



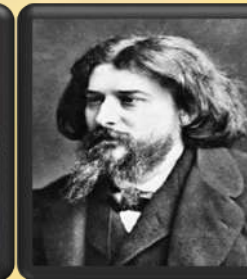
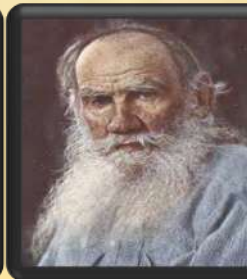
ELOQUENTIA-II

**II Semester B.Sc./B.Sc., (FAD)/BVA., and other Programs
Coming under the Faculty of Science**

GENERAL ENGLISH

Under the State Education Policy

(SEP – 2024)



Chief Editor: Dr. T.N. Thandava Gowda

Editor : Dr. Prasanna Udipikar

**Bengaluru City University (BCU)
Bengaluru**



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General English Textbook for II Semester B.Sc./B.Sc., (FAD)/BVA., and other courses under the faculty of Science has been prepared by the members of the B.Sc. Textbook Committee, Bengaluru City University (BCU).

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FOREWORD

It is with immense pleasure that I introduce *Eloquentia- II*, the textbook specially designed for II semester **B.Sc./B.Sc. (FAD)/B.V.A.**, and other course students, as a cornerstone in the academic journey. Carefully curated by the dedicated members of the textbook committee, this collection of literature and language topics is not only insightful but also transformative, blending the timeless wisdom of classic and contemporary works with the precision of modern language study.

The selected literature pieces in this textbook offer an enriching dive into diverse narratives, voices, and perspectives. Whether delving into the poignant truths of a short story, the lyrical beauty of poetry, or the gripping essence of an inspiring article, these works have been chosen to cultivate critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and a deeper understanding of human experience. Each piece serves as an invitation to explore the complex interplay between individual lives and the broader cultural and scientific contexts they inhabit.

In parallel, the grammar modules provide a robust framework to sharpen linguistic skills, enabling the students to communicate with clarity, accuracy, and confidence. These lessons are designed to fortify command over the English language, an invaluable tool for both academic success and professional excellence.

The textbook committee deserves special appreciation for their meticulous efforts in ensuring a balanced and inspiring selection of topics. Their thoughtful choices reflect an understanding of the academic and personal growth of students, as well as an awareness of the relevance of these themes in today's rapidly evolving world. Their commitment has resulted in a resource that not only fulfils the curriculum's objectives but also instils a lifelong appreciation for literature and language.

As we embark on this semester, I encourage the students to embrace this textbook as more than just a learning resource. See it as a guide, a companion, and a gateway to curiosity. Allow it to challenge, provoke thought, and ignite passion for inquiry. The lessons and insights derived from these pages will echo far beyond the confines of the classroom, enriching understanding of both the sciences and the humanities.

Prof. Lingaraja Gandhi
Vice-Chancellor
Bengaluru City University
Bengaluru-560001

PREFACE

Eloquentia- II, a meticulously curated textbook for the **II semester B.Sc./B.Sc. (FAD)/B.V.A.**, and other courses under the Faculty of Science at Bengaluru City University (BCU). This compilation of literature and language topics has been thoughtfully designed to inspire intellectual curiosity, enhance language proficiency, and foster a deep appreciation for the written word.

The title *Eloquentia* itself reflects the essence of this textbook: the art of speaking and writing with clarity, grace, and confidence. To achieve this, the textbook integrates a balanced blend of literary works and language exercises, tailored to meet the academic and professional aspirations of budding scientists and scholars. Each selection is intended not only to build linguistic dexterity but also to broaden your perspectives on themes that resonate across disciplines and cultures.

The syllabus crafted in *Eloquentia-II* are diverse and stimulating, featuring contemporary works that illuminate the richness of human thought and creativity. These works are complemented by carefully designed grammar exercises that reinforce core concepts, strengthen written and verbal communication, and prepare students to excel in both academic and professional settings.

Special congratulations are due to the textbook committee for their exceptional vision and dedication in crafting this resource. Their expertise and unwavering commitment to academic excellence are evident in the thoughtful selection of content that aligns seamlessly with the curriculum while addressing the practical and intellectual needs of students. Their effort has resulted in a textbook that is both educational and engaging—a true companion for students navigating the multifaceted journey of higher education.

I also extend my gratitude to the Director of Bengaluru City University Press and their staff for the timely publication of the book.

Dr. Thandava Gowda T N

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Bengaluru - 01

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NOTE TO THE TEACHER

Course Title – General English	
Teaching Hours: 4 hours per week	Course Credits: 3
Formative Assessment Marks: 20	Internal Assessment
Summative Assessment Marks: 80	Duration of Exam: 3 hours

We are delighted to present *Eloquentia-II*, a textbook designed to meet the specific academic and linguistic needs of II semester Bachelor of Science students. This book reflects our commitment to providing a balanced and engaging learning experience, combining literature and language in a manner that promotes intellectual growth, communication skills, and critical thinking.

Objectives of the Textbook

The primary objectives of *Eloquentia-II* are:

- To develop students' proficiency in English through an integrated approach to literature and language.
- To foster critical thinking and analytical skills by exposing students to diverse literary works.
- To improve students' ability to express themselves clearly and effectively in both written and oral forms.
- To prepare students for academic and professional success by equipping them with strong linguistic and interpretative skills.

Topics and Content Structure

The textbook is divided into two key sections:

Literature:

- A selection of short stories, poems, and articles has been included to provide students with diverse exposure to various genres, themes, and writing styles
- Each piece is accompanied by contextual introductions, annotations, references, suggestions and thought-provoking exercises to facilitate a deeper understanding.
- Themes include scientific research and its politics, ethical dilemmas, personal growth, and cultural diversity, ensuring relevance to students' academic and personal lives.

Grammar and Language Skills:

- The grammar modules are designed to enhance the foundational aspects of the language, covering soft skills, picture reading, and speeches, including the Welcome Speech and Vote of Thanks.
- The Exercises are designed to enhance writing skills and Comprehending skills, including Caption writing, Giving instructions and directions and Comprehension passages.

This structure ensures a seamless integration of literary appreciation and practical language learning.

Implementation and Assessment

To achieve the textbook's objectives, we recommend the facilitators to familiarize students with the following implementation and assessment framework:

1. Summative Assessment (80 Marks):

- The question paper is divided into two sections to test students' understanding of both literature and grammar.

- Literature: Questions assess comprehension, analysis, and interpretation of the literary pieces, including long answers and short questions.
- Grammar and Language Skills: Exercise includes soft skills, Comprehension passage, Picture reading, Giving Captions, Giving Instructions and Directions.

2. Internal Assessment (20 Marks):

- Continuous internal assessment to be conducted through periodic assignments, tests, and presentations.
- Teachers are encouraged to use creative methods like group discussions, debates, and role-playing to evaluate students' understanding of the material.

Eloquentia-II is more than a textbook ; it is a gateway to intellectual discovery and excellence in communication . With the facilitator's expertise and guidance, we are confident it will empower students to navigate their academic and professional journeys with confidence and clarity.

The Committee extends its heartfelt gratitude to **Dr. Thandava Gowda T N**, Chairperson (UG/PG) of Bengaluru City University and **Dr. Prasanna Udipikar** for their unwavering support and valuable contributions to the creation of this book. We express our heartfelt regards to **Prof. Lingaraja Gandhi**, the Honourable Vice-Chancellor of BCU, for his insightful advice and suggestions.

Dr. Prasanna Udipikar,
Chairperson, Text book Committee,
Principal, V.V.N. Degree College
Bengaluru- 560004

SYLLABUS
II SEMESTER B.Sc/ B.Sc. (FAD) AND OTHER PROGRAMS UNDER
THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE

Course Title -- L2 - GENERAL ENGLISH	
Teaching Hours: 4 hours per week	Course Credits: 3
Formative Assessment Marks: 20	Internal Assessment
Summative Assessment Marks: 80	Duration of Exam: 3 hours

CONTENT OF THE COURSE - II SEMESTER B.Sc/ B.Sc. (FAD) AND OTHER PROGRAMS UNDER THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE		
LITERARY COMPONENT (50 Marks)		56/64hrs
Poems	<i>The Heart of the Tree</i> by Henry Cuyler	4hrs
	<i>Any Woman</i> by Katharine Tynan	4hrs
Short Stories	<i>The Imp and the Crust</i> by Leo Tolstoy	4hrs
	<i>The Ensign</i> by Alphonse Daudet	4hrs
	<i>The Empire of Ants</i> by H. G. Wells	4hrs
Essays	<i>Three Women Officers Speak on Gender Identity in Armed Forces Agniveers and Turning Points</i> - Hindustan Times	4hrs
	<i>Heroic Struggle of a Scientist with Cancer</i> by TR Govindarajan	4hrs
GRAMMAR COMPONENT (30 Marks)		
1	Comprehension Passages	4hrs
2	Picture Reading and Giving a Caption	4hrs
3	Listening and Hearing: Types of Listening	2hrs
4	Soft Skills - (Introducing oneself, Introducing others, Requests, Offering help, Congratulating, Enquiries, Seeking permission)	6hrs
5	Welcome Speech and Vote of Thanks	6hrs
6	Giving Instructions and Giving Directions	6hrs

Pedagogy: Lecture, Presentation, Seminar, Practical sessions, Role Plays, Assignments, Ted Talks, MOOC

CHAPTER 1

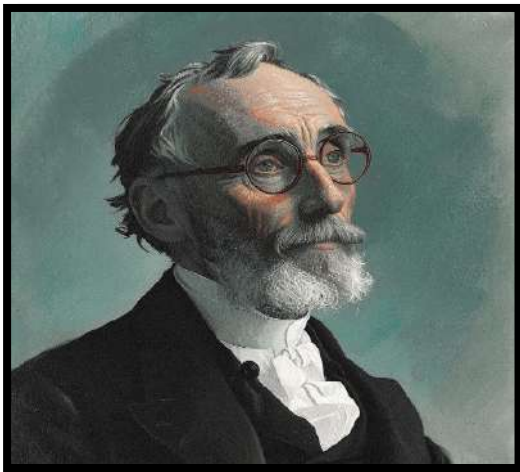
THE HEART OF THE TREE

-Henry Cuyler

Pre-Reading Activity:

- Brainstorm and list all the words that come to mind on hearing the word 'tree'.
- Discuss why conserving trees is crucial in the context of today's development-driven world.
- Identify activities in your surroundings that may lead to biodiversity loss and propose measures to address the issue.
- Share your thoughts and expectations from a poem titled *The Heart of the Tree*.

About the Poet:



Henry Cuyler Bunner (1855 – 1896) popularly known as H.C. Bunner, was born on August 3, 1855, in Oswego, New York, and received his education in New York city. Recognized for his talent as a political journalist, Bunner became the editor of *Puck*, one of America's earliest comic magazines. At the time of his appointment, *Puck* was a struggling publication. However, his literary prowess and unwavering commitment transformed it into a prominent platform for social and political commentary.

While Bunner's prose was not regarded as achieving literary perfection, it was celebrated for its simplicity and engaging charm. Sadly, his life was cut short when he passed away on May 11, 1896, when just 41 years old.

"He who plants a tree, plants a hope"

Bunner is most famously remembered as the editor of the humour magazine *Puck*. Beyond this role, he authored several plays, novels, and collections of poems, including *Rowen* (Scribner, 1892), *Short Sixes* (Scribner, 1891), *Airs from Arcady* (1884), and *The Midge* (1886). His fiction, particularly *Made in France*, reflects the influence of French writers such as Guy de Maupassant. As a playwright, his most notable work is *Tower of Babel*.

About the Poem:

The Heart of the Tree is a tribute to the beauty and immense value of trees in enhancing human life and well-being. The poem portrays the tree as a symbol of generosity and nobility, offering benefits to all living beings and creating a lasting legacy for future generations. It underscores the critical role trees play in fostering a nation's progress, providing shade and shelter, and sustaining diverse forms of life.

The poem highlights the countless advantages of trees, particularly their role in preserving ecological balance and supporting sustainable development. On a deeper level, planting a tree is depicted as a meaningful act of virtue, inspiring more kindness and harmony. Although written over a century ago, the poem's message remains deeply relevant in today's world, where rapid development and urbanization pose significant threats to the environment.

What does he plant who plants a tree?

He plants a friend of sun and sky;

He plants the flag of breezes free;

The shaft of beauty, towering high;

He plants a home to heaven anigh;

For song and mother-croon of bird
In hushed and happy twilight heard—
The treble of heaven's harmony—
These things he plants who plants a tree.
What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants cool shade and tender rain,
And seed and bud of days to be,
And years that fade and flush again;
He plants the glory of the plain;
He plants the forest's heritage;
The harvest of a coming age;
The joy that unborn eyes shall see—
These things he plants who plants a tree.
What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants, in sap and leaf and wood,
In love of home and loyalty
And far-cast thought of civic good—
His blessings on the neighbourhood,
Who in the hollow of His hand
Holds all the growth of all our land—
A nation's growth from sea to sea
Stirs in his heart who plants a tree.

Glossary:

breeze : soft , cold winds

shaft of beauty : a beam of beauty, like a ray of light

towering high	: growing as tall as a tower
home to heaven	: the sky, often considered the dwelling place of God
anigh	: close by or near to
mother-croon of bird	: the gentle and soft song sung by a mother bird to her young ones
hushed	: silenced and calmed
twilight	: the faint light visible at the end of the day after the sun has set
treble	: a high-pitched tone in music, three-fold
harmony	: the pleasing combination of different musical notes played or sung together
tender rain	: gentle, caring rain
fade and flush	: the cycle of fading out and brightening up again
years that fade and flush again	: refers to the natural cycle where trees grow, fade, and are replaced by new ones in a continuous process within the forest
heritage	: cultural features like traditions, languages, and beliefs passed down through generations
harvest of a coming age	: the accumulated wealth of a forest created now, which will benefit future generations
unborn eyes	: a poetic reference to future generations yet to be born
sap	: the liquid in a plant that transports nutrients to all its parts
loyalty	: faithfulness or steadfast allegiance
far-cast	: the ability to foresee or predict the distant future
civic good	: the well-being or welfare of the city and its citizens

hollow : an empty space or void, a cupped palm

stirs : moves or arouses a feeling

Comprehension Questions:

I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each:

1. Why does the poet begin the poem with a question?
2. How does the poet describe the physical beauty of a tree?
3. Mention any two things that man achieves by planting trees.
4. What does the expression 'sap and leaf' mean?
5. What is the meaning of the line 'He plants a friend of sun and sky'?
6. What does the poet indicate by the 'flag of breezes'?
7. What is meant by 'shaft of beauty'? What is compared to the shaft?
8. What is known as the mother-croon of the bird? Why is the song sung in a hushed voice?
9. What is twilight? Why is it described as a happy twilight?
10. How does the man who plants a tree plant the forest heritage?

II. Answer the following questions in about a page each:

1. Enumerate three benefits of planting trees as suggested by the poet in this extract. How do trees create a cool and shaded environment?
2. What is the meaning of 'treble, heaven's harmony'? What role does the treble play in heaven's harmony?
3. How do trees contribute to life on Earth as described by the poet?
4. How do trees ensure the harvest of future years?

5. Explain the meaning of the line, 'The joy that unborn eyes shall see.'
6. How do the last two lines of the extract illustrate the process of regeneration?

III. Answer the following questions in about two pages each:

1. What is the meaning of 'far-cast thought of civic good'? How is the planter's work a blessing, and for whom is it a blessing?
2. Why do you think this poem serves as a call to action for concern about the future of the Earth?
3. What fundamental values are emphasized in the poem? How does the act of planting a tree contribute to promoting these values?
4. Explain the line, 'A nation's growth from sea to sea stirs in his heart who plants a tree.'
5. Discuss the appropriateness of the poem's title, The Heart of the Tree.

Suggested Reading:

➤ **'Vertical' by Linda Pastan**

A reflective poem that contemplates life, growth, and the enduring presence of trees as silent witnesses to human experience.

➤ **'When Autumn Came' by Faiz Ahmed Faiz**

A nostalgic poem capturing the changes brought by autumn, symbolizing loss, transition, and renewal.

➤ **‘Everything I Need to Know I Learned in the Forest’ by Vandana Shiva**

A thought-provoking piece that emphasizes the wisdom and lessons derived from forests, advocating for ecological harmony and sustainability

Reference:

- ◆ <https://treepeople.org/22-benefits-of-trees/>
- ◆ <https://poets.org/text/poems-about-trees>
- ◆ <https://www.topperlearning.com/icse-class-10-poems-and-short-stories/the-heart-of-the-tree-henry-cuyler-bunner>

CHAPTER 2

ANY WOMAN

-Katharine Tynan

Pre-Reading Activity:

- Discuss the traditional roles and responsibilities of women in families and societies and how they shape family dynamics.
- Share real-life examples where women have played a central role in holding families or communities together.
- Reflect on the importance of recognizing and appreciating women's contributions to the family and society, fostering a sense of gratitude and awareness.
- Explore how women's roles have evolved over time, balancing progress with aspects of their roles that remain universal and timeless.

About the Poet:



Katharine Tynan (1859–1931) was an Irish poet and novelist known for her deeply personal and often spiritual themes. Born in Dublin, Ireland, Tynan was educated at a convent school and began writing poetry as a young woman. She became associated with the Irish Literary Revival, a movement aimed at promoting Irish culture and literature. A close friend

of W. B. Yeats, Tynan's works reflect her Irish heritage, Catholic faith, and her strong belief in the sanctity of family and motherhood.

"The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."

Tynan wrote over 100 novels and numerous volumes of poetry, often focusing on themes of home, family, love, and religion. ‘Any Woman,’ one of her most celebrated poems, underscores the indispensable role of women in nurturing families and sustaining the fabric of society. Through simple yet powerful imagery, Tynan elevates the domestic and emotional labour of women to a near-sacred status.

About the Poem:

‘**Any Woman**’ is a tribute to the essential role of women in holding families together. The speaker, representing the voice of countless women, proclaims herself as the ‘pillars of the house,’ emphasizing how indispensable she is to her family’s survival and well-being. Through evocative metaphors, Tynan illustrates a woman as the warmth of the hearth, the light of love, and the knot that binds her children.

The poem goes beyond mere acknowledgment of women’s responsibilities; it portrays their role as sacred and foundational. Tynan’s lyrical verse highlights both the physical and emotional labour women contribute, which often goes unnoticed but is vital for the functioning of households and communities.

I am the pillars of the house;

The keystone of the arch am I.
Take me away, and roof and wall
Would fall to ruin me utterly.

I am the fire upon the hearth,

I am the light of the good sun,
I am the heat that warms the earth,
Which else were colder than a stone.

At me the children warm their hands;

I am their light of love alive.

Without me cold the hearthstone stands,

Nor could the precious children thrive.

I am the twist that holds together

The children in its sacred ring,

Their knot of love, from whose close tether

No lost child goes a-wandering.

I am the house from floor to roof,

I deck the walls, the board I spread;

I spin the curtains, warp and woof,

And shake the down to be their bed.

I am their wall against all danger,


Their door against the wind and snow,

Thou Whom a woman laid in a manger,

Take me not till the children grow!

Glossary:

pillars of the house	: main support
keystone	: essential part
hearth	: fireplace floor
woof	: horizontal threads
warp	: vertical threads
sacred ring	: holy bond
manger	: feeding trough
hearthstone	: fireplace stone base



peroxide blond	: light bleached colour
raven black	: deep black
thread	: connecting strand
fragrance of home	: family warmth
twist	: binding force
danger's wall	: safety barrier
roof and wall	: stability, security

Comprehension Questions:

I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each:

1. What does the phrase 'pillars of the house' signify in the poem?
2. What is the 'keystone of the arch' compared to in the poem?
3. What does the hearth symbolize in the poem?
4. What is the twist in the sacred ring?
5. Why does the woman say, 'take me not till the children grow'?
6. What does the metaphor of 'roof and wall' signify?
7. Why is the house compared to the woman?
8. What is the significance of the thread imagery in the poem?
9. How does the poem depict the role of a mother?
10. What does the hearthstone stand for in the absence of the woman?
11. Why is the woman referred to as a wall against danger?
12. What do the 'warp and woof' signify?
13. How does the imagery of light reinforce the theme?
14. What universal truth does the poem convey?

II. Answer the following questions in about a page each:

1. In what ways does the woman represent strength and unity in the poem?
2. Discuss the central metaphors used in 'Any Woman' and their impact on the reader.
3. What role does the hearth play in conveying the poem's message about women?
4. How does the poem reflect Katharine Tynan's views on family and motherhood?
5. Analyze the imagery of 'roof and wall' in connection with the poem's themes.
6. What does the sacred ring symbolize in the poem, and why is it significant?
7. How does the tone of the poem emphasize a woman's dedication to her family?
8. How does Tynan use domestic symbols to elevate the role of women?

III. Answer the following questions in about two pages each:

1. Analyze the significance of the imagery in the poem. How does Tynan use simple domestic symbols to convey universal truths?
2. Discuss the theme of sacrifice in 'Any Woman.' How does the poem portray the balance between love and labour?
3. How does the poem resonate with contemporary ideas of women's roles in family and society?

4. Compare and contrast the spiritual and practical roles assigned to women in the poem.
5. How do the poem's structure and tone contribute to its overall theme of motherhood and devotion?

Suggested Reading:

➤ **'The Angel in the House' by Coventry Patmore**

A Victorian poem celebrating the idealized role of women in family life.

➤ **'Phenomenal Woman' by Maya Angelou**

This empowering poem challenges stereotypes and celebrates women's individuality and strength.

➤ **'Women' by Alice Walker**

A tribute to the sacrifices made by women in ensuring progress and stability for future generations.

