READING COMPREHENSION

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April, 2017
© Indira Gandhi National Open University, 2017
ISBN: 978-81-266-266-6

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Further information on the Indira Gandhi National Open University courses may be obtained from the University’s Office at Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110068.

Printed and published on behalf of the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, by the Director, School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi.

Laser Typeset : Rajshree Computers, V-166A, Bhagwati Vihar, Uttam Ngr. (Near Sec.-2, Dwarka), N.D.59
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READING COMPREHENSION

Introduction to the Block

This Block is about reading in English as a second language or foreign language. A lot of research has been done on different aspects of reading particularly in the last two decades, but we cannot possibly deal with all of it in this Block. We will discuss some of the current ideas about reading and how they can be used in the second language classroom.

The first two units namely, Reading Comprehension I and II are an attempt to relate the reasons for reading with appropriate reading styles. These units also highlight the teaching objectives and principles underlying reading comprehension activities and describe the three phases of a reading lesson. The reading comprehension activities and exercises can be used or adapted by a teacher in her/his classroom.

The third and fourth unit of the Block focus on developing an understanding of how we as teachers, may approach the teaching of literature, an important element in the teaching of language. Here we consider the different kinds of literary texts and see if we can adopt ways of teaching them effectively. Prose, fiction, drama and poetry may require different approaches, therefore, our aim is to explore the means of reading and appreciating each type of literacy text.

Since an important aid to competent reading is having a vocabulary, the last unit i.e., Teaching Vocabulary discusses the importance of vocabulary in the framework of devising interesting ways of teaching and learning of words.
UNIT 11  READING COMPREHENSION-I

Structure
11.1  Objectives
11.2  Introduction
11.3  Reasons for Reading and Reading Styles
11.4  Reading Comprehension and Teaching Implications
11.7  Teaching Objectives for Reading
11.8  Principles Underlying Producing or Using Reading Comprehension Exercises
11.9  Reading Comprehension in the Classroom
11.10  Let Us Sum Up
11.11  Answers
11.12  Suggested Reading

11.1  OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- relate the reasons for reading with the appropriate reading style;
- aware of the teaching objectives and principles underlying reading comprehension activities; and
- describe the three phases of a reading lesson and identify the questions belonging to each phase.

11.2  INTRODUCTION

A simple definition of reading is that it is a process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written. The key word is ‘understands’ — merely reading aloud does not count as reading. This definition does not mean that the learner needs to understand everything in a text. Understanding is not an ‘all or nothing’ process, and therefore reading too is not an ‘ail or nothing process either’. It means that every reader will comprehend something and perhaps some readers may not understand every word and nor is this necessary.

Again, although reading has been defined as a process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written, the reader does not necessarily need to look at everything in a given piece of writing. The reader actively works on the text and is able to arrive at understanding it without looking at every letter and word.

11.3  REASONS FOR READING AND READING STYLES

People generally do not read unless they have a reason for reading, i.e., they have a need of some kind that can be satisfied through reading. Furthermore in case of an effective reader, his/her reason for reading will also influence...
his/her style of reading. The effective reader is one who is able to adapt his/ her style to his/her purpose, and does not read everything slowly and intensively. Learning language should not be an aim in itself — the ultimate aim is to be able to use language appropriately. It is therefore important to give learners practice in different reading styles. This is achieved not by telling learners to skim, read intensively, etc. but by setting tasks that encourage the use of these styles.

The following diagram summarises the relationship between reasons for reading and various styles of reading.

### REASONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General information about the text</th>
<th>Information from the text</th>
<th>Pleasure or interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scanning</td>
<td>Intensive</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skimming</td>
<td>Rapid</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Check Your Progress 1

1. Consider the following types of texts and write for each of them the reason for reading it and the style of reading used. One has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Reason for Reading</th>
<th>Style of Reading Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Railway time table</td>
<td>Look for a particular piece of information</td>
<td>Scanning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Instruction for using a machine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Newspaper article</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. An extract from a novel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Telephone directory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. A letter to the editor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii. A notice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii. A recipe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix. A poem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x. Rules for playing a game</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11.4 READING COMPREHENSION AND TEACHING IMPLICATIONS

The important thing to remember is that the reading comprehension passage and the associated activities should promote skills in reading for understanding. The following are some important characteristics of ‘understanding’ and their implications for teaching reading comprehension.

1. All readers bring something with them to a text in terms of a general stock of knowledge. Knowledge of the world does not only cover knowledge of a particular topic, it may include knowledge of a particular culture or a way of life.

   **Teaching implications:** Before reading the reading passage itself, one can draw on the learners’ previous knowledge of the subject matter, their experience of life in general. (This is the purpose of warm up/pre-reading activities).

