

RADIANCE- II

II Semester B.A./B.S.W/B.A,(Music)

GENERAL ENGLISH

Under the State Education Policy
(SEP-2024-25)

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PRASARANGA

BANGALORE CITY UNIVERSITY

Bengaluru

RADIANCE-II: General English Textbook for II Semester B.A/B.S.W/B.A (Music) and other courses coming under Faculty of Arts, is prepared by the Members of the Textbook Committee, Bengaluru City University (BCU).



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FOREWORD

Radiance -II, the General English Textbook for the Second Semester B.A/ B.S.W/ B.A (Music) and other courses coming under faculty of Arts, Bengaluru City University (BCU), is designed to improve language skills and hone literary sensibilities among the students.

This is the first General English textbook for the students of Arts (BCU) under State Education Policy (SEP). It is prepared by the members of the BCU textbook committee. I congratulate the Chairperson and all the members of the textbook committee for their efforts in the preparation and selection of materials to improve communication and linguistic skills.

I thank the Director of BCU Press and their personnel for bringing out the textbook on time. I hope the teachers and the stakeholders will make the best use of this textbook to improve LSRW skills and appreciate literature.

Prof. Lingaraja Gandhi
Vice-Chancellor
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PREFACE

Radiance-II, the General English Textbook for the Second Semester B.A and other courses under the faculty of Arts (BCU), is designed to improve the linguistics and communication skills, to sensitize the students to thought provoking ideas, concepts and issues by engaging them with interesting literary texts. This is the first General English textbook for the Second Semester B.A/ B.S.W/ B.A (Music) in the State Education Policy (SEP).

The Course Book has a wide range of literary pieces from English, American and Indian writers to help student appreciate Literature in its diversity while introducing them to new ideas and thought provoking topics to help students develop critical thinking. The Grammar component which is retained from the previous Workbook consists of the language component intended to hone the LSRW skills.

The marks allotment for the End semester exam is for 80 Marks in Total; of which 50 marks is allotted for the course book and 30 marks for the Grammar section. Internal Assessment in the SEP syllabus is for 20 Marks. It is hoped that the teachers and students will make the best use of the course book and the workbook components to appreciate literature and to enhance the learners' communicative skills.

I thank the Chairperson and the team members of the textbook committee for their efforts in the preparation of this text in consonance with the objectives of the State Education Policy syllabus. I also thank the members of the BOS for their constant support and contribution in the selection of the literary pieces and in bringing out the Text book.

I would like to thank the Vice Chancellor and the Registrar of BCU for their consistent support. I also thank the publishers and the printers who helped to bring out the textbook neatly and on time.

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Note to the Teacher

Radiance-II, the General English Text Book under the New SEP syllabus for II Semester B.A/ B.S.W/ B.A (Music) and other courses under the Faculty of Arts is aimed at introducing the students to varied Literary pieces selected from Indian writing, British and American Literature to help them get acquainted with different kinds of English that is being used in a Global context. This will help them develop their language skills in a realistic manner and to improve their employability prospects in a multi-cultural corporate world.

The selected pieces are also graded ranging with simple and easy language to a higher degree of language complexity which can be taught with the help of a well worked out Glossary and comprehension questions provided at the end of each chapter. The teacher can also additionally help the students with additional references provided in the text book. The pre-reading, post –reading activities, suggested reading and references provided in the text book goes a long way in helping both the teachers and the students to enrich their knowledge and language skills.

The text comprises of Indian writing that is relatable to the Indian context, culture and its legends and mythologies. It also helps them to get acquainted with local issues and situations in real life. At the same time it also introduces them to some of the excellent British and American literary pieces and writers, making their literary experience richer. Care has been taken to select such texts that will also introduce them to various ideas and concepts like career options, life values, gender related issues, which can initiate thought provoking discussions and critical thinking and help them in consolidating human and life values. The textbook comprises short stories, poems, letters and essays to acquaint students to various genres and varied forms of writing which helps them to appreciate literature and creative writing.

The broad objectives of the textbook are:

- To acquaint the students to various genres and various English writings to develop an appreciation of literature.
- To help trigger discussions helping in developing communicative skills.
- To enhance observation and thinking skills and aid in vocabulary and language development.
- To develop critical thinking.
- To enable the learners to communicate effectively and appropriately in real life situations.
- To integrate the use of LSRW skills and develop language skills.

Furthermore, some changes have been made regarding the weightage of marks allotment in the new text. The course carries 4 credits and is assessed at the end semester exam for 80 marks, out of which 50 marks are allotted for the course book and 30 marks allotted to the Grammar component / work book. 20 marks have been allotted for Internal Assessment, out of which 10 marks can be allotted for internal tests and 10 marks for Assignments / Presentations / Workbook. The pattern of Assessment and a model question paper has been included at the end of the text book for the guidance of the teachers and the students.

The committee hopes that the textbook helps the students in developing skills that will increase their career prospects and boost their confidence in the use of language and communication skills.

The committee expresses its gratitude to Prof. Lingaraja Gandhi, the Vice Chancellor of BCU for his support and guidance. The committee also extends its thanks to Dr. Tandava Gowda, Chairperson, BCU and all the BOS members especially Ms Prasanna Udipikar and Ms Ayesha Firdose for their steadfast support and timely inputs. We are grateful to the staff of Prasaranga, Bengaluru City University Press, BCU for their efforts in bringing out this textbook so neatly on time.

I would like to place on record the immense contribution and intense involvement of the text book committee members, in thoughtfully curating every literary piece for fine honing the literary sensibilities of the students.

Dr. Rekha Kowshik.P.R
Chairperson,
Text Book Committee.
BCU, Bengaluru.

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1. Be Melting Snow

– *Mevlâna Jalâluddîn Rumi translated by Coleman Barks*

Pre-reading activity

1. What is spirituality according to you?
2. What are the ways in which one can be spiritual in today's world?

Note to the Reader

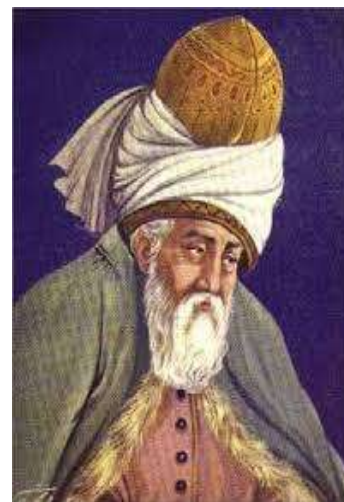
Sufism:

A way to draw closer to God through self-purification, meditation, and remembering God through song, chant, and sometimes dance. The central concern of Sufism is *tawhîd*, the belief that "there is no deity but God".

Nafs (نفس) is an Arabic word occurring in the Quran, literally meaning "self", and has been translated as "psyche", "ego" or "soul". The elimination of *nafs* is central for proper worship of God, according to the teachings of Sufism.

About the Poet :

Rumi (1207-1273) was a Persian poet and Islamic scholar who was a devoted practitioner of Sufism belonging a mystical Islamic tradition. He was a great Sufi mystic and poet whose work influenced mystical thought and literature throughout the world. His real name was Muhammad, but he was also known by the nicknames Jalaladdin and Mevlana, which mean "our master". Rumi studied under the scholar Burhaneddin al-Tirmithi for nine years, focusing on the foundations of Sufism, including divine love, humility, and tolerance. After Burhaneddin's death, Rumi became an Islamic jurist, teacher, and preacher in Konya. A meeting with the dervish Shams-e Tabrizi transformed Rumi from a teacher and jurist into an ascetic.



About the Translator:

Coleman Barks (born April 23, 1937) is an American poet and former literature faculty member at the University of Georgia. Although he neither speaks nor reads Persian, he is a popular interpreter of Rumi, rewriting the poems based on other English translations.



‘Be Melting Snow’ suggests a journey towards spiritual enlightenment and self-discovery. It encourages individuals to embrace change, shed their ego, and seek a deeper connection with the world around them. In essence, it promotes the idea of becoming more open, fluid, and connected, transcending the confines of one's self. Once one has melted like snow beyond these limiting veils, all that is left is God. This stage, the consummation of the spiritual path, is termed “Baqa” or ‘life in God.’

Totally conscious, and apropos of nothing, you come to see me.
Is someone here? I ask.
The moon. The full moon is inside your house.
My friends and I go running out into the street.
I'm in here, comes a voice from the house, but we aren't listening.
We're looking up at the sky.
My pet nightingale sobs like a drunk in the garden.
Ringdoves scatter with small cries, Where, Where.
It's midnight. The whole neighborhood is up and out
in the street thinking, The cat burglar has come back.
The actual thief is there too, saying out loud,
Yes, the cat burglar is somewhere in this crowd.
No one pays attention.
Lo, I am with you always means when you look for God,
God is in the look of your eyes,
in the thought of looking, nearer to you than your self,
or things that have happened to you
There's no need to go outside.
Be melting snow.
Wash yourself of yourself.
A white flower grows in quietness.
Let your tongue become that flower.

**-Ghazal 2172 from Rumi's *Diwan-eShams*
translated by Coleman Barks**

Glossary:

Apropos of nothing: for no reason

Ringdoves : a [dove](#) or [pigeon](#) with a [ring-shaped](#) mark around the neck.

Cat Burglar: a thief who enters a building by climbing to an upper storey

‘Wash yourself of yourself’: means to transcend the sense of personal ego — termed Nafs or the ‘animal soul’ in Sufism — that veils the presence of God in all things, and within one’s self.

‘Be melting snow’: refers to the loosening of personal boundaries that occur with such ego transcendence. In Sufism, it is the stage called “Fana” or annihilation, in which one dies to the unreal divisions which ego-shaitan has erected, in its desire to be a god unto itself.

Comprehension:

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

1. Who does the ‘you’ in the first line refer to?
2. What does the full moon inside the house signify?
3. Why is the pet nightingale sobbing?
4. Who’s voice says, “I’m in here”?
5. Where is God, according to the poet?

II. Answer the following questions in a page”

1. Why is nobody paying attention in the poem?
2. Why does Rumi say, “There’s no need to go outside”?
3. “God is in the look of your eyes, in the thought of looking, nearer to you than your self”. Do you think this line is the crux of the poem? What is the meaning of ‘self’?
4. What is the significance of the title, “Be Melting Snow”?
5. Comment on the imagery used in the poem.

III. Answer the following questions in about two pages:

1. How does Rumi explain the importance of transcending above one’s ego in this poem?
2. In the Advaita Vedanta, there is a sanskrit mantra- “Aham Brahmasmi”. Do you think it has any correlation to the spirit of this poem?

2.If

By Rudyard Kipling

Pre-reading:

1. What do you mean by self-control?
2. How does discipline plays an important role in the life of an individual?
3. How can a father lead his children towards the right path ?

Note on the Author

Rudyard Kipling (30 December 1865-18 January 1936) was a famous English literary figure. He was a reputed journalist, poet and also a novelist. He was born in Bombay, India. As a boy, he took pleasure in the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Wilkie Collins. He was around eleven years old when he first started writing. Kipling's best-known work, *The Jungle Book*, was published in the late 1890s. Kipling's life took a tragic turn in the 1930s with the death of his second child. After developing an ulcer and undergoing surgery, Kipling died less than a week later. His ashes were interred in Westminster Abbey in Poet's Corner.



Since his writing has come under some scrutiny as readers' opinions of his colonial, sometimes overly masculine tone now seem much less tasteful. *If* is a famous poem written by Rudyard Kipling. *"If"* is a poem which talks about stoicism, which means self-control and self-discipline. Stoicism also means the capacity to remain cool and calm even during testing times. This poem is addressed by Kipling to his son. The poet lists out the tough conditions his son has to endure to become a Man. The first advice the poet gives his son is that even when all others are losing their temper and blame him he should not lose his temper. He should keep his head as cool as a cucumber. When all others do not have trust in him, the son should trust himself, he should also respect the people who had doubts on him. The poet advises his son that even when there is a situation to tell a lie and escape a situation, he should not tell a lie. He should wait for truth to triumph. When people around him hate him, it is not good that he too hates them. The son should pose himself to be good in stature always and douse anger. The son should not talk as a very intelligent person in the crowd. He should be modest and submissive. The poet advises his son that he should not allow his dreams to master him or his thoughts to become his aim. Winning and losing are two extremes.

The poet's son should treat both of these feeling as one. The poet gives two situations. The son tells a truth and he watches the words are wrongly interpreted by his enemies and they make a trap. The son watches his precious things for which he craved for a long time are broken and he finds that he can't make one more again for he has only broken tools. The son should remain calm and undisturbed during these situations. The poet tells his son that even if he collects all his wins and make it as a heap and lose it at once, he should not cry for his loss, he should not talk about his loss; he should begin to work again. The poet advises his son even when his physical conditions are bad and he is worn out he should have a strong will and courage to go on. The poet advises his son to move with people but not get diverted of his goodness. He may also get a chance to move with the kings but should be down to earth and understand that he is a common man. The poet advises his son that, even if his enemies or loving friends hurt him, he should not be disturbed. He can move with all people but should not confine to a small group. He should think that every minute has sixty chances for achieving the goals. When his son adheres to these words then the Earth becomes his own. Everything in this earth becomes his. The son then becomes a man, and growth and maturity are certain!

Text

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

Glossary:

- Keep your head: To stay calm
- Make allowance for: To take into account
- Impostor: Fraud
- Knave: Trickster
- Stoop: To bend down
- Build 'em up: Build them up
- Worn-out: Useless
- Pitch-and-toss: A game in which players throw coins.
- Sinew: Tough tissue that joins muscle to bone.
- Hold on: To continue
- Foe: Enemy
- Count with you: To be important for others

Comprehension:

I Answer the following in a sentence or two:

1. Who is the speaker in the poem?
2. For whom is the poem intended?
3. What does it mean to 'keep your head'?
4. According to the poem who are the two imposters of life?
5. The poem talks about patience. True/False
6. What do knaves represent in the poem?
7. What will happen if you can do all the things in the poem?
8. The phrase 'yours is the Earth and everything that's in it' refers to-----
9. What does the poet tell the reader not to 'give way' to?
10. What does the author warn the reader not to make 'their master'?

II Answer the following in about a page:

1. Explain the poet's views on honesty and fortitude of character.
2. What is the poet's approach to dreams and longings?
3. What is the visualization of the father about his son?
4. Write a note on the speaker of the poem.
5. What is the message conveyed in the last stanza of the poem?

III Answer the following in about two pages:

1. Explain the significance of the title 'If'?
2. How has the poet used comparison and contrast to explain his thoughts?
3. How relevant is the speaker's advice? How can you imbibe it in your life?

Suggested reading:

Read Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken"

3.The Guests

- Saki

Pre- Reading Activity

- What are some peculiarities that you have observed in guests who stayed in your home?
- Why does boredom occur? What are things that you do to deal with boredom?

About the Author



Hector Hugh Munro (18 December 1870 – 14 November 1916), popularly known by his pen name Saki, was a British writer renowned for his sharp wit, satirical humor, and mastery of the short story form. Born on December 18, 1870, in Akyab, Burma (now Sittwe, Myanmar), where his father was a British officer, Saki was later sent to England for his education after the early death of his mother.

Saki's works often critique Edwardian society, exposing the hypocrisy, absurdities, and rigid social conventions of the time. He is celebrated for his ability to blend dark humor with irony, often introducing unexpected twists in his stories. Influenced by authors like Oscar Wilde and Kipling, Saki developed a style marked by clever dialogue, eccentric characters, and a penchant for the macabre.

Some of his most famous works include short stories like "The Open Window", "The Schartz-Metterklume Method", and "Sredni Vashtar." Saki also wrote novels, such as "The Unbearable Bassington" and "When William Came", and political commentary under his real name.

About the Text

'*The Guests*' is a witty and humorous tale that recounts Matilda's chaotic experience hosting the Bishop of Bequar during a flood. Already awkward due to a family feud, the visit becomes even more absurd when a leopard invades the Bishop's room, and the house fills with displaced animals, wet chickens, and overwhelmed servants.

Through sharp dialogue and escalating mishaps, Saki humorously explores the struggles of hospitality, the absurdity of life, and the tension between social obligations and personal grievances. The story is a perfect blend of satire, irony, and comedy.

Note: Absurdism in literature often deals with the idea that life is chaotic, irrational, or meaningless, and this story features bizarre and surreal events that defy logic. While this story is not entirely absurdist, it has certain elements of absurdism.

Irony: A situation where the outcome is opposite to what was expected or a contrast between appearance and reality.

Wit: The ability to express oneself in an intelligent and quick manner, often with clever or sharp remarks.

Humor: The quality of being amusing, entertaining, or funny.

Satire: The use of humor, irony, or exaggeration to criticize or mock people, institutions, or society.

The Guests

"The landscape seen from our windows is certainly charming," said Annabel; "those cherry orchards and green meadows, and the river winding along the valley, and the church tower peeping out among the elms, they all make a most effective picture. There's something dreadfully sleepy and languorous about it, though; stagnation seems to be the dominant note. Nothing ever happens here; seedtime and harvest, an occasional outbreak of measles or a mildly destructive thunderstorm, and a little election excitement about once in five years, that is all that we have to modify the monotony of our existence. Rather dreadful, isn't it?"

"On the contrary," said Matilda, "I find it soothing and restful; but then, you see, I've lived in countries where things do happen, ever so many at a time, when you're not ready for them happening all at once."

"That, of course, makes a difference," said Annabel.

"I have never forgotten," said Matilda, "the occasion when the Bishop of Bequar paid us an unexpected visit; he was on his way to lay the foundation-stone of a mission-house or something of the sort."

"I thought that out there you were always prepared for emergency guests turning up," said Annabel.

"I was quite prepared for half a dozen Bishops," said Matilda, "but it was rather disconcerting to find out after a little conversation that this particular one was a distant cousin of mine, belonging to a branch of the family that had quarrelled bitterly and offensively with our branch about a Crown Derby dessert service; they got it, and we ought to have got it, in some legacy, or else we got it and they thought they ought to have it, I forget which; anyhow, I know they behaved disgracefully. Now here was one of them turning up in the odour of sanctity, so to speak, and claiming the traditional hospitality of the East."

"It was rather trying, but you could have left your husband to do most of the entertaining."

"My husband was fifty miles up-country, talking sense, or what he imagined to be sense, to a village community that fancied one of their leading men was a were-tiger."

"A what tiger?"

"A were-tiger; you've heard of were-wolves, haven't you, a mixture of wolf and human being and demon? Well, in those parts they have were-tigers, or think they have, and I must say that in this case, so far as sworn and uncontested evidence went, they had every ground for thinking so. However, as we gave up witchcraft prosecutions about three hundred years ago, we don't like to have other people keeping on our discarded practices; it doesn't seem respectful to our mental and moral position."

"I hope you weren't unkind to the Bishop," said Annabel.

"Well, of course he was my guest, so I had to be outwardly polite to him, but he was tactless enough to rake up the incidents of the old quarrel, and to try to make out that there was something to be said for the way his side of the family had behaved; even if there was, which I don't for a moment admit, my house was not the place in which to say it. I didn't argue the matter, but I gave my cook a holiday to go and visit his aged parents some ninety miles away. The emergency cook was not a specialist in curries, in

fact, I don't think cooking in any shape or form could have been one of his strong points. I believe he originally came to us in the guise of a gardener, but as we never pretended to have anything that could be considered a garden he was utilised as assistant goatherd, in which capacity, I understand, he gave every satisfaction. When the Bishop heard that I had sent away the cook on a special and unnecessary holiday he saw the inwardness of the manoeuvre, and from that moment we were scarcely on speaking terms. If you have ever had a Bishop with whom you were not on speaking terms staying in your house, you will appreciate the situation."

Annabel confessed that her life-story had never included such a disturbing experience.

"Then," continued Matilda, "to make matters more complicated, the Gwadlipichee overflowed its banks, a thing it did every now and then when the rains were unduly prolonged, and the lower part of the house and all the out-buildings were submerged. We managed to get the ponies loose in time, and the syce swam the whole lot of them off to the nearest rising ground. A goat or two, the chief goatherd, the chief goat-herd's wife, and several of their babies came to anchorage in the verandah. All the rest of the available space was filled up with wet, bedraggled-looking hens and chickens; one never really knows how many fowls one possesses till the servants' quarters are flooded out. Of course, I had been through something of the sort in previous floods, but never before had I had a houseful of goats and babies and half-drowned hens, supplemented by a Bishop with whom I was hardly on speaking terms."

"It must have been a trying experience," commented Annabel.

"More embarrassments were to follow. I wasn't going to let a mere ordinary flood wash out the memory of that Crown Derby dessert service, and I intimated to the Bishop that his large bedroom, with a writing table in it, and his small bath-room, with a sufficiency of cold-water jars in it, was his share of the premises, and that space was rather congested under the existing circumstances. However, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, when he had awakened from his midday sleep, he made a sudden incursion into the room that was normally the drawing-room, but was now dining-room, store-house, saddle-room, and half a dozen other temporary premises as well. From the condition of my guest's costume he seemed to think it might also serve as his dressing-room.

"'I'm afraid there is nowhere for you to sit,' I said coldly; 'the verandah is full of goats.'"

"'There is a goat in my bedroom,' he observed with equal coldness, and more than a suspicion of sardonic reproach.

"'Really,' I said, 'another survivor? I thought all the other goats were done for.'

"'This particular goat is quite done for,' he said, 'it is being devoured by a leopard at the present moment. That is why I left the room; some animals resent being watched while they are eating.'

"The leopard, of course, was easily explained; it had been hanging round the goat sheds when the flood came, and had clambered up by the outside staircase leading to the Bishop's bath-room, thoughtfully bringing a goat with it. Probably it found the bathroom too damp and shut-in for its taste, and transferred its banqueting operations to the bedroom while the Bishop was having his nap."

"What a frightful situation!" exclaimed Annabel; "fancy having a ravening leopard in the house, with a flood all round you."

"Not in the least ravening," said Matilda; "it was full of goat, had any amount of water at its disposal if it felt thirsty, and probably had no more immediate wish than a desire for uninterrupted sleep. Still, I think any one will admit that it was an embarrassing predicament to have your only available guest-room occupied by a leopard, the verandah choked up with goats and babies and wet hens, and a Bishop with whom you were scarcely on speaking terms planted down in your own sitting-room. I really don't know how I got through those crawling hours, and of course mealtimes only made matters worse. The emergency cook had every excuse for sending in watery soup and sloppy rice, and as neither the chief goat-herd nor his wife were expert divers, the cellar could not be reached. Fortunately the Gwadlipichee subsides as rapidly as it rises, and just before dawn the syce came splashing back, with the ponies only fetlock deep in water. Then there arose some awkwardness from the fact that the Bishop wished to leave sooner than the leopard did, and as the latter was ensconced in the midst of the former's personal possessions there was an obvious difficulty in altering the order of departure. I pointed out to the Bishop that a leopard's habits and tastes are not those of an otter, and that it naturally preferred walking to wading; and that in any case a meal of an entire goat, washed down with tub-water, justified a certain amount of repose; if I had had guns fired to frighten the animal away, as the Bishop suggested, it would probably merely have left the bedroom to come into the already over-crowded drawing-

room. Altogether it was rather a relief when they both left. Now, perhaps, you can understand my appreciation of a sleepy countryside where things don't happen."