Reference:

- ◆ 'Katharine Tynan: A Biographical and Critical Study' by Ann Mattoon.
- ◆ 'Themes of Home and Faith in Tynan's Poetry' by Maria Johnston.
- ◆ <https://www.irishpoetryarchive.com>

CHAPTER 3

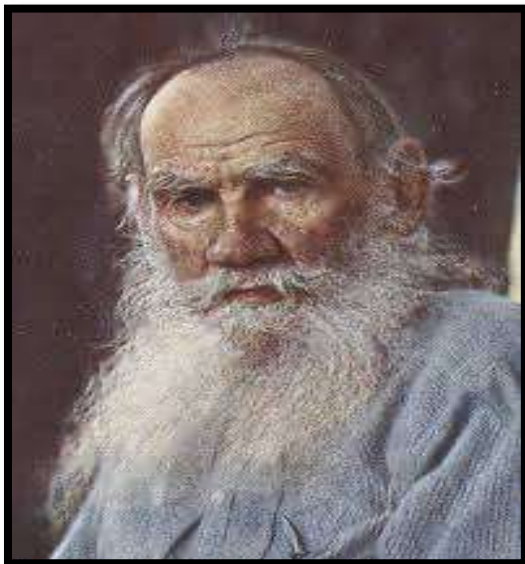
THE IMP AND THE CRUST

-Leo Tolstoy

Pre-Reading Activity:

- Consider the statement: 'Good and bad are two sides of the same coin. It is up to us to choose which side to embrace.' Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Think about how being content with what you have influences your happiness.
- Discuss the impact of greed on human behaviour and its consequences for society.
- Explore whether a single action can determine a person's character, or if it requires a consistent series of actions over time to define it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (9 September 1828 – 20 November 1910), known as **Leo Tolstoy**, was a renowned Russian writer celebrated as one of the greatest and most influential authors in literary history. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature annually from 1902 to 1906 and for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1901, 1902, and 1909.

Born into an aristocratic family, Tolstoy is best known for his monumental novels, *War and Peace* (1869) and *Anna Karenina* (1878), widely regarded as masterpieces of realist fiction and among the greatest works of literature ever

"A hungry man is not a free man."


written. He gained early literary recognition in his twenties with his semi-autobiographical trilogy *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth* (1852–1856) and the *Sevastopol Sketches* (1855), inspired by his experiences during the Crimean War.

Tolstoy's body of work includes numerous short stories, such as *After the Ball* (1911), and novellas like *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1886), *Family Happiness* (1859), and *Hadji Murad* (1912). In addition to fiction, he wrote plays and essays that explored philosophical, moral, and religious themes, further cementing his legacy as a profound thinker and writer.

ABOUT THE TEXT:

Promoting a Devil (also known as **The Imp and the Crust**) is a short story by Russian author Leo Tolstoy, first published in 1886. It serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of excess and greed. The story revolves around a peasant who, when given more than he needed to survive, succumbs to a sinful and corrupt life. The little devil in the tale recognizes that all humans possess a savage side, which remains dormant when the basic needs are met. However, once the peasant acquires a surplus, this savage nature emerges, leading to his downfall.

The story explores the duality of an 'abundance mindset,' highlighting both its benefits and its pitfalls. While having a mindset of abundance can encourage positivity and growth, it also comes with significant risks. It may foster a sense of entitlement, reducing gratitude for what one has and increasing disappointment when expectations are unmet. It can also lead to greed, a constant desire for more, and feelings of superiority over those with less. Tolstoy's narrative cautions readers to recognize these potential dangers and to approach the concept of abundance with balance and mindfulness



A poor peasant set out early one morning to plow, taking with him for his breakfast a crust of bread. He got his plow ready, wrapped the bread in his coat, put it under a bush, and set to work. After a while, when his horse was tired and he was hungry, the peasant fixed the plow, let the horse loose to graze, and went to get his coat and his breakfast.

He lifted the coat, but the bread was gone! He looked and looked, turned the coat over, shook it out—but the bread was gone. The peasant could not make this out at all.

‘That’s strange,’ thought he; ‘I saw no one, but all the same someone has been here and has taken the bread!’


It was an imp who had stolen the bread while the peasant was plowing, and at that moment he was sitting behind the bush, waiting to hear the peasant swear and call on the Devil.

The peasant was sorry to lose his breakfast, but ‘It can't be helped,’ said he. ‘After all, I shan’t die of hunger! No doubt whoever took the bread needed it. May it do him good!’

And he went to the well, had a drink of water, and rested a bit. Then he caught his horse, harnessed it, and began plowing again.

The imp was crestfallen at not having made the peasant sin, and he went to report what had happened to the Devil, his master.

He came to the Devil and told how he had taken the peasant’s bread, and how the peasant instead of cursing had said, ‘May it do him good!’



The Devil was angry, and replied: ‘If the man got the better of you, it was your own fault—you don’t understand your business! If the peasants, and their wives after them, take to that sort of thing, it will be all up with us. The matter can’t be left like that! Go back at once,’ said he, ‘and put things right. If in three years you don’t get the better of that peasant, I’ll have you ducked in holy water!’

The imp was frightened. He scampered back to earth, thinking how he could redeem his fault. He thought and thought, and at last hit upon a good plan.

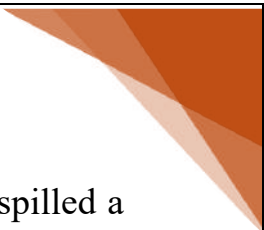
He turned himself into a labouring man, and went and took service with the poor peasant. The first year he advised the peasant to sow corn in a marshy place. The peasant took his advice, and sowed in the marsh. The year turned out a very dry one, and the crops of the other peasants were all scorched by the sun, but the poor peasant’s corn grew thick and tall and full-eared. Not only had he grain enough to last him for the whole year, but he had much left over besides.

The next year the imp advised the peasant to sow on the hill; and it turned out a wet summer. Other people’s corn was beaten down and rotted and the ears did not fill; but the peasant’s crop, up on the hill, was a fine one. He had more grain left over than before, so that he did not know what to do with it all.

Then the imp showed the peasant how he could mash the grain and distill spirit from it; and the peasant made strong drink, and began to drink it himself and to give it to his friends.

So the imp went to the Devil, his master, and boasted that he had made up for his failure. The Devil said that he would come and see for himself how the case stood.

He came to the peasant’s house, and saw that the peasant had invited his well-to-do neighbours and was treating them to drink. His wife was offering the drink to



the guests, and as she handed it round she tumbled against the table and spilled a glassful.

The peasant was angry, and scolded his wife: 'What do you mean, you slut? Do you think it's ditchwater, you cripple, that you must go pouring good stuff like that over the floor?'

The imp nudged the Devil, his master, with his elbow: 'See, said he, that's the man who did not grudge his last crust!'

The peasant, still railing at his wife, began to carry the drink round himself. Just then a poor peasant returning from work came in uninvited. He greeted the company, sat down, and saw that they were drinking. Tired with his day's work, he felt that he too would like a drop. He sat and sat, and his mouth kept watering, but the host instead of offering him any only muttered: 'I can't find drink for everyone who comes along.'

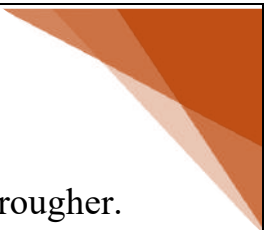
This pleased the Devil; but the imp chuckled and said, 'Wait a bit, there's more to come yet!'

The rich peasants drank, and their host drank too. And they began to make false, oily speeches to one another.

The Devil listened and listened, and praised the imp.

'If, said he, 'the drink makes them so foxy that they begin to cheat each other, they will soon all be in our hands.'

'Wait for what's coming,' said the imp. 'Let them have another glass all round. Now they are like foxes, wagging their tails and trying to get round one another; but presently you will see them like savage wolves.'



The peasants had another glass each, and their talk became wilder and rougher. Instead of oily speeches, they began to abuse and snarl at one another. Soon they took to fighting, and punched one another's noses. And the host joined in the fight, and he too got well beaten.

The Devil looked on and was much pleased at all this.

'This is first-rate!' said he.

But the imp replied: 'Wait a bit—the best is yet to come. Wait till they have had a third glass. Now they are raging like wolves, but let them have one more glass, and they will be like swine.'

The peasants had their third glass, and became quite like brutes. They muttered and shouted, not knowing why, and not listening to one another.

Then the party began to break up. Some went alone, some in twos, and some in threes, all staggering down the street. The host went out to speed his guests, but he fell on his nose into a puddle, smeared himself from top to toe, and lay there grunting like a hog.

This pleased the Devil still more.

'Well,' said he, 'you have hit on a first-rate drink, and have quite made up for your blunder about the bread. But now tell me how this drink is made. You must first have put in fox's blood: that was what made the peasants sly as foxes. Then, I suppose, you added wolf's blood: that is what made them fierce like wolves. And you must have finished off with swine's blood, to make them behave like swine.'

'No,' said the imp, 'that was not the way I did it. All I did was to see that the peasant had more corn than he needed. The blood of the beasts is always in man; but as

long as he has only enough corn for his needs, it is kept in bounds. While that was the case, the peasant did not grudge his last crust. But when he had corn left over, he looked for ways of getting pleasure out of it. And I showed him a pleasure—drinking! And when he began to turn God’s good gifts into spirits for his own pleasure—the fox’s, wolf’s and swine’s blood in him all came out. If only he goes on drinking, he will always be a beast!’

The Devil praised the imp, forgave him for his former blunder, and advanced him to a post of high honour.

GLOSSARY:


Imp	: mischievous sprite
plow	: turn soil, a spelling variant of ‘plough’
crust	: hard outer part of bread
shan’t	: shall not
harnessed	: fastened to equipment
crestfallen	: disappointed
ducked	: lowered quickly
scampered	: ran quickly
redeem	: compensate
took service	: befriended
marshy	: swampy soil
full-eared	: grain-filled crop
slut	: offensive term
ditchwater	: stagnant water
cripple	: disabled
nudged	: pushed gently
grudge	: resentment

railing	: barrier
foxy	: cunning
swine	: pig
staggering	: shocking
grunting	: low sound
hog	: domesticated pig
blunder	: mistake
sly as foxes	: clever, cunning

Comprehension Questions:

I. Answer the following in a sentence or two each :

1. What was the Imp's intention in stealing the bread crust?
2. What puzzled the peasant about the missing bread?
3. The Imp was sad because he:
 - (a) forced the peasant to wish well
 - (b) failed to make the peasant sin or curse
 - (c) made the farmer feel sorry
4. What does the poor peasant's reaction to losing his breakfast reveal about his character?
5. According to Leo Tolstoy, wealth as portrayed through the peasant in *The Imp and the Crust* suggests:
 - (a) wealth leads to moral decline and irresponsibility
 - (b) wealth enhances community development
 - (c) wealth fosters humility and gratitude
 - (d) wealth promotes generosity and altruism
6. The Imp encourages responsible use of wealth by the farmer. True/False
7. What benefit does the farmer gain from the Imp's second advice?

- 
8. The fox, the wolf, and the pig in the story symbolize _____.
 9. Name the animals in the story that represent the beastly side of peasants.
 10. Abundance of food, wealth and comfort lead to greed and irresponsible behaviour. True/False

II. Answer the following questions in about a page each:

1. Why is the Imp at fault for failing to make the peasant angry?
2. What suggestions did the Imp provide to the peasant?
3. How did the peasants' behaviour change after consuming alcohol?
4. Why did the Imp disguise himself as a labouring man?
5. How does the poor peasant's behaviour evolve as he becomes wealthy in the story?
6. Explain how the Imp's third piece of advice leads to the peasant's downfall.

III. Answer the following questions in about two pages each:

1. How does Leo Tolstoy portray the moral values reflected by the main characters in *The Imp and the Crust*?
2. Is wealth inherently bad? How can it lead to destruction? Discuss with examples.
3. Explain the central moral of the story.
4. How does the peasant's transformation from a kind-hearted individual to a violent and envious character symbolize the themes of *The Imp and the Crust*?
5. 'Abundance is a paradox'. Explain.

Suggested Reading:

➤ **‘The Devil and Tom Walker’ by Washington Irving**

A dark tale of greed, corruption, and a deal with the devil, echoing similar moral themes as *The Imp and the Crust*.

➤ **‘The Pied Piper of Hamelin’ by Robert Browning**

A legendary poem that explores themes of deception, broken promises, and the consequences of greed.

➤ **‘The Little Match Girl’ by Hans Christian Andersen**

A poignant and heartbreaking story highlighting poverty, hope, and the harsh realities of life.

Reference:

- ◆ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/tolstoy/1886/the-imp-and-the-crust.html>
- ◆ <https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-downsides-of-having-an-abundance-mindset>
- ◆ <https://www.studocu.com/en-us/quiz/2nd-story-the-imp-and-the-crust-the-imp-and-the-peasants-bread/692880>

CHAPTER 4

THE ENSIGN

-Alphonse Daudet

Pre Reading Activity:

- How do you feel when you see your national flag? Share your emotions and thoughts.
- Discuss an incident of heroism or patriotism that you remember or have heard about.
- Reflect on the importance of symbols like the national flag in uniting people and fostering pride.
- Share your thoughts on how acts of courage and sacrifice inspire others in a community or nation.



Alphonse Daudet (May 13, 1840 – December 16, 1897) was a French novelist and short-story writer, best known for his sentimental depictions of provincial life in southern France. A true son of the South, he blended a deep understanding of human passion with a vivid perspective shaped by the radiant Mediterranean landscape. Daudet's works often showcase imaginative flights while maintaining a keen focus on the intricacies of human behaviour. Throughout his life, he meticulously recorded his observations of people in small notebooks, which served as a rich source of inspiration for his writing.

"It is not titles that honour men, but men that honour titles."

About the text:

The Ensign is a heartrending short story set during the Franco-Prussian War, showcasing the unwavering patriotism of Sergeant Hornus. Faced with the advancing Prussian army, Sergeant Hornus chooses to sacrifice his life rather than surrender his cherished national flag. The story highlights the profound love and respect for one's country and the ultimate bravery displayed in defending its honour. It serves as a powerful tribute to the spirit of patriotism and selfless sacrifice.

THE regiment was engaged on the banks of a railway, and served as a target to the whole Prussian army massed in an opposite wood. They were firing on each other at a distance of eighty yards. The officers shouted, 'Lie down!' but no one would obey, and the proud regiment remained standing, gathered round their colors.

In the great horizon of the setting sun, of cornfields, of pasture land, this confused group of men, enveloped in smoke, were like a flock of sheep surprised in the open country by the first whirlwind of a terrific storm.

It rained iron on that slope! Nothing was heard but the crackle of the volleys and the prolonged vibration of the balls which flew from one end of the battle-field to the other. From time to time the flag, which waved overhead in the wind of the mitrailleuse, disappeared in the smoke, then a voice grave and steady, dominating the firing, the struggles of the dying, the oaths of the wounded, would cry: 'Au drapeau, mes enfants, au drapeau!' Instantly an officer, vague as a shadow in the red mist, would spring forward, and the standard, once more alive as it were, showed again above the battle.

Twenty-two times it fell. Twenty-two times its staff, still warm, slipping from a dying hand, was seized and upheld, and when, at sunset, what remained of the

regiment-scarce a handful of men-retreated slowly, firing as they went, the colors were mere rags in the hands of Sergeant Hornus, the twenty-third ensign of the day.

SERGEANT HORNUS was a crusty old war-dog, who could hardly write his own name, and who had taken twenty years to gain his sergeant's stripes. All the miseries of a foundling, all the brutalizing effects of barrack-life, could be traced in the low projecting forehead, the back bent beneath the knapsack, that air of careless self-neglect acquired in the ranks.

Besides all this he stammered, but then eloquence is not essential to an ensign. On the evening of the battle his colonel said to him, 'You have the colors, my brave fellow; keep them.' And on his coarse hood, frayed by war and weather, the vivandière stitched the gold band of a *sub-lieutenant*.

This had been the one ambition of his humble life. From that moment he drew himself up; he who was wont to walk with bent head and eyes fixed on the ground, henceforth looked proudly upwards to the bit of stuff which he held very straight, high above death, treachery and defeat. Never was there a happier man than Hornus on days of battle, holding his staff firmly in its leather socket with both hands.

He neither spoke nor moved, and was as serious as a priest guarding some sacred thing. All his life, all his strength, were concentrated in the fingers grasping that gilded rag upon which the balls beat so persistently, and in his defiant eyes looking the Prussians full in the face, as if saying, 'Try, if you dare, to take it from me!'

No one did try, not even death.

After Borny, after Gravelotte, those murderous battles, the colors came out, tattered, in holes, transparent with wounds, but it was still old Hornus who carried them.

Then came September with the army around Metz, the investment, and that long pause when the cannon rusted in the mud, and the finest troops in the world,

demoralized by inaction, want of food and want of news, died of fever and ennui beside their piled arms. No one, neither chiefs nor soldiers, had faith in the future; Hornus alone was still confident. His ragged tricolor was all in all to him, and as long as he could see that, nothing seemed lost.

Unfortunately, as there was no more fighting, the colonel kept the colors at his house in one of the suburbs of Metz, and poor Hornus was much like a mother whose child is out to nurse. He thought of it constantly. Then when the yearning was too much for him, he went off to Metz, and, having seen it still in the same place, leaning against the wall, he returned full of courage and patience, bringing back to his dripping tent dreams of battle and of advancing marches, with flying colors floating over the Prussian trenches.

An order of the day from Marshal Bazaine put an end to these illusions. One morning Hornus on awakening found the whole camp clamorous, groups of soldiers in great excitement, uttering cries of rage, all shaking their fists towards one side of the town as though their anger were roused against some criminal. There were shouts of 'Away with him!' 'Let him be shot!' And the officers did nothing to prevent them. They kept apart with bent heads as if ashamed of being seen by their men. It was indeed shameful. The Marshal's order had just been read to 150,000 fighting men, well-armed and still efficient-an order which surrendered them to the enemy without a struggle!

'And the colors?' asked Hornus, growing pale. The colors were to be given up with the rest, with the arms, with what was left of the munitions of war-everything.

'To-To-Tonnerre de Dieu!' stuttered the poor man.

'They shan't have mine.' And he started at a run towards the town.

Here also there was great disturbance National Guards, civilians gardes mobiles shouting and excited, deputations on their way to the Marshal; but of this Hornus saw and heard nothing. All the way up the Rue du Faubourg he kept saying to himself:

‘Take my flag from me indeed! It is not possible. They have no right to it! Let him give the Prussians what is his own, his gilded carriages, his fine plate brought from Mexico! But that, it is mine. It is my honour. I defy anyone to touch it.’

These fragments of speech were broken by his rapid pace and by his stammer, but the old fellow had his idea notwithstanding; a very clear and defined idea--to get the standard, carry it to the regiment, and cut his way through the Prussians with all who would follow him.

When he reached his destination he was not even allowed to enter the house. The colonel, furious himself, would see no one; but Hornus was not to be put off thus. He swore, shouted, hustled the orderly!

‘My flag, I want my flag.’ At last a window opened.

‘Is it you, Hornus?’

‘The colors are all at the arsenal you have only to go there and you will get an acknowledgment.’

‘An acknowledgment! What for?’

‘It is the Marshal's order.’

‘But Colonel-’

‘Leave me alone,’ and the window was shut.

Old Hornus staggered like a drunken man.

‘An acknowledgment, an acknowledgement,’ he repeated mechanically, moving slowly away, comprehending only one thing, that the flag was at the arsenal and that he must get it again, no matter at what price.

The gates of the arsenal were wide open, to allow the passage of the Prussian wagons which were drawn up in the yard. Hornus shuddered. All the other ensigns were there, fifty or sixty officers silent and sorrowful; those somber carts in the rain, with the men grouped bareheaded behind them, had all the aspect of a funeral.

In a corner the colors of Bazaine’s army lay in a confused heap on the muddy pavement. Nothing could be sadder than these bits of gay-colored silks, these

ends of gold fringe and of ornamented hafts, all this glorious paraphernalia thrown on the ground, soiled by rain and mud. An officer took them one by one, and as each regiment was named, its ensign advanced to receive an acknowledgment. Two Prussian officers, stiff and unmoved, superintended the ceremony.

And must you go thus, oh sacred and glorious flags!-displaying your brave rents, sweeping the ground sadly like broken-winged birds, with the shame of beautiful things sullied? With each of you goes a part of France. The sun of long marches hid in your faded folds. In each mark of a ball you kept the memory of the unknown dead falling at random around the standard, the enemy's mark!

Hornus, it is your turn, they are calling you; go for your receipt. 'What did he care about a receipt! The flag was there before him. It was his, the most beautiful, the most mutilated of all And seeing it again, he fancied himself once more on that railway bank. He heard the whistling balls and the colonel's voice. 'Au drapeau, mes enfants?' He saw his twenty-two comrades lying dead; himself, the twenty-third, rushing forward in his turn to support the poor flag which sank for want of an arm. Ah! that day he had sworn to defend it to the death and now!

Thinking of all this made his heart's blood rush to his head. Distracted, mad, he sprang on the Prussian officer, tore from him his beloved standard, tried to raise it once more straight and high, crying 'Au dra But the words stuck in his throat- he felt the staff tremble, slip through his hands. In that paralyzing atmosphere that atmosphere of death which weighs so heavily on capitulated towns, the standard could no longer float, nothing glorious could live. And old Hornus, too, choked with shame and rage, fell dead.

