

## B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH

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### SEMESTER - I

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**B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 1**

**SEMESTER - I**

**PROSE**

**UNIT - I**

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**R.K.Narayan: Toasted English**

**Introduction to the Author**

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**Introduction to the Author:**

R.K. Narayan: Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayanswami, who preferred the shortened name R.K. Narayan, was born in Madras on October 10, 1906. Felicitated with Sahitya Akademi

Award and Padma Bhushan, R.K. Narayan remains one of the most renowned and widely read Indian novelists. He can be credited for introducing Indian literature in English to the rest of the world and has been regarded as one of India's greatest English language novelists. His stories were simple, fictional and celebrated the humour and energy of ordinary life. He began his writing career with *Swami and Friends* in 1935. Most of his work including *Swami and Friends* is located in the fictional town of Malgudi which portrays everything Indian while having a unique identity of its own. R.K. Narayan's writing style was marked by simplicity and subtle humour. He passed away on May 13, 2001. He told stories of ordinary people trying to live their simple lives in a changing world.

R. K. Narayan was born in Madras (now Chennai, Tamil Nadu), British India. He was one of eight children; six sons and two daughters. Narayan was second among the sons; his younger brother Ramachandran later became an editor at Gemini Studios, and the youngest brother Laxman became a cartoonist. His father was a school headmaster, and Narayan did some of his studies at his father's school. As his father's job entailed frequent transfers, Narayan spent a part of his childhood under the care of his maternal grandmother, Parvati. During this time his best friends and playmates were a peacock and a mischievous monkey.

His grandmother gave him the nickname of Kunjappa, A name that stuck to him in family circles. She taught him arithmetic, mythology, classical Indian music and Sanskrit. According to Laxman, the family mostly conversed in English, and grammatical errors on the part of Narayan and his siblings were frowned upon. While living with his grandmother, Narayan studied at a succession of schools in Madras, including the Lutheran Mission School in Purasawalkam, C.R.C. High School, and the Christian College High School. Narayan was an avid reader, and his early literary diet included Dickens, Wodehouse, Arthur Conan Doyle and Thomas Hardy. When he was twelve years old, Narayan participated in a pro-independence march, for which he was reprimanded by his uncle; the family was apolitical and considered all governments wicked.

Narayan moved to Mysore to live with his family when his father was transferred to the Maharajah's College High School. The well-stocked library at the school, as well as his father's own, fed his reading habit, and he started writing as well. After completing high school, Narayan failed the university entrance examination and spent a year at home reading and writing; he subsequently passed the examination in 1926 and joined Maharaja College of Mysore. It took Narayan four years to obtain his bachelor's degree, a year longer than usual. After being persuaded by a friend that taking a master's degree (M.A.) would kill his interest in literature, he briefly held a job as a school teacher; however, he quit in protest when the headmaster of the school asked him to substitute for the physical training master. The experience made Narayan realise that the only career for him was in writing, and he decided to stay at home and write novels. His first published work was a book review of *Development of Maritime Laws of 17th-Century England*. Subsequently, he started writing the occasional local interest story for English newspapers and magazines. Although the writing did not pay much (his income for the first year was nine rupees and twelve annas), he had a regular life and few needs, and his family and friends respected and supported his unorthodox choice of career. In 1930, Narayan wrote his first novel, *Swami and Friends*, an effort ridiculed by his uncle and rejected by a string of publishers. With this book, Narayan created Malgudi, a town that creatively reproduced the social sphere of the country; while it ignored the limits imposed by colonial rule, it also grew with the various socio-political changes of British and post-independence India.

While vacationing at his sister's house in Coimbatore, in 1933, Narayan met and fell in love with Rajam, a 15-year-old girl who lived nearby. Despite many astrological and financial obstacles, Narayan managed to gain permission from the girl's father and married her. Following his marriage, Narayan became a reporter for a Madras-based paper called *The Justice*, dedicated to the rights of non-Brahmins. The publishers were thrilled to have a Brahmin Iyer in Narayan espousing their cause. The job brought him in contact with a wide variety of people and issues. Earlier, Narayan had sent the manuscript of *Swami and Friends* to a friend at Oxford, and about this time, the friend showed the manuscript of *Swami and Friends* to Graham Greene. Greene recommended the book to his publisher, and it was finally

published in 1935. Greene also counselled Narayan on shortening his name to become more familiar to the English-speaking audience. The book was semiautobiographical and built upon many incidents from his own childhood. Reviews were favourable but sales were few. Narayan's next novel *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), was inspired in part by his experiences at college, and dealt with the theme of a rebellious adolescent transitioning to a rather well-adjusted adult; it was published by a different publisher, again at the recommendation of Greene. His third novel, *The Dark Room* (1938) was about domestic disharmony, showcasing the man as the oppressor and the woman as the victim within a marriage, and was published by yet another publisher; this book also received good reviews. In 1937, Narayan's father died, and Narayan was forced to accept a commission from the government of Mysore as he was not making any money.

In his first three books, Narayan highlights the problems with certain socially accepted practices. The first book has Narayan focusing on the plight of students, punishments of caning in the classroom, and the associated shame. The concept of horoscope-matching in Hindu marriages and the emotional toll it levies on the bride and groom is covered in the second book. In the third book, Narayan addresses the concept of a wife putting up with her husband's antics and attitudes.

Rajam died of typhoid in 1939. Her death affected Narayan deeply and he remained depressed for a long time. He never remarried in his life; he was also concerned for their daughter Hema, who was only three years old. The bereavement brought about a significant change in his life and was the inspiration behind his next novel, *The English Teacher*. This book, like his first two books, is autobiographical, but more so, and completes an unintentional thematic trilogy following *Swami and Friends* and *The Bachelor of Arts*. In subsequent interviews, Narayan acknowledges that *The English Teacher* was almost entirely an autobiography, albeit with different names for the characters and the change of setting in Malgudi; he also explains that the emotions detailed in the book reflected his own at the time of Rajam's death.

Bolstered by some of his successes, in 1940 Narayan tried his hand at a journal, *Indian Thought*. With the help of his uncle, a car salesman, Narayan managed to get more than a thousand subscribers in Madras city alone. However, the venture did not last long due to Narayan's inability to manage it, and it ceased publication within a year. His first collection of short stories, *Malgudi Days*, was published in November 1942, followed by *The English Teacher* in 1945. In between, being cut off from England due to the war, Narayan started his own publishing company, naming it (again) *Indian Thought Publications*; the publishing company was a success and is still active, now managed by his granddaughter. Soon, with a devoted readership stretching from New York to Moscow, Narayan's books started selling well and in 1948 he started building his own house on the outskirts of Mysore; the house was completed in 1953. Around this period, Narayan wrote the screenplay for the Gemini Studios film *Miss Malini* (1947), which remained the only screenplay by him that was successfully adapted into a feature film.

After *The English Teacher*, Narayan's writings took a more imaginative and creative external style compared to the semi-autobiographical tone of the earlier novels. His next effort, *Mr. Sampath*, was the first book exhibiting this modified approach. However, it still draws from some of his own experiences, particularly the aspect of starting his own journal; he also makes a marked movement away from his earlier novels by intermixing biographical events. Soon after, he published *The Financial Expert*, considered to be his masterpiece and hailed as one of the most original works of fiction in 1951. The inspiration for the novel was a true story about a financial genius, Margayya, related to him by his brother. The next novel, *Waiting for the Mahatma*, loosely based on a fictional visit to Malgudi by Mahatma Gandhi, deals with the protagonist's romantic feelings for a woman, when he attends the discourses of the visiting Mahatma. The woman, named Bharti, is a loose parody of Bharati, the personification of India and the focus of Gandhi's discourses. While the novel includes significant references to the Indian independence movement, the focus is on the life of the ordinary individual, narrated with Narayan's usual dose of irony.

In 1953, his works were published in the United States for the first time, by Michigan State

University Press, who later (in 1958), relinquished the rights to Viking Press. While Narayan's writings often bring out the anomalies in social structures and views, he was himself a traditionalist; in February 1956, Narayan arranged his daughter's wedding following all orthodox Hindu rituals. After the wedding, Narayan began travelling occasionally, continuing to write at least 1500 words a day even while on the road. *The Guide* was written while he was visiting the United States in 1956 on the Rockefeller Fellowship. While in the U.S., Narayan maintained a daily journal that was to later serve as the foundation for his book *My Dateless Diary*. Around this time, on a visit to England, Narayan met his friend and mentor Graham Greene for the first time. On his return to India, *The Guide* was published; the book is the most representative of Narayan's writing skills and elements, ambivalent in expression, coupled with a riddle-like conclusion. The book won him the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1958.

Occasionally, Narayan was known to give form to his thoughts by way of essays, some published in newspapers and journals, others not. *Next Sunday* (1960), was a collection of such conversational essays, and his first work to be published as a book. Soon after that, *My Dateless Diary*, describing experiences from his 1956 visit to the United States, was published. Also included in this collection was an essay about the writing of *The Guide*.

Narayan's next novel, *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, was published in 1961. The book was reviewed as having a narrative that is a classical art form of comedy, with delicate control. After the launch of this book, the restless Narayan once again took to travelling, and visited the U.S. and Australia. He spent three weeks in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne giving lectures on Indian literature. The trip was funded by a fellowship from the Australian Writers' Group. By this time Narayan had also achieved significant success, both literary and financial. He had a large house in Mysore, and wrote in a study with no fewer than eight windows; he drove a new Mercedes-Benz, a luxury in India at that time, to visit his daughter who had moved to Coimbatore after her marriage. With his success, both within India and abroad, Narayan started writing columns for magazines and newspapers including *The Hindu* and *The Atlantic*.

In 1964, Narayan published his first mythological work, *Gods, Demons and Others*, a collection of rewritten and translated short stories from Hindu epics. Like many of his other works, this book was illustrated by his younger brother R. K. Laxman. The stories included were a selective list, chosen on the basis of powerful protagonists, so that the impact would be lasting, irrespective of the reader's contextual knowledge. Once again, after the book launch, Narayan took to travelling abroad. In an earlier essay, he had written about the Americans wanting to understand spirituality from him, and during this visit, Swedish-American actress Greta Garbo accosted him on the topic, despite his denial of any knowledge.

Narayan's next published work was the 1967 novel, *The Vendor of Sweets*. It was inspired in part by his American visits and consists of extreme characterizations of both the Indian and American stereotypes, drawing on the many cultural differences. However, while it displays his characteristic comedy and narrative, the book was reviewed as lacking in depth. This year, Narayan travelled to England, where he received the first of his honorary doctorates from the University of Leeds. The next few years were a quiet period for him. He published his next book, a collection of short stories, *A Horse and Two Goats*, in 1970. Meanwhile, Narayan remembered a promise made to his dying uncle in 1938, and started translating the Kamba Ramayanam to English. The Ramayana was published in 1973, after five years of work. Almost immediately after publishing The Ramayana, Narayan started working on a condensed translation of the Sanskrit epic, the Mahabharata. While he was researching and writing the epic, he also published another book, *The Painter of Signs* (1977). It is a bit longer than a novella and makes a marked change from Narayan's other works, as he deals with hitherto unaddressed subjects such as sex, although the development of the protagonist's character is very similar to his earlier creations. The Mahabharata was published in 1978.

In 1983, Narayan published his next novel, *A Tiger for Malgudi*, about a tiger and its relationship with humans. His next novel, *Talkative Man*, published in 1986, was the tale of an aspiring journalist from Malgudi. During this time, he also published two collections of short stories: *Malgudi Days* (1982), a revised edition including the original book and some

other stories, and *Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories*, a new collection. In 1987, he completed *A Writer's Nightmare*, another collection of essays about topics as diverse as the caste system, Nobel prize winners, love, and monkeys. The collection included essays he had written for newspapers and magazines since 1958.

During his final years, Narayan, ever fond of conversation, would spend almost every evening with N. Ram, the publisher of *The Hindu*, drinking coffee and talking about various topics until well past midnight. Despite his fondness of meeting and talking to people, he stopped giving interviews. The apathy towards interviews was the result of an interview with *Time*, after which Narayan had to spend a few days in the hospital, as he was dragged around the city to take photographs that were never used in the article.

In May 2001, Narayan was hospitalised. A few hours before he was to be put on a ventilator, he was planning on writing his next novel, a story about a grandfather. As he was always very selective about his choice of notebooks, he asked N. Ram to get him one. However, Narayan did not get better and never started the novel. He died on 13 May 2001, in Chennai at the age of 94.

### **Objectives:**

- a.) To understand the critical differences between American and British English.
- b.) To infer the various usages of American phrases.
- c.) To understand the changes that the language went through when it travelled from Britain to other countries.

### **Toasted English (Text)**

*In American restaurants they call for 'toasted English', referring to English muffins which, though being made in America, now retain 'English' as a sort of concession to their origin. The same may be said of the Americans' language too. They too went through a phase of throwing out the British but retaining their language and letting it flourish on American soil; the resultant language is somewhat different from its British counterpart; it may be said to*

*have gone through a process of toasting. One noticeable result of this toasting is that much of the formalism surrounding the use of English has been abandoned.*

*In America, they have freed the language from the stifling tyranny of the Passive voice.*

*Where we should say ceremoniously 'Trespassing Prohibited, their signboards, as I noticed in the parks of Berkeley, merely say 'Newly Painted, Don't Walk.' Or 'Absolutely*

*No Parking' leaves no room for speculation, and no motorist need spend too much time peering out and studying the notice. In a similar situation our authorities are likely to plant a twenty-line inscription on the land to say 'Under Municipal Act so and so this area has been reserved, etc., etc., and any vehicle stationed thereon will be deemed to have contravened sub-section so and so of the Motor Vehicles Act, etc., etc.' I saw on many American office-doors just 'Do Not Enter.' The traffic signs at pedestrian crossings never mince words; they just say 'Go'; or 'Wait'. In a Hollywood studio I was rather startled to read, 'Mark Stevens—Keep Out.' Mark Stevens is a busy television personality who does not like to be disturbed by visitors. Incidentally it left me wondering why, if Mr. Stevens did not like interruptions, he announced his name at all on the door! But it is one of the minor mysteries that make travel through the country so engrossing.*

*The 'toasting' of English has been achieved through other means also. Americans have evolved certain basic keywords which may be used anywhere, anyhow, words which have universal, multi-purpose use. I may make my point clear if I mention the example of the word 'check' which may safely be labelled the American National Expression. While the British usage confines it to its bare dictionary definitions, the American uses it anywhere, this expression being so devised that one may blindly utter it and still find out that it is appropriate for the occasion. 'I'll check' means 'I'll find out, investigate, examine, scrutinise, verify, 'or probe.' 'Your CHECK' means your ticket, token or whatever you may have to produce. 'Check room' is where you leave your possession for a while 'Check girl' is one who takes care of your coat, umbrella, or anything else you may leave in custody.*

*'Check in' and 'Check out (at first I heard it as 'Chuck Out' and felt rather disturbed) refer to one's arrival in a hotel and departure therefrom. And there are scores of other incidental uses for the word. Of you are ever hard up for a noun or verb you may safely utter the word*

*'check' and feel confident that it will fit in. 'Fabulous' is another word that is used in that country freely, without much premeditation. Of course, everyone knows that fabulous means, but American usage has enlarged its sense. I heard a lady in Wisconsin declare 'Oh, those cats of mine are fabulous' –meaning that they were eccentric. 'Oh, so and so, he is fabulous!' may mean anything from a sincere compliment to an insinuation that so and so plays a mild form of charming lunacy.*

*'O.K.' or okay is another well-known example. It is the easiest sound that ever emanated from the human vocal cords. Everyone knows how comprehensive its sense can be. 'Okay' is a self-sufficient word which needs no suffix to indicate any special respect for the listener; it can stand by itself without a 'Sir' to conclude the sentence. In this respect it is like 'yeah' which seals off a sentence without further ado. 'Yes sir' or 'Yes, Darling' are conceivable but 'Yeah sir', or 'Yeah Darling,' is unthinkable. 'Yeah' is uttered in a short base-of-the-tongue grunt, which almost snaps any further continuation of a sentence. 'Yes' involves time as the sibilant could be prolonged.*

*The refinements of usage in countries where English has a bazaar status are worth a study. On a London bus you will never hear the conductor cry, 'Ticket, Ticket'. He approaches the passenger and say, 'Thank you', and on receiving the fare says again, 'Thank you, Sir'. I found out that one could calculate the number of passengers in a bus by halving the total number of 'Thanks' heard. In any western country if a receptionist asks, 'Can I help you?' it really means, 'Have you any business here, if so state it.' Or it may mean 'Evidently you have wandered off into a wrong place, go away.' A man who wants to pass you always says 'Excuse me', while he may with all justice burst out, 'What do you mean by standing there gaping at the world while you block everybody's passage? Stand aside, man!' When you send your card in, the busy man's secretary appears and whispers in your ear, 'Would you like to wait?' Though the tone is one of consultation, you have really no choice in the matter. The thing to do is not to answer the question but say 'Thanks' and look for a comfortable seat in the waiting-room, although you may feel like saying, 'No I wouldn't like to wait. I have other things to do.'*

*The time has come for us to consider seriously the question of a Bharat brand of English. As I've said in my essay on 'English in India' so far English has had a comparatively confined existence in our country—chiefly in the halls of learning, justice, or administration. Now the time is ripe for it to come to the dusty street, market-place, and under the bunyan tree. English must adopt the complexion of our life and assimilate its idiom. I am not suggesting here a mongrelisation of the language. I am not recommending that we should go back to the ways we heard, particularly in the railways, 'Wer U goin', man? Bharat English will respect the rule of law and maintain the dignity of grammar, but will have a swadeshi stamp about it unmistakably, like the Madras handloom check shirt or the Tirupati doll. How it can be achieved is a question for practical men to tackle.*

### **Summary of the text**

In the essay *Toasted English*, R.K. Narayan brings out the difference between American and British English in an amusing way with brilliant examples.

The author interestingly points out that like Indians, Americans also drove the British out of their country but allowed English to stay back. The Americans made the usage of English easier by giving up Passive Voice. For example, instead of, 'Trespassing Prohibited' they say, 'Newly painted, don't walk' on the notice-board. This process of modifying the English language is called 'toasting' by R.K. Narayan. Americans have created certain basic key words which may be used anywhere, anyhow- words which have universal multipurpose use. 'O.K', 'Yeah', are more commonly used expressions.

Further R.K. Narayan discusses 'the bazaar status' of English. English is used in a refined way in London. The conductor will never say, 'Ticket, Ticket' on a London bus but simply go near the passenger and say 'Thank you' on receiving the fare and issuing the ticket also.

Finally, he concludes that by adopting English to suit our purposes, we have developed a 'Bharat brand of English'. He clearly mentions that he is not advocating 'mongrelisation'

i.e. hybridisation of English. The author asserts that Indian English should have its own identity- its 'Swadeshi Stamp'. The author wishes that Indians should develop their own English which would be more unique and distinct than the present English.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter is Narayan's take on the differential uses of English language in different contexts. He starts by saying that the English language has undergone a remarkable transformation by shedding its formal features. The Americans have appropriated the language and rid it of its formal features and let it grow and flourish according to their own local structures of usage. Thereafter, the author enlists the new usage of words he was familiar with while he was visiting America.

### **Let's Sum Up**

Language is a cultural construct whose evolution a concomitant with human evolution. The evolution and change in any language system have been a result of many factors. Some commentators use the label corruption to suggest that language change constitutes a degradation in the quality of a language, especially when the change originates from human error or is a prescriptively discouraged usage. Modern linguistics typically does not support this concept, since from a scientific point of view such innovations cannot be judged in terms of good or bad. Narayan looks at this very evolution of English language through a subjective lens and further agrees with the theory that innovations in language cannot be judged in terms of purity and pollution but embraced and understood in terms of their context.

### **Glossary**

Toasted: made brown and crunchy by heating. The author uses the word humorously to refer to changes made in the English language. Muffins: tea-cakes of a certain kind formalism: rules of proper behaviour counterpart: parallel, equivalent

Berkeley: a city in United States of America speculation:  
supposition, assumption, conjecture never mince: to say

something plainly and directly, without worrying about

good manners chuck out: throw something or someone

out

scores of a 'score' is twenty, just as a dozen is twelve

so and so: such a person or thing

vocal cords: two pieces of muscle in the throat which enable us to make sounds

suffix: something that is added on to the end of a word ado: fuss, unnecessary

excitement or trouble sibilant: a hissing sound, e.g. the sound 's' prolonged:

delayed, lengthened

where English has a bazaar status: where English is the language of common people

mongrelisation: breeding a new type of animal. Here the author means referring to a new language produced by mixing different languages

### **Self Assessment Questions**

#### **Short Answer Type Questions**

What does 'toasted English' refer to in American restaurants?

Ans. According to the author, it refers to English muffins which though being made in America, now retain 'English' as a sort of concession to their origin.

What has happened as a result of the 'toasting' of English in America?

Ans. The result of 'toasting' of English in America has led to the abandonment of formalism surrounding the use of the English language.

How have the Americans simplified the language. Give examples.

Ans. The Americans prefer using shorter sentences which are to the point, leaving no room for ambiguity. Some examples of this are, instead of using passive voice on sign boards, direct instructions are given like 'Don't Enter'; 'Newly Painted'; 'Don't walk' etc.

What does the author mean by the 'American National Expression'? Why does he say so?

Ans. The 'American National Expression' refers to the word 'check' which has multiple meanings. It can be used in different situations. Exaggerating the point, the author says that when someone is hard up for a noun or a verb he may safely utter the word 'check'; and feel confident that it will fit in.

The author approves and disapproves of American English in certain senses. Give examples to elaborate.

Ans. The author approves simplified instructions that Americans use, especially for signboards in public places and for motorists like the word 'go' as they can be easily followed without peering out and studying the notice. He, however, disapproves the way the American English disrespects the rule of law and the dignity of grammar when someone says something like 'Wer U goin, man?'

How, according to the author, can the mongrelisation of English be prevented?

Ans. According to the author, the mongrelisation of English can be prevented by respecting the rule of law and maintaining the dignity of grammar.

How does the author visualise Bharat English?

Ans. The author visualises that Bharat English would respect the rule of law and maintain the dignity of grammar. He said that Bharat brand would have to come to the dusty street, to the market-place, under the banyan tree and have a swadeshi stamp about it unmistakably, like the Madras handloom check shirt or the Tirupati doll.

How have the Americans simplified English compared to their Western counterparts?

Ans. The Americans have appropriated the language and rid it of its formal features and let it grow and flourish according to their own local structures of usage. Thereafter, the author

enlists the new usage of words he was familiar with while he was visiting America. he stresses this point by giving an example of the multipurpose use of the word check. “I will check” in America means that the person saying he will investigate or verify. Another use of the word check in and check out is to refer to one’s arrival and departure at a hotel.

Explain the term ‘mongrelisation’ of the language used by the author.

Ans. Mongrelisation means breeding a new type of animal. Here the author means referring to a new language produced by mixing different languages. In the context of the chapter, it refers to the way that the Americans use language without any formality. It also refers to disrespecting grammatical rules.

What meaning does ‘Bharat brand of English’ convey to you?

Ans. Through the usage of this term, the author doesn’t suggest mongrelisation of language, he rather stresses that our language should have an identity of its own, and its usage must present a local flavour. It must in turn respect and follow the written rules of grammar.

What meaning does the title ‘Toasted English’ convey to you? Justify how it is a suitable title.

Ans. Toasted refers to the transformation of English language and here the author gives numerous examples to prove that the Americans have transformed the English language and made it more user friendly and to the point.

Elaborate the significance of the personal anecdotes in the essay, ‘Toasted English’.

Ans. Personal anecdotes are examples citing one’s own observations and experiences. They strengthen the argument of the story and add a personal touch to the narrative.

### **Multiple Choice Questions**

1. In which year was R. K. Narayan born?

- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| a. 1906 | b. 1908 |
| c. 1919 | d. 1909 |

2. What is American national expression?

- a. check                                      b. mongrel
- c. father                                      d. here

3. What is the meaning of mongrelisation in the context of the essay?

- a. disrespecting grammatical rules                      b. respecting grammatical rules
- c. changing the structure of English                      d. not changing the structure of English

### **Reference and Suggested Readings**

R.K.Narayan. A Story Teller's World. Penguin India, New Delhi, 1991.

R.K Narayan. Malgudi Adventures- Classic Tales for Children. Penguin, New Delhi, 2009.

### **Answer Key MCQ**

a

a

a

### **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 2**

**SEMESTER - I**

**PROSE**

**UNIT - I**

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## **“Dream-Children: A Reverie”**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Objective**
- 3. Charles Lamb: Life and Works**
- 4. “Dream-Children: A Reverie” : Introduction**
- 5. “Dream-Children: A Reverie” : Text**
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### **Characters in “Dream Children: A Reverie”**

#### **Humour in Charles Lamb’s Works**

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#### **Humour and Pathos in “Dream Children: A Reverie”**

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- 8. Charles Lamb’s Contribution to the Growth of the Familiar Essay**
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### **1. Introduction**

Charles Lamb (1775-1834) is one of the most important prose writers in English literature. His essays constitute the very best of what the Romantic Age had to offer in England in the genre of prose writing, which was otherwise dominated by poetry. His contribution to the development of nineteenth century familiar and personal essay has been monumental and his style which at once mingles the humorous with the pathetic is one of its kind in English prose

writing. His essay “Dream-Children: A Reverie”, published in his collection of essays *Essays of Elia* (1823), is one of his best known personal essays in which he harks back to his childhood and in a heightened expression of pathos, gives vent to his unfulfilled desire of getting married and having children.

## **2. Objective**

The objective of this lesson is to acquaint the learners with the essay “Dream-Children: A Reverie” written by Charles Lamb. The lesson aims to appraise the learners with:

- biography and an account of Charles Lamb’s works
- summary and critical analysis of the essay “Dream-Children: A Reverie”
- Charles Lamb’s writing style and his importance as a prose writer

## **3. Charles Lamb: Life and Works**

**Life:** Charles Lamb was born in 1775 to John Lamb, the personal servant of Samuel Salt, a bencher of the Inner Temple, and Elizabeth Field, a Hertfordshire woman. They lived in Salt’s house at 2 Crown Office Row where Mrs Lamb acted as housekeeper. Their eldest son, John, called by Lamb “James Elia”, was born in June 1763. Mary Lamb (“Bridget”) was the second surviving child, born in December 1764. Charles, the youngest, was born on 10 February 1775. Salt’s house in the Temple was Lamb’s home for the first seventeen years of his life. His youth was passed in poverty, but fortunately a presentation to the famous “Bluecoat” charity school of Christ’s Hospital at the age of seven procured him the elements of a social education. Here he remained for seven years; and formed a lifelong friendship with another poor, neglected boy: S.T. Coleridge. Lamb left Christ’s Hospital in 1789, when he was only fourteen years old and two years later obtained an appointment in the South-Sea House as a clerk, and in 1792 he entered a scene of greater activity, the East India House (the London headquarters of the East India Company) in Leadenhall Street, where, for thirty-three years, he performed his daily duties. Between 1792 and 1796 the friendship with Coleridge was continued in fervent talks and in the trickle of sonnets which

Lamb showed to his gifted friend. Four were published in Coleridge's *Poems on Various Subjects* in 1796. At the end of 1795 came the first note of tragedy. Lamb had some kind of mental collapse and spent six weeks in a private asylum. Nothing is known about his breakdown and nothing like it occurred again. But there was insanity in the family and it declared itself with the horror of an Elizabethan tragedy. Poor Mary, overworked, overwrought, taxed beyond endurance by a helpless mother, a half-senile aunt and a querulous father, had a sudden fit of mania in which she stabbed her mother to death. The poor woman was removed to an asylum, and if the advice of John had been taken, she would have remained there for ever. But Charles undertook the permanent care of her, and thus in his twenty-third year found himself pledged to the support of a father in his second childhood, a dying aunt and a sister whose returning sanity was liable to fail again at any moment. The father, now in the bare half-light of reason, could be kept quiet only by cards; and Charles, as soon as he returned from his daily work, had to devote himself to playing the old man to sleep. His Sundays and holidays were spent with Mary in the private asylum. At last in 1799 the father died. Charles was only spared his nightly ordeal, but could take Mary to live with him, until the signs of recurring insanity warned them that she must go back for a time. So passed many years, the periods of Mary's insanity becoming longer and longer, and then brother and sister might be seen walking silently, hand in hand, to the gates of the asylum, their cheeks wet with tears. When Lamb was fifty years of age the East India Company, led partly by his literary fame following his first *Essays of Elia* (Elia was the name of an Italian clerk with whom Lamb had worked in the South Sea House after leaving school), and partly by his thirty-three years of faithful service, granted him a comfortable pension; and happy as a boy turned loose from school he left India House forever to give himself up to literary work. He died at Edmonton in 1834; and his gifted sister Mary sank rapidly into the gulf from which his strength and gentleness had so long held her back. No literary man was ever more loved and honoured by a rare circle of friends; and all who knew him bear witness to the simplicity and goodness which any reader may find for himself between the lines of his essays.

**Works:** The works of Charles Lamb fall into three periods. First, there are his early literary efforts, including the poems signed “C.L.” in Coleridge’s *Poems on Various Subjects* (1796); his romance *Rosamond Gray* (1798); his poetical drama *John Woodvil* (1802); and various other immature works in prose and poetry. This period comes to an end in 1803, when he gave up his newspaper work, especially the contribution of jokes, puns, and squibs daily to the *Morning Post* at sixpence apiece. The second period was given largely to literary criticism; and the *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807) — written by Charles and Mary Lamb, the former reproducing the tragedies, and the latter the comedies—may be regarded as his first successful literary venture. The book was written primarily for children; but so thoroughly had brother and sister steeped themselves in the literature of the Elizabethan period that young and old alike were delighted with this new version of Shakespeare’s stories, and the *Tales* are still regarded as the best of their kind in English literature. In 1808 appeared his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Contemporary with Shakespeare*. This carried out the splendid critical work of Coleridge, and was the most noticeable influence in developing the poetic qualities of Keats, as shown in his last volume. The third period includes Lamb’s criticism of life, which are gathered together in his *Essays of Elia* (1823), and his *Last Essays of Elia*, which were published ten years later. These famous essays began in 1820 with the appearance of the new *London Magazine*, and were continued for many years, such subjects as the “Dissertation on Roasted Pig,” “Old China,” “Praise of Chimney Sweepers,” “Imperfect Sympathies,” “A Chapter on Ears,” “Mrs. Battle’s Opinions on Whist,” “Mackery End,” “Grace Before Meat,” “Dream Children,” and many others being chosen apparently at random, but all leading to a delightful interpretation of the life of London, as it appeared to a quiet little man who walked unnoticed through its crowded streets. In “Dissertation on Roasted Pig” and “Dream Children,” we have the extremes of Lamb’s humour and pathos.

#### 4. “Dream-Children: A Reverie” : Introduction

In 1821 Lamb was growing ominously tired of “official confinement,” and “a certain deadness” to everything followed on the death of his brother. He sat, he told

Wordsworth, “like Philomel all day (but not singing), with my breast against this thorn of a desk.”

In the winter (1821–22) dozing in his bachelor arm-chair with Mary at his side, he dreamed of things as they might have been. “My little ones,” “dream-children,” stood at his knees; and he was telling them about their old great-grandmother Field; and about their Uncle John—such a handsome, spirited youth, “a king to the rest of us” and how, when he died, “though he had not been dead an hour, seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me I missed him all day long, and know not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him ”

And then the dream-children, little John, and Alice with the fair hair, begged for some stories about “their pretty dead mother.” “Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial, meant in maidens — when suddenly turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was ”

And the dream-children faded. “We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages, before we have existence, and a name ”

Did Mr. and Mrs. Bartrum take in the *London Magazine*? And if so, what did Mr. Bartrum think of the reference to himself in this particular number? And did the blue eyes of Ann, who was the mother of up growing Bartrums, suffuse over poor Charles Lamb’s “Dream-Children”? Perhaps people had told her — as the clerks of the old South Sea House had told John — that “Charles Lamb was growing famous.” The little romance of their youth was an old story now!

## 5. “Dream-Children: A Reverie” : Text

*CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when they were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene — so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country — of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother’s looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterward came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner’s other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C. ’s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, “that would be foolish indeed.” And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter by heart, aye, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer — here*

*Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till upon my looking grave, it desisted — the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain ; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said “ those innocents would do her no harm; ” and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she — and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grand-children, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out — sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me — and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then, — and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at — or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me — or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening, too, along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth — or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings, — I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by*

*Alice, he had mediated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grand- children, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out — and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries — and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy — for he was a good bit older than me — many a mile when I could not walk for pain; — and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterward it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty, dead mother. Then I told them how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens — when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such*

*a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech; "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name" — and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side — but John L. (or James Elia) was gone forever.*

## **6. "Dream-Children: A Reverie" : Summary**

The narrator, identified with Charles Lamb, begins the essay by saying that children love to hear stories of their elders as children because they can then imagine those elders whom they cannot actually meet. He says that one day his little children Alice and John gathered around him to listen to the story of their great grandmother Mrs Field. Hence begins the very real story of Mrs Field who used to live in a big mansion in Norfolk. In that part of the countryside, where that mansion was located, many strange tragic tales were prevalent. The narrator and his siblings came to know about those stories when they themselves were children through a ballad, known as 'Ballad of the Children in the Wood.' This ballad about 'the children' and their 'cruel uncle', together with the story of 'Robin Redbreast' was carved on a piece of wood which was placed on top of a chimney-piece till the time it was removed by a foolish rich man who replaced it with a marble chimney. At this point, the reader gets introduced to the narrator's daughter named Alice, who strikingly resembles her mother (also called Alice) and carries her dead mother's expressions on her face. The narrator continues with Mrs Field's story. He says that although that old lady, Mrs Field was merely a caretaker of that mansion, but she looked after the mansion as if it were her own house. She was entrusted with the complete responsibility of looking after that house by the owner of the house, a gentleman who lived in a more fashionable house in a nearby county. That is why,

the old lady, Mrs Field lived in that house as if it were her own house. The narrator says that Mrs Field was a good and religious woman who was admired and respected by everyone. She meticulously looked after the mansion and maintained the dignity of the mansion till the time she was alive. But after her death, the condition of the mansion deteriorated to the point of breaking. Gradually, the owner of the house shifted the decor of the house to his new house. The narrator comments that the old-fashioned and antique kind of decor looked awkward and mismatched in the new house. It was as if someone had taken the old tombs from an Abbey and placed them at the drawing room of Lady C. At this amusing comparison, the narrator's son John passes a smile, probably after imagining that it would have looked really mismatched and odd. The narrator then tells the kids that at the day of their great grandmother's funeral, almost all the people from the county along with the people from the neighbourhood counties walked miles together in her fond remembrance.

The old woman was good-natured, remained religious woman all through her life, and every person who knew her respected her. In this way, the old woman was laid to rest which left a feeling of emptiness and void in the hearts of all her admirers, as well as the grand mansion which was also left empty. At this moment, the narrator stops and observes the little Alice who spreads her hands, and resumes the description of his grandmother Mrs Field who was a tall, upright, and graceful woman. She was considered the best dancer during her youth, till the time she was engulfed by that cruel disease, Cancer which weakened her and inflicted severe pain and sufferings upon her. At this moment, Alice slightly shakes her foot as if to dance, but stops as soon as she sees her father noticing her. The narrator tells that even the pain and suffering which Mrs Field experienced could not stop her from being good spirited, probably because of her goodness and faith in God. It was probably Mrs Field's faith that gave her strength during her sufferings and difficult times. The narrator further says that the old lady used to sleep alone in her chamber in that big and lonely mansion, even though she repeatedly saw some phantom like shapes of infants during midnight. These phantom like shapes moved up and down the staircase which was adjacent to her chamber. The narrator

remarks that probably the house was haunted, but even this fact could not frighten her and she always used to say that these innocents will never harm her.

