founded upon the shaking of his fat paunch and tossing up of his rosy jowls.

**22.3 Further Readings**



*Books*

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

## Unit 23: Jhumpa Lahiri's "This Blessed House": Detailed Study

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### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Introduce Jhumpa Lahiri and her work "This Blessed House".
- Discuss "This Blessed House".

### Introduction

"This Blessed House", by Jhumpa Lahiri, was first published in *Epoch* literary magazine in 1999 and then published in Lahiri's collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*, later that year. The collection was Lahiri's first book, and it won the Pulitzer Prize. Reviewers praised Lahiri's lucid, distinctive style, as well as her mature insight into the emotional lives of her characters, and these qualities of her work continue to resonate with readers and students.

The characters in Lahiri's stories are mostly Indian, often people who have immigrated to the United States and are trying to find their place in a new culture. Some of the stories deal with feelings of dislocation, exile, and loss. In "This Blessed House," however, the young, newlywed Indian couple Sanjeev and Twinkle have adjusted well to life in America. Sanjeev is successful in business, and he and Twinkle have just moved into a new house. However, they do not know each other all that well, and tensions between them surface when Twinkle finds a number of Christian devotional items left behind by the former owners. She likes them and displays them on the mantel, but Sanjeev wants to get rid of them. This sets the stage for a struggle between Sanjeev and Twinkle over who is going to control their relationship. Sanjeev, from whose point of view the story is mostly told, learns a great deal about his new wife and what it will take for them to have a harmonious marriage.

### 23.1 Biography of Jhumpa Lahiri

Jhumpa Lahiri was born in London, England, in 1967. She was raised from the age of three in South Kingston, Rhode Island. Her parents were immigrants to the United States from Calcutta, India. Her father was a librarian at the University of Rhode Island, and her mother was a teacher's aide at an elementary school.

In spite of the fact that they lived in the United States, Lahiri's parents considered themselves Indian, and every few years they made trips to Calcutta, accompanied by their two daughters. Lahiri would stay in India for periods lasting up to six months, although she did not feel at home there. Nor did she feel quite at home in Rhode Island, where she was conscious of her different ethnic background and often felt like an outsider.

## Notes

Lahiri became an avid reader when she was a child, and she also began to write stories. At the age of seven, she would coauthor with her classmates stories of up to ten pages in length.

After graduating from South Kingstown High School, Lahiri attended Barnard College, from which she graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in English literature. Continuing her studies, she received three master of arts degrees from Boston University, in English, creative writing, and comparative studies in literature and the arts. She also obtained a doctoral degree from Boston University in Renaissance Studies. Her dissertation was on the representations of Italian architecture in early seventeenth-century English theater.

In the summer of 1997, while working on her dissertation, Lahiri worked as an intern for *Boston* magazine. She had already begun writing short stories and had won the Henfield Prize from *Transatlantic Review* in 1993 and the *Louisville Review* fiction prize in 1997. Her work at *Boston* magazine, however, was limited to writing blurbs for consumer products.

Lahiri taught creative writing at Boston University and the Rhode Island School of Design, but her real ambition was to write fiction, a goal that received a major boost when the *New Yorker* published three of her stories and named her one of the twenty best young writers in the United States. Her collection of nine short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*, including "This Blessed House," was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1999. It was an immediate success, winning the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2000, an impressive achievement for a young writer with her first book. The title story was awarded the O. Henry Award in 1999.

Three years later, Houghton Mifflin published Lahiri's first novel, *The Namesake*, which she had begun working on in 1997. The novel is about a family that moves from Calcutta to New York. One of the main characters is a second-generation Indian American named Gogol who struggles to find his place in the world. The novel received critical acclaim and was nominated for the 2003 *Los Angeles Times* book award for fiction. It was made into a movie directed by Mira Nair.

Lahiri married Alberto Vourvoulis, an American-born journalist, in 2001, at a ceremony in Calcutta. They have two children. In 2002, Lahiri received a Guggenheim fellowship. Since 2005, Lahiri has served as vice president of the PEN American Center.

### **23.2 Detailed Study – This Blessed House**

They discovered the first one in a cupboard above the stove, beside an unopened bottle of malt vinegar. "Guess what I found." Twinkle walked into the living room, lined from end to end with taped-up picking boxes, waving the vinegar in one hand and a white porcelain effigy of Christ, roughly the same size as the vinegar bottle, in the other.

Sanjeev looked up. He was kneeling on the floor, marking, with ripped bits of a Post-it, patches on the baseboard that needed to be retouched with paint.

"Throw it away."

"Which?"

"Both."

"But I can cook something with the vinegar. It's brand-new."

"You've never cooked anything with vinegar."

"I'll look something up. In one of those books we got for our wedding."

Sanjeev turned back to the baseboard, to replace a Post-it scrap that had fallen to the floor, "Check the expiration. And at the very least get rid of that idiotic statue."

"But it could be worth something. Who knows?" She turned it upside down, then stroked, with her index finger, the minuscule frozen folds of its robes. "It's pretty."

"We're not Christian," Sanjeev said. Lately he had begun noticing the need to state the obvious to Twinkle. The day before he had to tell her that if she dragged her end of the bureau instead of lifting it, the parquet floor, would scratch.

She shrugged. "No, we're not Christian. We're good little Hindus." She planted a kiss on top of Christ's head, then placed the statue on top of the fireplace mantel, which needed, Sanjeev observed, to be dusted.

By the end of the week the mantel had still not been dusted; it had, however, come to serve as the display shelf for a sizable collection of Christian paraphernalia. There was a 3-D postcard of Saint Francis done in four colors, which Twinkle had found taped to the back of the medicine cabinet, and a wooden cross key chain, which Sanjeev had stepped on with bare feet as he was installing extra shelving in Twinkle's study. There was a framed paint-by-number of the three wise men, against a black velvet background, tucked in the linen closet. There was also a tile trivet depicting a blond, unbearded Jesus, delivering a sermon on a mountaintop, left in one of the drawers of the built-in china cabinet in the dining room.

"Do you think the previous owners were born-again?" asked Twinkle, making room the next day for a small plastic snow-filled dome containing a miniature Nativity scene, found behind the pipes of the kitchen sink.

Sanjeev was organizing his engineering texts from MIT in alphabetical order on a bookshelf, though it had been several years since he had needed to consult any of them. After graduating, he moved from Boston to Connecticut, to work for a firm near Hartford, and he had recently learned that he was being considered for the position of vice president. At thirty-three he had a secretary of his own and a dozen people working under his supervision who gladly supplied him with any information he needed. Still, the presence of his college books in the room reminded him of a time in his life he recalled with fondness, when he would walk each evening across the Mass. Avenue bridge to order Mughlai chicken with spinach from his favorite Indian restaurant on the other side of the Charles, and return to his dorm to write out clean copies of his problem sets.

"Or perhaps it's an attempt to convert people," Twinkle mused.

"Clearly the scheme has succeeded in your case."

She disregarded him, shaking the little plastic dome so that the snow swirled over the manger.

He studied the items on the mantel. It puzzled him that each was in its own way so silly. Clearly they lacked a sense of sacredness. He was further puzzled that Twinkle, who normally displayed good taste, was so charmed. These objects meant something to Twinkle, but they meant nothing to him. They irritated him. "We should call the Realtor. Tell him there's all this nonsense left behind. Tell him to take it away."

"Oh, Sanj." Twinkle groaned. "Please. I would feel terrible throwing them away.' Obviously they were important to the people who used to live here. It would feel, I don't know, sacrilegious or something."

"If they're so precious, then why are they hidden all over the house? Why didn't they take them with them?"

"There must be others," Twinkle said. Her eyes roamed the bare off-white walls of the room, as if there were other things concealed behind the plaster. "What else do you think we'll find?"

But as they unpacked their boxes and hung up their winter clothes and the silk paintings of elephant processions bought on their honeymoon in Jaipur, Twinkle, much to her dismay, could not find a thing. Nearly a week had passed before they discovered, one Saturday afternoon, a larger-than-life-sized watercolor poster of Christ, weeping translucent tears the size of peanut shells and sporting a crown of thorns, rolled up behind a radiator in the guest bedroom. Sanjeev had mistaken it for a window shade.

"Oh, we must, we simply must put it up. It's too spectacular." Twinkle lit a cigarette and began to smoke it with relish, waving it around Sanjeev's head as if it were a conductor's baton as Mahler's Fifth Symphony roared from the stereo downstairs.