2. One can understand something better if one puzzles out things for oneself. Advice and guidance are valuable. But true learning involves a large element of personal discovery, struggle and achievement. The outcome is that one is more confident and better equipped for further and more challenging tasks of understanding. The same is true of reading comprehension.

   **Teaching implications:** Make students work out things for themselves. Don’t spoon feed them by explaining the passage to them, but devise exercises so that they can work them out on their own.

3. Understanding something will be deeper and will last longer if one does something with the information one has just acquired e.g. one will understand a recipe better if one has actually cooked the dish concerned. This is equally true of reading.

   **Teaching implications:** There should be exercises and activities to get the learners to use this new found knowledge and ideas.

4. In trying to understand, for example, directions on how to get to someone’s house, you need to concentrate exclusively on what the directions are. Similarly, in reading, one needs to concentrate on reading for understanding and not get sidetracked into other aspects of the passage.

   **Teaching implications:** While teaching reading comprehension, don’t focus on teaching pronunciation or grammar.

5. Understanding anything is not an ‘all or nothing’ process. Similarly, reading for understanding is not an ‘all or nothing process’ either.

   **Teaching implications:** Don’t aim at ‘total comprehension’ of every single word, sentence and item of the content of a passage.

6. The ability to understand anything or anybody is made up of a variety of component sub-skills (e.g. anticipating what will come next,
distinguishing main elements from the details, bringing together information from various sources). Reading, too, is composed of such sub-skills.

Teaching implications: Instead of aiming at ‘total comprehension’ of a particular reading passage, use that passage as a vehicle for teaching the reading skills that the learner needs for reading other passages.

Check Your Progress 2

2. Write in your own words the various factors that you need to keep in mind while constructing exercises for teaching reading comprehension.

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11.5 TEACHING OBJECTIVES FOR READING

At the end of a reading programme we should expect our learners to be able to achieve the following objectives at their own level, e.g. a learner at the end of class VI should be able to identify the main points and details of a passage suitable to his/her level and (s)he should be able to do the same for a difficult passage at the end of class IX.

- read silently at varying speed depending on the purpose of reading.
- adopt different reading strategies for different types of text.
- recognise the organisation of a text.
- identify the main points of a text.
- understand the relations between different parts of a text.
- anticipate and predict what will come next in a text.
- deduce the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items in a given context.
- consult a dictionary to obtain the required information.
- infer, analyse, interpret and evaluate the ideas in a text.
- select and extract from a text information required for a specific purpose.
- transcode i.e. transform information from verbal to diagrammatic form.
- read extensively for pleasure. In any given passage it is possible to fulfil a combination of objectives i.e. when you choose a reading passage you can set questions/exercises/activities which would fulfil a number of objectives stated in ‘this list.

11.6 PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING PRODUCING OR USING READING COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

According to Francoise Grellet (1981), there are a number of considerations to be borne in mind when producing or using reading comprehension
exercises/activities. One should start with global understanding (understanding the text as a whole) and move towards detailed understanding rather than working the other way round. Similarly, when constructing/using reading comprehension exercises on a given text it is always preferable to start with the overall meaning of the text, its function and aim, rather than working on vocabulary or more specific ideas. This is important and essential because:

- It is an efficient way of building the learner’s confidence. If the activity is global enough, the learner will not feel completely lost. They will feel that at least they understand what the text is about and will later feel less diffident when tackling a new text.

- It will develop an awareness of the way texts are organised (e.g. stating the main aim and developing it or giving the chronological sequence of events). It is this awareness of the general structure of a passage that will allow the students to read more efficiently later on.

- Reading is a constant process of guessing and what one brings to the text is often what one finds in it. From the beginning the learners should be taught to use what they know, to understand unknown elements, whether these are ideas or simple words and phrases. This is best achieved through a global approach to the text.

- It is important to use authentic texts whenever possible (at least when you are choosing an unseen passage for reading comprehension). Authenticity means that nothing of the original text is changed and also its presentation and layout are retained e.g. a newspaper article should be presented as it first appeared in the paper. Getting the learners accustomed to reading authentic texts from the very beginning as against a simplified or adapted text does not necessarily mean a much more difficult task on the learner’s part. The difficulty of a reading exercise depends on the activities and the exercises rather than on the text itself. Therefore, one should grade the activities and not necessarily the text.

- Another important principle when devising comprehension exercises is that the activities should be flexible and varied. The exercises should be suited to the texts and to one’s reasons for reading them. It is essential to take into account the author’s point of view, intention and tone for a full understanding of the text.

- Reading comprehension should not be separated from other skills. There are few cases in real life when we do not talk or write about what we read. It is therefore important to link the different skills through the reading activities.