The narrator recollects that when he was a child, he himself would get frightened whenever he used to visit his grandmother, even though the maid slept next to him. Recollecting this incident, the narrator remarks that maybe he used to get scared because he was neither as religious as Mrs Field nor “half as good” as her. However, he confesses that he never saw the spirit of those two infants himself. At the mention of the spirits, little John tries not to look frightened by not shuddering his eyebrows in fear. The narrator says that the old lady was very affectionate towards all her grandchildren and all of them were warmly received by her when they visited her during their vacations. The narrator recollects his childhood days at his grandmother’s place. He would spend hours together engrossed in himself, and looking at the Twelve Ceasers (the busts of the twelve Emperors of Rome which were decorative items). He would get so involved while observing those figures that those figures appeared to him as if they were coming to life, and sometimes he would think that he himself might turn into a marble statue. He would roam in that mansion which had many vacant rooms filled with old hangings on the walls, fluttering embroidery, and oaken pane. Sometimes, he would go to the old-styled spacious ornamental gardens where he would behold the fruits. After listening to the rich description of the garden and fruits, little John slyly looks at the plate filled with grapes, which he is supposed to share with his sister, and Alice notices him looking at the plate. After listening about the fruits, they develop a desire to relish the plate filled with grapes but hold their desire for some time. Hence, their father, the narrator of the story intensifies the tone of his narration so that the kids’ attention again shifts to the story, and he tells them that although grandmother Mrs Field loved all the kids, but she had a soft-corner for the narrator’s elder brother John L. (James Elia). Perhaps this was so because he was a spirited young boy and his nature was very different from the other children. The narrator describes John as a “King” who, unlike the other kids did not roam at the vacant parts of the mansion, but used to ride the best horse from the stable. Thus, Uncle John in the early morning would do horse riding and join the hunters outdoors, although he

equally loved the mansion and its gardens. In some way, his spirit was such that could not be contained within the four walls of the house, and he grew up to be brave and handsome, for which he was admired by everyone, especially by grandmother Field. He was so good-natured that he used to carry his younger brother, the narrator on his back when he was young and lame-footed. John was elder to him and cared about his younger brother. Even when he felt any pain or discomfort while carrying his brother on his back, he never gave up on his brother.

However, the narrator laments that the same spirited man, an hour before his own death looked as if he was long dead. The narrator says that although, initially, he had come to terms with the fact of his elder brother's death, but later on, he was continuously haunted by his memories, and though he did not shed tears, unlike what John would have done, he missed his brother's presence every single day. At this moment, he realises that he loves his brother John very much, whose death has left a void and emptiness in his heart. While narrating this, the narrator re-lives those experiences and feelings which had once tormented him, and he misses his brother, his goodness and his resilience, and wishes that he comes to life once again, and prefers fighting with him, as siblings do, rather than being away from him. The narrator compares his uneasiness at these thoughts with the uneasiness John felt when the doctor cut off his limb. At the thought of the feeling of loss, the kids get emotionally moved and their eyes get filled with tears, probably because they are reminded of their mother whom they never saw. Maybe they knew their mother only as a feeling of loss.

The kids then look up at their father and plead to him to discontinue the story of Uncle John, and in its place tell them their mother's story. The narrator changes the subject, and shifts the narration towards their mother, who lives on only in their imagination. He tells the children that for seven long years, sometimes in hope and sometimes in dire despair he courted their mother, his beloved Alice W. (Ann Simmons). He tries his best to describe their mother to them, her shyness and sense of denial characteristic of young women, although he doubts that being young kids, his children are unable to understand that. At this moment, he suddenly looks at little Alice, who is "the soul of the first Alice" and resembles her mother

completely, and he feels as if his wife Alice is looking at him through their daughter's eyes. The mother and daughter share such striking similarity that he gets confused as to which Alice, the mother or the daughter is before him. At this moment, as the narrator gets stuck and fails to understand, the two children turn into shadowy figures and gradually begin to fade and vanish till the time the two faces appear at a distance, and with their voice produce an effect to tell the narrator that neither they are his children, nor Alice's. They are, in fact, not even children in reality. Those voices tell him that Alice's real kids refer to a man named 'Bartrum' as their father, and not him, and they are nothing but creation of his imagination. At this moment, the reader realises that the narrator's entire storytelling to his kids is just a daydream, a reverie, or rather a creation of his sub-conscious mind. Just at the moment when the imaginary voices tell the narrator that he will have to wait for "million of ages" for these imaginary figures to come into being and get a name, the narrator is shaken awake of his daydream and finds himself on his bachelor armchair, where he had fallen asleep, with his faithful Bridget (Mary Lamb)

by his side. The essay "Dream Children: A Reverie" comes to an end as a reverie, as a daydream of the narrator which only gives the appearance of reality.

## **7. "Dream-Children: A Reverie" : Analysis**

"Dream Children: A Reverie" is a unique essay, channelling the logic and flow of a dream in a series of long sentences, of strung together phrases, and no paragraph breaks to be found. Lamb deftly uses these stylistic conceits to pull the reader into a reverie, creating a sense of tumbling through this dream world with its series of dovetailing tangents. In fact, the essay could prove confusing and hard to navigate until the reader gets to the end when, with a savvy twist, Lamb explains the formal oddness of the yarn he has been spinning all along and the reader is ripped out of this odd dream state into the most familiar state Lamb can be found in—sitting next to his sister.

To some extent, this piece blurs genre lines between essay and fiction. Commonly, we understand essays to be works of non-fiction, but in this one, Lamb uses his typical interior-

facing autobiographical approach to make room for a fictional narrative inside of a dream. The fact that his children exist is a fiction, as is the idea that he married Alice, as may be the existence and deaths of Field and John L. We know that the real life Charles had a brother John Lamb, but in choosing the rare occasion to write of his real life brother inside of this vivid dream, Lamb seems to be choosing to write about a fantasized version of his real life.

In his book *Metaphors of Self: The Meaning of Autobiography*, the literary theorist James Olney says that the most fruitful approach a writer can take in an autobiography is not to follow a formal or historical one but to, “see it in relation to the vital impulse to order that has always caused man to create and that, in the end, determines both the nature and the form of what he creates.” This explanation of autobiography rings true generally of Charles Lamb’s work, but doubly so with “Dream Children: A Reverie.” Here, Lamb models his essay on a dream, bringing the fantasy that fuels his creative energies to the fore, blurring the lines between that fantasy of his past life and that life to which he dedicates his writing practice.

#### **Characters in “Dream Children: A Reverie”**

**Alice:** Alice is a little girl in Lamb’s dream, whom he sees as his daughter. She is described to have “put out one of her dear mother’s looks”. Alice depicts Lamb’s real life wish of having kids with Ann.

**John:** John is a little boy in Lamb’s dream, whom he sees as his son. Like Alice, John also represents Lamb’s wish of having children.

**John L – :** John L– is another person who appeared in Lamb’s dream. He appeared as Alice’s and John’s uncle. John represents Lamb’s real brother John Lamb.

**Grandmother Field:** Great-grandmother Field is Lamb’s grandmother in his dream, about whom he tells stories to his dream children. The grandmother represents Lamb’s real life grandmother, with whom he used to spend his holidays.

**Alice W – n:** Alice W – n is a character in Lamb's dream who is representative of Ann; the lady to who Lamb proposed and wanted to marry in his real life. However, Ann rejected Lamb's proposal.

**Bartrum:** After rejecting Lamb's proposal of marriage, Ann married a man whose name was Bartrum. In his dream, Lamb hears the children saying that they were not Lamb's and Ann's offspring; rather they were Bartrum's and Ann's children.

### **Humour in Charles Lamb's Works**

Charles Lamb is ranked as the finest humourist. There is, no other humourist like him; no one with his high spirits and delicacy, his whimsicality and his fun and kindness of wit. He can safely be regarded as the romanticist of humourists, for he finds mirth where no one else finds it, and he turns everything to jest through the joyousness of his own personality.

The humour of Lamb's essays is as fantastic as that of his life. But, however fantastic or however light, his jests have always some point. Lamb's humour varies from essay to essay, from mood to mood and has many ingredients and diverse delicate shades. It can be ironical and purely mocking ('Mrs. Battle's Opinion on Whist'), or fanciful ('A Dissertation upon Roast Pig'), or tenderly compassionate ('The Praise of Chimney

Sweepers'), or wistfully pathetic ('Dream Children'). Humour in his essays is diffused everywhere. It is like an atmosphere which heightens and multiplies the particular effect of each device. Regarding his humour, Hallward and Hill remark, "The terms Wit, Humour and Fun are often confused but they are really different in meaning. The first is based on intellect, the second on insight and sympathy, the third on vigour and freshness of mind and body. Lamb's writings show all the three qualities, but what most distinguishes him is humour, for his sympathy is ever strong active." Albert says, "It is this delicate clashing of humours like the chiming of sweet bells that affords the chief delight to Lamb's readers."

In 'Poor Relations' the opening is marked by witticism, but gradually it turns out a painful picture. There is pure fun in 'All Fool's Day', and 'Roasted Pig.' Lamb's humour emerges

from his 'whim whams' and his fondness for punning which is indulged freely. Lamb's humour was the relief that saved him from the weariness and melancholy that preyed upon his mind. It saved him from that insanity which claimed his sister as victim. It was largely the effect of a sane and healthy protest against the over-whelming melancholy induced by the morbid taint in his mind. He laughed to save himself from weeping. English humour at its deepest and tenderest seems incarnate in him. He did not merely create it, he lived in it.

### **Pathos in Charles Lamb's Works**

Allied with humour is Lamb's pathos. From a man whose life was largely affected by melancholy and despair, pathos was inevitable and Lamb could not prevent his mind in spite of his excursion in the realm of humour, from passing at times to the sadder aspects of life. In 'Rosamund Grey'; in the description of his dead brother in 'Dream Children'; in the flight of Favel from the university in 'Poor Relations'; in the story of the sick boy who had no friends in 'Old Morgate Hoy' and many other instances we have examples of true pathos. In 'New Year's Eve', in 'Witches and other Night Fears' and the 'Confession of a Drunkard', we experience more of pathos than terror. *The Essays of Elia*, written in intervals of service, were primarily intended to provide some relief and outlet for the expression of the poignant feelings locked up in the heart of the essayist. Lamb's personal life was one of despair and unhappiness and the essays were the means of escaping the tears and turmoil of life. They were written primarily for self-gratification and secondarily for the delight of the readers. Through the essays run warm and wide human sympathies, delicate whimsicality and tenderness, and beneath the blithe surface something of the pathos which made up Lamb's life and personality.

### **Humour and Pathos in "Dream Children: A Reverie"**

His humour is so allied to pathos that it is hard to distinguish the one from the other. He had passed through the fires of hell, and walked under the perpetual shadow of tragedy. In later years, Mary's condition worsened and her visits to the Asylum became more and more frequent and longer. A streak of inherited insanity ran in the family and it may be doubted if

Lamb himself was entirely without taint. In his heroic struggle against this misfortune, he found relief in eccentricity and freakish humour. His humour, thus, was born of suffering, and was at the same time an escape from it. It was, in terms of modern psychology, a sort of defence mechanism against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

Wordsworth's "Lamb, the frolic and the gentle" was a refined humourist whose smile could be both satirical and tender. In him humour and pathos are, indeed, very often allied. Lamb could not prevent his mind from passing at times to the sadder aspects of life, and there is belief that he laughed to save himself from weeping. Laughter is followed by tears of sympathy in many of his essays. In fact, Lamb's personal life was full of disappointments and frustrations. But instead of complaining, he looked at the tragedies of life, its miseries and worries as a humourist. "Dream Children: A Reverie" is a true testimony of his blending of humour and pathos in a single row.

The whole essay is infused with a note of heart sob. In "Dream Children: A Reverie" he journeys back to the good old days and pops up stories in front of his dream children. He relates his childhood days, of Mrs Field, his grandmother and John Lamb, his brother. He describes how fun he had at the great house and orchard in Norfolk. Of his relations he gives us full and vibrant pictures – his brother John (John L-), so handsome and spirited youth, and a 'king.' John was brave, handsome and won admiration from everybody.

Charles' grandmother Mrs Field is the other living picture. She was a good natured and religions-minded lady of respectable personality.

Charles Lamb's sweetheart Alice Winterton is the other shadowed reality. The dream children, Alice and John are mere bubbles of fancy. Thus Lamb's nostalgic memory transports us back to those good old days of great grandmother Field. But even in those romantic nostalgia the hard realities of life do not miss our eyes. Death, separation, and suffering inject deep-rooted pathos in our heart. Whereas Mrs Field died of cancer, John Lamb died in early age. Charles Lamb's love for Ann Simmons has been a tale of unrequited

love. Notably the children are millions of ages distant in oblivion and Charles is not a married man but a bachelor having a reverie.

In his actual life Lamb courted Ann Simmons but could not marry her, he wanted to have children but could not have any. Thus he strikes a very pathetic note towards the end of his essay when he puts the following words in front of his imaginary offspring: “we are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all      We are nothing, less than nothing, dreams. We are only what might have been.” Lamb’s humour was no surface play, but the flower plucked from the nettle of peril and awe. In fact, Lamb’s humour and pathos take different shapes in different essays. Sometimes it is due to his own unfulfilled desires, sometimes it is due to the ill-fortunes of his relatives and friends and on some other occasions it is due to his frustration in love etc. In any well-balanced piece of writing, humour is supplemented to pathos. “Dream Children: A Reverie” also appropriates this trademark features. Lamb’s widowhood and parenthood both arouse laughter and sorrow. But the most exuberant source of humour is his fictitious creation of children. In fact, the subtitle of the essay – ‘A Reverie’ which literally means a daydream or a fantasy – prepares us for the pathos of the return to reality although the essay begins on a deceptively realistic note.

### **Charles Lamb’s Prose Style with reference to “Dream Children: A Reverie”**

Charles Lamb occupies a unique place in the history of English prose by virtue of his unique style. All of Lamb’s major trademarks as an essayist are to be found in this work: overall, a relaxed and colloquial voice and a genteel sensibility incorporating elements of humour, whimsy, strong personal recollection, and touches of pathos. Lamb’s prose style in the essays is old fashioned, bearing echoes and odour from older writers like Sir Thomas Browne and Fuller. It is full of long and curious words, and it is dashed with frequent exclamations and parenthesis. “As a stylist,” says Compton-Rickett, “does he walk in the past, gathering to himself the pleasant tricks and mannerisms of bygone writers, just as a girl plucks flowers instinctively that blend with her looks and carriage. The blossoms are culled from other men’s gardens, but their blending is all Lamb’s own. Through Lamb’s imagination, they

become something fresh and individual. His style is a mixture certainly of many styles, but a chemical not a mechanical mixture.” He was more at home with the Elizabethans. It is so quaint, so individual and idiosyncratic, that there is no word but

‘Lambish’ to describe it adequately. His style was moulded and coloured by his reading of the older writers. Because of this he was not a very popular author in his time. His antiquated mode of writing is part of his charm. Lamb himself characterizes his own style as a “self-pleasing quaintness.” All these mark him out as one of the great exponents of the familiar essay in English in the nineteenth century, along with Thomas de Quincey and William Hazlitt. However, he is unique by the virtue of his telling stories bearing his personality, along with his fondness for the obscure and other idiosyncrasies.

The style of the *Essays of Elia* is liable to the charge of a certain ‘mannerism’. His sentences are cast in the mould of the old authors. His is a very bookish style; he has a very mannered manner. Lamb always writes as one to whom words are a delight in themselves and though no one cared more genuinely for the things he wrote about, joy lay for him in the ‘manner’ of describing them. He is distinctly an art-for-art’s sake writer.

“Dream Children: A Reverie” exhibits all Lamb’s strengths as an essayist. It is short but effective in encompassing a range of moods. It starts out on a convivial and realistic note with the picture of a cosy domestic setting in which the writer regales his two children with stories of the family past; yet by the end this picture has dissolved into nothingness, is revealed to be a mere dream, or ‘reverie’ on part of the writer. It is, in fact, the picture of the family that Lamb longed for but never actually had, as he never married, instead devoting a lifetime to caring for his sister Mary (who appears as Bridget in his essays) who was afflicted with periodical insanity.

The real achievement of this piece lies in the compact evocation both of the solid realism of family life and nostalgia for a family past, incorporating the memory of a lost love, Alice, and also of Lamb’s older brother, before merging into the air of dream. He also skilfully conjures a genuine sense of eeriness when the two children reveal themselves to be

mere dream, the products of wishful thinking, before the dreamer wakes up: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been."

Procter has pointed out that Lamb is unique not because of his 'Elizabethanness', but that one of the most invigorating aspects of Lamb's style is his dramatic characterization. Though his 'Phantasm' or imaginary characters are best revealed in his essays "The South Sea House" and "My Own Relation", in "Dream Children: A Reverie" we also get a glimpse of Lamb's ability of characterization. James Elia of "My Relations" but John L- of "Dream Children: A Reverie" a handsome and spirited youth, a 'king', his grandmother Mrs Field, his sweetheart Alice Winterton are the living pictures in his picture gallery.

Lamb's another essential component style is his profuse use of quotations and allusions to the older texts. Lamb was a prolific reader and the huge influx of quotations shows that they are constantly in his mind, and are a natural component of his style not raked up on occasion.

George Barnett Lamb has observed, "Lamb's egoism suggests more than Lamb's person: it awakens in the reader reflections of kindred feelings and affections." Lamb's style, therefore, is a mixture certainly of many styles, but a chemical not a mechanical mixture.

## **8. Charles Lamb's Contribution to the Growth of the Familiar Essay**

The growth of the familiar essay with its highly personal, often whimsical, flaunting of the writer's tastes, prejudices, and idiosyncrasies, represents an important aspect of the Romantic exploitation of personality. It is not unknown in earlier writing-one can find it, in varying ways and degrees, in the seventeenth century, in Sir Thomas Browne and, very differently in Cowley's essays, and in the eighteenth century, again in different ways, in Sterne and in Cowper-but in the first half of the nineteenth century it reaches a new stage and becomes for the first time a literary norm of its own. That it should have become a norm of its own has not on the whole been fortunate for subsequent literature: the familiarity of

the familiar essay has been stressed by generations of writers since Lamb, and nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English literature is overloaded with minor writers struggling with unsuccessful whimsy, one of the less happy literary spectacles. But Charles Lamb himself, the master and in some degree the founder of the genre, is a subtler and more interesting writer than his influence might lead one to suspect. He is not the cultivated gentleman of leisure relaxing in easy chat; the circumstances of his personal life were harsh and even tragic; he was in large measure self-educated; his views on life and letters were worked out with an almost desperate geniality in order to preserve and develop a relish for the colour and individuality of experience which for him was the only alternative to despair. His sentimentality – seen at its strongest in such an early work as *A Tale of Rosamund Gray* (1798), a melodramatic story of a girl ruined by a villain - is largely a defense-mechanism, and in its more tempered form, as in his essay “Dream- Children: A Reverie,” is artfully controlled. He rejected the rational and Utopian systems so popular in his youth, and cultivated a mixture of restrained hedonism and humane feeling which appears in his essays in his appreciation of certain physical pleasures, his zest for the picturesque and the oddly individual in human character, and his occasional almost fierce attacks on the lack of human kindness that can be covered by a formal social code (“Modern Gallantry”).

## **9. Charles Lamb : A Critical Appraisal**

Charles Lamb (1775-1834), the prince among English essayists, is one of the best beloved of English authors. He was essentially a Londoner: though he had great sympathy with and admiration for the moral views of his friend Wordsworth, he had nothing of Wordsworth’s feeling for nature. There was nothing in him, either, of the “alienation” of Byron (whom he disliked): he was sociable, talkative, and dependent on friendship. His *Essays of Elia* (1820-23) and *Last Essays of Elia* (1833), artfully artless in their personal, conversational tone, show his interests in curious persons and places, his relish of the colour and variety of London life and characters, his attitudinizing, his whimsical or humorous assuming of roles, his carefully manipulated sentimentality, his parading of himself, his skill in breaking off into jest just before he has exasperated the reader by his whimsies, sentimentalities, or

cultivated oddness. Recollections and nostalgia play an important part in his essays. On other occasions he can use mock seriousness (as in his famous “Dissertation Upon Roast Pig”) or mock categorization (as in “The Two Races of Men”) or draw on real or assumed autobiography in order to make obliquely and half-humorously, some serious moral point (“Old China”). The writer’s own character is always there, flaunted before the reader, but it is carefully prepared and controlled before it is exhibited. In nearly all his work, and pre-eminently in the most widely-known portion of it, the ever- delightful *Essays of Elia*, Lamb is as much an egoist as Montaigne, and the substance of what he writes is almost wholly drawn from himself, his experiences, reminiscences, likes, dislikes, whims, and prejudices. He was a master of humour and pathos, both of which, and more particularly the peculiar way in which he combined them (blending the finest tenderness with the quaintest fancies) are so entirely personal to him, that they can be compared with nothing else in literature, hence, the coinage of the epithet ‘Lambish’ in order to suggest their qualities. On the critical side, his influence was strong in the development of romanticism, and especially of that kind of romanticism which was retrospective in character and largely nourished itself on the pre-Augustan age. All his sympathies were with this early literature, and the bent of his mind, and the direction of his taste are shown in his Elizabethan tragedy *John Woodvil*, in his familiar *Tales from Shakespeare* (in collaboration with his sister Mary), and in his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who wrote about the Time of Shakespeare*—a work which did much to spread the knowledge of the older English playwrights. His style, though like everything else about him, absolutely his own, is flavoured by constant contact with his favourite writers, Burton, Fuller, and Sir Thomas Browne. He even said, in his whimsical way, that he wrote neither for the present nor for the future, but for antiquity. The style of all his essays is gentle, old-fashioned, and irresistibly attractive. Though these essays are all criticisms or appreciations of the life of his age, they are all intensely personal. In other words, they are an excellent picture of Lamb and of humanity. Without a trace of vanity or self-assertion, Lamb begins with himself, with some purely personal mood or experience, and from this he leads the reader to see life and literature as he saw it. It is this wonderful combination of personal and universal interests, together with Lamb’s rare old style and

quaint humour, which make the essays remarkable. They continue the best tradition of Addison and Steele, the first great essayists; but their sympathies are broader and deeper, and their humour more delicious, than any which preceded them.

**10. Glossary** reverie - a state of being pleasantly lost in one's thoughts; a daydream  
traditionary - relating to, or being a tradition grandame - archaic term for  
grandmother upbraiding - find fault with (someone); scold mansion - a large,  
impressive house

county - a territorial division of some countries, forming the chief unit of local administration

Abbey - building or buildings occupied by a community of monks or nuns tawdry -

showy but cheap and of poor quality gilt - covered thinly with gold leaf or gold paint

concourse - a crowd or assembly of people gentry - people of good social position,  
specifically the class of people next below the nobility in position and birth

Psaltery - a volume containing the Book of Psalms aye - said to express assent; yes

apparition - a ghost or ghostlike image of a person dace - a small freshwater fish

related to the carp, typically living in running water friskings - skip or leap

playfully; frolic moping - wander about listlessly and aimlessly because of

unhappiness or boredom mettlesome - (of a person or animal) full of spirit and

courage; lively crossness - the quality or state of being cross or angry; irritability;

snappishness

Lethe – (in Greek mythology) a river in Hades whose waters cause drinkers to forget their  
past

## **11. Multiple Choice Questions**

1. Charles Lamb was born in the year

a) 1770

b) 1775

c) 1773

d) 1771

2. Charles Lamb worked for thirty three years in

a) South-Sea House

b) Christ's Hospital

c) East India Company

d) None of the above

3. Charles Lamb is called as

a) the king among English essayists

b) the founder of English essays

c) the shining star of English essays

d) the prince among English essayists

4. Charles Lamb referred to his brother John Lamb as

a) James Elia

b) John Elia

c) Jack Elia

d) Jorge Elia

5. “Dream Children: A Reverie” was published in the collection

a) *Essays*

b) *Poems on Various Subjects*

c) *Last Essays of Elia*

d) *Essays of Elia*

6. “Dream Children: A Reverie” is in the form of a

a) dream

b) daydream

c) nightmare

d) hallucination

7. Charles Lamb’s imaginary kids in “Dream Children: A Reverie” are named

a) Alice and John

b) Alice and James

c) Ann and John

d) Mary and James

8. In “Dream Children: A Reverie” Charles Lamb narrates the real story of

a) His mother

b) His sister

c) His great grandmother

d) His grandmother

9. In “Dream Children: A Reverie” as narrated by Charles Lamb, Mrs Field had a special fondness for

a) Mary Lamb

b) Charles Lamb

c) John Lamb

c) None of the above

10. In “Dream Children: A Reverie” Charles Lamb tells the kids that he courted their mother for

a) seven years

b) eleven years

c) four years

d) ten years

11. In “Dream Children: A Reverie” the kids’ mother Alice represents \_\_\_\_\_ in real life

a) Mary Lamb

b) Ann Simmons

c) Mrs Field

d) None of the above

12. The children tell Charles Lamb that Alice’s children call \_\_\_\_\_ as their father

a) Bernard

b) Brayden

c) Bartrum

d) Brenton

13. The “faithful Bridget” described at the end of the essay is

a) Mary Lamb

b) John Lamb

c) Mrs Field

d) Ann Simmons

14. In “Dream Children; A Reverie” the element of \_\_\_\_\_ predominates

a) humour

b) pathos

c) wit

d) melancholy

15. In “Dream Children: A Reverie” Charles Lamb gives vent to his sub-conscious desire of

a) writing

b) creative instinct

c) getting married

d) none of the above

## **12. Examination Oriented Questions**

1. Give an account of Charles Lamb’s early life and his works.

2. Explain how “Dream Children: A Reverie” blurs the line between the real and the imaginary.
3. Give a critical appraisal of the essay “Dream Children: A Reverie.”
4. Why the essay “Dream Children” is subtitled “A Reverie”?
5. Justify the title of the essay “Dream Children: A Reverie.”
6. In what light does Charles Lamb portray his grandmother in the essay “Dream Children: A Reverie”?
7. Comment on the autobiographical elements in “Dream Children: A Reverie.”
8. How does Charles Lamb portray his brother John Lamb in the essay “Dream Children: A Reverie”?
9. Whom does Charles Lamb refer to as “faithful Bridget” by his side at the end of the essay? What does it signify?
10. Write a detailed note on the element of humour and pathos in Charles Lamb’s works with reference to “Dream Children: A Reverie.”
11. Comment on Charles Lamb’s prose style with reference to “Dream Children: A Reverie.”
12. Give an assessment of Charles Lamb as an essayist and his contribution to the development of nineteenth century familiar essay.

### 13. **Answer Key**

1. b) 1775
2. c) East India Company
3. d) the prince among English essayists
4. a) James Elia
5. d) *Essays of Elia*
6. b) daydream
7. a) Alice and John
8. d) His grandmother

- 9. c) John Lamb
- 10. a) seven years
- 11. b) Ann Simmons
- 12. c) Bartrum
- 13. a) Mary Lamb
- 14. b) pathos
- 15. c) getting married

#### **14. Let Us Sum Up**

In this lesson, we have discussed in detail the life and works of Charles Lamb, one of the most critically acclaimed essayists of the nineteenth century. The lesson provides a comprehensive summary of his essay “Dream Children: A Reverie.” In “Dream Children: A Reverie” the narrator re-visits his childhood days in a daydream and reminisces about his grandmother Mrs Field and his brother John Lamb. He also gives an outlet to his unrequited love for Ann Simmons, and his unfulfilled desire to get married to her and have children through the fictional-imaginative persona of his wife Alice, as well as his kids Alice and John. The lesson further provides critical analysis of the essay and a glossary to assist the learners in better understanding the text and concludes with multiple choice questions and examination oriented questions to help the learners in developing a holistic understanding of the essay “Dream Children: A Reverie.”

#### **15. Suggested Reading**

Hudson, William Henry. *An Outline History of English Literature*. Rupa Publications, 2015.

Long, William J. *English Literature: Its History and Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World*. AITBS Publishers, 2013.

Masson, Flora. *Charles Lamb*. Read Books, 2008.

*The Essays of Elia by Charles Lamb*. Little, Brown, and Company, 1892.

Various internet sources.

## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 3**

**SEMESTER - I**

**PROSE**

**UNIT - I**

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### **SHASHI THAROOR “FREEDOM OF THE PRESS”**

#### **STRUCTURE**

Introduction to the Essayist

Objectives

Introduction to the Essay

“Freedom of the Press”

Summary of the Essay

Let Us Sum Up

Glossary

Self-Assessment Questions

Examination Oriented Questions

Suggested Reading

#### **INTRODUCTION TO THE ESSAYIST**

Shashi Tharoor is a well-known Indian writer, diplomat and politician. He has authored some fifteen Fictional/Non-Fictional books along with many newspaper articles. Besides being member of United

Nations he has also served as a Member of the Parliament from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, in the year 2009-2014. He was born on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1956 in London to Lily and Chandran Tharoor of a Nair family from Palakkad, Kerala and did his early schooling from Montfort School in Yercaud, Tamil Nadu in 1962 and later Champion School Bombay from 1963 to 1968. He completed his High School from St Xavier’s College in Calcutta 1971 and went

on to graduate with Bachelor of Arts degree in History from St Stephen's College, Delhi in 1975. In the same year he moved to the United States to pursue Post graduate studies at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, Massachusetts USA, where he obtained his MA and MALD. He was awarded the Robert B. Stewart Prize for Best Student Award and he also completed his PhD at the age of 22.

Tharoor started his literary career at a very young age and his first published story appeared in the Sunday edition of The Press Journal in Mumbai at the age of ten. At the age of eleven his World War II adventure novel *Operation Bellows* was serialized in the Junior Statesman. It was inspired by the James Bigglesworth a fictional pilot and adventurer nicknamed "Biggles", a series of youth-oriented adventure books written by W. E. Johns. At the age of forty three his first major work *The Great Indian Novel*, a satirical novel based on the great Indian Epic *Mahabharata*, was published on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1989, with subsequent editions, and has been translated in many other languages. Other notable works like *The Elephant, the Tiger and the Cellphone* has undergone seven hardback re-printings.

Shashi Tharoor's association with United Nations (UN) began in 1978 as a staff member of the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva. After a brief period of hard work and dedication he became the first chairman of the staff elected by UNHCR personnel worldwide. In 1989 he left the post and was appointed special assistant to the Under-Secretary General for Special Political Affairs, the unit that later became the Peace keeping Operations wing in New York. In 1996 Tharoor was appointed director of communications and special projects and executive assistant to the then Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

In January 2001 he was appointed Under-Secretary General for Communications and Public Information, and as Head of the Department of Public Information (UNDPI). In this capacity, he was responsible for the United Nations' communications strategy, enhancing the image and effectiveness of the organisation. It was during this period of time that he gave his speech on the *Freedom of the Press* at UN's World Freedom Day on 3rd of May 2001. In 2003 the Secretary-General gave him the additional responsibility of United Nations Coordinator for Multilingualism. During his tenure at the UNDP, Tharoor reformed the department and undertook a number of initiatives, ranging from organising and conducting the first-ever UN seminar on anti-Semitism, the first-ever UN seminar on 'Islamophobia' after the September 11 attacks, and launching

an annual list of “Ten Under-Reported Stories the World Ought to Know about”, which was last produced in 2008 by his successor.

In 2006, the government of India nominated Tharoor for the post of UN Secretary-General. Tharoor finished second, behind Ban Ki-moon, South Korean statesman and politician. On 9 February 2007, after 29 years with the UN, Tharoor resigned from the post of UN Under-Secretary-General and left the UN on 1 April 2007.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The Objectives of this Lesson are:

- i) to explain the learner the sum and substance of the prose *Freedom of the Press*. ii) to acquaint the learner with the format of the Examination Oriented Questions.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE ESSAY**

The Essay “Freedom of the Press” was first delivered as a speech at UN’s World Freedom Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2001. Later it appeared as an article “*Freedom of the press ... blood stained and a casualty during the war in*

*Iraq*” in one of India’s leading English newspaper The Hindu, Magazine on Sunday, on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2003. It was perhaps a reaction against the killing of 12 journalists in the year 2001 all over the world as estimated by Committee to Protect Journalists, a New York-based independent nonprofit organization, and the failure of free and safe press functioning which could have minimized, if not totally, the catastrophe of the 2003 invasion of Iraq led by the United States of America.

## **“FREEDOM OF THE PRESS”**

**Freedom of the press ... blood stained and a casualty during the war in Iraq.**

*As I write these words, on May 3, World Press Freedom Day, I am reminded that 12 journalists have been killed just this year, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, a New York-based independent non-profit organisation. All over the world, journalists are jailed, attacked and harassed every day.*

*Throughout the world, World Press Freedom Day, observed on May 3, serves as an occasion to inform the public of violations of the right to freedom of*

*expression and as a reminder that many journalists brave death or jail to bring people their daily news. Freedom of the press is the mortar that binds together the bricks of freedom — and it is also the open window embedded in those bricks, through which we can all see the world.*

*The day marks the anniversary of the Declaration of Windhoek, a statement of principles drawn up by African journalists calling for a free, independent and pluralistic media in their continent and throughout the world. The declaration, adopted in 1991 at a seminar organised by the United Nations and UNESCO in Windhoek, Namibia, affirms that a free press is essential to the existence of democracy and a fundamental human goal.*

*A free press is one of the most essential components of a democratic society. And there is no longer any serious debate about the proposition that democracy is essential for social and economic development.*

*There can be little argument that information and freedom go together. The information revolution is inconceivable without political democracy — and vice-versa. Already, the spread of information has had a direct impact on the degree of accountability and transparency of governments around the world.*

*There is a widespread recognition that restraints on the flow of information directly undermine development. Global interdependence means that those who receive and disseminate information have an edge over those who curtail it. The consequences are apparent in all fields of human endeavour.*

*The new hallmarks of development are the ability to receive, download and send information through electronic networks, and the capacity to share information — including not only newspapers and journals, but also on-line web sites — without censorship or restrictions. Thus developing countries need to open up to the outside world, liberalise the mass media, and resist government control and censorship of information.*

*This year the United Nations is organising two major events that will stress the centrality of press freedom. The World Electronic Media Forum, convening in Geneva from December 9 to 11, will bring together media executives and practitioners from developed and developing countries, as well as policy makers, to discuss the role of the electronic media in the information society.*

*The forum will contribute to the only global summit this year — the World Summit on the Information Society, which will be held in Geneva from December 10 to 12, 2003, with a second phase in Tunis in 2005. Freedom of the press*

*will be a major focus of this first-ever global summit on the subject of the information society.*

*The summit's draft Declaration of Principles stresses "the commitment to democracy and good governance as well as the existence, in accordance with the legal system of each country, of independent, pluralistic and free mass and other communication media". If the draft is adopted, world leaders will commit themselves to freedom of expression and guarantee the plurality of information.*

*The information society of the 21st Century can thrive only, if citizens are provided with full information to allow democratic participation at all levels.*

*The summit will engage the media as indispensable key participants of the information society, and will, we hope stress the role of press freedom as vital to democracy and good governance.*

*The summit should also help promote the creation of domestic content, in line with the local culture and in the local language. Cultural diversity and pluralism are essential to an inclusive information society. The "digital divide" is not only a technological one, but also a content divide that penalises developing countries. The two concepts — diversity of content and press freedom — can and need to go together.*

*New digital technology offers great possibilities for enhancing traditional media and combining them with new media. Moreover, traditional media, and especially radio and television, remain the sole form of access to the information society for much of the world's population, including the very poor and the illiterate.*

*Perhaps this is the newest challenge for the United Nations — to work to bring access to information, and the empowerment it offers, to all the world's people. Only then will equity and equality be truly brought to the information revolution. Only then will the world's poor and underprivileged have a real way out of the darkness that shrouds their voices, and their hopes.*

*Published In: The Hindu, Magazine on Sunday.*

## **SUMMARY OF THE ESSAY**

In this essay, Shashi Tharoor takes the opportunity of World Press Freedom Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> May and expresses his sadness on the estimated 12 deaths of Journalists all over the world according to the recent report by Committee

to Protect Journalists, a New York-based independent non-profit organization. He claims that journalists are jailed, attacked and harassed in the different parts of the world every day. He further acknowledges the fact that these journalists, who are brave, have sometimes lost their lives for the sake of providing daily news to its readers.

He asserts that this day also marks the anniversary of the Declaration of Windhoek, a statement of principles drawn up by African journalists calling for a free, independent and pluralistic media in their continent and throughout the world. This declaration was further adopted in 1991 at a seminar organised by the United Nations and UNESCO in Windhoek, Namibia which confirms that free press is an essential component for the existence of democracy and perhaps should be a fundamental human aspiration.