"Now, look. I will tolerate, for now, your little biblical menagerie in the living room. But I refuse to have this," he said, flicking at one of the painted peanut-tears, "displayed in our home."

## Notes

Twinkle stared at him, placidly exhaling, the smoke emerging in two thin blue streams from her nostrils. She rolled up the poster slowly, securing it with one of the elastic bands she always wore around her wrist for tying back her thick, unruly hair, streaked here and there with henna. "I'm going to put it in my study," she informed him, "That way you don't have to look at it,"

"What about the housewarming? They'll want to see all the rooms. I've invited people from the office."

She rolled her eyes. Sanjeev noted that the symphony, now in its third movement, had reached a crescendo, for it pulsed with the telltale dashing of cymbals.

"I'd put it behind the door," she offered, "That way, when they peek in, they won't see. Happy?"

He stood watching her as she left the room, with her poster and her cigarette; a few ashes had fallen to the floor where she'd been standing. He bent down, pinched them between his fingers, and deposited them in his cupped palm. The tender fourth movement, the *adagietto*, began. During breakfast Sanjeev had read in the liner notes that Mahler had proposed to his wife by sending her the manuscript of this portion of the score. Although there were elements of tragedy and struggle in the Fifth Symphony, he had read, it was principally music of love and happiness.

He heard the toilet flush. "By the way," Twinkle hollered, "if you want to impress people, I wouldn't play this music. It's putting me to sleep."

Sanjeev went to the bathroom to throw away the ashes. The cigarette butt still bobbed in the toilet bowl, but the tank was refilling, so he had to wait a moment before he could flush it again. In the mirror of the medicine cabinet he inspected his long eyelashes — like a girl's, Twinkle liked to tease. Though he was of average build, his cheeks had a plumpness to them; this, along with the eyelashes, detracted, he feared, from what he hoped was a distinguished profile. He was of average height as well, and had wished ever since he had stopped growing that he were just one inch taller. For this reason it irritated him when Twinkle insisted on wearing high heels as she had done the other night when they ate dinner in Manhattan. This was the first weekend after they'd moved into the house, by then the mantel had already filled up considerably, and they bickered about it in the car on the way down. But then Twinkle had drunk four glasses of whiskey in a nameless bar in Alphabet City, and forgot all about it. She dragged him to a tiny bookshop on St. Mark's Place, where she browsed for nearly an hour and when they left she insisted that they dance a tango on the sidewalk in front of strangers.

Afterward, she tottered on his arm, rising faintly over his line of vision, in a pair of suede three-inch leopard-print pumps. In this manner they walked the endless blocks back to a parking garage on Washington Square, for Sanjeev had heard far too many stories about the terrible things that happened to cars to Manhattan. "But I do nothing all day except sit at my desk," she fretted when they were driving home, after he had mentioned that her shoes looked uncomfortable and suggested that perhaps she should not wear them. "I can't exactly wear heels when I'm typing." Though he abandoned the argument, he knew for a fact that she didn't spend all day at her desk: just that afternoon, when he got back from a run, he found her inexplicably in bed, reading. When he asked why she was in bed in the middle of the day she told him she was bored. He had wanted to say to her then, You could unpack some boxes. You could sweep the attic. You could retouch the paint on the bathroom windowsill, and after you do it you could warn me so that I don't put my watch on it. They didn't bother her, these scattered, unsettled matters. She seemed content with whatever clothes she found at the front of the closet, with whatever magazine was lying around, with whatever song was on the radio — content yet curious. And now all of her curiosity centered around discovering the next treasure.

A few days later when Sanjeev returned from the office, he found Twinkle on the telephone, smoking and talking to one of her girlfriends in California even though it was before five o'clock and the long-distance rates were at their peak. "Highly devout people," she was saying, pausing every now and then to exhale. "Each day is like a treasure hunt. I'm serious. This you won't believe. The switch plates in the bedrooms were decorated with scenes from the Bible. You know, Noah's Ark and all that. Three bedrooms, but one is my study. Sanjeev went to the hardware store right away and replaced them, can you imagine, he replaced every single one."

Now it was the friend's turn to talk. Twinkle nodded, slouched on the floor in front of the fridge, wearing black stirrup pants and a yellow chenille sweater, groping for her lighter. Sanjeev could smell something aromatic on the stove, and he picked his way carefully across the extra-long phone cord tangled on the Mexican terra-cotta tiles. He opened the lid of a pot with some sort of reddish brown sauce dripping over the sides, boiling furiously.

"It's a stew made with fish, I put the vinegar in it," she said to him, interrupting her friend, crossing her fingers, "Sorry, you were saying?" She was like that, excited and delighted by little things, crossing her fingers before any remotely unpredictable event, like tasting a new flavor of ice cream or dropping a letter in a mailbox. It was a quality he did not understand. It made him feel stupid, as if the world contained hidden wonders he could not anticipate, or see. He looked at her face, which, it occurred to him, had not grown out of its girlhood, the eyes untroubled, the pleasing features unfirm, as if they still had to settle into some sort of permanent expression. Nicknamed after a nursery rhyme, she had yet to shed a childhood endearment. Now, in the second month of their marriage, certain things nettled him – the way she sometimes spat a little when she spoke, or left her undergarments after removing them at night at the foot of their bed rather than depositing them in the laundry hamper.

They had met only four months before. Her parents who lived in California, and his who still lived in Calcutta, were old friends, and across continents they had arranged the occasion at which Twinkle and Sanjeev were introduced – a sixteenth birthday party for a daughter in their circle – when Sanjeev was in Palo Alto on business. At the restaurant they were seated side by side at a round table with a revolving platter of spareribs and egg rolls and chicken wings, which, they concurred, all tasted the same. They had concurred too on their adolescent but still persistent fondness for Wodehouse novels, and their dislike for the sitar, and later Twinkle confessed that she was charmed by the way Sanjeev had dutifully refilled her teacup during their conversation.

And so the phone calls began, and grew longer, and then the visits, first he to Stanford, then she to Connecticut, after which Sanjeev would save in an ashtray left on the balcony the crushed cigarettes she had smoked during the weekend – saved them, that is, until the next time she came to visit him, and then he vacuumed the apartment, washed the sheets, even dusted the plant leaves in her honor. She was twenty-seven and recently abandoned, he had gathered, by an American who had tried and failed to be an actor; Sanjeev was lonely, with an excessively generous income for a single man, and had never been in love. At the urging of their matchmakers, they married in India, amid hundreds of well-wishers whom he barely remembered from his childhood, in incessant August rains, under a red and orange tent strung with Christmas tree lights on Mandeville Road.

"Did you sweep the attic?" he asked Twinkle later as she was folding paper napkins and wedging them by their plates. The attic was the only part of the house they had not yet given an initial cleaning.

"Not yet. I will. I promise. I hope this tastes good." she said, planting the steaming pot on top of the Jesus trivet. There was a loaf of Italian bread in a little basket, and iceberg lettuce and grated carrots tossed with bottled dressing and croutons, and glasses of red wine. She was not terribly ambitious in the kitchen. She bought pre-roasted chickens from the supermarket and served them with potato salad prepared who knew when, sold in little plastic containers. Indian food, she complained, was a bother; she detested chopping garlic, and peeling ginger, and could not operate a blender, and so it was Sanjeev who, on weekends, seasoned mustard oil with cinnamon sticks and cloves in order to produce a proper curry.

He had to admit, though, that whatever it was that she had cooked today, it was unusually tasty, attractive even, with bright white cubes of fish, and flecks of parsley, and fresh tomatoes gleaming in the dark brown-red broth.

"How did you make it?"

"I made it up."

"What did you do?"

"I just put some things into the pot and added the malt vinegar at the end."

"How much vinegar?"

She shrugged, ripping off some bread and plunging it into her bowl.



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"What do you mean you don't know? You should write it down. What if you need to make it again, for a party or something?"

"I'll remember," she said. She covered the bread basket with a dishtowel that had, he suddenly noticed, the Ten Commandments printed on it. She flashed him a smile, giving his knee a little squeeze under the table.



*Did u know?* Sanjeev is serious about his religion. He is a Hindu and he doesn't want anything to do with Christian things.

"Face it. This house is blessed."

The housewarming party was scheduled for the last Saturday in October, and they had invited about thirty people. All were Sanjeev's acquaintances, people from the office, and a number of Indian couples in the Connecticut area, many of whom he barely knew, but who had regularly invited him, in his bachelor days, to supper on Saturdays. He often wondered why they included him in their circle. He had little in common with any of them, but he always attended their gatherings, to eat spiced chickpeas and shrimp cutlets, and gossip and discuss politics, for he seldom had other plans. So far, no one had met Twinkle; back when they were still dating, Sanjeev didn't want to waste their brief weekends together with people he associated with being alone. Other than Sanjeev and an ex-boyfriend who she believed worked in a pottery studio in Brookfield, she knew no one in the state of Connecticut. She was completing her master's thesis at Stanford, a study of an Irish poet whom Sanjeev had never heard of.