Glossary

Languorous: Pleasantly tired, relaxed, or lacking energy.

Monotony: Lack of variety, tedious sameness.

Disconcerting: Unsettling or causing confusion.

Sanctity: The quality of being holy or sacred.

Tactless: Lacking sensitivity or consideration.

Guise: An appearance or form that hides the true nature of something.

Manoeuvre: A planned or skillful movement or action.

Gwadlipichee: A fictional river mentioned in the story.

Syce: A person who looks after horses; a groom.

Bedraggled: Wet, dirty, and untidy.

Predicament: A difficult or unpleasant situation.

Ravening: Extremely hungry or greedy, hunting for prey.

Comprehension

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

1. What does Annabel find charming yet monotonous about the countryside?
2. How does Matilda contrast her life in the countryside with her experiences abroad?
3. Why was Matilda disconcerted by the Bishop of Bequar's visit?
4. What was the old family feud about, and how did it affect Matilda's interaction with the Bishop?
5. How did Matilda handle the unexpected flood and the displaced animals?
6. Why was the leopard in the house, and how did it complicate the situation?
7. What challenges did Matilda face with the emergency cook during the Bishop's stay?
8. How did Matilda justify her preference for a quiet countryside over places where "things happen"?
9. What role does humor play in Matilda's account of the events?
10. How does the story reflect Saki's style of satire and irony?

II. Answer the following questions in a page:

1. How does Matilda's recollection of the Bishop of Bequar's visit reveal her character and attitude toward social conventions?
2. In what ways does Saki use absurdity and humor to highlight the differences between Matilda's past experiences and her current life in the countryside?
3. Discuss the significance of the family feud over the Crown Derby dessert service in the story. How does it shape the relationship between Matilda and the Bishop?
4. How does the flood and the arrival of the leopard symbolize the disruption of normal life in the story? What role does nature play in creating chaos?
5. Analyze how Saki uses irony and wit to critique societal norms and expectations through Matilda's handling of unexpected situations.
6. How does the combination of absurd events (the flood, the leopard, the goats) enhance the theme of unpredictability in life?
7. In what ways does the story reflect the challenges of hospitality and maintaining social grace in the face of chaos and discomfort?
8. Reflect on the ending of the story. How does the conclusion encapsulate Matilda's perspective on the unpredictability of life and her preference for the "sleepy" countryside?

III. Answer the following questions in about two pages:

1. Analyze the relationship between Matilda and the Bishop of Bequar. How does their interaction reflect deeper themes of social class, tradition, and personal grievances?
2. Discuss the role of humor in "The Guests." How does Saki use absurd situations and witty dialogue to comment on human nature and societal conventions?
3. Examine the symbolic significance of the flood and the leopard in the story. How do these elements reflect the themes of chaos, unpredictability, and the clash between human control and nature?
4. How does the presence of the animals affect the human characters in the story? What might these animals symbolize in relation to Matilda's life and her expectations of social order?

Suggested Activity

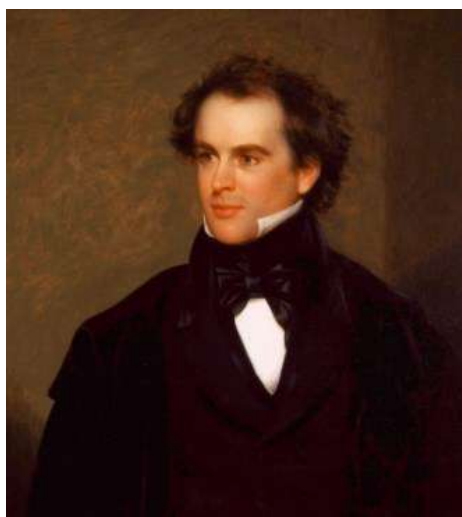
- Read the 'The Open Window' by Saki
- Attempt a podcast with smaller groups in your class. Analyze different types of guest that come to any household.

4. The Birthmark by Nathaniel Hawthorne - Nathaniel Hawthorne

Pre-reading activity

1. Is it possible to control nature according to the whims and fancies of a scientist?
2. What is the repercussion of controlling nature?
3. Discuss how far it is right on part of scientists to overstep their boundaries.
4. What is perfection? Do you think it exists in the world?
5. Is it possible to attain 100% perfection?
6. What are some things in life that should not be tampered with?

Note on the author:



Nathaniel Hawthorne was born on July 4, 1804, in Salem, Massachusetts, USA. Hawthorne is known for short stories and novels that examine the relationship between the visible, physical world of nature and the invisible, spiritual life of human beings. Hawthorne's short stories and sketches are gathered in numerous collections, including *Twice-Told Tales* (1837), *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846), and *The Snow-Image, and Other Twice-Told Tales* (1851). In 1850 he published his first popular novel, *The Scarlet Letter*, which was soon followed by *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and *The Blithedale Romance* (1852). His last full-length novel, *The Marble Faun*, was published in 1860. He also published several books for children. His writing was praised by popular American literary figures of the day, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82), whom Hawthorne knew personally, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82).

About the text:

The text is a story set towards the end of the 1700s. Aylmer is a renowned scientist who has recently married Georgiana, a beautiful young woman. Aylmer views Georgiana as physically perfect except for a small birthmark on her cheek. Aylmer becomes obsessively disgusted by the birthmark, and he eventually confesses this to Georgiana. Georgiana, desperate to please her husband, says that she will undergo any risk to have the birthmark removed. Aylmer says that with his scientific knowledge and experience, he is confident that he will be able to find a way to

remove it. Aylmer and Georgiana go to the apartment that houses Aylmer's laboratory. There, Aylmer gives Georgiana a new concoction that he says, will remove Georgiana's birthmark. Georgiana drinks the concoction, and her birthmark fades, but she dies. Aylmer then feels deep regret for not simply learning to love the birthmark.

The Birthmark by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Text

In the latter part of the last century there lived a man of science, an eminent proficient in every branch of natural philosophy, who not long before our story opens had made experience of a spiritual affinity more attractive than any chemical one. He had left his laboratory to the care of an assistant, cleared his fine countenance from the furnace smoke, washed the stain of acids from his fingers, and persuaded a beautiful woman to become his wife. In those days when the comparatively recent discovery of electricity and other kindred mysteries of Nature seemed to open paths into the region of miracle, it was not unusual for the love of science to rival the love of woman in its depth and absorbing energy. The higher intellect, the imagination, the spirit, and even the heart might all find their congenial aliment in pursuits which, as some of their ardent votaries believed, would ascend from one step of powerful intelligence to another, until the philosopher should lay his hand on the secret of creative force and perhaps make new worlds for himself. We know not whether Aylmer possessed this degree of faith in man's ultimate control over Nature. He had devoted himself, however, too unreservedly to scientific studies ever to be weaned from them by any second passion. His love for his young wife might prove the stronger of the two; but it could only be by intertwining itself with his love of science, and uniting the strength of the latter to his own.

Such a union accordingly took place, and was attended with truly remarkable consequences and a deeply impressive moral. One day, very soon after their marriage, Aylmer sat gazing at his wife with a trouble in his countenance that grew stronger until he spoke.

"Georgiana," said he, "has it never occurred to you that the mark upon your cheek might be removed?"

"No, indeed," said she, smiling; but perceiving the seriousness of his manner, she

blushed deeply. "To tell you the truth it has been so often called a charm that I was simple enough to imagine it might be so.

"Ah, upon another face perhaps it might," replied her husband; "but never on yours. No, dearest Georgiana, you came so nearly perfect from the hand of Nature that this slightest possible defect, which we hesitate whether to term a defect or a beauty, shocks me, as being the visible mark of earthly imperfection."

"Shocks you, my husband!" cried Georgiana, deeply hurt; at first reddening with momentary anger, but then bursting into tears. "Then why did you take me from my mother's side? You cannot love what shocks you!"

To explain this conversation it must be mentioned that in the centre of Georgiana's left cheek there was a singular mark, deeply interwoven, as it were, with the texture and substance of her face. In the usual state of her complexion—a healthy though delicate bloom—the mark wore a tint of deeper crimson, which imperfectly defined its shape amid the surrounding rosiness. When she blushed it gradually became more indistinct, and finally vanished amid the triumphant rush of blood that bathed the whole cheek with its brilliant glow. But if any shifting motion caused her to turn pale there was the mark again, a crimson stain upon the snow, in what Aylmer sometimes deemed an almost fearful distinctness. Its shape bore not a little similarity to the human hand, though of the smallest pygmy size. Georgiana's lovers were wont to say that some fairy at her birth hour had laid her tiny hand upon the infant's cheek, and left this impress there in token of the magic endowments that were to give her such sway over all hearts. Many a desperate swain would have risked life for the privilege of pressing his lips to the mysterious hand. It must not be concealed, however, that the impression wrought by this fairy sign manual varied exceedingly, according to the difference of temperament in the beholders. Some fastidious persons—but they were exclusively of her own sex—affirmed that the bloody hand, as they chose to call it, quite destroyed the effect of Georgiana's beauty, and rendered her countenance even hideous. But it would be as reasonable to say that one of those small blue stains which sometimes occur in the purest statuary marble would convert the Eve of Powers to a monster. Masculine observers, if the birthmark did not heighten their admiration, contented themselves with wishing it away, that the world might possess one living specimen of ideal loveliness without the semblance of a flaw. After his marriage, —for he thought little or nothing of the matter before,

—Aylmer discovered that this was the case with himself.

Had she been less beautiful, —if Envy's self could have found aught else to sneer at, —he might have felt his affection heightened by the prettiness of this mimic hand, now vaguely portrayed, now lost, now stealing forth again and glimmering to and fro with every pulse of emotion that throbbed within her heart; but seeing her otherwise so perfect, he found this one defect grow more and more intolerable with every moment of their united lives. It was the fatal flaw of humanity which Nature, in one shape or another, stamps ineffaceably on all her productions, either to imply that they are temporary and finite, or that their perfection must be wrought by toil and pain. The crimson hand expressed the ineludible gripe in which mortality clutches the highest and purest of earthly mould, degrading them into kindred with the lowest, and even with the very brutes, like whom their visible frames return to dust. In this manner, selecting it as the symbol of his wife's liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death, Aylmer's sombre imagination was not long in rendering the birthmark a frightful object, causing him more trouble and horror than ever Georgiana's beauty, whether of soul or sense, had given him delight.

At all the seasons which should have been their happiest, he invariably and without intending it, nay, in spite of a purpose to the contrary, reverted to this one disastrous topic. Trifling as it at first appeared, it so connected itself with innumerable trains of thought and modes of feeling that it became the central point of all. With the morning twilight Aylmer opened his eyes upon his wife's face and recognized the symbol of imperfection; and when they sat together at the evening hearth his eyes wandered stealthily to her cheek, and beheld, flickering with the blaze of the wood fire, the spectral hand that wrote mortality where he would fain have worshipped. Georgiana soon learned to shudder at his gaze. It needed but a glance with the peculiar expression that his face often wore to change the roses of her cheek into a deathlike paleness, amid which the crimson hand was brought strongly out, like a bass-relief of ruby on the whitest marble.

Late one night when the lights were growing dim, so as hardly to betray the stain on the poor wife's cheek, she herself, for the first time, voluntarily took up the subject.

"Do you remember, my dear Aylmer," said she, with a feeble attempt at a smile, "have you any recollection of a dream last night about this odious hand?"

"None! none whatever!" replied Aylmer, starting; but then he added, in a dry, cold tone, affected for the sake of concealing the real depth of his emotion, "I might well dream of it; for before I fell asleep it had taken a pretty firm hold of my fancy."

"And you did dream of it?" continued Georgiana, hastily; for she dreaded lest a gush of tears should interrupt what she had to say. "A terrible dream! I wonder that you can forget it. Is it possible to forget this one expression? —'It is in her heart now; we must have it out!' Reflect, my husband; for by all means I would have you recall that dream."

The mind is in a sad state when Sleep, the all-involving, cannot confine her spectres within the dim region of her sway, but suffers them to break forth, affrighting this actual life with secrets that perchance belong to a deeper one. Aylmer now remembered his dream. He had fancied himself with his servant Aminadab, attempting an operation for the removal of the birthmark; but the deeper went the knife, the deeper sank the hand, until at length its tiny grasp appeared to have caught hold of Georgiana's heart; whence, however, her husband was inexorably resolved to cut or wrench it away.

When the dream had shaped itself perfectly in his memory, Aylmer sat in his wife's presence with a guilty feeling. Truth often finds its way to the mind close muffled in robes of sleep, and then speaks with uncompromising directness of matters in regard to which we practise an unconscious self-deception during our waking moments. Until now he had not been aware of the tyrannizing influence acquired by one idea over his mind, and of the lengths which he might find in his heart to go for the sake of giving himself peace.

"Aylmer," resumed Georgiana, solemnly, "I know not what may be the cost to both of us to rid me of this fatal birthmark. Perhaps its removal may cause cureless deformity; or it may be the stain goes as deep as life itself. Again: do we know that

there is a possibility, on any terms, of unclasping the firm gripe of this little hand which was laid upon me before I came into the world?"

"Dearest Georgiana, I have spent much thought upon the subject," hastily interrupted Aylmer. "I am convinced of the perfect practicability of its removal."

"If there be the remotest possibility of it," continued Georgiana, "let the attempt be made at whatever risk. Danger is nothing to me; for life, while this hateful mark makes me the object of your horror and disgust, —life is a burden which I would fling down with joy. Either remove this dreadful hand, or take my wretched life! You have deep science. All the world bears witness of it. You have achieved great wonders. Cannot you remove this little, little mark, which I cover with the tips of two small fingers? Is this beyond your power, for the sake of your own peace, and to save your poor wife from madness?"

"Noblest, dearest, tenderest wife," cried Aylmer, rapturously, "doubt not my power. I have already given this matter the deepest thought—thought which might almost have enlightened me to create a being less perfect than yourself. Georgiana, you have led me deeper than ever into the heart of science. I feel myself fully competent to render this dear cheek as faultless as its fellow; and then, most beloved, what will be my triumph when I shall have corrected what Nature left imperfect in her fairest work! Even Pygmalion, when his sculptured woman assumed life, felt not greater ecstasy than mine will be."

It is resolved, then," said Georgiana, faintly smiling. "And, Aylmer, spare me not, though you should find the birthmark take refuge in my heart at last."

Her husband tenderly kissed her cheek—her right cheek—not that which bore the impress of the crimson hand.

The next day Aylmer apprised his wife of a plan that he had formed whereby he might have opportunity for the intense thought and constant watchfulness which

the proposed operation would require; while Georgiana, likewise, would enjoy the perfect repose essential to its success. They were to seclude themselves in the extensive apartments occupied by Aylmer as a laboratory, and where, during his toilsome youth, he had made discoveries in the elemental powers of Nature that had roused the admiration of all the learned societies in Europe. Seated calmly in this laboratory, the pale philosopher had investigated the secrets of the highest cloud region and of the profoundest mines; he had satisfied himself of the causes that kindled and kept alive the fires of the volcano; and had explained the mystery of fountains, and how it is that they gush forth, some so bright and pure, and others with such rich medicinal virtues, from the dark bosom of the earth. Here, too, at an earlier period, he had studied the wonders of the human frame, and attempted to fathom the very process by which Nature assimilates all her precious influences from earth and air, and from the spiritual world, to create and foster man, her masterpiece. The latter pursuit, however, Aylmer had long laid aside in unwilling recognition of the truth—against which all seekers sooner or later stumble—that our great creative Mother, while she amuses us with apparently working in the broadest sunshine, is yet severely careful to keep her own secrets, and, in spite of her pretended openness, shows us nothing but results. She permits us, indeed, to mar, but seldom to mend, and, like a jealous patentee, on no account to make. Now, however, Aylmer resumed these half-forgotten investigations; not, of course, with such hopes or wishes as first suggested them; but because they involved much physiological truth and lay in the path of his proposed scheme for the treatment of Georgiana.

As he led her over the threshold of the laboratory, Georgiana was cold and tremulous. Aylmer looked cheerfully into her face, with intent to reassure her, but was so startled with the intense glow of the birthmark upon the whiteness of her cheek that he could not restrain a strong convulsive shudder. His wife fainted.

"Aminadab! Aminadab!" shouted Aylmer, stamping violently on the floor.

Forthwith there issued from an inner apartment a man of low stature, but bulky frame, with shaggy hair hanging about his visage, which was grimed with the vapors of the furnace. This personage had been Aylmer's under worker during his whole scientific career, and was admirably fitted for that office by his great

mechanical readiness, and the skill with which, while incapable of comprehending a single principle, he executed all the details of his master's experiments. With his vast strength, his shaggy hair, his smoky aspect, and the indescribable earthiness that incrustated him, he seemed to represent man's physical nature; while Aylmer's slender figure, and pale, intellectual face, were no less apt a type of the spiritual element.

"Throw open the door of the boudoir, Aminadab," said Aylmer, "and burn a pastil."

"Yes, master," answered Aminadab, looking intently at the lifeless form of Georgiana; and then he muttered to himself, "If she were my wife, I'd never part with that birthmark."

When Georgiana recovered consciousness, she found herself breathing an atmosphere of penetrating fragrance, the gentle potency of which had recalled her from her deathlike faintness. The scene around her looked like enchantment.

Aylmer had converted those smoky, dingy, somber rooms, where he had spent his brightest years in recondite pursuits, into a series of beautiful apartments not unfit to be the secluded abode of a lovely woman. The walls were hung with gorgeous curtains, which imparted the combination of grandeur and grace that no other species of adornment can achieve; and as they fell from the ceiling to the floor, their rich and ponderous folds, concealing all angles and straight lines, appeared to shut in the scene from infinite space. For aught Georgiana knew, it might be a pavilion among the clouds. And Aylmer, excluding the sunshine, which would have interfered with his chemical processes, had supplied its place with perfumed lamps, emitting flames of various hue, but all uniting in a soft, impurpled radiance. He now knelt by his wife's side, watching her earnestly, but without alarm; for he was confident in his science, and felt that he could draw a magic circle round her within which no evil might intrude.

"Where am I? Ah, I remember," said Georgiana, faintly; and she placed her hand over her cheek to hide the terrible mark from her husband's eyes.

"Fear not, dearest!" exclaimed he. "Do not shrink from me! Believe me, Georgiana, I even rejoice in this single imperfection, since it will be such a rapture to remove it."

"Oh, spare me!" sadly replied his wife. "Pray do not look at it again. I never can forget that convulsive shudder."

In order to soothe Georgiana, and, as it were, to release her mind from the burden of actual things, Aylmer now put in practice some of the light and playful secrets which science had taught him among its profounder lore. Airy figures, absolutely bodiless ideas, and forms of unsubstantial beauty came and danced before her, imprinting their momentary footsteps on beams of light. Though she had some indistinct idea of the method of these optical phenomena, still the illusion was almost perfect enough to warrant the belief that her husband possessed sway over the spiritual world. Then again, when she felt a wish to look forth from her seclusion, immediately, as if her thoughts were answered, the procession of external existence flitted across a screen. The scenery and the figures of actual life were perfectly represented, but with that bewitching, yet indescribable difference which always makes a picture, an image, or a shadow so much more attractive than the original. When wearied of this, Aylmer bade her cast her eyes upon a vessel containing a quantity of earth. She did so, with little interest at first; but was soon startled to perceive the germ of a plant shooting upward from the soil. Then came the slender stalk; the leaves gradually unfolded themselves; and amid them was a perfect and lovely flower.

"It is magical!" cried Georgiana. "I dare not touch it."

"Nay, pluck it," answered Aylmer,— "pluck it, and inhale its brief perfume while you may. The flower will wither in a few moments and leave nothing save its brown seed vessels; but thence may be perpetuated a race as ephemeral as itself."

But Georgiana had no sooner touched the flower than the whole plant suffered a blight, its leaves turning coal-black as if by the agency of fire.

"There was too powerful a stimulus," said Aylmer, thoughtfully.

To make up for this abortive experiment, he proposed to take her portrait by a scientific process of his own invention. It was to be effected by rays of light striking upon a polished plate of metal. Georgiana assented; but, on looking at the result, was affrighted to find the features of the portrait blurred and indefinable; while the minute figure of a hand appeared where the cheek should have been.

Aylmer snatched the metallic plate and threw it into a jar of corrosive acid.

Soon, however, he forgot these mortifying failures. In the intervals of study and chemical experiment he came to her flushed and exhausted, but seemed invigorated by her presence, and spoke in glowing language of the resources of his art. He gave a history of the long dynasty of the alchemists, who spent so many ages in quest of the universal solvent by which the golden principle might be elicited from all things vile and base. Aylmer appeared to believe that, by the plainest scientific logic, it was altogether within the limits of possibility to discover this long-sought medium; "but," he added, "a philosopher who should go deep enough to acquire the power would attain too lofty a wisdom to stoop to the exercise of it." Not less singular were his opinions in regard to the elixir vitae. He more than intimated that it was at his option to concoct a liquid that should prolong life for years, perhaps interminably; but that it would produce a discord in Nature which all the world, and chiefly the quaffer of the immortal nostrum, would find cause to curse.

"Aylmer, are you in earnest?" asked Georgiana, looking at him with amazement and fear. "It is terrible to possess such power, or even to dream of possessing it."

"Oh, do not tremble, my love," said her husband. "I would not wrong either you or myself by working such inharmonious effects upon our lives; but I would have you consider how trifling, in comparison, is the skill requisite to remove this little hand."

At the mention of the birthmark, Georgiana, as usual, shrank as if a red-hot iron had touched her cheek.

Again Aylmer applied himself to his labors. She could hear his voice in the distant furnace room giving directions to Aminadab, whose harsh, uncouth, misshapen

tones were audible in response, more like the grunt or growl of a brute than human speech. After hours of absence, Aylmer reappeared and proposed that she should now examine his cabinet of chemical products and natural treasures of the earth. Among the former he showed her a small vial, in which, he remarked, was contained a gentle yet most powerful fragrance, capable of impregnating all the breezes that blow across a kingdom. They were of inestimable value, the contents of that little vial; and, as he said so, he threw some of the perfume into the air and filled the room with piercing and invigorating delight.

"And what is this?" asked Georgiana, pointing to a small crystal globe containing a gold-colored liquid. "It is so beautiful to the eye that I could imagine it the elixir of life."

"In one sense it is," replied Aylmer; "or, rather, the elixir of immortality. It is the most precious poison that ever was concocted in this world. By its aid I could apportion the lifetime of any mortal at whom you might point your finger. The strength of the dose would determine whether he were to linger out years, or drop dead in the midst of a breath. No king on his guarded throne could keep his life if I, in my private station, should deem that the welfare of millions justified me in depriving him of it."