Glossary:

ensign	: a commissioned officer who serves as a flag-bearer a flag representing a nation or a regiment
prussia	: a historical region in northern Germany. The story is likely set during the Franco-Prussian War (1870), a conflict between the Second French Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia. The German and Prussian armies achieved a series of swift victories, culminating in the fall of Paris on January 28, 1871
standard, colours	: the flag of a regiment
au drapeau mes enfants:	a French phrase meaning ‘to the flag, my children.’
mitrailleuse	: a French term for ‘machine gun.’
sergeant, colonel, lieutenant, marshal	: various ranks of officers in the army
crusty	: bad-tempered or irritable
foundling	: an infant abandoned by its parents and subsequently found and cared for by others
ennui	: a feeling of weariness and dissatisfaction, often due to boredom
arsenal	: a building where military weapons and explosives are manufactured or stored
metz	: a city in northeastern France
tonnerre de dieu	: a French phrase meaning ‘thunder of God.’
rue du faubourg	: the name of a street in France

Comprehension Questions:

I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each:

1. Where was the regiment positioned in the beginning of the story?
2. The French were fighting the _____ army:
 - a. Russian
 - b. Prussian
 - c. Persian
3. The men on the battlefield were like a confused _____
4. From time to time, a voice would cry out _____
5. Sergeant Hornus was the _____ ensign of the day.
6. Which are the other two battles mentioned in the text?
7. What was Sergeant Hornus's only ambition in life?
8. How did Hornus feel when the Colonel kept the colours at his house?
9. Why were the soldiers angry with Marshal Bazaine?
10. When Hornus went to take the colours from the Colonel, the Colonel told him that the colours were:
 - a. At the arsenal
 - b. At the Major's house
 - c. On the battlefield

II. Answer the following questions in about a page each:

1. Describe the battlefield scene before Hornus was appointed as the 23rd ensign.

2. Write a note on Sergeant Hornus, describing his character before and after taking charge of the ensign.
3. ‘This had been the one ambition of his humble life.’ What was Sergeant Hornus’s ambition, and how did he fulfill it until the Colonel took away the flag?
4. ‘An order of the day from Marshal Bazaine put an end to these illusions.’ What was the order, and how did the soldiers react to it?
5. How does the statement ‘My flag, I want my flag’ symbolize Sergeant Hornus’s values and life?

III. Answer the following questions in about two pages each:

1. Explain the circumstances that led to Sergeant Hornus becoming the twenty-third ensign of the day.
2. ‘Take my flag from me indeed! It is not possible...’ How does this statement reflect the character and determination of Sergeant Hornus?
3. The title of the story highlights both the flag and its bearer. Discuss the appropriateness of the title.

Suggested Reading:

➤ **‘The Send-Off’ by Wilfred Owen**

A reflective poem depicting the sombre reality of soldiers departing for war, highlighting themes of loss and sacrifice.

➤ **‘Survivors’ by Siegfried Sassoon**

A powerful portrayal of the psychological scars left on soldiers returning from the battlefield.

➤ **‘The Last Lesson’ by Alphonse Daudet**

A touching story reflecting on themes of patriotism, language, and the bittersweet moments of change during wartime.

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- ◆ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphonse_Daudet
- ◆ https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=535ca4972108ea6d&sxsrf=ADLYWILSwquzloS2x4mECZFvADKNQSWbQA:1736526125819&q=alphons
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CHAPTER 5

THE EMPIRE OF THE ANTS

-H.G.Wells

Pre reading activity:

- Do you agree with the African proverb, ‘An ant on its feet can do more than an elephant lying down’? Share your thoughts.
- Discuss the statement, ‘All good work is done the way ants do things: little by little.’ How does this reflect persistence and teamwork?
- Reflect on how ants symbolize hard work and cooperation. Can we learn lessons from their behaviour?
- Why do you think small creatures like ants often achieve remarkable things? Share examples from nature or real life.



Herbert George Wells (21 September 1866 – 13 August 1946), known as H.G. Wells, was an English writer celebrated for his versatility across multiple genres. He has authored more than fifty novels and numerous short stories, alongside a wide range of non-fiction works encompassing social commentary, politics, history, popular science, satire, biography, and autobiography. Often regarded as the ‘Father of Science Fiction,’ Wells’ groundbreaking

contributions to the genre earned him a lasting acclaim.

As a futurist, he wrote extensively on utopian themes and remarkably predicted the advent of technologies such as aircraft, tanks, space travel, nuclear weapons, satellite television, and even an early concept of the World Wide Web. His science fiction works explored ideas like time travel, alien invasions, invisibility,

"Man has only to sink beneath the surface and he is free."

and biological engineering long before they became common themes in the genre. Wells has also been described as the ‘Shakespeare of science fiction’ for his profound impact on the field.

About the Text:

The Empire of the Ants is a 1905 short story by H.G. Wells that explores the fragility of humanity’s dominance on Earth. The story features Captain Gerilleau, a Brazilian officer tasked with taking his gunboat, the *Benjamin Constant*, to aid the residents of Badama, a town in the ‘Upper Amazon,’ against a plague of ants. Accompanying him is Holroyd, a Lancashire engineer through whose perspective most of the story unfolds. They encounter a species of large black ants that have evolved advanced intelligence, enabling them to create tools and engage in organized aggression. Holroyd’s reaction to the situation is one of resignation, questioning, ‘what else was there to do?’ as they retreat downstream for further orders.

The narrative concludes with Holroyd’s return to England, where he resolves to warn authorities about the ants’ threat ‘before it is too late.’ The story, first published in *The Strand Magazine* in 1905, underscores Wells’ recurring themes of human vulnerability and the potential rise of other forms of intelligence

I.

When Captain Gerilleau received instructions to take his new gunboat, the *Benjamin Constant*, to Badama on the Batemo arm of the Guaramadema and there assist the inhabitants against a plague of ants, he suspected the authorities of mockery. His promotion had been romantic and irregular, the affections of a prominent Brazilian lady and the captain’s liquid eyes had played a part in the

process, and the *Diario and O Futuro* had been lamentably disrespectful in their comments. He felt he was to give further occasion for disrespect.

He was a Creole, his conceptions of etiquette and discipline were pure-blooded Portuguese, and it was only to Holroyd, the Lancashire engineer who had come over with the boat, and as an exercise in the use of English--his 'th' sounds were very uncertain--that he opened his heart.

'It is in effect,' he said, 'to make me absurd! What can a man do against ants? Dey come, dey go.'

'They say,' said Holroyd, 'that these don't go. That chap you said was a Sambo---

'Zambo;--it is a sort of mixture of blood.'

'Sambo. He said the people are going!'

The captain smoked fretfully for a time. 'Dese tings 'ave to happen,' he said at last. 'What is it? Plagues of ants and suchlike as God wills. Dere was a plague in Trinidad--the little ants that carry leaves. Or! der orange-trees, all der mangoes! What does it matter? Sometimes ant armies come into your houses--fighting ants; a different sort. You go and they clean the house. Then you come back again;--the house is clean, like new! No fleas, no jiggers in the floor.'

'That Sambo chap,' said Holroyd, 'says these are a different sort of ant.'

The captain shrugged his shoulders, fumed, and gave his attention to a cigarette. Afterwards he reopened the subject. 'My dear 'Olroyd, what am I to do about dese infernal ants?'

'You're asking me?'

'Yes,' said Gerilleau, reluctantly, and broke out. 'But it is a confounded shame! 'Ere I 'ave got dis gun ! Very likely I shall never use it--never ! And an insurrection in Parana--practically--*now*. They will not let me target practise.. But about dese ants !

‘They say corrosive sublimate is rather good for them. You ought to lay in some of that. Then chalk, or lime, or whiting— what you do dancing girls’ shoes with.’

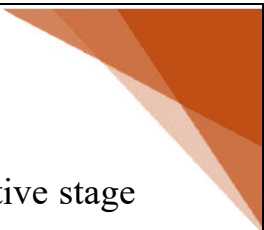
‘Ah, precisely !’ said the captain.

‘And carbohic acid. After all—you’ve got to pull the job off, you know.

You’ve got to make a success of it.’

The captain reflected. ‘It is ridiculous,’ he said. But in the afternoon he put on his full uniform and went ashore, and jars and boxes came back to the ship and subsequently he did. And Holroyd sat on deck in the evening coolness and smoked profoundly and marvelled at Brazil. They were six days up the Amazon, some hundreds of miles from the ocean, and east and west of him there was a horizon like the sea, and to the south nothing but a sand-bank island with some tufts of scrub. The water was always running like a sluice, thick with dirt, animated with crocodiles and hovering birds, and fed by some inexhaustible source of tree trunks; and the waste of it, the headlong waste of it, filled his soul. The town of Alemquer, with its meagre church, its thatched sheds for houses, its discoloured ruins of ampler days, seemed a little thing lost in this wilderness of Nature, a sixpence dropped on Sahara. He was a young man, this was his first sight of the tropics, he came straight from England, where Nature is hedged, ditched, and drained, into the perfection of submission, and he had suddenly discovered the insignificance of man. For six days they had been steaming up from the sea by unfrequented channels; and man had been as rare as a rare butterfly. One saw one day a canoe, another day a distant station, the next no men at all. He began to perceive that man is indeed a rare animal, having but a precarious hold upon this land.

He perceived it more clearly as the days passed, and he made his devious way to the Batemo, in the company of this remarkable commander, who ruled over one big gun, and was forbidden to waste his ammunition. Holroyd was learning



Spanish industriously, but he was still in the present tense and substantive stage of speech, and the only other person who had any words of English was a negro stoker, who had them all wrong. The second in command was a Portuguese, da Cunha, who spoke French, but it was a different sort of French from the French Holroyd had learnt in Southport, and their intercourse was confined to politeness and simple propositions about the weather. And the weather, like everything else in this amazing new world, the weather had no human aspect, and was hot by night and hot by day, and the air steam, even the wind was hot steam, smelling of vegetation in decay: and the alligators and the strange birds, the flies of many sorts and sizes, the beetles, the ants, the snakes and monkeys seemed to wonder what man was doing in an atmosphere that had no gladness in its sunshine and no coolness in its night. To wear clothing was intolerable, but to cast it aside was to scorch by day, and expose an ampler area to the mosquitoes by night; to go on deck by day was to be blinded by glare and to stay below was to suffocate. And in the daytime came certain flies, extremely clever and noxious about one's wrist and ankle. Captain Gerilleau, who was Holroyd's sole distraction from these physical distresses, developed into a formidable bore, telling the simple story of his heart's affections day by day, a string of anonymous women, as if he was telling beads. Sometimes he suggested sport, and they shot at alligators, and at rare intervals they came to human aggregations in the waste of trees, and stayed for a day or so, and drank and sat about, and, one night, danced with Creole girls, who found Holroyd's poor elements of Spanish, without either past tense or future, amply sufficient for their purposes. But these were mere luminous chinks in the long grey passage of the streaming river, up which the throbbing engines beat. A certain liberal heathen deity, in the shape of a demi-john, held seductive court aft, and, it is probable, forward.

But Gerilleau learnt things about the ants, more things and more, at this stopping-place and that, and became interested in his mission.

‘Dey are a new sort of ant,’ he said. ‘We have got to be--what do you call it?--entomology? Big. Five centimetres! Some bigger! It is ridiculous. We are like the monkeys---sent to pick insects... But dey are eating up the country.’

He burst out indignantly. ‘Suppose--suddenly, there are complications with Europe. Here am I--soon we shall be above the Rio Negro--and my gun, useless!’ He nursed his knee and mused.

‘Dose people who were dere at de dancing place, dey 'ave come down. Dey 'ave lost all they got. De ants come to deir 'ouse one afternoon. Everyone run out. You know when de ants come one must--everyone runs out and they go over the house. If you stayed they'd eat you. See? Well, presently dey go back; dey say, ‘The ants 'ave gone.’ ... De ants 'aven't gone. Dey try to go in--de son, 'e goes in. De ants fight.’

‘Swarm over him?’

‘Bite 'im. Presently he comes out again--screaming and running. He runs past them to the river. See? He gets into de water and drowns de ants-- yes.’ Gerilleau paused, brought his liquid eyes close to Holroyd's face, tapped Holroyd's knee with his knuckle. ‘That night he dies, just as if he was stung by a snake.’

‘Poisoned--by the ants?’

‘Who knows?’ Gerilleau shrugged his shoulders. ‘Perhaps they bit him badly... When I joined dis service I joined to fight men. Dese things, dese ants, dey come and go. It is no business for men.’

After that he talked frequently of the ants to Holroyd, and whenever they chanced to drift against any speck of humanity in that waste of water and sunshine and distant trees, Holroyd's improving knowledge of the language enabled him to recognise the ascendant word Sauba, more and more completely dominating the whole.

He perceived the ants were becoming interesting, and the nearer he drew to them the more interesting they became. Gerilleau abandoned his old themes almost

suddenly, and the Portuguese lieutenant became a conversational figure; he knew something about the leaf-cutting ant, and expanded his knowledge. Gerilleau sometimes rendered what he had to tell to Holroyd. He told of the little workers that swarm and fight, and the big workers that command and rule, and how these latter always crawled to the neck and how their bites drew blood. He told how they cut leaves and made fungus beds, and how their nests in Caracas are sometimes a hundred yards across. Two days the three men spent disputing whether ants have eyes. The discussion grew dangerously heated on the second afternoon, and Holroyd saved the situation by going ashore in a boat to catch ants and see. He captured various specimens and returned, and some had eyes and some hadn't. Also, they argued, do ants bite or sting?

‘Dese ants,’ said Gerilleau, after collecting information at a rancho, ‘have big eyes. They don’t run about blind--not as most ants do. No! Dey get in corners and watch what you do.’

‘And they sting?’ asked Holroyd.

‘Yes. Dey sting. Dere is poison in the sting.’ He meditated. ‘I do not see what men can do against ants. Dey come and go.’

‘But these don’t go.’

‘They will,’ said Gerilleau.

Past Tamandu there is a long low coast of eighty miles without any population, and then one comes to the confluence of the main river and the Batemo arm like a great lake, and then the forest came nearer, came at last intimately near. The character of the channel changes, snags abound, and the *Benjamin Constant* moored by a cable that night, under the very shadow of dark trees. For the first time for many days came a spell of coolness, and Holroyd and Gerilleau sat late, smoking cigars and enjoying this delicious sensation. Gerilleau’s mind was full of ants and what they could do. He decided to sleep at last, and lay down on a mattress on deck, a man hopelessly perplexed, his last words, when he already

seemed asleep, were to ask, with a flourish of despair, 'What can one do with ants?... De whole thing is absurd.'

Holroyd was left to scratch his bitten wrists, and meditate alone.

He sat on the bulwark and listened to the little changes in Gerilleau's breathing until he was fast asleep, and then the ripple and lap of the stream took his mind, and brought back that sense of immensity that had been growing upon him since first he had left Para and come up the river. The monitor showed but one small light, and there was first a little talking forward and then stillness. His eyes went from the dim black outlines of the middle works of the gunboat towards the bank, to the black overwhelming mysteries of forest, lit now and then by a fire-fly, and never still from the murmur of alien and mysterious activities...

It was the inhuman immensity of this land that astonished and oppressed him. He knew the skies were empty of men, the stars were specks in an incredible vastness of space; he knew the ocean was enormous and untamable, but in England he had come to think of the land as man's. In England it is indeed man's, the wild things live by sufferance, grow on lease, everywhere the roads, the fences, and absolute security runs. In an atlas, too, the land is man's, and all coloured to show his claim to it-- in vivid contrast to the universal independent blueness of the sea. He had taken it for granted that a day would come when everywhere about the earth, plough and culture, light tramways and good roads, an ordered security, would prevail. But now; he doubted.

This forest was interminable, it had an air of being invincible, and Man seemed at best an infrequent, precarious intruder. One travelled for miles, amidst the still, silent struggle of giant trees, of strangulating creepers, of assertive flowers; everywhere the alligator, the turtle, and endless varieties of birds and insects seemed at home, dwelt irreplaceably; but man, man at most held a footing upon resentful clearings, fought weeds, fought beasts and insects for the barest foothold, fell a prey to snake and beast, insect and fever, and was presently carried

away. In many places down the river he had been manifestly driven back, this deserted creek or that preserved the name of a *casa*, and here and there ruinous white walls and a shattered tower enforced the lesson. The puma, the jaguar, were more the masters here...

Who were the real masters?

In a few miles of this forest there must be more ants than there are men in the whole world! This seemed to Holroyd a perfectly new idea. In a few thousand years men had emerged from barbarism to a stage of civilisation that made them feel lords of the future and masters of the earth! But what was to prevent the ants evolving also? Such ants as one knew lived in little communities of a few thousand individuals, made no concerted efforts against the greater world. But they had a language, they had an intelligence! Why should things stop at that any more than men had stopped at the barbaric stage? Suppose presently the ants began to store knowledge, just as men had done by means of books and records, use weapons, form great empires, sustain a planned and organised war?

Things came back to him that Gerilleau had gathered about these ants they were approaching. They used a poison like the poison of snakes. They obeyed greater leaders even as the leaf-cutting ants do. They were carnivorous, and where they came they stayed...

The forest was very still. The water lapped incessantly against the side. About the lantern overhead there eddied a noiseless whirl of phantom moths.

Gerilleau stirred in the darkness and sighed. 'What can one do?' he murmured, and turned over and was still again.

Holroyd was roused from meditations that were becoming sinister by the hum of a mosquito.

II.

The next morning Holroyd learnt they were within forty kilometres of Badama, and his interest in the banks intensified. He came up whenever an opportunity offered to examine his surroundings. He could see no signs of human occupation

whatever, save for a weedy ruin of a house and the green-stained facade of the long-deserted monastery at Moju, with a forest tree growing out of a vacant window space, and great creepers netted across its vacant portals. Several flights of strange yellow butterflies with semi-transparent wings crossed the river that morning, and many alighted on the monitor and were killed by the men. It was towards afternoon that they came upon the derelict *cuberta*.

She did not at first appear to be derelict; both her sails were set and hanging slack in the afternoon calm, and there was the figure of a man sitting on the fore planking beside the shipped sweeps. Another man appeared to be sleeping face downwards on the sort of longitudinal bridge these big canoes have in the waist. But it was presently apparent, from the sway of her rudder and the way she drifted into the course of the gunboat, that something was out of order with her. Gerilleau surveyed her through a field-glass, and became interested in the queer darkness of the face of the sitting man, a red-faced man he seemed, without a nose--crouching he was rather than sitting; and the longer the captain looked the less he liked to look at him, and the less able he was to take his glasses away.

But he did so at last, and went a little way to call up Holroyd. Then he went back to hail the *cuberta*. He ailed her again, and so she drove past him. *Santa Rosa* stood out clearly as her name.

As she came by and into the wake of the monitor, she pitched a little, and suddenly the figure of the crouching man collapsed as though all its joints had given way. His hat fell off, his head was not nice to look at, and his body flopped lax and rolled out of sight behind the bulwarks.

‘Caramba!’ cried Gerilleau, and resorted to Holroyd forthwith.

Holroyd was half-way up the companion. ‘Did you see dat?’ said the captain.

‘Dead!’ said Holroyd. ‘Yes. You’d better send a boat aboard. There’s something wrong.’

‘Did you--by any chance--see his face?’

‘What was it like?’

‘It was--ugh! I have no words.’ And the captain suddenly turned his back on Holroyd and became an active and strident commander.

The gunboat came about, steamed parallel to the erratic course of the canoe, and dropped the boat with Lieutenant da Cunha and three sailors to board her. Then the curiosity of the captain made him draw up almost alongside as the lieutenant got aboard, so that the whole of the *Santa Rosa*, deck and hold, was visible to Holroyd.

He saw now clearly that the sole crew of the vessel was these two dead men, and though he could not see their faces, he saw by their outstretched hands, which were all of ragged flesh, that they had been subjected to some strange exceptional process of decay. For a moment his attention concentrated on those two enigmatical bundles of dirty clothes and laxly flung limbs, and then his eyes went forward to discover the open hold piled high with trunks and cases, and aft, to where the little cabin gaped inexplicably empty. Then he became aware that the planks of the middle decking were dotted with moving black specks.

His attention was riveted by these specks. They were all walking in directions radiating from the fallen man in a manner--the image came unsought to his mind--like the crowd dispersing from a bull-fight.

He became aware of Gerilleau beside him. ‘Capo,’ he said, ‘have you your glasses? Can you focus as closely as those planks there?’

Gerilleau made an effort, grunted, and handed him the glasses.

There followed a moment of scrutiny. ‘It’s ants,’ said the Englishman, and handed the focused field-glass back to Gerilleau.

His impression of them was of a crowd of large black ants, very like ordinary ants except for their size, and for the fact that some of the larger of them bore a sort of clothing of grey. But at the time his inspection was too brief for particulars. The head of Lieutenant da Cunha appeared over the side of the cuberta, and a brief colloquy ensued between them.

‘You must go aboard,’ said Gerilleau.

The lieutenant objected that the boat was full of ants.

‘You have your boots,’ said Gerilleau.

The lieutenant changed the subject. ‘How did these men die?’ he asked.

Captain Gerilleau embarked upon speculations that Holroyd could not follow, and the two men disputed with a certain increasing vehemence. Holroyd took up the field-glass and resumed his scrutiny, first of the ants and then of the dead man amidships.

He has described these ants to me very particularly.

He says they were as large as any ants he has ever seen, black, and moving with a steady deliberation very different from the mechanical fussiness of the common ant. About one in twenty was much larger than its fellows, and with an exceptionally large head. These reminded him at once of the master workers who are said to rule over the leaf-cutter ants; like them they seemed to be directing and co-ordinating the general movements. They tilted their bodies back in a manner altogether singular as if they made some use of the fore feet. And he had a curious fancy that he was too far off to verify, that most of these ants of both kinds were wearing accoutrements, had things strapped about their bodies by bright white bands like white metal threads...

He put down the glasses abruptly, realising that the question of discipline between the captain and his subordinate had become acute.

‘It is your duty,’ said the captain, ‘to go aboard. It is my instructions.’

The lieutenant seemed on the verge of refusing. The head of one of the mulatto sailors appeared beside him.

‘I believe these men were killed by the ants,’ said Holroyd abruptly in English.