Sanjeev had found the house on his own before leaving for the wedding, for a good price, in a neighborhood with a fine school system. He was impressed by the elegant curved staircase with its wrought-iron banister, and the dark wooden wainscoting, and the solarium overlooking rhododendron bushes, and the solid brass 22, which also happened to be the date of his birth, nailed impressively to the vaguely Tudor facade. There were two working fireplaces, a two-car garage, and an attic suitable for converting into extra bedrooms if, the Realtor mentioned, the need should arise. By then Sanjeev had already made up his mind, was determined that he and Twinkle should live there together, forever, and so he had not bothered to notice the switch plates covered with biblical stickers, or the transparent decal of the Virgin on the half shell, as Twinkle liked to call it, adhered to the window in the master bedroom. When, after moving in, he tried to scrape it off, he scratched the glass.

The weekend before the party they were raking the lawn when he heard Twinkle shriek. He ran to her, clutching his rake, worried that she had discovered a dead animal, or a snake. A brisk October breeze stung the tops of his ears as his sneakers crunched over brown and yellow leaves. When he reached her, she had collapsed on the grass, dissolved in nearly silent laughter. Behind an overgrown forsythia bush was a plaster Virgin Mary as tall as their waists, with a blue painted hood draped over her head in the manner of an Indian bride. Twinkle grabbed the hem of her T-shirt and began wiping away the dirt staining the statue's brow.

"I suppose you want to put her by the foot of our bed," Sanjeev said.

She looked at him, astonished. Her belly was exposed, and he saw that there were goose bumps around her navel. "What do you think? Of course we can't put this in our bedroom."

"We can't?"

"No, silly Sanj. This is meant for outside. For the lawn."

"Oh God, no. Twinkle, no."

"But we must. It would be bad luck not to."

"All the neighbors will see. They'll think we're insane."

"Why, for having a statue of the Virgin Mary on our lawn? Every other person in this neighborhood has a statue of Mary on the lawn. We'll fit right in."

"We're not Christian."

"So you keep reminding me." She spat onto the rip of her finger and started to rub intently at a particularly stubborn stain on Mary's chin. "Do you think this is dirt, or some kind of fungus?"

He was getting nowhere with her, with this woman whom he had known for only four months and whom he had married, this woman with whom he now shared his life. He thought with a flicker of regret of the snapshots his mother used to send him from Calcutta, of prospective brides who could sing and sew and season lentils without consulting a cookbook. Sanjeev had considered these women, had even ranked them in order of preference, but then he had met Twinkle. "Twinkle, I can't have the people I work with see this statue on my lawn."

"They can't fire you for being a believer. It would be discrimination."

"That's not the point.!

"Why does it matter to you so much what other people think?"

"Twinkle, please." He was tired. He let his weight rest against his rake as she began dragging the statue toward an oval bed of myrtle, beside the lamppost that flanked the brick pathway. "Look, Sanj. She's so lovely."

He returned to his pile of leaves and began to deposit them by handfuls into a plastic garbage bag. Over his head the blue sky was cloudless. One tree on the lawn was still full of leaves, red and orange, like the tent in which he had married Twinkle.

He did not know if he loved her. He said he did when she had first asked him, one afternoon in Palo Alto as they sat side by side in a darkened, nearly empty movie theater. Before the film, one of her favorites, something in German that he found extremely depressing, she had pressed the tip of her nose to his so that he could feel the flutter of her mascara-coated eyelashes. That afternoon he had replied, yes, he loved her, and she was delighted, and fed him a piece of popcorn, letting her finger linger an instant between his lips, as if it were his reward for coming up with the right answer.

Though she did not say it herself, he assumed then that she loved him too, but now he was no longer sure.

In truth, he had decided, returning to an empty carpeted condominium each night, and using only the top fork in his cutlery drawer, and turning away politely at those weekend dinner parties when the other men eventually put their arms around the waists of their wives and girlfriends, leaning over every now and again to kiss their shoulders or necks. It was not sending away for classical music CDs by mail, working his way methodically through the major composers that the catalogue recommended, and always sending his payments in on time. In the months before meeting Twinkle, Sanjeev had begun to realize this. "You have enough money in the bank to raise three families." his mother reminded him when they spoke at the start of each month on the phone. "You need a wife to look after and love," Now he had one, a pretty one, from a suitably high caste, who would soon have a master's degree. What was there not to love?

That evening Sanjeev poured himself a gin and tonic, drank it and most of another during one segment of the news, and then approached Twinkle, who was taking a bubble bath, for she announced that her limbs ached from raking the lawn, something she had never done before. He didn't knock. She had applied a bright blue mask to her face, was smoking and sipping some bourbon with ice and leafing through a fat paperback book whose pages had buckled and turned gray from the water. He glanced at the cover; the only thing written on it was the word "Sonnets" in dark red letters. He took a breath, and then he informed her very calmly that after finishing his drink he was going to put on his shoes and go outside and remove the Virgin from the front lawn.

"Where are you going to put it?" she asked him dreamily, her eyes closed. One of her legs emerged, unfolding gracefully, from the layer of suds. She flexed and pointed her toes.

"For now I am going to put it in the garage. Then tomorrow morning on my way to work I am going to take it to the dump."

"Don't you dare." She stood up, letting the book fall into the water, bubbles dripping down her thighs. "I hate you," she informed him, her eyes narrowing at the word "hate." She reached for her bathrobe, tied it tightly about her waist, and padded down the winding staircase, leaving sloppy wet

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footprints along the parquet floor. When she reached the foyer, Sanjeev said, "Are you planning on leaving the house that way?" He felt a throbbing in his temples, and his voice revealed an unfamiliar snarl when he spoke.

"Who cares? Who cares what way I leave this house?"

"Where are you planning on going at this hour?"

"You can't throw away that statue. I won't let you."

Her mask, now dry, had assumed an ashen quality, and water from her hair dripped onto the caked contours of her face.

"Yes I can. I will."



Notes

Sanjeev cares about other people's opinions on him, whereas Twinkle just does what she likes to without worrying what others might think.

"No," Twinkle said, her voice suddenly small, "This is our house. We own it together. The statue is a part of our property." She had begun to shiver. A small pool of bathwater had collected around her ankles. He went to shut a window, fearing that she would catch cold. Then he noticed that some of the water dripping down her hard blue face was tears.

"Oh God, Twinkle, please, I didn't mean it." He had never seen her cry before, had never seen such sadness in her eyes. She didn't turn away or try to stop the tears; instead she looked strangely at peace. For a moment she closed her lids, pale and unprotected compared to the blue that caked the rest of her face. Sanjeev felt ill, as if he had eaten either too much or too little.

She went to him, placing her damp toweled arms about his neck, sobbing into his chest, soaking his shirt. The mask flaked onto his shoulders.

In the end they settled on a compromise: the statue would be placed in a recess at the side of the house, so that it wasn't obvious to passersby, but was still clearly visible to all who came.

The menu for the party was fairly simple: there would be a case of champagne, and samosas from an Indian restaurant in Hartford, and big trays of rice with chicken and almonds and orange peels, which Sanjeev had spent the greater part of the morning and afternoon preparing. He had never entertained on such a large scale before and, worried that there would not be enough to drink, ran out at one point to buy another case of champagne just in case. For this reason he burned one of the rice trays and had to start it over again. Twinkle swept the floors and volunteered to pick up the samosas; she had an appointment for a manicure and a pedicure in that direction, anyway. Sanjeev had planned to ask if she would consider clearing the menagerie off the mantel, if only for the party, but she left while he was in the shower. She was gone for a good three hours, and so it was Sanjeev who did the rest of the cleaning. By five-thirty the entire house sparkled, with scented candles that Twinkle had picked up in Hartford illuminating the items on the mantel, and slender stalks of burning incense planted into the soil of potted plants. Each time he passed the mantel he winced, dreading the raised eyebrows of his guests as they viewed the flickering ceramic saints, the salt and pepper shakers designed to resemble Mary and Joseph. Still, they would be impressed, he hoped, by the lovely bay windows, the shining parquet floors, the impressive winding staircase, the wooden wainscoting, as they sipped champagne and dipped samosas in chutney.