He emphasizes the fact that a democratic government is very essential for social and economic development of any country and for a democratic functioning of a state, transparent and authentic information to its people is vital, therefore, both Democracy and Information are inseparable entity. It is widely accepted that restrained information to its people has cost a lot to many governments around the world since the dynamics of information technology is ever changing. Global interdependence like electronic media and World Wide Web has greatly transformed the medium of information transmission where information concealed always leads to information exposed. Such change or rather revolution is fairly visible now days in the form of unrestricted ability to receive, download and send information to any person in any part of the world. Therefore the developing countries must encourage free and liberal press functioning.

He says that the same year United Nations is going to organise two major events which will stress the importance of Free Press. First is The World Electronic Media Forum, convening in Geneva from December 9 to 11, which is going to bring together media executives, practitioners and policymakers from developed and developing countries to discuss the role of the electronic media in the information society. And second, World Summit on the Information Society, which will be held in Geneva from December 10 to 12, 2003, with a second phase in Tunis in 2005. The planned draft declaration for the World Summit on the Information Society will be stressed on “the commitment to democracy and good governance as well as the existence, in accordance with the legal system of each country, of independent, pluralistic and free mass and other communication media”. He further confirms the fact that, if the draft is adopted, then the world leaders will commit themselves to the freedom of expression and will guarantee free, fair and liberal information.

He claims that information society or journalism can only develop if the citizens are provided with full information, whereby allowing them a full participation at all levels. For this purpose the said summit will engage the media as indispensable key participant, thereby encouraging the stress and need of free press as vital to democracy and good governance.

He hopes that the summit will also promote regional information society or journalism about local culture and in the local language because diverse informed information society at large is very essential. He explains the term

“digital divide” (a term that refers to the gap between demographics and regions that have access to modern information and communication technology, and those that don’t or have restricted access) as not only deprivation of modern mass communication medium like internet, newspaper etc. but also deprived of full information or diverse information which hampers the growth of the developing countries. Therefore, two concepts like diversity of content/information and press freedom can and need to go together.

Tharoor finally concludes his essay with a note that the new digital technology offers great possibilities for enhancing traditional media and thus combining them with new media. Moreover, traditional media, and especially radio and television remain the only form of access to the information society for much of the world population, including the very poor and the illiterate ones. Perhaps he says, the newest challenge for the United Nation is to bring access of information to people around the world and only then equity and equality can be truly brought to the information revolution and the world’s poor and underprivileged will have a real way out of darkness that suppress their voices and their hopes.

### **LET US SUM UP**

- a. Theme: The theme of the essay “Freedom of the Press” by Shashi Tharoor, discusses the need and importance of free and liberal press in a modern world. He argues that for any democratic developing country it is very important to provide its countrymen with valid information about the government and its functioning. He further says that democracy and liberal press are two inseparable entities and none of them can exist separately if a country aspires for true democracy. Therefore the freedom of press is an essential component of any free state.
- b. United Nation Efforts: To safe guard the interest of information society or journalism and the people residing in democratic countries United Nation

and UNESCO have continuously organised world summits. For example two major events which will stress the importance of Free Press are going to be conducted. First is The World Electronic Media Forum, convening in Geneva from

December 9 to 11 and second, World Summit on the Information Society, which will be held in Geneva from December 10 to 12, 2003, with a second phase in Tunis in 2005. These conferences will encourage the world leaders towards a liberal press functioning in their countries and will create awareness of modern digitally connected world where diverse and free information or journalism has become very essential.

- c. Digital Revolution and Press: With the ever changing sources of Information transmission and continuous development in the field of electronic media like internet and social networking sites Shashi Tharoor press the view of liberal journalism. Such change or rather revolution is fairly visible now days in the form of unrestricted ability to receive, download and send information to any person in any part of the world. Therefore, he says, that there is a dire need of the Governments to encourage information society at both local and global levels for an equal participation of its citizens towards a diverse informed society.

## **GLOSSARY**

Harassed: feeling or looking tired as a result of having too many demands made on one.

Violations: the action of violating someone or something.

Mortar: Any of various bonding materials used in masonry, surfacing, and plastering, especially a mixture of cement or lime, sand, and water that hardens in place and is used to bind together bricks or stones.

Embedded: enclosed firmly in a surrounding. Declaration: formal announcement, either oral or written.

Pluralistic: Having multiple aspects or parts.

Affirm: Assert to be true.

Essential: Fundamentally important or necessary.

Proposition: A plan suggested for acceptance; a proposal.

Transparency: Honest and open.

Accountability: Responsible.

Inconceivable: Unimaginable or Unbelievable.

Undermine: To weaken, injure, or impair.

Disseminate: To Spread.

Widespread: Spread or scattered over a considerable extent.

Endeavour: An effort to do or attain something.

Apparent: Readily seen; visible.

Hallmarks: A mark indicating quality or excellence.

Censorship: A person or committee authorized to examine books, films, or other material and to remove or suppress what is considered morally, politically, or otherwise objectionable.

Summit: A conference between heads of state or other top-level government officials.

Draft: To draw up a preliminary version of or plan for something.

Thrive: To be successful or make steady progress; prosper.

Indispensable: Absolutely necessary; essential.

Penalises: To subject to a penalty.

Diversity: Varied; from different parts.

Enhancing: To improve.

Sole: Only.

Equity: Something that is just and fair.

Underprivileged: Lacking the standard of living and opportunities enjoyed by most people in a society.

Shrouds: To cover-up or conceal.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

What is “digital divide” according to Shashi Tharoor?

Ans: “Digital divide” is a term that refers to the gap between demo graphics and regions that have access to modern information and communication technology, and those that don’t or have restricted access. Shashi Tharoor explains the term “digital divide” as not only deprivation of modern mass communication medium like internet, newspaper etc. but also deprived of full and diverse information about the Government to its people which hampers the growth of a developing country.

Write a short note on two conferences the United Nation is going to host. Ans

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Q.

3. Why is ‘World Press Freedom Day’ observed on May 3rd? Ans

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### **EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS**

Write a short note on the theme of the Essay “Freedom of the Press.”

What does Shashi Tharoor means by “Freedom of the press is the mortar that binds together the bricks offreedom.”?

“The two concepts — diversity of content and press freedom — can and need to go together.” Explain.

### **SUGGESTED READING**

□ The Pierian Spring: An Anthology for BA, B.Sc, B.Com and BCA, first year, University ofJammu.

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## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 4**

**SEMESTER - I**

**PROSE**

**UNIT - I**

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### **A. P. J. ABDUL KALAM “WINGS OF FIRE” STRUCTURE**

Introduction to the Author

Objectives

“Wings of Fire”

Introduction to the Essay

Summary

Self -Check Exercise

Examination Oriented Questions

Recapitulation of the Lesson

Answer Key to Self -Assessment Questions

Keywords

Suggested Reading

#### **INTRODUCTION TO THE AUTHOR**

Avul Pakir Jainulab-deen Abdul Kalam was born in a middle class family in the island town of Rameshwaram. He served as the twelfth

President of India from 2002 to 2007. He grew up in the simple and serene surroundings of Rameshwaram under the able guidance of his parents who nurtured him with humility and good values. His father was deeply spiritual and commanded a lot of respect in the town. The ideals and rich wisdom of his father influenced the personality of Kalam to a great extent. Kalam is known as the missile man of India and his work as a defence scientist is unparalleled. His life is an awe-inspiring model for all the young learners who wish to reach glorious heights. He may rightly be labelled as a trendsetter for all those who dream of a dynamic and productive India.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The lessons ‘Wings of Fire’ by A.P.J. Abdul Kalam is an autobiography wherein he leads hagiographic glimpses to his early childhood days, his family and the people who influenced him. The objective of the lesson is to acquaint the learner with A.P.J. Abdul Kalam- his disciplined and simple life which nurtured him as an inspiring trendsetter for many youth and the impact of his father who was his role model. The lesson is a must read for all the young learners who aspire to reach glorious heights.

### **“WINGS OF FIRE”**

This short autobiographical piece is an excerpt from Kalam’s “Wings of Fire”. Kalam leads most to the piece by giving kaleidoscopic glimpses of his early childhood. He recalls his early childhood days spent in the peaceful and calm surroundings of the island town Rameshwaram. He talks about his parents who were an ideal couple and nurtured him with humility and rich values. His father was deeply spiritual and his ideals deeply influenced Kalam in his growing years. Kalam also reminisces a terrible tragedy he witnessed as a child: a cyclone that ruined his father’s boat and was a great human disaster. He also remembers and cherishes his friendship with Ahmed Jaallaudin who later became his brother-in-law and was a great support to him. The excerpt is a nostalgic Kaleidoscope to his early childhood.

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE ESSAY**

“Wings of Fire” is a brief autobiographical excerpt of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. The essay mainly talks about his early childhood, his village, his parents and also his friends who influenced him.

### **SUMMARY**

“Wings of Fire” is an autobiographical piece written by A.P.J. Abdul Kalam where he reminisces about his simple childhood life and the surroundings of

Rameswaram, his home town. Kalam was born in the humble middle class Tamil family. The chapter provides an interesting glimpse of religious harmony existing in Rameswaram, a southern religious town in Tamil Nadu. The excerpt is an account of a young boy who tries to achieve his dreams defeating all odds. The study emphasises the importance of family, relatives and friends in helping each other's goals.

Kalam's father, Jalaluddin was a simple man with no formal education and wealth but had an ideal partner in his mother, Aashini. He led a simple life avoiding all the in essential comforts and luxuries but provided a secure childhood to his children. His ideals left a great impact on the young Kalam.

Kalam's mother used to feed a number of people everyday at her home. Kalam normally ate with his mother sitting on the floor of the kitchen from a banana leaf.

The famous Shiva Temple was about ten minutes walk from Kalam's house and high priest of the temple, Pakshi Lakshman Shastri was a close friend of Kalam's father. Both of them used to discuss spiritual matters.

Kalam recalls that when his father came out of the mosque after prayers, people of different religious belief would be sitting out watching for him. His father would dip his fingertips in the bowl of water and say a prayer. The water was then carried home for invalids and people often visited Kalam's home to thank him after being cured.

Kalam also remembers the tragedy at the Pamban bridge, when a cyclone ruined his father's boat, when he was doing a good business taking the pilgrims from Rameswaram to Dhanuskodi. He also described his friendship and bonding with Ahmed Jalaluddin who later became his brother-in-law, Jalaluddin was a great inspiration for Kalam along with his first cousin, Samsuddin.

### **SELF-CHECK EXERCISE**

#### **Fill in the Blanks :**

- a. "Wings of Fire" is an \_\_\_\_\_ excerpt.
- b. "Wings of Fire" is written by \_\_\_\_\_ .
- c. The author in the excerpt talks about his early \_\_\_\_\_ .
- d. The author's father was deeply \_\_\_\_\_ .
- e. The author was inspired by his friend \_\_\_\_\_ .

### **True or False**

- f. The author's parents were regarded as an ideal couple.
- g. His austere father did not avoid all comforts of life.
- h. Kalam tried to emulate his father in his own life.
- i. Jallauddin was not an inspiration for young Kalam.
- j. Kalam inherited goodness and kindness from his mother.

### **Short Questions**

- k. What did Kalam inherit from his mother and father ?
- l. Who were the people who influenced Kalam's childhood ?
- m. How has Kalam tried to emulate his father in his work as a scientist ?
- n. What was the power of prayer according to Kalam's father ?
- o. What was the terrible tragedy that Kalam experienced as a child ?

Describe Abdul Kalam's childhood house?

Ans. During his childhood, Abdul Kalam lived in his ancestral house located on the Mosque Street in the island town of Rameswaram in the erstwhile Madras state. The house was built in the middle of 19th century and it was a *pacca* house made of limestone and brick.

What kind of person was Abdul Kalam's mother? What was her lineage?

Ans. Kalam's mother was a very sincere and hard working woman. She proved to be an ideal helpmate to her husband. She used to feed many people every day. He recalls that more outsiders used to eat with them than all the members of his family put together.

### **EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS**

- a. Give the sum and substance of the essay "Wings of Fire."
- b. Identify the people who had influenced Kalam as a young boy and discuss how they helped him to become the kind of person he was.

- c. Discuss the growth of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam from a young boy to the twelfth President of India.
- d. Explain the following with reference to the context :
  - i. My austere father used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries... mine was a very secure childhood, both materially and emotionally.
  - ii. One of the most vivid memories of my early childhood is of the two men, each in his traditional attire, discussing spiritual matters.
  - iii. Every child is born with some inherited characteristics, into a specific socio-economic and emotional environment and trained in certain ways by figures of authority.

### **RECAPITULATION OF THE LESSON**

- a. The autobiographical piece is an excerpt from Kalam's "Wings of Fire."
- b. Kalam reminisces his early childhood spent with his parents.
- c. His father was a very spiritual person who commanded a lot of respect in the town.
- d. His ideals and thoughts gravely influenced Kalam.
- e. Kalam recalls a terrible tragedy, he witnessed as a child. The cyclone that ruined his father's boat and caused a great disaster.
- f. He recalls his cherishing friendship with Ahmed Jallauddin, who later become his brother-in-law and was an inspiration to him.
- g. Books were rarely available in this small town of Rameshwaram and people were mainly dependent on the library of S.T.R. Manickam and also, the newspaper agent, Samsuddin.
- h. The entreat of World War II followed by the changes in this small city are also recapitulated by Kalam.

- i. The qualities of honesty, self-discipline, goodness and kindness inherited by his parents and the wisdom of his parents, and Samsuddin attributed to his creativity and success in the later years.

### **ANSWER KEY TO SELFASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

- a. Autobiographical
- b. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
- c. Childhood
- d. Spiritual
- e. Jallaluddin
- f. T
- g. F
- h. T
- i. F
- j. T
- k. Faith, kindness and goodness from his mother and honesty and self-discipline from his father.
- l. Ahmed Jalaluddin and Samsuddin.
- m. By understanding the basic truths told to him by his father about the existence of a divine power which uplift a human from turmoil and misery.
- n. It made possible a communion of the spirit between people.
- o. Cyclone that destroyed his father's boat and caused a great human tragedy.

### **KEYWORDS**

- a. Dollop    A large lump of soft substance
- b. Sacred    Holy

- c. Benevolent      Kind
- d. Impasse      Situation where no progress seems possible deadlock
- e. Melancholy      Unhappiness, sad feeling
- f. Environs      Outskirts
- g. Initiative      Ability to understand know without any proof.
- i. Erstwhile      Former
- j. Introspection      To examine one's action
  
- k. Endeavoured      Attempted mentally
- l. Invalids      Weak
- m. Innate      Inborn
- n. Lineage      Ancestry
- o. Austere      Simple
- p. Benevolent      Kind
- q. Halt      Stop

### **SUGGESTED READING**

- The Pierian Spring: An anthology for BA, B.Sc, B.Com and BCA, first year, University of Jammu.

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## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 5**

**SEMESTER - I**

**POETRY**

**UNIT - II**

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### **RABINDRANATH TAGORE “LEAVE THIS CHANTING”**

#### **STRUCTURE**

Introduction to the Poet

Objectives

About *Gitanjali*

Introduction to the Poem

Summary of the Poem

Key-Words

Reference to the Context

Self-Check Exercise

Examination Oriented Questions

Recapitulation of the Lesson

Answer-Key to Self-Assessment Questions

Suggested Reading

#### **INTRODUCTION TO THE POET**

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was born in Calcutta, Bengal

Presidency, British India.

He was the youngest child in the family. His mother, Sarada Devi had died in his early childhood (1875) and his father, Debendranath Tagore who was the leader of Brahmo Samaj, a religious sect in the nineteenth century Bengal, would remain mostly out of house because of his social activities. In consequence, Rabindranath Tagore was raised by servants. He had his early education at home and later went to England for formal schooling. However, he did not finish his studies there. After staying just over a year, he left England and returned to India.

In India, in addition to his literary activities, he managed his estate which brought him close to common people and he became interested in social reforms. He started a school Shantiniketan and taught *Upanishads*. On December 9, 1883, Rabindranath Tagore was married to Mrinalini Devi Raichaudhari, the daughter of one of the junior officers of the family estate. He had two sons and three daughters. For some time Rabindranath Tagore worked as a secretary of Brahmo Samaj which was “a quasi- theological” exercise for him. He even made occasional incursions into national politics but remained essentially an internationalist. He participated in the Indian National Movements and became a devoted friend of Mahatma Gandhi.

Rabindranath Tagore was a poet, author, songwriter, philosopher, artist and educator. With his translations of his poems he became rapidly known not only in India but also became famous in West. His fame attained a luminous height, taking him across continents on lecture tours. In the West, he became the voice of India’s spiritual heritage and in India he became a great living institution. For his profoundly sensitive and beautiful verse work, *Gitanjali*, he became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. Rabindranath Tagore was held in high regard by fellow Bengalis and Indians. In 1950 his song *Jana Gana Mana* was adopted as India’s national anthem.

His major works include:

### **Poetry**

*Bhanusimha Thakurer Padavali (The Songs of Bhanusimha Thakur)* 1884

*Manasi (The Ideal One)* 1890

*Sonar Tari (The Golden Boat)* 1894

*Gitanjali (Songs Offerings)* 1910

*Gitimalya (Wreath of Songs)* 1914

*Balaka (The Flight of Cranes)* 1916

### **Dramas**

*Valmiki-Pratibha (The Genius of Valmiki)* 1881

*Visarjan (The Sacrifice)* 1890

*Raja (The King of the Dark Chamber)* 1910

*Dak Ghar (The Post Office)* 1912 *Achalayatan*

*(The Immovable)* 1912 *Muktadhara (The*

*Waterfall)* 1922 *Raktakaravi (Red Oleander)*

1926

### **Fiction**

*Nastanirh (The Broken Nest)* 1901

*Gora (Fair-Faced)* 1910

*Ghare Baire (The Home and the World)* 1916

*Yogayog (Crosscurrents)* 1929

### **Memoirs**

*Jivansmriti (The Reminiscences)* 1912

*Chhelebelā (My Boyhood Days)* 1940

## **OBJECTIVES**

The following lesson deals with the poem “Leave this Chanting” by Rabindranath Tagore. The objective of the lesson is to acquaint the learner with Rabindranath Tagore’s idea of God. According to him, God cannot be found through chanting of *mantras* in a secluded corner. If someone wishes to see God, then one can see Him in the hard work of the workers and labourers who toil for the society. Rabindranath Tagore rejects the ascetic way of life and exposes the shams of priests and worshippers. He persuades the reader to keenly participate in life’s activities for the liberation.

## ABOUT GITANJALI

*Gitanjali* is a collection of poems by Rabindranath Tagore. The English translation of *Gitanjali* became well-known in the West, and was widely translated in other foreign languages. The word *gitanjali* is derived from the word “gita” meaning song, and “anjali” meaning offering, and thus means—“An offering of songs” but the word for offering, *anjali*, has a strong devotional connotation, so the title may also be interpreted as “prayer offering of song”. *Gitanjali* is written to express devotion towards God.

Every phrase of each poem has a hidden poetic meaning. From the standpoint of philosophy and rationalism, it can be easily noticed that the intrinsic words convey meanings that transcend all barriers of emotions in an intellectual and aesthetic sense. *Gitanjali* reveals the schema of truths, beauty, harmony and grandeur which pave the way of a poetic pilgrimage.

Religion is not important for life. To be spiritual, but not religious is the beautiful philosophy propounded by Rabindranath Tagore. His message in *Gitanjali* has no religious connotation and ethnic bearing. *Gitanjali* has a neutral and universal message to the very core. He preaches a liberalist mode of life where the cleavages of religion, race, creed, provincialism, intolerance and ecclesiasticism are all relinquished to attain enlightenment.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM

“Leave this chanting” is the eleventh poem in *Gitanjali*. *Gitanjali* is originally written in Bengali. The original Bengali collection of 157 poems was published on August 14, 1910. Later Rabindranath Tagore translated *Gitanjali* in English. The English edition contains 103 poems and was first published in November 1912 by the India Society of London.

## SUMMARY OF THE POEM

The poet advises the priests to give up their counting of beads and their singing and chanting of *mantras*. He also urges them to stop worshipping God in a secluded corner of the temple, with their eyes half shut. He sharply states, “Open your eyes and see God is not there before you.” One cannot find God in this way. God lives with the humble and down-trodden like the tillers of the land and path-makers who work hard at breaking stones. He lives with those who toil in sun and rain and whose clothes are soiled with dust. If the priest wants God he must come out of his temple, give up his holy robes and work with the humble tillers and road

makers who work hard whether it is rain or sunny day. Rabindranath Tagore thus glorifies the life of the humble labourers and rejects the ascetic way of life and all rituals and shams of worshipping.

The ultimate spiritual goal of the ascetic is to seek deliverance which is the liberation of the soul from the cycle of birth and death. However, God Himself is bound to all of us in chains of love because He loves us. He himself is not free and He has joyfully bound Himself to the objects of His creation. How can then man ever hope to be free from bondage? He urges the ascetics to leave the ritualistic flowers and incense which does not serve any purpose. According to the poet one cannot find God in the temple. He is with the workers who are working whole day in the dirt and under the hot sun. He asks what harm is there if one works under the sun and if one's clothes will spoil with dirt. Even when clothes are torn out or stained there is no harm in it because one is going to be with the creator.

Thus Rabindranath Tagore conveys that participation in the activities of life is essential for the realization of God.

#### **KEY-WORDS**

- a. Chant – repeat or sing again and again
- b. Beads – rosary
- c. Dost- do
- d. Thou – you
- e. Thine – your
- f. Thy – your
- g. Thee- you
- h. Till – to prepare and use land for growing crops
- i. Tiller – who tills land
- j. Mantle – cloak
- k. Deliverance – liberation
- l. Bonds – chains
- m. Meditation – contemplation
- n. Tattered – old and torn

## REFERENCE TO THE CONTEXT

- (a) Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

### Reference

These lines have been taken from the poem “Leave this Chanting” by Rabindranath Tagore.

### Context

“Leave This Chanting” is an advice to worshippers to seek God outside temples, among the labourers.

### Explanation

In the lines under reference, Rabindranath Tagore advises the worshippers to leave the chanting of *Mantras* and counting rosary as God cannot be found in this way. The worshippers sing *Mantras* and count their *Rudraksha* Beads inside the shut, dark, lone corners of their temples but when they open their eyes their God is nowhere to be seen in the temples. They are blind to think that God will be pleased to stay inside shut temples. Thus poet rejects all the shams and rituals of worshipping.

- (b) Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all forever. Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.

### Reference

These lines have been taken from the poem “Leave this Chanting” by Rabindranath Tagore.

### Context

Rabindranath Tagore conveys that participation in the activity of life is essential for the realization of God. He rejects the ascetic way of life and all shams of worshipping.

### Explanation

Deliverance or *Mukti* or Release is not the leaving of this world. It is not detachment but divine attachment. God created this world and decided to stay with this world forever. Mankind would feel God is one

among them. God has joyfully taken upon him the responsibility of preserving and caring for his creations. He has come to stay with us till the end of the days, and He likes being bonded to this world. Many of his worshippers are living in a virtual world of incense, meditation and flowers which displeases Him much. He wishes them to come out of this world of illusion, to stand by Him in sun and shower. There is no harm in their robes becoming tattered and stained if they are near to God. Those who seek God should be prepared to stand by Him and meet Him in toil and in the sweat of their brow.

### **SELF-CHECK EXERCISE**

#### **Fill in the Blanks:**

- (a) “Leave this Chanting” is the eleventh poem in \_\_\_\_\_.
- (b) “Leave this Chanting” is written by \_\_\_\_\_.
- (c) The poet in the poem is addressing to \_\_\_\_\_.
- (d) According to poet, God lives with \_\_\_\_\_.
- (e) Deliverance, according to the poet is \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **True or False:**

- (f) The only way to find God is the chanting of *Mantras*.
- (g) God resides with workers and labourers who toil hard for the society.
- (h) Incense, meditation and flowers displease God.
- (i) God bonds to us by the chain of love.
- (j) Deliverance or *Mukti* is detachment from the world.

#### **Short Questions:**

- (k) According to poet, what are the shams and false ways to find God?
- (l) Why God chooses to reside with workers and labourers?
- (m) What is the key, according to poet, to be one with God?

- (n) According to poet, what is deliverance?
- (o) In which year, the English version of *Gitanjali* was published?

### EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

**(a) Give the critical appreciation of the poem “Leave this Chanting.”**

Ans. The poem is didactical in tone. Rabindranath Tagore uses the style of hymn to point out the importance of living and working together with the workers and peasants. He condemns those who only wish to put on white robes and worship God with flowers in the lonely dark temples but refuse to toil together with the poor and lowly masses of the people in the dusty places.

Rabindranath Tagore advises the worshippers to leave the chanting of *mantras* and counting rosary as God cannot be found in this way. The worshippers sing *mantras* and count their *Rudraksha* beads inside the shut, dark, lone corners of their temples but when they open their eyes their God is nowhere to be seen in the temples. They are blind to think that God will be pleased to stay inside shut temples. God resides with the humble and down-trodden like the tillers of the land and path-makers who work hard at breaking stones. He lives with those who toil in sun and rain and whose clothes are soiled with dust. If the priest wants God he must come out of his temple, give up his holy robes and work with the humble tillers and road makers who work hard whether it is rain or a sunny day. Rabindranath Tagore thus glorifies the life of the humble labourers and rejects the ascetic way of life and all rituals and shams of worshipping.

Deliverance or *Mukti* or Release is not the leaving of this world; it is not detachment but divine attachment. God created this world and decided to stay with this world forever, so that mankind would

feel God is one among them. God has joyfully taken upon him the responsibility of protecting and caring for his creations. He has come to stay with us till the end of the days, and He likes being bonded to this world. Many of his worshippers are living in a virtual world of incense, meditation and flowers which displeases Him much. He wishes them to come out of this world of illusion, to stand by God in sun and shower. There is no harm in their robes becoming tattered and stained if they are near to God. Those who seek God should be prepared to stand by Him and meet Him in toil and in the sweat of their brow.

**(b) Give the sum and substance of the poem “Leave this Chanting.”**

Ans. Rabindranath Tagore advises the worshippers to leave the chanting of *mantras* and counting rosary as God cannot be found in this way. The worshippers sing *mantras* and count their *Rudraksha* beads inside the shut, dark, lone corners of their temples, but when they open their eyes God is nowhere to be seen in the temples. They are blind to think that God will be pleased to stay inside shut temples. God resides with the humble and down-trodden like the tillers of the land and path-makers who work hard at breaking stones. He lives with those who toil in sun and rain and whose clothes are soiled with dust. Deliverance or *Mukti* or Release is not the leaving of this world. It is not detachment but divine attachment. God created this world and decided to stay with this world forever. Mankind would feel God is one among them. The poet asks the worshippers to come out of this world of illusion, to stand by God in sun and shower. There is no harm in their robes becoming tattered and stained if they are near to God. Those who seek God should be prepared to stand by Him and meet Him in toil and in the sweat of their brow.

**(c) Explain Rabindranath Tagore's idea of God as expressed in the poem.**

Ans. Rabindranath Tagore advises the worshippers to leave the chanting of *mantras* and counting rosary as God cannot be found in this way. Rabindranath Tagore thus glorifies the life of the humble labourers and rejects the ascetic way of life and all rituals and shams of worshipping. Deliverance or *Mukti* or Release is not the leaving of this world. It is not detachment but divine attachment. God created this world and decided to stay with this world forever. Mankind would feel God is one among them. He has joyfully taken upon him the responsibility of preserving and caring for his creations. He has come to stay with us till the end of the days, and He likes being bonded to this world. Many of his worshippers are living in a virtual world of incense, meditation and flowers which displeases Him much. He asks them to come out of this world of illusion, to stand by Him in sun and shower. There is no harm in their robes becoming tattered and stained if they are near to God. Those who seek God should be prepared to stand by Him and meet Him in toil and in the sweat of their brow.

**(d) Explain the following with reference to the context:**

i. Leave this chanting——— God is not before thee!

- ii. He is with them—— the dusty soil! iii. Deliverance?——  
—— he is bound with us all forever.
- iv. Come out of thy meditations—— stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.

### RECAPITULATION OF THE LESSON

- A. Leave this Chanting is the eleventh poem in *Gitanjali*.
- B. *Gitanjali* is a collection of Rabindranath Tagore's poem originally written in Bengali and published in 1910.
- C. The English translation of the poem was published in 1912.
- D. In the "Leave this Chanting" poet advises the priests to give up their counting of beads and their singing and chanting of *mantras*.
- E. They are blind to think that God would be pleased to stay inside shut temples.
- F. God resides with the humble and down-trodden like the tillers of the land and path-makers who work hard at breaking stones.
- G. Poet glorifies the life of the humble labourers and rejects the ascetic way of life.
- H. Deliverance or *Mukti* or Release is not the leaving of this world; it is not detachment but divine attachment.
- I. Those who seek God should be prepared to stand by Him and meet Him in toil and in the sweat of their brow.

### ANSWER-KEY TO SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- (a) *Gitanjali*.
- (b) Rabindranath Tagore.
- (c) God's worshipers.
- (d) Workers and labourers.

- (e) Divine attachment.
- (f) F
- (g) T (h) T
- (i) T
- (j) F
- (k) Chanting *Mantras* and counting beads.
- (l) They toil hard for the society and are in direct contact with world, the creation of God.
- (m) Love.
- (n) Divine attachment.
- (o) 1912

#### **SUGGESTED READING**

- Paul, S.K. *The Complete Poems of Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali: Text and Critical Evaluation*. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2006. Print.
- Radhakrishnan, S. *Rabindranath Tagore: A Centenary Volume 1861- 1961*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1961. Print.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. *Gitanjali*. University of California: Internal Pocket Library, 1912. Print.

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## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 6**

**SEMESTER - I**

**POETRY**

**UNIT - II**

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### **RUDYARD KIPLING**

#### **“IF”**

#### **STRUCTURE**

Introduction

Objectives

Introduction to the Poet

Introduction to the Poem

Central Idea of the Poem

Summary of the Poem

Self-Check Questions

Glossary

Comprehension Questions

Examination Oriented Questions

Self-Assessment Questions

Recapitulation of the Lesson

Answer Key (Self-Check Questions)

## Suggested Reading

### INTRODUCTION

In this lesson you are going to read 'If' a famous, inspirational and motivational poem written by Rudyard Kipling. Kindly read the text of the poem carefully. This poem is going to inspire and enlighten you. Look for the difficult words in the Glossary Section.

### OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you should be able to

1. appreciate the poem.
2. explain the difficult words thus enhancing your vocabulary.
3. Answer examination oriented questions.
4. Express your views about the poem.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE POET

Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay in 1865, educated in England and spent his early manhood as a journalist in Lahore. He wrote many stories and poems about India, of which the most famous are *The Jungle Book* (1894), *Plain Tales from the Hills* and *Wee Willie Winkie*. He also wrote widely about army life, about men and machines, about the sea and ships and in *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910) about the Sussex countryside where he spent his later life and where he died in 1936. He was awarded Nobel Prize for literature in 1907.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM

The poem "If" is concerned with the moral qualities needed to be a good man. Kipling was denounced as an imperialist but here in this poem, he frames certain moral qualities which are essential for becoming a moral and noble man.

### CENTRAL IDEA OF THE POEM

Rudyard Kipling in his famous poem 'If' suggests some qualities which make a man virtuous and noble. He advises us to be self-confident

and always be on the side of truth and never to succumb before pressures and threats. We should never care either for success or failure and should always accept

them in the same way as both are deceivers and none is true. We should always struggle for the good. The poet advises us to try and try again. Though we may fail yet we should not lose heart but gather all our strength even in the old age to pursue the right and truthful path. Even in the company of kings and superiors, we should not lose touch with the common people and in the company of evil people we should never give up our virtue and kindness. We should never stop our truthful and rightful struggle as time and tide wait for none. If we possess all these qualities, we will become moral and virtuous.

### **SUMMARY OF THE POEM**

The poem begins by the poet encouraging man/his son to keep his strength when others are becoming weak and blaming the cause on him. So at this stage, one should not lose trust in oneself when everyone doubts him. Other's doubt should be allowed. One has to wait for the right time and one should never feel tired of waiting. When others base themselves on lies, one should not deal in lies or when others hate you one should not give way to hating. One should not, at this time, look either too good or too wise.

The poet then advises man/his son to dream but never become slave of the dreams. One should think but not make thoughts one's aim. Here the poet stresses the practical side of life. One should not believe in theory but put it into practice. If one gets success or failure, one should treat both with the same heart as both are fake and hypocrites. The poet further advises if you see your principles and ideas distorted by any dishonest man so as to be fool people and if you see things you have built after hard work and honesty modified or destroyed by the selfish people, do not feel weak but again gather strength and build them with full spirit even if your body is weak and old.

The poet again tells that if one's winning and success are lost in any risk, one should not lose heart and never lament for the loss but to hold on the will and strength and start working again. The poet here refers to the old age when one is weak and unable to do hard work. Even at this stage, one can gather strength and mental balance to do the right thing.

The poet in the concluding stanza advises man/his son to be always good and noble even if one is in contact with many people very closely. So one's virtue should not be polluted by the evil thoughts of others. Also if a man is in the company of superior people like kings, he should not lose sympathy for common man, that is, he should not look down upon others. If a man cannot be harmed either by friends or by enemies and all men are important to him, that man is expected to make full

use of time which never waits for anybody. If a man possesses all these qualities, he deserves to live on this earth and everything on it belongs to him. Such a man is a true, virtuous and moral man, according to Kipling.

### SELF-CHECK QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions briefly:

- (a) Where was Rudyard Kipling born and in which year?
- (b) Name the most important works of Rudyard Kipling.
- (c) What is the theme of the poem 'If'?

### GLOSSARY

Trust	—	believe in, have faith
Triumph	—	success
Disaster	—	ruin, catastrophe
Imposter	—	fake
Trusted	—	distorted, changed
Heap	—	gather
Breathe a word about	—	lament, become sad
Heart and nerve and sinew	—	to keep physical and mental balance.
Virtue	—	goodness.
Common touch	—	sympathy
Unforgiving	—	here it refers to time which does not wait or stop for anybody.

### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does poet want to say in these lines? *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.*

In these lines, the poet wants to say that during the time of trouble and confusion, we should not lose our balance of mind. Nor should we mind if people blame us for the confusion. We should have self-confidence and not depend on what people think about us. Patience is an important virtue and so is truthfulness. Moreover, we should not try to appear better or wiser than others.

2. Explain these lines —

“And so hold on where there is nothing in you,  
Except the will which says to them : “Hold on!””

In these lines, the poet wants to say that we should have a very strong will-power. When we are tired, have lost heart, and finished our strength, then too we should have the will-power to carry on our struggle.

### EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. **What qualities, according to the poet, should a brave and honourable man possess?**

**Ans.** According to the poet, a brave and an honourable man should possess the following qualities :—

1. He should always keep his strength and never feel weak.
2. He should have faith in himself. He should have self-confidence.
3. He should never become the slave of his dreams.
4. He should never bother for success or failure of his struggle.
5. Even in old age, he should gather strength and work laboriously.
6. He should not lose his virtue when in the company of evil men.
7. He should respect time and work for the betterment of human beings.

2. **Give the sum and substance of the poem.**

**Ans.** Refer Summary.

3. **Why does the poet call Triumph and Disaster Impostors? What should be one's attitude towards them ?**

**Ans.** The poet calls Triumph and Disaster imposters because both are deceivers; sometimes what we think to be as success may turn out to be a failure and

what we may think as disaster may turn out to be a triumph. One should not attach oneself to either of the two but always struggle for better thinking, about success or failure.

**4. What should a man guard against when moving with ‘crowds’ and ‘kings’?**

**Ans.** A man when moving with crowds should not lose his virtue. He should not be corrupted by evil and coward thoughts of others. In the same way, when moving with kings, he should not lose warm touch with his fellow men and should not look upon them as his inferiors.

**5. When do dreams become a man’s master?**

**Ans.** The dreams become a man’s master when man succumbs to them and becomes their slave. The poet warns us against making dreams our masters. The poet encourages us for action.

**6. What qualities according to the poet should brave and honourable men possess? Ans. Refer Summary.**

**SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

**1. Who is the speaker ? What does the poem reveal about the speaker’s character ?**

**Ans.** The speaker in the poem is the poet, Rudyard Kipling. The poem reveals the speaker as a man of character and principles. He possesses virtues and has a balanced outlook.

**2. How does one make allowance for doubting ? Why is this important?**

Ans.