The captain burst into a rage. He made no answer to Holroyd. ‘I have commanded you to go aboard,’ he screamed to his subordinate in Portuguese. ‘If you do not go aboard forthwith it is mutiny--rank mutiny. Mutiny and cowardice! Where is

the courage that should animate us? I will have you in irons, I will have you shot like a dog.' He began a torrent of abuse and curses, he danced to and fro. He shook his fists, he behaved as if beside himself with rage, and the lieutenant, white and still, stood looking at him. The crew appeared forward, with amazed faces. Suddenly, in a pause of this outbreak, the lieutenant came to some heroic decision, saluted, drew himself together and clambered upon the deck of the cuberta.

'Ah!' said Gerilleau, and his mouth shut like a trap. Holroyd saw the ants retreating before da Cunha's boots. The Portuguese walked slowly to the fallen man, stooped down, hesitated, clutched his coat and turned him over. A black swarm of ants rushed out of the clothes, and da Cunha stepped back very quickly and trod two or three times on the deck.

Holroyd put up the glasses. He saw the scattered ants about the invader's feet, and doing what he had never seen ants doing before. They had nothing of the blind movements of the common ant; they were looking at him--as a rallying crowd of men might look at some gigantic monster that had dispersed it.

'How did he die?' the captain shouted.

Holroyd understood the Portuguese to say the body was too much eaten to tell.

'What is there forward?' asked Gerilleau.

The lieutenant walked a few paces, and began his answer in Portuguese. He stopped abruptly and beat off something from his leg. He made some peculiar steps as if he was trying to stamp on something invisible, and went quickly towards the side. Then he controlled himself, turned about, walked deliberately forward to the hold, clambered up to the fore decking, from which the sweeps are worked, stooped for a time over the second man, groaned audibly, and made his way back and aft to the cabin, moving very rigidly. He turned and began a conversation with his captain, cold and respectful in tone on either side, contrasting vividly with the wrath and insult of a few moments before. Holroyd gathered only fragments of its purport.

He reverted to the field-glass, and was surprised to find the ants had vanished from all the exposed surfaces of the deck. He turned towards the shadows beneath the decking, and it seemed to him they were full of watching eyes.

The cuberta, it was agreed; was derelict, but too full of ants to put men aboard to sit and sleep: it must be towed. The lieutenant went forward to take in and adjust the cable, and the men in the boat stood up to be ready to help him. Holroyd's glasses searched the canoe.

He became more and more impressed by the fact that a great if minute and furtive, activity was going on. He perceived that a number of gigantic ants--they seemed nearly a couple of inches in length--carrying oddly-shaped burthens for which he could imagine no use--were moving in rushes from one point of obscurity to another. They did not move in columns across the exposed places, but in open, spaced-out lines, oddly suggestive of the rushes of modern infantry advancing under fire. A number were taking cover under the dead man's clothes, and a perfect swarm was gathering along the side over which da Cunha must presently go.


He did not see them actually rush for the lieutenant as he returned, but he has no doubt they did make a concerted rush. Suddenly the lieutenant was shouting and cursing and beating at his legs. 'I'm stung!' he shouted, with a face of hate and accusation towards Gerilleau.

Then he vanished over the side, dropped into his boat, and plunged at once into the water. Holroyd heard the splash.

The three men in the boat pulled him out and brought him aboard, and that night he died.

III.

Holroyd and the captain came out of the cabin in which the swollen and contorted body of the lieutenant lay and stood together at the stern of the monitor, staring at the sinister vessel they trailed behind them. It was a close, dark night that had



only phantom flickerings of sheet lightning to illuminate it. The cuberta, a vague black triangle, rocked about in the steamer's wake, her sails bobbing and flapping, and the black smoke from the funnels, spark-lit ever and again, streamed over her swaying masts.

Gerilleau's mind was inclined to run on the unkind things the lieutenant had said in the heat of his last fever.

‘He says I murdered ‘im,’ he protested. ‘It is simply absurd. Someone ‘ad to go aboard. Are we to run away from these confounded ants whenever they show up?’

Holroyd said nothing. He was thinking of a disciplined rush of little black shapes across bare sunlit planking.

‘It was his place to go,’ harped Gerilleau. ‘He died in the execution of his duty. What has he to complain of? Murdered!... But the poor fellow was--what is it?--demented. He was not in his right mind. The poison swelled him... U’m.’

They came to a long silence.

‘We will sink that canoe--burn it.’

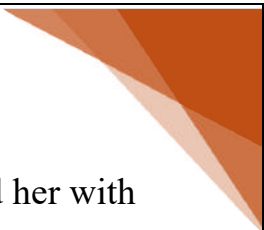
‘And then?’

The inquiry irritated Gerilleau. His shoulders went up, his hands flew out at right angles from his body. ‘What is one to do’ he said, his voice going up to an angry squeak.

‘Anyhow,’ he broke out vindictively, ‘every ant in dat cuberta!--I will burn dem alive!’

Holroyd was not moved to conversation. A distant ululation of howling monkeys filled the sultry night with foreboding sounds, and as the gunboat drew near the black mysterious banks this was reinforced by a depressing clamour of frogs.

‘What is one to do?’ the captain repeated after a vast interval, and suddenly becoming active and savage and blasphemous, decided to burn the *Santa Rosa* without further delay. Everyone aboard was pleased by that idea, everyone helped



with zest; they pulled in the cable, cut it, and dropped the boat and fired her with tow and kerosene, and soon the cuberta was crackling and flaring merrily amidst the immensities of the tropical night. Holroyd watched the mounting yellow flare against the blackness, and the livid flashes of sheet lightning that came and went above the forest summits, throwing them into momentary silhouette, and his stoker stood behind him watching also.

The stoker was stirred to the depths of his linguistics. ‘Sauba go pop, pop,’ he said, ‘Wahaw’ and laughed richly.

But Holroyd was thinking that these little creatures on the decked canoe had also eyes and brains.

The whole thing impressed him as incredibly foolish and wrong, but--what was one to do? This question came back enormously reinforced on the morrow, when at last the gunboat reached Badama.

This place, with its leaf-thatch-covered houses and sheds, its creeper-invaded sugar-mill, its little jetty of timber and canes, was very still in the morning heat, and showed never a sign of living men. Whatever ants there were at that distance were too small to see.

‘All the people have gone,’ said Gerilleau, ‘but we will do one thing anyhow. We will 'oot and vissel.’

So Holroyd hooted and whistled.

Then the captain fell into a doubting fit of the worst kind. ‘Dere is one thing we can do,’ he said presently, ‘What’s that?’ said Holroyd.

‘Oot and vissel again.’

So they did.

The captain walked his deck and gesticulated to himself. He seemed to have many things on his mind. Fragments of speeches came from his lips. He appeared to be addressing some imaginary public tribunal either in Spanish or Portuguese. Holroyd's improving ear detected something about ammunition. He came out of

these preoccupations suddenly into English. 'My dear 'Olroyd!' he cried, and broke off with 'But what can one do?'

They took the boat and the field-glasses, and went close in to examine the place. They made out a number of big ants, whose still postures had a certain effect of watching them, dotted about the edge of the rude embarkation jetty. Gerilleau tried ineffectual pistol shots at these. Holroyd thinks he distinguished curious earthworks running between the nearer houses, that may have been the work of the insect conquerors of those human habitations. The explorers pulled past the jetty, and became aware of a human skeleton wearing a loin cloth, and very bright and clean and shining, lying beyond. They came to a pause regarding this...

'I 'ave all dose lives to consider,' said Gerilleau suddenly.

Holroyd turned and stared at the captain, realising slowly that he referred to the unappetising mixture of races that constituted his crew.

'To send a landing party--it is impossible--impossible. They will be poisoned, they will swell, they will swell up and abuse me and die. It is totally impossible...

If we land, I must land alone, alone, in thick boots and with my life in my hand. Perhaps I should live. Or again--I might not land. I do not know. I do not know.'

Holroyd thought he did, but he said nothing.

'De whole thing,' said Gerilleau suddenly, 'has been got up to make me ridiculous. De whole thing!'

They paddled about and regarded the clean white skeleton from various points of view, and then they returned to the gunboat. Then Gerilleau's indecisions became terrible. Steam was got up, and in the afternoon the monitor went on up the river with an air of going to ask somebody something, and by sunset came back again and anchored. A thunderstorm gathered and broke furiously, and then the night became beautifully cool and quiet and everyone slept on deck. Except Gerilleau, who tossed about and muttered. In the dawn he awakened Holroyd.

'Lord!' said Holroyd, 'what now?'

‘I have decided,’ said the captain.

‘What--to land?’ said Holroyd, sitting up brightly.

‘No!’ said the captain, and was for a time very reserved. ‘I have decided,’ he repeated, and Holroyd manifested symptoms of impatience.

‘Well,--yes,’ said the captain, ‘*I shall fire de big gun!*’

And he did! Heaven knows what the ants thought of it, but he did. He fired it twice with great sternness and ceremony. All the crew had wadding in their ears, and there was an effect of going into action about the whole affair, and first they hit and wrecked the old sugar-mill, and then they smashed the abandoned store behind the jetty. And then Gerilleau experienced the inevitable reaction.

‘It is no good,’ he said to Holroyd; ‘no good at all. No sort of bally good. We must go back--for instructions. Dere will be *de deuce* of a row about dis ammunition--oh! *de deuce* of a row! You don't know, 'Olroyd...’

He stood regarding the world in infinite perplexity for a space.

‘But what else was there to do?’ he cried.

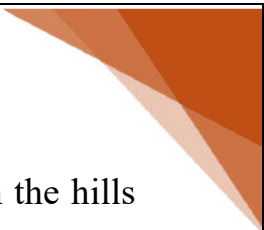
In the afternoon the monitor started downstream again, and in the evening a landing party took the body of the lieutenant and buried it on the bank upon which the new ants have so far not appeared...

IV.

I HEARD this story in a fragmentary state from Holroyd not three weeks ago.

These new ants have got into his brain, and he has come back to England with the idea, as he says, of ‘exciting people’ about them ‘before it is too late.’ He says they threaten British Guiana, which cannot be much over a trifle of a thousand miles from their present sphere of activity, and that the Colonial Office ought to get to work upon them at once. He declaims with great passion: ‘These are intelligent ants. Just think what that means!’

There can be no doubt they are a serious pest, and that the Brazilian Government is well advised in offering a prize of five hundred pounds for some effectual



method of extirpation. It is certain too that since they first appeared in the hills beyond Badama, about three years ago, they have achieved extraordinary conquests. The whole of the south bank of the Batemo River, for nearly sixty miles, they have in their effectual occupation; they have driven men out completely, occupied plantations and settlements, and boarded and captured at least one ship. It is even said they have in some inexplicable way bridged the very considerable Capuarana arm and pushed many miles towards the Amazon itself. There can be little doubt that they are far more reasonable and with a far better social organisation than any previously known ant species; instead of being in dispersed societies they are organised into what is in effect a single nation; but their peculiar and immediate formidableness lies not so much in this as in the intelligent use they make of poison against their larger enemies. It would seem this poison of theirs is closely akin to snake poison, and it is highly probable they actually manufacture it, and that the larger individuals among them carry the needle-like crystals of it in their attacks upon men.

Of course it is extremely difficult to get any detailed information about these new competitors for the sovereignty of the globe. No eye-witnesses of their activity, except for such glimpses as Holroyd's, have survived the encounter. The most extraordinary legends of their prowess and capacity are in circulation in the region of the Upper Amazon, and grow daily as the steady advance of the invader stimulates men's imaginations through their fears. These strange little creatures are credited not only with the use of implements and a knowledge of fire and metals and with organised feats of engineering that stagger our northern minds--unused as we are to such feats as that of the Saubas of Rio de Janeiro, who in 1841 drove a tunnel under the Parahyba where it is as wide as the Thames at London Bridge--but with an organised and detailed method of record and communication analogous to our books. They are increasing rapidly in numbers,

and Holroyd at least is firmly convinced that they will finally dispossess man over the whole of tropical South America.

This is a startling outlook, but what is going to check them ? And why should they stop at tropical South America ?

I confess I felt disposed to echo the inquiry of Captain Gerilleau and ask: ‘What can one do ?’

Suppose they go on spreading ! Suppose they come down the river to the sea and send off an expedition in the hold of some eastward-travelling ship! What could one do?

There are moments when I am almost disposed to agree with Holroyd and believe that he has seen the beginning of one of the most stupendous dangers that have ever threatened our race.

Glossary:

infernal	: wretched; extremely unpleasant
insurrection	: a violent uprising against an authority or government
corrosive	: tending to corrode
sublimate	: to change the form of something, often from a solid directly into a vapor, or to transform behaviour into a higher or more socially acceptable form
sluice	: a sliding gate or device used to control the flow of water in or out of a canal
ampler	: sufficient or more than sufficient; abundant or plentiful
stoker	: a person responsible for tending a furnace, particularly on

	ships, locomotives, or in steam boilers
noxious	: harmful, poisonous, or highly unpleasant
chinks	: narrow openings or gaps
demijohn	: a bulbous, narrow-necked bottle holding 3 to 10 gallons of liquid, typically enclosed in a wicker cover
aft	: at, near, or towards the stern of a ship
entomologie	: entomology, the scientific study of insects, a branch of zoology
caracas	: the capital city of Venezuela.
rancho	: a ranch or a hut, or a collection of huts used by herders, labourers, or travellers
moor	: to tie a boat in place to keep it stationary
bulwark	: an extension of a ship's sides above the deck level
interminable	: endless or seeming to have no end
creek	: a stream or minor tributary of a river
concerted	: done with great effort, determination, or in cooperation with others
derelict	: in very poor condition due to disuse and neglect
strident	: loud and harsh; grating
enigmatic	: difficult to interpret or understand; mysterious
laxly	: not tense, firm, or rigid
colloquy	: a conversation or dialogue
accoutrements	: additional items of dress or equipment
mulatto	: a term used to classify people of mixed African and European ancestry
ululation	: a howling or wailing sound
extirpation	: the act of removing or destroying something completely

Comprehension Questions:

I. Answer the following questions a sentence or two each:

1. What is the name of the new gunboat commanded by Captain Gerilleau?
2. Who is Holroyd in the story?
3. How many people accompanied the *Benjamin Constant* on its journey to Badama?
4. What are referred to as the luminous chinks in the grey passage of the steaming river?
5. During their six-day journey upriver, man appeared to be as rare as a _____.
6. The _____ and _____ were the masters.
7. The ants employed a poison similar to the venom of _____.
8. How did the Captain describe the Lieutenant's death in the line of duty?
9. What method did the Captain and Holroyd consider to eliminate the Cuberta?
10. What is described as the greatest threat ever faced by the human race?

II. Answer the following questions in about a page each:

1. Describe the weather in Batemo.
2. In England, why did Captain Gerilleau believe that land belonged to man, and why does he now seem to doubt it?

3. Who are the true masters in Balterno, and why are they considered so?
4. What struck Holroyd as a completely new idea?
5. How does Holroyd describe the surroundings of Badama?
6. Describe the Cuberta or Santa Rosa and the men aboard it.
7. What caused an argument between the Captain and the Lieutenant? How are the ants on the ship described?
8. How did Lieutenant de Cunha lose his life?
9. Why does the author suggest that the Brazilian Government's offer of a five-hundred-pound prize for an effective method of eradication is justified?
10. What prompted the author to echo Captain Gerilleau's words, 'What can one do?'

III. Answer the following questions in about two pages each:

1. 'What can one do?' captures the helplessness of humanity in the face of the overwhelming power of the ants in *The Empire of the Ants*. Elucidate
2. Justify how ants are portrayed as 'the new competitors for the sovereignty of the globe.'
3. How does *The Empire of the Ants* convey the fear that ants have become one of the greatest threats ever faced by humanity?
4. Discuss how H.G. Wells uses the ants as a metaphor for the potential downfall of human dominance on Earth.

Suggested Reading:

➤ **‘Man’s Search for Meaning’ by Viktor Frankl**

A deeply moving memoir and philosophical exploration of resilience and the human spirit, written by a Holocaust survivor who finds purpose even in the darkest circumstances.

➤ **‘The Old Man and the Sea’ by Ernest Hemingway**

A timeless novella about an aging fisherman’s relentless struggle against the forces of nature, embodying endurance, perseverance, and the triumph of the human spirit.

➤ **‘Life of Pi’ by Yann Martel**

A gripping tale of survival that follows a young boy stranded on a lifeboat with a tiger, blending faith, resilience, and the will to overcome extraordinary odds.

Reference:

- ◆ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._G._Wells?variant=zh-tw
- ◆ https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=535ca4972108ea6d&sxsrf=ADLYWIIyJ38iZljRsIDg5_htn-2oum_VXQ:1736525451844&q=H.G.+WELLS&
- ◆ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empire_of_the_Ants

CHAPTER 6

THREE WOMEN OFFICERS SPEAK ON GENDER IDENTITY IN ARMED FORCES, AGNIVEERS AND TURNING POINTS

From The Hindustan Times

Pre-Reading:

- What is meant by ‘gender identity,’ and how does it differ from biological sex and traditional gender roles?
- How has the understanding of gender evolved within societal structures and institutions, such as the armed forces?
- In your opinion, how do different countries address the inclusion of diverse gender identities within their military forces?
- Can you think of examples of progressive or restrictive military policies regarding gender identity worldwide?



"Courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it."

Lieutenant commander Annu Prakash, colonel Neha Singh, group captain Shaliza Dhama touched upon issues regarding women in defence at HT Leadership Summit.

Note on HT Leadership Summit

The Hindustan Times Leadership Summit was launched in 2003 to enhance the level of discourse on critical issues, encourage interaction among leaders in important areas and present international quality thought- platforms aimed at solutions. The last twenty-one Summits have been outstanding successes with attendance by leaders from India and across the world. The audience included senior politicians, bureaucrats, diplomats, business executives, thinkers, commentators and analysts. Over the years, the Summit has become one of India's most prestigious and eagerly awaited fora.

Two successful editions of the Summit have also been hosted in Singapore where top leaders of the region gathered together to discuss the unstoppable rise of Asia and the East, amidst the political and economic surge and the changing paradigm of the world order. At HTLS 2023, the global thought leaders discussed and shared their views on progressing Beyond Barriers.

About the talk:

At the 21st Hindustan Times Leadership Summit, Lieutenant Commander Annu Prakash (Indian Navy), Colonel Neha Singh (Indian Army), and Group Captain Shaliza Dhama (Indian Air Force) discussed progress and challenges for women in India's defense forces.

Colonel Neha Singh called the permanent commission for women a ‘turning point,’ enabling their dream of commanding roles to become a reality. She highlighted the evolving nature of warfare and emphasized the need for women’s involvement in decision-making.

Lieutenant Commander Annu Prakash identified the deployment of women on warships as a pivotal moment for the Navy, foreseeing increased representation due to expanded roles.

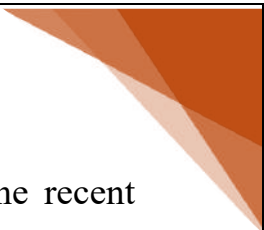
Group Captain Shaliza Dhami emphasized systematic changes that have opened all branches to women, underlining the importance of outreach and awareness for inspiring future recruits.

They collectively stressed inclusivity over numerical representation and the transformative role of women in combat and leadership across the armed forces.

Lieutenant commander in Indian Navy Annu Prakash, colonel in Indian Army Neha Singh and group captain Shaliza Dhami in Indian Air Force touched upon diverse issues related to women in defence forces on Day 5 and the final day of the 21st edition of Hindustan Times Leadership Summit on Saturday.

Colonel Neha Singh described the recent grant of permanent commission to women officers as a ‘turning point’ for women in the Indian Army. She also highlighted the dream of becoming a commanding officer that many women officers have held and how this dream is now becoming a reality.

Singh is among the first women officers in the Indian Army to be appointed to a command role. Commissioned in 2004, Singh is the commanding officer of an Air Defence unit in the western sector.



‘As far as the turning point for women in the army is concerned, the recent permanent commission that has been granted to women officers and followed by the command roles, and promotions that have come up. When we joined the Indian Army, every officer had a dream of someday becoming a commanding officer. We also had this dream in our minds, but we never knew if it was going to manifest in our service life. So, definitely, this is the turning point,’ Singh said in a conversation with Rahul Singh, senior associate editor, Hindustan Times.

For lieutenant commander Annu Prakash, the turning point for the Indian Navy was when women were appointed on warships.

‘The Indian Army was the first among the three forces to induct women officers. Thereafter, the numbers have increased. In 2008, operation fields were opened to women. Women were inducted as naval operation officers. That was operation roles for women and I was one among them. In 2016, women were inducted as pilots. The turning point was definitely when women were appointed on warships. With that, the numbers are going to increase,’ she said.

Prakash is currently serving onboard the Navy’s frontline destroyer INS Kochi. She is a naval air operations officer (observer). The Indian Navy deployed women officers on warships in early 2021 after a hiatus of almost 25 years.

Group captain Shaliza Dhami gave insights on the systematic changes that have taken place over the years. ‘Any time we induct something new, we go systematically. So probably when women were inducted in 1991-92, there was a system in place, but later when women were employed in other branches. Today, all branches are open to women officers. There have been a couple of turning points.’

A helicopter pilot, Dhami was the first woman to assume command of a frontline Indian Air Force combat unit in March. She heads a missile squadron in the western sector. Commissioned into the IAF in 2003, Dhami is a qualified flying instructor and has logged more than 2,800 hours of flying.

Women on submarines

Prakash admitted that it's not a matter of capability but rather space constraints that have kept submarines off-limits for women. She shared her own experience, where her initial expectations did not include being posted on a warship.

Women for hardcore combat

Singh spoke on the evolving nature of warfare, including the inclusion of space, cyber, and information warfare. She pointed out that combat roles are undergoing transformation, and women are expected to play a more substantial role, including decision-making.

‘The concept of warfighting itself is going through a huge change. We have space, cyber, and information warfare. In times to come, combat roles themselves will undergo significant changes, and women are likely to take on more roles and become part of the decision-making apparatus. We have witnessed in recent wars how these new dimensions are playing a major role in decisive warfare.’