Check Your Progress 3

3. What are the various considerations we must take care of in order to make a learner an independent, efficient reader?

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11.7 READING COMPREHENSION IN THE CLASSROOM

As you already know the first point to be noted when conducting a reading lesson in the classroom is that it is a **silent activity**. Therefore silent reading should be encouraged. The students should not read aloud. This would in fact tend to give the impression that all the texts are to be read at the same speed. Besides when we read, our eyes do not follow each word of the text one after the other — at least in the case of efficient readers. On the contrary, many words or expressions are simply skipped; we go back to check something or go forward to confirm something. Such tactics became impossible when reading aloud and this reading activity therefore tends to prevent the learners from developing efficient reading strategies.

**Three phases of a reading lesson**

**Pre-reading Phase**

This phase consists of a variety of tasks. These tasks arouse learners’ interest in the topic, encourage them to predict and deal with difficult vocabulary. In order to help prepare for pre-reading work, useful questions that you can ask yourself are:

- What knowledge, ideas or opinions might the learners already have on the topic and how can this knowledge be drawn out and used?
- Why should anyone want to read this text and can the same or similar reasons be generated in the learners?

The answers to these questions will give a clue to ways of introducing the text, motivating the learners and at the same time will incorporate language preparation. Visuals, drawing up of lists or setting questions (mostly oral) may all play a part in pre-reading activities.

**While-reading Phase**

This phase draws on the text, rather than the learners’ ideas previous to the reading activity. The aims of this phase are

- to help understand the writer’s purpose.
- to help understand the organisation of the text.
- to clarify the text content.

The traditional ‘Comprehension exercise’ at the end of the text is a typical **white-reading** activity. There are usually plenty of these activities/exercises. What you need to do is to consider whether these exercises correspond to and fulfil the objectives of teaching reading.

The sort of questions that you can ask yourself as a guide to the while-reading activities are the following :

- what is the function of this text ?
- how is the text organised? (narrative, descriptive, chronological, etc.)
- what content is to be extracted from the text?
what may the learner infer or deduce?

what reading style is suitable?

what language may be learned from the text?

As a rule, while-reading work should begin with a general or global understanding of the text, and then move to the smaller units such as paragraphs, sentences and words. The reason for this is that the larger units provide a context for understanding the smaller units – a paragraph or a sentence may help the reader to understand a word.

Let us look at some examples of while-reading questions here.

1. How are wildlife sanctuaries of today different from the private hunting preserves of kings and rulers?
   
   (The purpose of this question is to check the students’ understandings of two contrasted situations — wildlife sanctuaries and private hunting preserves and this question can be answered when the learner has an overall understanding of both the situations.) The organisation of the test in ‘compare and contrast’ style can be discussed with the students.

2. How did Helen Keller come to realise that she was different from others?

   (The question demands comprehension of all the situations/incidents/happenings which Helen Keller faced before she realised that others were different than her.) The importance of sequence of events in a narrative style can be highlighted.

3. Why couldn’t Costas’ father accompany him to Mount Lycabettus?

   (Demands local comprehension of the reasons that stopped Costas’ father from accompanying him to Mount Lycabettus.)

Post-reading Phase

The exercises/activities in this section do not directly refer to the text, but grow out of it.

The aims of post-reading exercises are

1. to consolidate and reflect upon what has been read; and

2. to relate the text to the learner’s own knowledge, interests or views.

These exercises should contribute, in a coherent manner, to the writing, speaking and listening skills.

Let us look at some post-reading questions given below.

1. Your class has been allowed to meet and interview Ms. Rita Panicker, the Founder Director of Butterflies and Ms. Poonam Chandra, Coordinator at Bal Sahyog. In groups of five, frame ten questions that you would like to ask them about their organisation, the programmes they run, the source of funds and the success of their efforts.

   Compare your questions with other groups.
Reading Comprehension

(Demands understanding of the programmes and activities of both the organisations – Butterflies and Bal Sahyog. The lesson acts as a take-off point to frame these extrapolatory questions.)

- Imagine that you are Squire Gordon – Black Beauty’s master. Write a letter to your friend in the town narrating your miraculous escape on that stormy night. (Based on the events of the lesson and yet provides a chance to students for creative thinking and writing.)

- How is dinner time similar or different in your house from what has been described in the poem?

(An attempt is made to relate the experience of the learners to what has been described in the poem. Reading then becomes more meaningful for the learners by giving them an opportunity to compare their own experience in a similar situation.)

You may get ideas for post-reading work by asking yourself the following questions:

- Do the learners know of a similar situation to that presented in the text?
- Does the text present a situation that invites completion?
- Does the text present views that might need to be counter-balanced?

If the answer to any of these questions is ‘yes’ then there is an opportunity for post-reading activities.

This three-phase approach is not to be carried out mechanically on every occasion. Sometimes you may wish to cut out the pre-reading stage and get the learners to work on the text directly. Sometimes post-reading work may not be required.