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**3. What does Kipling mean by “hold on” ?**

The expression ‘hold on’ is very significant in the context of the poem. Even though one has lost and come to the end of one’s strength, one must have the strength and will power to endure and carry on the fight.

**4. What does ‘unforgiving minute’ suggest ?**

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**RECAPITULATION OF THE LESSON**

In this poem, Rudyard Kipling throws light on the qualities required to become a true, virtuous and moral man. He says that we should have balance of mind, strong will-power, self-confidence and patience to become complete human beings. We should have dreams and aims in life but at the same time we should be realist. We should not worry about defeats and victories. Both of them, should be taken as part of life. We should retain our naturalness whether we are with kings or the common crowd. The most important thing is that we should use every second of our lives very carefully.

**ANSWER KEY (SELF-CHECK QUESTIONS)**

- a. Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay in 1865.
- b. The most important works of Rudyard Kipling are :
  - 1. *The Jungle Book*
  - 2. *The Plain Tales From the Hills*
  - 3. *Wee Willie Winkie*
  - 4. *Puck of Pook’s Hill*
  - 5. *Rewards and Fairies*
- c. The main theme of the poem ‘If’ is the moral qualities (Truth, Hardwork, Honesty, Strength, Virtue etc.) required for becoming a good, moral and noble man.

**SUGGESTED READING**

- The Pierian Spring: An Anthology for BA, B.Sc, B.Com and BCA, first year, University of Jammu.

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## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 7**

**SEMESTER - I**

**POETRY**

**UNIT - II**

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### **WILLIAM WORDSWORTH “THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US”**

#### **STRUCTURE**

Introduction to the Poet

Objectives

Introduction to the Sonnet

About the Sonnet

Critical Appreciation of the Sonnet

Theme of the Sonnet

Analysis of the Sonnet

Central Idea

Summary

Poetic Techniques

Paraphrase of the Sonnet

Stanza - 1

Stanza – 2

Stanza – 3

Summary

Glossary

Self- Assessment Questions

Lesson End Exercise

Short Answers

Long Answers

References

Examination Oriented Questions

Suggested Reading

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE POET**

William Wordsworth (1770 -1850) was a high priest of nature. He elevated nature to the heights of spiritual glory. His love of nature is abundantly reflected in his poems.

William Wordsworth was a major English Romantic Poet, who with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, helped to launch the Romantic Age in English literature with the 1798 joint publication of *Lyrical Ballads*.

Wordsworth's magnum opus is generally considered to be "*The Prelude*", a semiautobiographical poem of his early times. It was posthumously titled and published, prior to which it was generally known as the poem of Coleridge. Wordsworth was Britain's Poet Laureate from 1843 until he died in 1850.

The second of five children born to John Wordsworth and Ann Cookson, William Wordsworth was born on 7 April 1770 in Wordsworth House in Cockermouth, Cumberland. His sister, the poet and the diarist Dorothy Wordsworth, to whom he was close all his life, was born the following year, and the two were baptized together. Their father was a legal representative of James Lowther, first Earl of Lonsdale.

Wordsworth received an honorary Doctor of Civil Law degree in 1838 from Durban University, and the same honor from Oxford University the next year. In 1842 the government awarded a civil pension amounting to £300 a year. With the death in 1843 of Robert Southey Wordsworth became the Poet Laureate.

His major works includes:

- *Lyrical Ballads* (First edition 1798)
- *Lyrical Ballads* (Second edition 1800)
- *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807)
- *The Excursion* (1814)
- *The Prelude* (1850)

## **OBJECTIVES**

After reading this lesson you should be able to:

know the keywords, thus enhancing your vocabulary.

Answer the examination oriented questions.

Express your views about the poem.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE SONNET**

“The World is Too Much With Us” is a sonnet by English Romantic poet William Wordsworth. In it, Wordsworth criticizes the world of the first Industrial Revolution for being absorbed in materialism and distancing itself from nature. The sonnet was first published in *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807). Like most Italian sonnets, its fourteen lines are written in iambic pentameter.

In this sonnet, the poet says that man has become a prey to getting and spending the delights in achieving physical pleasures. The human value systems have disappeared. Man has sold himself and in this way he has been pulled away from nature, which does not give him that quiet nature abounds in. People are obsessed with money and man made objects. The mundane world has been spoiling their attitudes. Nature calls man but man cannot run away from material pleasures. We use up our energy for physical pleasures and we are deprived of all sense of appreciation and worship for nature.

## **ABOUT THE SONNET**

### **Critical Appreciation of the Sonnet**

In “The World is Too Much With Us” Wordsworth is begging humanity to ignore account books and mundane pursuits dedicated to financial profit and avoidance of loss.

Alex Gauthier comments on the pure display of love which is quite “rare”. William Wordsworth surely dedicated his whole heart into the words; he breathed onto the paper when he wrote this.

### **Theme of the Sonnet**

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Wordsworth wrote several sonnets blasting what he perceived as “the decadent material cynicism of the time. “The World is too Much With Us” is one of those works which reflects his philosophy that humanity must get in touch with nature in order to progress spiritually. The rhyme scheme of this sonnet is abba,abba,cdcdcd. Lines (sestet) to answer the first eight lines (octave).

### **ANALYSIS OF THE SONNET Central Idea:**

The sonnet is believed to have been written in the era when the Industrial Revolution in England is in full progress. The world of rising capitalism and materialism is influencing people of the times in every aspect of life.

### **Summary**

The poet says sooner or later, all our humanely strength will go to waste in getting into plenty and endless spending. Our resources to meet our unlimited wants will vanish. People can no longer see their dignity, honour and self-respect. They have totally surrendered their hearts to a sordid filthy and unhonourable benefit of materialism. Each evening that passes by, if only one can notice how the mighty seas expose its nakedness to the bright shining moon under the naked starry spies, and the powerful breeze blowing strongly yet endlessly for long hours through day and night. But now they are awoken from sleep just like flowers that begin to bloom, and giving the people a wake up call to wake up from this murderous slumber of uncontrolled materialistic attitude that does not match the ancient English virtues of refined idealism. Yet none of the people at that time are touched by the moving earthly spirit of the wind. Wordsworth cries out to God and expresses his supplications that he would rather be a heathen and feed upon a set of beliefs and principles of pagan nature worship, than to be a part of such an immortal materialistic society. He would prefer, by then, to stand in the middle of a pleasant meadow and have a brief view of the nature around and that would make him feel free from the fear of rejection, loneliness and sorrow perhaps, at times get the privilege of looking towards the sea for hours and see proteus – a Greek demi – god of the sea who is

capable of assuming a variety of appearances, rising out of the great water. He may also get the privilege of hearing old Triton, another aquatic demi god, who is represented as half man and half dolphin.

### **Poetic Techniques**

Metaphor “we have given our hearts away, a sordid boon” Sordid- demonstrating the worst aspects of human nature such as immorality, selfishness and greed. Boon- something that functions as a blessing or benefit.

Contradiction between words suggest materialism is a destructive and corrupt blessing that the Industrial Revolution has produced. It emphasized the tension between the good exterior and the sordid truth behind materialism. On the exterior material good bring pleasure and in many ways are a symbol of man’s progress however, in truth, they feed the worst aspects of humanity (greed).

### **Sonnet form**

- Ironic-Wordsworth employs a strictly structured form which conforms to a set of strict conventions. Creates a tension between the emotional, natural, fluid themes explored in the sonnet and the structured form of the sonnet. Mirrors what was occurring at the time in which artists and poets were rebelling in the structured world of the neoclassical period. Shattering it from within.
- Employing the familiar with the new and revolutionary, Wordsworth uses the familiar structure of the sonnet as well as referencing to familiar ancient Gods (in the author’s context they would have been familiar) to persuade the reader to engage in a positive way to the concepts addressed. The unfamiliar or unknown is always feared and suppressed thus by incorporating the familiar with the revolutionary the reader in the 19th century is more likely to engage positively with Wordsworth’s message. In many ways this sonnet is a persuasive piece.

Repetition and rhyming scheme -Repetitive rhyming scheme abba,abba “getting and spending” “late and soon” emphasizes the monotonous nature of modern life and materialism. Getting and spending, cluster of longer emphasized words with many consonants words are drawn out when read.

### **Sluggish**

In essence materialism is just that getting and spending it is devoid of emotion or a true fulfilling purpose no life of flare as shown in the language. This positions the reader to engage negatively with the glorification of materialism and industrialization.

In many ways the stereotypes of man and woman mirror the difference between the neoclassical and romantic period between civilized and nature. Men in this context are associated with rationality, strength, order and power. Whereas the feminine is associated with emotion and the imagination.

Capitalization of the word Sea makes it a name. This idea that nature is not a commodity but an equal to man is demonstrated in the line ‘little we see in nature that is ours’ implies that Wordsworth envisions a equal relationship between man and nature.

Music and Harmony ‘for this for everything we are out of tune’- implies that man is out of tune with nature, unable to live in harmony. Through describing this as a tune this demonstrates Wordsworth’s use of the sensory experience in his poetry.

Wordsworth’s poetry has lyrical harmonies.

Collective pronoun uses the words we and us. Involves and includes the reader once again positioning reader to engage positively.

Persuasive Imagery “and are up gathered now like sleeping flowers” -Sleeping flowers suggest that man is numb and in a way dead and unaware of the beauty and power of the natural world. However, there is also a certain optimism à sleeping flowers implies that humans are dormant in other words there is some hope to wake up and realize the power of nature.

Punctuation-many commas and semicolons create pauses that instill a reflection in the reader. In each pause the reader is given space to contemplate and engage with the message.

## **PARAPHRASE OF THE SONNET**

### **Stanza – 1**

*The world is too much with us; late and soon, Getting  
and spending, we lay waste our powers; We have  
given our hearts away, a sordid boon! This sea that  
bares her bosom to the moon;  
The winds that will be howling at all hours, And  
are up-gathered now like Sleeping flowers;*

*Explanation:*

The poet says that the people in the world are busy in physical aspects in life. Materialism has been a problem and is likely to continue in the future. People are not interested in the sweet scenes and gentle touches of nature. The gains of the physical pleasures are a shameful gain we don't love the scene when the sea bares her blossom to the moon. The sight of moonlight falling on the sea holds no charm for the materialists. Winds make much noise during the day but sleep like flowers at night. Even this holds no charm.

### **Stanza – 2**

*For this, for everything, we are out of tune;  
It moves us not-great God! I'd rather be A  
Pagan suckled in a creed outworn; So  
might I standing on this pleasant lea,*

*Explanation:*

Wordsworth laments the modern man's fate. He is unable to enjoy the beauties of nature. He does not have time to enjoy the

music of nature as well. It is all due to his hankering after wealth. Wordsworth is sad to note this state of affairs. He, therefore, would- prefer to be a Pagan, who loves nature and follows many God's as the god of Sea, the god of the Wind, etc. By being a Pagan, Wordsworth would be able to enjoy the sight of the sea- god Proteus rising from the sea. While standing

in the meadows, he would also be able to see the sea-god Triton blowing his twisted horn.

### **Stanza – 3**

*Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;*

*Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;*

*Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.*

*Nor heed nor see what things they be;*

*But form these create he can Forms*

*more real than living man, Nurslings*

*of immortality!*

*Explanation:*

Men are obsessed with material gains. They are busy in hording and spending objects of nature, the calm sounds and sights do not seem to have any impact on people engrossed in materialism. It is from nature that man can create sights and watch nature from which flows a quiet touch. Whatever one gets from nature or whatever he draws out of it is more valuable and beautiful than physical things. What nature gives us is immortal and something that energizes us but how unfortunate that we are not affected by the sweetness that prevails in nature.

### **CONCLUSION**

In this poem, the poet criticizes the modern man for having lost his touch with nature. He is very much worldly minded. He is wasting all his physical energy in earning money and spending it. He is indifferent to the beauty of the sea which bares its surface to the moon. He does not listen to the music of winds. He urges his readers to realize that nature has a beauty and significance, we should not miss it.

Wordsworth is at pain to note the indifference of the modern man to the beauties of nature. The modern man's madness for money and materialism upsets him very much. He would like to give up his faith in God and Christianity and become a heathen. He would stand in meadow and see beautiful sights of nature. He would be able to see the Greek sea-god Proteus, rising from the sea. He would also hear the sound of twisted horn blown by another sea-god, Triton. He thinks

that the beautiful sights of Nature will give him a wealth of joy. Then he would not stand in need of Christianity or worldly riches and luxuries.

Wordsworth gives a fatalistic view of the past and the future. The words “Late and Soon” in the opening verse describe how the past and future are included in his characterization of mankind. The author knows the potential of humanity’s “powers”, but fears it is clouded by the mentality of “getting and spending”. The “Sordid boon” we have “given our hearts” is the materialistic progress of mankind.

Unlike society, Wordsworth does not see nature as a commodity. The verse “Little we see in the Nature that is ours”, shows that coexisting is the relationship envisioned. The relationship appears to be at mercy of mankind because of the vulnerable way nature is described. The phrase “Sleeping flowers” might also describe how nature is being overrun unknowingly and is helpless.

The verse “I, standing on this pleasant lea, have glimpses that would make me less forlorn”, reveals Wordsworth’s perception of himself in society. A visionary romantic more in touch with nature than his contemporaries.

#### **GLOSSARY**

Powers	:	Spiritual powers.
Sordid	:	Unpleasant and mean.
Sordid boon	:	Shameful gain; tarnished pleasing. This phrase is an oxymoron, a form of paradox that juxtaposes contradictory words.
Late and soon:		Our fixation on materialism has been a problem in the past and will continue to be a problem in future.
Pagan	:	a person who is not a believer in any of the established religions of the world and worships nature.
Suckled Outworn:		Brought up in an outdated religion.
Lea	:	Meadow.
Forlorn	:	Lonely and unhappy.

Proteus : In Greek mythology, a sea god could change shape at will and possessed complete knowledge of the past, present and future.

Triton : In Greek mythology, a sea god who had the body of a man and the tail of a fish. He used a conch – the spiral shell of a mollusk – as a trumpet.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

What is the Wordsworth's message in this poem?

Ans: Wordsworth's sonnet "The World is Too Much With Us" warns us against too much lust for wealth. We must give up materialistic pursuits to be able to live in peace. Materialism has taken us away from nature. We should stop worshipping money before it is too late. If we remain crazy about money, we'll suffer loss of peace and happiness.

What is the meaning of 'Sordid boon'?

Ans: Wordsworth criticizes the way people in industrialized societies hanker after wealth. Materialism has made them greedy. Their greed is the 'sordid boon' given to them by Mammon, the god of wealth, that they worship. However, this boon or blessing is not worth having.

### **LESSON END EXERCISE Short**

**Answers:**

**In what way is the 'world too much with us'?**

Ans: We are over busy in worldly affairs. The poet finds that the men around him do not find any joy in the beauties of nature. They are after money and worldly pursuits. They are wasting their time in earning money and spending it on worldly goods and luxuries. They are indifferent to the beauties of nature.

**What are the powers that man is wasting?**

Ans: The poet says that we are wasting our mental and physical energy in earning and spending money. Materialism is our religion in the modern age. We have absolutely no relationship with nature.

**What is the 'sordid boon'?**

Ans: The phrase 'sordid boon' is an example of the figure of speech called oxymoron. It is a form of paradox that places two contradictory words side by side. In the context of the poem, 'sordid boon' means a shameful gain. We have lost our inner powers and love of nature in exchange for money and material possessions.

**What does the poet mean when he says 'We are out of tune'?**

Ans: We are all so much busy in earning and spending money that we do not feel any joy in the various beauties of nature. These beautiful things are flowing streams, mountains, lakes, birds and flowers etc.

The mean gifts brought by money have crushed our feelings and emotions. We do not listen to music produced by blowing winds. Sometimes these winds stop blowing and become quiet. They give us a message of peace and tranquility. But we are completely lost in money making.

**Why does Wordsworth wish to remain a pagan?**

Ans: A pagan is a person who is non believer in Christianity. The poet says that if he were a pagan, he could see the presence of gods and goddesses in Nature. He could see sea gods like Proteus rise up from the sea and hear Triton, another sea god, blow his twisted horn.

**"..... Are up – gathered now like sleeping flowers" ? What is the comparison made here?**

Ans: The sea waves are resting. So they are calm and quiet. As they are resting after blowing hard for long, they look peaceful like the flowers lying asleep. The comparison stresses the beautiful sights and scenes that are there in plenty in Kingdom of the world of nature. But the people today are lost in amassing wealth and spending wealth, that they have become indifferent to the natural world.

**"It moves us not". What doesn't move the poet anymore?**

Ans: People in the world of modern times are money minded. They hanker after wealth. Their main motto is to possess material things in plenty. They are indifferent to the Nature and its beauty. As a result, its beauty does not move them at all. They have hardly any time to appreciate it. He pities the modern man for failing to be moved by the beauty of the sea bathed in the moonlight or the music produced by the wind.

**"A pagan suckled in a creed outward" ? Explain.**

Ans: The poet, William Wordsworth prefers to be in tune or harmony with nature. He does not want to follow a religion like Christianity, if it takes him away from nature. He would like to be a Pagan so that he can see mythological gods like Proteus who can take many shapes, and Triton, another sea god.

**“Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn”. What are the sights that make the poet happy?**

Ans: Wordsworth is a priest of Nature. He feels charmed by the sight of flowing streams, mountains, lakes, birds and flowers. We do not feel moved by the beauty of the sea which is bathed in the moonlight. Not do we listen to the music produced by the blowing winds. Sometimes the silent winds give him a message of peace and tranquility. But we are totally lost in making and spending money. But being a pagan, he would see sea gods like Proteus and Triton. This would establish him communion with nature. Thus he would feel less lonely.

### **Long Answers**

**Wordsworth has been described as a nature poet. Would you agree that this is an apt description?**

Ans: In the sonnet “The World is Too Much With Us” the poet is adoring nature, which he called a sublime force, says the healer and the preacher. The suffocated self of a person begins to feel warmth and gain energy, if one has faith in nature and her influences. In his poems of nature, which are usually meditative, the poet has always stressed on going back to nature. In nature, the poet sought solace and relief from the hollowness of the mundane world. The sonnet reveals Wordsworth’s love for quiet beauty and influences of nature. In this sonnet, there are two beautiful pictures, namely sea bathing in moonlight and the other of winds that sleep like flowers at night. He was influenced and affected by the nature deities of Greece and Rome. He was against materialism and that disturbed him vehemently.

**“The World is Too Much With Us”, late and soon, Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers”. Do you agree with the poet when he says, “The World is too much with us” ? Give reasons for your answer.**

Ans: The World is, indeed, too much with us. We who live in of the world of the modern times are in no way better than the people of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We have become materialistic in our outlook. Our only concern is money. We’ve focused our energies on running after material things. We are blindly

accumulating wealth and spending it on material gains. As a result, we've lost our imagination, love of nature, and spiritual powers.

We are too deeply concerned with materialism to think of nature. We've lost all touch with the world of nature. Our attachment to materialism has alienated us from the world rich in the natural charms. We've become apathetic to nature.

Wordsworth is disgusted with the growing indifference to God and nature. He, therefore, prefers to be a pagan enjoying nature. He urges the people to say good-bye to the materialistic tendencies and pay heed to the beautiful aspects of nature.

**Even though this sonnet has been written more than two centuries ago, it has a great relevance today and we can identify with what Wordsworth has to say. Justify.**

Ans: "The World is too much with us" is a popular Wordsworthian sonnet that refers to changed manners and attitude of man towards nature, which cannot give them any delight or joy. Wordsworth was an ardent lover of nature and called it the great healer and preacher. The modern man seems to be engrossed so much in materialism that finer and beautiful things of nature hold no charm for him. The sonnet was written more than two centuries ago but is relevant even today. Aspects of physical and material culture are possessing mankind. A man may find pleasure in these physical developments but suffocation is there and man is overpowered by strains to a very large extent. This physical civilization marked by materialism has obsessed man, who has become self-centered, selfish and mute to the beauty of nature. The modern man is not really happy from a practical point of view. The finer and nobler things of life have been running away from him. Man has sold his soul.

## REFERENCES

1. Hunter Davies, *William Wordsworth – A Biography*, Frances Lincoln Ltd, London.
2. Emma Mason, *The Cambridge Introduction to William Wordsworth*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
3. Works by William Wordsworth at Bartleby. Com.

## EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. Give the theme of the sonnet 'The World is Too Much With Us'.
2. What message does Wordsworth convey through this sonnet?
3. Why is Wordsworth willing to become a Pagan?
4. Write down the meaning of the Sordid boon.

### **SUGGESTED READING**

- The Pierian Spring: An Anthology for BA, B.Sc, B.Com and BCA, first year, University of Jammu.

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## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 8**

**SEMESTER - I**

**POETRY**

**UNIT - II**

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### **DR. KARAN SINGH "THE ADVENTURER"**

#### **STRUCTURE**

Introduction to the Poet

Objectives

Introduction to the Poem

"The Adventurer"

Summary of the Poem

Reference to Context

Let Us Sum Up

Glossary

Self-Assessment Questions

Examination Oriented Questions

Suggested Reading

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE POET**

Dr. Karan Singh is the son of the last ruler of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh. He was born on

9 March 1931, in Cannes, France, to Maharaja Hari Singh, and his wife Maharani Tara Devi. He was educated at the Doon School, Dehra Dun, and received B.A. from Sri Pratap College Srinagar, and did M.A. in Political Science and PhD from Delhi University. Ethnically he is a Dogra but such evolved souls like Dr. Karan Singh do not associate themselves with just one community but they connect themselves with the entire humanity. In 1949, at age of eighteen, Singh was appointed as the regent of Jammu and Kashmir after his father stepped down as the ruler, following the state's accession to India. He served successively as regent, the first and last *Sadar-i-Riyasat*, and governor of the state of Jammu and Kashmir from 1965 to 1967. In 1971, the government abolished all the privileges of the princely titles, in order to bring true democracy. Dr. Karan Singh voluntarily surrendered his title and all the privileges given to him as a Maharaja. He placed the entire sum into a charitable trust named after his parents. In 1967, he resigned as Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, and became the youngest ever member of the Union Cabinet, holding the portfolios of Tourism and Civil Aviation. In 1971, he was sent as an envoy to the Eastern Bloc nations to explain India's position with regard to East Pakistan, and then engaged in civil war with West Pakistan.

However, apart from his interest in active politics, he is also involved in philosophy, spiritual education and social service. His personal interests have been books, classical music, and travel. Dr. Karan Singh has served as Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University, Jammu and Kashmir University and Jawaharlal Nehru University. He is an avid reader and has authored a number of books. Some of his famous works are *Towards A New India* (1974), *Essays on Hinduism* (1987), *Brief Sojourn* (1991), *Hymns to Shiva other Poems* (1991), *Hinduism* (2005) etc.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this lesson are :

- \* to acquaint the learner with the life and major works of the poet,
- \* to explain the learner the sum and substance of the poem prescribed,
- \* to help the learner answer examination oriented questions.

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM**

This poem gives a beautiful rendering of the existential dilemma which an individual experiences in this world. The poem is presented in the form of a journey which symbolizes the journey of life. The narrator visualizes life/journey as merciless but at the same time it gives meaningful lessons too. He has personified his abstraction into a self-portrait of the man fighting the wrath of the world and in this turmoil he emerges triumphant. Finally it smoothly converges at the ultimate fate and his fear of it, that is destined death. Even after all the achievements of his life he is unable to conquer the fear of death and finally submits himself to its fate.

#### **“THE ADVENTURER”**

*For I have gone where men have never been, and  
wandered over countries far and near and crossed great  
mountains with no trace of fear, and gazed on many a  
strange and wondrous scene; on mighty oceans have I  
plied my raft where monstrous fishes close beneath me  
played, and endless water heaved and lurched and  
swayed, as tirelessly I hurled my lethal shaft; and  
through the great primeval forests tall I plied the lonely  
furrow of my life and slew great monsters, waged  
untiring strife with creatures of the darkness, great and  
small; and often as I strove with might and main, and  
which each victory won for renown,*

*I thought that I had mown my troubles down  
and conquered fear and death, old age and pain;*

*but ever were my hopes rudely belied for wander  
as I might throughout the world I could not rid me  
of the terror curled somewhere within my being,  
deep inside; for over all our mortal hopes and  
gains hovers the constant shadow of the grave, of  
Time, that dims the glory of the brave and lays at  
waste our labour and our pains; and what  
adventure, what exploit will stay with us beyond  
the folded veil of death?  
and what, when we have shed our mortal breath, will speed  
us on our far, eternal way.*

### **SUMMARY OF THE POEM**

The adventurer who is the persona of this poem says that he has seen all the things of the world which are worth seeing. He has been to places where no one else has gone before. Being a true adventurer he has crossed many mountains and faced many hurdles and has always been triumphant. He has enjoyed the strange and wild things and his life has been full of excitement, thrill, and fun. He has crossed the mighty oceans and has come face to face with many dangers. Here, the adventurer might be talking about the ocean of life in which he has seen dangers in the form of struggles that every individual has to face. The adventurer has tried to kill the worldly lust with his 'lethal shaft' and is continuously doing it. In his journey the adventurer has killed many monsters, has overcome many creatures of the dark. In a way he has overcome every obstacle of his life, but he admits that he still he is unable to conquer the fear of death, old age and pain. The adventurer feels helpless in this vast universe, even after he has achieved so much. He feels defeated as the terror of death is still deep inside his psyche. The passing time, the vanishing youth and finally the approaching death is out of his control and inevitable in this world. He fears death because he has not attained the true wisdom of life as lust, anger, greed, pride and attachment to worldly things still clings to his soul. Now, the adventurer regrets as time passes by. The cruel hands of death will take away everything that he has achieved. He fears the moment when his mortal breath will stop and the veil of death will take him away on a far and eternal journey of the mysterious dark world.

## REFERENCE TO CONTEXT

1. *For I have gone where men have never been, and  
wandered over countries far and near and crossed  
great mountains with no trace of fear, and gazed on  
many a strange and wondrous scene;*

**Reference to Context:** These lines have been taken from the poem ‘The Adventurer’ by Dr. Karan Singh. Presented in the form of a journey the poem narrates the existential dilemma of an adventurer.

**Explanation:** In the above lines the adventurer proudly displays his achievements and declares that he has travelled far and wide to places where no human has ever been to. During his journey he has crossed great mountains, which are also suggestive of hurdles and difficulties, without any trace of fear. He also says that while on this journey of life he has enjoyed the strange and beautiful scenes of nature and therefore his life has been full of thrill, excitement and fun.

2. *On mighty oceans have I plied my raft where  
monstrous fishes close beneath me played,*

*and endless water heaved and lurched and swayed, as tirelessly I  
hurled my lethal shaft;*

**Reference to Context:** These lines have been taken from the poem ‘The Adventurer’ by Dr. Karan Singh. In these lines, the adventurer narrates about his mighty exploits of sea and oceans where he faced many dangers in the form of monstrous fishes.

**Explanation:** The Ocean here is symbolic of deep and mysterious life where every human has to face many hurdles. The adventurer has tried to overcome all sought of difficulties, some even as big as monstrous fishes. And he has always been able to wade his raft with the help of his strong determination (lethal shaft) and is doing it tirelessly. The adventurer says that he has spent his youthful days in various pursuits; his life was full of action but with the passing of his youthful days he is reminded of his mortality.

3. *and through the great primeval forests tall I plied the  
lonely furrow of my life and slew great monsters,  
waged untiring strife with creatures of the darkness,  
great and small;*

**Reference to Context:** These lines have been taken from the poem, 'The Adventurer' by Dr. Karan Singh. Here the adventurer narrates his journey through the lonely forest of his life where he faced many hurdles and how he overcame it.

**Explanation:** Further, the adventurer has journeyed through the primeval forest which is suggestive of unpredictable, challenging and a lonely life. He continued this journey facing all the difficulties courageously while putting a brave resistance. He has killed many monsters, fought with the creatures of darkness and won over them. He achieved great accomplishments in all of his pursuits be it great or small.

4. *and often as I strove with might and main, and which  
each victory won for renown, I thought that I had  
mown my troubles down and conquered fear and  
death, old age and pain;*

**Reference to Context:** These lines have been taken from the poem, 'The Adventurer' by Dr. Karan Singh. These lines suggest that no matter how much we succeed in life we have to leave this world.

**Explanation:** In these lines the adventurer says that he worked very hard with all his strength so that he can achieve success and reputation. He has always achieved excellence in all the pursuits of his life that for a moment he even thought that he had overcome all his troubles and conquered the fear of death, old age and pain. But it pained him when he had to confront the reality that death is inevitable and he is still mortal.

5. *but ever were my hopes rudely belied for wander as I  
might throughout the world I could not rid me of the  
terror curled somewhere within my being, deep  
inside;*

**Reference to Context:** These lines have been taken from the poem, 'The Adventurer' by Dr. Karan Singh. These lines suggest that we as human are

unable to control our mind even though we have achieved great physical achievements.

**Explanation:** The adventurer further narrates that his hopes betrayed him rudely. Although he has travelled the whole world and confronted all the problems and hurdles, he could not get rid of the fear that is curled deep within his mind: the fear of death. It haunts him all the time and he cannot escape that fear. The thought of death reminds him of his limitations, powerlessness and helplessness as an individual in this ever moving mysterious universe.

6. *for over all our mortal hopes and gains hovers the  
constant shadow of the grave, of Time, that dims the  
glory of the brave and lays at waste our labour and  
our pains;*

**Reference to Context:** These lines have been taken from the poem, 'The Adventurer' by Dr. Karan Singh. These lines suggest that death and time will take away everything that one has achieved in this life.

**Explanation:** The adventurer is of the view that our hopes and accomplishments are nothing but temporary, it cannot stand the test of time and death. With the passage of invincible Time the glory of our labour and achievements is deemed to fade. He is worried that time will take away all the joys, pride and glory that he had attained during his ventures. All his success will be turned into nothingness as his grave is waiting for him. The labour, hard work, pain and boldness that he had shown to achieve success in various fields will go waste and useless. Death will engulf all the great deeds of our life.

7. *and what adventure, what exploit will stay with us  
beyond the folded veil of death?  
and what, when we have shed our mortal breath, will speed  
us on our far, eternal way.*

**Reference to Context:** These lines have been taken from the poem, 'The Adventurer' by Dr. Karan Singh. These lines suggest that death is an inevitable truth and part of our life.

**Explanation:** The adventurer ends the poem with a note of pessimism and a universal truth of life. He says that all the adventures, brave deeds and

accomplishments of our life cannot accompany us behind the dark veil of death. Once the death has overcome this willful soul and takes us away from this mortal world, another journey and this time it is the journey of the soul, will begin.

### **LET US SUM UP**

This poem deals with the theme of death, impermanence and power of time. We work very hard to achieve success and fame in our life. We test our capabilities and no matter how much we succeed we have to leave this world; we have to leave behind all our trophies, glory and achievements in this world. When death arrives we are left with no choice but to embrace it. All the adventure and exploits will lay waste. Time is very powerful and though man has controlled nature to a great extent but he has not been able to control time. Time takes away all the joys, pride and glory that he has attained. All of his achievements will be turned into nothingness as his grave is waiting for him. The adventurer spends his youthful days in various pursuits, his life is full of actions but with the passage of youthful days he is reminded of his mortality. The thought of death reminds him of his limitations, powerlessness and helplessness as an individual in this ever moving mysterious world. Therefore, the adventurer questions the meaning of human existence; in this world death comes equally to all and takes us away on a dark and mysterious journey.

### **GLOSSARY**

Wandered: to move around or go to different places usually without having a particular purpose

Gazed: to look at someone or something in a steady way and usually for a long time

Plied: rowing or sailing over

Raft: A small boat or floating platform.

Monstrous: very ugly, cruel and unusually large

Heaved: to lift or pull with effort

Lurched: to move quietly

Swayed: a slow movement back and forth

Hurled: to throw with force

Primeval: basic and powerful/ very old and ancient

Slew: to have killed someone

Belied: to give a false idea

Hover: to stay very close to a person or place

Exploit: exciting act or action

Mortal: certain to die

Eternal: something that lasts forever/always true or valid

Veil: a cloth, net or a curtain to cover something

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

Q1. What do you infer by the phrase ‘constant shadow of the grave’?

Ans: The above phrase gives us the idea that despite all the achievements and victories in his life the adventurer is unable to stop death and over- come his fear of dying. Death is the inevitable truth of every human in this world. The adventurer is constantly reminded of his immortality and it hovers his unconscious-self all the time like a shadow to the body. He has not achieved immortality hence he is afraid of the ‘grave’ that is waiting for him.

Q2. What is the poet’s philosophy of life?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Q3. Discuss the various symbols and images used by the poet in “The Adventurer”.

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Q4. How is the poet reminded of his immortality?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS**

- Q1. Comment on the title of the poem.
- Q2. Write a note on the central idea of the poem.
- Q3. What is the theme of the poem “The Adventurer”?
- Q4. What image of the world is given by the poet? Do you agree with the poet? Give reasons for your answer.
- Q5. What are the various exploits mentioned in the poem? Discuss the symbols associated with it.

### **SUGGESTED READING**

- Contemporary Indian Literature, A Symposium, Sahitya Academy, 1957.
- Dr. Karan Singh, Official Website.
- The Pierian Spring: An Anthology for BA, B.Sc, B.Com and BCA, first year, University of Jammu.

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## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 9**

**O HENRY “THE LAST LEAF”****STRUCTURE**

Introduction to the writer

Objectives

Introduction to the short story “The Last Leaf”

“The Last Leaf ”

Summary of the short story

Let Us Sum Up

Glossary

Self-Assessment Questions

Examination Oriented Questions      Suggested

Reading

**INTRODUCTION TO THE WRITER**

William Sydney Porter known by his pen name O Henry was born to Dr. Algernon Sidney Porter, a physician, and Mary Jane Virginia Swaim

Porter on September 11, 1862, in Greensboro, North Carolina, America. At the age of three, his mother died from tuberculosis, and he and his father moved into the home of his paternal grandmother. As a child, Porter was an avid reader reading everything from classics to dime novels. Porter graduated from his aunt

Evelina Maria Porter’s elementary school in 1876 nd was then enrolled at the Lindsey Street High School. His aunt continued to tutor him until he was fifteen.

In 1879, he started working in his uncle’s drugstore and in 1881, at the age of nineteen he was licensed as a pharmacist. Later, one of Porter’s friends Richard Hall became Texas Land Commissioner and offered Porter a job.

Porter started as a draftsman at the Texas General Land Office (GLO) in 1887, drawing maps from surveys and field notes. Although the salary was enough to

support his family, he continued his literary contributions to magazines and newspapers. In the GLO building, he began developing characters and plots for such stories as *Georgia's Ruling*(1900), and *Buried Treasure*(1908). The castle-like building where he worked was even woven into some of his tales such as *Bexar Scrip No. 2692*(1894).

Since his job at the GLO was a political appointment by his friend Hall, Porter resigned in early 1891 when the new governor Jim Hogg was sworn in. The same year, Porter began working at the First National Bank of Austin as a teller and bookkeeper. The bank was operated informally and Porter was apparently careless in keeping his books and may have embezzled funds. In 1894, he was accused by the bank of embezzlement and lost his job. Later federal indictment followed and he was arrested on the charges and was found guilty in February 1898 thereof sentenced to five years in prison.

Porter was a licensed pharmacist and was able to work in the prison hospital as the night druggist and was given his own room in the hospital wing. He had fourteen stories published under various pseudonyms while he was in prison, but was becoming best known as 'O. Henry', a pseudonym that first appeared over the story *Whistling Dick's Christmas Stocking* in the December 1899 issue of McClure's Magazine. A friend of his in New Orleans would forward his stories to publishers so that they had no idea that the writer was imprisoned.

Porter was released on July 24, 1901 for good behaviour after serving three years and Porter's most prolific writing period started in 1902, when he moved to New York City to be near his publishers. While there, he wrote 381 short stories. Porter's work is wide-ranging, and his characters were inspired from the real people living around him. He had an inimitable hand for isolating some element of society and describing it with an incredible economy and grace of language. His wit, characterization, and plot twists were adored by his readers, but often panned by critics. Some of his best and least-known work is contained in *Cabbages and Kings* (1904), a series of stories each of which explores some individual aspect of life in a sleepy Central American town. *Cabbages and Kings* was his first collection of stories, followed by *The Four Million* (1906) and *The Trimmed Lamp and Other Stories of the Four Million* (1907). Among his most famous stories are: *The Gift of the Magi*, *The Ransom of Red Chief*, *The Cop and the Anthem*, *A Retrieved Reformation* etc.