"Why do you keep such a terrific drug?" inquired Georgiana in horror.

"Do not mistrust me, dearest," said her husband, smiling; "its virtuous potency is yet greater than its harmful one. But see! here is a powerful cosmetic. With a few drops of this in a vase of water, freckles may be washed away as easily as the hands are cleansed. A stronger infusion would take the blood out of the cheek, and leave the rosiest beauty a pale ghost."

"Is it with this lotion that you intend to bathe my cheek?" asked Georgiana, anxiously.

"Oh, no," hastily replied her husband; "this is merely superficial. Your case demands a remedy that shall go deeper."

In his interviews with Georgiana, Aylmer generally made minute inquiries as to her sensations and whether the confinement of the rooms and the temperature of the atmosphere agreed with her. These questions had such a particular drift that Georgiana began to conjecture that she was already subjected to certain physical influences, either breathed in with the fragrant air or taken with her food. She fancied likewise, but it might be altogether fancy, that there was a stirring up of her system—a strange, indefinite sensation creeping through her veins, and tingling, half painfully, half pleasurably, at her heart. Still, whenever she dared to look into the mirror, there she beheld herself pale as a white rose and with the crimson birthmark stamped upon her cheek. Not even Aylmer now hated it so much as she.

To dispel the tedium of the hours which her husband found it necessary to devote to the processes of combination and analysis, Georgiana turned over the volumes of his scientific library. In many dark old tomes she met with chapters full of romance and poetry. They were the works of philosophers of the middle ages, such as Albertus Magnus, Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and the famous friar who created the prophetic Brazen Head. All these antique naturalists stood in advance of their centuries, yet were imbued with some of their credulity, and therefore were believed, and perhaps imagined themselves to have acquired from the investigation of Nature a power above Nature, and from physics a sway over the spiritual world. Hardly less curious and imaginative were the early volumes of the Transactions of the Royal Society, in which the members, knowing little of the limits of natural possibility, were continually recording wonders or proposing methods whereby wonders might be wrought.

But to Georgiana the most engrossing volume was a large folio from her husband's own hand, in which he had recorded every experiment of his scientific career, its original aim, the methods adopted for its development, and its final success or failure, with the circumstances to which either event was attributable. The book, in truth, was both the history and emblem of his ardent, ambitious, imaginative, yet practical and laborious life. He handled physical details as if there were nothing beyond them; yet spiritualized them all, and redeemed himself from materialism by his strong and eager aspiration towards the infinite. In his grasp the veriest clod of earth assumed a soul. Georgiana, as she read, revered Aylmer and loved him more profoundly than ever, but with a less entire dependence on his judgment than

heretofore. Much as he had accomplished, she could not but observe that his most splendid successes were almost invariably failures, if compared with the ideal at which he aimed. His brightest diamonds were the merest pebbles, and felt to be so by himself, in comparison with the inestimable gems which lay hidden beyond his reach. The volume, rich with achievements that had won renown for its author, was yet as melancholy a record as ever mortal hand had penned. It was the sad confession and continual exemplification of the shortcomings of the composite man, the spirit burdened with clay and working in matter, and of the despair that assails the higher nature at finding itself so miserably thwarted by the earthly part. Perhaps every man of genius in whatever sphere might recognize the image of his own experience in Aylmer's journal.

So deeply did these reflections affect Georgiana that she laid her face upon the open volume and burst into tears. In this situation she was found by her husband.

"It is dangerous to read in a sorcerer's books," said he with a smile, though his countenance was uneasy and displeased. "Georgiana, there are pages in that volume which I can scarcely glance over and keep my senses. Take heed lest it prove as detrimental to you."

"It has made me worship you more than ever," said she.

"Ah, wait for this one success," rejoined he, "then worship me if you will. I shall deem myself hardly unworthy of it. But come, I have sought you for the luxury of your voice. Sing to me, dearest."

So she poured out the liquid music of her voice to quench the thirst of his spirit. He then took his leave with a boyish exuberance of gayety, assuring her that her seclusion would endure but a little longer, and that the result was already certain. Scarcely had he departed when Georgiana felt irresistibly impelled to follow him. She had forgotten to inform Aylmer of a symptom which for two or three hours past had begun to excite her attention. It was a sensation in the fatal birthmark, not painful, but which induced a restlessness throughout her system. Hastening after her husband, she intruded for the first time into the laboratory.

The first thing that struck her eye was the furnace, that hot and feverish worker, with the intense glow of its fire, which by the quantities of soot clustered above it seemed to have been burning for ages. There was a distilling apparatus in full operation. Around the room were retorts, tubes, cylinders, crucibles, and other apparatus of chemical research. An electrical machine stood ready for immediate use. The atmosphere felt oppressively close, and was tainted with gaseous odors which had been tormented forth by the processes of science. The severe and homely simplicity of the apartment, with its naked walls and brick pavement, looked strange, accustomed as Georgiana had become to the fantastic elegance of her boudoir. But what chiefly, indeed almost solely, drew her attention, was the aspect of Aylmer himself.

He was pale as death, anxious and absorbed, and hung over the furnace as if it depended upon his utmost watchfulness whether the liquid which it was distilling should be the draught of immortal happiness or misery. How different from the sanguine and joyous mien that he had assumed for Georgiana's encouragement!

"Carefully now, Aminadab; carefully, thou human machine; carefully, thou man of clay!" muttered Aylmer, more to himself than his assistant. "Now, if there be a thought too much or too little, it is all over."

"Ho! ho!" mumbled Aminadab. "Look, master! look!"

Aylmer raised his eyes hastily, and at first reddened, then grew paler than ever, on beholding Georgiana. He rushed towards her and seized her arm with a gripe that left the print of his fingers upon it.

"Why do you come hither? Have you no trust in your husband?" cried he, impetuously. "Would you throw the blight of that fatal birthmark over my labors? It is not well done. Go, prying woman, go!"

"Nay, Aylmer," said Georgiana with the firmness of which she possessed no stinted endowment, "it is not you that have a right to complain. You mistrust your wife; you have concealed the anxiety with which you watch the development of

this experiment. Think not so unworthily of me, my husband. Tell me all the risk we run, and fear not that I shall shrink; for my share in it is far less than your own."

"No, no, Georgiana!" said Aylmer, impatiently; "it must not be."

"I submit," replied she calmly. "And, Aylmer, I shall quaff whatever draught you bring me; but it will be on the same principle that would induce me to take a dose of poison if offered by your hand."

"My noble wife," said Aylmer, deeply moved, "I knew not the height and depth of your nature until now. Nothing shall be concealed. Know, then, that this crimson hand, superficial as it seems, has clutched its grasp into your being with a strength of which I had no previous conception. I have already administered agents powerful enough to do aught except to change your entire physical system. Only one thing remains to be tried. If that fail us we are ruined."

"Why did you hesitate to tell me this?" asked she.

"Because, Georgiana," said Aylmer, in a low voice, "there is danger."

"Danger? There is but one danger—that this horrible stigma shall be left upon my cheek!" cried Georgiana. "Remove it, remove it, whatever be the cost, or we shall both go mad!"

"Heaven knows your words are too true," said Aylmer, sadly. "And now, dearest, return to your boudoir. In a little while all will be tested."

He conducted her back and took leave of her with a solemn tenderness which spoke far more than his words how much was now at stake. After his departure Georgiana became rapt in musings. She considered the character of Aylmer, and did it completer justice than at any previous moment. Her heart exulted, while it trembled, at his honorable love—so pure and lofty that it would accept nothing less than perfection nor miserably make itself contented with an earthlier nature than he had dreamed of. She felt how much more precious was such a sentiment than that meaner kind which would have borne with the imperfection for her sake, and have

been guilty of treason to holy love by degrading its perfect idea to the level of the actual; and with her whole spirit she prayed that, for a single moment, she might satisfy his highest and deepest conception. Longer than one moment she well knew it could not be; for his spirit was ever on the march, ever ascending, and each instant required something that was beyond the scope of the instant before.

The sound of her husband's footsteps aroused her. He bore a crystal goblet containing a liquor colorless as water, but bright enough to be the draught of immortality. Aylmer was pale; but it seemed rather the consequence of a highly- wrought state of mind and tension of spirit than of fear or doubt.

"The concoction of the draught has been perfect," said he, in answer to Georgiana's look. "Unless all my science have deceived me, it cannot fail."

"Save on your account, my dearest Aylmer," observed his wife, "I might wish to put off this birthmark of mortality by relinquishing mortality itself in preference to any other mode. Life is but a sad possession to those who have attained precisely the degree of moral advancement at which I stand. Were I weaker and blinder it might be happiness. Were I stronger, it might be endured hopefully. But, being what I find myself, methinks I am of all mortals the most fit to die."

"You are fit for heaven without tasting death!" replied her husband "But why do we speak of dying? The draught cannot fail. Behold its effect upon this plant."

On the window seat there stood a geranium diseased with yellow blotches, which had overspread all its leaves. Aylmer poured a small quantity of the liquid upon the soil in which it grew. In a little time, when the roots of the plant had taken up the moisture, the unsightly blotches began to be extinguished in a living verdure.

"There needed no proof," said Georgiana, quietly. "Give me the goblet I joyfully stake all upon your word."

"Drink, then, thou lofty creature!" exclaimed Aylmer, with fervid admiration. "There is no taint of imperfection on thy spirit. Thy sensible frame, too, shall soon be all perfect."

She quaffed the liquid and returned the goblet to his hand.

"It is grateful," said she with a placid smile. "Methinks it is like water from a heavenly fountain; for it contains I know not what of unobtrusive fragrance and deliciousness. It allays a feverish thirst that had parched me for many days. Now, dearest, let me sleep. My earthly senses are closing over my spirit like the leaves around the heart of a rose at sunset."

She spoke the last words with a gentle reluctance, as if it required almost more energy than she could command to pronounce the faint and lingering syllables. Scarcely had they loitered through her lips ere she was lost in slumber. Aylmer sat by her side, watching her aspect with the emotions proper to a man the whole value of whose existence was involved in the process now to be tested. Mingled with this mood, however, was the philosophic investigation characteristic of the man of science. Not the minutest symptom escaped him. A heightened flush of the cheek, a slight irregularity of breath, a quiver of the eyelid, a hardly perceptible tremor through the frame, —such were the details which, as the moments passed, he wrote down in his folio volume. Intense thought had set its stamp upon every previous page of that volume, but the thoughts of years were all concentrated upon the last.

While thus employed, he failed not to gaze often at the fatal hand, and not without a shudder. Yet once, by a strange and unaccountable impulse he pressed it with his lips. His spirit recoiled, however, in the very act, and Georgiana, out of the midst of her deep sleep, moved uneasily and murmured as if in remonstrance. Again Aylmer resumed his watch. Nor was it without avail. The crimson hand, which at first had been strongly visible upon the marble paleness of Georgiana's cheek, now grew more faintly outlined. She remained not less pale than ever; but the birthmark with every breath that came and went, lost somewhat of its former distinctness. Its presence had been awful; its departure was more awful still. Watch the stain of the rainbow fading out the sky, and you will know how that mysterious symbol passed away.

"By Heaven! it is well-nigh gone!" said Aylmer to himself, in almost irrepressible ecstasy. "I can scarcely trace it now. Success! success! And now it is like the

faintest rose color. The lightest flush of blood across her cheek would overcome it. But she is so pale!"

He drew aside the window curtain and suffered the light of natural day to fall into the room and rest upon her cheek. At the same time he heard a gross, hoarse chuckle, which he had long known as his servant Aminadab's expression of delight.

"Ah, clod! ah, earthly mass!" cried Aylmer, laughing in a sort of frenzy, "you have served me well! Matter and spirit—earth and heaven—have both done their part in this! Laugh, thing of the senses! You have earned the right to laugh."

These exclamations broke Georgiana's sleep. She slowly unclosed her eyes and gazed into the mirror which her husband had arranged for that purpose. A faint smile flitted over her lips when she recognized how barely perceptible was now that crimson hand which had once blazed forth with such disastrous brilliancy as to scare away all their happiness. But then her eyes sought Aylmer's face with a trouble and anxiety that he could by no means account for.

"My poor Aylmer!" murmured she.

"Poor? Nay, richest, happiest, most favored!" exclaimed he. "My peerless bride, it is successful! You are perfect!"

"My poor Aylmer," she repeated, with a more than human tenderness, "you have aimed loftily; you have done nobly. Do not repent that with so high and pure a feeling, you have rejected the best the earth could offer. Aylmer, dearest Aylmer, I am dying!"

Alas! it was too true! The fatal hand had grappled with the mystery of life, and was the bond by which an angelic spirit kept itself in union with a mortal frame. As the last crimson tint of the birthmark—that sole token of human imperfection—faded from her cheek, the parting breath of the now perfect woman passed into the atmosphere, and her soul, lingering a moment near her husband, took its heavenward flight. Then a hoarse, chuckling laugh was heard again! Thus ever

does the gross fatality of earth exult in its invariable triumph over the immortal essence which, in this dim sphere of half development, demands the completeness of a higher state. Yet, had Aylmer reached a profounder wisdom, he need not thus have flung away the happiness which would have woven his mortal life of the self same texture with the celestial. The momentary circumstance was too strong for him; he failed to look beyond the shadowy scope of time, and, living once for all in eternity, to find the perfect future in the present.

Glossary

eminent: distinguished, high rank
countenance: face
ardent: enthusiastic
votaries: dedicated follower
swain: a lover or suitor
fastidious: attentive to detail, meticulous
ineffaceably: can't be erased
somber: gloomy and dark
apprised: informed, told
repose: rest
melancholy: depressed and gloomy state of mind

Comprehension

I Answer the following questions in a sentence or two.

1. What is Georgiana's relationship to Aylmer?
2. What is the name of Aylmer's assistant?
3. What is the only imperfection on Georgiana's entire physical form according to Aylmer?
4. Georgiana's birthmark is in a shape that resembles _____ (fill the blank with right answer)
5. When Aylmer first suggests removing Georgiana's birthmark, how does she react?
6. In Aylmer's dream, what does he do after cutting Georgiana's birthmark?
7. How does Georgiana feel after reading Aylmer's notebook about the outcome of his experiments?

8. Of the details below, which one does not describe the contents of Aylmer's notebook?
 - A. It only details observable phenomena.
 - B. Its writing seems to have a spiritual element.
 - C. It is mostly empty.
 - D. It details many failed experiments.
9. What remark does Aylmer's assistant make about Georgiana's birthmark?
10. How did Georgina react when Aylmer offered a glass of colourless liquid to her?
11. How does Aylmer demonstrate that consumption of colourless liquid is harmless to Georgina?
12. When did Aylmer make his greatest discoveries?
13. What effect did those discoveries have on his career?

II Answer the following questions in a page

1. Give a brief account of Georgina's birthmark.
2. How does Georgina react to the offending remarks about her birthmark by Aylmer?
3. Describe the married life of Aylmer and Georgina.
4. Describe the demonstration Aylmer shows to Georgiana to persuade her for the removal of her birthmark?
5. What was the dream that Aylmer had?
6. How does Aylmer react when he finds Georgiana reading his books in the laboratory? Explain
7. What kind of feeling does Georgiana develop about Aylmer after understanding his obsession to remove her birthmark?
8. Describe the scientific wonders in Aylmer's laboratory
9. Describe Georgiana's feeling to the adverse reaction of Aylmer's experiment upon her.
10. What did Georgiana understand after reading the notes of Aylmer's experiments? Explain
11. Write a note on the narrative technique used in the story.

III Answer the following questions in about two pages

1. 'Aylmer is, less of a loving husband than a dedicated scientist'. Discuss.
2. Georgina is a perfect woman and wife. Elucidate
3. 'It is Aylmer's obsession to remove Georgina's birth mark that led to disaster'. Explain.

4. The story is about the exploration of the relationship between science and nature, which is disastrous in many cases. Relate this to the lives of Aylmer and Georgina.
5. Give an account of Aylmer's scientific experiments.
6. 'Georgina's birthmark was the thing that kept her divine spirit connected to a human body, meddling with it is a murder' justify this statement.
7. 'Aylmer's over confidence, love for the science, his obsession to remove Georgina's birth is tampering with God's creation'. Discuss.
8. Write a note on the religious implications in the story.
9. 'Do you agree that Georgina is a victim of her husband's egotistical need to have a physically perfect wife'. Comment
10. 'Aylmer is a symbol of the dangers of unchecked ambition and the pursuit of unattainable perfection,' Discuss.
11. Describe how Georgina's character represents the uniqueness of humanity.
12. Birthmark has some supernatural power that disregards the rules of science. Discuss

Suggested Reading

1. *Dr. Heidegger's Experiment* by Nathaniel Hawthorne
2. *Pygmalion*, by George Bernard Shaw

Suggested Activity

1. Have debate on how the perils of striving for perfection is not worth it.
2. Have a discussion on how far it is right to meddle with God's creation.
3. Have debate on how nature retaliates in its own way to teach us a lesson.

5. The Rainbow Serpent

- Dick Roughsey

Pre- reading Activity

1. Have you heard tales about how the world was formed? What are some of the legends surrounding your culture?
2. Discuss some of the origin stories around the world in your class

About the Author



Dick Roughsey (Goobalathaldin) (1920-1985), artist and writer, was born in 1920 on Mornington Island, Queensland, and named Goobalathaldin. A member of the Lardil 'tribe', he was one of five brothers and grew up in an Aboriginal family clan, leading a traditional lifestyle. Roughsey wrote about the changing cultural circumstances of his life in *Moon and Rainbow* (1971), the first autobiography of a tribal Aboriginal Australian. Elsie Roughsey also wrote her story, *An Aboriginal Mother Tells of the Old and the New* (1984). *The Giant Devil Dingo* (1973) and *The Rainbow Serpent* (1974) contained some of his best figurative paintings, representing tribal lifestyles in monsoonal savannah

landscapes juxtaposed with powerful Dreamtime creatures. Roughsey cleverly fused certain southern Gulf cultural elements (his own Lardil) into the Cape York regional cultural repertoires of artefacts, mythic creatures, Indigenous names and other symbols. In 1976 and 1979 he won 'Children's Book of the Year' awards.

Note on the text:

This is the Aboriginal legend of the formation of the landscape on Cape York Peninsula. Goorialla, the Rainbow Serpent, was looking for his own tribe. On his travels he formed mountains, a deep gorge, and a lily lagoon called Minalinka. Eventually he found his own people. He showed them how to make headdresses of feathers and how to dance. When a big storm blew up, all the people built shelters except the Bil-bil boys. When they sought shelter in Goorialla's humpy he opened his mouth and swallowed them. Their people followed Goorialla when he left and cut him open to release the brothers who had turned into Rainbow Lorikeets. When Goorialla woke and discovered what had happened he was so incensed his rage caused the mountain to shake and thunder. He hurled parts of the mountain all over the country to form the hills and the mountains of today.

Far off in Dreamtime, there were only people, no animals or birds, no trees, or bushes, no hills or mountains. The country was flat. Goorialla, the Great Rainbow Serpent, stirred and set off to look for his own tribe. He travelled across Australia from South to North. He reached Cape York where he stopped and made a big red mountain called Naralullgan. He listened to the wind and heard only voices speaking strange languages. ‘This is not my country, the people here speak a different tongue. I must look for my own people’. Goorialla left Naralullgan and his huge body made a deep gorge when he came down. He travelled North stopping every evening to listen on the wind for his own people. He travelled for many days and his tracks made the creeks and rivers as he journeyed North.

Travelling North from Naralullgan, Goorialla made two more mountains. One of them, Naradunga, was long and made of granite; the other which had sharp peaks and five caves was called Minalinha.

His next resting place was at Fairview where he made a lily lagoon called Minalinka. Goorialla turned his great body round and round but the ground was too hard to make it deep.

One day he heard the singing on the wind.

He heard, “aarrhh, aarrhhh, arrrrhhh”.

“Those are my people singing”, said Goorialla.

“They’re holding a Bora”

He travelled North with the singing coming louder and louder. At the meeting place of the two rivers, Goorialla found his own people. They were singing and dancing. He crawled by quietly and lay in hiding and watched them. He watched them for a long time, then he came out and was welcomed by his people.

He told them, “you men are not dancing properly and you are not dressed properly. Watch me and I will show you the correct way.” Goorialla showed the men how to fit a lump of beeswax on the back of their heads and use feathers to make a rayed headdress. He dressed them with pandanas armbands and put white bones through their noses. Then he taught them to dance, and they copied him until they were tired.

A big storm was gathering so all the people built humpies for shelter.

Two young men, the Bil-bil, or Rainbow Lorikeet brothers came running in looking for shelter but no one had any room. He asked their grandmother, the star woman, but she said, “I have too many dogs, I can’t help you boys.”

The Bil-bil boys went to Goorialla and saw him snoring in his humpy. When the boys called out, he yawned and said, “I have no room for you.” The rain came heavier and the boys ran all about the camp looking for shelter, but no one would help them.

The boys went back to Goorialla and called out that the rain was heavy. Goorialla said, “Alright, you wait, I will make my humpy bigger.” He opened his mouth wide, right up to the roof and said, “Alright, you can come in now.”

The Bil-bil brothers ran into Goorilla’s mouth and he swallowed them. Then he began to worry about what the people would do when they found the boys to be missing. He decided to travel North to Bora-Bunaru, the only great natural mountain in the land.

Next morning the people asked each other who had given shelter to the Bil-bil boys. They found that the boys were gone and saw the tracks of Goorialla and knew that he had swallowed them. The men took the spear and followed after Goorialla.

Goorialla travelled towards distant Bora-Bunaru, the mighty mountain which towered far up into the sky. When he reached the cliffs around its base, Goorialla crawled up them. He coiled up for a sleep with the Bil-bil boys inside him.

The people followed Goorialla to the steep base of Bura-Bunaru. The men tried to climb the cliffs. Emu, Turkey, Brogla, Tortoise, Possum, Barramundi, they all tried but kept falling down again.

Two Wangoo, or Tree Goanna brothers, came along. Goorranji, the Emmu, said to them, "We cannot climb this steep mountain."

The Wangoo brothers said, "We will climb up to rescue the Bil-bil boys." They each made a knife from quartz and began to climb the mountain.

The Wangoo brothers climbed for days and nights and on reaching the top found Goorialla fast asleep and snoring. They crept up to him and the older brother said, "We will cut him open; you start down there and I will start here."

They cut until they reached the Bil-bil boys, who had changed into beautiful parrots with all the colours of rainbow serpent. The Wangoo said, "You can come out, you are now rainbow Lorikeets with wings and can fly away." The Bil-bil birds flew away.

The Wangoo brothers ran down the mountain. Goorialla snored on until a cold wind blew through his empty stomach and woke him.

He said, "Something is wrong with me."

And looked about and saw where he had been cut and his dinner stolen.

Goorialla became angry and worked himself into a great rage. He began to thrash about in fury, his long red tongue flashing like lightning, and the great mountain shook and thundered as Goorialla tore it apart in his anger.