However, the advantage of this three-phase approach is two-fold:

- it respects and makes use of the learner’s knowledge of the language and of the world and uses this as a basis for involvement, motivation and progress.

- it leads to the integration of the skills in a coherent manner, so that the reading session is not isolated.

Check Your Progress

4. Which phase of the reading lesson is it meant for pre, while or post reading? Give reasons to justify your answer. You can do this even without knowing the text.

1. How does Kezia begin to see her father as a human being who needs her sympathy?

2. Do you feel you know your parents better now, than when you were much younger? Perhaps you now understand the reasons for some of their actions that used to upset you earlier.

3. Has your life been different from or similar to that of Kezia when you were a child? Has your perception about your parents changed now? Do you find any change in your parents’ behaviour vis-a-vis
yours? Who has become more understanding? What steps would you like to take to build a relationship based on understanding? Write three or four paragraphs (150-200 words) discussing these issues from your own experience.

4. Why was Kezia afraid of her father?
5. In what ways did Kezia’s grandmother encourage her to get to know her father better?

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11.8 LET US SUM UP

You are aware about the nature of the reading process and the characteristics of reading as a meaningful activity. In this unit, we have reiterated these aspects of reading and at the same time tried to help you understand the principles underlying producing and using reading comprehension exercises which will help you to conduct the reading activity in the classroom in a meaningful way.

11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Reason for Reading</th>
<th>Style of Reading Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ii) Looking carefully for instructions</td>
<td>Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for operating a machine.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) Reasons may vary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) To seek information</td>
<td>Rapid reading followed by more intensive reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) For interest</td>
<td>Extensive reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) Infer character traits, understand</td>
<td>Intensive reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sequence, appreciate literary style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v) Looking for a particular number</td>
<td>Scanning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi) For interest</td>
<td>Scanning followed by intensive reading (if necessary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii) For particular information</td>
<td>Scanning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii) For proper instructions</td>
<td>Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix) a) Appreciate the poem</td>
<td>Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) For pleasure/enjoyment</td>
<td>Extensive/Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x) For total grasp of the rules to be</td>
<td>Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>followed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading Comprehension

2. • make optional use of learners own experience.
   • allow learners to negotiate meaning (do not always tell the answers to the learners).
   • the exercises to follow should be based on what has been learnt in the lesson,
   • the different sub-skills of reading are to be focussed on instead of total comprehension of each and every word.

3. Proceed from global to local comprehension (for an overall view of the text to local specific details); draw the students attention to the organisation of the text; use authentic texts instead of simplified or adapted ones; allow the learners to work through a variety of activities.

4. i. While reading – understanding of the text is needed.
   ii. Pre-reading – reader’s own experience would help in understanding the text well.
   iii. Post reading – allows the reader to express own thoughts after reading the passage.
   iv. While reading – understanding of the text is needed.
   v. While reading – understanding of the text is needed.

11.10 SUGGESTED READING

UNIT 12 READING COMPREHENSION-II

Structure

12.1 Objectives
12.2 Introduction
12.3 Reading Comprehension Questions
12.4 Skimming and Scanning
12.5 Devices Used for Textual Cohesion
12.6 Functions of a Text
12.7 Organisation of the Text
12.8 Let Us Sum Up
12.9 Key Words
12.10 Answers to Check Your Progress
12.11 Suggested Readings

12.1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the various skills of reading comprehension;
- set questions and activities for different reading skills e.g. skimming and scanning;
- describe various functions of texts;
- identify various devices used for textual cohesion and describe their function; and
- analyse a variety of text in terms of its organisation.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit attempts to give examples of various types of reading comprehension exercises. There are illustrations of different types of exercise. The level of difficulty of the text is not important - the exercises/activities suggested can be adapted for different levels.

Nitin shook his head tiredly as he walked down the steps of the hotel and got back into the car. “No. This one has no room either.”

- Why was Nitin tired?
- Use ‘got back’ in a sentence of your own.
- What does ‘this one’ refer to?
- Nitin shook his head tiredly as he walked down the steps of the hotel and got back into the car. “No. This one has no room either.”
- Check the pronunciation of hotel from a dictionary.
- What was Nitin looking for?
- Where is Nitin?
- Is there anyone else in the car?
A. Read the short passage in the box. Read the questions set on the passage and judge whether the questions test comprehension or not. Write ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on the dash against each question.