‘Should make women aware of opportunities’

Dhami underlined the substantial growth and progress made in the representation of women in the armed forces. The group captain stressed the importance of outreach and awareness, especially through media, to make women aware of the opportunities.

‘I personally feel if you just see the numbers and see the growth where we are now vis-à-vis when we started the induction, we have grown a lot. To know that there are defence forces, we need to reach out to them. Nowadays, the media is playing a big role. Earlier, when I joined the service, I didn't have much idea about the Indian Air Force before. I actually landed up in an NCC unit.’

Women's representation in armed forces

When asked about whether the induction of women in Agniveers will enhance representation in all three services, Prakash, “Definitely! The Indian Navy has

now adopted the vision, ‘all roles, for all ranks, for all women’. All branches of the Navy are open to women. Initially, many girls had not dreamt that they could actually take up those roles. I feel the numbers will go up exponentially.”

Gender imbalance in armed forces

Singh responded to the critical issue of gender imbalance in the armed forces. She highlighted the importance of focusing on gender inclusivity rather than mere numerical representation.

‘When we are dealing with the issue of national security, it is unfair to talk about numbers and percentages. We should talk more about gender inclusivity - how women can be included in the armed forces and what roles they can play. Barring the three combat arms, the army has included women in various other roles quite effectively. Our organization can envision what roles women can fit into.’

Glossary:

lieutenant commander	: a rank of officer in the navy
diverse	: showing a great deal of variety; very different
squadron	: an operational unit in an air force consisting of two or more flights of aircraft and the personnel required to fly them
apparatus	: the technical equipment or machinery needed for a particular activity or purpose
decisive	: settling an issue; producing a definite result
substantial	: of considerable importance, size, or worth
exponentially	: rapidly

inclusivity : the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized

Comprehension Questions:

I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each :

1. What recent development did Colonel Neha Singh describe as a ‘turning point’ for women in the Indian Army?
2. Which Indian Army officer was among the first women to be appointed to a command role?
3. What role does Colonel Neha Singh currently hold in the Indian Army?
4. How did Lieutenant Commander Annu Prakash describe the turning point for women in the Indian Navy?
5. When were women first inducted into operational roles in the Indian Navy?
6. In which year were women appointed on warships in the Indian Navy after a 25-year hiatus?
7. How does Colonel Neha Singh foresee women's roles evolving in future combat scenarios?

II. Answer the following questions in about a page each:

1. Explain the impact of women being appointed on warships in the Indian Navy, as mentioned by Lieutenant Commander Annu Prakash.

2. Analyze the systematic changes in the Indian Air Force regarding the induction of women, as described by Group Captain Shaliza Dhami.
3. How has the concept of warfare evolved to include new dimensions such as space, cyber, and information warfare, and what role do women play in this evolution according to Colonel Neha Singh?
4. Why does Lieutenant Commander Annu Prakash believe that space constraints, rather than capability, have kept women off submarines in the Indian Navy?
5. Evaluate the role of media and outreach in increasing awareness of opportunities for women in the Indian Armed Forces, as emphasized by Group Captain Shaliza Dhami.
6. In what ways does the Indian Navy's vision of 'all roles, for all ranks, for all women' aim to enhance women's representation, according to Lieutenant Commander Annu Prakash?
7. What were the key turning points in the inclusion of women in various branches of the Indian Armed Forces, as shared by the three officers?
8. How has the role of women in decision-making processes within the armed forces evolved, particularly in the light of the recent wars, as mentioned by Colonel Neha Singh?

II. Answer the following questions in about two pages each:

1. Evaluate the historical significance of Group Captain Shaliza Dhami's achievements in the Indian Air Force and their implications for women in combat roles.

2. Discuss the significance of the permanent commission granted to women officers in the Indian Army, as highlighted by Colonel Neha Singh.
3. What was described as a ‘turning point’ for women in the Indian Army by Colonel Neha Singh? Discuss the significance of this development.
4. How did Lieutenant Commander Annu Prakash characterize the Indian Navy’s progress in integrating women into operational roles? What was the key moment she highlighted?
5. Discuss the challenges and limitations that women face in the Indian Navy, particularly concerning deployment on submarines, as mentioned by Lieutenant Commander Annu Prakash.
6. How is the evolving nature of warfare, including the domains of space, cyber, and information, influencing the roles of women in the Indian Army according to Colonel Neha Singh?
7. What is Colonel Neha Singh’s perspective on gender imbalance in the armed forces, and how does she suggest addressing it beyond numerical representation?
8. Discuss the challenges and significance of addressing gender imbalance in the armed forces, as outlined by Colonel Neha Singh.

Suggested Reading:

➤ **‘Colonel Neha Speaks on Day 5 of Hindustan Times 2023’**

Insights from Colonel Neha on gender imbalance, the Agniveer initiative, and pivotal moments in her military career.

(Read more at: [Hindustan Times](#))

➤ **‘How the Armed Forces Can Be Prepared for Transgender Personnel’**

A thoughtful exploration of the steps needed to create an inclusive environment for transgender individuals in the armed forces.

(Read more at: [Civildaily](#))

➤ **‘The Battle for Gender Equality in the Indian Armed Forces’**

A comprehensive overview of the challenges and progress in achieving gender equality within the Indian armed forces.

(Read more at: [Nyaaya](#))

Reference:

- ◆ Women in Armed Forces (<https://gokulamseekias.com/mains-c-a/women-in-armed-forces/>)
- ◆ HTLS | Military has come long way in gender integration, say women trailblazers (<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/htls-military-has-come-long-way-in-gender-integration-say-women-trailblazers-101699097192900.html>)
- ◆ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/htls-2023-three-women-officers-speak-on-gender-imbalance-in-armed-forces-agniveers-and-turning-points-101699078952640.html>

CHAPTER 7
A HEROIC STRUGGLE OF A SCIENTIST WITH CANCER
B VIJAYALAKSHMI

-T. R. Govindarajan

Pre-Reading Activity:


- How do personal stories of individuals overcoming challenges like cancer influence public views on resilience and courage?
- In what ways can personal struggles shape or enhance an individual's contributions to their profession?
- How important is the support of family, friends, or colleagues in helping someone navigate their fight against cancer?



B. Vijayalakshmi (1952 – May 12, 1985) was a distinguished Indian physicist whose life was marked by resilience and dedication to her field. Born into a conservative family, she earned her master's degree from Seethalakshmi Ramaswami College, Tiruchirapalli, in 1974 and joined the Department of Theoretical Physics. She completed her

Ph.D. from Madras University in 1982 and married T. Jayaraman shortly after. Vijayalakshmi's research focused on relativistic equations of higher spin in external electromagnetic and gravitational fields, as well as constructing higher spin theories. She later extended her work to spinning particles in non-relativistic quantum mechanics. In 1978, she contributed to the formation of the Association of Research Scholars at Madras University.

"Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will."



During her Ph.D. studies, she was diagnosed with stomach cancer. Despite this, she continued her academic work, delivering a highly regarded talk at a physics symposium in Kochi in 1980 and completing her Ph.D. in 1982. Her determination and commitment to her research were unwavering, even in the face of adversity. Tragically, she passed away on May 12, 1985, but her contributions to physics remain a reflection of her perseverance and brilliance.

About the Text:

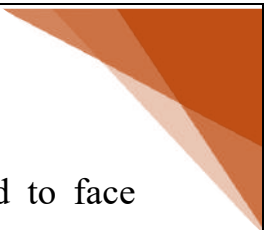
Viji, a trailblazing physicist, defied societal norms to pursue research at the Department of Theoretical Physics, University of Madras, starting in 1974. Despite being diagnosed with advanced stomach cancer, she maintained a relentless focus on completing her Ph.D. and contributing meaningfully to theoretical physics. Her research centred on relativistic equations of higher spin and their interactions with electromagnetic and gravitational fields, producing notable work in non-relativistic quantum mechanics and supersymmetry. Active in academic reform, Viji championed the rights of graduate students, despite resistance from the university's administration. Her life took a transformative turn after meeting T. Jayaraman, whose support and shared ideals in politics and science further enriched her professional and personal journey. Married in 1978, the couple exemplified mutual encouragement and resilience, with Jayaraman and his family standing by her during her intense treatments. Viji's groundbreaking work on spinning particles and her contributions to high-energy physics gained her recognition, even as her health deteriorated. She completed significant publications and her Ph.D. amidst gruelling chemotherapy, impressing peers at institutions like IIT Kanpur and IISc Bangalore. Her legacy as a socially conscious scientist was celebrated in a Doordarshan documentary, 'Vijayalakshmi: The Story of a Young Woman with Cancer.' Viji passed away

on May 12, 1985, leaving an enduring impact as a scientist and a symbol of courage, intellect, and determination.

Viji joined the Department of Theoretical Physics in 1974 after obtaining her Masters from Seethalakshmi Ramaswami College, Tiruchirapalli. Hers was a conservative background, and it was remarkable that she could overcome conventional gender restrictions and consider research an option. Our advisor was Professor P. M. Mathews, who was the head of department at that time. Always smiling and friendly, Viji discussed the graduate courses with me like any other student. Once, while we were discussing our work, she expressed some discomfort and I enquired about it. Looking straight at me as if to gauge my reaction, she replied that she had been diagnosed with widespread cancer of the stomach and the abdominal region. I was shocked and speechless for a few moments. Later she told me that her major aim was to make some substantial research contribution and be recognised as a physicist and that her immediate goal was to finish her research degree before anything happened to her.

Both of us were involved in the studies of relativistic equations of higher spin in external electromagnetic and gravitational fields. Our attempts were to look for suitable ways in which interacting higher spin theories could be constructed. It was a very lively period in the life of the department. There was always much discussion, not only about theoretical physics but also about issues in politics, history, economics and university education. That was also the turbulent period of the Emergency and we came to know of the arrest of many political and trade union leaders.

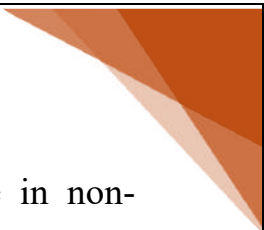
It was also the time when the Association of Research Scholars of the Madras University was formed. Viji, while concentrating on her research, contributed



actively to the Association. Graduate students in the University had to face enormous difficulties, even in routine matters like regular monthly fellowships and the ability to use their contingency or travel grants for their research. Laboratory facilities were poor and students' contingency grants were often used to augment the collections of departmental libraries. Worse still, they had to suffer many unacceptable restrictions from a feudal administrative and academic setup. Viji's involvement in the Association was not liked by some in the University and in the department.

Viji's life and world-view changed after she met T. Jayaraman, who was certainly the most important person in her life. She began to learn about the political scene in the country and to follow political events and happenings closely. She associated herself with the activities of the communist Left as much as her health would allow, an association that grew deeper as the years passed. She also moved on to an atheism that was not always immediately noticeable, but was nevertheless firmly held. Jayaraman and Viji married in 1978; Jayaraman sustained her professional work, gave her courage and inspired her to new achievements, and their marriage and relationship were an inspiration and example to all who knew them. Jayaraman introduced Viji to a circle of friends who became very close to her, and who cared deeply for both of them. With the marriage Viji also acquired concerned parents-in-law who were to assist her diligently in the years of difficult health that were to follow.

All this happened in the midst of many chemotherapy and radiation sessions, which often completely immobilized her. Eventually, as the cancer spread to the bones in her hip and legs, she had to use a wheel chair for her travel as she could not walk more than very short distances. None of this, however, seemed to affect her good cheer and humour or make a dent on her fighting spirit.



In 1978 she started her work on characterizing a spinning particle in non-relativistic quantum mechanics. This was a novel idea of the interplay of geometry and topology. This also produced an interesting dual relation between massless particles and the monopoles of electromagnetic theory. This work was published and this particular contribution laid the foundation for many interesting developments later.

Her talk at the bi-annual High Energy Physics Symposium of the Department of Atomic Energy held at the University in Kochi in 1980 was well received. This was a great experience for her. The community of Indian high energy physicists was also very encouraging, treating her with due regard as an upcoming professional. Many of our fellow students, both visitors and those of the University, even took turns to take her around in her wheel chair.

By that time her health began to deteriorate further. Viji was always aware of the race with time. Continuing research for the next couple of years she wrote five publications on the relativistic wave equations in external fields and completed her requirements for Ph.D. The study of higher spin wave equations and their interactions were important issues which had engaged the minds of physicists and mathematicians. In her thesis work she identified large classes of relativistic equations which were not equivalent to already known equations describing single mass and spin. This study in which she obtained interesting new results involved many conceptually difficult issues in group theory, which she mastered successfully.

This was also the period when supersymmetry was becoming an active area of research among high energy physicists and Viji started actively studying it. She visited IIT Kanpur (IITK) for a couple of months with the active support of her mother-in-law. The physics group at IITK who were watching this wheelchair-bound researcher were impressed and offered all support for her work. She also met Captain Laxmi Saigal of Kanpur, who was moved by her courage and

arranged support for her health and continued research. Following this she visited the Centre for Theoretical Studies at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (now the Centre for High Energy Physics). She wrote two papers on issues in supersymmetric field theories.

Having accomplished her immediate aim, she continued to be active for two more years, studying relativistic equations from different angles. She even made plans to visit ICTP in Trieste with Jayaraman, but her health deteriorated sharply and she died on May 12, 1985. A socially conscious scientist, she will remain an inspiring figure in the minds of all her friends and associates. An inspiring one-hour documentary of her battle and her spirit, titled ‘Vijayalakshmi: The Story of a Young Woman with Cancer,’ which also included accounts of her years in school and college, was telecast by Doordarshan in the early 1980s.

Her death was an irreparable loss for all those who knew her. To me she was always truly one of the ‘Daughters of Lilavati.’

I thank V K Ramachandran for the photograph of Viji and help in preparing this biographical note.

GLOSSARY

contingency : a future event or circumstance which is possible but cannot be predicted with certainty

physicist : an expert in the field of physics

turbulent : not stable or calm

quantum mechanics: the field of physics that explains how extremely small objects simultaneously have the characteristics of both particles (tiny pieces of matter) and waves (a disturbance or variation that

	transfers energy)
abdominal	: related to the abdomen
electromagnetic	: the interrelation of electric currents and magnetic fields
atheism	: disbelief or lack of belief in the existence of God
chemotherapy	: the treatment of disease by the use of chemical substances, especially the treatment of cancer by cytotoxic and other drugs
monopoles	: a single electric charge or magnetic pole
diligently	: care and conscientiousness in one's work or duties
topology	: the way in which constituent parts are interrelated or arranged
deteriorate	: become progressively worse

Comprehension Questions:

I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each:

1. In which year did Viji join the Department of Theoretical Physics, and from which college did she obtain her Master's degree?
2. What was the major goal Viji aimed to achieve before her health deteriorated due to cancer?
3. What were Viji and her colleague studying in their research on relativistic equations?
4. Who was the most influential person in Viji's life, and how did this relationship affect her worldview and personal life?
5. What were the main areas of focus in Viji's Ph.D. research?

6. What legacy did Viji leave behind, and how was her life documented for a broader audience?

II. Answer the following questions in a page each:

1. What challenges did Viji face in pursuing her research career, and how did she overcome them?
2. How did Viji's involvement in the Association of Research Scholars of Madras University reflect her commitment to improving the conditions for graduate students?
3. In what ways did Viji's relationship with T. Jayaraman influence her life and work?
4. How did Viji balance her research ambitions with her health challenges, particularly during her later years?
5. What role did Viji's family and friends play in supporting her through her illness and research endeavours?

III. Answer the following questions in two page each:

1. Discuss the significance of Viji's decision to pursue research in theoretical physics despite her conservative background. How did this decision reflect on her character and determination?
2. Analyse the impact of Viji's diagnosis on her academic goals and how she balanced her research work with her battle against cancer.
3. Evaluate Viji's involvement in the Association of Research Scholars of the Madras University and the challenges she faced as a result. What does this reveal about the academic environment at the time?

4. Discuss the role of T. Jayaraman in Viji's life, both personally and professionally. How did their relationship influence Viji's worldview and research pursuits?
5. Reflect on the impact of Viji's health challenges on her career and the support she received from the scientific community. How did her perseverance inspire those around her?
6. Discuss the legacy of Viji as a socially conscious scientist. How does her story serve as an inspiration to future generations of researchers, especially women in science?

Suggested Reading:

- **'Healed: How Cancer Gave Me a New Life' by Manisha Koirala**
A heartfelt memoir by Bollywood actress Manisha Koirala, recounting her journey of overcoming cancer and finding new meaning in life.
- **'Love and family support helped Anni Rajani Sharma overcome cancer'**
An inspiring real-life story of resilience and the power of love and family support in overcoming cancer.
(Read more at: [YourStory](#))
- **'To Cancer, With Love' by Neelam Kumar**
An inspiring narrative offering hope, courage, and humor, written by a cancer survivor sharing her triumph over adversity.

Reference:

- ◆ Lilavati's Daughters: The Women Scientists of India by Rohini Godbole
- ◆ <https://www.ias.ac.in/public/Resources/Initiatives/Women>
- ◆ Vijayalakshmi PDF (Read more at: Indian Academy of Sciences)



GRAMMAR COMPONENT

CHAPTER 1

COMPREHENSION PASSAGE

Objectives:

- **To cultivate a passion for reading** by engaging students with diverse and meaningful texts.
- **To develop critical reading skills** that enable students to comprehend, analyse, and interpret various texts effectively.
- **To explore** different types of comprehension to enhance reading proficiency

Introduction:

Reading comprehension is one of the most important skills for learners. It involves the ability to understand, interpret, and analyse written texts. Comprehension helps learners identify and compare key points, grasp the main ideas, and retain relevant information from a passage. One of the primary aims of reading comprehension is to strengthen the grammatical structures of the learners' language and to expand their vocabulary. As individuals enhance their comprehension skills, they become more proficient readers, which subsequently strengthens their critical thinking abilities. Effective reading comprehension strategies also contribute to overall reading proficiency by helping students understand the text more deeply. This can improve their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Reading itself is the process of understanding the meaning of written symbols and words, which requires attention to both the structure of the language and the ideas being conveyed. In addition to improving reading, comprehension also supports the development of the four fundamental language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. By engaging with texts, learners encounter new ideas, concepts, and perspectives, which expand their prior

knowledge and understanding. This process allows them to acquire and retain new information on a variety of topics, enhancing their overall learning experience.

The Process of Comprehension

1. Decoding

Decoding is a fundamental stage in the reading process, serving as the foundation for all other reading skills. It involves identifying individual sounds and linking them to corresponding letters to form words. This ability is essential for understanding written discourse and developing reading comprehension.

2. Fluency

Fluency enhances a reader's ability to read accurately and effortlessly, leading to improved comprehension and a faster reading pace. A fluent reader can process the text with ease, allowing for better engagement and understanding of the material.

3. Vocabulary

Vocabulary development plays a crucial role in reading comprehension. It can be reinforced through reading aloud, direct instruction, and word recognition strategies. A reader must be familiar with most of the words in a text to fully grasp its meaning, making vocabulary knowledge a key factor in understanding the written content.

4. Sentence Construction and Cohesion

Cohesion refers to the way ideas are logically connected within and across sentences. Understanding these connections helps readers make sense of passages and maintain coherence in a text. Effective sentence construction contributes to clarity and unity, enabling a smoother flow of ideas throughout a written piece.

5. Reasoning and Background Knowledge

Comprehension improves when readers connect new information with their prior knowledge. A strong reader relies on existing knowledge to interpret meanings, infer unstated ideas, and understand complex concepts within a text.

6. Memory and Attention

Effective reading requires focused attention and the ability to retain and process information. Working memory helps readers hold onto key details, draw connections, and monitor their understanding as they read, ultimately enhancing comprehension and learning

A Few Types :

a) Global comprehension

Global Comprehension is the ability to perceive the overarching theme, central message, and primary ideas of a text while reading. Rather than focusing on individual details, it involves understanding the broader context and intent of the discourse. This type of comprehension helps readers develop a general sense of the content, making it useful for quickly grasping the essence of a passage.

Example:

Imagine a boy named Harsha sitting alone in a corner, carefully building a tower out of blocks. He places one block on top of another, making his tower grow taller and more intricate with each addition. Instead of focusing solely on the details of his actions, global comprehension allows the reader to interpret the broader meaning of the scene.

At a deeper level, this passage conveys themes of growth, patience, and creativity. Harsha's gradual construction of the tower can be seen as a

representation of persistence and careful planning. The text suggests a process where smaller efforts build upon one another to create something meaningful.

Thus, global comprehension helps readers grasp the overall idea, theme, or message of a passage rather than just individual facts. It encourages looking beyond specific details to understand what the text as a whole is communicating

Passage 1: The Role of Education in Global Development

Education plays a crucial role in global development by empowering individuals and societies to improve their economic conditions, health, and social stability. However, in many parts of the world, access to quality education remains limited. Poverty, conflict, and gender inequality are key barriers preventing children from attending school, particularly in low-income countries. Despite these challenges, governments, NGOs, and international organizations have made significant efforts to improve education systems.

Education is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty, as it equips individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to secure better jobs and contribute to economic growth. Moreover, it promotes gender equality by providing both girls and boys with equal opportunities to succeed. The global community recognizes that achieving universal education is essential for sustainable development and the realization of human rights

Answer the following questions:

1. How does education influence poverty?
2. Why does the passage emphasize the importance of gender equality in education?
3. What is the primary objective of expanding access to education?
4. What are the main obstacles preventing children from receiving education?

5. How does education help in overcoming poverty?

Passage 2: The Impact of Social Media on Society

In recent years, social media has become an integral part of daily life for millions of people worldwide. It allows individuals to connect, share ideas, and stay informed about global events in real time. However, social media's impact is not entirely positive. It can also contribute to feelings of isolation and depression, especially among young people who compare their lives to the seemingly perfect lives of others on these platforms. Furthermore, the constant bombardment of information can lead to information overload, causing anxiety and stress. Another issue is the spread of misinformation and fake news, which can have serious consequences on public opinion, elections, and even public health. Despite these challenges, social media continues to play a significant role in shaping political, social, and cultural landscapes around the world.