He hurled parts of the mountain all over the country to form the hills and mountains of today. All the people were terrified of the thunder on the mountain as Goorialla knocked it to pieces.

Some of them were killed by flying stones. Others ran away to hide, turning themselves into all kinds of animals, birds, insects and plant life that live in the country today.

That is how it all happened back in Dreamtime. When Goorialla's anger was spent there was only a small hill remaining of the great mountain, Bora- Bunaru. He went down and disappeared into the sea where he remains to this day.

Now the remaining people have to look after all the animals, all the living things which were men and women in the beginning, but were too afraid of old Goorialla to remain as people. The shooting star racing across the sky at night is the eye of Goorialla watching everybody.

Glossary:

Dreamtime: the time of creation in the mythology of the Australian aborigines

Goorialla: a creator deity who is said to have given life and fertility to the Earth. The snake is seen as a creation ancestor in Aboriginal Australia and its journey across the country create aspects of the landscape. It is linked to the earth because it burrows underground, but it is also closely linked to water

Pandanus: They are palm-like, [dioecious](#) trees and shrubs native to the [Old World](#) tropics and subtropics. Aboriginal people used many parts of the pandanus plant for food, medicine, and craft objects

Gorge: a narrow valley with steep sides and a river running through it

Lorikeet: a species of parrot found in Australia.

Humpy: a primitive hut

Tree goanna: also known as the lace monitor, is a monitor lizard native to Australia

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

1. Why did Goorialla leave Naralullgan?
2. Name the mountains formed by Goorialla's movement?
3. What did Goorialla teach his own people?
4. Where did the Bil-bil brothers find refuge?
5. What did Goorialla do after swallowing the Bil-bil brothers?
6. How did the Wangoo brothers rescue the Bil-bil brothers?
7. What is the Bora-Bunaru?
8. What remained after Goorialla's anger was spent?
9. What is the duty of the remaining people?
10. Where can Goorialla's eye be found?

II. Answer the following questions in a page:

1. Who were the Bil-bil brothers? What happened to them?
2. Explain the events that led to the rescuing of the Bil-bil brothers.
3. Why was Goorialla angry?
4. How were the animals and plants formed?
5. Explain how the mountains and hills of today were formed

III. Answer the following questions in two pages:

1. Did Goorialla destroy or create the world? Explain
2. How was the world that we see today formed?
3. How does Dick Roughsey use indigenous species in his story to explain the formation of the landscape on Cape York Peninsula?

Suggested Activity: Also available as part of a short film (The Rainbow Serpent and 2 Other Stories, 1982) and as part of a kit containing a filmstrip, a sound cassette and notes (The Rainbow Serpent, 1978) can be watched in class and further discussion on various origin stories can be done in the classroom.

6. The Joy of Learning Random Things on Wikipedia - By Annie Rauwerda

Pre-reading:

1. Have you heard about Wikipedia?
2. What do you know about Wikipedia?
3. What are the uses of Wikipedia?

Note on the Author

Annie Rauwerda (27-11-1999- Present) is an American internet personality, journalist, and comedian known for Depths of Wikipedia, a group of social media accounts that highlight facts from Wikipedia. Rauwerda hosts Wikipedia-focused variety and comedy shows based on the accounts. Rauwerda was named the 2022 Media Contributor of the Year by the Wikimedia Foundation, the non-profit organisation that hosts Wikipedia. In June 2023, Rauwerda got considerable social media attention for organizing a perpetual stew in a Brooklyn Park. Annie Rauwerda graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in neuroscience in 2022. In addition to the Depths of Wikipedia social media accounts, Rauwerda hosts Wikipedia-focused variety and comedy shows, going on tour in 2022 and 2023.



In her talk “The Joy of Learning Random Things on Wikipedia,” Annie Rauwerda shares her passion for trivia and the joy of learning, which she often satisfies through Wikipedia. She highlights the fun and educational aspects of trivia, emphasizing how it can lead to deeper interest in various subjects without any pressure. Rauwerda discusses the unique community behind Wikipedia, where anyone can contribute and add a bit of personality to the vast online encyclopedia. She reflects on the importance of Wikipedia as an accessible source of information, despite its imperfections, and its role in educating people during significant events. Finally, she conveys the message that even seemingly trivial knowledge can be powerful and invites curiosity about the world.

Youtube Link: <https://youtu.be/WCmeOccXRq8?si=O0YizjoPK53K6mnl>

Transcript:

Early Fascination with Trivia

When I was younger, I used to be really into Trivial pursuit, and sometimes I would memorize the backs of the cards so I could win. And that is how I learned some

of my favourite trivia. Like, there's a name for those three asterisks in a book when the vibe changes. It's called a dinkus. I also learned that Oklahoma has a state vegetable, and it's a watermelon. I've always really liked trivia, precisely because it's information that carries no responsibility at all. If you forget the information that's going to be on your test or your mom's birthday, you might have consequences. But you never have a test on state vegetables; it's learning that's just for fun. I've always been pretty curious. I graduated in 2022, and my favourite parts of my neuroscience classes were not necessarily the nitty-gritty physiology. I really liked the funnier stuff, like the protein in limb development named after Sonic the hedgehog or this bridged bicyclic molecule that looks like a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle.

The Love for Wikipedia

Not all of my coursework was so charming, but I tried to convince myself that everything was at least a little bit interesting. One of the best ways to make things more interesting is to learn more than you have to. My favourite place for a long time, to quench my curiosity, is Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia that anyone can edit. I've been a long-time fan. I journaled about my Wikipedia reading habits when I was in fifth grade. And when classes went online in 2020, I found myself scrolling through all these Wikipedia articles and contributing. Anyone can edit the site. Some of the things I read had to do with my coursework. Like, I learned that the p in pH does not stand for anything.

Discoveries and Contributions on Wikipedia

I also learned about things that had no relation to my classes — Fictional worms, non-water floods. Before I could think too long about what it would have been like to live in London when beer was flowing through the streets, I was reading about Goblu and Beatosu, fake towns. They do not exist, but they were put on the official Michigan map in the Ohio section at the bottom by mischievous mapmakers in the '70s. I started screen shooting my favourite pieces of trivia on Wikipedia and I put them on Instagram. And that was in the early pandemic, and I am still doing it. I posted things like the Michigan State professor who took this model kidney to Disney World to see if roller coasters help pass kidney stones. They do. Good to know.

The Unique World of Wikipedia Editors

Wikipedia is created by real people. Unlike traditional publishers or other encyclopedias, it does not require that you're an expert in your field. This is a user whose name is Dianna, who has written probably everything you know about World War II and also P. Diddy. There are thousands of people like this. You do not have to be an expert. You just have to be able to synthesize sources and follow style guidelines. Those guidelines are strict, but not so strict that a little personality does not shine through sometimes. This article about the Pope mobile I think has quite a bit of

personality. It says “John Paul II requested that the media stop referring to the car as the Pope mobile, saying that the term was ‘undignified.’ Wikipedia sometimes feels infinite. I am sure you have heard warnings that it is not perfect. Maybe your seventh-grade teacher said, “Do not use Wikipedia, anyone can edit it.” It is true that there is some misinformation and disinformation on the site. Often, it is only up for a few seconds or minutes, but sometimes hoaxes last longer.

The Impact of Wikipedia

For example, there was an article for 10 years about an Aboriginal god called Jar’Edo Wens. It did not cite any sources. It should have been deleted, but it wasn’t. And eventually, this information was printed in books and told in university lectures. After 10 years, somebody realized that the article was just created by probably an Australian teenager named Jared Owens. So Wikipedia is not perfect, but studies have shown that it contains fewer factual inaccuracies than Encyclopedia Britannica. And I think that’s really impressive. When I was in the summer of 2020, I kept posting my favourite trivia. Physically, I was quarantined, but I was exploring the world. Things like breast-shape hills or this unusual chess opening.

Discoveries and Reflections through Wikipedia

I definitely was aware that there were islands in lakes. Like, I knew that was a thing. But it had never occurred to me that there could be an island in a lake on an island. I also had never thought about the possibility of an island in a lake on an island in a lake. I had definitely never considered the idea of an island in a lake on an island in a lake on an island. Wikipedia is just huge. It has 6.6 million articles in English alone. But it is not done. Wikipedia needs editors like you to contribute to free knowledge, whether that is small things like fixing commas or adding sources or big things like heavy content editing or making sure people are not using it for advertisements. There are some fun ways to contribute.

This is a website called wikishootme.toolforge.org and it shows you what landmarks nearby need photos. That’s a fun way to contribute. Wikipedia should be representative of everything in the world, and you would hope that its contributors also reflected the world’s population. By best estimates, the contributors are about 80% male, so there are a lot of efforts with edit-a-thons and marketing campaigns to get more people editing.

The Human Aspect of Wikipedia

I will remind you, it is created by very normal, real people. This couple in 2008 noticed that there were no photos on the Wikipedia article for high five, so they took matters in their own hands, acting out the sequence: up high, down low, victim misses, and too slow with finger guns. And then they added a hyperlink so you can go visit the finger gun article if you want to.

I thought this was very charming when I first saw it. And so I reached out to them, I tracked them down. It turns out after this, after they did this, they started dating, they got married, they had kids, and they agreed to recreate the photos with their kids. People take the task of writing an encyclopedia very seriously. I said that I get really into trivia. Some of these people will spend a long time doing very trivial things. There was a long debate on whether the caption “Guy Standing sitting” was too funny for an encyclopedia. They eventually removed the caption. There was a 40,000-word discussion on whether to capitalize the I in “Star Trek Into Darkness.”

Wikipedia in the Context of Modern Information

There was an even longer discussion on whether this thing should be called corn or maize. Maize is winning, as Ann Arbor will be happy to know. So ultimately, I kind of laugh at this sort of meticulous detail, but I’m glad that people are thinking this deeply about things, especially in an era of social media filter bubbles and 24-hour news cycles, when truth looks different depending on where you look. People on Wikipedia are coming together to write history in real time. I think the inner workings of an online encyclopedia are fascinating. Turns out, other people do too. When I was a student here last year, I started moonlighting as a journalist, explaining how a site this big gets made by volunteers. I wrote about how, when after Russia invaded Ukraine, downloads of Wikipedia skyrocketed in Russia as the state was limiting free press.

The Importance of Wikipedia as a Resource

Wikipedia is not perfect, but clearly it is an information source that people desire. When the Queen died, I wrote about the Wikipedia editor that was so quick to change her article into past tense. I kept posting online and I was getting a following, and I started leading edit-a-thons to get more people to contribute. Then I started doing comedy shows, and I was surprised to learn that one, I thought it was fun, but also people were excited to pay money to go to a show about an encyclopedia. I am still really drawn to useless knowledge. Like Diego, the tortoise who had so much sex that he saved his species. Some applause for him, great. I will let him know. Or I like “Boops boops in a bucket,” I just like that. But I really wouldn’t call it useless knowledge. I don’t think I would call anything useless knowledge, because the thing about trivia is that it is an invitation to learn more about a subject.

Trivia as an Educational Tool

You might learn a trivia fact and suddenly you’re far more interested, and you’re learning about things you never thought were interesting before. Ken Jennings once said trivia was the bait on the fishhook of education. I previously had little interest in the romantic period of piano music, and then I learned that Franz Liszt, he had such good looks and dramatic performances that these girls in the 1800s in Europe were getting diagnosed with something called Liszt fever because they were such fan girls. Suddenly, I am interested in piano music history. Similarly, I didn’t have a lot of interest in life in

the 13th century. And then I learned about this boy named Onfim and he was a six-year-old and his random birch bark drawings were preserved. And he wrote things that you would see a six-year-old draw today, like these proclamations like, “I am a wild beast.” And his stick figure drawings with too many fingers, they look like something that a six-year-old would draw today.

It reminded me that for all of history, people have always been people. Sometimes with trivia, you start somewhere random and then you start thinking about empathy and geopolitics and who knows, science, what have you. Facts are really powerful, even fun facts. And luckily, we live at a time where information has never been easier to access. Whether you’re looking for fictional worms or non-water floods or more serious things like atmospheric carbon data. If nothing else, trivia reminds you that the world is huge and it’s amazing and it’s really interesting. And I don’t think that’s trivial at all.

Glossary:

- Fascination: Attraction
- Trivia: A quiz game that involves obscure facts.
- Pursuit: Search
- Asterisk: Reference mark
- Dinkus: Typographic symbol or a small drawing
- Precise: Accurate
- Neuroscience: The scientific study of the nervous system (the brain, spinal cord, and peripheral nervous system), its functions, and its disorders.
- The nitty-gritty: The basic facts of a situation/subject
- Physiology: The scientific study of the way in which the bodies of living things work
- Stuff: Things
- Sonic the Hedgehog: A video game series and media franchise created by the Japanese developers
- Hedgehog: A small brown animal covered with sharp needles
- Molecule: Group of atoms bonded together, representing the smallest fundamental unit of a chemical compound that can take part in a chemical reaction.
- Bicyclic molecule: (from bi 'two' and cycle 'ring') is a molecule that features two joined rings.
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: A media franchise created by the comic book artists. It follows Leonardo, Donatello, Raphael and Michelangelo,

four anthropomorphic turtle brothers trained in ninjutsu who fight evil in New York City.

- Coursework: Work set at regular periods as part of an educational course.
- Quench: To satisfy a need or wish
- Wikipedia: The free online encyclopedia that anyone can edit.
- pH: In chemistry, pH , also referred to as acidity or basicity, historically denotes "potential of hydrogen". (or "power of hydrogen")
- Fictional worms: A term used for many different distantly related bilateral animals that typically have a long cylindrical tube-like body, no limbs, and no eyes (these worms don't exist in reality).
- Non-water floods: The storage facilities suddenly releasing liquids, or industrial retaining reservoirs releasing toxic waste.
- Goblu and Beatosu: The two non-existent towns in Fulton and Lucas counties, respectively, in the US state of Ohio. They were inserted into the 1978–1979 edition of the official state of Michigan map.
- Pandemic: A new disease or new strain of an existing disease spread worldwide.
- Instagram: An American photo and video sharing social networking service.
- P. Diddy : Nick name of Sean John Combs, an American rapper.
- Synthesize: to make (something) by combining different things.
- Hoax: Joke
- Jar'Edo Wens: A deliberately fictitious Wikipedia article which existed for almost 10 years before being spotted in November 2014 and deleted in March 2015.
- Encyclopedia Britannica: An English-language encyclopedia that provides general knowledge on a wide range of subjects.
- Hyperlink: An element in computer technology that connects one document to another on the internet.
- Edit-a-thons: An event where a group of people gather together, either online or in person, to collaboratively edit and improve content on a specific platform like Wikipedia, usually focusing on a particular topic or theme, often with the goal of adding new information or addressing gaps in existing content.
- Ann Arbor : A city in Michigan, USA

- Moonlighting: The act of working at an extra job, especially without telling your main employer.
- Diego, the tortoise: It was one of 15 tortoises in a captive breeding program in Costa Rica which helped increase the tortoise population to 2,000 from 15. Diego is responsible for about 40 percent of the offspring produced.
- Boops boops: A variety of fish.
- Franz Liszt: He was a Hungarian composer, pianist, conductor and teacher of the Romantic period.
- Onfim: He was a boy who lived in Russia in the 13th century. He left his notes and homework exercises scratched in soft birch bark.
- Atmospheric carbon data: The measurement of the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) present in the Earth's atmosphere.

Comprehension:

I Answer the following in a sentence or two:

1. What did Rauwerda use to win trivia while she was young?
2. Name the state vegetable of Oklahoma?
3. How did the bicyclic molecule appear to the speaker?
4. Define Wikipedia.
5. Who wrote about World War II and P. Diddy in Wikipedia?
6. Who is Jared Owens?
7. What was the speaker doing during quarantine?
8. How many articles does Wikipedia have in English?
9. Who added hyperlink to Wikipedia?
10. Name the famous pianist mentioned by the speaker?

II Answer the following in about a page:

1. Write a short note on Rauwerda's fascination with trivia & love for Wikipedia.
2. Mention the Discoveries and Contributions of Wikipedia and the role of editors.
3. Highlight the human aspect of Wikipedia.
4. What are the opinions of the speaker about Wikipedia as a resource and the storehouse of modern information?
5. State the usefulness of Wikipedia as a tool of education?

III Answer the following in about two pages:

1. Critically analyse the speech “The Joy of Learning Random Things on Wikipedia”
2. Capture the fascination of Annie Rauwerda towards Wikipedia.
3. How can one use Wikipedia in an effective manner? Explain.

Suggested reading:

Read the Transcript of Olivia Fox Cabane Debunks Charisma at Stanford Entrepreneurship Corner .

7. Communicating Biodiversity Conservation through Visual Storytelling for Conservation

-By Sandesh Kadur & Priya Singh

Pre-reading:

1. Have you heard of the term wildlife?
2. Can you picture yourself in the lush green forests?
3. Can you brave through the forest with a camera in your arms?



Note on the Authors:

Sandesh Kadur, an Indian wildlife documentary filmmaker and Priya Singh, Wildlife Research Scientist and know from them what it feels like being inside the forest studying and learning about their calling of the wild that has transformed into making it a career. They embody the spirit of storytelling and crafts narratives that illustrate the delicate balance of ecosystems and the species in them. Kadar's films shed light on undiscovered locations in India, contributing significantly to the existing library of wildlife documentaries. He carefully takes his camera through several different locations around the world - From the Himalayas to our own backyards in the Western Ghats, through the cloud forests of Rwanda, and under the crashing seas of the Galapagos Islands, spends countless hours observing the carefully linked behaviour of the species in the area and how they indirectly support their coexistence in the habitat. These observations help him craft stories that show how the changing world affects wildlife and the need for action. His films for National Geographic like 'Wild Cats of India' and 'India's Wild Leopards' along with this team from his company Felis' Creations are the best way to learn about the Big and Small Cats in the wild, his work in "Planet Earth II" and "Our Planet" are prime examples of how visually stunning productions showcase the incredible diversity of life on Earth, from the vast polar ice caps to the teeming coral reefs.



Sandesh Kadur and Wildlife Biologist Priya Singh spent years to document the study of ecology and animal behaviour, researching and consulting with researchers in the field. The essay showcases the journey of both Kadur and Priya Singh through the flora and fauna of various forests. It is a visual narrative which focuses on the Western Ghats, the Himalayas, the Dampa Tiger Reserve and the distinct species found there. The narrative captures zeal of Kadur who looks to film the fascinating wildlife. It also traces the observations of Priya Singh an expert in the art of behavioural science with regards to animals and plants. The essay also throws light on the nitty-gritties of film making and the role of Wildlife filmmakers and Biologists in the conservation of wildlife and the forest.

Text

My name is Sandesh Kadur and I am a Wildlife Documentary Filmmaker. I like to tell stories of people, places, wildlife and natural history. My journey started right here in India, where I turned my curiosity for the mysterious creatures of the wild into a reality.

What would you see if you were here with me, nestled in the forests?

Experiencing the wildlife first-hand in the lush dark, green forests in the Western Ghats, nestled in the multitude of greens of the Shola patches; walking on the rustling leaf litter on the forest floor without making any sound is an art as well as science. The floor isn't as smooth as the ones back home. The weather makes the mud wet and squishy, and despite the weather, I sit here waiting, acutely aware of the calls of the wild around me. I transform into a human camera trap, sitting in hide — the longer I stay here in my perfect hiding spot, the animals become accustomed to my presence and might considering giving me a visit. The longer I am a part of this ecosystem, the closer I am to getting that one beautiful shot.

On one of my first expeditions to the Western Ghats, I encountered the elusive and mysterious grey cat, hidden in the wilderness - the Pogeyan, the one that appears and disappears like the mist. I continue to be on his trail, hoping to capture the enigmatic cat that is not found on any textbook, on my camera.

Looking for the Pogeyan in the Anaimudi hills, I encountered several other animals unique to country. In fact, scientists discover several new reptiles and amphibians in the Nilgiri biosphere every year. In daylight, I witnessed the Nilgiri Tahrs

in the mists of the hills in rutting season, the males head butting in competition and the Indian Dhols as they swiftly corner a Sambar Deer calf in lake, while I captured it all in my camera, wading in a boat nearby. We got special visits from the elephants as close as 6 feet from our jeep once in a while, with their ability to overturn the entire vehicle with one charge. A wildcat like the Pogeyan, seen even by the locals only a few times, could be a nocturnal animal, shrouded in the mists of the hills. So I set up a bird trap in the trails of the hills and several camera traps along the way and wait all night in my tent, waking up every couple of hours to scope the hillside to catch a glimpse of him again. It was pitch black, but I was confident of sighting a few animals in our trail. A list of various animals small & big, few monkeys, Nilgiri Tahrs and elephants caught the camera eye, but not the Pogeyan. I still hope that one day the inexplicable cat will be found again and become an incredible addition to the history of the Nilgiris.

Clearly, finding the Pogeyan and other felines, is no easy feat. Think of it like trying to find a person in a new city — you ask around, look for trails and observe the places they’ve been. In the wilderness, I transform into a part of the forest when I search for any species, learning bird calls, following animal trails and spending countless hours observing their allies, enemies and their usual grub. My efforts to search for this elusive dream species have been relentless and I am still looking for this mystery cat. In this process, I also get to be a part of experiencing special bonds with species.

While I was filming in the foothills of the Himalayas, I witnessed the release of two orphaned clouded leopard cubs back into the wild. Finding these clouded leopards in the wild wasn’t that easy either. I spend days and nights, waiting and observing, on trees, on the forest floor and in the darkness, waiting for these mysterious felines to pose for my camera. Accompanying me on these expeditions is Priya Singh, an independent wildlife biologist.

Priya Singh, an independent wildlife biologist based out of Bengaluru. She graduated with a degree in Wildlife Biology and Conservation from the Post-graduate programme offered by WCS-India and the National Centre for Biological Sciences (TIFR), Bengaluru. She has been working on carnivore communities in many Biodiversity Hotspots in the North East of India having contributed many research papers.

While Sandesh Kadur documents the flora and fauna arresting the moments through his camera along with him Priya Singh studies the subject backing it with research with scientific approach. Priya Singh says ‘It also takes more than just scientific data and visuals to speak to your audience and urge people to protect what is in their own backyards and their home’. While Sandesh Kadur believes ‘Wildlife filmmakers are exceptional storytellers. They combine creative cinematography, riveting narratives, facts and interactions with conservationists to tell captivating stories.

With this, viewers are no longer passive observers; they become invested in the stories of the animals and their fight for survival’.

Priya Singh says “I have spent several months following species like the clouded leopard hoping to catch a glimpse of it. At the Dampa Tiger Reserve, we also face several challenges to identify and protect these cats, because of poaching and hunting that continues to occur.