Since Porter was a heavy drinker his health deteriorated markedly by 1908, which further affected his writing. He died on June 5, 1910, of cirrhosis of the liver, complications of diabetes, and an enlarged heart.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are:

to explain the learner the sum and substance of the story “The Last Leaf”,  
to acquaint the learner with the format of the examination oriented questions.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SHORT STORY “THE LASTLEAF.”

In 1907 O. Henry published his third collection of short stories titled

*The Trimmed Lamp and Other Stories of the Four Million* and “The Last Leaf” is one among them. The story is set in Greenwich Village, a place where the young artists prefer staying as there are plenty of rooms available to rent at cheap price. The story revolves around two central characters Sue and Johnsy, who came from Maine and the other from California, and like many other young artists have found in Greenwich Village their second home. These two friends were spending beautiful time in each other’s company until, before the advent of winter, Johnsy falls sick. Her sickness is aggravated when she thinks that her last days are near and that she will die when “*The last leaf*” of the tree next to her window falls. In the end she is saved by an old, unsuccessful man who always wished to create a masterpiece before he dies. Henry in this story has tried to explore one of the strangest aspects of human psychology along with the human will to always create something new.

This story has been adapted into many notable screen and stage productions. In 1917 a silent movie based on the story was produced by Broadway Star Features. In 1983 a second screen adaptation was done as a 24-minute film produced by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In this adaptation the two characters were portrayed as sisters and not as friend. More recently the 2013 Hindi film *Lootera* was partially based on “The Last Leaf.”

## “THE LAST LEAF”

*In a little district west of Washington Square the streets have run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called “places.” These “places” make strange angles and curves. One street crosses itself a time or two. An artist once discovered a valuable possibility in this street. Suppose a collector with a bill for paints, paper and canvas should, in traversing this route, suddenly meet himself coming back, without a cent having been paid on account.*

*So, to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came prowling,  
hunting for north windows and eighteenth-century gables and*

*Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs and a chafing  
dish or two from Sixth Avenue, and became a "colony."*

*At the top of a squatty, three story brick Sue and Johnsy had their studio.  
"Johnsy" was familiar for Joanna. One was from Maine; the other from California.*

*They had met at the table d'hote of an Eighth Street "Delmonico's," and  
found their tastes in art, chicory salad and bishop sleeves so congenial that the  
studio resulted.*

*That was in May. In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors  
called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his  
icy fingers. Over on the east side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by  
scores, but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown  
"places."*

*Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gentleman. A  
mite of a little woman with blood thinned by California zephyrs was hardly fair  
game for the red-fisted, short breasted old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay  
scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch  
window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house.*

*One morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hallway with a shaggy,  
gray eyebrow.*

*"She has one chance in-let us say, ten," he said, as he shook down the  
mercury in his clinical thermometer. "And that chance is for her to want to live.  
This way people have of lining-up on the side of the undertaker makes the entire  
pharmacopoeia look silly. Your little lady has made up her mind that she's not going  
to get well. Has she anything on her mind?" "She-she wanted to paint the Bay of  
Naples some day," said Sue.*

*"Paint?-bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking about twice a  
man, for instance?"*

*"A man?" said Sue, with a jew's-harp twang in her voice. "Is a man worth-  
but, no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind."*

*“Well, it is the weakness, then,” said the doctor. “I will do all that science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish. But whenever my patient begins to count the carriages in her funeral procession I subtract 50 per cent from the curative power of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about the new winter styles in cloak sleeves I will promise you a one-in-five chance for her, instead of ten.”*

*After the doctor had gone Sue went into the workroom and cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp. Then she swaggered into Johnsy’s room with her drawing board, whistling ragtime.*

*Johnsy, lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bedclothes, with her face toward the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she was asleep.*

*She arranged her board and began a pen and ink drawing to illustrate a magazine story. Young artists must pave their way to Art by drawing pictures for magazine stories that young authors write to pave their way to literature.*

*As Sue was sketching a pair of elegant horseshow riding trousers a monocle on the figure of the hero, an Idaho cowboy, she heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the bedside.*

*Johnsy’s eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting-counting backward.*

*“Twelve,” she said, and a little later “eleven”; and then “ten,” and “nine”; and then “eight” and “seven,” almost together.*

*Sue looked solicitously out the window. What was there to count? There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the blank side of the brick house twenty feet away. An old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half way up the brick wall. The cold breath of autumn had*

*stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.*

*“What is it, dear? Tell you Sudie.”*

*“Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the last one falls I must go, too. I’ve known that for three days. Didn’t the doctor tell you?”*

*“Oh, I never heard of such nonsense,” complained Sue, with magnificent scorn. “What have old ivy leaves to do with your getting well? And you used to love that vine, so, you naughty girl. Don’t be a goosey. Why, the doctor told*

*me this morning that your chances for getting well real soon were-let's see exactly what he said-he said the chances were ten to one! Why that's almost as good a chance as we have in New York when we ride on the street cars or walk past a new building. Try to take some broth now, and let Sudie go back to her drawing, so she can sell the editor man with it, and buy port wine for her sick child, and pork chops for her greedy self."*

*"You needn't get any more wine," said Johnsy, keeping her eyes fixed on the window. "There goes another. No, I don't want any broth. That leaves just four. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then I'll go too."*

*"Johnsy, dear," said Sue, bending over her, "will you promise me to keep your eyes closed, and not look out the window until I am done working? I must hand those drawings in by to-morrow. I need the light, or I could draw the shade down."*

*"Couldn't you draw in the other room?" asked Johnsy, coldly.*

*"I'd rather be here by you," said Sue. "Besides, I don't want you to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves."*

*"Tell me as soon as you have finished," said Johnsy, closing her eyes, and lying white and still as a fallen statue, "because I want to see the last one fall. I'm tired of waiting. I'm tired of thinking. I want to turn loose my hold on everything, and go sailing down, down, just like one of those poor, tired leaves."*

*"Try to sleep," said Sue. "I must call Behrman up to be my model for the old hermit miner. I'll not be gone a minute. Don't try to move 'til I come back."*

*Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them. He was past sixty and had a Michael Angelo's Moses beard curling down from the head of a satyr along the body of an imp. Behrman was a failure in art. Forty years he had wielded the brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his Mistress's robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising. He earned a little by serving as a model to those young artists in the colony who could not pay the price of a professional. He drank gin to excess, and still talked of his coming masterpiece. For the rest he was a fierce little old man, who scoffed terribly at the softness in*

any one, and who regarded himself as especial mastiff-in- waiting to protect the two young artists in the studio above.

Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries in his dimly lighted den below. In one corner was a blank canvas on an easel that had been waiting there for twenty-five years to receive the first line of the masterpiece. She told him of Johnsy's fancy, and how she feared she would, indeed light and fragile as a leaf herself, float away, when her slight hold upon the world grew weaker.

Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.

"Vass!" he cried. "Is dere people in de world mit der foolishness to die because leafs dey drop off from a confounded vine? I haf not heard of such a thing. No, I will not bese as a model for you fool hermit- dunderhead. Vy do you allow dot silly pusiness to come in der brain aof her?"

Ach, dot poor lettles Miss Yohnsy."

"She is very ill and weak," said Sue, "and the fever has left her mind morbid and full of strange fancies. Very well, Mr. Behrman, if you do not care to pose for me, you needn't. But I think you are a horrid old-old flibbertigibbet."

"You are just like a woman!" yelled Behrman. "Who said I will not bese? Go on. I come mit you. For half an hour I haf been trying to say dot I am ready to bese. Gott! dis is not any blace in which one so gooot as Miss Yohnsy shall lie sick. Some day I vill baint a masterpiece, and ve shall all go away. Gott! yes."

Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. She pulled the shade down to the window-sill, and motioned Behrman into the other room. In there they peered out the window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A persistent, cold rain was falling, mingled with snow. Behrman, in his old blue shirt, took his seat as the hermit miner on an upturned kettle for a rock.

When Sue awoke from an hour's sleep the next morning she found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes staring at the drawn green shade.

"Pull it up; I want to see," she ordered, in a whisper.

Wearily Sue obeyed.

But Lo! after the beating rain and fierce gusts of wind that had endured through the livelong night, there yet stood out against the brick wall one ivy leaf. It was the last on the vine. Still dark green near its stem, but with its serrated edges

*tinted with the yellow of dissolution and decay, it hung bravely from a branch some twenty feet above the ground.*

*“It is the last one,” said Johnsy. “I thought it would surely fall during the night. I heard the wind. It will fall to-day, and I shall die at the same time.”*

*“Dear, dear!” said Sue, leaning her worn face down to the pillow, “think of me, if you won’t think of yourself. What would I do?”*

*But Johnsy did not answer. The loneliest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey. The fancy seemed to possess her more strongly as one by one the ties that bound her to friendship and to earth were loosed.*

*The day wore away, and even though the twilight they could see the lone ivy leaf clinging to its stem against the wall. And then, with the coming of the night the north wind was again down from the low Dutch eaves.*

*When it was light enough Johnsy, the merciless, commanded that the shade be raised.*

*The ivy leaf was still there.*

*Johnsy lay for a long time looking at it. And then she called to Sue, who was stirring her chicken broth over the gas stove.*

*“I’ve been a bad girl, Sudie,” said Johnsy. “Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how wicked I was. It is a sin to want to die. You may bring me a little broth now, and some milk with a little port in it, and-no; bring me a hand-mirror first, and then pack some pillows about me, and I will sit up and watch you cook.” An hour later she said:*

*“Sudie, some day I hope to paint the Bay of Naples.”*

*The doctor came in the afternoon, and Sue had an excuse to go into the hallway as he left.*

*“Even chances,” said the doctor, taking Sue’s thin shaking hand in his. “With good nursing you’ll win. And now I must see another case I have downstairs. Behrman, his name is-some kind of artist, I believe. Pneumonia,*

*too. He is old, weak man, and the attack is acute. There is no hope for him; but he goes to the hospital today to be made more comfortable."*

*The next day the doctor said to Sue: "She's out of danger. You've won. Nutrition and care now-that's all."*

*And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, contentedly knitting a very blue and very useless woollen shoulder scarf, and put one arm around her, pillows and all.*

*"I have something to tell you, white mouse," she said. "Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia today in the hospital. He was ill only two days. The janitor found him on the morning of the first day in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through and icy cold. They couldn't imagine where he had been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still lighted, and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes, and a palette with green and yellow colors mixed on it, and- look out the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on the wall. Didn't you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when the wind blew? Ah, darling, it's Behrman's masterpiece- he painted it there the night the last leaf fell."*

### **SUMMARY OF THE SHORTSTORY**

The story is about two young artists, Sue and Johnsy, who have rented a room in Greenwich Village. Both of them work and are happy in each other's company. But before the advent of winter season Johnsy catches pneumonia and falls sick badly. The doctor who has attended Johnsy explains to Sue that she has very little chance to survive and that the reason behind her declining health was herself. He explains that Johnsy has given up all hopes to recover her health and therefore Sue needs to create in her desire to live once again.

In the same building where these two friends live, an old man who is an unsuccessful artist and also a drunkard lives, his name is Behrman. Behrman is a kind man and lives with a dream that one day he will paint a masterpiece which will make him famous. He is also a concerned man and always takes care of Sue and Johnsy when in need. Sue tells Behrman about the worsening condition of Johnsy and tells him that she thinks that when the last leaf from the vine outside her window

falls, she too will die. Hearing this Behrman gets agitated and scoffs at this as foolishness.

Since its very cold and raining, one windy evening Sue and Johnsy realise that only one leaf is left on the vine and Johnsy persists that she wants to see it fall. Hearing this Johnsy closes the curtains of the window and tries to calm her saying that she will get better. The next day to their amazement they find the leaf still intact and green. The leaf had not fallen that night, nor does it fall overnight, nor the next day. When few days passed by, Johnsy starts believing that the only leaf, stayed there to make her realise how unreasonable and weak she was, and that she has sinned in wanting to die.

After few days the doctor visits again and tells Sue about the improvement in Johnsy's health and he also informs her that another man called Behrman had been found wet and suffering from Pneumonia few days back in his room. Since he was weak and old, he has been hospitalised with very few chance to live. They also found his painting materials, a ladder and a light outside just below Johnsy's window.

In the end, Johnsy gradually begins to recover her strength and gets well soon whereas Behrman dies. When Johnsy is strong enough, Sue realising the sacrifice Behrman had made, reveals to her that their neighbour Behrman has died of pneumonia, and that the one remaining leaf was not a real one and had been painted by Behrman; in fact it was his master piece created for Johnsy so that she might inspire to live.

### **LET US SUM UP**

**a. Theme of the story:** The theme of the story "The Last Leaf"

is, Love and Friendship; Pessimism and Optimism and the final victory Hope. The story tells about the treasure of life and the importance of faith and hope to continue in spite of all the difficulties and teaches the essence of life. It also explains how friendship, love, compassion and sacrifice are essential part of human beings without which life is indeed very hard and cruel. This bond of love, friendship and sacrifice becomes life-saving blessings for Johnsy who had lost all her will to live (a pessimist) whereas Sue hopes (an optimist) that her friend will recover, continuously takes care of Johnsy and she finally lives but ironically at the cost of sacrifice made by Behrman. O Henry has very creatively mixed all these elements with a

pinch of irony and has created a powerful story with a strong message that hope survives all.

- b. Significance of Title of the story:** O Henry has aptly used the title of the story “The Last Leaf” as it denotes the coming of winter or decay which can be further associated with bareness, death and hopelessness. The central character Johnsy who has associated herself with the last leaf feels that she would die when it falls and therefore the title compares the falling of the last leaf to death. However, her neighbour Mr. Behrman, a strong optimistic old man and also an artist with all the experience of life, thinks this as foolish and with an altruistic determination braves a cold rainy night to paint the last leaf on a wall, making Johnsy believe that the leaf had not fallen. Ironically, the man who inspired and gave life to another has to lose his own life just for the sake of drawing his ‘Masterpiece’ a last leaf.
- c. Symbols and imagery used in the story:** As a writer O. Henry is well known for his wit, wordplay, warm characterization, and surprise endings. For this purpose he uses a wide range of symbols and imagery. In “The Last Leaf” the ‘Leaf’ symbolises Despair and Death on the one hand and Hope and Life on the other. In this battle between hope and despair finally hope becomes victorious emphasising optimistic view of life as a true essence of life. He also cleverly personifies

a bad cold ‘Pneumonia’ as an Old man, “*an unseen stranger who stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy fingers*”, he further calls him a rude and impolite person who had also touched Johnsy with his icy fingers. Such description vividly draws an image of a heartless old man who does not care for anyone.

## GLOSSARY

Attics: A space or room inside or partly inside the roof of a building.

Gables: The triangular upper part of a wall at the end of a ridged roof.

Prowling: (of a person or animal) move about restlessly especially in search of prey.

Traversing: Travel across or through.

Quaint: Attractively unusual or old-fashioned.

Squatty: To have compressed features

Studio: A room where an artist, photographer, sculptor, etc., works.

Chicory: A blue-flowered Mediterranean plant of the daisy family, cultivated for its edible salad leaves and carrot-shaped root.

Congenial: (of a person) pleasing or liked on account of having qualities or interests that are similar to one's own.....(of a thing) pleasant or agreeable.

Pewter mugs: A mug made up of malleable metal alloy, traditionally 85–99% tin, with the remainder consisting of copper, antimony, bismuth and sometimes lead.

Chafing: (with reference to a part of the body) make or become sore by rubbing against something....rub (a part of the body) to restore warmth or sensation.

Ravager: One who brings heavy destruction or devastation.

Strode: Walk with long, decisive steps in a specified direction.

Smiting: Strike with a firm blow....be strongly attracted to someone or something.

Scores: To gain.

Trod: A person's manner of walking or the sound made as they walk.

Maze: A complicated and confusing system of connected passages.

Chivalric: Behaving in honourable and polite way especially towards women.

Mite: Power to do something; physical strength.

Zephyrs: A very slight or gentle wind.

Duffer: A clumsy or awkward person.

Smote: To hurt; to kill or to punish.

Shaggy: Covered with hair that is long and tangled.

Pharmacopoeia: An official publication containing a list of medicinal drugs with their effects and directions for their use.

Jew's-harp: A small lyre-shaped musical instrument held between the teeth and struck with a finger. It can produce only one note, but harmonics are sounded by the player altering the shape of the mouth cavity  
Twang: To make a harsh quick sound like that of a plucked banjo string.

Swaggered: To walk in a very confident way.

Ragtime: disorderly; disreputable

Ripple: To move in small waves; to pass or spread through or over.

Pave: To cover something with a material (stone, tar or concrete) that forms a hard, level surface for walking, driving etc.

Elegant: Graceful and attractive; Simple and clever.

Monocle: An eye glass for one eye.

Trousers: An outer garment covering the body from the waist to the ankles, with a separate part for each leg.

Idaho cowboy: A man who herds and tends cattle, performing much of his work on horseback is called a cowboy and Idaho is a state in the northwestern region of the United States.

Solicitously: Showing concern or care for someone's health, happiness etc.

Dreary: Causing unhappiness or sadfeelings.

Gnarled: Full of knots.

Ivy vine: A climbing or trailing woody-stemmed plant related to the grapevine.

Magnificent: Very beautiful or impressive.

Scorn: To rebuke or scold.

Goosey: Scared.

Pork chops: A pork chop is a chop of pork (a meat chop) cut perpendicularly to the spine of the pig and usually containing a rib or part of a vertebra, served as an individual portion.

Port wine: A strong, sweet dark red (occasionally brown or white) fortified wine, originally from Portugal, typically drunk as a dessert wine.

Hermit: A person who lives in a simple way apart from society.

Michael Angelo: Was an Italian sculptor, painter, architect, poet, and engineer of the High Renaissance who exerted an unparalleled influence on the development of Western art.

Moses beard: Long bearded.

Satyr: A creature in classical mythology who was part man and part goat.

Imp: A small, mischievous devil or sprite.

Hem: The edge of a piece of cloth that is folded back and sewn down.

Daub: To put something on something with quick, small motions.

Gin: A colourless alcoholic beverage made from distilled neutral grain spirit, flavoured with Juniper berries and aromatics.

Mastiff-in-waiting: Always at guard like a mastiff dog.

Easel: A frame for supporting an artist's painting.

Juniper berries: Berrylike cone of a common juniper tree.

Contempt: Lack of respect or reverence for something.

Derision: A state of being laughed at or ridiculed.

Morbid: Not healthy or normal.

Horrid: Very unpleasant.

Persistent: Existing for a long or longer than usual time.

Mingled: To combine or bring together two or more things.

Wearily: Exhausted in strength, endurance or freshness.

Dissolution: The act of officially ending something.

Decay: To be slowly destroyed by natural processes.

Serrated: Notched or toothed on the edge.

Mysterious: Strange or difficult to understand.

Merciless: Very cruel or harsh.

Broth: Soup consisting of meat or vegetables cooked in stock, sometimes thickened with barley or other cereals.

Bay of Naples: 15-kilometre-wide gulf located along the south-western coast of Italy. It opens to the west into the Mediterranean Sea.

Pneumonia: Lung inflammation caused by bacterial or viral infection, in which the air sacs fill with pus and may become solid. Inflammation may affect both lungs (double pneumonia) or only one (single pneumonia).

Contentedly: Happy and satisfied.

Janitor: A caretaker or doorkeeper of a building.

Palette: A thin oval or rectangular board that a painter holds and mixes colours on.

Fluttered: To flap the wings rapidly.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

Write a brief note on the character of Johnsy.

Ans: O. Henry has craftily portrayed Johnsy around whom the whole story revolves. She is although not presented as a strong character but her weakness plays a significant role in the development of the story. The readers are told that she is an amateur young artist in pursuit of dreams and when she falls sick she starts hallucinating that she will die when the last leaf falls. Her pessimism towards life and unreasonable attraction towards death further worsen her condition and is on the verge of dying but miraculously recovers when her hope and will to live is reborn.

Write a short note on the character of Behrman.

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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What is hope? And why is it important to have hope when everything seems useless?

Ans. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS**

Write a short note on the title of the story “The Last Leaf.” How does Henry portray pneumonia?

Write a short note on the theme of the story “The Last Leaf.”

What message Henry is trying to convey through the character Behrman?

### **SUGGESTED READING**

- Collected Stories O’ Henry, Rupa & Co., New Delhi.2007
- The Pierian Spring: An Anthology for BA, B.Sc, B.Com and BCA, first year, University of Jammu.

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## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 10**

**SEMESTER - I**

**SHORT STORIES**

**UNIT - III**

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## **MUNSHI PREMCHAND      “THE CHILD”**

### **STRUCTURE**

Introduction  
Objectives  
Introduction of the Author  
Introduction to the Short Story  
Main Points of the Short Story  
Summary  
Let Us Sum Up  
Glossary  
Self-Assessment Questions  
Check Your Progress  
Examination Oriented Questions  
Suggested Reading

### **INTRODUCTION**

“The Child” depicts the realistic picture of Indian society. The story exposes the man-made shallow norms and rigid customs that lead to injustice, inequality and maltreatment of the voiceless, especially women. Premchand had a purpose behind writing the story, which was aimed to transform the society and to educate the narrow minded and hypocrites to shun all kinds of prejudices.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. The objective of this lesson is to acquaint the learner with the various social issues related to the short story “The Child”.
2. The learner is given a detailed and comprehensive summary of the story so as to thoroughly explain the theme and substance of the story.
3. “The Child” brings to light the fact that society needs transformation.
4. We are made to learn the shortcomings of the society and to ponder over pettiness of the social taboos which hinders the progress of the society.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE AUTHOR

In the realm of Hindi literature, Munshi Premchand is still the most popular among readers. He stands as a guiding force for those who believe in writing with a social purpose. Like G.B Shaw he acts as a social reformer in his novels as well as short stories. He found writing as the best medium in creating awareness among the people as it exposes the pettiness of the human world. This Upnayas Samrat wrote two hundred fifty stories and more than a dozen novels on issues like dowry, widow remarriage and prostitution. Some of his best works are *Idgah*, *Kafan*, *Godan*, *Nirmala*, *Gaban*, *Rangbhumi* and *Vardaan*. On seeing the miserable life led by widows he himself decided to get married to a child widow Shivrani Devi in 1906. He is undoubtedly called the master of the realistic fiction who had a rare insight into human psychology.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SHORT STORY

The short story champions the cause of widows who have always been maltreated by the society. The writer is conveying the message that a woman can't be won over by just providing bread and lodging and the basis of

a man and woman relationship should be love and not social status. The story brings out the shortcomings of Indian society and satirises the middle-class morality. Middle-class morality refers to the values and code of conduct followed by the rich and the poor and these middle-class people had to follow rigid and strict norms which ultimately suppress their freedom. This suppression leads to injustice and frustration. Gangu in the story is a representative of what Premchand was in his real life.

## MAIN POINTS OF THE SHORT STORY

The story begins with a focus on Gangu, a poor Brahmin. This uneducated Brahmin is shown short tempered before his marriage to Gomti Devi. Gangu never bows to his master as he thinks he belongs to high caste of Hindu hierarchical caste system. He never prays and does not take a bath daily. He is shown to be concerned about his master's reputation when he leaves his job in order to get married to Gomti Devi whom people considered a bad character woman and who was turned out of the widow's home. After the marriage Gangu started his work as a hawker and lived in thatched hut with his wife. When Gomti leaves his house without telling, he blames himself only for not being able to prove himself as a good husband. Gangu narrated this to his master, who is also the narrator of the story. After this meeting the narrator went to Nanital for a month and when he comes back he is astonished to see a baby in the arms of Gangu at his home. Gangu said that the boy was God's

gift to him. Gomti had gone to Lucknow for child birth and Gangu brought her back and heartily accepted the child as his own. The narrator taunts him for his shamelessness in accepting Gomti's illegitimate child. Gangu is unmoved and reasons "After all when one takes a harvested field, one does not refuse the crop merely because someone else has sown it". This was the lesson of courage, compassion and real goodness taught by an illiterate Brahman to his master.

### **SUMMARY**

Gangu, the poor Brahmin servant behaves differently from other servants in the household. He gets easily agitated over the slightest rebuke and does not seem to be pally with the other servants. He never bows to anyone and expects others to bow in front of him because of his high caste. Whenever he sees his master in profuse perspiration he fans him with an attitude of doing him great favour. The master does not like someone to intrude his privacy. He does his minor works himself so that he can have the feeling of independence. One morning the narrator was about to go for a morning walk when Gangu came in and expressed his wish to leave the job as he wanted to get married to Gomti Devi, a woman who was turned out of the widow's home. The narrator was shocked to see the courage of this old-fashioned Brahmin who never touched the used utensils and now was ready to get married to a woman of doubtful character. Gangu reasoned that a woman can't stay with a man who does not love her. The narrator was bewildered to see Gangu who was talking in the tone of a poet and ultimately he accepted his resignation. The master knew that tomorrow Gangu would repent his decision of marrying Gomti Devi. After five months he saw Gangu working as a hawker and was happy.

One day the narrator received the news that Gomti Devi had run away so he felt elated to hear this news and thought that he would offer his shoulder to Gangu for crying. Gangu looked completely shattered when he met him. On seeing him, the narrator expressed his superficial sympathy towards him but Gangu blamed himself for her running away. He told him, perhaps he was not educated that's why she left him. He blamed himself for not being able to prove himself as a good husband. The narrator was taken a back to see the unshaken love for a defamed woman like Gomti. Gangu resolved to find her as soon as possible. After this incident, the narrator went to Nanital for about one month. On his return he was shocked to see Gangu carrying a baby in his arms and was very happy. The narrator mocked at his shamelessness taunted him on getting child within five months of his marriage. Gangu replied proudly "when one takes a harvested field one does not refuse the crop merely because someone else has sown it".

He embraced the child as a gift to him. The narrator was touched by Gangu's sentiments and his pure love for Gomti. He felt ashamed of his middleclass morality. He kissed the baby and went along with Gangu to his house to meet Gomti.

### LET US SUM UP

“The Child” is a thought provoking story. It brings to light the fact that Indian society is narrow minded when we talk about man and woman relationship. Men are allowed to marry after wife's death but marriage of a woman after her husband's death is still a taboo. The writer has tried to bring some reforms in the story through an illiterate character Gangu who unconditionally loves Gomti Devi and accepts her child as his own. Gangu believes that “to win someone over, one has to first forget about oneself”. The writer is making us understand that one should be bold enough to cast aside all kinds of pressures that this society exerts on us. Women are to be treated with respect and compassion. A woman's heart can't be won by merely providing bread and lodging. Gangu, who is acting as a mouthpiece of the writer made the narrator ashamed of his old age rigid customs and traditions. The story is also a satire on the middle-class morality. Due to its rigid norms it makes people blind towards the plight of downtrodden in general and widows in particular. The story has its relevance in modern India too; still some reforms are needed for the overall development of the society.

### GLOSSARY

Perspiration:	sweat
Short tempered:	who gets easily angry
Rebuke:	to criticise harshly
Syce:	a servant with responsibility for the horses
Addiction:	a strong desire or need for something
Ancestry:	forefathers
Invade:	to forcibly enter a place
Centre for:	asked to come
Seldom:	not often
Bother:	disturb

Unsolicited:	not being asked for.
Reprehensible:	at fault, blame worthy
Backbiting:	speaking ill behind his/her back
Mode of flattery:	praising somebody insincerely
Ignoble:	shameful, not noble
Annoyed:	displeased
Irritably:	angrily
Leisure:	time to relax
Contemplative:	thoughtful
Idling:	not doing anything
Inflict:	to impose
Dispose off:	to get rid of somebody
Muster:	gather
Alternative:	choice
Intriguing:	mysterious, strange
Bewilderment:	confusion
Expel:	turn out of
Lovelorn:	Love less, lovesick
Stupid:	silly
Better off financially:	in a monetarily better position
Conviction:	with certainty
Unperturbed:	not upset
Zeal:	enthusiasm
Board and lodging:	meals and room
Widow:	women whose husband is dead
Martyr:	one who sacrifices his or her life for the sake of principle
Aloof:	keep away from something or someone

Hawker:	one who carries goods from place to place and sell them
Contentment:	satisfaction
Envious:	jealous
Dissuaded:	made one not to do something
Respite:	relief
Shattered:	broken down, sad
Feigned:	not real, pretended
Blasphemed:	said something irreligious
Perception:	correct understanding of people, things etc.
Frailty:	weakness in character
Displaying:	showing
Impish:	mischievous, naughty
Sentiments:	feelings
Embodiment:	the model or best example of something
Bashful:	shy
Placid:	calm
Sheer:	complete

## SELF- ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Discuss the theme of the story?

**Ans:** The story contains the themes like social reformation and selfless love. The story revolves around the various social issues like caste system, middle-class morality and the ill treatment done to the widows. Women are treated as mere objects rather than individuals. Gangu is representative of what Premchand was in his real life.

Gangu considers Gomti as a goddess. When the narrator dissuades Gangu from marrying her because of a doubtful past Gangu defends Gomti's action of leaving her previous husbands almost with a zeal of a poet. He says "where there is no love you cannot expect a woman to stay on. You

cannot win a woman with mere board and lodging.” Premchand attacks the narrow-mindedness of the society through the story expecting a better society by casting aside all old rigid norms and rules which cause frustration. Gangu’s unconditional and selfless love is another theme of the story. His love is based on the ideology that ‘to win someone over, one has to first forget about oneself’. He is truly in love with Gomti and accepts her child as a gift from the side of God. He reasons that after all, when one takes a harvested field, one does not refuse the crop merely because someone else has sown it. Gangu can be considered as embodiment of love, human warmth and goodness.

### **Who is the mouthpiece of the writer?**

**Ans:** Gangu is truly representing Premchand’s ideals. He himself married a child widow for which he had to face a lot of pressure from the conservative society in which he lived. Gangu is also shown as a real hero who does not believe in shallow old rigid customs and norms which foresees a man to consider a woman as an object rather than individual. He was discouraged by his master for not marrying Gomti Devi who had already left three husbands but his unconditional and selfless love would not stop

him from marrying her and accept her child begotten by some other man. Gangu is an independent thinker who believes that a woman needs to have an emotional support rather than financial. We should seek inspiration from Gangu and his beliefs. The writer is educating the minds through an illiterate Gangu that women are to be treated with respect.

### **Q3. What is middle-class morality?**

**Ans:** Morality means in the context of behaviour, real values help to distinguish between the right and the wrong. The values and code of conduct is followed by middle-class people who are neither too rich nor were too poor. Middle-class people usually follow rigid and strict norms which ultimately limit the freedom and suppress their individuality. This suppression sometimes causes frustration and injustice in the society. In the story, the rigidity in the behaviour of the master makes him blind towards the plight of widow and the true love of Gangu. The master thinks that accepting an illegitimate child and marrying a woman of doubtful character is not acceptable in the society. He dissuades Gangu from marrying her but Gangu’s courage, sincerity and kind attitude touched his heart and he felt ashamed of his middle-class morality. His morality consisted in false notions,

hypocrisy and insincerity. Gangu sets up new and inspiring customs and becomes an embodiment of goodness.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1: Was Gangu's personality different before his marriage. How does Gangu convince the narrator that he is not wrong to marry Gomti? Is the narrator convinced?**

**Ans:** In the beginning, we are told, he is arrogant and he never bows to anyone. He expects other people to bow in front of him because of his high caste. But after marriage, he worked as a hawker to look after his wife. After marriage there is a change in his attitude. He becomes more humble and an understanding husband. He convinces

his master by saying that Gomti Devi is an educated woman and her former husbands treated her like an object. This way he convinces the narrator and the narrator senses the resolve of Gangu and allows Gangu to marry Gomti.

**Q2: What is the impression the narrator has of Gangu's married life with Gomti? Do Gangu and Gomti continue to have a peaceful marriage? How?**

**Ans:** The narrator is of the opinion that this marriage cannot last long but he is surprised to see both living a happy and peaceful life. Gangu is a sincere and courageous lover who refuses to go by what people say about Gomti's character and accepts the child as his own.

**Q3: What is the middle-class morality that the narrator seems to represent here? How does this contrast with what Gangu believes?**

**Ans:** Woman like Gomti Devi, who has already left three husbands is considered to be of loose character. In conservative society people are not respectful towards such widows and marrying such types of woman is improper and unacceptable. This type of middle-class morality of narrator contrasts with Gangu's belief. Gangu is unaffected by all kinds of rumours floated by the people and he happily accepts the child begotten by someone else as God's gift.

**Q4. Is Gangu the hero of the story? If so, how does the story make him one? What is the role of the child in the story?**

**Ans:** Gangu has the right sense of judgement as he is bold enough to stand against societal pressure. He's the real hero who believes in equal rights for women

and treats his wife not as an object but as an individual. He is kind and considerate towards Gomti and accepts her child. The role of the child is to establish Gangu as the embodiment of goodness.

### EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. Premchand is the pen name of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Dhanpat Rai Srivastava)
2. He is popularly known as ..... (Upnayas samraat).
3. He is known as Master of ..... (realistic fiction)
4. He has written more than a dozen novels and \_\_\_\_\_ short stories. (250).
5. His objective of writing was to \_\_\_\_\_ the society. (transform)
6. "The Child" is a \_\_\_\_\_ on middle-class morality. (satire)
7. The story is told in \_\_\_\_\_ narrative form. (first person)
8. The theme of the story is ..... (social reformation)
9. On seeing baby in the arms, the narrator compares Gangu's happiness with \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Nanda of Mahabharata)
10. Gangu is called \_\_\_\_\_ by the narrator. (embodiment of goodness)

**Q1. What is your opinion about the ending of the story ? Do you really feel his solution is idealistic? Substantiate your answer.**

**Ans.** The writer gives a happy end to the story and justifies the action of marrying Gangu to Gomti Devi whom the narrator thought to be a woman of doubtful character. On being asked by the narrator about the acceptance of someone else's child, Gangu supported his argument by quoting an example. He said that a person who buys a harvested field does not refuse the produce because it was sown by somebody else. The solution may be idealistic but it is justified in context of the story. The narrator was convinced on hearing his argument and felt ashamed of his narrow thinking. Gangu also taught the narrator that woman cannot be won over by just providing boarding and lodging. The man-woman relationship is based on love and not on social status. These remarks passed by an uneducated Brahmin left a great impact on his mind and the narrator took the baby in his arms and kissed him with affection. He then went with Gangu to see Gomti. The end

of the story compels everyone to cast aside all kinds of pressures that society exerts on us. Man and woman are born equal but the society is prejudiced towards women. Attitudes have to be changed and women are to be given respect. The story depicts the picture of the pre-Independence Indian society but it has its relevance in the modern Indian society too. In this era also if a man's wife dies he is allowed to get married but if a woman's husband dies, marrying again is considered as a taboo. The end of the story is quite inspiring and urging people to change their mindsets.

**Q2. What is the idea of morality that Gangu seems to represent? How does this contradict what the narrator believes?**

**Ans:** In the opinion of Gangu, morality is to be just, kind and respectful towards woman. One should not think of harming others and lead a peaceful and harmonious life. In this story, he does not bother about the rumours floated by the people against Gomti Devi. His idea of morality clashed with that of the narrator. His courage and sincerity touched his master towards the end of the story. He proved to be a man of understanding with a practical approach to the problems of life. He married Gomti against all social pressures. Six months after this marriage with Gomti, she later gave birth to a child which he knew to be of someone else's, but he gladly accepted the same to ensure a happy life. This conduct of Gangu humbled the narrator. In the heart of hearts, the narrator started feeling guilty for opposing Gangu's marriage with Gomti. Gangu's large heartedness and unconditional love for Gomti changes the Master's heart. He accepted Gangu as an embodiment of goodness. In order to expiate for his false sense of morality, he went to see Gomti along with Gangu. Gangu's sincerity thus exposed the hollowness of the narrator's concept of morality.