B. Aim: To train the students to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words. In the space provided write the word/phrases which help you deduce the meaning of the words in bold.

a) I saw her walk away. Her day had been ruined. She had made a fool of herself in public. She had impressed no one. In her own sad red eyes she was a failure.
   i) made a fool of herself
   ii) .........................
   iii) .........................

b) Monday morning found Tom Sawyer miserable. Monday mornings always found him so, because it began another week’s slow suffering in school.
   i) .........................

c) “Hey! Where are you going? Come back!” But the tinker was already out of earshot. He was on his way back to Mirzapur twice as fast as he left it, with his dog running behind him.
   i) .........................
   ii) .........................
   iii) .........................
   iv) .........................

Check Your Progress 1
1. Choose a short passage:
   a) Frame 4-5 questions which test only Reading Comprehension.
      ............................................................
      ............................................................
      ............................................................
      ............................................................
   b) Frame 4-5 vocabulary exercises where the student has to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words from other words in the text.
      ............................................................
      ............................................................
      ............................................................
      ............................................................

12.4 SKIMMING AND SCANNING
You have already come across these terms. Both skimming and scanning are specific reading techniques necessary for quick and efficient reading.

When skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organised, or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer. When scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even read the whole passage to do so.
simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it be a name, a date, or a less specific piece of information. The activities suggested below to practise scanning also try to put the students in an authentic situation where they would naturally scan the text rather than read it. The students are therefore asked to solve a specific problem as quickly as possible - which is only possible by means of scanning.

Activity I

Imagine that your uncle who has retired wishes to settle down in Delhi. He, along with his family, is expected to shift to Delhi in a month’s time. He’s asked to scan the newspapers for a number of advertisements.

First of all he wishes to rent a comfortable house preferably with three bedrooms.

Your aunt is a great lover of plants, so there should be enough space for her plants.

Your uncle worked in the accountant general’s office. He is still very energetic so he’d like to take up some suitable job for some time.

Your aunt doesn’t want a fulltime job; however, she wishes to take up some tuitions, during free morning hours.

His son Sanjay has a computer degree and is looking for a suitable job.

His daughter is a journalist, a free lancer. She is also looking for a suitable job.

Scan the following advertisements and locate the appropriate ones.

Activity 2

Indicate the advertisement against the person stated below:

1. Flat for your uncle’s family
2. Job for his son
3. Job for his daughter
4. Part time job for your aunt
5. Job for your uncle

WANTED AN EXPERIENCED LADY COMPUTER OPERATOR-CUM-GENERAL OFFICE ASSISTANT, PERSON MUST BE FLUENT IN ENGLISH AND ABLE TO INITIATE WORK TO COMPUTERISE THE COMPANIES ACCOUNTING SYSTEM. GOOD WORKING ENVIRONMENT. APPLY IN CONFIDENCE.

GHAZIABAD TOOL PVT. LTD.
FLAT NO. 110 ASHIRWAD COMPLEX
D-1 GREEN PARK
NEW DELHI-110 016 (AD 99246)


(Home Tuitions) tutors/available all localities/classes/public/convent school/English conversations/European languages (Also wanted more tutors). Ring (P.T.B) Puri Tutors Bureau 693077/4624631.
First floor drawing dining three bedrooms, second floor three bedrooms attached bath rooms big balconies. Company/Embassy lease. Contact Telephone 6434856, 6460635 Office 6874689.

Industrial shed 50, 100 & 150 square metres with 20 H.P. 400 square metres plot with 20 H.P. Contact Bhatia 5553346, 5592227. Kalkaji Alaknanda Aravalli Apartments 3 bedroom flat duplex type large terrace. Company lease/South Indian preferred. Contact 2201488.


Two bedroom drawing modern construction, single unit, Sukhdev Vihar, Mathura Road, 2 years company lease, foreigners only Contact 2213664.

West Punjabi Bagh 4 bedrooms duplex apartment fully furnished. Company lease only. Phone 7129635/644519 Nair.

St. Paul’s tutor’s Bureau provide excellent tutors for convent children. Call. F. Bob 3715114 Tutors also welcome.


Required a retired experienced accountant well versed in accounts preferably Gujrati & South Indian. Write P. Box. 85496, Times of India, New Delhi-2.


Wanted full-time competent Chartered Accountant to handle accounts audit/ tax matter of leading business house at New Delhi. Age around 35. Remuneration according to capability. Write P. Box 85133. Times of India, New Delhi-2.

Wanted experienced tutors for XI & XII for Physics, Chemistry, Maths & Economics. Contact B-10/7474 Vasant Kunj, New Delhi (6 to 8 p.m.).

Activity 3

The following news item was printed in a newspaper about the longest letter in the world, which might be included in the Guinness Book of World Records. Fill in the form given below for the publishers to include this information in the book.