Douglas, one of the new consultants at the firm, and his girlfriend Nora were the first to arrive. Both were tall and blond, wearing matching wire-rimmed glasses and long black overcoats. Nora wore a black hat full of sharp thin feathers that corresponded to the sharp thin angles of her face. Her left hand was joined with Douglas's. In her right hand was a bottle of cognac with a red ribbon wrapped around its neck, which she gave to Twinkle.

"Great lawn, Sanjeev;" Douglas remarked. "We've got to get that rake out ourselves, sweetie. And this must be..."

"My wife. Tanimu."

"Call me Twinkle."

"What an unusual name," Nora remarked.

Twinkle shrugged, "Not really. There's an actress in Bombay named Dimple Kapadia. She even has a sister named Simple."

Douglas and Nora raised their eyebrows simultaneously, nodding slowly, as if to let the absurdity of the names settle in. "Pleased to meet you. Twinkle,"

"Help yourself to champagne. There's gallons."

"I hope you don't mind my asking," Douglas said, "but I noticed the statue outside, and are you guys Christian? I thought you were Indian,"

"There are Christians in India," Sanjeev replied, "but we're not."

"I love your outfit," Nora told Twinkle.

"And I adore your hat. Would you like the grand tour?"

The bell rang again, and again and again. Within minutes, it seemed, the house had filled with bodies and conversations and unfamiliar fragrances. The women wore heels and sheer stockings, and short black dresses made of crepe and chiffon. They handed their wraps and coats to Sanjeev, who draped them carefully on hangers in the spacious coat closet, though Twinkle told people to throw their things on the ottomans in the solarium. Some of the Indian women wore their finest saris, made with gold filigree that draped in elegant pleats over their shoulders. The men wore jackets and ties and citrus-scented aftershaves. As people filtered from one room to the next, presents piled onto the long cherry-wood table that ran from one end of the downstairs hall to the other.

It bewildered Sanjeev that it was for him, and his house, and his wife, that they had all gone to so much care. The only other time in his life that something similar had happened was his wedding day, but somehow this was different, for these were not his family, but people who knew him only casually, and in a sense owed him nothing. Everyone congratulated him. Lester, another coworker, predicted that Sanjeev would be promoted to vice president in two months maximum. People devoured the samosas, and dutifully admired the freshly painted ceilings and walls, the hanging plants, the bay windows, the silk paintings from Jaipur. But most of all they admired Twinkle, and her brocaded *salwar-kameez*, which was the shade of a persimmon with a low scoop in the back and the little string of white rose petals she had coiled cleverly around her head, and the pearl choker with a sapphire at its center that adorned her throat. Over hectic jazz records, played under Twinkle's supervision, they laughed at her anecdotes and observations, forming a widening circle around her, while Sanjeev replenished the samosas that he kept warming evenly in the oven, and getting ice for people's drinks and opening more bottles of champagne with some difficulty, and explaining for the fortieth time that he wasn't Christian. It was Twinkle who led them in separate groups up and down the winding stairs, to gaze at the back lawn, to peer down the cellar steps. "Your friends adore the poster in my study," she mentioned to him triumphantly, placing her hand on the small of his back as they, at one point, brushed past each other.

Sanjeev went to the kitchen, which was empty, and ate a piece of chicken out of the tray on the counter with his finger because he thought no one was looking. He ate a second piece, then washed it down with a gulp of gin straight from the bottle.

"Great house. Great rice." Sunil, an anesthesiologist, walked in, spooning food from his paper plate into his mouth. "Do you have more champagne?"

"Your wife's wow," added Prabal, following behind. He was an unmarried professor of physics at Yale. For a moment Sanjeev stared at him blankly, then blushed; once at a dinner party Prabal had pronounced that Sophia Loren was wow, as was Audrey Hepburn. "Does she have a sister?"

Sunil picked a raisin out of the rice tray. "Is her last name Little Star?"

The two men laughed and started eating more rice from the tray, plowing through it with their plastic spoons. Sanjeev went down to the cellar for more liquor. For a few minutes he paused on the steps, in the damp, cool silence, hugging the second crate of champagne to his chest as the party drifted above the rafters. Then he set the reinforcements on the dining table.

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"Yes, everything, we found them all in the house, in the most unusual places," he heard Twinkle saying in the living room. "In fact we keep finding them."

"No!"

"Yes! Every day is like a treasure hunt. It's too good.

God only knows what else we'll find, no pun intended."

That was what started it. As if by some unspoken pact, the whole party joined forces and began combing through each of the rooms, opening closets on their own, peering under chairs and cushions, feeling behind curtains, removing books from bookcases. Groups scampered, giggling and swaying up and down the winding staircase.

"We've never explored the attic," Twinkle announced suddenly, and so everybody followed.

"How do we get up there?"

"There's a ladder in the hallway, somewhere in the ceiling."

Wearily Sanjeev followed at the back of the crowd, to point out the location of the ladder, but Twinkle had already found it on her own. "Eureka!" she hollered.

Douglas pulled the chain that released the steps. His face was flushed and he was wearing Nora's feather hat on his head. One by one guests disappeared, men helping women as they placed their strappy high heels on the narrow slats of the ladder, the Indian women wrapping the free ends of their expensive saris into their waistbands. The men followed behind, all quickly disappearing, until Sanjeev alone remained at the top of the winding staircase. Footsteps thundered over his head. He had no desire to join them. He wondered if the ceiling would collapse, imagined, for a split second, the sight of all the tumbling drunk perfumed bodies crashing, tangled, around him. He heard a shriek, and then rising, spreading waves of laughter in discordant tones. Something fell, something else shattered. He could hear them bobbing around a trunk. They seemed to be struggling to get it open, banging feverishly on its surface.

He thought perhaps Twinkle would call for his assistance, but he was not summoned. He looked about the hallway and to the landing below, at the champagne glasses and half-eaten samosas and napkins smeared with lipstick abandoned in every corner, on every available surface. Then he noticed that Twinkle, in her haste, had discarded her shoes altogether, for they lay by the foot of the ladder, black patent-leather mules with heels like golf tees, open toes, and slightly soiled silk labels on the instep where her soles had rested. He placed them in the doorway of the master bedroom so that no one would nip when they descended.

He heard something creaking open slowly. The strident voices had subsided to an even murmur. It occurred to Sanjeev that he had the house all to himself. The music had ended and he could hear, if he concentrated, the hum of the refrigerator, and the rustle of the last leaves on the trees outside, and the tapping of their branches against the windowpanes. With one flick of his hand he could snap the ladder back on its spring into the ceiling, and they would have no way of getting down unless he were to pull the chain and let them. He thought of all the things he could do, undisturbed. He could sweep Twinkle's menagerie into a garbage bag and get in the car and drive it all to the dump, and tear down the poster of weeping Jesus, and take a hammer to the Virgin Mary while he was at it. Then he would return to the empty house; he could easily clear up the cups and plates in an hour's time, and pour himself a gin and tonic, and eat a plate of warmed rice and listen to his new Bach CD while reading the liner notes so as to understand it properly. He nudged the ladder slightly, but it was sturdily planted against the floor. Budging it would require some effort.

"My God, I need a cigarette," Twinkle exclaimed from above.

Sanjeev felt knots forming at the back of his neck. He felt dizzy. He needed to lie down. He walked toward the bedroom, but stopped short when he saw Twinkle's shoes facing him in the doorway. He thought of her slipping them on her feet. But instead of feeling irritated, as he had ever since they'd moved into the house together, he felt a pang of anticipation at the thought of her rushing unsteadily down the winding staircase in them, scratching the floor a bit in her path. The pang intensified as he thought of her rushing to the bathroom to brighten her lipstick, and eventually rushing to get people

their coats, and finally rushing to the cherry-wood table when the last guest had left, to begin opening their housewarming presents. It was the same pang he used to feel before they were married, when he would hang up the phone after one of their conversations, or when he would drive back from the airport, wondering which ascending plane in the sky was hers.

"Sanj, you won't believe this."

She emerged with her back to him, her hands over her head, the tops of her bare shoulder blades perspiring, supporting something still hidden from view.

"You got it, Twinkle?" someone asked.

"Yes, you can let go."

Now he saw that her hands were wrapped around it: a solid silver bust of Christ, the head easily three times the size of his own. It had a patrician bump on its nose, magnificent curly hair that rested atop a pronounced collarbone, and a broad forehead that reflected in miniature the walls and doors and lampshades around them. Its expression was confident, as if assured of its devotees, the unyielding lips sensuous and full. It was also sporting Nora's feather hat. As Twinkle descended, Sanjeev put his hands around her waist to balance her, and he relieved her of the bust when she had reached the ground. It weighed a good thirty pounds. The others began lowering themselves slowly, exhausted from the hunt. Some trickled downstairs in search of a fresh drink.