**Q3. At the end of the story, it is the arrival of the child that resolves all problems. Comment.**

**Ans.** The arrival of the child resolves all problems. If there is no child Gangu's worth is unnoticed in the story. Gangu's bold decision of marrying Gomti Devi was socially unacceptable to the people in general and his master in particular. Gangu never bothered about the reputation of Gomti Devi. After marriage both lived happily in a hut. He worked as a hawker and was contented to earn a small amount of money. After some time Gomti left Gangu without informing him which pained Gangu but he blamed himself for her escape. He went in search of her and after some time she came back with the baby she had delivered. She had actually gone to the hospital for

the delivery of the child. Gangu was very happy to see the child and went to narrator's place carrying the child in his arms. The narrator taunted him for carrying an illegitimate child as it was born six months after Gangu's marriage with Gomti. He reasoned that a person, who bought a harvested field, could not refuse the produce because it was sown by somebody else. He meant that when he accepted Gomti as his wife, he found no harm in accepting her child also. This impressed the narrator and he felt humbled. He considered Gangu as a man of better understanding than himself. Gangu's large heartedness and unconditional love for Gomti changes the heart of the narrator. Gangu teaches him the lesson of courage, compassion and what the real goodness is. Thus, we can say that the arrival of child resolves all the problems, social as well as personal.

### **SUGGESTED READING**

- The Pierian Spring: An Anthology for BA, B.Sc, B.Com and BCA, first year, University of Jammu.

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## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 11**

**SEMESTER - I**

**SHORT STORIES**

**UNIT - III**

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### **CHHATRAPAL "CHETTA" (MEMORY)**

#### **STRUCTURE**

Introduction

Objectives

Introduction of Chhatrapal

Summary of “Chetta”

Characters in “Chetta”

Examination Oriented Questions

Let Us Sum Up

Self-Assessment Questions

Key to Self-Assessment Questions

Glossary

Suggested Reading

## **INTRODUCTION**

This lesson introduces the learner to Chhatrapal as a fast emerging

Dogri writer who has been instrumental in the development of the realistic, socially-relevant short story form in Dogri.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of this lesson are: to acquaint the learner with Chhatrapal as an emerging writer, to help the learner in appreciating the text of “Chetta” which is a Dogri short story translated in English.

## **INTRODUCTION OF CHHATRAPAL**

Chhatrapal is a fast emerging writer whose hometown is Akhnoor. He writes under the pen- name J. P. Saraf. He was born in 1949 to Sh. Satyapal Saraf who was a very intelligent and supporting father. When Chhatrapal was only two years old, he suffered from polio. This physical challenge reduced his mobility and he grew into a shy, reserved and an introvert person. He developed as a keen observer of life and this also lent him an insight into the depths of human psychology. Chhatrapal is an alumnus of G.G.M. Science College from where he did B.Sc. Then he took to writing and his first short story, *Lalitaditya Key Martand* in Hindi was published in the renowned magazine *Dharmyug*. He published his first short story when he was only nineteen years old. He was influenced by Russian writers like Maxim Gorky, Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekov. Munshi Premchand, Rabindranath Tagore, Mohan Rakesh, Manu Bhandari, Nirmal Verma,

Krishan Chander and Swadesh also had an indelible impression on his mind as a writer.

In the beginning, he wrote short stories in Hindi but later on, Prof. Ram Nath Shastri motivated him to write in Dogri language. Prof. Lalit Magotra helped him in emerging as a more versatile writer by helping him in the translation of his Dogri short stories into English. He has written scripts for more than sixty serials and over 2000 documentaries for

Doordarshan. He has also written scripts for 115 radio-plays and several advertisements. In 1971, he became Dogri News Reader for All India Radio. His ideology as a writer is to 'live and let others live'. He believes in formless God and his mission in life is to serve the poor and physically challenged children. He is presently taking care of physically-challenged children in JRC Home for handicapped, Udheywala, Jammu.

Writing for Chhatrapal is a medium of observation, self-expression and celebration. "Sapkani" is a short story which is very close to his heart. He is a celebrated Dogri writer with over 250 short stories, articles and literary works to his credit. Chhatrapal has been instrumental in the development of the realistic, socially relevant short story form in Dogri. He has authored five major books including *Tapu Da Aadami*, a collection of Dogri short stories. He has been the recipient of many prestigious awards from various national organisations such as Sahitya Kala Parishad, New Delhi and the Ministry of Human Resource Development, India.

"Chetta" is originally written in Dogri language by Chhatrapal and later translated by Sh. Suman Sharma. This short story leaves an indelible impression on the minds of the readers. The narrative style used in this story is stream-of-consciousness technique. The narrative keeps shifting from present to past and vice versa. The story begins with the protagonist waiting at the bus stand. He is going somewhere to attend a wedding. His mind keeps on recollecting things of the past. Through the physical setting of the story in a bus stand, we move to various places. The story is open ended. Chhatrapal has revealed in an interview that he has deliberately given an open ending to the story as he wants to leave it to the imagination of the readers to draw their own conclusions. We feel sympathetic towards the protagonist. The psychological analysis of the character gives us an insight into the problems, embarrassment and a sense of shame that the old man has to go through in the story.

#### **SUMMARY OF "CHETTA"**

“Chetta” is the story of an old retired school teacher suffering from senility and dementia. His forgetfulness is made fun of by his family and

ridiculed by his other retired friends. The story leaves us with sympathy and concern for the poor old man and anger over the insensitive behaviour on the part of the youngsters and others who don’t understand the problems of the old age. The story begins at the bus stand where the old man reaches in an auto. A strong wind is blowing. He gives the fare to the auto driver and sits on a bench in the bus stand. There are fifty minutes left to board the bus. He is going somewhere to attend the wedding of Guptaji’s daughter in a village in Punjab. Guptaji has retired from the same school a few months ago. As the old man is suffering from senility and dementia which is a kind of memory loss, the members of his family are not willing to allow him to go alone to attend the wedding. He is sitting on the bench suddenly he starts checking his bag for saree which he has kept in his bag as a wedding gift for Guptaji’s daughter and a bag of *Rajmah* beans for Gupta Sahib. After retirement, his physical and mental abilities have diminished and to add to his worries he has recently lost his wife. Aanshu, his granddaughter, also makes fun of his forgetful nature. She, most sarcastically, remarks whether his grandfather really remembers the face of his friend.

While sitting there, he recollects how his granddaughter Aanshu makes fun of him every now and then. He is waiting there for his friend Abrol to come. Abrol has also retired from the same job and suffers from severe knee problem. Abrol and he decided on the phone the previous night that they will meet at the bus stand by 10 o’clock. Though, initially, Abrol has refused because of pain in the knees but finally he has decided to join the old man for Gupta Sahib’s happiness. The old man is worried as to whether Abrol will come or not as Abrol has ditched him several times in the past. Then he tries to recollect how many times Abrol has not turned up and remembers that Abrol has ditched him 4-5 times. He feels a little happy at the feat of his memory but suddenly he regrets why his mind remembers useless things. He remembers each and everything about his childhood but feels helpless when it comes to recalling Abrol’s landline phone number so that he can enquire from a local PCO about his arrival. Finally, he decides to go alone and stands in the queue in front of the ticket counter. It takes him lot of time to reach the ticket counter as the queue is long. Some passengers ahead of him are Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine pilgrims and he is lost in his memory.

He is reminded of a past experience. He went to Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine in the past on foot. There he met a Maharashtrian family and became familiar with them. In the evening, he reached the holy Shrine but being tired he went to sleep thinking that he will pay obeisance the next day. The next day, after waking up in

the morning, he resumed his journey back home. On his way back, he met the same Maharashtrian family once again and they told him about the holy *darshan* of Mata Vaishno Devi. Then he realized his foolishness. He started his journey back without having a *darshan* of Mata Vaishno Devi *pindies* and it felt ashamed of his forgetfulness and foolishness. He cried a lot that time but did not disclose this incident to anybody in his family. After seven years, when he narrates this incident during Navratras, everybody laughs at his forgetfulness. His granddaughter Aanshu has specially repeated it several times and has added spice to it. He feels sorry for himself and even consults many psychiatrists but there is no medicine for senility and he feels helpless.

While standing in the queue, he remembers a number of incidents when he has lost his memory suddenly. He recalls another incident when he was to list himself as a voter, he forgot his own name. His friend had given him his visiting card in case he forgets his name. Finally, his turn comes to buy the ticket from the ticket counter. He takes out two hundred rupee notes from his pocket. The booking clerk asks about the destination but to his utter dismay, the old man is not able to recall the name of the place where he has to go. There are a number of persons standing behind him in the queue. So the booking clerk feels irritated and a young man behind him shoves him aside and insults him. The other passengers laugh at him which further embarrasses him a lot and he feels pity for himself.

He finds a ray of hope when Abrol suddenly arrives at the bus station. He asks him whether he has purchased the tickets or not. The old man pretends that he has also just arrived a minute ago. He feels like asking Abrol about the destination but knows that Abrol will make fun of him. He lights a cigarette and tries to recollect the name of the town. He asks Abrol cunningly whether there is any bus going to Guptaji's town but Abrol takes it otherwise. He says that he will definitely pay him the bus fare. At this he feels bad and tries to enquire from Abrol as to whether he is carrying the wedding card sent by Guptaji or not. This irritates Abrol and he answers back that he must have forgotten the name and now wants to see the address. This is a big blow for the old man. He does not want to lower his dignity. Abrol compels the old man to go and buy the tickets as he has severe pain in the knee and can't stand in the queue. Therefore, he gets up and goes towards the ticket counter again.

He observes that now only three to four persons are in the queue. He reaches the counter and scans the board having the name of towns. Still he is not able to find the name of Guptaji's town. He feels like going back to Abrol and ask the name of the town. Every moment is like a heavy mountain on his heart. Then he realizes that only he is left at the booking counter. He takes out the money and

thrusts his hand forward in the hope that when the question will be put to him like a bullet, may be the name will erupt from his memory.

### **CHARACTERS IN “CHETTA”**

There are only a few characters in the short story, “Chetta “ as the entire story revolves around the protagonist whose name is not given intentionally by the writer. He is an old man who is suffering from senility and dementia. Stream- of- consciousness technique has been used by the writer to expose the inner recesses of the mind of the protagonist. The characterization of the protagonist is so strong that we sympathize with him. The entire story is about how this old man feels, what he has gone through in his life and how he is carrying on his life after developing dementia. He is a retired school teacher and has sons and daughters- in-law and a grand daughter, Aanshu.

Aanshu plays some role in the story as she keeps making fun of her grandfather every now and then. The younger generation is represented

by Aanshu who does not have the ability to understand the helplessness which old men and women experience. She does not understand how it hurts when somebody mocks at someone. We must not forget that life is a cycle and everyone has to pass through several stages in life. In old age, people start losing physical and mental capabilities. They suffer from different ailments like memory loss as in the case of the protagonist and severe knee pain as in case of his friend Abrol.

Mr. Abrol has been given a prominent role. He is a very supportive friend of the protagonist. Though he does not miss an opportunity to make fun of him. He suffers from knee pain. He comes to the protagonist’s rescue several times.

Mr. Gupta is another school teacher who is in absentia in the story.

### **EXAMINATION-ORIENTED QUESTIONS**

#### **SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS (50-60 words each)**

- Q1. Why did the main protagonist go at the bus stand ?
- Q2. Why did the main protagonist decide to go alone on the journey ?
- Q3. What happened the first time at the ticket counter ?
- Q4. What did Abrol ask the main protagonist and why ? What was his answer ?

Q5. What happened to the second time at the ticket counter ?

**LONGANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS (250 words each)**

Q1. Comment on the characterization in the story with special emphasis on the main protagonist.

Q2. Discuss the role of the Vaishno Devi pilgrimage incident within the story.

Q3. Comment on the significance of the title of the story.

**LET US SUM UP**

“The Chetta” is the story of an old retired school teacher suffering from senility and dementia. His forgetfulness is made fun of by his family and

ridiculed by his other retired friends. The story leaves us with sympathy and concern for the poor old man and anger over the insensitive behaviour on the part of the young who don’t understand the problems of the oldage.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

Q1. What is the name of protagonist’s granddaughter ?

Q2. The main protagonist is suffering from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Q3. Who is narrator’s close friend ?

(a) Guptaji

(b) Abrol

(c) Aanshu

(d) clerk

**KEY TO SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

Ans.1 Aanshu

Ans.2 Senility and Dementia Ans.3

(b) Abrol

**GLOSSARY**

pound– to strike or hit heavily and repeatedly gust

– a sudden strong rush

trifle – a little

demise – a person’s death

errand – a short journey undertaken in order to deliver or collect something

jibe– an insulting remark

misgiving – a feeling of doubt or apprehension about an outcome

envisage – to contemplate or conceive of as a possible future

event bolster – to support or strengthen obeisance – respect or  
worship

perplex– to puzzle or confuse regale– to

entertain or amuse malady– disease or

illness muse – be absorbed in thoughts

chasm – a deep breach pervade – to spread

through derision – ridicule or mockery

scald– to injure with very hot liquid or steam

steed– a horse scrutiny – critical

examination intercede – to intervene on

behalf of another

Bauji – an appellation for father or a grandfather, also used for a well turned  
out stranger

HathiMattha – the highest point on the ascent to Goddess Vaishno Devi’s  
shrine so called because it resembles an elephant’s forehead

Navratras – nine sacred nights and days dedicated to the nine goddesses of  
the Hindu pantheon

Tauji– an appellation for an elderly man; literally, father’s elder brother;  
here used in derision

Barat– the groom’s party

### **SUGGESTED READING**

- The Pierian Spring: An Anthology for BA, B.Sc, B.Com and BCA, first year,  
University ofJammu.

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## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 12**

**SEMESTER - I**

**UNIT - IV**

**READING, WRITING AND SPEAKING SKILLS**

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### **COMPREHENSION OF UNSEEN PASSAGES**

#### **STRUCTURE**

Objectives

Meaning of Comprehension

Reading Comprehension

Passage for Comprehension

Comprehension Questions

Let Us Sum Up

Examination Oriented Questions

Suggested Reading

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Our objective in this lesson is to give you practice in comprehension by: -

- i. Giving you a passage to read and comprehend.
- ii. Giving questions on comprehension.

After completing this lesson you should be able to

- i. Read a passage;
- ii. Read it again to grasp it better;
- iii. Read between the lines, that is, find the hidden meanings; iv.

Answer the questions at the end of the passage in your own words.

### **MEANING OF COMPREHENSION**

In simple words comprehension means the act or capability of understanding, especially writing or speech.

The aim of a passage set for comprehension is to test the student's capacity to grasp its meaning.

### **READING COMPREHENSION**

**Study Guide:** Read the passage given below carefully. After you have read the passage, answer in your own words the questions given at the end.

### **PASSAGE FOR COMPREHENSION**

It is sometime said that this is a pleasure-seeking age. Whether it be pleasure-seeking age or not, I doubt whether it is a pleasure finding age. We are supposed to have great advantages in many ways over our predecessors. There is, on the whole, less poverty and more wealth. There are supposed to be more things which are now considered means of enjoyment and which our ancestors did not possess, but I do not judge from what I read in the newspapers that there is more contentment. Indeed, we seem to be living in an age of discontent. It seems to be rather on the increase than otherwise and is a subject of general complaint. If so, it is worthwhile considering what it is that makes people happy, what they can do to make themselves happy and it is from the point of view that I wish to speak on recreation.

Let it be admitted that recreation is only one of the things that make for happiness in life. I do not even recommend it as the most important. There are at least four other things which are more or less under our own control

and which are essential to our happiness. The first is some moral standard by which to guide our actions. The second is some satisfactory home life in the form of good relations with family or friends. The third is some form of work which justifies our existence to our own country and makes us good citizen. The fourth thing is some degree of leisure and the use of it in some way that makes us happy.

To succeed in making a good use of our leisure will not compensation our failure in any one of the other three things to which I have referred, but reasonable amount of leisure and a good use of it is an important contribution to happy life. How is this happy use of leisure to be insured? We sometimes meet people who do not seem to know what to do with their spare time. They are like the man for whom it was said. 'He doesn't know what he wants and he won't be happy till he gets it'. The first thing, therefore, is take ourselves out of that category, to know definitely what we want, and to make sure it is something that will make us happy when we get it, and that is the beginning of recreation.

### **COMPREHENSION QUESTION**

- Q 1. In what respects are we better than our ancestors?
- Q 2. In what respects were our ancestors better off than ourselves?
- Q 3. What is recreation?
- Q 4. Name the one thing most essential to happiness.
- Q 5. Give a suitable title.

Answers:

- 1) We are better off than our ancestors in respect of material comforts. We are, on the whole, richer and have more means of enjoyment, such as cars, movies and many other things unknown to our forefathers.
- 2) Our ancestors had one great advantage over us. They were more contented, while we, for all our luxuries, remain discontented and restless.
- 3) Recreation is something that recreates, relaxes or refreshes us, a pastime, hobby, etc. Examples are: sports and games, long walks, reading for pleasure, gardening, painting, music etc.
- 4) The most essential thing for happiness is contentment.
- 5) Recreation

### **LET US SUM UP**

Comprehension involves the following:

- ☐ Understanding clarity about the passage.
- ☐ Answering the questions given at the end of the passage,
- ☐ Writing the answers in one's own words,

- Writing short, simple and precise sentences.

### **EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS Exercise**

#### **- 1**

Read the following passages carefully and answer the questions given at the end of the passage.

India is rightly proud of her fighting forces. Coming from all parts of the land, from all communities, our jawans have distinguished themselves for courage, patriotism and discipline in most trying circumstances. They are among the finest in the world. Besides personal valour, they have also displayed a rare skill in the use of new and sophisticated weapons. A team of Russian defence scientist was agreeably surprised by their quick grasp of minute detail.

Another significant thing about Indian army is that it has never been a symbol of imperialistic conquest and plunder. Its chief purpose has been to protect the freedom and frontiers of the land from aggressors. Unlike the rapacious army of Pakistan who massacred millions of unarmed men, women and children in Bangladesh, dishonoured women and ravaged villages, Indian soldiers have been remarkably human and civilized. There have been no complaints of any lawless conduct to their part from the areas conquered by them.

- i) What are the distinguishing qualities of the Indian army?
- ii) What is the chief purpose of the Indian army? iii) What did the Pakistan army do in Bangladesh? iv) What surprised the Russian defence Scientists? v) Give a suitable title to the paragraph.

#### **Exercise 2**

Read the following passage and answer the questions at the end.

At an inn in the north, I once heard three men talking at their breakfast on the question of diet. They agreed that most people ate too much meat, and one of them went so far as to declare that, for his part, he rather preferred vegetables and fruit. "Why," he said, "Will you believe me that I sometime make a breakfast of apples?" This announcement was received in silence; evidently the two listeners didn't quite know what to think of it. There upon the speaker, in rather a blustering tone, cried out, "Yes, I can make a very good breakfast on two or three pounds of apples." Wasn't it amusing? And wasn't it characteristics? This honest Briton had

gone too far in frankness. It is all very well to like vegetables and fruits upto a certain point, but no breakfast on apples! His companions silence proved that they were a little ashamed of him, his confession savoured of poverty or meanness, to right himself in their opinion nothing better occurred to the man than to protest that he ate them largely, by the pound! I laughed at the fellow, but I thoroughly understood him, so would every Englishman, for at the root of being is a hatred of parsimony. The manifests itself in all sorts of ludicrous or contemptible forms, but no less is it the source of our finest qualities. An Englishman desires, above all, to live largely; on that account he not only dreads, but hates and despises poverty. His virtues are those of the free handed and warm hearted opulent man; his weakness come to the sense (intensely painful and humiliating) which attaches in his mind to one who cannot spend and give; his vices, for the most part, originate in loss of self-respect due to loss of secure position.

### QUESTIONS

- i) Name the chief characteristics of the English according to this passage.
- ii) Why does an English man hate poverty?
- iii) What, according to this passage are the virtues, weakness and vices of an Englishman?
- iv) Give a suitable title to the passage.

Read the paragraph and answer the questions given at the end:

The great advantages of early rising are the good start it gives us in our day's work. The early riser has done a large amount of hard work before other men have got out of bed. In the early morning, the mind is fresh, and there are few sounds or other distractions, so that work done at that time is generally well done. In many cases, the early riser also finds time to take some exercise in the fresh morning air and this exercise supplies him with a fund of energy that will last until the evening. By beginning so early, he knows that he has plenty of time to do thoroughly all the work he can be expected to do and is not tempted to hurry over any part of it. All his work being finished in good time, he has a long interval of rest in the evening before the timely hour when he goes to bed. He gets to sleep several hours before midnight, at the time when sleep is most refreshing, after a sound night's rest rises early next morning in good health and spirits for the labours of a new day.

It is very plain that such a life as his far more conducive to health as that of the man who shortens his waking hours by rising late and so can afford in the course

of the day little leisure for necessary rest. And one, who lies in bed late, must, if he wishes to do a full day's work, go on working to a correspondingly

late hour, and deny himself the hour or two of evening exercise that he ought to take for the benefit of his health. But, in spite of all his efforts he will probably not produce as good results as the early riser, the best working hours of the day.

1. What are the advantages of early rising?
2. How does a man feel in the morning?
3. What is the disadvantage of rising late?
4. Why can a late riser not produce as good results as an early riser?
5. Give a suitable title to the passage.

#### **Exercise 4**

There is some humbling to human pride in rustic life. It grates against the heart to think of the tone in which we unconsciously permit ourselves to address a rustic. We see in him humanity in its simplest state. It is a sad thought to feel that we despise him; that all we respect in our species is what has been created by art ; the gaudy dress, the glittering equipage, or even the cultivated intellect. The mere and naked material of nature we eye with indifference or trample on with disdain. Poor child of toil, from the gray dawn to the setting sun, one long task. No idea elicited, no thought awakened beyond those that suffice to make him the machine of others, the serf of the hard soil. And then too, mark how we frown upon his scanty holidays, how we hedge in his mirth and turn hilarity into crime ! We make the whole of the gay world, wherein we walk and take our pleasure, to him a place of snares and perils. If he leaves his labour for an instant, in that instant how many temptations spring up to him and yet we have no mercy for his errors; the jail, the transport ship, the gallows. These are our sole lecture books, and our only method of expostulation.

1. Why do we despise a rustic ?
2. Is the life of a rustic a bed of roses?
3. How do we punish him for his errors ?
4. What do we respect in our species ?
5. Give a suitable title to the passage ?

#### **Answer Key**

#### **Exercise - 1**

- i) The distinguishing qualities of the Indian army its courage, patriotism, and discipline in the most difficult circumstances.
- ii) The chief purpose of the Indian army is to defend the country against external attack.
- iii) The Pakistan army wrought havoc in Bangladesh by slaughter of defenceless men, women and children. iv) The team of Russian defence scientists was surprised by the Indian jawans quick grasp of minute details.
- v) Indian Army

#### **Exercise - 4**

1. We despise a rustic because he is simple and artless. He is a child of nature unadorned by trappings of civilization.
2. No, a rustic's life is certainly not a bed of rose. It is, on the other hand, a life of endless toil.
3. We are merciless on his errors. We punish him with imprisonment, transportation or hanging.
4. All we respect in man is artificiality, his outward appearance ; showy apparel, luxurious belonging or refined speech and manners.
5. Rustic or Rustic life.

#### **SUGGESTED READING**

- The Pierian Spring: An Anthology for BA, B.Sc, B.Com and BCA, first year, University of Jammu.

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## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 13**

**SEMESTER - I**

**UNIT - IV**

### **READING, WRITING AND SPEAKING SKILLS**

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## **CONSONANT**

### **STRUCTURE**

Introduction

Objectives

Defining Consonants

Classification and Description of Consonants

Place of Articulation

Manner of Articulation

State of Glottis

Consonant Sound Chart

Let Us Sum Up

Self-Assessment Questions

References

Suggested Reading

### **INTRODUCTION**

Students of English as a second or foreign language find speech sounds of this language difficult for the reason that they do not have a sufficient knowledge of their articulation. Knowledge of consonant sounds appears easier and more interesting to the students than that of vowel sounds. J.D.O'Connor in his book *Better English pronunciation* writes that skipping a vowel sound in a word and pronouncing the consonants only still makes the word understood .E.g. in *please* if the vowels are left out (pl..s..) still one can make out what the word would be like because consonants form the skeleton of English. So, speaking imperfect vowel sounds may not lead to that big misunderstanding as speaking imperfect

consonants may do. A thorough knowledge of consonant sounds and their differentiation from other consonant sounds makes you an acceptable and effective language user.

## OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to introduce you to another form of speech sounds i.e. Consonants. In addition to their classification and description an effort will be made to give you few exercises for practice.

## DEFINING CONSONANTS

All sounds during the production of which we hear friction are consonants, but not all consonants are produced with friction. Consonants are the speech sounds that are produced with some kind of obstruction to the air stream in the vocal tract. Let us first look at the consonant phonetic symbols.

Consonant Symbol	Examples
p	pen, copy, happen
b	back, baby, job
t	tea, tight, button
d	day, ladder, odd
k	key, clock, school
g	get, giggle, ghost

t ʈ	church, match, nature
dʒ	judge, age, soldier fat,
f	coffee, rough, photo
v	view, heavy, move

<p>θ</p> <p>dð</p> <p>s</p> <p>z</p> <p>ʃʒ</p> <p>ð</p> <p>h</p>	<p>thing, author, path this, other, smooth</p> <p>soon, cease, sister</p> <p>zero, music, roses, buzz ship, sure, national pleasure, vision</p> <p>hot, whole, ahead</p>
<p>m</p> <p>n ŋ</p>	<p>more, hammer, sum nice, know, funny, sun ring, anger, thanks, sung</p>
<p>l</p> <p>r j</p>	<p>light, valley, feel</p> <p>right, wrong, sorry, arrange yet, use, beauty, few</p>
<p>w</p> <p>ʔ</p>	<p>wet, one, when, queen</p> <p>(glottal stop) department, football</p>

### CLASSIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF CONSONANTS

The sounds that are called consonants also need to be sub-classified.

Consonants can be classified on the basis of :

- Place of articulation
- Manner of articulation
- The state of glottis

To describe a consonant sound, we need certain important pieces of information. We need to know the following regarding its production:

- The air stream mechanism;

- The state of the glottis;
- The position of the soft-palate;
- The active articulator;
- The passive articulator; □ The stricture involved.

**The air stream mechanism:** All English sounds (vowels as well as consonants) are produced with a pulmonic egressive air stream mechanism, i.e., lung air pushed out.

**The position of the soft-palate:** Speech sounds can be classified as oral or nasal, depending upon whether the soft-palate is raised so as to shut off the nasal passage of air (oral) or it is lowered to open the nasal passage of air simultaneously with an oral closure (nasal). Sounds can also be nasalized.

### PLACE OF ARTICULATION

According to Peter Ladefoged and Keith Johnson in their book *A Course in Phonetics* any part of the vocal tract which can be used to form sounds are called *Articulators*. There are two types of articulators. Let's discuss them:

**The active articulators:** Of the various articulations described, at least two are required for the production of any speech sound. There are articulators on the lower surface of the vocal tract which are very mobile

during the production of speech sounds. These are termed as active articulators. These are:

- The lower lip
- The tongue
- The uvula

The tip and the blade of the tongue are the most mobile parts. The speech gestures using them are called *Coronal articulations* whereas that using the back of the tongue are called *Dorsal articulations*.

**The passive articulators :** It is a position in the vocal tract which is involved in the production of speech sound but does not move during articulation.

- The upper lip

- The alveolar ridge
- The hard palate
- The soft palate or velum

Do not think that the upper lip and the soft palate are not capable of independent movement, but when either of these is one of the articulators involved in the production of a sound, it is always the other articulator that moves towards these. So the upper lip and the soft palate are considered passive articulators.

One of the parameters of articulation of consonants is their place of articulation i.e. where the obstruction of air stream occurs. The position where the actual contact between an active and passive articulators takes place is called the place of articulation. Based on this place consonants are classified as: **Labial consonants**

- Bilabial: Both the lips are the articulators.
- Labio-dental: Lower lip and upper teeth are articulators.

#### **Coronal consonants**

- Lingua-dental: Tongue and the upper teeth are the articulators.
- Alveolar: Tongue and the alveolar ridge are the articulators.
- Palato- alveolar: Tongue and the middle of hard palate and alveolar ridge are articulators.

#### **Dorsal consonant**

- Velar: Tongue and the soft palate are the articulators.

#### **Coronary/dorsal consonant**

- Palatal: Tongue and the hard palate are the articulators.

*Note* that Palatal sounds are sometimes coronary and sometimes dorsal articulations.

### **MANNER OF ARTICULATION**

The manner means how a particular obstruction is occurring. The way in which the passage of air is restricted by the various organs of speech is called a **stricture**.

**Stops:** Complete closure of the airstream by the articulators produces Stops. There are two types of Stops.

**A. Plosives or Oral Stop** (complete closure and sudden release):

First there is a velic closure i.e., the soft palate is raised and air is not allowed through nasal passage. Then the active articulators come into firm contact with each other and the lung-air is blocked in the mouth. When the oral closure is released, i.e., when the active articulator is suddenly removed from the passive articulator, the air escapes with a small explosive noise called **Plosive** as per IPA alphabet. For example p & b sounds in pin & bin are bilabial plosives.

**B. Nasal Stop** (Complete oral closure): The soft palate is lowered so that there is a velic opening, i.e., the nasal passage of air is opened. The active and passive articulators are in firm contact with each other, thereby blocking off the oral passage of air completely. "Sounds that are articulated with a stricture of complete oral closure are called **Nasals**". The final sounds in the English words sum, sun, and sung are some examples of nasal consonants.

**Affricatives** (Complete closure and slow release): If after blocking the oral and the nasal passages of air, the oral closure is removed slowly, i.e., if the active articulator is removed slowly from the passive articulator, instead of the explosive noise that is characteristic of plosive consonants, friction will be heard. "Sounds that are produced with a stricture of complete closure and slow release are called **Affricatives**." The initial sounds in the English word *chin* and *jam* are affricate consonants.

**Fricatives** (close approximation): The soft palate is raised so as to shut off the nasal passage of air. The active articulator is brought so close to the passive articulator that there is a very narrow gap between them. The lung-air escapes through the narrow space between the active and passive articulators, producing audible friction. The initial sounds in the English word *five*, *vine*, *thin*, *then*, *sip*, *zip*, *sheep* and *hat* are fricatives.

**Lateral Approximants** (Partial closure): The soft palate is raised, thereby shutting off the nasal passage of air. The active and passive articulators are

in firm contact with each other. If the sides of the tongue are lowered so that there is plenty of gap between the sides of the tongue and the upper molar teeth, the air will escape along the sides of the tongue without any friction. “Sounds that are articulated with a stricture of complete closure in the centre of the vocal tract but with the air escaping along the sides of the tongue without any friction are called laterals”. The initial sound in the English word **love** is a lateral.

**Open approximants:** The soft palate is raised, thereby shutting off the nasal passage of air. If the active articulator is brought close to the passive articulator so that the gap between them is wide the air will escape through this gap without any friction. “Sounds that are articulated with a stricture of open approximation are called frictionless continuants and semi vowels”. In fact Peter Ladefoged uses the term approximants to refer to sounds that are articulated with a stricture of open approximation. E.g. *Raw & Yacht*.

**Trills or rolled consonants** (Intermittent closure): The soft palate is raised, thereby shutting off the nasal passage of air. The active articulator strikes against the passive articulator several times with the result that the air escapes between the active and passive articulators intermittently. Such a stricture is termed intermitted closure. Sounds that are articulated with a stricture of intermittent closure are called **trills or rolled** consonants. The letter r in English words like red and ran is pronounced as a trill by most Scottish people. **Flaps:** For some consonants the active articulator strikes against

t□□

the passive articulator just once and then quickly flaps forward. Such consonants are called taps or flaps. The letter r in very is pronounced as a tap by some English people.

## STATE OF GLOTTIS

Speech sounds can be classified as voiceless or voiced, depending upon whether the vocal cords are wide apart and the glottis is wide open (voiceless) or the vocal cords are kept loosely together and they vibrate (voiced).

**Consonant Pairs:** As we learn about voiced and voiceless consonants, it is important to know the difference in various pairs of consonants which are produced in almost the same way.

Row-I	p	f	T		k	θ	s	□□
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Row-II	b	v	D	dð	g	ð	z	ð
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The sounds shown in the same column of the above table are called consonant pairs. Let us take them one by one:

### Sound Description Examples

p b	Both are bilabial plosives. But /p/ is aspirated and /b/ is voiced.	Pat,Bat/ Park,Bark
f v	Both are fricative labiodentals but /f/ is aspirated but /v/ is voiced.	Fan,Van/Ferry,Very
t d	Both are oral, alveolar, plosives. But /t/ is aspirated and /d/ is voiced.	Time, Dime/ Train, Drain
t ʈ	Both involve friction in production, are alveolar but /t ʈ/ is voiceless and /dʒ/ is voiced.	Choke,Joke/ Batch,Badge
k g	Both are velar plosives but /k/ is voiceless and /g/ is voiced.	Came, Game/ Card,Guard
θ ð	Both are dental fricatives but /θ/ is voiceless and /ð/ is voiced.	Think, The/ Through,With
s z	Both are alveolar fricatives but /s/ is voiceless and /z/ is voiced.	Ice, Eyes/Last, Maize

ʃ ʒ Both are post alveolar fricatives but /ʃ/ is aspirated whereas /ʒ/ is voiced. Education,Confusion

### CONSONANT SOUND CHART

x	bilabial		Labio-dental		Dental		aveolar		Post - alveolar		Palate-alveolar		palattal		Velar		glottal	
↓ Manner	vl	vd	vl	vd	vl	vd	vl	vd	vl	vd	vl	vd	vl	vd	vl	vd	vl	vd
Plosive	p	b					t	d							k	g		
Affricate											t ʈ	dʒ						
Fricative			f	v	θ	ð	s	z			ʃ ʒ	ʃ						h

Nasal		m						n									ŋ	
Lateral								l										
Glide(sem i vowel )		w						r				j						

## LET US SUM UP

Dear learners in this lesson you have been taught how are consonant sounds produced. While examining a consonant you need to remember that the air-stream used is pulmonic egressive only. Find whether the sound is oral or nasal. Most of the consonant sounds are oral & central only. Also observe whether the vocal cords are drawn apart or these are joined and vibrating. This will give you an estimate of whether the sound is voiced or voiceless. Locate the active and passive articulators, its place of articulation, manner of articulation alongwith strictures. This practice shall bring you very close to the English language , hence making you an efficient user of this language. Let's check our understanding of Consonants in the next section.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Exercise-I:

**Write a word having the given phonetic sound. One is done for you.**

- / θ /    Death
- /g/    \_\_\_\_\_
- / □ /

d. /f/

e. /r/

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f.

/t ɒ /

g. / dʒ/


h. / j/

i. / ɲ/

j. /b/

k. /z/

l. / l/ 

m. /h/ 

### Exercise-II:

Write five examples each of the following:

a. Bilabial Consonants:

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b. Palatal consonants:

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c. Fricatives:

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**d. Alveolar Consonants:**

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**e. Plosives:**

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**f. Lingua-dental sounds:**

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**g. Velar consonants:**

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**h. Nasal stops:**

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**g. Rolled consonants:**

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**h. Affricates:**

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**i. Flaps:**

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**Exercise-III: Describe the asked sound in the given words in the following table. The first one is done for you.**

**i. /p/ in Spy**

The air stream mechanism	Pulmonic Egressive
The position of vocal cords	Drawn apart.
The State of glottis	Open
The sound	Voiceless
The state of soft palate	Raised
The sound	Oral
The active articulator	Upper Lip
The passive articulator	The Lower Lip
The stricture	Complete closure and sudden release

Articulated sound is	Plosive
Three-term description	Voiceless Bi-labial Plosive
<b>ii. /k/ in Sky</b>	
The air stream mechanism	
The position of vocal cords	
The State of glottis	
The sound	

The state of soft palate	
The sound	
The active articulator	
The passive articulator	
The stricture	
Articulated sound is	
Three-term description	
<b>iii. /d/ in Dear</b>	
The air stream mechanism	
The position of vocal cords	
The State of glottis	
The sound	
The state of soft palate	
The sound	
The active articulator	
The passive articulator	
The stricture	
Articulated sound is	
Three-term description	
<b>iv. /ch/ in cheap</b>	
The air stream mechanism	
The position of vocal cords	

	The State of glottis	
	The sound	
	The state of soft palate	
	The sound	
	The active articulator	
	The passive articulator	
	The stricture	
	Articulated sound is	
	Three-term description	
<b>v</b>	<b>/v/ in vine</b>	
	The air stream mechanism	
	The position of vocal cords	
	The State of glottis	
	The sound	
	The state of soft palate	
	The sound	
	The active articulator	
	The passive articulator	
	The stricture	
	Articulated sound is	
	Three-term description	
<b>vi. /th/ in Think</b>		
	The air stream mechanism	



m.	<u>C</u> rores	.....
n.	<u>G</u> esture	.....
o.	<u>G</u> iant	.....
p.	<u>G</u> lottal	.....
s.	<u>C</u> horus	.....
t.	<u>Ch</u> urch	.....
u.	N <u>a</u> ture	.....
v.	Ple <u>a</u> sure	.....
w.	Te <u>eth</u>	.....
x.	<u>T</u> here	.....
y.	Smoo <u>th</u>	.....
z.	Pa <u>th</u>	.....