I (Priya Singh) spent four months, 5 days a week in the forests trying to spot the clouded leopard, following its trails, and never saw one. With my background in biology, I find the most ideal places to set camera traps, based on the species’ lifestyle and roaming trails. Species like the clouded leopard are arboreal; they spend a lot of time upon trees, so we would set up camera traps upon trees with much difficulty, waiting days for a leopard to show up. Every animal has a unique personality, and its usual hunting grounds. We actually spotted a clouded leopard in the remote north-eastern corners of India, on a camera trap up a tree much later. It takes more than scientific data and visuals to speak to your audience and urge people to protect what is in their own backyards and their home.”

Wildlife filmmakers and Biologists are whisperers to these forests and wildlife, actually braving through them all, tasked with the special duty of transporting audiences to the far reaches of the world to tell stories, creating awareness about the known and unknown species and habitats of the world. Wildlife films act as an essential unit in the wildlife ecosystem, bridging gaps between humans and the natural world and bolstering conservation efforts, by bringing powerful stories to the palm of your hands. It is also crucial in ensuring that they do not disturb the habitat of the species.

One of the distinguishing features of wildlife filmmaking is its ability to document the hidden nooks and crannies of the animal kingdom. Filmmakers take their cameras into remote locations and capture the delicately intertwined lives of species, their behaviour and the balance of ecosystems. Through these films, they illuminate the challenges faced by species in a fast changing world, that otherwise remain unnoticed.

The newfound knowledge that wildlife films dissipate, foster a sense of connection and empathy. We begin to see species not simply as animals, but as individuals with unique personalities, instincts and emotions. Watching a herd of elephants eat together and protect their babies, or a tigress teaching her cubs how to hunt, connect to viewers and create a wave of emotions on seeing the challenges these animals face.

This connection is crucial for conservation efforts as it motivates people to care for the natural world and its fate. By bringing ecosystems to life, wildlife documentary films educate viewers about the intricate balance in nature, but also display the threats posed by climate change, poaching and the loss of habitat, inspiring viewers to become advocates for wildlife.

The emotional investment in wildlife, created by documentaries highlights the fact that simple actions in everyday life contribute significantly to the sustainability of ecosystems; ecosystems that build and rebuild the natural world that we continue to live in. They motivate viewers to take action at their homes, even if it is simple as limiting plastic usage to protect animals or supporting stricter environmental policies. Change certainly starts at home.

Wildlife filmmaking is a bridge, connecting us to the heartbeat of our planet, reminding us that we are essential strands in the fabric of the Earth, capable of action, and not merely its residents. The stories intricately woven by wildlife filmmakers ignite a spark, that compels you to become a champion for the wild.

Priya Singh has noted that ‘Recognizing the vast wealth of flora and fauna found in India, along with the largest global population for a country, and only 5% area under protected area networks, it is no surprise that much of the wildlife in India shares space with human communities. These are usually people living on the fringes of forests who come into conflict when wild animals leave protected area spaces and use human-use areas for foraging or movement’.

Wildlife filmmakers are tasked with the special duty of transporting audiences to the far reaches of the world to tell stories about the known and unknown of species and habitats, and they have been doing so for decades. Wildlife films bridge gaps between humans and the natural world. The power of wildlife filmmaking lies in its capacity to raise awareness, ignite passion, and motivate action in viewers. These films are powerful catalysts for change; bring powerful stories, to the palm of your hands.

This connection is crucial for conservation efforts as it motivates people to care for the natural world and its fate. By bringing ecosystems to life, wildlife documentary films educate viewers about the intricate balance in nature, but also display the threats posed by climate change, poaching and the loss of habitat, inspiring viewers to become champions for the wild.

Glossary:

- Wildlife: Animals and plants that grow independently of people, usually in natural conditions.
- Documentary: a film or television or radio programme that gives facts and information about a subject.
- Filmmaker: The one who is in charge of making a film.
- Nestle: To rest oneself or part of one’s body in a warm, comfortable, and protected position.
- Multitude: A large number of people or things.
- Shola: A patch of stunted tropical montane forest.
- Squishy: Soft

- Ecosystem: A biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.
- Expedition: An organized journey for a particular purpose.
- Encounter: To see
- Pogueyan: A mysterious large cat found in the Western Ghats of India.
- Enigmatic: Puzzling
- Tahr: A mammal which lives on the mountain.
- Felines: the family of mammals belong to the family of cats.
- Clouded Leopards: Medium sized felines.
- Cub: A cub is the baby of a wild animal.
- Wildlife Biologist: The scientists who observe and study the behaviour of animals.
- Carnivore Communities: A group of meat-eaters are the animals or plants whose nutrition and energy requirements are met by consumption of animal tissues as food, whether through predation or scavenging.
- Biodiversity Hotspot: A region where a significant number of threatened or endangered species live together.
- Flora and Fauna: All the plant and animal life in a particular region.
- Visual: Picture
- Exceptional: Brilliant, excellent
- Creative: Imaginative
- Cinematography: The art of photography and camerawork in film- making.
- Riveting: Fascinating
- Narrative: Story
- Invested: Devoted
- Glimpse: Sight
- Poach: Steal
- Camera Trap: A digital camera connected to an infrared sensor which can “see” warm objects that are moving, like animals. When an animal moves past the sensor it causes the camera to fire, recording an image or video to the memory card for later retrieval.
- Arboreal Animals: The animals which live in trees.
- Whisperer: Spokesman
- Transport: Extremely pleased or happy
- Bolster: To improve

- Conservation: Preservation
- Habitat: the natural environment in which an animal or plant usually lives.
- Distinguish: Special
- Nook: Corner
- Remote: Far-off
- Species: A set of animals or plants in which the members have similar characteristics to each other and can breed with each other.
- Fringe: Border
- The wild: Natural conditions, independent of humans

Comprehension:

I Answer the following in a sentence or two:

1. Who is Sandesh Kadur?
2. Who is Priya Singh?
3. Where did Kadur encounter the Pogeyan?
4. Which institution offers a Post-graduate programme in Wildlife Biology and Conservation?
5. Where are the Tahrs found in India?
6. According to Kadur Wildlife filmmakers are exceptional -----
 - a. storytellers
 - b. bankers
 - c. scientists
7. Mention one of the key features of wildlife filmmaking?
8. Name the tiger reserve mentioned in the essay.
9. Who spent a long time trying to spot a leopard?
10. What do wildlife documentary films display?
11. What is the special duty of Wildlife filmmakers?
12. Who are the whisperers of forest?

II Answer the following in about a page:

1. Highlight the significance of Pogeyan in the essay.
2. Trace the experiences of Sandesh Kadur on his expeditions to the Western Ghats.
3. Write a short note on Priya Singh.
4. How do Wildlife filmmakers and Biologists complement each other in forests?
5. Showcase the role of wildlife filmmakers and biologists in the conservation of wildlife and the forest in brief.

III Answer the following in about two pages:

1. Critically analyse the essay “Communicating Biodiversity Conservation through Visual Storytelling for Conservation”
2. How are wildlife filmmakers and biologists whisperers to the forests? Explain
3. Conservation of wildlife and the forest are very much the need of the hour. Substantiate.

Suggested reading:

Read the article of K.V. Pawar and Ravi V. Rothkar on Forest Conservation & Environmental Awareness

Read the article of Vikas Kumar Soni on Wildlife Conservation in India: Issues and Challenges.

GRAMMAR

Chapters	Content	Page.No.
Chapter 1:	Reading Skills - Types of Comprehension, Global,Factual and Inferential. Read the passage, Identify the theme and suggest a title	1-12
Chapter 2:	Picture Reading, Caption Writing	13-27
Chapter 3:	Listening and Hearing, Types of Listening	28-34
Chapter 4:	Communication skills- Introducing Oneself, Introducing Others, Requests, Offering Help, Congratulating, Enquiries, Seeking Permission	35-54
Chapter 5:	Public speaking: Welcome Speech and Vote of Thanks	55-62
Chapter 6:	Giving instructions, giving Directions	63-71

Comprehension is derived from the Latin word *Comprehensio* that means *seizing or capturing*. Reading comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and to integrate with what the reader already knows. Fundamental skills required in efficient reading comprehension are knowing the meaning of words, ability to understand the meaning of a word from the context, follow the organization of the passage and to identify the antecedents and references in it. It also requires the ability to draw inferences from a passage about its contents, identify the main thought of a passage, answer questions, recognize the devices or propositional structures used and determine its tone, understand the situational mood conveyed for assertions, questioning, commanding, refraining etc. This finally enables to determine the writer's purpose, intent and point of view, and draw inferences about the writer.

Types/Levels of

Comprehension:

Global

Comprehension

Factual

Comprehension

Inferential

Comprehension

Global Comprehension: It refers to the skill that allows readers understand the general meaning of a text. It can be compared to selective comprehension, which means understanding specific information in the text, and detailed comprehension. Global, selective, and detailed comprehensions have parallels with the three reading skills of skimming, scanning and intensive reading.

For example, in the classroom, various activity types can test global comprehension. Learners can be asked to sort out jumbled versions of a text, answer comprehension questions which test general understanding, such as true or false statements, and suggest titles.

Factual Comprehension:

Factual passages convey information in a straightforward and direct manner about a particular subject. Usually, the language and the style are simple and clear. Factual passages may give instructions or descriptions or report of an

event or a new finding.

As the title 'factual' suggests, the contents of such a passage are a collection of facts put together in a sequential manner. Factual description involves creating a complete mental picture of a particular person, place, object, beings or events. A factual description allows the reader to get a comprehensive view of the subject under discussion. It involves a step by step description of the subject in the best possible manner. In this way, the reader is able to compare or contrast facts, data or other relevant information. A factual passage is a detailed description of the physical attributes of the given topic.

Inferential Comprehension:

Inferential comprehension is the ability to process written information and understand the underlying meaning of the text. This information is then used to infer or determine deeper meaning which is not explicitly stated.

Inferential comprehension requires readers to combine ideas, draw conclusions, interpret critically, and evaluate information, identify tone and voice. As students develop inferential reading skills they learn to:

- understand the intonation of characters' words and relationships to one another

- provide explanations for ideas presented in the text

- offer details for events or their own explanations

- recognize the author's view of the world including the author's biases

- offer conclusions from facts presented in the text

- relate what is happening in the text to their own knowledge of the world

Exercise:

I. Read the passage carefully and answer the questions given below:

PASSAGE 1

Mother Teresa was a humanitarian. This means she did things to help other people. Her entire life was devoted to helping the poor, the sick, the needy and the helpless.

Mother Teresa was born in Uskub, Ottoman Empire on 26th August 1910. This city is now called Skopje. Her birth name was Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu. Her

father died when she was eight and she was raised by her mother. She joined the Sisters of Loreto at the age of 18 to become a missionary in India. She first had to learn English. So she went to Ireland to learn English at the Loreto Abby.

A year later she started her missionary work in Darjeeling, India. She learnt the local language, Bengali, and taught at the local school. She soon took her first vows as a nun and took the name, Teresa.

When she was 36 years old, she felt the call from God to help the poor of India. She received some basic medical training and then set out to help the sick and the needy. This was not an easy task in 1948 India. She had very little support and, while trying to feed and help the poorest of the poor, she herself was constantly hungry and even had to beg for food.

Soon other women joined her and she formed the Missionaries of Charity. Mother Teresa described the purpose of the Missionaries of Charity as an organisation to take care of “the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved and uncared for throughout society.”

It wasn't an easy task to build such an organization and to keep the focus on the poorest people. In 1979, Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for work undertaken in the struggle to overcome poverty and distress, which also constitutes a threat to peace. She was beatified in 2003, the first step on the path to sainthood, within the Catholic church. She worked almost up until her death on 5th September, 1997.

1. Mother Teresa was called.....because her entire life was devoted to helping the poor, the sick, the needy and the helpless.

- a) philanthropic
- b) humanitarian
- c) sympathiser
- d) merciful

2. Mother Teresa was born in Uskub, now known as Skopje.....
(True / False)

3. Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu changed her to Teresa when she.....
.....as a nun.

4. What hardships did Mother Teresa face while helping the poor?
5. Suggest a suitable title to the passage.

PASSAGE 2

Too many parents these days cannot say no. As a result, they find themselves raising ‘children’ who respond greedily to everything. Even getting what they want doesn’t satisfy some kids; they only want more. Now, a growing number of psychologists, educators and parents think it is time to stop the madness and start teaching kids about what’s really important : values like hard work, contentment, honesty and compassion. The struggle to set limits has never been tougher—and the stakes have never been higher. One recent study of adults who were overindulged as children, paints a discouraging picture of their future : when given too much too soon, they grow up to be adults who have difficulty coping with life’s disappointments. They also have distorted sense of entitlement that gets in the way of success in the work place and in relationships.

Psychologists say that parents who overindulge their kids, set them up to be more vulnerable to future anxiety and depression. Today’s parents themselves raised on values of thrift and self-sacrifice, grew up in a culture where ‘no’ was a household word. Today’s kids want much more, partly because there is so much more to want. The oldest members of this generation were born in the late 1980s, just as PCs and video games were making their assault’ on the family room. They think of MP3 players and flat screen TV as essential utilities, and they have developed strategies to get them. One survey of teenagers found that when they crave for something new, most expect to ask nine times before their parents give in. By every measure, parents are shelling out record amounts. In the heat of this buying blitz, even parents who desperately need to say no find themselves reaching for their credit cards.

Today’s parents are not equipped to deal with the problem. Many of them, raised in the 1960s and 70s, swore they would act differently from their parents and have closer relationships with their own children. Many even wear the same designer clothes as their kids and listen to the same music. And they work more hours; at the end of a long week, it is tempting to buy peace with ‘yes’ and not mar precious family time with conflict. Anxiety about the future is another factor. How do well intentioned parents say no to all the sports gear and arts and language lessons they believe will help their kids thrive in

an increasingly competitive world? Experts agree: too much love will not spoil a child. Too few limits will.

What parents need to find, is a balance between the advantages of an affluent society and the critical life lessons that come from waiting, saving and working hard to achieve goals. That search for balance has to start early. Children need limits on their behaviour because they feel better and more secure when they live within a secured structure. Older children learn self-control by watching how others, especially parents act. Learning how to overcome challenges is essential to becoming a successful adult. Few parents ask kids to do chores. They think their kids are already overburdened by social and academic pressures. Every individual can be of service to others, and life has meaning beyond one's own immediate happiness. That means parents eager to teach values have to take a long, hard look at their own.

1. What do the psychologists, educators and parents want to teach the children?
 - a) To teach them about treachery.
 - b) To teach them about indiscipline.
 - c) To teach them about the values of life like hard work, contentment, honesty and compassion.
 - d) None of these.
2. Why do children need limits on their behaviour when they live within a secured structure?
3. The drawback of giving children too much too soon is
4. Find words in the passage similar in meaning:
 - a) a feeling of satisfaction (paragraph 1)
 - b) valuable (paragraph 3)
5. Suggest a suitable title to the passage.

PASSAGE 3

It was market-day, and from the country sides and villages nearby, the peasants and their wives were coming toward the town Goderville. The men walked slowly, throwing the whole body forward at every step of their long, crooked legs. They were deformed from pushing the plough which makes the

left- shoulder higher and bends their figures side-ways; from reaping the grain, when they have to spread their legs so as to keep on their feet. Their starched blue shirts, blown out around their bony bodies, looked very much like balloons about to soar, from which issued two arms and two feet.

Some of these fellows dragged a cow or a calf at the end of a rope. And just behind the animal followed their wives beating it over the back with a leaf-covered branch to hasten its pace and carrying large baskets out of which protruded the heads of chickens or ducks. These women walked more quickly and energetically than the men, with their erect, dried-up figures, adorned with scanty little shawls and their heads wrapped round with a white cloth, enclosing the hair and surmounted by a cap

In the marketplace at Goderville was a great crowd, mingled of men and beasts. The horns of cattle, the high, long hats of wealthy peasants, the headdresses of the women came to the surface of that sea like crowd. And the sharp, shrill, barking voices made a continuous, wild noise, while above it occasionally rose a huge burst of laughter from the sturdy lungs of a merry peasant or a prolonged bellow from a cow tied fast to the wall of a house.

It all smelled of the stable, of milk, of hay and of perspiration, giving off that half-human, half-animal odour which is peculiar to country folks.

Hubert of Breaute, had just arrived at Goderville and was making his way toward the square when he saw on the ground a little piece of string. Hubert, economical in nature, reflected that everything was worth picking up which could be of any use, and he stooped down, but painfully, because he suffered from rheumatism. He took the bit of thin string from the ground and was carefully preparing to roll it up when he saw Malandain, the harness maker, on his doorstep staring at him. They had once had a quarrel about a halter, and they had borne each other malice ever since. Hubert was overcome with a sort of shame at being seen by his enemy picking up a bit of string in the road. He quickly hid it beneath his shirt and then slipped it into his trousers pocket, then pretended to be still looking for something on the ground which he did not discover and finally went off toward the marketplace, his head bent forward and his body almost doubled in two by rheumatic pains.

He was at once lost in the crowd, which kept moving about slowly and noisily as it haggled and bargained. The peasants examined the cows, went off, came back, always in doubt for fear of being cheated, never quite daring to decide,

looking the seller square in the eye in the effort to discover the tricks of the man and the defect in the beast.

The women, having placed their great baskets at their feet, had taken out the poultry, which lay upon the ground, their legs tied together, with terrified eyes and scarlet combs.

They listened to propositions, bargaining for some time and suddenly calling out to the customer who was starting to go away:

“All right, I'll let you have them, Allame.”

Then, little by little, the square became empty, and when it was midday those who lived at a distance poured into the motels.

At the lodgings run by Jordan, the great hall was filled with eaters just as the vast ground in front of the hotel was filled with vehicles of every sort like horse carriages, wagons, gigs and so on.

All the Rich was eating there at Jordan; the owner, was also a dealer in horses and a sharp fellow who had made a great deal of money in his day.

The dishes were passed round, were emptied, as were the jugs of wine. Everyone told of his affairs, of his purchases and his sales. They exchanged news about the crops. The weather was good for greens, but too wet for grain.

Suddenly the drum began to beat in the courtyard before the lodgings. Everyone, except some of the most indifferent, was on their feet at once and ran to the door, to the windows, their mouths full and napkins in their hand.

When the public announcer had finished his drumbeating, he called forth in a jerky voice, pausing in the wrong places: “Be it known to the inhabitants of Goderville and in general to all persons present at the market that there has been lost this morning on the Bambino Road, between nine and ten O'clock, a black leather pocketbook containing five hundred francs and business papers. Any finder, you are requested to return it to the mayor's office at once. There will be twenty francs reward.”

Then the man went away. They heard once more at a distance the dull beating of the drum and the faint voice of the announcer. Then they all began to discuss this incident, guessing the chances the pocketbook owner had of finding or of not finding it again.

The meal went on. They were finishing their coffee when a few police officers with the Mayor appeared on the threshold.

He asked:

“Is Hubert, of Breauté, here?”

Hubert, seated at the other end of the table answered: “Here I am, here I am.”

And he followed the policemen.

The mayor was waiting for him, seated in an armchair. He was in charge of the place, a tall, grave man of pompous speech. “Hubert,” said he, “this morning on the Bambino Road, you were seen to pick up the pocketbook lost by James, the caretaker.”

The countryman looked at the mayor in amazement frightened already at this suspicion which rested on him, he knew not why.

“I -- I picked up that pocketbook?” “Yes,

YOU.”

“I swear I don't even know anything about it.” “You were seen.”

“I was seen -- I? Who saw me?”

“Malandain, the harness-maker.”

Then the old man remembered, understood, and, reddening with anger, said: “Ah! he saw me,

did he, the rascal? He saw me picking up this string here, sir.”

And fumbling at the bottom of his pocket, he pulled out of it the little end of string.

***(Extract adapted from a popular short story by Guy de Maupassant)**

1. The detailed physical description of the peasants reveals a) that they were like balloons and fly in the air.
b) the unhealthy way they led their lives.
c) how the drudgery of their daily life has altered their physical form. d) that they were ugly in appearance.
2. Hubert of Breauté picked up a string from the ground_____ (True/False)
3. What was the announcement made by the public announcer?
4. The synonym of motel is_____.
5. Give a suitable title to the story?

PASSAGE 4

On 30 September 2001, I was on my way to Bokaro from Ranchi in Jharkhand when the helicopter carrying me crashed moments before landing. It hit the earth with a thud after its engine failed. All of us on board had a miraculous escape. Grateful to God but unfazed by the incident, I went ahead with my scheduled programme of addressing the students in Bokaro. At night, however, a panel of doctors persuaded me to take a tranquillizer to alleviate my perceived shock. The drug made me sleep hours ahead of my usual time-1 a.m. I also failed to rise at my usual 6 a.m. and woke up only after eight O'clock.

It was, however, a disturbed sleep, and sometime in the middle of it, I fell to thinking why the human race, the best of all of God's creations, has been so deeply divided by violence. I imagined a conversation between five people who together symbolize the finest attributes of the human mind and whom I admire deeply. Through their conversation, I sought an answer. In this experience, much more intense and vivid than a dream, though for want of a better word I shall term it that, I saw myself in a desert with miles of sand all around. There was a full moon and the desert was bathed in its light. Five men— Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, Emperor Asoka, Abraham Lincoln and Caliph Omar— stood in a circle, their clothes ruffled by the wind. They all spoke and their message was one. They all said to me in their different ways; 'This is our message to the planet. Everything that we do, any doctrine that we espouse, should be for the good of the humankind'.

The next morning, I kept sitting for some time drinking my tea and

pondering about this strange dream. And yet, the history of the world shows the forces of good struggling hard to make life better for mankind while the human race also shows a terrible capacity for destruction. Thus, we have Gandhi, and other great saints and teachers who lay down the precepts for a happy and virtuous life, on the one hand, and on the other the death of millions in the Second World War and the dropping of atomic bombs that destroyed entire cities. Thousands have died in the Bosnia conflict, the Israel-Palestine conflict continues to take lives, and on 11 September 2001 terrorists used a new tactic to take lives when they struck at the World Trade Centre in New York. At home, in the Bhopal gas tragedy, 30,000 people died as the result of the carelessness of a multinational company, and thousands more have died in the Kashmir Valley violence. On 13 December 2001, when the leaders of India were in Parliament, an attempt was made by the terrorists to paralyse the country. Where will it all stop? Are we doomed to destroy ourselves? No, we have to find an everlasting solution.

The five great human beings I saw in my dream lived at different times. In the modern world, there are few examples of human beings who embody the qualities that come from realizing the nature of the mind. Once a child asked me if I had read the Mahabharata and if so, who my favourite character in it was. The multifaceted characters in the epic represent almost every aspect of human nature, good as well as bad. I told the child that I was particularly attracted to the character of Vidura, who showed grit against the wrongdoings of authority and had the courage to differ when everyone else chose to surrender before the tyranny of adharma. Today, it is hard for us to find one true Vidura among our leaders. It is hard for us to imagine such an enlightened being and even harder for us to aim for such enlightenment. More discouraging still is the quality of public life today, the low level of discourse and the presence of so much ego, anger, greed, jealousy, spite, cruelty, lust, fear, anxiety and turmoil! I felt a new determination dawning inside me.