She took a breath, raised her eyebrows, crossed her fingers, "Would you mind terribly if we displayed it on the mantel? Just for tonight? I know you hate it."

He did hate it. He hated its immensity, and its flawless, polished surface, and its undeniable value. He hated that it was in his house, and that he owned it. Unlike the other things they'd found, this contained dignity, solemnity, beauty even. But to his surprise these qualities made him hate it all the more. Most of all he hated it because he knew that Twinkle loved it.

"I'll keep it in my study from tomorrow," Twinkle added. "I promise."

She would never put it in her study, he knew. For the rest of their days together she would keep it on the center of the mantel, flanked on either side by the rest of the menagerie. Each time they had guests Twinkle would explain how she had found it, and they would admire her as they listened. He gazed at the crushed rose petals in her hair, at the pearl and sapphire choker at her throat, at the sparkly crimson polish on her toes. He decided these were among the things that made Prabal think she was wow. His head ached from gin and his arms ached from the weight of the statue. He said. "I put your shoes in the bedroom."

"Thanks. But my feet are killing me." Twinkle gave his elbow a little squeeze and headed for the living room.

Sanjeev pressed the massive silver face to his ribs, careful not to let the feather hat slip, and followed her.

### **23.3 Main Characters**

#### **Characters**

##### *Douglas*

Douglas is one of the guests at the housewarming party. Tall and blond, he is a consultant at the firm at which Sanjeev works.

##### *Nora*

Nora is the girlfriend of Douglas. Like him, she is tall and blond.

##### *Prabal*

Prabal is a guest at the housewarming party. He is an unmarried professor of physics at Yale University. He admires Twinkle and tells Sanjeev: "Your wife's wow."

## Notes

*Sanjeev*

Sanjeev is a thirty-three-year-old Indian immigrant to the United States, married to Twinkle. His parents still live in India. Sanjeev is a successful man, with an engineering degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). After graduating, he moved from Boston to Connecticut to work for a firm near Hartford. He excels at his work, in which he supervises a an attempt to fix every small imperfection. Sanjeev keeps his life as orderly and precise as possible. He tries to control his life by controlling the things.

**Self-Assessment****1. Choose the correct answer:**

- (i) Where does Twinkle take all the guests during the party?  
 (a) The basement. (b) The porch. (c) The yard. (d) The attic.
- (ii) What did Sanjeev feel about all the Christian paraphernalia in his home?  
 (a) Concern. (b) Apathy. (c) Hate. (d) Amusement.
- (iii) What did Sanjeev's friend Prabal call Twinkle?  
 (a) Fancy. (b) Wow. (c) Hot. (d) Silly.
- (iv) What kind of statue does Twinkle find hidden in the yard when they are raking?  
 (a) Virgin Mary. (b) Jesus Christ. (c) Saint Peter. (d) Saint Francis.
- (v) What surprisingly good meal does Twinkle prepare for Sanjeev?  
 (a) Fish stew. (b) Pasta primavera. (c) Mughlai chicken. (d) Samosas.

**23.4 Summary**

- "This Blessed House" is set in present-day Connecticut. A young Indian couple, Sanjeev and Twinkle, are recently married and have just moved into their new house. As they go about investigating and fixing up the house, they begin to find small Christian knickknacks, left behind by the previous owners. Twinkle first finds a porcelain effigy of Christ. Sanjeev does not like it and tells Twinkle to get rid of it, but she thinks it is pretty and might even be worth something. Sanjeev reminds her that they are not Christians. No, she confirms, they are Hindus. She puts the statue of Christ on the fireplace mantel.
- Over the next few days, more Christian items turn up: a 3-D postcard of Saint Francis, which had been taped to the back of a medicine cabinet; a wooden cross key chain; a framed paint-by-number painting of the three wise men, which had been hiding in a linen closet; a tile trivet showing Jesus delivering a sermon on a mountaintop; and a snow-filled dome containing a miniature Nativity scene. Twinkle arranges them all on the mantel. Sanjeev thinks they are all silly and wonders why Twinkle is so charmed by them. He wants her to throw them all away, but Twinkle says it would feel sacrilegious to do so. She hopes to find more.
- A week later, Twinkle finds a watercolor poster of Christ, weeping and with a crown of thorns on his head. She wants to display it, but Sanjeev refuses. Twinkle says she will put it in her study, so he will not have to look at it.
- When Sanjeev has a moment to himself, he recalls a dinner he and Twinkle had in Manhattan a couple of days before. Twinkle drank four glasses of whiskey in a bar, then dragged him into in a bookstore for an hour, and then insisted that they dance a tango on the sidewalk.
- A few days later, Sanjeev returns from the office to find Twinkle on the phone to her girlfriend in California, talking enthusiastically about the "Christian paraphernalia." Each day is like a treasure hunt, she says. As Sanjeev observes her, he is aware that certain things about her irritate him. The way she sometimes spits a little as she speaks, for example. They have not yet been married two months, and they only met four months before. The meeting, which took place in Palo Alto, California, had been arranged by their parents. Twinkle's parents live in California, and Sanjeev's parents live in Calcutta, India. They married in India after a brief long-distance courtship punctuated by weekends together.

- They are preparing for a housewarming party at the end of October, to which they have invited thirty people, all of them Sanjeev's acquaintances. Twinkle, who is still a student at Stanford University, knows no one in the area. The weekend before the party, Twinkle finds a plaster Virgin Mary in the yard, behind an overgrown bush. Twinkle wants to keep it but Sanjeev says the neighbors will think they are insane. As they argue about it, Sanjeev begins to realize that he does not know Twinkle very well, and he is not sure whether he loves her. Nor is he sure that she loves him.
- That evening, when Twinkle is lying in a bubble bath, Sanjeev says he is going to remove the statue of the Virgin from the front lawn and take it to the dump. Twinkle stands up and says she hates him. She gets out of the bath, wraps a towel around her waist, and follows him down the staircase. She says she will not let him throw the statue away. He notices that she is crying, and his heart softens. They agree on a compromise. The statue will be placed in a recess at the side of the house so passersby will not see it, although it will still be visible to anyone who comes to the house.
- They make extensive preparations for the party, cooking and cleaning. The first guests to arrive are Douglas and Nora. Having seen the statue of the Virgin, Douglas inquires whether Sanjeev and Twinkle are Christians. Sanjeev replies that they are not.
- Soon all the guests have arrived. Everyone is elegantly dressed. They congratulate Sanjeev and admire the house. They admire Twinkle even more, and gather around her, laughing at her anecdotes and observations. Twinkle takes them on a tour of the house, and she tells Sanjeev that they all loved the poster of Christ in the study.
- After Twinkle explains about how they found all the Christian items, everyone starts to search around the house to see if they can find any more. They climb up a ladder to get to the attic, although Sanjeev has no desire to join them. He hears a shriek, followed by waves of laughter. When Twinkle descends from the attic, she is carrying a large silver bust of Christ. Sanjeev takes it from her and finds it is heavy, weighing about thirty pounds. Twinkle asks if she can display it on the mantel just for the evening. After that, she says, she will keep it in her study. But Sanjeev knows this will never happen. Twinkle will keep the bust of Christ on the center of the mantel along with all the other items he dislikes. But he does not argue with her. Instead, he follows her into the living room, carrying the statue.

### 23.5 Key-Words

1. Paraphernalia : Personal belongings, the article used a particular activity.
2. Knickknacks : Ornamental article, a trinket A small statue, figures, or ornamental.

### 23.6 Review Questions

1. Why do people admire Twinkle?
2. What do you think Sanjeev and Twinkle's relationship, is the true love like he thought?
3. Why is Twinkle charmed Christ, but Sanjeev against it?

### Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (i) (d)                      (ii) (a)                      (iii) (b)                      (iv) (b)                      (v) (d)

### 23.7 Further Readings



Books

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.



## Unit 24: Jhumpa Lahiri's "This Blessed House": Discussion on All Important Questions

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### Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Analyse Jhumpa Lahiri's "This Blessed House".
- Discuss Characters of "This Blessed House".