Answer the following questions:

1. How has social media become an integral part of daily life for millions of people worldwide?
2. What are the negative emotional effects of social media, especially on young people?
3. How does the constant flow of information on social media contribute to anxiety and stress?
4. What are the consequences of misinformation and fake news spread on social media?
5. Despite its challenges, how does social media continue to influence political, social, and cultural landscapes globally?

b) Inferential comprehension

Inferential comprehension refers to the ability to read between the lines and draw conclusions based on information that is implied but not directly stated in the text. It requires readers to use their reasoning skills, prior knowledge, and contextual clues to infer meanings, predict outcomes, and understand deeper layers of the text. Inferential comprehension engages critical thinking and interpretation

Example:

(The text below is about a father's visit to his daughter's house)

"Prema had offered to drive to the airport to receive her father, who was visiting from Delhi, India, but he insisted on renting a car and following directions off the Internet. When she heard the sound of tyres on the gravel drive, she started picking up and putting away the toys and plastic animals that were scattered across the living room floor by Prakash. 'Turn off the television, Peanut,' she called out to him now. 'Don't sit so close to the screen. Dadu's here.'"

Question

"Don't sit so close to the screen. Dadu's here."

Who is the person being referred to as "Dadu" in the sentence above?

- The person is Prema's grandfather.
- The person is Prema.
- The person is Prakash.
- The person is Prakash's grandfather.

Answer: Option (4)

This question demonstrates **Inferential comprehension** because the answer is not explicitly stated but must be deduced using contextual clues from the passage.

c) Factual Comprehension

Factual comprehension involves understanding and interpreting straightforward information about a specific topic. These passages present facts, instructions, descriptions, or reports in a clear and direct manner, often including statistics or details about an event or discovery. The language used is simple and unambiguous, ensuring that readers can easily grasp the key points.

Example: The Discovery of Penicillin

In 1928, Alexander Fleming, a Scottish bacteriologist, accidentally discovered penicillin while working in his laboratory. He noticed that a Mold called *Penicillium notatum* had killed bacteria in one of his petri dishes. This breakthrough led to the development of antibiotics, which have since saved millions of lives. Penicillin was first mass-produced during World War II and is still widely used to treat bacterial infections today.

Question:

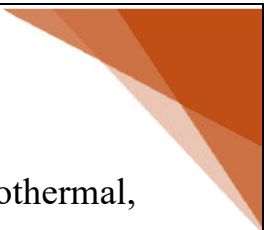
Who discovered penicillin?

Answer: Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin in 1928.

This question tests factual comprehension because the answer is explicitly stated in the passage.

Passage 1: The Impact of Renewable Energy on Global Sustainability

The global demand for energy has been rising steadily, driven by population growth, industrialization, and the increasing reliance on electronic devices. For decades, fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas have been the primary sources of energy worldwide. However, the environmental impact of these energy sources, particularly in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and their contribution to climate change, has led to a growing push toward renewable energy solutions.



Renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, hydroelectric, and geothermal, are considered more sustainable alternatives because they do not deplete over time and generally have a much lower environmental impact compared to fossil fuels. Solar energy, for instance, harnesses the power of the sun through photovoltaic cells that convert sunlight into electricity. Wind energy relies on wind turbines to generate power, while hydroelectric energy uses the flow of water to produce electricity. Geothermal energy taps into the Earth's internal heat to generate power, providing a reliable and continuous source of energy.

The shift toward renewable energy is seen as essential in the global fight against climate change. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), renewable energy sources are expected to account for almost 90% of global electricity expansion by 2050. This shift could significantly reduce global carbon emissions, as electricity generation is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gases worldwide. Moreover, renewable energy offers energy security, as it is often produced locally, reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels.

However, the transition to renewable energy is not without its challenges. One major issue is the intermittent nature of some renewable sources, particularly solar and wind power, which depend on weather conditions. As a result, energy storage technologies are crucial for ensuring a reliable supply of electricity. Additionally, the initial investment in renewable energy infrastructure can be expensive, and some regions may face challenges in transitioning away from fossil fuels due to existing dependence on coal or oil for economic reasons.

Despite these challenges, many countries are making significant strides toward increasing their renewable energy capacity. Nations like Denmark and Germany have invested heavily in wind power, while China has become a global leader in solar energy production. The transition to renewable energy is not only seen as a way to combat climate change but also as an opportunity to create new jobs in the green energy sector and promote sustainable development on a global scale.

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the main types of renewable energy, and how do they work?
2. How can renewable energy help address climate change?
3. What challenges exist in transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy?
4. How are countries like Denmark, Germany, and China contributing to the growth of renewable energy?
5. Why is energy storage important for renewable energy?

Passage 2: The Importance of Exercise for Health

Regular exercise is essential for maintaining physical and mental health. It helps improve cardiovascular health, strengthen muscles and bones, and maintain a healthy weight. Exercise also releases endorphins, chemicals in the brain that promote a sense of well-being and reduce stress. Additionally, physical activity can improve mental health by reducing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress. It also helps improve sleep quality, boosts energy levels, and enhances cognitive function. The recommended amount of exercise varies depending on age and health status, but it generally includes at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise most days of the week. Incorporating exercise into daily routines can lead to long-term health benefits, including a reduced risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

Answer the following questions:

1. What are some of the health benefits of regular exercise mentioned in the passage?
2. How does exercise contribute to mental health and well-being of a person?
3. What are the standard recommendations guidelines for weekly exercise?
4. How does exercise improve sleep quality and cognitive function?

5. What long-term health benefits can be achieved by incorporating regular exercise into daily routines?

Passage 3: The Human Digestive System

The human digestive system is a complex series of organs and glands that work together to break down food. The process begins in the mouth, where food is chewed and mixed with saliva, containing enzymes that begin to break down the carbohydrates. The food is then swallowed and travels down the oesophagus into the stomach, where it is mixed with gastric juices that contain enzymes and acids to further break down food. The partially digested food moves into the small intestine, where nutrients are absorbed into the bloodstream. The large intestine absorbs water and minerals, while undigested food is formed into waste, which is expelled through the rectum. The digestive system plays a vital role in providing the body with the nutrients it needs for energy, growth, and repair.

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the first step in the human digestive process, and what role does saliva play?
2. How does the stomach contribute to the breakdown of food?
3. What happens to the food in the small intestine?
4. What is the role of the large intestine in the digestive process?
5. Why is the digestive system important for the body's energy, growth, and repair?

Passage 4: The Process of Photosynthesis

Photosynthesis is the process by which plants, algae, and certain bacteria convert light energy into chemical energy, storing it as glucose. This process occurs in the chloroplasts of plant cells, where chlorophyll absorbs sunlight. During


photosynthesis, plants absorb carbon dioxide from the air and water from the soil. Using sunlight energy, they combine these substances to produce glucose and release oxygen as a by-product. The glucose serves as an energy source for the plant's growth and various metabolic functions. Photosynthesis is vital for life on Earth, as it provides oxygen for the atmosphere and forms the foundation of the food chain for many organisms.

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the primary function of photosynthesis in plants, algae, and certain bacteria?
2. In which part of plant cells does photosynthesis occur, and what is the role of chlorophyll in this process?
3. What are the essential components needed for photosynthesis, and what products does it generate?
4. How does the glucose generated through photosynthesis support plant life?
5. Why is photosynthesis crucial for sustaining life on Earth?

Passage 5: The Effects of Globalization on Culture

Globalization has had a profound impact on cultures around the world. As people from different backgrounds interact more frequently through travel, technology, and trade, cultural exchanges have increased. This has led to greater awareness of diverse traditions, languages, and lifestyles. However, globalization also brings concerns about cultural homogenization, where local cultures may be overshadowed or replaced by dominant global cultures. For example, Western culture, particularly through media and entertainment, has spread worldwide, influencing fashion, food, and social norms. While globalization has brought people closer together and promoted cross-cultural understanding, it has also led to the erosion of traditional practices and values in some regions. Some critics argue that globalization promotes a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, ignoring the



unique cultural identities of different groups. Nevertheless, proponents believe that globalization provides opportunities for cultural enrichment and mutual understanding.

Answer the following questions:

1. How has globalization increased cultural exchanges around the world?
2. What is cultural homogenization, and how does globalization contribute to it?
3. In what ways has western culture influenced other parts of the world through globalization?
4. What are some concerns critics have regarding the effects of globalization on traditional cultures?
5. How do proponents of globalization view its impact on culture and cross-cultural understanding?

CHAPTER 2

PICTURE READING AND CAPTION WRITING

Objectives:

- **To enhance observation skills** by analyzing and interpreting visual elements effectively.
- **To improve creative thinking** by encouraging imaginative and critical analysis for meaningful caption creation.
- **To develop expressive language** by strengthening concise and impactful articulation through caption writing.

Introduction

A picture is more than just a visual representation; it narrates a story, conveys emotions, and captures a moment in time. Picture reading involves keen observation, thoughtful interpretation, and the ability to articulate insights based on what is seen. This skill is crucial in developing literacy, improving cognitive functions, and fostering an appreciation for visual storytelling. While picture reading is a fundamental tool in early education to enhance language acquisition, it also serves as a powerful exercise in creative writing, analytical thinking, and effective communication across all learning levels.

Definition of Picture Reading

Picture Reading is the process of analysing, interpreting, and describing an image by identifying its elements, emotions, and underlying themes. It helps individuals connect with visual narratives and translate them into structured verbal or written descriptions.

Importance of Picture Reading

1. **Enhances Thinking Capabilities** – Encourages observation, analysis, and reasoning.
2. **Builds Reading and Writing Skills** – Improves comprehension, vocabulary, and sentence structure.
3. **Stimulates Creativity and Imagination** – Encourages creative storytelling based on visuals.
4. **Strengthens Communication Skills** – Helps in verbal and written expression.
5. **Develops Attention to Detail** – Sharpens focus and encourages noticing small details.
6. **Builds Confidence** – Assists in public speaking and storytelling by organizing thoughts logically

Key Aspects of Picture Reading

1. Observing the Picture Closely

- Examine the image thoroughly before forming interpretations.
- Identify key elements: **Who, What, Where, When, and Why.**
- Pay attention to colours, objects, and background details.
- Use present continuous tense while describing ongoing actions.

2. Identifying Characters and Actions

- Recognize people, animals, or objects in the image.
- Describe their emotions, body language, and expressions.
- Determine their roles and interactions within the scene.

3. Understanding the Setting

- Identify the location and time frame depicted in the image.
- Look for contextual clues such as historical settings, cultural aspects, and environmental conditions.
- Describe how the background complements the story of the picture.

4. Maintaining Logic, Relevancy, and Continuity

- Use linking verbs to create a smooth flow of description.
- Avoid unnecessary details and focus on key elements.
- Ensure a logical connection between different parts of the description.

5. Choosing the Right Words

- Use clear and expressive language to convey the essence of the image.
- Select adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that enhance the reader's understanding.
- Avoid repetition and ambiguity in the description.

Steps to Describe a Picture

1. **Introduction** – Provide a general overview of what the picture represents.
2. **Character Description** – Describe the people, animals, or objects visible in the image.
3. **Setting and Background** – Explain where and when the scene takes place.
4. **Actions and Interactions** – Detail what is happening in the picture and how the elements relate.
5. **Emotions and Mood** – Convey the emotions expressed in the image.
6. **Conclusion** – Summarize the key message or theme of the picture.

Picture Description Example 1:



The picture portrays a vibrant marketplace bustling with activity. Numerous stalls are lined up, offering a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, and other goods. Vendors are seen actively engaging with customers, some bargaining while others select produce. In the background, people walk around carrying shopping bags, while children curiously observe the colourful surroundings. The atmosphere appears lively and full of energy, reflecting the daily life of a busy marketplace. The image highlights community interaction and the importance of commerce in everyday life.

Picture Description Example 2:



The image depicts a heartbreaking scene of dogs crammed into a wire cage, struggling for space and freedom. Their expressions reflect fear and distress, highlighting the cruelty of animal captivity. The rusted wires and overcrowded conditions suggest neglect and inhumane treatment. This image raises awareness about animal rights and the urgent need to prevent such abuse through stronger laws and responsible actions.

Exercise

Describe the pictures given below:

1.



Caption Writing

Definition:

A caption is a short, descriptive text accompanying an image. It provides context, enhances understanding, and makes the image more engaging by offering insights beyond what is visually apparent. Captions help viewers connect with images on a deeper level by adding meaning and significance.

Why Are Captions Important?

Captions serve several essential functions, including:

1. **Providing Background Information:** They explain who, what, when, where, and why about the image.
2. **Enhancing Storytelling:** Captions add depth to visuals, guiding viewers in interpreting the image accurately.
3. **Increasing Engagement:** Thought-provoking captions encourage discussion, reflection, and emotional connection.
4. **Making Images More Relatable:** They help viewers relate to the subject by providing context or personalizing the message.
5. **Clarifying Ambiguity:** In cases where an image might be misunderstood, a caption provides necessary clarification.
6. **Improving Accessibility:** Captions help visually impaired individuals understand images when used with screen readers.
7. **Supporting Memory Retention:** Studies show that words and images together enhance recall and comprehension.

Guidelines for Writing Effective Captions

To create impactful captions, follow these guidelines:

- **Start with a capital letter** and keep sentences concise and meaningful.
- **Be accurate** by ensuring the caption reflects factual and verified information.
- **Identify key subjects** in the image, including people, objects, and events.
- **Use the present tense** to maintain immediacy and create a sense of action.
- **Maintain a tone that matches the image**, whether it is serious, humorous, emotional, or formal.
- **Avoid stating the obvious**—instead, provide additional context or insights that the image does not explicitly reveal.
- **Use active voice** to make captions more engaging and direct.
- **Consider the audience** and tailor captions to their level of understanding and interest.
- **Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation**—proofreading is essential.

Common Mistakes in Caption Writing

- **Being too vague:** A caption should be specific enough to provide value.
- **Over-explaining:** Keep it brief; a caption should complement, not overshadow, the image.
- **Ignoring context:** Consider cultural and situational relevance to avoid misinterpretation.
- **Using incorrect facts:** Always verify names, dates, and details before publishing.
- **Forgetting punctuation:** Proper grammar and punctuation improve readability.

Example 1 :



"Amid the smoke and chaos, a tiny life finds hope in the arms of a hero."

Example 2 :



"Drifting in the silence of the cosmos."

Exercise:

Write suitable captions for the following pictures:

1.



2.



Examples of Picture Reading and Caption Writing:

1. Study the given picture carefully and write:
 - a) A description of the picture.
 - b) A suitable caption.



- a. The image shows a man sitting on a couch, holding a fresh salad in one hand and a burger in the other. His thoughtful expression suggests he is torn between making a healthy choice or indulging in fast food. The contrast between the vibrant salad and the tempting burger highlights the common struggle between nutrition and cravings, making this a relatable moment of decision.
- b. "Salad for the body, Burger for the soul—tough call!"

2. Study the given picture carefully and write:

a) A description of the picture.

b) A suitable caption.



a. The image depicts a group of women and a young girl walking across a dry, cracked landscape, carrying water in buckets and earthen pots. The barren ground signifies extreme drought conditions, highlighting the struggle for access to water. Their traditional attire suggests they belong to a rural region, where water scarcity is a major issue. The determination on their faces reflects resilience and the daily hardship they endure to secure this essential resource.

b. "A long walk for a drop of life."

Exercise:

1. Observe the given image and give:
 - a) A picture description.
 - b) A suitable caption.



2. Observe the given image and give:

- a) A picture description.
- b) A suitable caption.



CHAPTER 3

LISTENING AND HEARING SKILLS

Objectives:

- **To distinguish** between hearing and listening and understand their significance in communication.
- **To explore** the process, types, and barriers of effective listening.
- **To develop** strategies and skills for becoming an effective listener in personal and professional settings.

Introduction

Listening is a purposeful and focused activity that requires attention, concentration, and a conscious effort to understand and respond appropriately. It is an essential skill in communication, forming the foundation for speaking, reading, and writing. While hearing is a passive, physiological process, listening is an active, cognitive function. As the saying goes, ‘Hearing is through the ears, but listening is through the mind.’

Hearing is the passive perception of sound. It is a physiological process in which sound waves are received by the ears and processed by the brain without requiring active effort or attention. Hearing occurs naturally and continuously unless impaired by medical conditions.

Listening, on the other hand, is an active process that requires attention, comprehension, and interpretation. It involves understanding and responding to the message being conveyed rather than merely perceiving the sound.

Effective listening involves five key steps:

1. **Receiving** – This step involves active focusing on the speaker’s message while filtering out distractions. It is the initial stage where the listener must ensure he/she is attentive and mentally prepared to engage in communication.
2. **Understanding** – In this stage, the listener interprets the meaning of the message based on his personal knowledge, experiences, and perception. It requires cognitive effort to connect the information received with pre-existing knowledge.
3. **Remembering** – Retaining key information for future reference is essential in communication. Effective listeners process and store relevant details that may be needed for follow-up conversations or decision-making.
4. **Evaluating** – This involves assessing the credibility, logic, and relevance of the message. A critical listener determines whether the message is reliable, identifies biases, and considers how the information fits into the larger context.
5. **Responding** – Providing feedback through words, gestures, or actions completes the listening process. Responses can include verbal affirmations, getting questions clarified, or non-verbal cues that indicate comprehension and engagement.

Importance of Listening Skill

1. Forms the foundation of communication.
2. Enhances speaking and effective communication.
3. Strengthens professional and personal relationships.
4. Prevents miscommunication and misunderstandings.

5. Facilitates constructive feedback and critical analysis.
6. Influences attitudes, behaviours, and interpersonal skills.
7. Builds trust and rapport in social and professional interactions.

Hearing vs. Listening

Aspect	Hearing	Listening
Nature	Continuous and involuntary	Selective and intentional
Process	Physiological	Psychological and cognitive
Concentration	Not required	Essential
Outcome	Does not ensure understanding	Leads to comprehension and response
Engagement	Passive involvement	Active involvement
Effort	Minimal or none	Requires focus and energy
Retention	Temporary, unless repeated	Longer retention and better recall

Types of Listening

1. **Active (Comprehensive) Listening** – This type of listening involves complete engagement with the speaker’s message. The listener asks clarifying questions, processes information critically, and provides feedback to ensure understanding. It is commonly used in educational and professional settings.
2. **Empathetic (Sensitive) Listening** – In this form of listening, the listener focuses on understanding the speaker’s emotions and perspectives. It helps build strong relationships and is often used in counselling, therapy, and conflict resolution.

3. **Critical Listening** – This type of listening requires analysing and evaluating the speaker’s arguments, evidence, and reasoning. It is crucial in decision-making processes, debates, and academic discussions where logical reasoning and judgment are necessary.
4. **Appreciative Listening** – This is a passive form of listening used for enjoyment and entertainment. It includes listening to music, storytelling, or a speech to appreciate its aesthetic or artistic qualities without necessarily analysing its content.

Barriers to Effective Listening

1. **Physical Barriers** – External distractions such as noise, poor acoustics, and environmental conditions can make it difficult to listen effectively. The distance between the speaker and listener, or interruptions, can also hinder the listening process.
2. **Physiological Barriers** – Physical conditions such as hearing impairments, fatigue, illness, or pain can negatively impact the ability to concentrate on what is being said. Listeners struggling with these issues may find it difficult to fully grasp or retain information.
3. **Psychological Barriers** – Emotional factors such as stress, preconceptions, biases, or lack of interest can obstruct effective listening. A closed mind or preconceived notions about the speaker’s credibility can prevent a listener from engaging meaningfully with the message.
4. **Linguistic Barriers** – Language-related issues, including the use of jargon, unfamiliar vocabulary, mispronunciations, or heavy accents, can cause confusion. If the listener does not have sufficient language proficiency, comprehension may be compromised.


5. **Socio-Cultural Barriers** – Differences in cultural norms, religious beliefs, gender perspectives, and communication styles can lead to misunderstandings. A lack of awareness or sensitivity to cultural differences may result in misinterpretation or ineffective communication.

Strategies for Effective Listening

1. **Be Receptive and Avoid Bias** – Approach conversations with an open mind, free from preconceived judgments.
2. **Concentrate on Key Ideas** – Focus on the overall message rather than getting lost in minor details.
3. **Observe Non-Verbal Cues** – Pay attention to gestures, facial expressions, and tone to understand the speaker better.
4. **Take Meaningful Notes** – Jot down key points to enhance comprehension and retention of important details.
5. **Engage Through Questions** – Provide feedback by asking clarifying questions and encouraging further discussion.
6. **Maintain Active Body Language** – Exhibit attentiveness through posture, eye contact, and positive facial expressions.
7. **Eliminate Distractions** – Minimize interruptions and external noise to enhance focus and comprehension.

Qualities of a Good Listener

1. **Attentive** – A good listener actively engages with the speaker by maintaining eye contact, nodding, and avoiding distractions. This ensures full focus on the conversation.
2. **Patient** – Allows the speaker to complete his/her thoughts without interruptions. Rushing or finishing the speaker's sentences can disrupt the flow of communication.

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3. **Open-Minded** – Listens without bias or judgment. Being receptive to different viewpoints fosters a more meaningful and constructive discussion.
 4. **Observant** – Recognizes both verbal and non-verbal messages such as body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions, which provide additional context to the speaker's message.
 5. **Reflective** – Thinks critically about the information received, processes it, and asks relevant questions to ensure clarity and understanding.
 6. **Responsive** – Provides appropriate feedback through verbal affirmations, clarifying questions, and thoughtful responses, demonstrating active engagement in the conversation.

Exercise:

1. Explain the steps involved in the listening process.
2. List the importance of listening skills.
3. Differentiate between hearing and listening.
4. Describe the types of listening and explain any two.
5. Identify common barriers to effective listening.
6. Explain socio-cultural barriers in listening.
7. Suggest strategies for effective listening.
8. Discuss the qualities of a good listener.
9. Define linguistic barriers in listening.
10. What is a psychological barrier in listening?