In this my most important decision I decided to help discover the nature of India's true self in its children. My own work and indeed I as a person were relegated to the background. My scientific career, my teams, my awards, all this became secondary. I wanted instead to be a part of the eternal intelligence that is India. I hoped to transcend myself and discover the inner, higher self that is in us through my interaction with joyous children.

(Extract from *Ignited Minds* by APJ Abdul Kalam)

1. What was the mishap that APJ escaped miraculously?

2. After the incident APJ_____.
 - a) was panicky and had to be given a tranquilizer.
 - b) went normally with the scheduled programme and addressed the students at Bokaro.
 - c) slept the whole day.
 - d) changed all the day's plans.
3. Great men appeared in APJ's dream_____ (true/false)
4. Give any example of violence that APJ refers to that has occurred in India?
5. What is the theme of the passage?

PASSAGE 5

Depression is a highly under- diagnosed illness. Many people are not even aware when they are suffering from it. Also, depression is confused with sadness or grief for an attitude problem. But it is not just sadness and grief — it is an illness. Sadness and grief are normal parts of life but depression isn't- the difference is like that between a common cold and pneumonia. Often people try to ignore depression or treat it with prescriptions for physical ailment or worse still, with drugs and alcohol. The result will be the same as what would happen to a person taking medicines for cold and fever when affected by pneumonia. Left untreated, depression can become a serious condition, crippling life or causing mortality. Gloomy facts apart, the best news is that, depression can be effectively treated and cured in many cases with modern medicine.

When depression becomes so severe that it makes a person dysfunctional for extended period of time causing irreversible damage to relationships or life conditions, it is generally referred to as clinical depression, and it requires professional treatment. Even though most depressed persons lack will and motivation to seek help, it is imperative that family members or well-wishers persuade and encourage the person to get treatment.

Depression is a whole person illness — it affects the body, feelings, thoughts and behaviour. There is certainly a bio- chemical process in depression, but it also affects the individual's thinking process, and ignites a variety of (negative) emotions. When it becomes unmanageable, it paves way for severe depression. Mental health professionals generally classify depression by its cause: Endogenous depression is caused by a chemical imbalance within

the mind. Reactive depression is caused as a response to a disturbing event or series of events. The first one responds better to medication. In the second case, medication may increase the symptoms, but it is necessary to resolve the issues that triggered it off, otherwise when medication is stopped, there can be a relapse.

Simple, cheap and highly effective anti-depressants are now available on prescription from a qualified doctor. The medicines should not be misused since the long-term effects can be adverse. At the other end of the spectrum, there are people who believe they should never ever use anti-depressants because of their horrible side effects and the medicine becomes addictive. This is absolutely not true. People regularly taking anti-depressant under medical supervision can lead absolutely normal day to day lives, without any serious side effects. And tapered off properly by the doctors, the patient will not have any addiction or craving for them and can get on with life.¹ Why do people in general not treat depression as an illness?

2. If sadness and grief is like common cold, then depression is like

.....

3. Which of the following statement is false?
- a) Depression can be triggered by a disturbing event.
 - b) Depression can cause a person to develop negative emotions.
 - c) Medicines should be taken life long, stopping them causes relapse.
 - d) Depression can be caused by chemical imbalance in the brain.
4. Mention any two compound words from the passage.
5. Give a suitable title to the passage.

Picture reading:

A picture is worth a thousand words - pictures give a lot of information that a reader might sometimes overlook. Picture reading proves to be helpful as an introduction to reading comprehension. It is an important educational tool, which helps in improving observation skills, vocabulary and language development.

A picture comprehension is an activity where students look at the pictures, find interesting details and then answer simple questions regarding the picture. These questions are usually based around who, what, where, when and why.

Why are picture comprehensions useful?

Pictures are extremely engaging and often less daunting for students than texts. Images are often used to induce language development and thinking skills within a thematic unit. Using a picture comprehension helps the students prepare for reading comprehensions.



Visual comprehensions are always stronger than listening or reading. By seeing a clear image, one can easily decipher meaning from a picture which they might not be able to with the text. One can use simple sentences to describe what is present or happening in the photo and start to understand how to take their reading further.

What do you see in the above photo?

1. Hints to express the photo

- The picture shows....
- How many people are there ...
- Who are they...
- What are they doing...

2. Use present continuous tense while describing the photo.

3. Use linking verbs to describe, contrast, connect or to develop ideas about the photo.
4. Give your opinion about the photo.
5. Give a suitable title to the photo.

The above picture can be titled as Swachh Bharath Abhiyan.

The photo depicts the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, a significant cleanliness campaign by the Government of India. Around six NCC cadets are seen in the photo, enthusiastically cleaning the pavement and clearing the debris.

“Keeping the surroundings and environment clean and hygienic is the responsibility of every citizen, both individually and collectively.” This is the message that the cadets intend to convey by means of this cleanliness drive.

This picture also emphasizes the belief that adopting hygienic habits will lead to the making of a healthy country.

Exercise:

Describe the pictures given below:

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



Caption Writing:

A caption is a brief description accompanying an illustration. It is a short piece of text under a picture in a book, magazine, or newspaper that describes the picture or explains what the people in it are doing or stating. The Latin root of *caption* is *capito*, which means “seizing” or “holding”. Though “A picture is worth a thousand words”, it still needs a caption to draw readers, provide context and tell the story.

Photo captions, also known as cutlines, are a few lines of text used to explain or elaborate on published photographs. In some cases, captions and cutlines are distinguished; the caption is a short title for the photo, the cutline is a longer prose block under the caption. The cutline generally describes the photograph, giving context, or relates it to the article. Captions more than a few sentences long are often referred to as a ‘copy block’, such as newspaper articles and magazines.

Why do we need a caption for a picture or a photo?

A photo with a caption provides the reader with basic information needed to understand a photograph and its relevance. Photos and Captions can help in many ways to find the main idea. Photos intensify the ideas in a text, give clues and ideas about what is going on and provide a better understanding of the main idea.

Captions give clues and hints in the story which can lead to the main idea. It should be written in a consistent, concise format. Captions are useful while providing more detailed understanding of the picture. A caption explains what is shown in a picture or illustration and helps the reader understand information that may or may not be in the text.

Guidelines for writing caption:

- Check the facts. Be accurate with the use of words, details and anything else that might catch a reader’s eye.

- Ensure the captions provide new information: avoid stating the obvious elements captured in the image.

- Focus on the key people/objects in the photograph.

- A photograph captures a moment in time hence use present tense. This creates a sense of immediacy and impact.

- The tone of the caption should reflect the significance of the image.

- Be precise and let the caption be fresh and catchy.

Points to consider before writing a caption:

Avoid Trite writing.

Do not make assumptions or wrong interpretations.

Avoid the unknown.

Make sure that the photo is not edited or cropped.

Check for spelling mistakes.

Do not write very lengthy captions.

Examples:

1.



2.



Exercise:

1. What is a caption?

2. Why do we need a caption to a photo or a picture?

3. What are the points to be remembered while writing a caption?

4. Enlist the points to follow before writing a caption.

5. Write suitable creative captions to the pictures given below.

a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



Captions are used as catchy and captivating phrases to create a positive impact and to bring a positive change in the society. Captions are also the ideal choice for spreading awareness through events, concepts or campaigns with a social or political cause.

Examples:

1. The event of 'World Hypertension Day' since the year 2005 has become a yearly event. In today's society, people consider the disease of Hypertension as a modern pandemic. To inculcate public awareness about this disease, create catchy captions.

Ans:

A healthy diet and a healthy heartbeat go hand in hand.
Keep yourself at a distance from tension in order to avoid
Hypertension. Hypertension is a silent killer.

2. We celebrate 'World Earth Day' every year on 22nd April worldwide to spread awareness about the importance of environmental protection. With the degrading nature of the environment, it has become all the more important to focus on saving the environment, and its resources. Create captions for the programme.

Ans:

The best revolution is a green revolution. Protect the Earth now, it will
protect you later. Save the resources before it's too late.
Make the Earth smile, it will make the future generations smile.

3. 'No Plastic' campaign has to spread far and near. Let us join hands to help the world reduce its plastic footprint. Write captions for this campaign

Ans:

If you cannot RECYCLE or REUSE, then quickly REFUSE.
Help the Earth rejuvenate; Say No to Plastics.
Laminate your documents, not the Earth.

Exercise:

1. The Youth Red Cross invites students to create awareness in the society about Global Warming. Create two captions for it.

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2. The Government of Karnataka has organised an event to create

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3. Amongst the list of conservation projects that various organizations had taken up, water conservation is one of them. Write three captions for water conservation.

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4. Write two captions to create an awareness on planting trees.

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Caption for a passage:

A passage or a story with a caption provides the reader basic information needed to understand it and its relevance. Caption writing for a passage requires perfect understanding of the given passage or the paragraph, aptitude to choose a suitable keyword or key-phrase and suggest a convincing caption using the keyword or key-phrase.

Steps to follow:

Read the given passage/paragraph/story carefully and understand its meaning, content and significance.

Find out the keyword or key-phrase from the passage. Generally, this keyword or key-phrase is found either in the first, second or in the last paragraph of the passage.

Finally suggest a suitable caption or title to the given passage or paragraph using the keyword or key-phrase in relation to the central idea or theme of the passage/paragraph.

Points to remember:

The captions must be brief.

The caption must reflect the theme of the passage/paragraph.

The title or caption must be clear, concrete, convincing and impressive.

Example:

Over-population has disturbed the ecological balance of the nature. Green forests have disappeared for cultivating more and more land to provide food to the ever-increasing population of the world. Natural resources like fossil fuel, metal ores, flora and fauna have been getting scarce day-by-day. Increasing population is a threat to the lives of the wild animals and biodiversity. It also causes scarcity of drinking water. Rising pollution becomes a concern in the big cities due to heavy transport and concrete forest. We must think seriously how to check this man-made menace.

Ans:

THE DANGERS OF OVER-POPULATION.
OVER-POPULATION: MAN-MADE MENACE.
THE PROBLEMS OF OVER-POPULATION.

Exercise:

I. Write a caption for the paragraphs below, in not more than 8 words:

1. Trees are our best friends. They provide us with shade, food and with wood for lighting fires and building houses. They also help in causing rain and prevent the topsoil from being eroded by the wind. Through them we produce papers on which we write, chairs and tables which make our furniture and even coffins. Above all they are the reason we continue to breathe oxygen and enjoy the beauty of the environment. Thus, from birth to death trees stand by us, thereby proving to be our best friends.

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2. Air pollution affects our health in many ways. Large quantities of smoke and other particles in the air cause lung-diseases including Cancer. Sulphur dioxide causes serious damage to the respiratory system. Besides, other pollutants present in the air can cause skin infections as well as infections of the eyes.

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3. An estimated 12 million Americans practice Yoga. There are about 450 Yoga centers in America, 50 or more in Canada and 145 across Europe, Australia and Southeast Asia and these figures do not include the fitness centers that teach Yogic exercises in one form or the other. Hollywood stars like Julia Roberts and Madonna are known to be regular practitioners of Yoga. Indian gurus are earning millions of dollars all over the world although little of this money finds its way to the home country.

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Note: Teachers can give small simple stories and ask the students to write the caption for the story.

Hearing revolves around the physiological act of hearing sounds. Merriam-Webster defines hearing as the ‘process, function, or power of perceiving sound by the special auditory sense(ears) where noises and tones are received as stimuli.’

Hearing is a passive, physical act that requires one sense and has to do with the perception of sound. It does not rely on concentration. Hearing is like collecting data; we hear sounds and words all day long, even if we are not paying attention to them.

Listening revolves around actively paying attention to the words and sounds that one hears, to understand their meaning and develop an emotional response. Merriam-Webster defines listening as ‘to hear something with thoughtful attention.’

Listening is a mental, active process that requires multiple senses. Listening is a voluntary act, which means that an individual can choose whether to hear or not. If one chooses to listen, then it is an active process. One can hear sounds and words without having to listen or focus on what one is hearing. Hearing without listening is an example of the common phrase ‘in one ear and out the other’.

Difference between listening and hearing:

Listening is an active process, whereas hearing is a passive process

Listening requires paying attention, whereas hearing requires no concentration or attention skills

Listening requires empathy, curiosity, and motivation, whereas hearing is associated with a lack of interest.

Listening is a skill that is necessary to have effective communication, whereas hearing is not a great communication skill.

Listening is a cognitive behaviour that involves both the mind and body, whereas hearing is a physical act that only involves the ears.

Purpose of Listening:

To gain information, enhance knowledge.

To broaden one's perspective thereby reducing conflicts.

To help solve problems which in turn boosts decision making skills.

To develop trust for each other in the society.

TYPES OF LISTENING

There are different methods of effective listening, and each one is suited to specific circumstances. A few of them are:

1. Active Listening

In **active listening**, the listener carefully pays attention to the words of the speaker and responds accordingly.

Active listening requires curiosity, motivation, purpose, and effort. The active listener attempts to internalize and understand what he/she hears to connect with the other person and participate in a meaningful conversation.

Ex: Group Discussion, Job interview, Students asking questions to the teacher on the topic explained.

2. Passive Listening

In Passive listening the listener is characterized as being disconnected, inattentive, and non-receptive. A passive listener has no desire to contribute effectively to the conversation. A passive listener most likely has an opinion already formed and is unwilling to work with the other individual to arrive at a solution.

Ex: Watching TV while eating food, Listening to someone while operating mobile.

3. Biased Listening

Biased listening (or selective listening) happens when someone is just listening for information that they want to hear. Here the listener is not honestly evaluating the validity of the speaker's opinions, but rather is looking to confirm previously-held notions. People are often unaware that they are biased while listening. Biased listening can lead to a distortion of facts in the mind of a listener who is not tuned in to what a speaker intends to communicate.

Here's an example: A superior is briefing on a new project. The listener is waiting to hear about the details of this assignment because he's been excited for a long time about it.

Because the listener is so focused on the details of the assignment, he doesn't fully hear everything the superior says. As a result, he *hears* the superior explain how one would be judged on this project, but the listener doesn't fully process it.

Since the listener does not have the necessary information, he may not perform well.

4. Sympathetic Listening

Sympathetic listening is an emotionally-driven type of listening, where a listener processes the feelings and emotions of a speaker and tries to provide support based on his perceptions.

Sympathetic listening is an important type of listening when trying to establish a deep connection with another person, especially when that person is experiencing adversity.

Ex: Sympathetic listening can be used when a child tells about the trouble he had at school. In this case a sympathetic listening mode can be used to make the child feel heard and give him/her support and comfort.

5. Empathetic Listening

In this form of listening, the receiver is able to understand the point of view of the speaker exactly in the same manner and spirit. This is achieved by making a connection with someone by developing compassion and identification. Here the listener communicates with the speaker indicating that he is taking time to hear him with an open mind and that he cares about him and his thoughts.

Ex: Kiran finds it hard to speak up during meetings. She's unable to get her points across and her colleague, Maya, notices this. Next time, Maya makes it a point to invite Kiran to speak without putting her on the spot.

6. Appreciative Listening

This is a listening for deriving pleasure or for entertainment. It is a conscious effort. The quality of appreciative listening depends on a large extent to three factors-presentation, perception, previous experience.

Ex: listening to good music, poetry or maybe even the soul stirring words of great leaders.

7. Critical Listening

Critical listening involves a systematic reasoning to analyse the speaker's message and separate fact from opinion. Here the listener judges the speaker and tries to seek truth of what is being said or spoken. He analyses and evaluates the information received critically and provides his judgment about it. Teachers encourage students to indulge in critical listening rather than seeking information. In addition to this, critical listening also plays an important role in day-to-day decision-making.

Ex: In office, when an employee makes a presentation stating his idea for an advertising campaign for a project, one must employ critical listening.

8. Relationship Listening

Relationship listening focuses on supporting another person or maintaining a relationship. Sometimes the most important factor in listening is to develop or sustain a relationship. Therapeutic listening is a special type of relationship listening which allows a troubled person talk through a problem. Relational/Relationship listening is also important in areas such as negotiation and sales.

Example of a conversation between a couple:

I feel ignored when you come home from work and start playing with the kids before even saying hello to me.

A good listener might respond with following:

“I really **appreciate** you bringing this up. I didn't know that you were **feeling ignored** by me. I certainly don't want to give you that message. You are suggesting that I talk with you when I get home so that we can connect.”

9. Comprehensive Listening

Comprehensive listening requires basic language skills and vocabulary to understand what is being communicated through the speaker's words. Comprehensive listening is a broad category that encompasses various forms of listening which the critical listeners employ. Through the course of their day-to-day lives, people use comprehensive listening paired with body language to understand the messages.

Ex: Comprehensive listening is essential for students, to listen to lectures, to interpret and to understand the message.

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Maintain eye contact with the speaker.

Keep an open mind, rather than being prejudiced.

Be attentive and relaxed, keeping away all physical and mental distractions.

Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.

Do not interrupt and do not impose solutions to speaker.

Wait for the speaker to pause in order to clarify questions.

Answer the following questions:

1. Define hearing.

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2. What is listening?

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1. State any three differences between hearing and listening.

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2. List out the benefits of listening.

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3. What is active listening?

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4. Give two examples for active and passive listening.

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5. Describe critical listening.

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3. State two advantages of relationship listening.

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4. How is comprehensive listening helpful to students?

.....

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5. How can we improve our listening skills?

.....

.....

Source:

Communication Skills- Ghousia Khatoon, Kamini Dhruva-
Himalaya Publishing House

Soft Skills for Business- K. Lavanya, Ranjith. S.V,
Cassandra Rane- Thakur Publishers

Chapter 4. Soft skills

I. INTRODUCING ONESELF

Introducing oneself refers to a clear, confident, and concise introduction to create best impression on others. It should communicate identity, attitude, confidence, personality. Therefore, students should be well aware of themselves and cover all necessary aspects while self-introducing to anyone as it may help to build a positive impression.

When the speaker introduces himself to someone, he hints that he is interested in establishing a mutual rapport. Introductions generally follow - the handshake (often, but not always), introducing oneself, moving into conversation

Some of the common ways of introducing oneself are:

Good morning. I'm **Rajesh** from **IIT, Chennai**.

Excuse me. I'm from.....

Hello, My name is I'm from

I'm the new student I'm from

Good morning. I'mfrom

Example 1: Here, Shivani is introducing herself at a volleyball camp:

Hello! My name is Shivani. I am 19 years old. I live in Rajajinagar with my parents and brothers. I am a first year Arts student. I am pursuing a Certificate Course in Communicative and Functional English after my college hours to improve my language skills. I like History and Economics. During weekends, I take dancing lessons, swimming and *veena*. I like puppies. My favourite colour is pink. My favourite food is *masala dosa*. I want to learn how to play volleyball better. Thank you.

Each of the sentences in this self-introduction has a grammatical structure. But, the message of Shivani is more than just subject, verb and object. Each sentence has a purpose or topic:

Hello - **GREETING**

My name is Shivani. – **NAME**

I am 19 years old. - **AGE**

I live in Rajajinagar with my parents and brothers – **WHERE YOU LIVE AND FAMILY**

I am a first year Arts student.

I am pursuing a Certificate Course in Communicative and Functional English after my college hours to improve my language skills –

CLASS AND DISCIPLINE

I like History and Economics – **SUBJECTS**

During weekends, I take dancing lessons, swimming and *veena* –

HOBBIES

I like puppies – **PETS**

My favourite colour is pink - **COLOUR**

My favourite food is masala dosa - **FOOD**

I want to learn how to play volleyball better – **PURPOSE FOR BEING AT CAMP**

Thank you - **CLOSING**

Once the students are clear about the purpose or topic of each sentence, they can choose which words to use.

GREETING

Hello , Hi

Good day/morning/afternoon/ evening

NAME, AGE and WHERE YOU LIVE

I am.....(I am in my twenties / I am nineteen.)

I live in....

I am from

I come from

FAVOURITES / FOOD

I like

I enjoy

I am fond of

I love

My favourite food is.....

HOBBIES / COLOURS

I like

I am fond of

I love

My favourite colour is

FAREWELL

Thank you. I hope to/ talk to you soon/meet you again / catch up with you.

Self-introductions can also be expanded into other activities throughout the year to refine the student's vocabulary skills. Students can talk about: greeting, name, age, where they are from, food, pets, music, hobbies/sports, family, closing with more confidence and clarity.

Self-introduction for career:

Self-introduction during an interview is vital. It is both a personal and professional communication skill that is needed in everyday life. So practice not only to introduce yourself but also convey something about who you are and what you do.

Self-introduction is marketing your skills. First impression counts a great deal in an interview:

A job interview is a tough competition with one or more candidates. And the manner in which a person introduces himself in an interview is imperative that he might be the deal breaker. Self-introductions are a natural oral form of communication that helps to assess the workers' confidence, vocabulary, grammar and attitude, and also help the employers know them.

Example 1 : Introduce yourself briefly

Good morning Sir, My name is Seema; I am from Kanakapura.

I completed my PG and UG in NIFT, Bengaluru.

I completed my schooling in Carmel High School, Bengaluru.

My hobbies are drawing, painting and listening to music.

My aim is to excel in fashion industry and I would like to help my country develop economically.

Thank you Sir.

Example 2: Introducing yourself

Good morning Madam,

Firstly I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to introduce myself.

My name is Anu. **My native place is** Bidar.

I have a degree in B.A., Economics from M T S college, Bidar.

I did my schooling from M. L. Higher Secondary School in my native place.

My strength is self-confidence. I am a positive thinker. **I am a fresher** and willing to learn new things.

My goal is to strive for excellence, enhance my skills and contribute to the growth of the organisation.

Thank you Madam.

Example 3: Introducing oneself in a Telephonic Conversation:

Start a telephonic conversation by introducing yourself. The person who makes a call is referred to as the caller and the other person who attends the call is mentioned as a receiver.

a) When the receiver attends and answers the caller directly:

Caller : Hello! This is John (or) It's John calling.
Receiver : Good morning John. Maya speaking. Is there any news?
Caller : Yes. This is just a reminder call.
Receiver : For what?
Caller : Today at 4 p.m., we have a meeting in our conference hall.
Receiver : Don't worry, I remember. I will be there sharp at 4 p.m.
Caller : Okay. Thanks. Bye for now

b). The caller does not introduce himself. The person whom the caller wants to speak is unavailable. Some other person attends the call on behalf of him:

Caller : Hello!
Receiver : This is Raj. May I ask / know who is calling please?
Caller : Oh, I'm Suresh. Your brother Vivek's friend.
Receiver : Hello. Vivek is not here at the moment. Any message for him?
Caller : No, thanks. Please inform him about my call. I will call him again in the afternoon.
Receiver : Oh, yes. May I hang up now?
Caller : Okay. Thank you.
Receiver : You are welcome.