### Introduction

Jhumpa Lahiri's "This Blessed House" was one of the most powerful stories. It exemplified the respect for a religion that people have whether they actually believe in it or not. Sanjeev and Twinkle were Indian Hindus who were certain that they weren't Christians. Lahiri presents Twinkle, the female character, as the dominant force in the relationship. Twinkle has all of the masculine traits in the story such as the bad habit of smoking, laziness, a wild side, and is the decision maker of the relationship. Although Sanjeev insists on getting rid of all the Christian paraphernalia, Twinkle simply replies to him with, "No, we're not Christian. We're good little Hindus" as she kissed the head of the Christ figure.

The inclusion of music symbolism helped highlight the role reversal between Sanjeev and Twinkle. The music is playing in "adagietto" at the point when Sanjeev first began to question his love for Twinkle. He references Mahler and the 5th Symphony to relay to the reader that slow, funeral-like music is being played. This music was supposed to symbolize "love and happiness" and Sanjeev was not happy at that moment. An example of the role reversal is evident when, "a few ashes had fallen to the floor where she'd been standing. He bent down, pinched them between his fingers, and deposited them in his cupped palm"

"This Blessed House" included a lot of themes including: love, sacrifice, respect, etc. Sanjeev's love and respect for Twinkle made it possible for him to sacrifice his personal beliefs and hold the Christ's head at the end of the story, "Sanjeev pressed the massive silver face to his ribs, careful not to let the feather hat slip, and followed her [Twinkle]"

### 24.1 Material Culture in Lahiri's "This Blessed House"

Material culture features prominently in Jhumpa Lahiri's debut collection of short stories, Interpreter of Maladies. Detailed descriptions of saris, curries, and temples appear throughout the text, and Lahiri is careful to write the fabric and texture of her characters' lives into her stories. Readers likely appreciate the way these details exoticize her themes and plots. However, these details do more than

pique readers' interest. Lahiri often uses her characters' material culture as emblems of the tensions and contradictions in their lives. Her short story "This Blessed House" is no exception. Through her use of material culture in this story, Lahiri explores and critiques the possibility of camp—a style that ironically exhibits poor taste—as a way to relieve some of those tensions created by divergent and incoherent experiences of the material objects that surround us.

In the story, a young Indian couple, Sanjeev and Twinkle, have just married and have begun to settle into their newly purchased Connecticut home. As they clean and unpack, they begin to find devotional trinkets left by the Christians who sold the house. Little porcelain effigies, gospel-themed snow globes, and posters and postcards of saints litter the house.

Twinkle decides to display the kitschy knickknacks around their home; Sanjeev, more traditional and socially self-conscious about his Indian roots, protests. Gradually the story reveals that Twinkle and Sanjeev's differences run deeper than their preferences about what sits on the mantel.

Sanjeev grew up in India, attended MIT, and approaches his work with a seriousness that manifests an anxiety for his peers' opinions of him. Twinkle was raised in California and approaches life with an uncalculated levity that makes her fun but also shallow, spontaneous, and insincere. They quarrel as Twinkle's boredom with her new life provokes Sanjeev to frustration. In the story's final scene, Twinkle gushes about her kitsch discoveries to some dinner guests. To Sanjeev's discomfort, the story incites a group treasure hunt around the house to look for more of the kitsch. As a dinner guest emerges from the attic with a large silver bust of Jesus, Sanjeev's discomfort dissolves into bland resignation.

## 24.2 Ideologies of Consumption

Lahiri's story hinges on the question of what these material objects signify to her characters. More than just catalyzing the narrative action of the story, material objects in "This Blessed House" reify a host of attitudes and values that deeply divide the newlyweds. If Sanjeev's and Twinkle's experience of these objects holds so much significance for them, it is important to ask how the couple came to embed such meanings in physical objects.

After all, the material objects in the story are commodities—products of economic systems that are subject to numerous social and economic factors. These objects also affect the ideologies by which people make sense of the world; surely those social and economic factors play a role in the characters' identities as well as the commodities' production. Because of the centrality of material culture and commodities to the story, the divide between Sanjeev and Twinkle may be interpreted in part as a function of their differing ideologies of consumption. Doing so reveals how both modern and postmodern economies constrain individuals' search for happiness and meaning.

This story, like much of Lahiri's work, lends itself to such a socioeconomic reading because of the gulf Lahiri's characters inhabit between two world economies. India is a nation in transition; half of its people work in agriculture, yet most of its gross domestic product (GDP) comes from information services and industry. Poverty remains high and most of the goods and services produced domestically are consumed abroad.

In *Consuming Life*, he focuses on how consumption's social meanings differ between modern and postmodern economies. To be sure, human life has always required some consumption as each person needs food, shelter, and other goods, but Bauman finds that consumption's socially symbolic function has emerged more recently.

The producer society needed to hypermobilize human labor. Convincing laborers to dramatically increase their productive efforts required that society construct a social-material discourse that assuaged doubts and reassured individuals of the meaning and worth of their unnaturally strenuous workload. Such reassurances came in the form of apparent security, permanence, and reward. As the producer society progressed during early modernity, consumption came to offer those reassurances as it took on the new role of stating the durability of the entire social system, as well as one's place within that system. These are the types of "conspicuous consumers" that sociologist Thorsten Veblen described at the turn of the twentieth century. Bauman characterizes Veblen's observations in this way: "[It was] the public display of wealth with an emphasis on its solidity and durability" rather

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than a demonstration of the facility with which pleasures [could] be squeezed out of acquired riches right away and on the spot.”

In a producer society, one consumes slowly, prolonging the exposure so as to be seen.

The effect of consuming for the sake of communicating to strangers limits how consumption signifies in producer societies. Efficiency and mobilization of labor reinforce social myths and ethos that give consumption its vocabulary. This condition changes once consumerism sets in.

Eventually, producer societies reach levels of efficiency and production where natural need cannot clear the market, resulting in overproduction. Human desire must then be mobilized, as labor was, in order to reach an economic equilibrium.

Consumption changes roles at this point, society now recasts “human wants, desires and longings into the principal propelling and operating force of society.”

This reorganization attempts to change the nature of those wants and desires because it needs to enlist them in the economy’s service. Like labor before it, desire is objectified by social discourse and stripped of some significance in order for it to function as an economic input.

This objectification dislocates desire and robs it of personality. A commoditized desire loses some of its more abstract meaning since it can so readily be weighed in terms of money. The personal significance of our wants evaporates from the increased pressure and heat of mobilized desire. In other words, producer societies tell you what you should want and what those wants mean; consumerist societies do not care, so long as you want more and want it faster.

Individuals struggle to define themselves in that type of climate. The lack of meaning and emphasis on novelty forecasts perpetual boredom as a sort of postmodern pathology, or ennui. Bauman quotes Georg Simmel on this point, who attributed the postmodern ennui to this objectification of desire: “[Things] appear to the blasé person in an evenly flat and grey tone; no one object deserves preference over any other. . . . All things float with equal specific gravity in the constantly moving stream of money.”

It is important to note that both economic systems present impediments to the way people give meaning to their labor and consumption.

For a person in a producer society, the anxiety about the value of his or her own labor translates into a quest for peers’ validation by consuming in ostentatious ways. For a person in a consumerist society, the pressure exerted by advertising and industry to clear the market of surplus goods increases the speed of consumption in a way that provides many options but divests the consumer of his or her attention to them. Like the immediate landscape seen from the window of a fast train, all distinctions blur into their basest aspects. Lahiri’s characters in “This Blessed House” embody these economic differences.

### The Hypocrisy of Camp

Some would argue that Twinkle’s treasure hunt is a viable antidote to the instability of postmodern life. If a postmodern economy insists on a speed of consumption that robs us of the ability to make sense of that consumption for ourselves, maybe the best thing to do is to deny that life was ever about making sense at all. The social geographer David Harvey sums up the problem in his materialist analysis of postmodernity: “How can we . . . identify essential meanings? Postmodernism, with its resignation to bottomless fragmentation and ephemerality, generally refuses to contemplate that question.”

Postmodernism, as Harvey describes it, forfeits truth and coherence for options and play. This is the sort of cultural logic implicit in Twinkle’s actions. Indeed, her very name suggests the evanescence that she sees in life. By Twinkle’s rules, you can elevate yourself above cultural signification and define taste and knowledge for yourself, but never with certainty or permanence. And why shouldn’t this work? After all, she seems much happier than Sanjeev and much better equipped to deal with the vicissitudes of life. She laughs at the kitsch of modernity, at the empty promises and truth claims. She recognizes the inability of mechanical forgeries to reproduce the essence of divinity, and so she laughs. The type of sign play with kitsch in which Twinkle engages fits under the description of

camp. The Oxford English Dictionary defines camp as that which is "ostentatious, exaggerated, affected, theatrical" and finds its earliest use in descriptions of homosexuals' mannerisms from the early twentieth century.