KOTTAYAM, Oct. 30 - A 27 year-old man from this city may figure in the Guinness Book as the author of the world’s longest letter, reports UNI. The letter is 2.4 km long, contains 100 million words, weighs 100.5 kg and cost the author, Reagan Jones, a freight charge of Rs. 2,058 to reach it to its addressee - Pope John Paul II.
Advocating world peace, the letter, artistically written with tasteful
colourshades on 2,985 sheets of thick J.K. card paper of width two feet four
inches, was sent to the Pontiff on his birthday on May 18. The unemployed
Jones had worked on the gargantuan letter for four years at an average of ten
hours a day.

In a recent communication to Jones, the Guiness Book of World Records
deputy editor, Sheelagh Thomas, said the letter would be considered for
inclusion in the book at Guiness’s “annual, review cycle, next spring”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>The Longest Letter in the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Name of the Writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Written to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Purpose of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>No. of sheets used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Language used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>No. of words used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Visuals used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>Days spent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>No. of hours spent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.</td>
<td>Kind of ink used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Kind of paper used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.</td>
<td>Substance of the letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o.</td>
<td>Date on which sent to the addressee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check Your Progress  2
2. Prepare two skimming and two scanning exercises.
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....................................................................................................
....................................................................................................

12.4  DEVICES USED FOR TEXTUAL COHESION

We need to prepare the students in recognising the various devices used to
create textual cohesion and the use of reference and link words.

Aim: To train the students to understand relations between parts of text
through pronoun referents.

In the paragraph below, some of the pronouns have been numbered. On the
lines below the paragraph, write the word or words that each numbered
pronoun refers to. The first has been done for you.
The name of the largest river in the world is the Amazon. But how did this river get its name? A tale exists which tells us that the name originated when an early Spanish explorer of South America was attacked by Indians who wore grass skirts and head dresses. Since the Indians reminded him of the Amazon in the Greek legends, he named the area after them.

This river Amazon

1. its ............................................................................................................
2. which ........................................................................................................
3. who ..........................................................................................................
4. him ..........................................................................................................
5. he .......................................................................................................... 

Check Your Progress 3
3. Prepare an exercise to train the students to understand relations between parts of a text through pronoun referents.

12.5 FUNCTIONS OF A TEXT

It is obvious that being aware of the function of a passage is important to comprehend it. So the students should be trained to find out whether the text aims at convincing the reader, giving information or asking for something. Match the following passages with their function. There could be more than one passage for a function. Write the function against the passage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Passage No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving instructions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving advice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertaining</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Angry mob sets two DTC buses on fire**

From Our Staff Reporter

New Delhi, March 18. An angry mob set on fire two DTC buses after a 40-year old man was crushed to death under the wheels of one in Janakpuri here late on Saturday night.

2. Don’t allow children to play Holi on roofs and parapets, cautions a neurosurgeon at the Mool Chand Hospital.

3. In the past two days, the hospital has had a number of children brought with head injuries, all caused by falling from roof-tops while playing with water-balloons, Dr. Ravi Bhatia, the neurosurgeon, warns against these.
4. If a child falls from a height and is injured, make him or her lie on the side. The mouth should be cleared of food or blood so that the air passage can be maintained. Rush him/her to the nearest medical centre, with the head in a low position. 5. Adults are advised not to drive after consuming bhang or alcohol.

5. **Curbs on Holi**

By A Staff Reporter

6. New Delhi; March 14: The city police have announced certain measures to preempt “riotous, indecent and disorderly behaviour” during Holi. They will come into force from tomorrow for a period of 10 days.

7. The police have warned that throwing of coloured water or rubber balloons and application of “gulal” on unwilling persons will invite prosecution. So will any indecent behaviour or language.

8. Pushing or obstruction of persons in any public place and “violent movements, menacing gestures or shouting” which disturb the public order are prohibited.

9. The police have also banned the sale of rubber balloons of two inches or less when not inflated.

10. **Gajjar Halwa**

**Ingredients**

- 1 kg red carrot
- 1 litre milk
- 200 gm sugar. Dry fruits for garnishing. Grate until soft. Mix in the sugar and boil the mixture till the milk dries up. Add ghee and stir for a few minutes. Finally add dry fruits.

11. **THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED FINANCIAL ANALYSIS OF INDIA**

Cordially invites all members of the public for a Lecture and Audio-Visual presentation on **UNION BUDGET**

(with special reference to current Economic Developments and their Impact on Capital Markets)

by

* Shri N. J. Yasaswy, Member, Board of Governors, ICFAI
* Shri G. Ramachandran, Advisor, ICFAI at the following venue and date

Venue: FICCI
Barakhamba Road,
Near Connaught Place
New Delhi-110001

**Date & Time:** March 19, 20xx at 6.00 p.m.
12. The Weather

Rain or thundershowers are likely to occur at one or two places in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya, Sub-Himalayan, West Bengal and Sikkim, plains of West Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, West Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Maharashtra, Marathwada and coastal Andhra Pradesh. Weather will be mainly dry over the rest of the country.