Exercise:

1. You are attending an interview for a large company in Bengaluru. Introduce to the employer highlighting your skills.

.....
.....

2. Introduce yourself to your class teacher on the first day of college.

.....

.....

3. Draft a telephonic conversation in which the receiver attends the call directly.

.....

.....

4. Draft a telephonic conversation in which the call is attended by some other person.

.....

.....

II. INTRODUCING OTHERS

Some of the common ways of introducing others / someone else are:

This is Mr. / Ms.....

Meet my friend / brother / sister.....

Do you know my father.....?

Please meet Mr. / Ms..... (Ms is pronounced 'Miz')

May I introduce my teacher.....?

Let me introduce

I'd like to introduce my mother

I'm sure you'd like to meet

Introducing your friend to your mother:

Nita : Latha, this is my mother. Ma, meet my friend Latha.

Mother : Hello, Latha. How are you?

Latha : I'm fine, thank you.

Mother : Nita quite often talks about you. Why don't you come home one day?

Latha : I'll come on a holiday. Thank you, Auntie.

When two people are introduced to each other, mention the senior person first.

Example 1:

Introducing the chief guest (who has come to honour the winners on the eve of women's day) to the audience:

Friends, let me introduce (or I am glad to introduce) our chief guest of the evening Ms. Krishnaveni. At the young of 20, she started serving the society. She has been the Director of Mahila Seva Samaja since 2005, which aims at improving the lives of many hapless women. She was honoured with the *Sthree Rathna* award for her work in the field. She has been associated with many NGOs who work for the same cause. We feel privileged to welcome you madam to our programme.

Example 2:

Introducing yourself to a VIP who has come to inaugurate Sports Meet:

Good morning Sir. I'm Rita, a final year Arts student of VVS college, Bengaluru. I am also the student representative of our college. It is my pleasure to invite you to our college sports meet.

Exercise:

1. Your friends Jay and Rahul have come to your house. Introduce them to your parents.

.....

.....

2. You are the class representative. Your department has arranged for UG Literary Association inauguration. Introduce the chief guest to the audience.

.....

.....

III. REQUESTS

A request is the act of asking for something to be given or done, especially as a favour or courtesy. Since we are asking someone for help, it is important not to be direct but to be polite.

Here are some examples of being direct:

“I want help”.

“pass me the salt”.

“Can you carry my bag?”

These questions are correct but they are direct and not polite requests

The common expressions of request are:

Could you help me please in.....?

Can you please....?

Can you do me a favour of.....?

Do you mind helping ...?

Will / Would you please.....?

I'm sorry to trouble you, but I need your help in.....

If you don't mind, please help me by.....

I would be grateful if you could.....

The first four expressions are informal, used when speaking to friends .

The remaining expressions are rather formal and polite, used when talking to superiors.

Example 1: In a hotel

Keerthi : Can you please serve some more rice?

Server : Yes, Madam. Anything else?

Keerthi : Yes. Please get some more vegetable curry.

Server : Okay, ma'am.

Example 2: In the classroom

Shiva : Could you please lend me a pen?

Raj : Sorry, I have only one pen with me.

Shiva : Do you have a pencil?

Raj : Sorry, I don't have a pencil either.

Exercise:

1. Keshav buys a book from a book shop. He requests the shopkeeper to gift wrap it for him. Write a conversation between them.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Sarala requests her nephew to help her with a heavy suitcase while boarding the bus. Develop a dialogue between Sarala and Naveen.

.....

.....

.....

.....

IV. OFFERING HELP

There are various expressions used in English to offer help. Each expression has a precise and nuanced meaning and it is used only in particular situations.

Here is a list of a few expressions to **offer help**:

‘May I offer you any help?’ (‘may’ is a modal verb that indicates possibility, a concession or request)

‘May I carry your bag?’

‘Would you like me to open the window?’ (‘would...like’ is the conditional form of *like* which can be used to express an offer of help to someone)

‘Can I give you a lift?’ (the modal verb ‘can’ is used to offer help somewhat less formally but still being kind. It is a warm way of showing desire to help the other person)

‘Do you want me to come to pick you up?’ (‘do’ is used when you are not completely sure of the answer your offer would receive)

‘Shall I turn off the radio?’ (the modal verb ‘shall’ is used only for the first person singular and plural. It is an encouraging way to express your wish to assist someone).

Let me (do something): this is a kind but informal way of offering assistance to someone.

Let me help you with your jacket.

Let me find out if it is true.

I will (do something): this simple future represents an informal way to offer aid. Use it with people who you know well and who will be happy to accept your help.

I’ll go shopping for you.

I’ll go to the pharmacy for you.

Example 1: In the classroom

Teacher : Is anyone in the class ready to introduce the guest ?
Raju : Perhaps, I could do sir.
Teacher : Thank you Raju. But I'm afraid you look sick. You may not be able to do it.
Raju : Yes, I am. But I'll manage sir.
Teacher : Thank you Raju. That's the spirit

Example 2: At the book stall

At the book stall an elderly man is struggling to read and copy the titles. Sourav offers to help him.

Old man : Oh! How forgetful I am. I have left my reading glasses.
Sourav : Sir, if you don't mind.....
Old man : I am so thankful to you son.
Sourav :
Old man :son, very.....

Exercise:

1. Roopa buys a dictionary from a book shop but has left her purse at home. Her friend Diya helps Roopa in purchasing the book. Write a conversation between them.

.....

.....

3. Srinath offers help to his uncle to drop him at the bank. Develop a dialogue between Srinath and his uncle.

.....

.....

CONGRATULATING / COMPLIMENTING

Congratulation is an expression of joy. The prefix ‘con’ means ‘with.’ When we congratulate someone, we are rejoicing ‘with’ someone. When we congratulate others for their accomplishments, we unvaryingly make ourselves part of their celebration.

We congratulate and compliment people on various occasions such as marriage, securing a rank or promotion, winning a prize, etc.

The following are some common expressions to congratulate others:

Congratulations! / Congrats! / My hearty congratulations....!

Hearty congratulations / Congrats on.....!

It was nice to hear that you have achieved success in.....

What a wonderful / superb performance. Hearty congrats.....!

Let me congratulate you on.....

I’d like to congratulate you on

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you
on your **Some common expressions used for
complimenting others:**

That’s a nice dress (you are wearing)

You look smart / You look very smart.

The sweet you have made is absolutely delicious.

That’s nice.

My compliments on your dedicated preparation.

Well done! / Very well done! Keep it up!

You really deserve this honour.

We are proud of you.

Responding to congratulatory expressions:

Thank you (for saying so).

Oh, thanks, not really.

I am glad you like it.

It is very good of you to say so.

Communication Activity: Congratulating / Complimenting and responding -
Groupwork

Practise the following in groups.

Example 1: Congratulating your friend on winning a championship:

Rakesh : Rajeev, I've won the championship in athletics. Here's the cup.
Rajeev : Well done, my friend! You deserve it. Hearty congrats!

Example 2: The Principal congratulating a student for being one among the winners:

Principal : Divya, I'm happy to congratulate you for securing the State Level Rank in National Talent Search examination.
Divya : Thank you, madam.
Principal : You've brought glory to your college. My heartiest congratulations!
Divya : Thank you very much, madam. Your constant encouragement helped me a lot.

Example 3: Sathish's article on 'Conservation of Natural resources' wins the first prize in an international competition organised by UNESCO. His supervisor and coordinator Dr. Ranjan congratulates him on his achievement.

Dr. Ranjan : Sathish, I have just heard the wonderful news. Congratulations On your remarkable achievement.
Sathish : Thank you very much sir. It's all because of your constant support and encouragement.
Dr. Ranjan : Not entirely. It is the result of your own hard work. You really deserve this honour. Everyone in the department is really proud of you. I'm sure you will keep up the good work.
Sathish : Thank you, sir. It's very kind of you.

Exercise:

1. Congratulate your boss on his promotion.

.....

.....

2. Congratulate your friend on winning the Best Student award.

.....

.....

3. Compliment your sister's new hair style.

.....

.....

4. Compliment your mother's delicious culinary preparation on your birthday.

.....

.....

ENQUIRIES

To enquire is to ask for information from somebody. Enquiries can be direct/indirect. A few ways of making polite enquiries to seek information are:

Subject questions:

These questions are about the subject of a sentence:

Who takes you to school?

Which is your favourite place?

What annoys you the most?

When is it convenient?

Do not add the auxiliary verb 'do' ('do', 'does', 'did'): Who takes you ...? **not** Who does take you ...?

Yes / No questions

Are you ready?

Is that convenient?

Do you remember me?

Can you send me the report, please?

Use the auxiliary verb before the subject: Do you remember ...? **not** You do remember ...?

These questions usually only need a short answer like 'yes' / 'yes', of course, or 'no' / 'no', I'm sorry.

Object questions:

These questions are about the object of a sentence:

Where do you want to meet?

Who did you invite to the meeting?

Why couldn't you go?

How much is this going to cost?

Remember to use an auxiliary verb ('do', 'did', 'have', 'can', etc.): Where do you want to meet? **not** Where you want to meet?

‘Let me know’

When you ask about something in an email, you can use this phrase. It shows that you want to get an answer.

5. Are you coming to the party on Saturday? Could you **let me know**?

Thanks...

I would like to attend the training next Tuesday. Please can you **let me know** the time?

One can **sound more polite** by adding the phrases like ‘excuse me’ or ‘pardon me’ at the beginning of a question:

Excuse me, when does the bus leave?

Pardon me, may I sit here?

You can also use modal auxiliaries like ‘could you...’, ‘would you...’, etc.,

Example :

Keerthi : Excuse me, when does the programme start?

Volunteer : It will start anytime soon.

Exercise:

1. You want to book a train to Dharwad. How would you enquire the station master in the railway station?

.....

.....

2. Enquire at the ticket counter about the availability of tickets for the cricket match.

.....

.....

SEEKING PERMISSION

The common expressions for seeking permission and giving permission are:

1. Seeking permission:

May / Can / Could I.....?

Do / Would you mind if I.....?

Is it all right if I.....?

If you don't mind, I would like to

2. Here are some expressions to give permission:

Certainly, you may.

By all means.

Yes, of course.

Go ahead.

It is perfectly all right / okay.

You can / may if you want.

Example 1: Seeking and granting permission – formal

Divya : Good morning ma'am. May I take leave for three days?

Rita : Good morning. What! Leave for three days!

Divya : Ma'am, My mother has high fever. The doctor has advised her to take

complete rest. I should take care of her. Please ma'am.

Rita : Okay. Take care of your mother.

Divya : Thank you, ma'am.

Example 2: Seeking and refusing permission – formal

Ravi : Good morning, sir.
Principal : Good morning Rakesh.
Ravi : Sir, we are first year literature students. Can we go on an excursion to Chikkamagalur this weekend?

Principal :
I'm sorry. I can't give you permission. The College Council has decided
that only during your final year, the students can go on an excursion.

Principal : Would you please request the Council to reconsider its decision?

Principal : I'm afraid, I won't.
Ravi: That's okay. We will go on an excursion in our final year. Thank you,sir.

Exercise:

1. You have forgotten your textbook. Write any two expressions seeking permission from the teacher to attend the class.

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.....
.....

2. Mention any three different ways of seeking permission.

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.....

3. Write any two expressions for giving permission.

.....
.....
.....

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Advanced Skills for Communication in English: Book I , by Jeya Santhi.V December 2015,Publisher: New Century Book House, ISBN: 978-81-2343-101-7

Welcome Speech, Vote of Thanks

Speech in simple terms is the ability to express thoughts and feelings through articulation. By reading loudly, one can improve speaking skills and thereby improve articulation in communication. Therefore, speaking skill is an important component of communication. When one extends speaking skills to public domain, it becomes a speech. The art and science of public speaking is called Oratory skill. It is the process of communicating from one to many such that, a good number of people understand what one is saying.

Public speaking, also called oratory or oration, has traditionally meant the act of speaking face to face to a live audience. Today it includes any form of speaking (formally and informally) to an audience, including pre-recorded speech delivered over great distance by means of technology.

Purpose of public speaking

The function of public speaking depends entirely on what effect a speaker intends when addressing a particular audience. The same speaker, with the same strategic intention, might deliver a substantially different speech to two different audiences. The point is to change something, in the hearts, minds or actions of the audience.

Public speaking contrary to its literary meaning is frequently delivered to the supposed homogenous, limited audience with a broadly common outlook. Audiences may be ardent fans of the speaker; they may be hostile (attending an event unwillingly); or they may be some strangers (indifferent to a speaker on a soap box in the street). An effective speaker must remember that the composition of even a small group of audience is still diverse.

As a broad generalization, public speaking seeks either to reassure a troubled audience or to awaken a complacent audience to some important issue. The speaker plans to enhance the effectiveness of the speech by combining information with a suitable approach.

If you have apprehensions about public speaking, here are a few suggestions you can do to overcome the stage fear:

I. Know the audience

A big part of public speaking is connecting with the audience, and one cannot really connect with the audience if he/she does not know the target audience. Spend some time about the composition of the audience and their inclination.

II. Get comfortable with the environment

Take a few minutes to scope out the room where you intend to speak. It will help you feel more comfortable. Even if it is a familiar place which you are accustomed to, stand at the front or at the podium and perceive the acoustics of the room.

III. Know the purpose

There is a purpose behind every speech. It is important to reflect on the purpose of one's presentation so that he/she can tailor the message and note the points accordingly. Advice from an expert can be taken in this regard.

IV. Practice is the mantra

Once you know the material try to retain the focus. Practice is essential for a better speech. Hence the speaker should rehearse to gain confidence.

Ensure that your speech should not be read out word to word from the paper because it leads to boredom. It is acceptable if it is first time speaking in public and one needs some practice. But this should not be a habit.

V. Learn from the professionals

A great way to practice is to listen to speeches of great orators and be observant of their uniqueness.

VI. Encourage yourself

The nervousness of public speaking comes from a fear that one might falter during the speech. This can be overcome by positive thinking.

VII. Be confident

When you are giving a speech, you may feel anxious. But the best thing you can do is to be confident, whether you feel it or not. Even if you make a mistake or lose your train of thought, recover, and continue with the speech. Stay calm and composed.

VIII. Retain your personality

Your speech should reflect your personality. Have a pleasant smile, make eye contact. The audience will be naturally drawn towards your uniqueness and genuine expressions even if you are not technically perfect.

IX. Do not magnify your mistakes

One may still forget an important point or make a blunder despite these suggestions. Stay positive, let it go and remind yourself that each presentation is a new opportunity to learn and improve.

Writing a Welcome Speech

A welcome speech is a speech given by the host at the beginning of a ceremony to show warmth and gratitude to those who have graced the occasion. It is a formal speech that marks the beginning of any event, meeting, gathering or celebration.

Start the speech by greeting the audience, before giving an overview of the event and end the speech by introducing the speaker, then thank the audience again for attending the program.

Points to consider while giving a welcome speech:

- plan the length of the speech.
- research thoroughly before writing.
- be concise.
- thank the guests.
- avoid clichés and practice aloud.

Length of the speech:

Long speeches are no longer in vogue. A five-minute speech consisting of roughly 750 words is sufficient. Publication coach Daphne Gray-Grant says that the average person speaks about 125-150 words per minute that means five

minutes of speech would have about 625-750 words. So, consider this word count during your preparations.

Welcome speech remarks

A good welcome speech sets the tone for an event. While giving an overview of the event, include the remarks. This will make it easier to bridge the communication effectively from the speech to the main event.

Welcome speech template

A sample welcome speech gives an idea to compose a speech. This is used to cordially greet all participants at a gathering. In addition, the welcome speech also contains important information about a special highlight of the event, remarks, etc. Ask for an effective welcome speech example for an event from the event experts.

Introduction

The initial part of the welcome speech sets the tone. Pay attention to factors such as event format, audience demographics, expectations, and the core themes. The content usually includes (but is not limited to):

Greeting: Greet the audience and set the mood by saying - “Ladies and gentlemen”, “Hello, my dear friends,” etc

Saying thank you: Getting involved in an event requires time and (in most cases) money. Express your appreciation to the audience for attending the event and thank the sponsors.

A “what” statement: Reiterate the name and theme and express how honoured you are to host it.

Example 1 - Sample welcome speech

A warm welcome to everyone to this beautiful evening.

Today we have Mr. _____ as our chief guest. It is an honour to welcome Mr. _____ on behalf of _____ college. He is an accomplished writer with several published well-known books. His books motivated all of us to dream big and achieve them. The literary works by him has ignited the fire among all of us.

Besides being a writer, he is a well-known social worker who loves to serve society. He is a person who provides free education to many underprivileged children. His love for nature and greenery is well known to all of us through the plantation drive he organizes every year in the city.

It is a pleasure for all of us to have such a great personality among us. We are keen to hear from you sir about your journey, knowledge and success *mantras*. Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to share your thoughts with us.

Once again, I welcome you to the function, sir. **Example 2 -**

Welcome speech for college function

Good evening, everyone.

Honourable Chief Guest Mr._____, Director of, Principal, teachers, and my dear friends. I welcome you all to this beautiful evening of the annual function of . Today we are here to celebrate the completion of 25 years of service of our college to the society.

The journey started 25 years back and _____ has achieved all the success in those golden periods. Today we are proud to be part of such an institution celebrating the silver jubilee. It is a matter of great honour for all the students, teachers, and the alumnus.

I congratulate each of those hard-working souls who has truly worked to elevate the reputation of our college. My heartfelt gratitude to all those who are a part of this prestigious college.

Let us begin the celebration. I would like to welcome our very versatile and talented chief guest Mr_ to the stage, to share his thoughts and to inaugurate the event.

Example 3 - Welcome speech for a seminar in college

Good Morning to one and all present here for the seminar.

Respected _____, Director of University, Principal _____, faculty members, distinguished guests and students, today we have gathered here to deliberate about a very important topic _____ which is the most vehemently discussed topic with significant implications.

Against this backdrop, we have assembled here to know more about the subject matter with the participation of many eminent speakers. I am honoured to welcome our Chief Guest Mr.

_____, Director of _____ University
for accepting our request to share his views on this pertinent subject. I also welcome all the participants who have come from across the country to present their papers.

I would, on behalf of our College, again thank you _____ for accepting our invitation and would like to extend my gratitude towards our Principal

_____ for encouraging us to conduct this seminar. Thank you Sir/Madam, for your kind support, suggestions and guidance. I feel honoured to welcome the august gathering for taking a keen interest in attending the seminar. I welcome the gathering once again to the seminar and hope that you will have a great time ahead.

Thank you all!

Vote of Thanks

A proposal of vote of thanks is a well-prepared brief formal speech addressed to thank the guest, the organizer and other participants for their gracious presence and contribution to an event. It is an important part of every formal event.

Preparing a proposal of vote of thanks is always thought of as a Herculean task, but it is not. Adhere to the instructions: Choose your words carefully, avoid long unwinding sentences, keep the length short and simple. Start the vote of thanks by greeting everyone present or with a good quote on gratitude, followed by the list of guests you must extend your thanks on behalf of the organization hosting the event. It is very important that one do not miss out to include any of the esteemed guests, the host, the dignitaries, and the media (if invited).

Later, thank the participants and everyone who has been there for the event.

Finally, you can end by thanking the hosts for having given you the opportunity to represent them.

Example 1 - Vote of Thanks for a General Event

Good evening, everyone.

It has been such an honour to be a part of this wonderful event. On behalf of the organization, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed guests, Mr Chandrasekar, Manager, IT Solutions and Mrs Sunitha, Director of NSM Technologies. Thank you, sir, thank you madam for gracing the occasion despite your busy schedule. Your words were indeed insightful and inspiring.

Sincere thanks to the Heads of various departments who handled the event throughout. A big round of applause and thanks to all the participants who made the event a memorable one.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you present here with us today and helping us make this event a grand success.

Thank you one and all.

Example 2 – Vote of Thanks for Teachers’ Day

A very pleasant morning to the gathering,

On behalf of all students and staff, I am glad to be here to propose the vote of thanks. A special thanks to our chief guest, Ms Sandhya, for accepting our invitation and for being here with us today. Your thoughts have truly inspired us. I thank our Headmistress, Mrs Karishma, for her constant support and guidance.

Our distinguished teachers always put in a lot of efforts and love into making each one of us a good student and wonderful human being. You have always been generous with your time when we the students needed you. Thank you, dear teachers.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not thank the fellow students who have made this day possible. I would also like to thank each one of you for being amidst us and making this day a wonderful and memorable one for our dear teachers.

Thank you once again.

Exercise:

1. Prepare a welcome speech for your college freshers' day programme.
2. Prepare a welcome speech for inauguration of NSS activities of your college.
3. Prepare vote of thanks for the valedictory programme of your college activities.
4. Prepare vote of thanks for the annual sports meet in your college.

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Instruction is the act of educating, giving the steps that must be followed or an order. The purpose of instruction is to help people learn. In this unit we look into various ways of giving instructions to do a task and to use a device.

An effective set of instruction requires the following:

Clear, precise, and simple writing.

A thorough understanding of the procedure in all its technical details.

The ability to put yourself in the place of the reader, the person trying to use your instructions.

The ability to visualize the procedure in detail and to keep a record of the steps involved.

Few methods for giving instructions:

1. Number linking

This method is useful when giving short instructions. You can use words such as firstly, secondly, thirdly and then finally. Usually, the last line in any instructions will end in ‘finally’ or ‘in the end’.

Example:

In the first step.....

Followed by the second step.....

The third step involves.....

As a final step.....

At last.....

2. Linking words

You can use the following linking words while giving instructions.

The first thing is to...

You can begin with....

You can start with....

And then....

Following this....

When this is done, you can start with....

A few expressions which indicate different stages in the instructions:

First, firstly, initially, in the beginning, first of all, secondly, next, then, subsequently, carefully,

gradually, swiftly, in a careful manner, such a manner, so as to, finally, eventually, lastly, in the end etc.,

I. Giving instructions to do a task:

A. Instructions to make a cup of tea

Ingredients:

Tea powder, water, sugar, milk, cardamom powder

1. **First**, take a vessel and put a cup of water in it.
2. **Secondly**, allow the water to boil.
3. **Next**, add three teaspoons of milk and one teaspoon of sugar in the water or to your taste.
4. **Then**, add cardamom powder for flavour.
5. **Now** add tea leaves and boil for another two minutes.
6. **Finally**, filter the tea, pour it in a cup and enjoy the tea with biscuits.

B. Instructions to prepare Maggi noodles:

Ingredients:

1. Maggi – One packet
2. Water – A cup and a half

Method:

1. **Firstly**, take one and a half cup of water in a pan.
2. **Next**, heat the pan on medium flame.
3. **Gradually** add the noodles to the boiling water in the pan.
4. **Then** add the tastemaker to the pan, mix it well without breaking the noodles and for cook about two minutes.
5. **Finally**, turn off the stove when the Maggi is done.
6. Enjoy the delicious Maggi with a cup of hot tea.

Instructions could be given in different ways depending on the task we choose.