### Exercise-V

**Knock the odd one out giving reasons. One is done for you.**

- Ribs, Leaves, Tapes, Girls      Tapes(sound of 's' is /s/ whereas others have /z/)
- Cause, Cruel, Cruze, Cease      \_\_\_\_\_
- Planned, Saved, Hated, Needed      \_\_\_\_\_
- Kiss, Cause, Reason, Advise      \_\_\_\_\_
- Character, Choose, Much, Pitch      \_\_\_\_\_
- School, Schnauzer, Scholar, Scheme      \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise-VI

**Write two words each where the given consonant is left unpronounced or silent.**

a.	P	_____
b.	R	_____
c.	L	_____
d.	N	_____
e.	C	_____

**Answer Key:**

- Exercise-III:**
- ii) Voiceless velar plosive
  - iii) Voiced alveolar plosive
  - iv) Voiceless palate-alveolar affricative
  - v) Voiced labio-dental fricative
  - vi) Voiceless dental fricative

**Exercise-IV:**

a. /k/	b. /k/	c. /s/	d. /g/	e. /dʒ/
f. /g/	g. /dʒ/	h. /g/	i. /k/	j. /g/
k. /g/	l. /s/	m. /k/	n. /dʒ/	o. /dʒ/
p. /g/	s. /k/	t. /t /	u. /t ɪ /	v. /ʒ/
w. / θ /	x. /ð /	y. / ð/	z. / θ /	

**Exercise-V:**

- a. Cease (sound of c is /s/ ; others have /k/ sound)
- b. Hated (sound of ed is /id/ rather than /d/ as in others)
- c. Kiss (sound of s is /s/ whereas others have /z/)
- d. Character (sound of )
- e. Schnauzer (sound of ch is / ɪ /)

**Exercise-VI ( hint)**

- a. Cupboard
- b. Bird
- c. Half
- d. Knife
- e. Science

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## B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**  
**SEMESTER - I**

**LESSON NO. 14**  
**UNIT - IV**

## READING, WRITING AND SPEAKING SKILLS

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### VOWELS

#### STRUCTURE

Introduction  
Objectives  
Defining Vowels  
Classification of Vowels  
Table of Vowel Sound Symbols  
Monophthongs  
Diphthongs  
Cardinal Vowel Chart  
Let Us Sum Up  
Self-Assessment Questions  
References  
Suggested Reading

#### INTRODUCTION

Human speech is produced with the help of organs meant for biological purpose. The requirements for speech production requires:

Respiration:	Inhaling & exhaling the air in form of breath.
Phonation:	This occurs in the Voice box ( Larynx) by the vocal cords.
Articulation:	This is done by various articulators viz. tongue, lips, teeth, alveolar ridge, soft palate, hard palate & velum.
Resonance:	This depends on the shape and size of the vocal tract, oral cavity & nasal cavity.

For speech production what we require is power or energy and vibrations. Normally the source of power is the air coming out of lungs called Pulmonic egressive air. Ingressive air is also used sometimes but that is not very common. And vibration occurs at Vocal Cords. A speech sound is called Phoneme. Vowels

and consonants are Phonemes. In this chapter we will be dealing with the articulatory phonetics.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Dear learners, in this lesson you will be introduced to an aspect of speech sound which is classified as vowels. An effort will be made to simplify the topic as you are students of General English not Linguistics. A lesson end exercise shall also be provided to check your learning pace.

## **DEFINING VOWELS**

The speech sounds made by the vocal cords are called vowels. A vowel sound comes from the lungs, through the open vocal cords. A vowel sound is produced when there is a continuous vibration of the vocal folds and the airstream is allowed to escape from the mouth without any interruption or obstruction. There are five vowels in the English language (a, e, i, o, u), but there are twelve different vowel sounds called monophthongs, eight diphthongs and five triphthongs. Unlike consonants, each of the vowel letters has more than one type of sound or can even be silent with no sound at all. The articulation of the different vowel sounds depends on:

- The point of constriction
- The degree of constriction
- The degree of lip-rounding
- The degree of muscle tension

## **14. 4 CLASSIFICATION OF VOWELS**

Vowels can be classified as per the following criteria:

**Tongue Position:** During the vowel sound production tongue is the active articulator whereas roof of the mouth (Hard Palate, Soft Palate & a part between Hard and Soft Palate) is the passive articulator. Tongue is divided in three parts viz. Front, Back and Centre. Whichever part of the tongue touches the mouth, the sound produced is named after that part e.g. Front vowels, Back Vowels or Central vowels. For example, if you make the vowel sound /i/ and then /u/, you will notice that your tongue moves back.

**Tongue Height:** Alongwith the back and forth movement of the tongue, the level of its height also participates in articulation. This means how high or low our

tongue is. For instance /i/ is a high vowel sound, /e/ is intermediate, and /a/ is low. Note the movement of the tongue if you pronounce these three sounds. So these vowels are also classified as Open & Half Open (how far is the tongue from hard palate and the mouth is open) or Close & Half Close (how close is the tongue to the hard palate) vowels.

**Lip Rounding:** While making a vowel sound the position of our lips also plays a role; they can be Spread, Rounded or Neutral. The production of sound /i/ makes the corners of our mouth go further apart. This is called a spread vowel sound. Whereas pronouncing /u/, our lips are rounded, and for the sound /a/ our lips are neither spread nor rounded, so it is an unrounded vowel or neutral.

*For example:* In *Seed* the vowel sound /i:/ can be labeled as front close unrounded vowel. In *Fool* , /u:/ is back close rounded vowel. In *Set*, /e/ is front unrounded vowel between half-close & half-open.

**Length:** Vowels can also be classified as Long & Short vowels.

- If we have only one vowel in a word and it is anywhere except at the end of a word, it usually has a short sound e.g. Pan.
- If a word has only one vowel and it is at the end of the word, it usually has a long sound e.g. Go
- If there are two or more vowels and the word ends with the vowel 'E', the ending vowel 'E' is silent, and the vowel that comes before it has a long sound e.g. Fade.
- If two vowel letters are together, the first vowel letter has a long sound and the second one is silent e.g. Train.
- If a word has a vowel followed by double consonants (same) , a short sound is used for the vowel e.g. Rubber
- If a word has two a double vowel the long sound is produced. This rule does not apply when 'O' is the double vowel e.g. Meek.

Vowels with a long sound are written with a colon. For example the sound of 'e' in Deep shall be /i:/. For more examples let us see the following table.

#### TABLE OF VOWEL SOUND SYMBOLS

## vowels

IPA	examples
ʌ	c <u>u</u> p, l <u>u</u> ck
a:	<u>a</u> rm, f <u>a</u> ther
æ	c <u>a</u> t, bl <u>a</u> ck
ə	<u>a</u> way, cin <u>e</u> ma
e	m <u>e</u> t, b <u>e</u> d
ɜ:	t <u>u</u> rn, l <u>e</u> arn
ɪ	h <u>i</u> t, s <u>i</u> tt <u>i</u> ng
i:	s <u>e</u> e, h <u>e</u> at
ɒ	h <u>o</u> t, r <u>o</u> ck
ɔ:	c <u>a</u> ll, f <u>o</u> ur
ʊ	p <u>u</u> t, c <u>o</u> uld
u:	bl <u>u</u> e, f <u>o</u> od
aɪ	f <u>i</u> ve, <u>e</u> ye
aʊ	n <u>o</u> w, <u>o</u> ut
əʊ	g <u>o</u> , h <u>o</u> me
eə	wh <u>e</u> re, <u>a</u> ir
eɪ	s <u>a</u> y, <u>e</u> igh <u>t</u>
ɪə	n <u>e</u> ar, h <u>e</u> re
ɔɪ	b <u>o</u> y, j <u>o</u> in
ʊə	p <u>u</u> re, t <u>o</u> urist

**Table –I**

### MONOPHTHONGS:

Monophthongs are represented by single symbols. During articulation these vowels do not change their quality. This means /u:/ will remain the same throughout its articulation.

[æ] as in cat	[ʌ] as in up	[ɪ] as in chips
[ɑ:] as in smart	[ɔ:] as in short	[i:] as in sheep
[ʊ] as in put	[ɒ] as in dog	[ɜ:] as in bird
[u:] as in food	[e] as in get	[ə] as in about

## DIPHTHONGS

A type of vowel sound which is made up of a combination of two individual vowel sounds but within the same syllable. In Table-I shown above, the last eight symbols are Diphthongs.

In the word ‘*now*’ you will hear two distinct vowel sounds; first it is the sound of back open rounded vowel and then it shifts to the sound of ‘u’ which is back rounded vowel between close and half close. Our tongue takes necessary positions to articulate these sounds; it first articulates the first sound and then slowly glides to the second one. But one thing needs to be kept in mind that a diphthong must belong to one syllable. For example in the word ‘*doing*’ though two vowels appear together and appear like a glide but they fall in two syllables, so this movement of sound is not a diphthong.

**Note** that the sound [i:] before final [r] in words like beer, peer, cheer, sheer, career usually has diphthongal character and the sound goes as /i:ʔ/.

## CARDINAL VOWEL CHART

A British Linguist, Daniel Jones has proposed a set of reference points known as *Cardinal Vowels Chart*. There are eight Primary Cardinal Vowels. The cardinal vowels are an abstract yardstick to be used by the linguist.



Wet	Wait
Test	Taste
Pepper	Paper
Men	Man
Said	Sad
Leg	Lag
Don	Dawn
Cot	Caught
Card	Cord
Cuff	Cough
Bus	Boss
Van	Vine
Back	Bike
Hat	Height
Pants	Pints
Huts	Hurts
Bun	Burn
Bud	Bird
Star	Stir
Barn	Burn

### **Exercise-II**

Recognize the sound of the underlined vowel in the following words and write its phonetic symbol:

**(A)**

Peter	.....
Regency	.....
Rewrite	.....
Prewar	.....
Material	.....
Speed	.....
Sleeve	.....
<b>(B)</b>	
Sphere	.....
Atmosphere	.....
Career	.....
Near	.....
Pierce	.....
<b>(C)</b>	
Clash	.....
Tramp	.....
Man	.....
Bang	.....
Band	.....
<b>(D)</b>	
Bare	.....
Declare	.....
Affair	.....
Despair	.....

Swear	.....
<b>(E)</b>	
Martyr	.....
Dark	.....
Father	.....
Bravo	.....
Massage	.....
Heart	.....
<b>(F)</b>	
June	.....
Whom	.....
Mood	.....
Boost	.....
Crew	.....
Clue	.....
<b>(G)</b>	
Wool	.....
Motherhood	.....
Pull	.....
Butcher	.....
Durable	.....
Endure	.....

### Exercise-III

i) Write two words each containing the following sounds:

- (a) /u/ .....
- (b) /ʔ/ .....
- (c) /ʔ/ .....
- (d) /ʔʔ/ .....
- (e) /aʔ/ .....

### Exercise:IV

i) Which of the following does not have the / æ/ sound

- a) Had
- b) Bat
- c) Take
- d) Mat .....

ii) Which of the following does not have the / i/ sound

- a) Bead
- b) Pick
- c) Tin
- d) Big .....

iii) Which of the following does not have the / u:/ sound

- a) Stout
- b) Troupe
- c) Stoop
- d) Route .....

iv) Which of the following does not have the /eI/sound

- a) Take
  - b) Gate
  - c) Late
  - d) Trait .....
- v) Which of the following does not have the /I /sound
- a) Boil
  - b) Boy
  - c) Rejoice
  - d) Now

**Exercise: V**

**Identify and underline the vowel sounds in the following paragraph.**

This morning the alarm didn't go off. I snoozed it once, and the phone acknowledged that I needed another year of sleep. Awakening with a snap in the nick of time, I slipped on my shoes, threw on my bag and scooted to math. The homework... stayed at home. Sliding into my seat, I blearily gazed at the blackboard, realizing that glasses hadn't made it to school either.

The power point was smeary, so I got bored. Why is math being explained with a powerpoint, anyway? There's seven blackboards in the room. With no glasses, deciphering grainy white scrawl on blackboard is easier than pixilated grey digital words on a colored field. The monotony wore on, I started to doodle. Swirls, wiggles, flowers, and spheres flowed from my pen. Soon the ink ran dry, however, as I'd forgotten to refill for several days. Then began the twiddling. Clenched in my lap, my opposable digits became a pocket watch. Each rotation deferred boredom for a moment, ticking down the seconds still left in class...

Source: <http://tdc.ds106.us/tdc417/>)

**Answer Key:**

*Exercise-II:* A. /i:/ B. /i:/ C. /æ/ D. /e/ E. /a:/ F. /u/

*Exercise-IV:* i)c ii) a iii) a iv) d v) d

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## B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH

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COURSE CODE : AA-101

LESSON NO. 15

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SEMESTER - I

APPLIED GRAMMER

UNIT - V

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## SUBJECT -VERB AGREEMENT (CONCORD)

### STRUCTURE

Introduction

Objectives

Defining Subject-Verb Concord

Basic Rule of Subject-Verb Agreement

15.4.1:Rule-I

:Rule-II

:Rule-III

Some More Rules

15.5.1: Rule-IV

15.5.2: Rule-V

15.5.3: Rule-VI

15.5.4: Rule-VII

15.5.5: Rule-VIII

15.5.6: Rule-IX

: Rule-X

: Rule-XI

: Rule-XII

: Rule-XIII : Rule-

XIV

: Rule-XV

: Rule-XVI

Exercise-I

Exercise-II

Exercise-III

Exercise-IV

Exercise-V

Let Us Sum Up

Reference

Suggested Reading

## **INTRODUCTION**

Dear learners, while focusing on English language learning we all do untiring efforts for accumulating words, working on tense structures, understanding pronunciation etc. but even then our language practice may lead us to inadequate learning if the grammatical concord is not understood in its real perspective. Though appears simple yet this component of language learning is of utmost importance. Many people confuse it with right usage of tense forms but actually this is a different concept. Leech and Svartvik in *A Communicative Grammar of English* divide grammatical concord as concord of number ( The boy is.....) and concord of person( He is...). Its thorough study and practice eases your language learning journey. And I assure you, this is not at all a complex area, it is rather a simple yet effective field of study. In examples quoted alongside the rules I will put subjects in *Italics* and underline the verb.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objective of writing this lesson is to introduce you to another very important aspect of English language that we know as subject-verb concord. All the rules governing this agreement shall also be discussed in this lesson. An effort shall also be made to provide you with self-check exercises that help you understand this topic better. You are also expected to go thoroughly through your English text prescribed and locate the use of subject verb agreement in its lessons. Here also, a text-based exercise shall be provided as a model for your further practice.

## **DEFINING SUBJECT-VERB CONCORD**

In a sentence subject and verb are like the wheels of a vehicle which, if not aligned properly, might make the vehicle unstable and difficult to drive. The agreement of a verb with its subject is a necessary phenomenon for the meaningful life journey of a sentence. Any error on this part will not only make the sentence incorrect but also unpleasant yielding a confused meaning. Before proceeding further kindly revisit your school grammar books and refresh upon nouns and pronouns that form the subject in a sentence and also the verb, its various forms and auxiliary verbs.

## BASIC RULE OF SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

### 15.4.1: Rule-I

Leech and Svartvik say that with all verbs except *be* ( is, am, are in the present tense and was, were in the past tense), the question of number concord arises only in the present tense. In the past tense there is no concord variation. The basic & cornerstone rule that governs this entire concept is that a verb agrees with its subject in number. This implies that singular noun takes a singular verb and a plural noun takes a plural verb.

You can remember this with this old saying that “Opposites attract”. This means that a non-‘s’ or ‘es’ subject takes an ‘s’ or ‘es’ verb and vice-versa

Needless to revise here that singular verbs are formed by adding ‘s’ or ‘es’ to the first form of the verb. One might be convinced with an idea that ‘s’ or ‘es’ verbs ( e.g. Goes) are plurals like plural nouns e.g. Boys or Horses. But it is not. You can remember that a noun without ‘s’ or ‘es’ ( means plural subject like Boy) always takes a verb with singular verb i.e. with ‘s’ or ‘es’ form ( e.g. Plays). Let’s take an example:

*The teacher punishes the erring boys.*

Here the teacher is a subject in singular form and shall take a singular verb ( s or es verb).

The Pronoun concord goes as:

*She lost all her life.*

*They lost all their lives.*

### Rule-II:

Another thing that needs to be remembered is that in a sentence you might find many other words between the noun and the verb. But remember that they never affect the above rule. You just need to carefully locate the verb in such sentences:

### Examples:

*The boy, who won the gold medal , belongs to my neighborhood.*

*The wrestler , who known for his tactics, is not participating in this contest.*

### Rule-III: Prepositional Phrase

You may find a prepositional phrase between the subject and the verb, but the agreement of the subject and the verb remains unchanged. Remember that a subject will come before a phrase beginning with *of*.

#### **Examples:**

*The students of this school are very intelligent.*

The phrase ‘**of this school**’ may confuse things for you but practice shall make you careful in such cases. Mentally omit the prepositional phrase to make the subject verb-agreement easier.

*A bouquet of yellow roses lends color and fragrance to the room (not lend).*

When noun and pronoun subjects like some, half, none, more, all, etc. are followed by a prepositional phrase, the form of the verb is decided by the object of the preposition. All of the *apple* is gone. All of the *apples* are gone.

*A lot of the **pie** has been eaten.*

*A lot of the **pies** have disappeared.*

*A third of the **group** is illiterate.*

*A third of the **people** are unemployed.*

*Some of the **pie** is burnt.*

*Some of the **pies** are missing.*

### SOME OTHER RULES

#### **Rule-IV: Indefinite Pronouns**

There are some subjects whose meaning may seem plural but they are actually singular. So they always take a singular verb. These are: each, someone, either, anyone, neither, nobody, one, somebody, no one, anybody, everyone and everybody.

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□

*Someone has insulted the guest.*

*Neither of the men is (not are) happy.*

- *Everyone has performed his or her duty.*
- *Somebody has left her pen here.*

Though the indefinite pronouns like everyone and everybody gives impression of more than one person and may mislead the students to use a plural verb with them. But as said above they are always singular. Each usually takes a prepositional phrase ending in a plural word (Each of boys), thus confusing the verb choice. *Each*, too, is always singular and requires a singular verb.

- *Everyone has eaten the food.*
- *Each of the brothers is supporting us.*

Indefinite pronouns like *all*, *any*, *some*, *most* can be more confusing. Remember that these are singular or plural depending on whether the thing referred by them is countable or not. Be careful in choosing a verb to accompany such pronouns.

- *Some of the dogs are missing.*
- *Some of the water is gone.*
- *Most of the news is good. (singular)*
- *Most of the walls were yellow.(plural)*
- *All of the parents were angry.(plural)*

Similarly in the use of *none* one needs to be careful. Usually this is taken as singular meaning ‘not one,’ so it takes a singular verb.

- *None of your friends shares this responsibility.*

□

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- *None of the students have done their homework.* (Note the use of their) Further, if one of the words *every*, *or no* comes before the subject, the verb is singular.

*No joking or mocking is allowed.*

*Every man is required to get up.*

### **Rule-V**

If your sentence has a positive and a negative subject out of which one is plural and the other singular, the verb should agree with the positive subject.

- *The department members but not the chair have decided not to teach on Valentine's Day.*
- *It is not the party members but *the president* who decides this issue.*
- *It was *the speaker*, not his ideas, that has provoked the students to riot.*

### **Rule-VI**

Sometimes words like *along with*, *as well as*, *besides*, *not*, etc. separate the subject and the verb . This can mislead you but remember that these words and phrases are not part of the subject. These do not compound the subjects (like the word *and*). Ignore them and use a singular verb when the subject is singular.

#### ***Examples:***

*The teacher, along with the students, is expected shortly. Honor as well as insult, is the part of life.*

### **Rule-VII**

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Sometimes you might find an expletive construction which begins with the words like *there* and *here* . Remember these are never subjects. The subject is usually found later on in the sentence.

- There are *two causes* for disease.  
There is *no reason* to hate you.  
Here are *two vehicles* parked in the lawn.
- There were *five marbles* on the shelf. (were, agrees with the subject marbles)

### **Rule-VIII**

It is not necessary that subjects always come before verbs . The case is different in questions.. Be sure about the subject before deciding the proper verb form to use.

- Does *Snooby* usually eat bread?
- Where are the *rules* of this game?

### **Rule- IX: Coordinated subjects**

If two or more subjects are connected by *and* use a plural verb. But if the two subjects separated by *and* refer to the same person or thing, the verb is singular.

**Example:**

- *A white shirt and a blue cap* are required for tomorrow.
- *Chicken and rice* is my favorite dish.

### **Rule-X: Notional concord with collective nouns**

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Collective nouns may be singular or plural, depending on their use in the sentence.

The following are some examples of collective nouns:

Army, committee, board, commission, council, audience, police, crowd, audience, flock, public, group, swarm, club, team, herd, senate, class, crowd.

If the group is considered as a single undivided body, the singular tends to be used as per the basic grammatical concord rule. For example:

*The Police* is searching the thieves. (Police is considered as one unit—singular.)

*A new family* have moved in across the street.

If the verb agrees with the idea of plural in the group noun rather than the actual singular form of the noun , it is called *notional concord*.

*The Police* were asked to give their musical backgrounds. (Police is considered as separate individuals—plural)

*A new family* has moved in across the street.

### **Rule-XI: Proximity**

If you find *or*, *either/or*, or *neither/nor* in a sentence , the verb agrees with the noun or pronoun closest to it, that is the last subject. This is the case of proximity.

#### ***Examples:***

Neither *the learners* nor *the coach* agrees to play. Neither the *coach* nor the *learners* agree on that play.

If the subjects of a sentence are both singular and are connected by the words *or*, *nor*, *neither/nor*, *either/or*, and *not only/but also* , the verb is singular.

*Jimmy or Conny* is to blame for the mistake.

### **Rule-XII**

If the subject consist of units of measurement , money ,weight or time , the singular verb form is usually used .

- *Five dollars* is (not are) is a big sum.
- *Ten days* is (not are) not enough time for preparation.

Expressions of time, are usually singular when the amount is considered one unit. If not,

It is used in the plural sense:

There were *thirty minutes* to cover the distance.

Four *meters of rope* *was* required to tie this firewood.

### **Rule-XIII**

Learners, you may come across some nouns which look plural in form but are actually singular in meaning.

- *Mathematics* appears (not are) difficult to some people.
- *Physics* is (not are) not an interesting subject.

Titles of books, movies, novels, etc. can also appear plural but these are treated as singular and take a singular verb.

- *The Burbs* *is* a movie starring Tom Hanks.

### **Rule-XIV**

If two infinitives are separated by *and* they take the plural form of the verb.

*To laugh and to cry* require a great skill.

### **Rule-XV**

When gerunds are used as the subject of a sentence, they take the singular form of the verb; but, when they are linked by *and*, they take a plural form.

*Standing* in the snow *was* a horrible experience.

*Playing flute and dancing* are my hobbies **15.5.13:**

### **Rule-XVI**

The word *were* replaces *was* in sentences that express a subjunctive mood (wish or are contrary to fact):

#### ***Example:***

- I would be happy if *he* were here..
- *I wish it* **were** Friday.

*She requested that he **raise** his hand.*

We may normally think that 'he' be followed by was, not were because he is singular. But 'he' isn't present here actually. It is just an unfulfilled wish. So we say were, not was. The sentence demonstrates the **subjunctive mood**.

### **EXERCISE-I**

**REWRITE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES AFTER CHOOSING THE RIGHT VERB FORM IN THE BRACKETS.** 1. Your cow (moo-moos) too much.

---

2. The man with the beard (look-looks) like your son.

---

3. The men in black (seem-seems) to be officers.

---

4. Jim Bayliss (drive-drives) very carefully.

---

5. The students (read-reads) five hours aday.

---

6. That fair child (live-lives) across the street.
7. He (sell-sells) toys for his livelihood.
8. The old maid (walk-walks) to temple every day.
9. The weather in Srinagar (appear-appears) to be cold this weekend.
10. The captain of the basketball team (shout-shouts) toomuch.
11. Everybody (was-were) asked to be attentive.
12. In a class, only few of the players (finishes-finish) the work in time.
13. Sixty days (is-are) not enough time to completethe project.

---

14. All of the workers (is-are) proceeding on leave.

---

15. On our street (is-are) many speed breakers.

---

16. It (don't-doesn't) make any meaning .

---

17. The value of Rupee in the international market (has-have) decreased.

---

18. The principal and her husband (is-are) present here.

---

19. Either the pitcher or the base runners (was-were) caught napping.

---

20. One of my friends (believe-believes) in my capabilities.

---

## **EXERCISE-II**

### **FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE RIGHT AUXILIARY VERB.**

1. Either my father or my brothers ..... going to sell the house.
2. Neither my brothers nor my father ..... going to sell the house.
3. either my brothers or my father responsible?
4. either my father or my brothers responsible?
5. Neither of the two traffic lights ..... working.
6. Which shirt do you want for Christmas? Either ..... fine with me.
7. There ..... a dog, a cat, and a bird in the garage.

## **EXERCISE-III**

### **IDENTIFY THE SINGULAR SUBJECTS & CIRCLE THEM.**

- Mumps, Utensils, Economics.
- Social Studies, Boxes.
- Grapes, Linguists, Measles.
- Calisthenics, Statistics , Praises.
- Civics, Physics, Rows.
- Gymnastics, Phonics, Phones.
  
- News, Acrobatics, Theatres.
- Aesthetics, Thesis, Mathematics.

## **15.9 EXERCISE-IV :-**

### **WRITE RIGHT OR WRONG FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES AFTER RECOLLECTING THE RULES.**

- A) Physics are one of the most uncomfortable subjects.

- 
- B) One hundred dollars are not a lot of money to some people.
- 
- C) Ram doesn't look very happy today.
- 
- D) Two minutes is the amount of time it takes me to reach my workplace.
- 
- E) It doesn't seem so pleasant today.
- 
- F) A pound of chicken costs about a hundred rupees.
- 
- G) They doesn't think they'll reach in time tonight.
- 
- H) He don't speak the facts of the matter.
- 

**: EXERCISE-V :-**

**TEXT BASED QUESTIONS**

Choose the correct one:

- a. He no less than you ( is/are) guilty.
- b. What I say and do (is/are) none of his business.

- c. Our faith in ourselves ( is/are) a key to success.
- d. To her surprise there (was/were) only one leaf on the creeper.
- e. Logic and rhetoric (develop/develops) a man's ability to debate and argue.
- f. One of these stories (deal/deals) with senile dementia.
- g. Through the essays(shine/shines) Lamb'spersonality.
- h. It is right attitude that (count/counts) in life.
- i. One of vivid memories of my early childhood(is/are) of the two men , each in his traditional attire, discussing spiritual matters.

**Answer Key:**

**Ex.-I:**

- |            |              |             |
|------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. moos    | 2. looks     | 3. Seem     |
| 4. Drives  | 5. read      | 6. lives    |
| 7. Sells   | 8. walks     | 9. appears  |
| 10. shouts | 11. was      | 12. finish  |
| 13. Is     | 14. are      | 15. doesn't |
| 16. Are    | 17. has      | 18. are     |
| 19. Were   | 20. Believes |             |

**Ex.-II**

- |        |       |        |        |
|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| 1) Are | 2) Is | 3) Are |        |
| 4) Is  | 5) Is | 6) Is  | 7) Are |

**Ex.-III:** Mumps, Economics, Social Studies , Measles, Calisthenics, Statistics,  
Civics, Physics, Gymnastics, Phonics, News,  
Acrobatics, Aesthetics, Thesis, Mathematics.

**Ex.-IV:**      A)      Wrong              B) Wrong              C) Right  
                 D)      Right              E) Right              F) Right  
                 G)      Wrong              H) Wrong

**Ex.-V:**      a. is              b. is              c. is              d. was  
                 e. develop      f. deals              g. shines      h. counts      i. is

### LET US SUM UP

Dear learners, by now you must have got a good hold on the subject- verb concord. It is only your practice that would make your decisions quick. Get hold of any text and locate the subject-verb agreement there. The more you read the more comfortable you will be in deciding the right verb for a subject. Remember that only the subject affects the verb and nothing else.

### REFERENCE

□ Leech, Geoffrey, Jan Svartvik. *A Communicative Grammar of English ( Third edition)* . Pearson Longman,2004.

### SUGGESTED READING

□ The Pierian Spring: An Anthology for BA, B.Sc, B.Com and BCA, first year, University ofJammu.

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## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 16**

**SEMESTER - I**

**APPLIED GRAMMER**

**UNIT - V**

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### **ANTONYMS**

#### **STRUCTURE**

Introduction

Objectives

Defining Antonymy

Types of Antonyms

Forming Antonyms

Choosing the Right Antonym

List of Antonyms

Antonyms from the Text

Let Us Sum Up

Self-Assessment Questions

Reference

Suggested Reading

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The meaning of a lexeme/word may be defined in terms of its reference or denotation & also in terms of its sense relations or lexical relations or relation

that occurs between words themselves. In this lesson you will be introduced to one of such sense relations called Antonyms.

## OBJECTIVES

Dear learners, in this lesson you will be introduced to Antonyms & their usage. Antonyms are important part of vocabulary & understanding them improves your comprehension skills. An exercise shall also be provided to give you a practice on the knowledge gained in this lesson.

## DEFINING ANTONYMY

Antonymy deals with the oppositeness of a word whose meaning is in contrast to the other word. The genesis of Antonym is in Greek combination of the two words ‘anti,’ meaning ‘against’ or ‘opposite,’ and ‘onym,’ meaning ‘name.’ E.g. *Happy* is the opposite of the word *sad*. Antonyms are very important part of vocabulary. In order to completely understand the meaning of a word we look for its antonym. Many words would reveal their true meaning on understanding their antonyms only. *White* is something not *black* in colour. Antonyms enrich our vocabulary and also improve our writing skills. Since a word might have many antonyms so a great deal of care is to be taken while using antonyms because every word can not be used as an antonym to a word in a sentence; these are context specific. Every good dictionary provides antonym of a word . You need to understand all the antonyms of a word & their contextual use. Some students find antonyms easier than synonyms for their concrete concepts .

## TYPES OF ANTONYMS

Jackson in his book *Words and their Meanings* writes that the relation of antonyms is not uniform. He divides antonyms into three categories of oppositeness.

- 1) Gradable Antonyms:** These are such adjectives which do not refer to absolute qualities but which may be subject to comparison or qualification.

For example, we can say of a man that one is very short, very tall, quite short, quite tall or taller or shorter . Here the adjective is relative to the noun

which is modification. Jacobson gives another interesting feature also. If you wish to ask questions about the quality concerned only one of them (either tall or short) is normally used. We normally say “How tall is he?” not “How short is he?” If we want to ask the latter, this means we have already identified that one is short. And while answering “How tall?” we say “Five feet tall” not “Five feet small”.

*For example:*

Narrow-Wide

Tall –Short

Small- Large

Weak- Strong

- 2) **Complementary Antonyms:** Such antonyms are exact opposites and offer only one word as antonym. For instance: Buy-Sell, Before-After etc. Complementarity means that the denial of one member of the pair implies the assertion of the other member. If one is not a boy, she is a girl; if one is not a seller, he is a buyer; if one is not dead then he is alive. It means there is a clear opposition with Complementary antonyms than with the Gradable ones.

*For example*

Alive-Dead

Male-Female

Open-Shut

Relinquish-Retain.

But Jacobson makes it clear that ‘any non-gradable antonym may be made gradable’. E.g. One can be ‘more alive than dead’, ‘the door may be almost shut or not quite open’.

- 3) **Converses or Relational Opposites:** In these pair of antonyms one member of the pair refers to the converse relation referred to by the other member E.g. If the bathroom is over the hall, then the hall is under the bathroom; If John is selling toffees to Jane then Jane is buying toffees from John. It means

a relation exists between these synonyms. Jacobson says they “represent two (opposite) perspectives on the same relation.” *For Example:*

Receive –Give Sell-Buy

Wife-Husband

Throw-Catch

Talk-Listen

## **FORMING ANTONYMS**

Like other languages English too forms antonyms by adding a prefix or suffix to the base word. These prefixes are:

de-

dis-

il-

im-

in- ir-

non-

un-

mis-

**Note:**

*Remem*

*ber that*

*a prefix*

*of a*

*word*

*may*

*change*  
*for its*  
*derivati*  
*ve. For*  
*instance*  
*, the*  
*antony*  
*m of*  
*Fortune*  
*is*  
*Misfort*  
*unae*  
*but the*  
*antony*  
*m of*  
*Fortuna*  
*te is*  
*Unfortu*  
*nate*  
*and not*  
*Misfort*  
*unate.*

**1. Use of prefix de-**

Compose-

Decompose

Attach-	Detach
Recognize-	De recognize

## 2. Use of prefix dis-

Arm-	Disarm
Array-	Disarray
Engage-	Disengage
Advantage -	Disadvantage
Locate-	Dislocate
Agree-	Disagree
Like-	Dislike
Encourage-	Discourage
Courteous-	Discourteous
Advantage-	Disadvantage
Continue-	Discontinue
Order-	Disorder
Qualified-	Disqualified
Satisfied-	Dissatisfied
Appear -	Disappear
Encourage -	Discourage
Approval -	Disapproval
Loyal -	Disloyal
Magnetize-	Demagnetize
Obedient-	Disobedient

Agree - Disagree

**3. Use of prefix il-**

Legal- Illegal

Literate- Illiterate

**4. Use of Prefix im-**

Some words form their antonyms when a prefix im- is added to them.

Proper- Improper

Material- Immaterial

Modest- Immodest

Possible- Impossible

Perfect- Imperfect

Probable- Improbable

Balance- Imbalance

Mature- Immature

Measurable - Immeasurable

Mobile- Immobile

Moral - Immoral

Movable- Immovable

Patient- Impatient Polite –

Impolite

Mature- Immature

**5. Use of Prefix in-**

Some words form their antonyms when a prefix in- is added to them.

Justice- Injustice

Capable-	Incapable
Competent-	Incompetent
Corrigible-	Incorrigible
Sufficient-	Insufficient
Significant-	Insignificant
Separable-	Inseparable
Convenient-	Inconvenient
Accesible-	Inaccessible
Considerate-	Inconsiderate
Appropriate-	Inappropriate
Definite-	Indefinite
Sincere-	Insincere
Accurate -	Inaccurate
Attention -	Inattention
Capable -	Incapable

*Note: Before the words beginning with the letters 'm' or 'p', the prefix 'in' changes to 'im' (impolite).*

## **6. Use of Prefix ir-**

Some words form their antonyms when a prefix ir- is added to them/ base word.

Relevant-	Irrelevant
Regular-	Irregular
Responsible-	Irresponsible

Reparable –	Irreparable
Rational -	Irrational
Recoverable-	Irrecoverable

## 7. Use of prefix un-

Many words form their antonyms when a prefix un- is added to them.

Believer-	Unbeliever
Adjusted-	Unadjusted
Responsive-	Unresponsive
Achievable-	Unachievable
Just-	Unjust
Fair-	Unfair
Truthful-	Untruthful
Grateful-	Ungrateful
Friendly-	Unfriendly
Necessary-	Unnecessary
Original-	Unoriginal
Attended-	Unattended

Necessary-	Unnecessary
Foreseen-	Unforeseen
Available-	Unavailable
Authorized-	Unauthorized
Healthy –	Unhealthy
Usual-	Unusual

Sure-                      Unsure

**8. Use of Prefix mis-**

Some words form their antonyms when a prefix mis- is added to them.