Temperature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Min.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abu</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmadabad</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangalore</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhopal</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhubaneswar</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check Your Progress 4

4. Collect five/six different types of texts and prepare a similar exercise.

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...........................................................................................................
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12.6 ORGANISATION OF THE TEXT

This refers to the method of presentation of information in any passage. These could be in the form of

- Main idea and supporting details
- Sequence
- Comparisons
- Logical Sequence

Let’s look at some examples:

Aim: To train the students to make an outline of the given passage with main ideas and their supporting details.

Whales

When you are outlining an article, you will often want to include the details that are given about some of the sub-topics. As you read the article below, decide what its main topics, sub-topics, and details are. Then complete the outline by using the items listed at the bottom of the page.

Whales are the largest animals the world has ever known. They are found in every major ocean, and although they resemble huge fish, they are really mammals. One important way whales differ from fish is in their body
temperature. They are warm blooded, so their temperature remains constant despite the surrounding climate. Extra protection is provided by blubber, a thick layer of fat that keeps them warm even in the coldest water. Whales also differ from fish in their manner of breathing. Equipped with lungs instead of gills, they are forced to hold their breath while underwater. When a whale’s supply of fresh air runs out, it must surface to breathe otherwise it would drown. Another difference that sets whales apart from fish is the way they treat their young. Babies are born alive and are nursed on their mother’s milk until they are old enough to feed themselves.

For centuries man has hunted whales for a variety of profitable reasons. Although whale products are not as sought-after today, they are still used throughout the world. Whale oil goes into making margarine in many European countries, and it is often found in various kinds of explosives. Some laundry soaps still contain whale oil. The meat of a whale is not as widely valued as the oil, but many manufactures use it in canned dog and cat food. Whale meat is even eaten by human beings in such countries as Norway and Japan.

A. How do whales differ from fish.
   1. ........................................................................................................
   2. ........................................................................................................

B. Breathing
   1. ........................................................................................................
   2. ........................................................................................................

C. Sub-titles
   1. ........................................................................................................
   2. ........................................................................................................

Whale products
A. Sub-titles
   1. ........................................................................................................
   2. ........................................................................................................

B. Sub-titles
   1. ........................................................................................................
   2. ........................................................................................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Margarine</th>
<th>Breathing</th>
<th>Explosives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whale products instead of gills</td>
<td>Warm-blooded</td>
<td>How whales differ from fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected by blubber</td>
<td>Treatment of young</td>
<td>Whale meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food for animals</td>
<td>Whale oil</td>
<td>Must surface to breathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babies born alive</td>
<td>Food for humans</td>
<td>Laundry soaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Body temperature</td>
<td>Young drink mother’s milk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aim: To train the students to write in a sequence. Here are the steps for a game called ‘Pattern Puzzle’. The steps are in jumbled order. Unscramble them and list them in proper order.

a) There is a time limit, say five minutes.

b) Give each group a card with a letter pattern.

c) The letter pattern should be the same.
Reading Comprehension

d) The group with most words is the winner.
e) No letter should be used more than once in any word.
f) The players each write down on paper all the words they can think of, containing some or all of these letters.
g) The middle letter e.g. E must appear in each word.

Aim: To train the students to understand comparisons/contrasts used in the text.

Aim: to train the students to understand the logical relationship within a passage. Read the following sentences and rearrange them so as to form a coherent passage.

1. He had gone to the December 1916 annual convention of the Indian National Congress party in Lucknow.
2. I am from Champaran, and I want you to come to my district’!”
3. When I first visited Gandhi in 1942 at his ashram in Sevagram, in central India, he said, “I will tell you how it happened that I decided to urge the departure of the British. It was in 1917.”
4. Gandhi had never heard of the place. It was in the foothills of the towering Himalayas, near the kingdom of Nepal. Under an ancient arrangement, the Champaran peasants were sharecroppers.
5. There were 2,301 delegates and many visitors. During the proceedings, Gandhi recounted, “a peasant came up to me looking like any other peasant in India, poor and emaciated, and said, ‘I am Rajkumar Shukia.
6. For weeks he never left Gandhi’s side. “Fix a date,” he begged.
7. Rajkumar Shukia was one of them.
8. Gandhi told Shukia he had an appointment in Cawnpore and was also committed to go to other parts of India. Shukia accompanied him everywhere. Then Gandhi returned to his ashram near Ahmedabad.
9. Impressed by the sharecropper’s tenacity and story Gandhi said, “I have to be in Calcutta on such-and-such a date. Come and meet me and take me from there.”
10. Shukla followed him to the ashram.
11. He was illiterate but resolute. He had come to the Congress session to complain about the injustice of the landlord system in Bihar, and somebody had probably said, “Speak to Gandhi.”