The connection to homosexuality highlights an element of camp as it is now more broadly defined. In as much as early twentieth-century homosexuals paraded and parodied their sexuality, they knowingly offended social norms of status and taste. This subversive facet of camp has stuck around, and the word has come to connote things that are enjoyed because of (rather than in spite of) the fact that they are knowingly in poor taste. As Susan Sontag has described it, "It's good because it's awful."

Camp operates by subversive irony, and Twinkle is in good company as one of its proponents. Historian Paul Fussell, for example, prescribes camp style for the home décor of those who would be culturally liberated in his analysis of the American class system: "[They] parody middle class effects, and parodied items [from the underclass] may make an appearance, like ironically ugly lawn furniture. . . . The guiding principle will be parody display."

For Fussell, camp transcends bourgeois culture. Furthermore, Benton Jay Komins defends camp because of its democratic tendencies and flexibility: "Camp no longer is portrayed as a privileged expression of any one group; in the true spirit of its inherent pastiche, it takes on multiple meanings. . . . [It] allows individuals to reappropriate the *démodé* and is the active process of working through extant cultural material."

He goes on to correctly identify economic factors as antecedents to this development: "Massive changes in the production and distribution of cultural products allowed this message proliferation to take place."

To rebut the position that camp is liberatory, let me extend Bauman's comments in a way that brings implications to bear on sign systems. The changes in production and distribution Komins refers to require great exchangeability. For Bauman, the necessity of exchange requires homogeneity, not just of physical objects but of human desires. This condition leads to the blunting of discernment and distinction. As signs depend upon difference to function, the lack of distinction becomes incredibly confusing. This fact sheds light on how camp functions semiotically. Once consumerism masks the meaning of "signifieds," the only subversive thing left to do is to tease signifiers. Laura Christian finds that camp "highlights the discernibly exaggerated or 'off' qualities of the signifier; it inserts the signifier into quotation marks, theatricalizing it."

Theatrics cannot provide a foundation for personal meaning if its referents shift constantly. That shift portends great confusion for postmodern life when we consider Lacan's insight that the subconscious functions like a sign system. Crafting a signifier that represents oneself in a polysemic sign system is difficult enough; make the signifieds more or less homogenous and see what happens. For these reasons, the economically "massive changes" that Komins cites preclude the ability of individuals to reappropriate kitsch culture in any meaningful way. This play on signifiers with its attendant dramatic flair motivates Twinkle's character. She perpetually theatricalizes her campy treasure hunt. She performs it over and over. She tells her Californian friend about it over the phone. She relishes telling the houseguests about it. In that instance, her self-conscious irony seems to gush out of the text, like a line from a stage play. She says, "God only knows what we'll find, no pun intended."

But the pun seems clearly intended. She confirms this reading of the house party as a theatric performance when she adds the gaudy costuming at the end – the bust of Jesus in a feather hat. The confusion that arises from forming an ego out of unstable signs afflicts both Sanjeev and Twinkle. Because Sanjeev is still stuck in the producer mode of consumptive signification, he seems confused but not hopeless of finding real meaning based on distinctions. This fact causes him to give negative definitions and descriptions of his desires. "In truth Sanjeev did not know what love was, only what he thought it was not."

Lahiri then lists the disappointments and loneliness that constitute Sanjeev's negative definition of happiness. Twinkle, as a consumerist, is further gone. All images are foreign and fleeting; only their pursuit as distraction matters now. Focus for a moment on the bathtub scene: Sanjeev interrupts

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Twinkle's bath to announce that he is going to throw away the lawn statue of the Virgin Mary. She tells him in a peevish, childish way that she hates him, throwing a tantrum.

Clearly desire has no mature significance for her. She takes no satisfaction in the treasures she had already found, and in the end the bust of Christ from the attic replaces the novelty from the Virgin Mary statue in her attention. As we would expect, Twinkle's language equivocates and demonstrates the erosion of meaningful distinction. She gives her reasoning for not throwing away the little relics: "It would feel, I don't know, sacrilegious or something."

Her comment downgrades sacrilege into an indistinct negative feeling, interchangeable with any other negative feeling. If camp serves only as a distraction, what might be the way out? Living in society entails exposure to media, and we cannot control completely how our actions and material objects will signify to others. Neither can we avoid consumption in a way that does not extract us from society and (on a much more basic, biological level) life completely. Rather, the solution comes into focus as we identify a commonality between consumerist society and the camp style.

Jhumpa Lahiri presents her characters with incoherent and contradictory forces of society that they, and we, must navigate. Her writing also positions ordinary desires and longings as points of cultural conflict. These cultural conflicts can sometimes manifest the constraints imposed by the socioeconomic organization of a society. When those constraints are derived from commoditization, exchangeability pervades our use of signs in ways that make self-conception problematic. This problem ultimately brings about a crisis of identity and desire as exchangeability reduces cultural difference to its most basic, consumable parts. Camp as a style is merely another mode of consuming images that recognizes distinction only in terms of an audience. In reflecting on the nature of our real desires, we must silence that audience if we ever hope to find wisdom.



*Task* What did Twinkle find along with a bottle of the Vinegar?

### Character Analysis of Twinkle

Twinkle is a very pretty, young Indian woman, who likes to get dressed up and look good. Her face was very girlish looking and had untroubled eyes. Her name in itself shows she's a fun girl. In the story it states she loved to wear high heels, some that were three inches and leopard print. This shows that she's fun and likes to be seen. It also said that she wore some black stirrup pants and a yellow chenille sweater. So she can still look cute dressing down too. It also says that she had an appointment for a manicure and pedicure before the party so she doesn't like to just dress good, but look good all the way around. What she wears to the party is also described as very elegant and classy, but fun at the same time. Twinkle definitely has a sense of style.

"Guess what I found", was the first thing Twinkle said in the story. By this first statement, it proved to me that she was a fun girl, not wanting to just tell Sanjeev what it is she found, but to play a game with him to figure it out. When she says, "I would feel terrible throwing them away", shows that she is also a very caring person. Even to people she doesn't know. Twinkle also made compromises with Sanjeev by telling him she would hide her new "treasures" behind the door or out of the way in the lawn. Twinkle also did not have the same taste in music as Sanjeev did because when he was listening to his music she told him to turn it off because it was putting her to sleep. Twinkle also proved that she doesn't care what people think by constantly asking Sanjeev why he always cares what people think because clearly she doesn't care. I also noticed that Twinkle is very outgoing and definitely a people person. She knows how to start a conversation and to keep guests entertained with different stories she would tell and what not.

Twinkle definitely likes to smoke. She's constantly smoking throughout the story. Usually, smoking is a release of stress and other things. So I assume her smoking was a way of just letting her troubles

go. Twinkle also likes to tease Sanjeev. I noticed this by the way she carried herself the times when she would squeeze his leg or his arm. She likes to read when she's bored, but also talk to her girlfriends on the phone. I think this shows she's easily entertained. She's also very carefree because she leaves clothes at the front of her closed, would read whatever magazine, and listen to whatever song on the radio. She gets excited by the little things in life. Like when Sanjeev always refilled her glass when they would go out together. As fun loving and carefree as she is though, she likes to read things like Sonnets and German films and was getting her masters degree. So Twinkle was also very intelligent. Even though she was not the greatest in the kitchen, she came up with a dish on her own and it even tasted good. This shows she's creative too. I also think that Twinkle liked to keep her emotions to her since she cried once in the story and that was the only time Sanjeev had ever seen her cry. I don't think she was crying just because of statue, but it had built up and that was the final straw. Twinkle also shows leadership. She took it upon herself to entertain the guests and get them interested in something they probably wouldn't normally be interested in. But by her enthusiasm she got them excited and they followed her wherever she went.

Sanjeev responded to Twinkle in many ways. In one instance, he would dote on her and how they met. In another he showed how much he cared by doing little things for her. Including holding her while she cried and compromising with her. On the other hand, he talked a lot about how annoying she was and would belittle her throughout the whole story. When the party guests arrived they ended up adoring Twinkle. They were with her the whole time and stayed by her side through her endeavors of finding a new "treasure". I can't decide if it made him jealous or even more annoyed. To me, it didn't seem that he truly loved her by the way he talked about her and to her.

The only thoughts that were shown was about Sanjeev and what he thought about Twinkle. The story didn't share hardly any of Twinkles' thoughts. Only about how much Sanjeev thought of Twinkle.