CHAPTER 4

SOFT SKILLS

Definition of Soft Skills

Soft skills are a set of interpersonal, communication, and social intelligence abilities that help individuals interact effectively and harmoniously with others. These skills are essential in personal and professional environments as they contribute to building relationships, fostering teamwork, and ensuring smooth communication. Some common soft skills include:

- **Communication Skills** – The ability to express oneself clearly and effectively.
- **Interpersonal Skills** – The capacity to interact positively with others.
- **Leadership Skills** – The ability to guide and inspire a team.
- **Adaptability** – The skill to adjust to changes in different situations.
- **Time Management** – The ability to prioritize tasks efficiently.
- **Problem-Solving** – The capacity to analyze issues and find effective solutions.

Effective Communication and Social Interaction

Successful communication is built on strong interpersonal skills, the ability to express oneself clearly, and the confidence to engage in conversations. Whether introducing yourself, requesting assistance, congratulating someone, or seeking permission, using appropriate language ensures meaningful and professional interactions. The following sections outline key aspects of effective communication.

A) Introducing Oneself

Definition

Introducing oneself is the process of presenting relevant personal information in a professional or social setting to create a positive impression.

Common Phrases for Introducing Oneself:

Formal Phrases	Informal Phrases
"Good morning, I am [Name]."	"Hey, I'm [Name]!"
"It's a pleasure to meet you. My name is [Name]."	"Nice to meet you! I'm [Name]."
"I would like to introduce myself. I am [Name]."	"I'm [Name], by the way!"
"Allow me to introduce myself. I am [Name]."	"I don't think we've met. I'm [Name]."
"I am [Name], and I work as a [Job Title]."	"I'm [Name] and I do [Job]."
"May I introduce myself? I am [Name]."	"Hey, I'm [Name]. What about you?"

Examples:

1. Formal Introduction in a Campus Interview

Good morning, sir/madam. Thank you for the opportunity. My name is Kumar. I am from Jharkhand and currently pursuing my final year in Information Technology at University College of Engineering and Technology, Hazaribagh. My short-term goal is to secure a job in a reputed company, and my long-term goal is to become a successful software

engineer. My strengths include good communication, problem-solving skills, and teamwork.

2. Introduction as a Host at a College Event

Good evening everyone! I am Sushant, a final-year Computer Science student at GM College of Engineering. It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this wonderful event. I hope you have a great time and enjoy the exciting programs ahead!

3. Formal Self-Introduction to a Professor

Ajith: Good morning, Professor. My name is Ajith, and I am currently in my first year, pursuing the degree of Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA). I completed my Pre-University studies at KL College, where I developed a strong foundation in computing.

Professor: Good morning, Ajith. Nice to meet you. What interests you the most in this field?

Ajith: I have a keen interest in software development and emerging technologies, especially in AI and cybersecurity. I look forward to learning from your expertise in this course.

Professor: That's great to hear! I hope you make the most of this learning experience.

Ajith: Thank you, Professor. I am eager to contribute and learn.

4. Casual Self-Introduction (To Classmates on the First Day)

Rajath: Hey everyone! My name is Rajath, and I just joined the BCA program at SR College. I completed my Pre-University studies at KL College and have always been passionate about technology and coding.

Classmate: Hey Rajath, nice to meet you! What do you like to do in your free time?

Rajath: I love playing chess, exploring new tech trends, and watching sci-fi movies. What about you?

Classmate: That's cool! I enjoy coding too. Looking forward to working on projects together.

Rajath: Same here! Let's make this semester an exciting one.

Points to Remember

- ✓ Speak clearly, confidently, and maintain eye contact.
- ✓ Use polite, professional language and keep introductions concise.
- ✓ Avoid fidgeting or looking away, as it shows nervousness.
- ✓ Do not begin with "Myself [Name]"—use "I am [Name]" instead.
- ✓ Adapt your introduction based on the setting and audience.

Exercise:

1. Introduce yourself to the librarian of your college.
2. Introduce yourself as the host of an event at your college.
3. How would you introduce yourself to an interview panel?
4. Introduce yourself to your Principal as the CR of your class.
5. How would you introduce yourself to the organizing Secretary of a Business Fest at a college in your neighbourhood?

B) Introducing Others

Definition

Introducing others involves formally or informally presenting one person to another. This is essential in professional settings, networking events, and social interactions.

Common Phrases for Introducing Others:

Formal Phrases	Informal Phrases
"May I introduce you to [Name]?"	"Hey, meet [Name]!"
"I'd like you to meet [Name]."	"This is [Name]."
"Let me introduce you to [Name]."	"You two should meet!"
"I have the pleasure of introducing [Name]."	"Hey [Name], this is my friend [Name]."
"Allow me to present [Name]."	"Guys, meet [Name]."
"It's my honour to introduce [Name]."	"Oh, you have to meet [Name]!"

Examples:

1. Formal Introduction in a Professional Setting

Mr. Rakesh, I would like you to meet Ms. Catherine Lee. Ms. Lee is joining our organization as an administrative assistant.

2. Introducing a Classmate to the Placement Officer

Sir, I'd like to introduce my classmate, Maonhar, a mechanical engineer who graduated from Mahe University of Science and Technology.

3. **Dr. Murthy Introducing Dr. Rekha Gupta to Mr. Kumar**

Dr. Murthy (to Mr. Kumar): Mr. Kumar, I'd like to introduce you to Dr. Rekha Gupta. She is the new member of our Board of Governors.

Dr. Murthy (to Dr. Gupta): Dr. Gupta, this is Mr. Sriram Kumar, our Secretary.

Mr. Kumar: Good morning, Dr. Gupta. It's a pleasure to meet you.

Dr. Gupta: Good morning. I'm pleased to meet you as well.

Mr. Kumar: We are delighted to have you on the board.

Dr. Gupta: Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity.

4. **Bhat Introducing his Boss Mr. Deepak Dhanraj to Social Worker**

Mrs. Vinita Lal

Bhat: Mr. Dhanraj, I'd like to introduce you to Mrs. Vinita Lal. She is a dedicated social worker.

Bhat: Mrs. Lal, please meet Mr. Deepak Dhanraj, our boss.

Mr. Dhanraj: Hello, Mrs. Lal. It's a pleasure to meet you.

Mrs. Lal: Pleased to meet you too, Mr. Dhanraj.

Mr. Dhanraj: I truly admire the incredible work you've been doing for the city's orphanages.

Mrs. Lal: Thank you. That's very kind of you to say.

Points to Remember

- ✓ Mention names clearly and pronounce them correctly.
- ✓ Introduce the person in a lower rank or position to the higher-ranking individual first
- ✓ Provide a brief and relevant context for the introduction.

C) Making Requests

Definition

Making a request involves politely asking someone for help or permission to do something. Being specific and courteous ensures effective communication.

Common Phrases for Making Requests

Formal & Informal Phrases

Formal Phrases	Informal Phrases
"Could you please...?"	"Can you...?"
"Would it be possible for you to...?"	"Could you do me a favor?"
"I would appreciate it if you could...?"	"Hey, would you mind...?"
"May I request you to...?"	"Do you think you could...?"
"Would you be able to...?"	"Can I ask you for a favor?"
"I kindly ask if you could...?"	"Mind helping me with this?"

Examples:

1. Requesting a Professor to extend the assignment deadline

Dear Professor, I would be grateful if you could extend the deadline for submitting the assignment.

2. Requesting for a Reservation

Bharath: Could you assist me in making a reservation?

Sharath: Of course! Please provide the details of your preferred date, time, and destination. Also, let me know if you have any specific berth preferences.

3. Booking a Vaccination Slot

Sannidhi: Excuse me, could you book a vaccination slot for my parents?

Health Worker: Of course, madam! May I know their age?

4. Anil: “Hey, can you grab me a coffee while you’re at the café?”

Bala: “Sure! Do you want sugar in it?”

Anil: “Yes, please. That would be perfect!”

Points to Remember

- ✓ Be polite and respectful while making requests.
- ✓ Use “please” and “thank you” to show courtesy.
- ✓ Specify your request clearly to avoid confusion.
- ✓ Avoid making requests sound like demands.
- ✓ Acknowledge and appreciate the person’s response

Exercise:

1. How would you politely request for directions from a stranger?
2. Write an informal request to borrow a book from a friend.
3. Ask your friend to lower/reduce the volume of the music.
4. Formally request the NCC Officer to consider you as a volunteer for the Independence Day celebrations.
5. Write a formal request to the Principal seeking permission to organize a college event

D) Offering Help

Definition

Offering help is an act of assisting someone voluntarily with a task or a problem. It reflects kindness, cooperation, and teamwork, which are essential in personal and professional relationships.

Common Phrases for Offering Help

Formal & Informal Phrases

Formal Phrases	Informal Phrases
"May I assist you with that?"	"Need a hand?"
"Would you like some help with this?"	"Want me to help out?"
"I'd be happy to assist you."	"I can do that for you!"
"Please let me know if you need any help."	"Just let me know if you need help!"
"Can I be of any assistance?"	"Want me to give it a shot?"
"I am here to help, please feel free to ask."	"I got this, don't worry!"

Examples:

1. Offering Assistance with Work

If you need any help with the project, feel free to reach out!

2. Helping a neighbour

Suman: "It looks like you have a lot to carry. May I assist you with those bags?"

Preetha: "Oh, that's very kind of you! Yes, I'd really appreciate it."

Suman: "No problem at all! Let me take these for you."

3. Helping a dear friend

Akash: "Hey, you seem to be struggling with that assignment. Want me to help?"

Dina: "That would be great! I'm stuck on this part."

Akash: "Let's go through it together and see if we can figure it out."

Points to Remember

- ✓ Offer help politely and sincerely without being intrusive.
- ✓ Assess whether the person actually needs assistance before offering.
- ✓ Wait for the other person's acceptance before taking action.
- ✓ Respect their decision if they decline your help.
- ✓ Ensure your offer of help is specific and clear, rather than vague

Exercise:

1. Offer help to a fellow student who is struggling with assignments.
2. Assist a neighbour in carrying her groceries.
3. Help a junior student in understanding a difficult subject.
4. Offer assistance to an elderly person at a public place.
5. Help a friend in preparing for an upcoming exam.

E) . Congratulating

Definition

Congratulating someone means expressing joy and appreciation for their achievements, success, or special occasions. It helps build positive relationships and encourages motivation.

Common Phrases for Congratulating

Formal Phrases	Informal Phrases
"Congratulations on your achievement!"	"Way to go!"
"I sincerely congratulate you on your success."	"Awesome job!"
"Well done! You truly deserve this."	"You nailed it!"
"Heartfelt congratulations on your hard work."	"Super proud of you!"
"I am delighted to congratulate you on this."	"Huge congrats!"
"Wishing you continued success in the future."	"Keep rocking!"

Examples:

1. Congratulating a Friend on Graduation

Hey, Rahul! Congratulations on your graduation with distinction. I knew you could do it! Best wishes for your future.

2. Congratulating a Colleague on a Promotion

Dear Mr. Suresh, congratulations on your well-deserved promotion. Wishing you continued success in your career.

3. Ram: "Congratulations on winning the 'Best Employee of the Year' award! Your dedication and hard work truly deserve this recognition."

Kumar: "Thank you so much! I couldn't have done it without the support of my amazing team."

Ram: "Absolutely! Your leadership has inspired everyone, and we're proud of you."

4. Divya: "Hey, I heard you got accepted into your dream university. That's incredible! Huge congratulations!"

Nita: "Thanks a lot! I'm really excited about this new journey."

Divya: "You've worked so hard for this. I'm sure you'll do great things there!"

Points to Remember

- ✓ Be genuine and enthusiastic while congratulating.
- ✓ Use a warm and appreciative tone suited to the situation.
- ✓ Acknowledge the specific achievement or success.
- ✓ Avoid making comparisons that downplay others' achievements.
- ✓ Ensure your congratulations sound personal and heartfelt, not robotic.

Exercise:

1. How would you informally congratulate a friend on winning a competition?
2. Congratulate your friend on winning a competition.
3. Congratulate a colleague on receiving an award.
4. Write a formal congratulatory message to a colleague who has received a promotion.
5. Congratulate a friend on his wedding.

F) . Making Enquiries

Definition

Enquiries refer to the process of asking questions to obtain information about a service, event, or process. It is essential in communication for seeking clarity and making informed decisions.

Common Phrases for Enquiries

Formal Phrases	Informal Phrases
"Could you kindly provide more details about...?"	"Can you tell me more about...?"
"I would like to inquire about...?"	"Hey, do you know about...?"
"May I ask for some information regarding...?"	"Can I ask you something about...?"
"Would you be able to clarify...?"	"Can you explain this to me?"
"Could you please confirm...?"	"Is it true that...?"
"May I know more details about...?"	"What's the deal with...?"

Examples:

1. Enquiring about college admission

Excuse me, sir. I would like to enquire about the admission process for the upcoming academic year. Could you please provide me with the necessary details?

2. Enquiring about the availability a Library Book

Hello, ma'am. Could you please check if the book 'Advanced Physics' is available in the library?

3. **Arun:** "Good afternoon. I would like to inquire about the application process for your training program. Could you please provide some details?"

Receptionist: "Of course! The application opens next Monday, and the requirements include a resume and a cover letter."

Arun: "That's great to know. Could you also confirm the deadline for submission?"

Receptionist: "Certainly! The last date to apply is the 25th of this month."

4. **Esha :** "Hey, do you know when the library closes today?"

Heena: "Yeah, I think it closes at 8 PM, but you might want to check the notice board."

Esha : "Good idea! Also, do they allow book renewals online?"

Heena: "Yes, you can renew books through their website."

Points to Remember

- ✓ Be clear and specific while making an enquiry.
- ✓ Use polite and respectful language, especially in formal situations.
- ✓ Listen carefully to the response and ask relevant follow-up questions.
- ✓ Avoid making enquiries that sound like demands.
- ✓ Give the person enough time to respond without rushing him/her.

Exercise:

1. Seek details regarding the application process for a scholarship.
2. Enquire about the fee structure at a university.
3. Ask about the available internship opportunities in a company.
4. Enquire about an internship opportunity in a company.

G) Seeking Permission

Definition

Seeking permission is an act of requesting in a polite and respectful manner for approval to perform a certain action.

Common Phrases for Seeking Permission

Formal Phrases	Informal Phrases
"May I have your permission to...?"	"Can I...?"
"Would it be possible for me to...?"	"Is it okay if I...?"
"I would like to request approval for...?"	"Mind if I...?"
"Could you kindly grant me permission to...?"	"Do you think I could...?"
"Would you allow me to...?"	"Is it cool if I...?"
"I seek your approval for...?"	"Am I allowed to...?"

Examples:

1. **Seeking permission from a Librarian to extend the date of returning the book.**

Excuse me, ma'am. May I extend the deadline for returning this book? I need it for an ongoing research project.

2. **Requesting the Principal's permission to organize a college event**

Dear Principal, I kindly request permission to organize a social awareness event on campus. The event aims to educate students on environmental sustainability.

3. **Abhi:** "Good morning, Professor. May I have your permission to submit my assignment a day late due to a personal emergency?"

Professor: "I understand your situation. Please make sure to submit it by tomorrow."

Abhi: "Thank you, Professor. I really appreciate your understanding."

4. **Minu:** "Hey Mom, is it okay if I stay out a bit longer tonight?"

Mother: "How much longer are we talking about?"

Minu: "Just an extra hour, I promise to be home by 10 PM."

Mother: "Alright, but be sure to stick to the time."

Minu: "Thanks, Mom! I will."

Points to Remember

- ✓ Be polite and respectful when making a request for permission.
- ✓ Clearly state what you are asking for and provide a reason if necessary.
- ✓ Avoid assuming that permission will be granted—always ask first.
- ✓ Do not interrupt or rush the person before he/she responds.
- ✓ Express gratitude once permission is granted.

Exercise:

1. Seek permission from your parents to take part in the NSS annual camp.
2. Persuade your uncle to allow you to use his laptop.
3. How would you casually ask a friend for permission to borrow his/her book?

CHAPTER 5

WELCOME SPEECH AND VOTE OF THANKS

Objectives:

- **Strengthen** Sentence Structure and Clarity
- **Enhance** Formal and Polite Language Proficiency
- **Achieve** Cohesion and Coherence in Speech Writing

Introduction

Public speaking is an essential skill that enables individuals to articulate their thoughts clearly and effectively. A **Welcome Speech** and a **Vote of Thanks** are two fundamental types of speeches delivered at formal events.

- A **Welcome Speech** is presented at the beginning of an event to greet attendees, introduce the purpose of the gathering, and set the right tone.
- A **Vote of Thanks** is delivered at the end of an event to express gratitude to those who contributed to its success.

Both speeches play a vital role in ensuring that the event runs smoothly and leaves a lasting impact on the audience.

Definition

A **Welcome Speech** is a formal address given at the beginning of an event to extend greetings and introduce the proceedings. It expresses gratitude to the attendees, provides an overview of the event, and sets the stage for the sessions that follow.

Importance of a Welcome Speech

1. **Marks the Beginning of an Event:** It officially opens the event and provides an introduction.
2. **Sets the Right Tone:** It establishes the mood, whether formal, celebratory, or engaging.
3. **Acknowledges Guests and Dignitaries:** It recognizes the presence of key individuals.
4. **Creates Engagement:** It grabs the audience's attention and builds interest in the program.
5. **Provides Essential Information:** It informs the participants about the event's theme, agenda, and significance.

Structure of a Welcome Speech

1. Introduction

- Greet the audience warmly.
Example: "Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure to welcome you all today."
- Express gratitude for their presence.
- Introduce yourself (if necessary).

2. Main Content

- Mention the event's theme, objectives, and significance.
- Highlight key aspects such as speakers, performances, or sessions.
- Acknowledge contributions from organizers and sponsors.

3. Conclusion

- End with an enthusiastic note, such as a hopeful message or a call to action.

- Introduce the next speaker or session.
- Thank the audience again for their presence.

Key Points to Remember for a Welcome Speech

- ✓ Keep it **brief** and to the point.
- ✓ Use a **warm and engaging tone**.
- ✓ Ensure **clarity** and avoid unnecessary jargon.
- ✓ Address **all key guests and participants** appropriately.
- ✓ End with an **inspiring remark** to build excitement.

Example:

1. Welcome Speech for a Seminar in College

Good morning, everyone!

Respected Principal [Principal's Name], esteemed faculty members, distinguished guests, and dear students, it is my absolute honour and privilege to extend a warm welcome to all of you to today's seminar on [Seminar Topic].

In today's fast-paced and ever-evolving world, knowledge and intellectual discussions play a crucial role in shaping our understanding and perspectives. This seminar has been organized with the aim of bringing together brilliant minds to discuss, deliberate, and explore new insights into [mention the significance of the topic].

We are truly honoured to have with us our Chief Guest, [Guest's Name], who is a renowned [mention guest's designation or achievements]. His/her presence here

today is a testament to the importance of this subject, and we are eager to hear their valuable insights and experiences.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to our Principal [Principal's Name] for his/her constant encouragement and support in making this seminar possible. His/her vision and leadership have always been instrumental in promoting a culture of learning and intellectual engagement.

A heartfelt welcome to all our faculty members and guest speakers, who have graciously accepted our invitation to be a part of this discussion. Your knowledge and expertise will surely provide us with deeper insights into this subject.

I also extend my warmest welcome to my fellow students and participants. Your enthusiasm and eagerness to learn are what make events like this truly meaningful. I encourage you all to actively participate, ask questions, and engage in discussions to make the most of this opportunity.

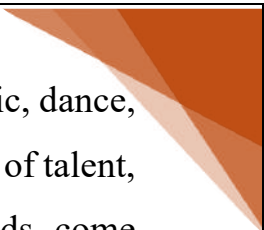
With that, let us commence this enriching journey of knowledge and exploration. Once again, welcome to this seminar, and I hope you all have an insightful and productive experience ahead.

Thank you!

2. Welcome Speech for Cultural Fest in college

Good morning!

Respected Principal [Principal's Name], esteemed faculty members, distinguished guests, and my dear friends, it is with immense joy and excitement that I welcome you all to [College Name]'s Annual Cultural Fest, [Event Name]!



Culture is the essence of our identity—it binds us together through music, dance, drama, art, and literature. This fest is not just an event; it is a celebration of talent, creativity, and diversity, where students from different backgrounds come together to showcase their artistic brilliance.

We are truly honoured to have with us our Chief Guest, [Guest's Name], a distinguished personality in the field of [mention their achievements or field].

Your presence here today adds great value to our celebration, and we look forward to your inspiring words.

A special note of gratitude to our Principal, [Principal's Name], whose unwavering support and encouragement have made this grand fest possible. Your belief in promoting cultural activities alongside academics is truly commendable.

I also take this opportunity to welcome and thank our faculty members, event coordinators, and organizing committee for their tireless efforts in bringing this fest to life. Months of planning, rehearsals, and dedication have finally led us to this moment of celebration.

And, of course, a warm and enthusiastic welcome to all our students, performers, and participants—the heart and soul of this fest! Your talent, enthusiasm, and passion make this event truly special. Whether you are here to perform, compete, or simply enjoy, this fest is for all of you.

So, get ready to witness electrifying performances, mesmerizing art, and unforgettable moments. Let's come together to celebrate creativity, passion, and the vibrant spirit of our college.

Once again, welcome to [Event Name], and let's make this a memorable and joyful experience!

Thank you, and let the celebrations begin!

Exercise:

1. Prepare a Welcome Speech for the Freshers' Day celebration at the college.
2. Draft a Welcome Speech for the inauguration of NSS activities at the university.
3. Write a Welcome Speech for the Annual Day function at the college.
4. Write a Welcome Speech for the Cultural Fest at RN Institute.
5. Write a Welcome Speech for a National Seminar organized by the department of English.