Interpret-              Misinterpret

Understand-          Misunderstand

Judge-                  Misjudge

Management-        Mismanagement

**9. Use of suffix -less**

Some words form their antonyms when a suffix -less is added to the root word

Careful-                Careless

Faithful-               Faithless

Colorful-              Colorless

Valuable -             Valueless

**CHOOSING THE RIGHT ANTONYM**

As discussed earlier, the antonyms might appear deceptive. We need to be careful while deciding an antonym. For this we should be well acquainted

with the nature & meaning of the word. If the word is positive in nature the antonym will be negative. Out of the probable choices eliminate the words that are no clear antonyms. For instance take a word *Foment* & the options are:

- A) mitigate            B) engender  
C) check               D) mollify              E) satiate

The words mitigate and mollify are close synonyms which mean “to reduce or soften in pain or intensity, to make less severe.” So, only three remaining viable answer choices are left & our task is eased.

The following are the some words against which a list of antonyms is given. You need to keep a standard dictionary alongside to clearly know the meaning of a word & of its antonyms. Regular practice shall acquaint you with them.

S.No	Word	Antonyms
1.	<i>Abandon</i>	Adopt, Defend, Occupy, Seek, Advocate, Favor, Prosecute, Support, Assert, Haunt, Protect, Undertake, Cherish, Hold, Pursue, Uphold, Claim, Keep, Retain, Court, Maintain.
2.	<i>Abase</i>	Advance, Elevate, Honor, Raise, Aggrandize, Exalt, Promote, Uplift, Dignify.
3.	<i>Abase</i>	Accuse, Charge, Condemn, Impeach, Obligate, Bind, Compel, Convict, Inculcate, Oblige.
4.	Absorb	Cast Out, Dissipate, Emit, Put Forth, Shoot Forth, Disgorge, Distract, Exude, Radiate, Throw Off, Disperse, Eject, Give Up, Send Out, Vomit.

5	Absurd	Certain, Incontrovertible, Rational, Substantial, Consistent, Indisputable, Reasonable, True, Demonstrable, Indubitable, Sagacious, Undeniable, Demonstrated, Infallible, Sensible, Unquestionable, Established, Logical, Sound, Wise, Incontestable.
6	Abuse	Applaud, Conserve, Favor, Protect, Sustain, Benefit, Consider, Laud, Regard, Tend, Care For, Eulogize, Panegyryze, Respect, Uphold, Cherish, Extol, Praise, Shield, Vindicate.
7	Acquaintance	Ignorance, Ignoring, Inexperience, Unfamiliarity.
8	Active	Dull, Inactive, Lazy, Slow, Heavy, Indolent, Quiescent, Sluggish, Idle, Inert, Quiet, Stupid.
9	Add	Diminish, Lessen, Remove, Withdraw, Deduct, Dissever, Reduce, Subtract.
10	Alarm	Assurance, Calmness, Confidence, Repose, Security.
11	Alive	Dead, Defunct, Dull, Lifeless, Deceased, Dispirited, Inanimate, Spiritless.
12	Barrier	Opening, Road, Transit, Entrance, Passage, Thoroughfare, Way.

13	Benevolence	Barbar it y, Greediness, Ill- Will, Malignity, Self-Seeking, Brutality, Harshness, Inhumanity, Niggardliness,
		Stinginess, Churlishness, Illiberality, Malevolence, Selfishness, Unkindness.
14	Pernicious	Advantageous, Favorable, Helpful, Profitable, Serviceable, Beneficent, Good, Invigorating, Rejuvenating, Useful, Beneficial, Healthful, Life- Giving, Salutary, Wholesome.
15	Persuade	Deter, Discourage, Dissuade, Hinder, Hold Back, Repel, Restrain.
16	Religion	Atheism, Godlessness, Irreligion, Sacrilege, Ungodliness, Blasphemy, Impiety, Profanity, Unbelief, Wickedness.
17	Support	Betray, Cast Down, Desert, Drop, Overthrow, Wreck.
18	Terse	Lengthy, Long, Prolix, Tedious, Verbose, Wordy.
19	Union	Disunion, Divorce, Separation, Contrariety, Disjunction, Division, Schism, Severance Decomposition, Dissociation.

## LIST OF ANTONYMS

Here is a list of some common antonyms. Read and learn them after revising their meanings:

Absence -	Presence
Accept -	Refuse
Alive -	Dead
Always -	Never
Ancient -	Modern
Answer -	Question, Query
Approach -	Recede, Depart
Abundant -	Scarce
Admit -	Deny
Advance -	Retreat, Retire
Artificial -	Natural
Arrival -	Departure
Ascend -	Descend
Attack -	Defense
Attractive -	Repulsive
Asleep -	Awake
Ally -	Enemy
Bad -	Good
Backward -	Forward, Onward
Bend -	Straighten

Beautiful -	Ugly
Beginning -	Ending
Below -	Above
Bent -	Straight
Big -	Small, Little
Blunt -	Sharp
Better -	Worse
Best -	Worst
Blame -	Praise
Bless -	Curse
Bitter -	Sweet
Borrow -	Lend
Bravery -	Cowardice
Build -	Destroy, Demolish
Bold -	Timid, Meek
Bright -	Dull
Broad -	Narrow
Clear -	Vague, Cloudy
Careful -	Rush, Careless
Calm -	Troubled
Captivity -	Freedom, Liberty
Cellar -	Attic
Cheap -	Dear, Expensive
Close -	Distant

Clever -	Stupid
Combine -	Separate
Clockwise -	Anti-Clockwise
Correct -	Incorrect
Conceal -	Reveal
Comfort -	Discomfort
Courage -	Cowardice
Cruel -	Kind
Courteous -	Discourteous, Rude
Cunning -	Simple
Danger -	Safety
Dark -	Light
Deep -	Shallow
Decrease -	Increase
Demand -	Supply
Despair -	Hope
Disease -	Health
Dismal -	Cheerful
Doctor -	Patient
Dry -	Wet
Dull -	Clear, Bright
Dusk -	Dawn
Early -	Late

Easy -	Difficult
Ebb -	Flow
East -	West
Economize -	Waste
Entrance -	Exit
Employer -	Employee
Empty -	Full
Excited -	Calm
End -	Beginning
Expand -	Contract
Export -	Import
Exterior -	Interior
External -	Internal
Fail -	Succeed
Feeble -	Strong, Powerful
Foolish -	Wise
Fast -	Slow
Few -	Many
Forelegs -	Hind Legs
Find -	Lose
First -	Last
Freedom -	Captivity
Fold -	Unfold

Forget -	Remember
Found -	Lost
Fresh -	Stale
Frank -	Secretive
Full -	Empty
Generous -	Mean
Gentle -	Rough
Gather -	Distribute
Glad -	Sorry
Gloomy -	Cheerful
Giant -	Dwarf, Pygmy
Great -	Small, Little
Guardian -	Ward
Guest -	Host
Guilty -	Innocent
Happy -	Sad
Harmful -	Harmless
Hate -	Love
Heavy -	Light
Height -	Depth
Hero -	Coward
Horizontal -	Vertical
Hinder -	Aid, Help

Honest -	Dishonest
Humble -	Proud
Imitation -	Original
Immense -	Tiny
Imprison -	Free
Include -	Exclude
Inferior -	Superior
Inhale -	Exhale
Interior -	Exterior, Outside
Internal -	External
Intentional -	Accidental
Join -	Separate
Junior -	Senior
Knowledge -	Ignorance
Laugh -	Cry
Lazy -	Energetic
Land -	Sea
Landlord -	Tenant
Large -	Little, Small
Last -	First
Lawyer -	Client
Lender -	Borrower
Lengthen -	Shorten

Light -	Dark, Heavy
Leader -	Follower
Little -	Much
Lofty -	Lowly
Loud -	Soft
Loss -	Find, Win
Low -	High
Mad -	Sane
Master -	Servant
Maximum -	Minimum
Me -	You
Merry -	Mirthless, Sad
Minority -	Majority
Miser -	Spendthrift
Narrow -	Wide
Near -	Far, Distant
Neat -	Untidy
New -	Old
Night -	Day
Noisy -	Quiet
North -	South
Odd -	Even
Offer -	Refuse

Optimist -	Pessimist
Out -	In
Parent -	Child
Past -	Present
Peace -	War
Permanent -	Temporary
Please -	Displease
Plentiful -	Scarce
Poetry -	Prose
Poverty -	Wealth
Powerful -	Feeble, Weak
Polite -	Impolite, Rude
Private -	Public
Prudent -	Imprudent
Pretty -	Unsightly, Ugly
Pure -	Impure
Qualified -	Unqualified
Rapid -	Slow
Regularly -	Irregularly
Rich -	Poor
Right -	Wrong, Left
Rigid -	Pliable, Soft
Rough -	Smooth

Satisfactory -	Unsatisfactory
Security -	Insecurity
Scatter –	Collect
Serious -	Trivial
Second hand -	New
Sense -	Nonsense
Shopkeeper -	Customer
Singular -	Plural
Simple -	Complicated
Slim -	Thick, Stout
Solid -	Liquid
Sober -	Drunk
Speaker -	Listener
Sour -	Sweet
Sow -	Reap
Stand -	Lie
Straight -	Crooked
Strong -	Weak
Success -	Failure
Sunny -	Cloudy
Take -	Give
Tall -	Short
Teacher -	Pupil

Thick -	Thin
Tight -	Slack, Loose
Top -	Bottom
Transparent -	Opaque
Up -	Down
Vacant -	Occupied
Victory -	Defeat
Virtue -	Vice
Voluntary -	Compulsory
Wax -	Wane
Wisdom -	Folly
Within –	Without

#### **ANTONYMS FROM THE TEXT:**

Dear learners, the antonyms given above are just few examples. Make a list of words while you read the text prescribed and write their antonyms as a preparation for the examination. Some of them are done below:

<b>Word</b>	<b>Antonym</b>	<b>Word</b>	<b>Antonym</b>
Humour	Seriousness	Ease	Difficulty
Harm	Benefit	Crazy	Sane
Virtue	Vice	Powerful	Powerless
Transparent	Opaque	Material	Spiritual
Amiable	Unfriendly	Intentional	Accidental
Pride	Humility	Mean	Generous

Wisdom	Foolishness	Prosperity	Adversity
--------	-------------	------------	-----------

Gentle	Harsh	Success	Failure
Hostile	Friendly	Blessings	Curse
Impediment	Advantage	Diligence	Laziness
Condemn	Appreciate	Defective	Perfect
Discourse	Silence	Contradictory	Compatible
Censure	Appreciate	Admiration	Compatible
Obligatory	Optional	Rigorous	Mild
Humble	Arrogant	Commend	Disapprove
Ignoble	Reputed	Wit	Foolishness
Malignant	Benign	Grave	Cheerful
Unforgiving	Forgiving	Muster	Separate
Sturdy	Weak	Odious	Pleasing
Probable	Improbable	Temerity	Care
Diversity	Uniform	Perpetual	Temporary
Benevolent	Unkind	Dignity	Indignity
Undermine	Strengthen	Apparent	Unclear

Incense	Stink	Freedom	Slavery
Joyfully	Sadly	Slack	Busy
Acquaintance	Stranger	Sacred	Unholy
Virtue	Vice	Spiritual	Material
Victory	Defeat	Miserable	Happy
Strange	Familiar	Bestow	Deny

Strife	Success	Impasse	Agreement
Glimpse	Stare	Scorn	Admiration
Congenial	Hostile	Dreary	Lively
Chivalric	Cowardly	Impatient	Patient
Scarcely	Frequently	Zeal	Disinterest
Smite	Boost	Threshold	Final
Frail	Strong	Demise	Rise

### LET US SUM UP

So, in this chapter you learnt about one of the sense relations called antonymy. You must have noticed that though a number of word classes are represented by these words(lexemes) like verb, noun, preposition & adjective but the relation of antonyms operates most widely in adjectives. You have learnt about

various kinds of antonyms. Hope you are also well- acquainted with various pairs of antonyms discussed above. Now let's move to self- assessment of our understanding of the lesson.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS Exercise**

#### **-I**

1. Choose the correct prefix for the words correct and appropriate to create their antonyms.

- In
- Im
- Un
- Non

Ans:.....

2. Choose the correct prefix for the word Perfect and Possible to create their antonyms.

- Im
- In
- Un
- Non

Ans:.....

3. Choose the correct prefix for the words Legitimate and Legal to create their antonyms .

- In
- Il
- De
- Dis

Ans:.....

4. Choose the correct prefix for the words Locate and Order to create their antonyms.

- Im
- Il □ Ir
- Dis

Ans:.....

5. Choose the correct prefix for the words Important and Adjusted to create their antonyms

- Im
- Un
- De
- Dis

Ans:.....

6. Choose the correct prefix for the words Compose and Attach to create their antonyms.

- In
- Non
- De
- Dis

Ans:.....

7. Choose the correct prefix for the words Accurate and Attention to create their antonyms.

- In
- Il
- De

- Dis

Ans:.....

8. Choose the correct prefix for the words Like and Agree to create their antonyms.

- In
- Il
- De
- Dis

Ans:.....

9. Choose the correct prefix for the words Relevant and Reparable to create their antonyms.

- Ir □ Il
- Im
- De

Ans:.....

10. Choose the correct prefix for the words Typical and Political to create their antonyms.

- Un
- Il □ A
- De

Ans:.....

### Exercise-II

- a. Choose the correct antonym of Empty.

- Accuse
- Full
- Distract

- Charge      Ans. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Choose the correct antonym of Mad.
  - Impeach
  - Obligate
  - Sane
  - Convict      Ans. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Choose the correct antonym of Coward.
  - Brave
  - Emit
  - Outrageous
  - Enemy      Ans. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Choose the correct antonym of Quiet.
  - Opaque
  - Noisy
  - Straight
  - Important      Ans. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Choose the correct antonym of Opaque.
  - Translucent
  - Brittle
  - Transparent
  - Straight      Ans. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Choose the correct antonym of Offer .
  - Refuse
  - Reuse

- Propose
  - Give Ans.\_\_\_\_\_
- g. Choose the correct antonym of Bright.
- White
  - Shine
  - Dull
  - Dirty Ans.\_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise-III

- a. Which of the following is not an antonym of Active.
- lethargic
  - Idle
  - Sluggish
  - Lively Ans.\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Which of the following is not an antonym of Charming.
- Obnoxious
  - Gross
  - Delightful
  - Vulgar Ans.\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Which of the following is not an antonym of Demolish.
- Build
  - Destroy
  - Construct
  - Create Ans.\_\_\_\_\_
- d. Which of the following is not an antonym of Praise.

- Abuse
- Approve
- Censure
- Reproach      Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

e. Which of the following is not an antonym of Sensibility.

- Coldness
- Feeling
- Insensibility
- Numbness      Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Exercise-IV:**

Identify the kinds of antonymy of the following pairs:

- a) Captive-Free, Fast-Slow, Fixed-Loose  
 b) Come-Go, Give-Take, Wide-Narrow

#### **Answer Key:**

#### **Exercise-I:**

- |       |       |        |        |       |
|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| 1. In | 2. Im | 3. Il  | 4. Dis | 5. Un |
| 6. De | 7. In | 8. Dis | 9. Ir  | 10. A |

#### **Exercise-II:**

- |                |           |          |          |
|----------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| a. Full        | b. Sane   | c. Brave | d. Noisy |
| e. Transparent | f. Refuse | g. Dull  |          |

#### **Exercise-III:**

- |            |               |            |
|------------|---------------|------------|
| a. Lively  | b. Delightful | c. Destroy |
| d. Approve | e. Feeling    |            |

#### **Exercise-IV:**

- a. Converses                      b. Complementary

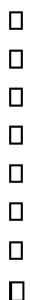
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Jackson, Howard. *Words and their Meanings*. Longman. London, 1991.

### **SUGGESTED READING:**

- *A Complete Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms* by Chicago Fleming H. Revel Company.
- *Synonyms and Antonyms*, by James Champlin Fernald. Funk & Wagnalis Company. New York & London. □ *Analysing Sentences* by Noel Burton-Roberts. Longman. London.

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## **B.A./B.COM - I : GENERAL ENGLISH**

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**COURSE CODE : AA-101**

**LESSON NO. 17**

**SEMESTER - I**

**APPLIED GRAMMER**

**UNIT - V**

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### **SYNONYMS**

#### **STRUCTURE**

Introduction

Objectives

Defining Synonyms

Importance of Synonyms

Types of Synonyms

Choosing the Right Synonym

List of Synonyms

Synonyms from the Text

Let Us Sum Up

Self-Assessment Questions

References

Suggested Reading

## INTRODUCTION

Once you gain sufficient knowledge of English and are ready to use correct sentence structures you start facing another problem i.e. challenge of vocabulary. A good treasure of words and an understanding of their contextual use is a great help to the English users. This chapter shall discuss synonyms which are words similar or near in meaning to other words. The word synonym takes its origin in Greek. “*Syn*” means same and “*onoma*” means name meaning ‘with the same name’. Synonyms help you understand a word in its totality and give you ample opportunities to avoid sounding repetitive, monotonous or stale.

## OBJECTIVES

Dear learners, in this lesson you will be introduced to an aspect of sense relations which is called synonymy. In addition to listing of various synonyms of words an exercise shall also be provided to test your knowledge of these word relations.

### 17.3 DEFINING SYNONYMS

A language consists of words & we use them to express ourselves. Some of them are opposite in meanings; some share similarities and if we interchange these words the meaning of the sentence remains (almost) unchanged. There might be some other which do not share anything between them. Words having similarity of meanings are called synonyms of each other. There might be some words which are very close in meanings whereas some other might be less closer but can sometimes be used as substitutes in a given context.

*Merriam-Webster’s New Dictionary of Synonyms* defines synonyms as:

*Synonyms, therefore, are only such words as may be defined wholly, or almost wholly, in the same terms. Usually they are distinguished from one another by an added implication or connotation, or they may differ in their idiomatic use or in their application.* (1984:24)

Burton & Humphries in “Mastering English Language” say that synonyms are not instantly interchangeable; one needs to find out whether the synonym chosen carries the shade of the intended meaning. For

instance *Slay* is synonym of *Kill* but these can not be interchanged in this sentence: “Fifteen killed on country’s roads in Bank Holiday Black Week.” Two words are rarely the same though they may be similar. So the words appropriate to the context must be used.

### IMPORTANCE OF SYNONYMS

Synonyms are important for the following reasons:

- These enhance our better understanding of a word.
- These words provide us with variety of choices to express our exact intention.
- If the same word is repeated time & again our expression becomes confusing. Synonyms help us reduce redundancy & make our communication more pleasant.
- Many speakers might be using/misusing the same word to utter thoughts & feelings so varied & unlike. Knowledge of synonyms help reduce this linguistic poverty.
- We can remember a word better by remembering where it is slightly different in meanings from its synonyms.

### TYPES OF SYNONYMS

Dear learners, as mentioned earlier, it is not necessary that any two given words are always synonyms. They might be synonymous in one particular context whereas in another they might not. Different linguists classify synonyms in different ways. Klaus-Bernhard Vomend in his book *Different Kinds of Synonymy in Language* divides them as Absolute Synonyms, Complete Synonyms, Cognitive Synonyms & Plesionyms. Whereas Quine makes it simpler & says that there are two kinds of synonymy: complete synonymy and partial synonymy. Jacobson in his book *Words and their Meanings* writes about two types viz. Strict synonymy & Loose synonymy. Let me simplify it for you.

**Absolute / Complete /Strict Synonyms:** When a pair of lexemes is exactly interchangeable in any imaginable context, these lexemes called absolute or complete synonyms. They are the words having identical meaning components. In more specific terms, words are complete synonyms if and only if they share all

ingredients with one another . But very few pairs qualify to be this kind of synonyms because both the words have to be either normal or abnormal in a particular context and also has the same ratio of distribution.

*For example: Big and Large*

- He is a *big* boy . ( Normal)
- He is a *large* boy.( Less normal)

This is also called *Strict synonymy* but linguists doubt whether this synonymy exists. Jacobson gives two reasons that work against this: One, due to the economy principle most of the similar meaning words of a language keep becoming obsolete & the idea of synonymy becomes weaker as the language can not afford to have this luxury for example: Airport & Aerodrome. As airport became more popular Aerodrome became obsolete. Second, if such synonyms occur in a language, slowly the differentiation of meanings starts and one of the words is excluded. Jacobson gives an example of French words *mouton* which originally meant *sheep* but over a period of time *mutton* just refers to the meat of the sheep rather than sheep.

**Cognitive Synonyms:** Cognitive synonymy (sometimes called descriptive synonymy, referential synonymy or propositional synonymy) is a special relation between at least two lexemes. Examples of cognitive synonymy are: *fade*, *die*, *decease*, *nibble off*, *kick the bucket*.

**Plesionyms or Partial or Near Synonyms:** This synonymy is context restricted. Synonyms which are not exactly interchangeable in any context are called Near synonyms or Plesionyms. They yield different truth conditions in a given context. The difference lies in the pragmatic or interpersonal connotations of the user. To be more simple, when words share most of the

necessary components or constituents they fall in this category. For example, the words *finish* and *terminate* may share most of the characteristics with one another, but they are still different in some respects.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT SYNONYM

So, synonyms can not be described in terms of sameness rather they are interchangeable in a context but without any change in either the cognitive or emotive import. This means synonyms substitute one another in any such context where their common meaning is not affected denotatively or connotatively. For example *healthy* and *well*, *quickly* and *speedily*. While using a synonym in a context you have to be careful that the right synonym is substituted. Practice and appropriate understanding of the words shall train you better. The following are some words with a number of synonyms. Learn how to find the most suitable for your expression. You may take help of a good dictionary.

S.NO	WORD	SYNONYMS
1	Abolish	Abate, Eradicate, Prohibit, Abrogate, Exterminate, Remove, Subvert, Annihilate, Extirpate, Repeal, Supplant, Annul, Nullify, Reverse, Suppress, Destroy, Obliterate, Revoke, Terminate. End, Overthrow.
2	Burn	Char, Flame, Incinerate, Set Fire To, Brand, Consume, Flash, Kindle, Set On Fire, Cauterize, Cremate, Ignite, Scorch, Singe.
3	Character	Constitution, Genius, Personality, Reputation, Temper, Disposition, Nature, Record, Spirit, Temperament.
4	Change	Alteration, Mutation, Renewing, Transmutation, Conversion, Revolution, Variation, Transformation, Variety, Renewal, Transition, Vicissitude.
5	Farewell	Adieu, Good-By, Parting Salutation, Valedictory, Congé, Leave-Taking, Valediction.

6	Furious	Ferocious, Fierce, Raging, Uncultivated, Violent, Fiery, Impetuous, Savage, Untrained, Wild.
7	Humane	Benevolent, Compassionate, Human, Pitying, Benignant, Forgiving, Kind, Sympathetic, Charitable, Gentle, Kind-hearted, Tender, Clement, Gracious, Merciful, Tender-hearted.
8	Innocent	Guiltless, Inoffensive, Spotless, Clean, Harmless, Pure, Stainless, Clear, Immaculate, Right, Upright, Faultless, Innocuous, Righteous, Virtuous. Guileless, Sinless.
9	Memory	Recollection, Reminiscence, Retrospect, Retrospection, Remembrance.
10	Order	Command, Injunction, Mandate, Requirement, Direction, Instruction, Prohibition.
11	Power	Ability, Competency, Expertness, Readiness, Aptitude, Dexterity, Faculty, Skill, Capability, Efficacy, Force, Strength, Capacity, Efficiency, Might, Susceptibility, Cleverness, Energy, Cogency.
12	Satisfy	Cloy, Fill, Sate, Suffice, Content, Glut, Sate, Surfeit.
13	Send	Cast, Despatch, Emit, Impel, Propel, Dart, Discharge, Fling, Lance, Sling, Delegate, Dismiss, Forward, Launch, Throw, Depute .

14	State	Affirm, Aver, Declare, Predicate, Set Forth, Allege, Avouch, Depose, Pronounce, Specify, Assert, Avow, Express, Propound, Swear, Asseverate, Certify, Inform, Protest, Tell, Assure, Claim, Maintain, Say, Testify.
15	Wisdom	Insight, Prudence, Depth, Judgment, Reason, Discernment, Judiciousness, Reasonableness, Discretion, Knowledge, Sagacity, Enlightenment, Learning, Sense, Erudition, Skill, Foresight, Profundity, Understanding.

### LIST OF SYNONYMS

Abandon	Desert, Forsake
Ability	Skill, Aptitude
Accurate	Correct, Right
Active	Energetic, Lively
Adamant	Firm, Unyielding
Adjourn	Postpone, Recess
Advocate	Support, Recommend
Afraid	Frightened, Scared
Amateur	Beginner, Novice
Apparent	Obvious, Evident
Ambitious	Aspiring, Driven
Artificial	Fake, Synthetic
Average	Ordinary, Fair

Beautiful	Pretty, Attractive
Believe	Trust, Accept
Beneficial	Helpful, Useful
Blend	Combine, Mix
Break	Fracture, Burst
Clarify	Explain, Simplify
Close	Near
Complex	Complicated, Intricate
Concrete	Real, Solid
Condemn	Censure, Denounce
Confine	Enclose, Restrain
Connect	Join, Link, Attach
Constantly	Always, Continually
Continue	Persist, Persevere
Courage	Bravery, Valor
Cruel	Mean, Heartless, Ruthless
Damage	Hurt, Impair, Harm
Dawn	Daybreak, Sunrise
Defend	Protect, Shield
Destroy	Ruin, Wreck, Devastate
Die	Expire, Perish
Diminish	Lessen, Decrease
Disagree	Differ, Dispute

Divide	Separate, Split
Dormant	Sleeping, Inactive
Dull	Blunt, Dreary
Empty	Drain, Unload
Enemy	Opponent, Foe
Enough	Sufficient, Ample
Evil	Bad, Wrong, Wicked
Excite	Arouse, Provoke, Incite
Exterior	Outside, Outer
Fabulous	Marvelous, Amazing
Fake	Imitation, Phony, Artificial
Fast	Rapid, Quick,
Feeble	Weak, Frail
Fill	Load, Pack
Flaw	Defect, Fault, Blemish
Flaw	Defect, Fault
Forgive	Pardon, Excuse
Fraction	Part, Portion, Segment
Full	Packed, Stuffed
Furious	Angry
Gain	Acquire, Receive
Gallant	Chivalrous, Stately
Gather	Accumulate, Compile

Generous	Giving, Selfless
Gentle	Tender, Mild Rough,
Genuine	Real, Authentic, Sincere
Gigantic	Immense, Colossal, Enormous
Give	Donate, Present, Offer
Glad	Happy, Pleased, Delighted
Gloomy	Dismal, Depressing
Glorious	Splendid, Magnificent
Good	Nice, Fine
Gratitude	Thankfulness, Appreciation
Great	Outstanding
Hard	Firm, Solid, Difficult
Hate	Loathe, Detest
Help	Aid, Assist
Hold	Grasp, Grip, Retain
Honest	Truthful, Sincere, Frank
Hostile	Antagonistic, Aggressive
Huge	Vast, Immense, Great
Humble	Modest, Unpretentious
Ignorant	Uninformed, Unaware
Immature	Childish, Inexperienced
Immune	Resistant
Impartial	Neutral, Fair

Imperative	Compulsory, Mandatory
Imperfect	Defective,
Important	Significant, Meaningful
Independent	Self-Reliant, Autonomous
Innocent	Guiltless
Insane	Crazy, Mad
Intelligent	Bright, Rational
Intolerant	Prejudiced
Intriguing	Fascinating, Enthralling
Irrelevant	Inappropriate, Unrelated
Irritate	Annoy, Agitate,
Join	Connect, Link
Jubilant	Overjoyed
Keep	Save, Protect
Kind	Considerate
Lament	Mourn
Last	Final, End
Least	Fewest, Minimum,
Legible	Readable, Clear
Lenient	Lax, Unrestrained
Logical	Sensible
Lure	Attract, Seduce
Luxurious	Extravagant, Elegant

Magnify	Expand, Enlarge
Mandatory	Required, Compulsory
Maximum	Greatest, Uppermost
Meager	Scanty, Sparse
Mean	Unkind, Malicious
Migrant	Traveling, Transient
Mirth	Fun, Laughter
Mischievous	Naughty
Moderate	Temperate, Lenient
Moral	Virtuous, Righteous
Morbid	Appalling
Mourn	Grieve, Lament
Mysterious	Elusive, Occult
Neat	Clean, Tidy
Nervous	Ruffled, Flustered
Neutral	Impartial
Normal	Ordinary
Numerous	Several, Abundant
Oblivious	Unconscious
Obnoxious	Offensive, Repulsive
Obsolete	Extinct, Dated
Obstinate	Stubborn, Adamant

Offend	Displease
Opaque	Transparent
Opponent	Enemy, Rival
Ordinary	Usual, Average
Outstanding	Extraordinary, Distinguished
Passive	Compliant, Submissive
Patience	Tolerance, Perseverance
Permanent	Enduring, Lasting
Plausible	Believable, Reasonable
Plentiful	Ample, Abundant
Pliable	Supple, Flexible
Poor	Destitute, Needy
Portion	Part, Segment
Possible	Conceivable, Feasible
Precious	Cherished, Valuable
Prejudiced	Biased, Opinionated
Premature	Early
Premeditated	Planned, Intended
Preserve	Uphold, Guard
Prevent	Thwart, Prohibit
Question	Interrogate
Quit	Cease, Withdraw

Raise	Hoist, Elevate
Rational	Logical
Reduce	Lessen, Decrease
Regular	Routine
Relevant	Pertinent, Suitable
Reliable	Trustworthy
Reluctant	Unwilling
Resist	Oppose
Retaliate	Avenge
Reveal	Show
Save	Preserve, Conserve
Scarce	Scanty
Separate	Divide
Serene	Peaceful, Tranquil
Serious	Grave
Shy	Bashful
Slim	Slender
Sociable	Friendly, Cordial
Sorrow	Woe, Anguish
Spontaneous	Instinctive
Stationary	Fixed, Immobile
Stimulate	Rouse, Stir

Strenuous	Vigorous
Strong	Powerful
Subsequent	Following
Successful	Thriving, Prosperous
Superb	Magnificent
Surplus	Excess
Swift	Fast, Speedy
Tender	Delicate, Gentle
Terrible	Dreadful
Trivial	Insignificant
Turmoil	Disturbance
Urgent	Crucial, Important
Vacant	Unoccupied
Valiant	Courageous
Vibrate	Shake
Victory	Triumph, Win
Vulgar	Offensive, Uncouth
Wealth	Riches, Prosperity
Win	Triumph
Warm	Affectionate
Wet	Drenched
Weak	Powerless
Whole	Complete

Woeful

Sad

Wonderful

Marvelous

Wrong

Incorrect

Yield

Produce

Zenith

Peak, Pinnacle

**SYNONYMS FROM THE TEXT:**

Dear learners, as you read your textbook make a list of words and try to find their synonyms. Some of them are done here for you.

Abate

Decrease

Yearly

Annually

Meticulous

Careful

Word	Synonym	Word	Synonym
Abate	Decrease	Appear	Seem
Yearly	Annually	Loving	Affectionate
Meticulous	Careful	Elementary	Basic
Mandatory	Compulsory	Futile	Useless
Wreck	Destroy	Foe	Enemy
Vanish	Perish	Ease	Comfort
Scrutiny	Examination	Crazy	Insane

Virtue	Goodness	Powerful	Strong
--------	----------	----------	--------

Traverse	Travel	Material	Tangible
Amiable	Pleasant	Intentional	Planned
Boon	Advantage	Mean	Low
Wisdom	Intelligence	Austere	Modest
Gentle	Soft	Mighty	Powerful
Hostile	Adverse	Blessings	Benediction
Impediment	Obstacle	Luxury	Pleasure
Condemn	Denounce	Defective	Imperfect
Discourse	Conversation	Contradictory	Opposing
Censure	Attack	Admiration	Praise
Obligatory	Necessary	Rigorous	Hard
Humble	Modest	Commend	Approve
Ignoble	Unworthy	Wit	Foolishness
Malignant	Dangerous	Grave	Serious
Politely	Humbly	Muster	Gather
Sturdy	Strong	Odious	Detestable
Probable	Likely	Temerity	Rashness
Diversity	Multiplicity	Perpetual	Continuing

Benevolent	Kind	Dignity	Pride
Undermine	Diminish	Apparent	Obvious, Clear
Incense	Fragrance	Freedom	Liberty

Joyfully	Happily	Slack	Relaxed
Acquaintance	Known, Familiar	Sacred	Holy
Drench	Wet	Legalize	Authorize
Victory	Success	Miserable	Pitiable
Strange	Unfamiliar	Bestow	Shower
Strife	Struggle	Impasse	Disagreement
Glimpse	Glance	Scorn	Condemn
Congenial	Supporting	Dreary	Gloomy
Chivalric	Brave	Impatient	Restless
Scarcely	Hardly	Zeal	Enthusiasm
Smite	Destroy	Threshold	Brink
Frail	Weak	Demise	Death

## 17. 9 LET US SUM UP

Dear learners, by now you must have understood that an understanding of the synonyms immensely helps us in enhancing our language usage. But one thing must have been noticed by you that though many words may share the similarity of meaning yet these words are not necessarily interchangeable; such substitution is context specific. In your language choosing the right synonym becomes very important. With this understanding of this chapter let's proceed to the exercises planned to check your knowledge gained here.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

#### Exercise-I:

Supply the correct synonym of the italicized word & rewrite the following sentences.

1. Even if we were not willing, they *forced* us to do justice.

---

2. The *situation* that there had been a fire was proved by the smoke-blackened walls.

---

3. He was *despaired* to move out of the country.

---

4. The *language* of his poem was widely appreciated.

---

5. He lives in the house but does not *have* it.

---

## Exercise-II

**Identify & circle the odd one:**

1. Punish, Refine, Appeal , Subdue, Castigate.
2. Nurture, Foster, Nourish, Protect, Comply.
3. Loyal, Faithful , Trustworthy, Unwavering, False.
4. Ferocious, Fierce, Raging, Violent, Despaired .
5. Effeminate, Female, Womanish, Womanly, Fetter.
6. Grant, Supply, Penalty , Confer, Impart.
7. Rule, Control, Manage, Comply , Reign.
8. Attend, Hark, Neglect, Hear, Heed.
9. Bolt, Clasp, Fasten, Break , Latch.
10. Sleepless, Watchful, Rightness, Vigilant, Wakeful.

## Exercise-III:

**Write the synonyms of the following:**

- a. Urgent .....
- b. Fake .....
- c. Shut .....
- d. Supply .....
- e. Reduce .....

## Exercise-IV:

**Match the following**

Separate	Sad
Serene	Attract
Woeful	Believable
Nervous	Compulsory
Opponent	Virtuous
Plausible	Divide
Moral	Aid
Lure	Thankfulness
Imperative	Peaceful
Help	Overjoyed
Gratitude	Vast
Huge	Annoy
Irritate	Enemy
Jubilant	Ruffled

**Exercise-V**

**Rewrite the sentences using the synonym of the italicized words**

1. Do you think I am *dumb*?
2. He has purchase an *expensive* shirt.
3. She belongs to a *normal* family.
4. Are you *sure* the result is out?
5. It is *hard* to believe that he is dead.
6. I am *glad* to know that he is out of danger.

7. I never meant to *annoy* you.
8. I got *nervous* on his comment.
9. He is a *shrewd* politician.
10. It *stimulates* my emotions.

**Answer Key:**

**Exercise-I :**

- |              |                 |        |
|--------------|-----------------|--------|
| 1. Compelled | 2. Circumstance | 3. Sad |
| 4. Diction   | 5. Possess      |        |

**Exercise-II :**

- |               |            |            |
|---------------|------------|------------|
| 1. Appeal     | 2. Comply  | 3. False   |
| 4. Despaired  | 5. Fetter  | 6. Penalty |
| 7. Comply     | 8. Neglect | 9. Break   |
| 10. Rightness |            |            |

**Exercise-III :**

- |              |               |          |
|--------------|---------------|----------|
| 1. Important | 2. Artificial | 3. Close |
| 4. Give      | 5. Decrease   |          |

**V :**

- |                   |              |              |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Fool           | 2. Coostly   | 3. Ordinary  |
| 4. Certain        | 5. Difficult | 6. Delighted |
| 7. Offend         | 8. Flustered | 9. Clever    |
| 10. Rouses/stirs. |              |              |

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