All in all, I think Twinkle has the whole package, minus the being organized and tidy part.



#### Notes

- Twinkle – an Indian who is living in America with her husband.
- Sanjeev – an Indian, as Twinkle's husband and is rich enough to raise family very well.

The story is all about these two main characters, and Lahiri uses third person to narrate what happen in the new moved house around them.

## Unhappy Marriage

Like Shoba and Shukuma, Sanjeev and Twinkle are an couple with unhappiness. They only met 6 months ago and it's too short a time for them to know each other well. Twinkle is not the kind of wife Sanjeev expected. His traditional thinking and her openness cause conflicts between them and make their marriage unhappy.

## Theme

### *Secrets withheld and Revealed*

Sanjeev kept his thought which is worried about what his neighbours and fellow workers think about the plaster Virgin Mary in the lawn. He has this hostility in the pretense of Twinkle's comment.

### *Tradition and Customs*

Sanjeev and Twinkle's marriage was arranged, they just knew each other for 6 months when they married.

**Self-Assessment****1. Choose the correct option:**

- (i) What does Twinkle find along with the Christ figurine in the cupboard above the stove?
- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| (a) Snow globe | (b) Trivet     |
| (c) Poster     | (d) Her sister |
- (ii) What is the final Christian icon Twinkle finds in "This Blessed House"?
- |                                      |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (a) Silver bust of Jesus             | (b) Statue of Virgin Mary       |
| (c) A snow globe of the Last Supper. | (d) A life-sized oster of Jesus |
- (iii) Twinkle was charamed by
- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| (a) Poster        | (b) Snow globe    |
| (c) Christ statue | (d) None of these |
- (iv) Lahiri was born in
- |              |                    |
|--------------|--------------------|
| (a) London   | (b) India          |
| (c) Calcutta | (d) South Kingston |

**24.3 Summary**

- Sanjeev and Twinkle, a newly married couple, are exploring their new house in Hartford, which appears to have been owned by fervent Christians: they keep finding gaudy Biblical paraphernalia hidden throughout the house. While Twinkle is delighted by these objects and wants to display them everywhere, Sanjeev is uncomfortable with them and reminds her that they are Hindu, not Christian. This argument reveals other problems in their relationship; Sanjeev doesn't seem to understand Twinkle's spontaneity, whereas Twinkle has little regard for Sanjeev's discomfort. He is planning a party for his coworkers and is worried about the impression they might get from the interior decorating if their mantelpiece is full of Biblical figurines. After some arguing and a brief amount of tears, a compromise is reached. When the day of the party arrives, the guests are enamored with Twinkle. Sanjeev still has conflicting feelings about her; he is captivated by her beauty and energy, but irritated by her naivete and impractical tendencies. The story ends with her and the other party guests discovering a large bust of Jesus Christ in the attic. Although the object disgusts him, he obediently carries it downstairs. This action can either be interpreted as Sanjeev giving into Twinkle and accepting her eccentricities, or as a final, grudging act of compliance in a marriage that he is reconsidering.
- When moving into a new house, newlyweds Twinkle and Sanjeev find Christian icons everywhere. The first is a porcelain effigy of Jesus found next to a bottle of malt vinegar left in the kitchen by the previous owners. Sanjeev tells his wife to throw both away, reminding her that they are not Christian. He feels that he has had to remind Twinkle of the obvious several times when moving in. But Twinkle is attached to the figurine and places it on the mantle – which Sanjeev notices needs dusting. Over the course of the week, Twinkle finds more items and places each on the mantle. Sanjeev doesn't understand why his wife is so charmed by the snow globes, statuettes and 3D postcards.
- By the end of the week, Twinkle grows dismayed that no other objects are hiding about. Then she finds a tacky poster of a crying Jesus and, with delight, announces she will hang it up. Sanjeev, unpacking while listening to Mahler, puts his foot down. Twinkle pushes back and decides to hang the poster in her study behind the door so it will remain hidden during their housewarming party. Sanjeev sighs and thinks about the piece he is listening to – a testament to love. From the bathrrrom, Twinkle tells him she finds the music boring.
- They bicker about the mantle on their way to Manhattan for a night, Twinkle in high heels and now taller than Sanjeev. He doesn't understand why she is content and curious about everything.

He doesn't understand why she doesn't unpack or clean or dust as she is home all day working on a dissertation. Three days later, he comes home to a delicious fish stew concocted out of thin air and with the vinegar Sanjeev implored Twinkle to throw away. The bread basket is covered with a cloth bearing Christ's image. Twinkle calms him by saying that the house is blessed.

- Sanjeev marvels at her behavior. Nicknamed after a nursery rhyme, she has yet to lose her childlike endearment. They had only known each other for four months. Their parents, old friends, arranged a meeting at the birthday party of one of the daughters in their circle. Sanjeev, in California on business, began an intense long-distance relationship with Twinkle after that night. They married in India shortly thereafter and Twinkle moved to Connecticut – where she knew no one. Sanjeev found the house before leaving for the wedding and determined that he and his bride should live there forever.
- A week before the housewarming party, Twinkle and Sanjeev rake the lawn of the golden leaves. Across the yard, Twinkle screams and Sanjeev runs over, thinking she has found a dead animal or snake. Instead, she has found a bust of the Virgin Mary. She screams with delight and insists on keeping it on the property. But Sanjeev is worried about what the neighbors will think, as they are Hindu and not Christian. Twinkle doesn't understand. Sanjeev, feeling as if he is getting nowhere with this woman he barely knows and yet shares his life with, wonders if they love one another. Sanjeev only knows for certain that love is not what he had in his old life – full of takeout meals and classical CDs arriving by mail. Later, with Twinkle in the bath, Sanjeev declares he is going to throw out the statue. She rises up and marches downstairs in a towel. She tells Sanjeev she hates him, then collapses in his arms in tears. The statue ends up in an alcove out of sight from the main road but still visible to all who visit their home.
- The night of the housewarming party, Twinkle avoids removing the objects from the mantle and Sanjeev hopes his guests – mostly colleagues – will notice the bones of the house more. When the guests arrive, Twinkle charms them easily. Sanjeev is asked if he is Christian, but it is not as big of an issue as it appears. His friends are impressed by Twinkle, but he still feels a bit lost. He steals a moment alone in the kitchen. Replenishing the champagne from the cellar, he hears Twinkle explain the figurines and how each day is like a treasure hunt.
- Soon, she mobilizes the party to search the attic, much to Sanjeev's dismay. While everyone is in the attic, he fantasizes removing the ladder and truly having the house to himself. He thinks of sweeping the figurines off of the mantle and into the trash in silence. Sanjeev finds Twinkle's discarded shoes and places them in the doorway of their master bedroom. For the first time since they married, the shoes create a pang of anticipation in Sanjeev. He thinks of Twinkle slipping her soles into the shoes, touching up her lipstick and rushing to hand out their guests' coats at the end of the night. It reminds him of the anticipation he would feel before one of their long talks when she was still living in California.
- Twinkle's voice rings out. The party has found an enormous silver bust of Jesus in the attic. She asks if they can put it on the mantle, just for the night. Sanjeev hates it, especially because she loves it so much, and he knows it will never find a home in her study as she promises. He knows she will have to explain to their guests to come, in their many years together. She rejoins the party and he follows.

## 24.4 Key-Words

1. Almari : A wooden cabinet
2. Vermillion : A deep shade of red

## 24.5 Review Questions

1. What is the reader's initial impression of Twinkle?
2. The relics "meant something to Twinkle" but nothing to Sanjeev. Explain their different views.



**Notes**

3. How did Sanjeev and Twinkle meet and why did they marry after only knowing each other for four months?
4. Contrast the work that Sanjeev and Twinkle do. How is this reflected in their personalities?
5. As the story progresses what do we learn about the relationships between Sanjeev and Twinkle?
6. What might explain Twinkle's obsession with the relics and Sanjeev's anger towards them?
7. Explain the dynamics of the house warming party.
8. What sense do we get from Sanjeev's perspective of the future of the relationship?
9. Summarise the main themes in this story in bullet point form. For each theme find 2-3 quotes that reflect it.

**Answers: Self-Assessment**

1. (i) (c)                      (ii) (a)                      (iii) (c)                      (iv) (a)

**24.6 Further Readings**



*Books*

1. "English for Competitive Exams" By Dr. R.P. Bhatnagar
2. "Unique Quintessence of General English" Edited By Dr. S. Sen and Others and revised by Dr. G.S. Mansukhani.

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