Vote of Thanks

Definition

A **Vote of Thanks** is a formal speech delivered at the end of an event to express gratitude to all ; including guests, organizers, and participants who contributed to its success.

Importance of a Vote of Thanks

1. **Expresses Gratitude:** It acknowledges contributions and efforts.
2. **Provides Closure:** It formally concludes the event.
3. **Strengthens Relationships:** It fosters goodwill and appreciation.
4. **Reflects on the Event's Impact:** It summarizes key takeaways.
5. **Leaves a Lasting Impression:** It ensures that attendees feel valued.

Structure of a Vote of Thanks

1. Introduction

- Greet the audience and introduce yourself.

Example: “Good evening, everyone. It is my honour to propose the Vote of Thanks.”

- Express appreciation for the event.

2. Main Content

- Thank the Chief Guest and speakers for their valuable contributions.
- Acknowledge the efforts of the organizing committee and volunteers.
- Express gratitude to the audience for their participation.

3. Conclusion

- End with a positive remark or a hopeful message.
- Thank everyone once again.
- Wish the audience well.

Key Points to Remember for a Vote of Thanks

- ✓ Keep it **concise and precise**.
- ✓ Express **genuine appreciation**.
- ✓ Ensure **all key contributors** are acknowledged.
- ✓ Deliver it with **confidence and warmth**.
- ✓ End on a **positive and inspiring note**.

Example:

1. Vote of thanks for Literary Fest in college

Good Morning, everyone.


It is a matter of great pride and joy for me to stand before you today to deliver the Vote of Thanks at the conclusion of this wonderful Literary Fest. This event has been a true celebration of literature, creativity, and intellectual discourse, and it would not have been possible without the combined efforts of many individuals.

First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our Chief Guest, [Guest's Name], for taking the time to be with us today and sharing such valuable insights. Your inspiring words have added immense value to this fest and will continue to motivate young minds in their literary pursuits.

A special note of thanks to our Principal, [Principal's Name], for the constant support, encouragement, and vision that have enabled us to organize such a vibrant and enriching event. Your belief in the power of literature has truly made this fest a grand success.

I also extend my sincere appreciation to our guest speakers, panellists, and authors who have graced this occasion with their presence, engaging discussions, and thought-provoking sessions. Your perspectives have left us all with new ideas and inspiration.

A big round of applause to our organizing committee, faculty members, and student volunteers, whose hard work and dedication have been the driving force behind this fest. Your meticulous planning and tireless efforts have made this event both enjoyable and enlightening.



To all the participants—poets, writers, speakers, and debaters—thank you for sharing your creativity and passion for literature. Your contributions have truly made this fest a platform for artistic expression and intellectual exchange.

Special thanks to our technical team, media partners, and sponsors, whose support and seamless coordination have ensured the smooth execution of this fest.

Lastly, but most importantly, I extend my gratitude to our wonderful audience—students, teachers, and literary enthusiasts—who have made this fest lively and engaging with their enthusiasm and active participation.

As we bring this Literary Fest to a close, let us carry forward the inspiration and ideas we have gathered today. I once again thank everyone who contributed to make this event a grand success.


Wishing you all a great day and looking forward to many more literary celebrations in the future

2. Vote of Thanks for Annual Sports Meet

Good evening, everyone.

It is an absolute honour to stand before you today to propose the Vote of Thanks on behalf of our institution at the conclusion of this Annual Sports Meet. This event has been a grand celebration of sportsmanship, dedication, and teamwork, and it would not have been possible without the unwavering support of many individuals.

First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our Chief Guest, [Guest's Name], for gracing this occasion with his/her presence and inspiring words. Your



valuable insights and encouragement have truly motivated our young athletes to strive for excellence.

Special thanks to our Principal, [Principal's Name], for his/her continuous guidance and unwavering support in promoting sports and overall development among students. Your encouragement has played a crucial role in making this event a resounding success.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to our sports coordinators, faculty members, and organizing committee for their meticulous planning and efforts in ensuring the smooth execution of this event. Your hard work behind the scenes has made this day both enjoyable and memorable.

A huge round of applause to our athletes and participants who have shown immense dedication, perseverance, and competitive spirit. Your enthusiasm and determination have truly embodied the spirit of sportsmanship, making this event a spectacular success.

To our volunteers, support staff, and technical team, thank you for your relentless efforts in coordinating various aspects of the event, ensuring that everything ran seamlessly. Your contribution is deeply appreciated.

Finally, I extend my gratitude to our spectators, parents, and students for your encouragement, cheering, and participation. Your support has added energy and excitement to this sports meet.

As we conclude this wonderful event, let us carry forward the values of discipline, teamwork, and perseverance in all our endeavours. Thank you once again, and I look forward to meeting you all at our next sporting event.

Have a great day!



Exercise:

1. Write a Vote of Thanks speech to conclude a Department Seminar.
2. Draft a Vote of Thanks for College Day Celebrations.
3. Prepare a Vote of Thanks for the Valedictory Ceremony of your college activities.
4. Write a Vote of Thanks for the Annual Sports Meet.
5. Prepare a Vote of Thanks for the Farewell Event of the senior batch.

CHAPTER 6

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS AND GIVING DIRECTIONS

Objectives

- **Understand** the difference between giving instructions and giving directions, and recognize when to use each effectively.
- **Use clear and structured language** with appropriate key phrases to provide step-by-step instructions and accurate directions.

Introduction

In daily communication, we often give instructions and directions to help others complete tasks or find their way. While both serve different purposes, they share the common goal of guiding someone effectively.

Giving Instructions

Instructions are **step-by-step guidelines** that explain how to complete a task.

They are commonly used in:

- Recipes
- Manuals (e.g., assembling furniture, operating a machine)
- School or workplace settings (e.g., exam guidelines, project tasks)
- Safety measures (e.g., fire drill procedures)

Key Features of Instructions

- **Clear and precise language** (Avoid vague terms)
- **Imperative verbs** (e.g., "Cut the paper," "Press the button")
- **Logical sequence** (Step 1, Step 2, Step 3...)
- **Concise and direct sentences**

- **Use of numbers or bullet points**
- **Diagrams or images (if needed)**

Common Sentence Structures for Giving Instructions

1. Use of Imperative Sentences

- "Mix the ingredients well."
- "Turn off the lights before leaving."

2. Use of Sequencing Words (to show order)

- "First, open the lid. Next, pour the liquid."
- "After that, press the start button."

3. Use of Passive Voice (for formal or polite instructions)

- "The form should be filled out carefully."
- "The machine must be cleaned after use."

Key Phrases for Giving Instructions

Purpose	Key Phrases
Starting Instructions	"First, you need to...", "To begin with...", "Start by...", "The first step is to...", "Before you start, make sure to..."
Continuing Instructions	"Next, ...", "Then, ...", "After that, ...", "Once you have done that, ...", "Proceed to the next step by ..."
Giving Warnings or Precautions	"Be careful when ...", "Make sure to ...", "Avoid ...", "Do not forget to ...", "Take note that ...", "Handle with care because ..."

Clarifying Instructions	"What I mean is ...", "In other words, ...", "Let me explain it another way...", "Simply put, ...", "To clarify, ..."
Concluding Instructions	"Finally, ...", "Once you finish, ...", "At the end, ...", "That's all you need to do!", "Your task is complete once..."
Checking Understanding	"Did you get that?", "Do you need me to repeat anything?", "Is everything clear so far?", "Would you like me to go over that again?", "Does that make sense to you?"

Example 1: How to Make a Cup of Tea

1. **Start by** boiling some water in a kettle.
2. **Next**, place a tea bag in a cup.
3. **Then**, carefully pour the hot water over the tea bag.
4. **Allow it to steep** for about 3–5 minutes.
5. **After that**, remove the tea bag and **add** sugar or milk as desired.
6. **Finally**, stir well and **enjoy your tea!**

Example 2: Using a Photocopier

1. **First**, turn on the machine.
2. **Then**, place the document on the scanner.
3. **Next**, select the number of copies you need.
4. **After that**, press the "**Start**" button.
5. **Wait patiently** for the copies to print, then **collect your documents**



Exercise:

Write step-by-step instructions for the following:

- How to send an email
- How to tie a shoelace
- How to prepare instant noodles

GIVING DIRECTIONS

Directions are instructions given to help someone reach a destination. They are commonly used when:

- Helping someone find a place
- Using navigation apps
- Giving road directions

Key Features of Directions

- **Use of landmarks** (e.g., "Next to the bank," "Opposite the mall")
- **Prepositions of place and movement** (e.g., "Go past," "Turn right at")
- **Short, clear sentences**
- **Polite and helpful tone**

Common Sentence Structures for Giving Directions

1. Using Imperatives

- "Go straight for two blocks."
- "Take the second left."

2. Using Landmarks

- "You'll see a post office on your right."
- "The café is next to the pharmacy."

3. Using Prepositions of Movement

- "Walk past the supermarket."
- "Turn left at the traffic light."

4. Using Questions & Politeness

- "Could you tell me how to get to the library?"
- "Excuse me, is there a hospital nearby?"

Key Phrases for Giving Directions

Purpose	Key Phrases
Starting Directions	"Go straight ahead.", "Head in the direction of ...", "Walk/Drive towards...", "Follow this road until ...", "Continue moving straight until you reach..."
Turning	"Turn left/right at ...", "Take a left/right at ...", "Make a sharp left/right at...", "At the next intersection, turn ...", "Take the first/second/third turn ..."
Landmarks	"You'll see a ... on your left/right.", "It's next to ...", "It's opposite ...", "It's behind ...", "It's in front of ...", "You will pass a ... before reaching your destination."
Distance and Timing	"It's about 5 minutes from here.", "It's around 500 meters away.", "Walk/Drive for about ... meters.", "It will take approximately ... minutes/hours."
Giving Alternatives	"You can also take ...", "Another way to get there is ...", "If you prefer a shorter route, you can ...", "You may also consider ..."
Checking Understanding	"Did you follow that?", "Would you like me to repeat that?", "Do you need more details?", "Are you okay with these directions?"

Practicing Verbal Directions Without Maps

Example 1: How to Get to the Railway Station

1. Go straight along Main Street.
2. Turn left at the second traffic light.
3. Walk past the supermarket.
4. The railway station is on your right, opposite the petrol station.

Example 2: Giving Directions in a Mall

1. Enter the main gate and walk straight.
2. Take the escalator to the second floor.
3. Turn right and walk past the clothing stores.
4. The bookstore is at the end of the corridor on the left.

Exercise:

Give directions for the following:

- How to go to the nearest park from your school.
- How to reach a friend's house from the bus stop.
- How to guide someone to the cafeteria in a shopping mall.

Important Phrasal Verbs for Giving Instructions and Directions

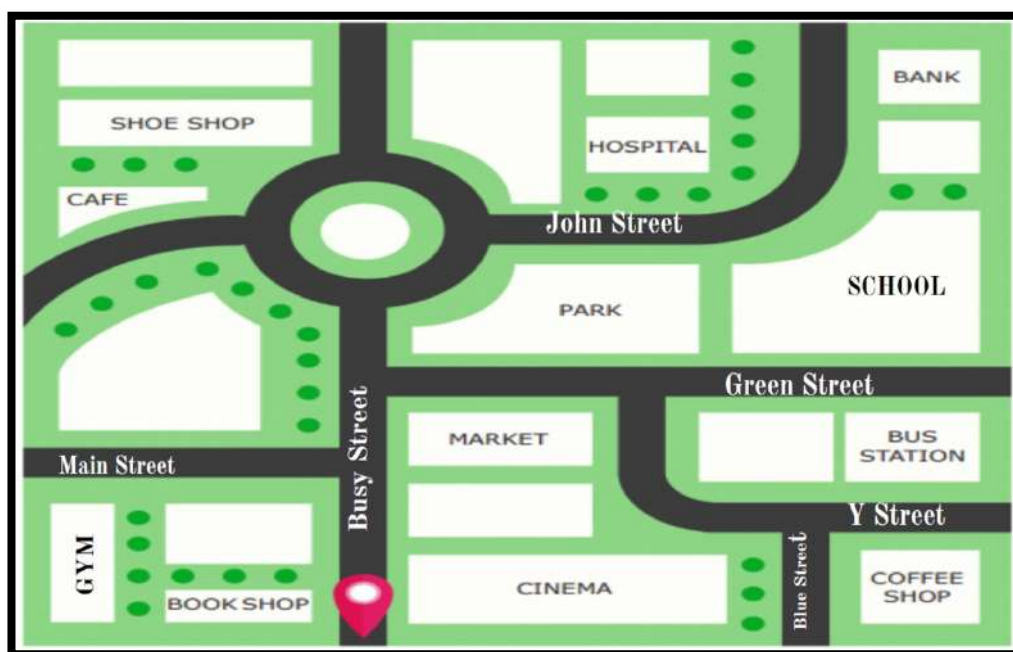
Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Example Sentence
Turn on	Start a device/machine	"Turn on the printer before using it."
Turn off	Stop a device/machine	"Don't forget to turn off the lights when you leave."
Plug in	Connect to an electrical source	"Plug in the charger to power up your laptop."
Fill in	Complete a form/document	"Please fill in your details on the application form."
Set up	Arrange or prepare something	"Set up the tent before it gets dark."

Go straight	Move forward without turning	"Go straight for two blocks until you see the gas station."
Turn left/right	Change direction	"Turn right at the intersection to reach the mall."
Look for	Try to find something	"Look for the information desk near the entrance."
Go past	Pass a location	"Go past the bank, and you'll find the restaurant on your left."
Head towards	Move in the direction of a place	"Head towards the bridge, then take a left."
Slow down	Reduce speed	"Slow down when approaching the school zone."
Speed up	Increase speed	"Speed up to merge onto the highway."
Pick up	Collect or lift something	"Pick up your luggage from the baggage claim area."
Drop off	Leave someone/something at a place	"I'll drop you off at the bus station."
Try out	Test or use something	"Try out the new coffee machine by following the instructions."
Break down	Stop working (for machines/vehicles)	"If your car breaks down, call for roadside assistance."
Figure out	Solve or understand something	"Figure out the problem before restarting the device."
Put together	Assemble something	"Put together the furniture by following the manual."

B. Study the above given map and fill in the blanks choosing the appropriate form of words given in the bracket. Some words could be used more than once. (east, west, north, south, crossroad, library, left turn, Post Office, right turn, Police, farm, Great Circle, go along, etc.)

Exit the Post Office on the East side. Take a _____ turn to enter Winter Street. _____ until you reach the bank on your _____ side. At the crossroad, take a left turn to enter Leaf Street. _____ and you will find the Police Station on your _____. Deliver the letters and continue on _____ to reach Farm Lane. Take a _____ turn and cross the road to go into the farm and drop the letters. Exit the farm onto the _____ and go right. Continue and go _____ the Great Circle onto Forest Lane. Take a _____ turn to enter Gold Street. You may deliver the posts to the houses on the _____ side off Gold Street.

2. Look at the map given below and give directions for the following tasks.





i. To reach School from the Book Shop

ii. To go to Coffee Shop from the Hospital

iii. Direct your friend to go to the Cinema from the Cafe.

QUESTION PAPER PATTERN
B.SC./B.SC. (FAD) AND OTHER PROGRAMS UNDER THE FACULTY
OF SCIENCE
II SEMESTER

Time: 3 hrs

Marks: 80

SECTION -A
(Literary Component -50 Marks)

(Questions to be set on both Prose and Poetry)

- | | |
|--|----------|
| I. Answer in two or three sentences (ANY 5 out of 7 questions) | 5×2 = 10 |
| II. Answer in about a page each (ANY 4 out of 5 questions) | 4×5 = 20 |
| III. Answer in about two pages each(ANY 2 out of 3 question) | 2×10 =20 |

SECTION -B
(Grammar Component -30 Marks)

- | | |
|---|----------|
| IV. Comprehension Passage | 05 Marks |
| V. Picture Reading and Giving a Caption | 04 Marks |
| VI. Listening and Hearing Skills | 03 Marks |
| VII. Soft Skills
(Introducing oneself, Introducing others,
Requests, Offering help, Seeking permission) | 10 Marks |
| VIII. Welcome Speech or Vote of Thanks | 04 Marks |
| IX. Giving Instructions or Giving Directions | 04 Marks |

MODEL QUESTION PAPER
II Semester B.Sc./ B.Sc.(FAD), B.V.A. Degree Examination,
GENERAL ENGLISH
ELOQUENTIA-II
(SEP Scheme)

Time: 3 Hours

Maximum Marks: 80

Instructions to Candidates:

- 1) Read all the questions carefully and write answers.***
- 2) Write all the question numbers correctly.***

SECTION-A
(Literary Component-50 Marks)

I. Answer any FIVE of the following questions in a sentence or two each.

(5x2=10)

1. What does the poet indicate by the phrase 'flag of breezes' in the poem *The Heart of the Tree*?
2. What does the hearth symbolize in the poem *Any Woman*?
3. The Imp encourages responsible use of wealth by the farmer. True/False
4. When Hornus went to take the colours from the Colonel, the Colonel told him that the colours were:
 - a. At the arsenal
 - b. At the Major's house
 - c. On the battlefield
5. The ants employed a poison similar to the venom of _____.
6. Which Indian Army officer was among the first women to be appointed to a command role?

7. Who was the most influential person in Viji's life, and how did this relationship affect her worldview and personal life?

II. Answer any FOUR of the following questions in about a page

each:

(4x5=20)

1. Discuss the central metaphors used in the poem Any Woman and their impact on the reader.
2. How do trees contribute to life on Earth as described by the poet in The Heart of the Tree?
3. How does the poor peasant's behaviour evolve as he becomes wealthy in the story The Imp and the Crust?
4. Explain the impact of women being appointed on warships in the Indian Navy, as mentioned by Lieutenant Commander Annu Prakash.
5. What challenges did Viji face in pursuing her research career, and how did she overcome them?

III. Answer any TWO of the following questions in about two pages

each:

(2x10=20)

1. How does the peasant's transformation from a kind-hearted individual to a violent and envious character symbolize the themes of The Imp and the Crust?
2. 'Take my flag from me indeed! It is not possible...' How does this statement reflect the character and determination of Sergeant Hornus?
3. Discuss how H.G. Wells uses the ants as a metaphor for the potential downfall of human dominance on Earth.

SECTION -B
(Grammar Component -30 Marks)

IV. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions set on it: (5x1=5)

Photosynthesis is the process by which plants, algae, and certain bacteria convert light energy into chemical energy, storing it as glucose. This process occurs in the chloroplasts of plant cells, where chlorophyll absorbs sunlight. During photosynthesis, plants absorb carbon dioxide from the air and water from the soil. Using sunlight energy, they combine these substances to produce glucose and release oxygen as a by-product. The glucose serves as an energy source for the plant's growth and various metabolic functions. Photosynthesis is vital for life on Earth, as it provides oxygen for the atmosphere and forms the foundation of the food chain for many organisms.

1. What is the primary function of photosynthesis in plants, algae, and certain bacteria?
2. In which part of plant cells does photosynthesis occur, and what is the role of chlorophyll in this process?
3. What do plants require for photosynthesis, and what are the resulting products?
4. How does glucose generated through photosynthesis support plant life?
5. Why is photosynthesis crucial for sustaining life on Earth?

V. Observe the given picture carefully and write: (2+2=4)

- a) A description of the picture.
- b) A suitable caption.



VI. Answer the following questions: (3x1=3)

1. Explain the steps involved in the listening process.
2. Differentiate between hearing and listening.
3. Identify common barriers to effective listening.

VII. Do as directed: (5x2=10)

1. Introduce yourself to the librarian of your college.
2. Introduce your classmate to the Placement Officer of your institution.
3. Write an informal request to borrow a book from a friend.

4. Offer help to a fellow student who is struggling with assignments.
5. Request your Principal for permission to organize a social awareness event in college.

VIII. Write a Welcome Speech for the Annual Day function at the college.

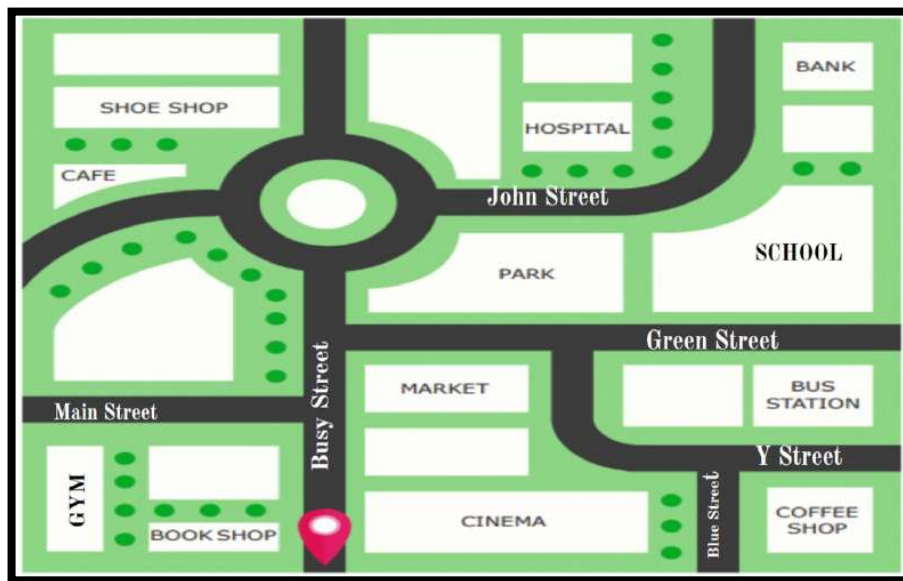
OR (4)

Write a Vote of Thanks for the Farewell Event of the senior batch.

IX. Give instructions to your friend on how to prepare instant noodles.

OR (4)

Look at the map given below and give directions for the following :



- a) To reach School from the Book Shop.
- b) To go to the Cinema from the Cafe.