C. Here are a set of instructions for students to attend online classes through MS Teams.

1. Join the virtual classroom on time. Look for your specific class under the teams in MS Teams and click join.

2. Students' speakers will be enabled, but microphone and camera will be disabled. If any student needs to make a query, click 'raise hand' or post a text message in the chat window, if required, the teacher may ask you to unmute the microphone or switch on the camera as appropriate.
3. Stay in real time video presence. Teachers will mark the attendance report automatically. The report contains name, join time, and leave time of all participants.
4. Be presentably attired for the class. Teacher may ask you to switch on your camera.
5. Keep the room quiet.
6. Avoid leaving the class in the middle.
7. Do not engage into other communications (conversation, phone call or SMS) during the class.
8. Avoid eating during the class time.
9. Use headphone/ earphone and microphone for better performance.
10. Teachers may record the lecture for future reference. Students are not allowed to record any part of the lecture by any means.
11. Any misuse of the lecture sessions or modified or unauthorized posting of any part of the lecture sessions in any social media group will be a major offense and will lead to disciplinary action.

II. Giving instructions to use a device:

A. How to upload documents to Digi Locker via app

1. First sign in to the Digi Locker app.
2. Then on the dashboard, tap on the burger menu on the top left.
3. Later select **Upload Documents**.
4. Next tap on the **upload** button on the top next to the menu button.
5. Then you will be asked to give the app access to your files.
6. Next, select **Files** or **Content from other apps**, depending on what you want to upload.
7. Selecting 'Files' will take you to your phone's storage (within the app) from where you can navigate to where the file is, select it, and tap on **Upload**.
8. Finally, content from other apps will open the default file browser of your phone.

Exercise:

Write simple and clear instructions for the following in at least five sentences:

1. How to do *Surya Namaskara*?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. How do you place an online order for food through an app?

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.....

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3. How to book a railway ticket?

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.....

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4. How do you make a vegetable bread sandwich?

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.....

.....

5 How to operate an ATM card?

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.....

.....

Asking for / Giving Directions

There may be occasions when you need to ask for or give directions to go from

.....

.....

.....

one place to another. Asking for or giving directions appropriately is an important communication skill.

- Here are some of the expressions which can be used while asking for directions:

- i. Excuse me, how do I get to.....?

- ii. Could you please direct me to.....?

- iii. Please tell me where is.

- iv. Can you help me locate / reach.....?

- v. Kindly tell me the way to.....?

- Similarly, while giving directions, you can use certain words, phrases, expressions, some of which are listed below:

at, up, around, past, along, up to/till/until/to, through, via, between, beyond, behind, before, under, near, beside, by, across, opposite, ahead, into, on, in, above, below, next to, further, farther, distant.
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in front of, not far from, as far as, in the middle of, at the end of

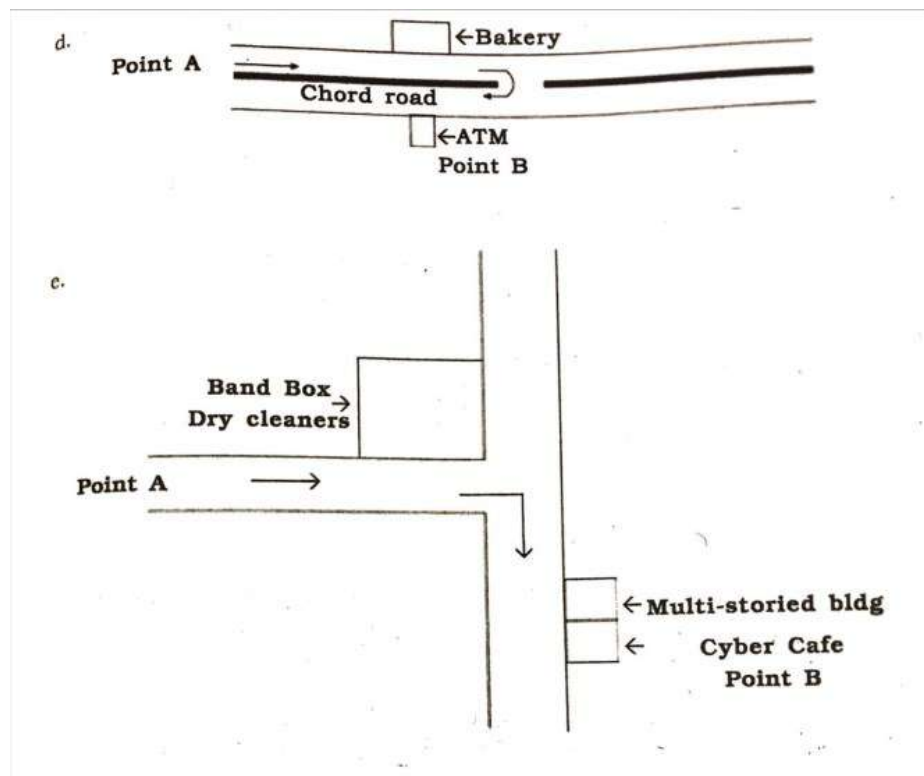
go straight, turn left, turn right, take a U-turn, go back
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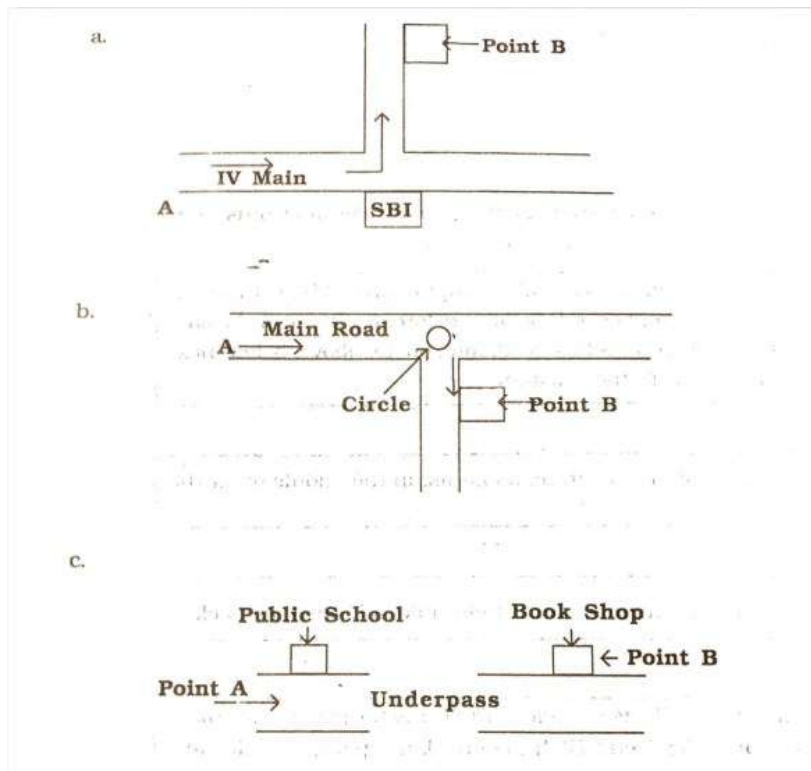
underpass, flyover, circle, corner, main road, service road, by-lane, dead end (T-Junction), lane, path, signal (traffic lights), median
--

Landmarks like a theatre, mall, super-market, church, temple, hospital, school, college, or a park, lake, river, hillock can be used for giving directions.

1. Look at the maps given below and fill in the blanks (choosing the right word from those given in the brackets) to give directions on how to go from point A to Point B. Some words could be used more than once.

(along, T-junction, underpass, main road, around, left, right, opposite, past, median, U-turn, next to across, at the corner, straight, till)





i. Go along 4th Main, take a _____ turn _____ SBI. Point 'B' is on your _____.

ii. Go _____ the _____, _____ circle, take a _____ turn into II Main. Point 'B' is on your _____.

iii. Go _____ the public school and enter the _____. As you emerge from _____, the book shop is on your _____.

iv. The ATM (Point B) is _____ the road from the bakery. So go _____ Chord Road, take a _____ at the _____ and the ATM is on your _____.

v. Go _____ on the main road _____ you come to a _____. There is a band box dry cleaners _____.

Take a _____ turn. The cybercafé (Point B) is _____ the multistoried building on your left

• While giving directions, you can use words which indicate time and distance.

Eg: walk for about 5 minutes' drive for about 1 km

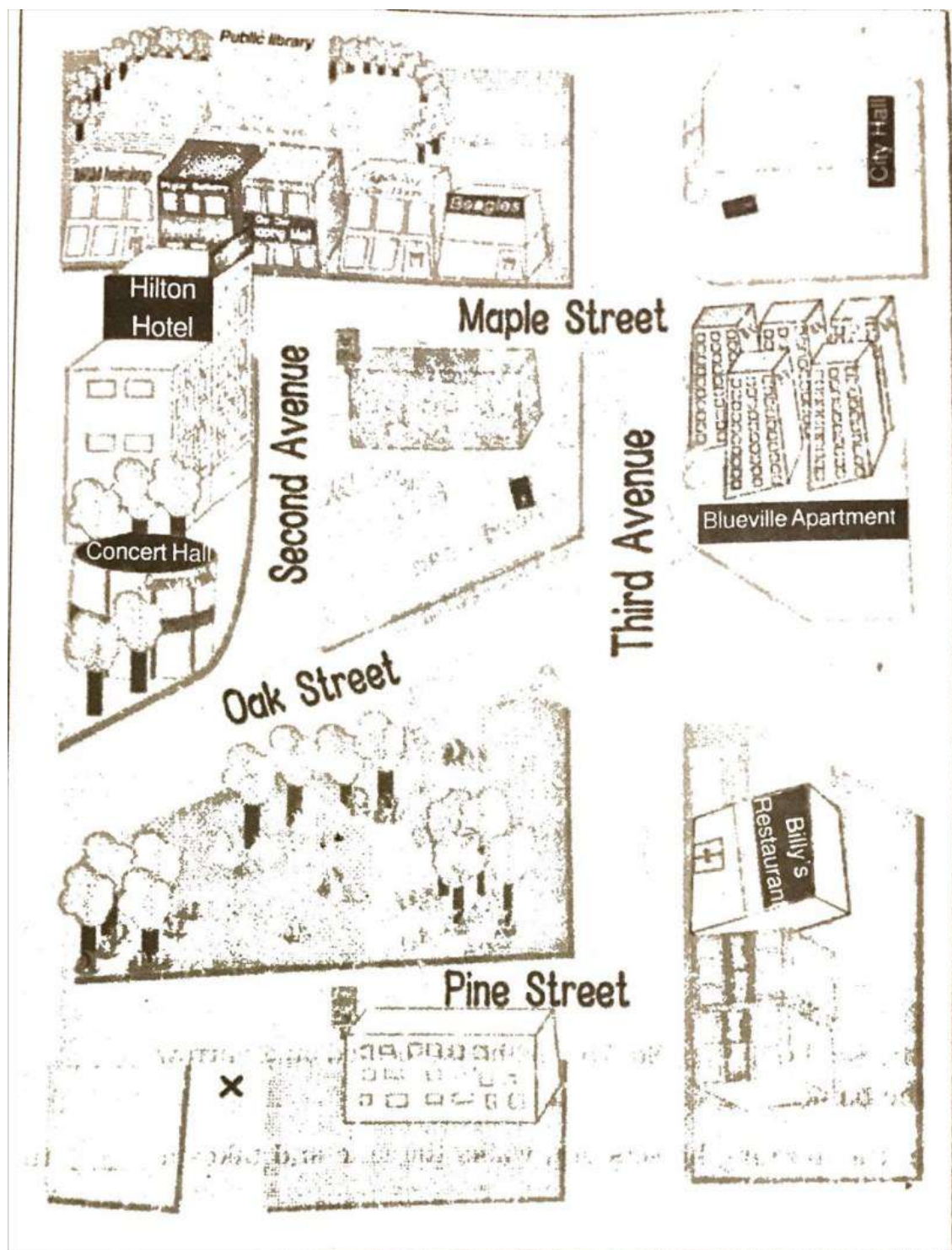
1. Look at the map given in the next page and answer the following questions:

i. How will you get to Billy's restaurant?

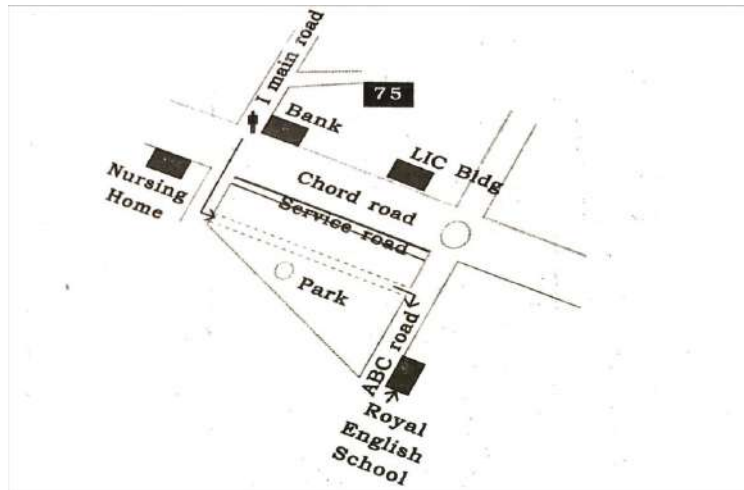
ii. How can you reach Hilton hotel?

111. Give directions for reaching Blueville Apartment?

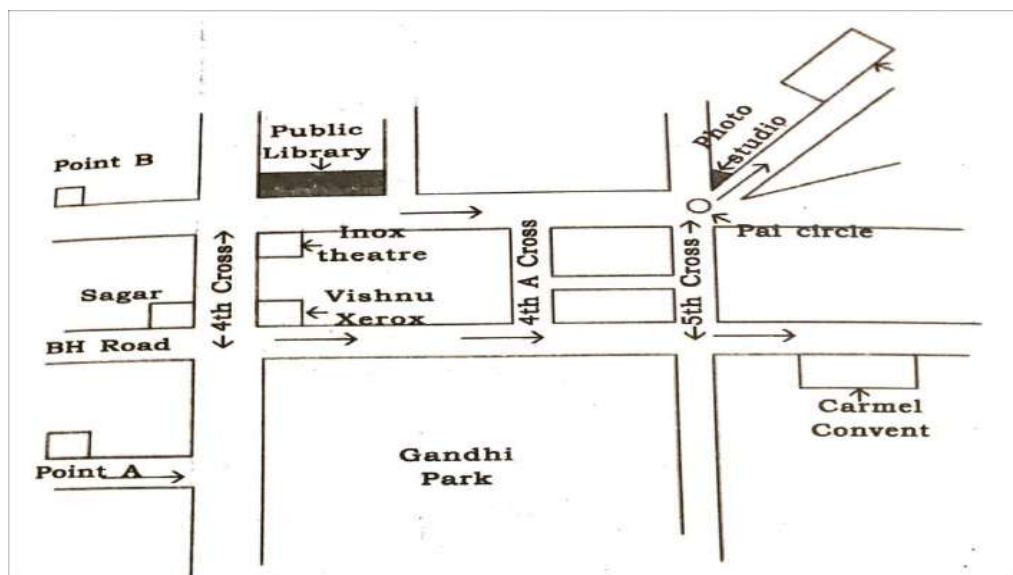
iv. How will you go from Concert Hall to City Hall?



2. Look at the map given below and fill the blanks with the words given in brackets
 [lane; along; left; behind; in front of; service; crosses; main; path: past;
 through; at; other; along]



- i. Mr Sen lives ____ No. 75, his house located on a narrow _____, _____ the bank.
- ii. In the morning he sets out, walks the lane and takes a _____ turn into _____.
- iii. Then again he takes a _____ turn onto the Chord Road which is a _____ road.
- iv. _____ the bank he _____ the road and enters the _____ road.
- v. From there he walks road _____ the park in the small _____ and reaches ABC road.
- vi. The Royal English School, where he works is located on the _____ side of the road.



- i. Give directions to your friend to get to AB College from Point A as marked on the given Map.
- ii. Give directions to your friend to get to Carmel Convent from Point B as marked on the given map

QUESTION PAPER PATTERN
B.A./B.S.W./ B.A.(MUSIC) AND OTHER PROGRAMS UNDER
THE FACULTY OF ARTS
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) | 5x2=10 |
| II | Answer in about a page each. (ANY 4 out of 5 questions) | 4x5=20 |
| III | Answer in about 2 pages. (ANY 2 out of 3 questions) | 2x10=20 |

SECTION - B

(Grammar Component-30marks)

- | | | |
|-------|---|----------|
| IV. | Comprehension passage | 05 marks |
| V. | Picture Reading and Giving a Caption | 02 marks |
| VI. | Listening and Hearing: Types of Listening | 03 marks |
| VII. | Soft Skills (Introducing oneself, introducing others, Requests, Offering help, Congratulating, Enquiries, Seeking permission) | 12 marks |
| VIII. | Welcome speech OR vote of Thanks | 04 marks |
| IX. | Giving Instructions OR Giving Directions | 04 marks |

MODEL QUESTION PAPER
II Semester BA/ BSW/ BA(Music)
General English
SEP 2024- 2025

Time :3Hours

Max Marks:80

Instructions:

- 1. Answer all the questions.**
- 2. Mention the question numbers correctly.**

SECTION –A
(Course Book)

I. Answer any five of the following in a sentence or two: 2X5= 10

1. What does the full moon inside the house signify in the poem ‘Be Melting Snow’?
2. The poet refers to Triumphs and Disasters as ----- in the poem ‘IF’.
3. What does Annabel find charming yet monotonous about the countryside in the story ‘The Guests’?
4. Where did the Bil-bil brothers find refuge in ‘The Rainbow Serpent’?
5. What was the speaker doing during quarantine in the lesson ‘The Joy of Learning Random Things on Wikipedia’?
6. Which institution offers a Post-graduate programme in Wildlife Biology and Conservation according to Sandesh Kadur in the lesson ‘*Communicating Biodiversity Conservation through Visual Storytelling for Conservation*’
7. What shape is Georgina’s birthmark in the lesson ‘The Birthmark’?

II. Answer any four of the following in about a page 4X5=20

1. How has the poet used comparison and contrast to explain his thoughts in the poem ‘IF’?
2. How does the flood and the arrival of the leopard symbolize the disruption of normal life in the story ‘The Guests’? What role does nature play in creating chaos?
3. How were the animals and plants formed according to the writer in the story ‘The Rainbow Serpent’?

4. What are the opinions of the speaker about Wikipedia as a resource and the storehouse of modern information in '*The Joy of Learning Random Things on Wikipedia*'?
5. Trace the experiences of Sandesh Kadur of his expeditions to the Western Ghats in the essay "Communicating Biodiversity Conservation through Visual Storytelling for Conservation".

III. Answer any two of the following in about two pages 2X10= 20

1. How does Rumi explain the importance of transcending above one's ego in the poem '*Be Melting Snow*'?
2. Do you think Aylmer's obsession to remove Georgina's birthmark is tampering with God's creation'? Discuss.
3. Analyse the relationship between Matilda and the Bishop of Bequar. How does their interaction reflect deeper themes of social class, tradition, and personal grievances?

SECTION – B

Grammar Section

IV. Read the following passage and answer the question given below. (5)

Too many parents these days cannot say no. As a result, they find themselves raising 'children' who respond greedily to everything. Even getting what they want doesn't satisfy some kids; they only want more. Now, a growing number of psychologists, educators and parents think it is time to stop the madness and start teaching kids about what's really important : values like hard work, contentment, honesty and compassion. The struggle to set limits has never been tougher—and the stakes have never been higher. One recent study of adults who were overindulged as children, paints a discouraging picture of their future : when given too much too soon, they grow up to be adults who have difficulty coping with life's disappointments. They also have distorted sense of entitlement that gets in the way of success in the work place and in relationships.

Psychologists say that parents who overindulge their kids, set them up to be more vulnerable to future anxiety and depression. Today's parents themselves raised on values of thrift and self-sacrifice, grew up in a culture where 'no' was a household word. Today's kids want much more, partly because there is so much more to want.

The oldest members of this generation were born in the late 1980s, just as PCs and

video games were making their assault' on the family room. They think of MP3 players and flat screen TV as essential utilities, and they have developed strategies to get them. One survey of teenagers found that when they crave for something new, most expect to ask nine times before their parents give in. By every measure, parents are shelling out record amounts. In the heat of this buying blitz, even parents who desperately need to say no find themselves reaching for their credit cards.

Today's parents are not equipped to deal with the problem. Many of them, raised in the 1960s and 70s, swore they would act differently from their parents and have closer relationships with their own children. Many even wear the same designer clothes as their kids and listen to the

same music. And they work more hours; at the end of a long week, it is tempting to buy peace with 'yes' and not mar precious family time with conflict. Anxiety about the future is another factor. How do well intentioned parents say no to all the sports gear and arts and language lessons they believe will help their kids thrive in an increasingly competitive world? Experts agree: too much love will not spoil a child. Too few limits will. What parents need to find, is a balance between the advantages of an affluent society and the critical life lessons that come from waiting, saving and working hard to achieve goals. That search for balance has to start early. Children need limits on their behavior because they feel better and more secure when they live within a secured structure. Older children learn self-control by watching how others, especially parents act. Learning how to overcome challenges is essential to becoming a successful adult. Few parents ask kids to do chores. They think their kids are already overburdened by social and academic pressures. Every individual can be of service to others, and life has meaning beyond one's own immediate happiness. That means parents eager to teach values have to take a long, hard look at their own.

1. What do the psychologists, educators and parents want to teach the children?
 - a) To teach them about treachery.
 - b) To teach them about indiscipline.
 - c) To teach them about the values of life like hard work, contentment, honesty and compassion.
 - d) None of these.

2. Why do children need limits on their behavior when they live within a secured structure?
 3. The drawback of giving children too much too soon is
 4. Find words in the passage similar in meaning:
 - a) a feeling of satisfaction (paragraph 1)
 - b) valuable (paragraph 3)
 5. Suggest a suitable title to the passage.
- V.** Lion's Club Bangalore, has organised an awareness programme on 'Blood Donation' in your college. Write two captions for it. (1x2=2)
- VI.** Answer the following questions: (1X3=3)
1. State any two differences between hearing and listening?
 2. What is active listening?
 3. Name any two types of listening
- VII.** Do as directed: (6X2=12)
1. Introduce yourself to your class teacher on the first day of college.
 2. Request the librarian of your college to issue a new library card.
 3. Congratulate your friend on winning the Best Student award.
 4. Enquire at the reception counter of the travel agency regarding the availability of train tickets to Hubli.
 5. You have forgotten your textbook. Write any two expressions seeking permission from the teacher to attend the class.
 6. Offer to help an elderly man at the book stall who is struggling to read and copy the titles.
- VIII.** Prepare vote of thanks for the annual sports meet in your college. (4)
- IX.** Give instructions to make a cup of tea in at least five sentences. (4)