Aim: to train students to understand comparisons

Compare the piece from the text (on the left below) with the other piece on Goan bakers (on the right). What makes the two texts so different? Are the facts the same? Do both writers give you a picture of the baker?
1. Our elders are often heard reminiscing nostalgically about those good old Portuguese days, the Portuguese and their famous loaves of bread. Those eaters of loaves might have vanished but the makers are still there. We still have amongst us the mixers, the moulders and those who bake the loaves. Those age-old, time-tested furnaces still exist. The fire in the furnaces had not yet been extinguished. The thud and the jingle of the traditional baker’s bamboo, heralding his arrival in the morning, can still be heard in some places. May be the father is not alive but the son still carries on the family profession.

2. Portuguese bread vanished with the paders. But the paders have managed to survive because they have perfected the art of door-to-door delivery service. The paders pick up the knowledge of bread making from traditions in the family. The leavened, oven-baked bread is a gift of the Portuguese to India. [Adapted from Nandakumar Kamat’s ‘The Unsung Lives of Goan Paders’]

Check Your Progress 5

5. Why do you think it is important for the students to understand how a text is organised?

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12.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed various types of reading comprehension exercises which you may use or adapt in your classroom. We once again state that the level of difficulty of the text is not important, the exercise types can be adapted for different levels. Do try some of these activities - it will make reading comprehension a more interesting and enjoyable experience for your students.

12.8 KEY WORDS

Skimming: Reading the text quickly for main idea.
Scanning: Reading to locate specific information.
Textual cohesion: The use of pronouns, conjunctions, or synonyms to establish relationship between sentences and paragraph.
Organisation of the text: The method of presentation of information in any passage.

12.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Open ended
2. Open ended
3. Open ended
4. Open ended
5. Understanding is better if the organisation of the text is clear to the learner e.g. in an article with headings and sub-points, the students can arrange and try to follow the text in those terms. In a narrative or set of instructions the sequence/order in which things happened or are to be done is important. When the learner knows that these are instructions, he/she would look for the sequence in which to proceed. Similarly, when the students are handling a text written to compare and contrast two or more things, they would start arranging the points in their own minds or in an exercise as similarities and differences.

12.10 SUGGESTED READINGS


UNIT 13 TEACHING LITERARY TEXTS-I

Structure
13.1 Objectives
13.2 Introduction
13.3 Literature and Language Acquisition
13.4 Teaching Prose
13.5 Teaching Fiction
13.6 Teaching Drama
13.7 Let Us Sum Up
13.8 References and Suggested Reading
13.9 Answers

13.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- understand and appreciate the role of literature in second language acquisition;
- appreciate the unique features of the different types of literary texts;
- plan teaching-learning strategies keeping in mind the uniqueness of each type of literary text; and
- develop language skills in your learners through the teaching of literary texts.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Whenever a syllabus for teaching language is made, literary texts are generally included in it. For many centuries, literature has been regarded as the best or highest form of language, and has great prestige. For instance, in the history of English language teaching in India, English literature was taken as the very basis of education in English, and is still quite important. We need to ask the question: Why is literature considered to be such an important aspect of teaching and learning a language? Firstly, it provides interest and motivation for learning. Telling a story, reading a story or poem which has actions, characters and dialogues, is very interesting for learners and they become involved in the process of learning a language without having to pay constant attention to its rules, or doing dull grammar exercises. In this unit, our aim is to understand how we may approach the teaching of literature, as it is an important element in the teaching of language. We will consider the different kinds of literary texts and see if we can adopt ways of teaching them effectively. Prose, fiction and drama may require different approaches; therefore our aim is to explore the means of reading and appreciating each type of literary text.
Literature provides many examples of the use of language in different situations. Indirectly, literary texts offer items of new vocabulary and new structures of sentences and phrases which, as they are used in context, give the learners valuable knowledge of the use of these words and sentences. Further, literature provides a context for communicative activities like discussion, speaking, role-playing and other types of interaction between learners. The literary text becomes the basis for many such activities and exercises. Most importantly, it is the practice of reading skill in the reading of literature that leads to the achievement of better levels of reading comprehension. This in turn enables learners to read many other kinds of texts and acquire knowledge of other subjects. We know that reading a literary text is also a cognitive challenge – a kind of problem solving activity. The reader has to decode its layers of meaning, which involves thinking critically. Moreover, if this is linked with practice in writing, it further develops writing skills, as well as the skill of editing. Apart from all the above purposes, literature is a part of our cultural awareness and develops our aesthetic sense, our enjoyment of that which is beautiful, pleasing as well as that which helps us to understand life, human beings and society. As Collie and Slater (1987) put it: ‘Literature provides a rich context in which individual lexical or syntactic forms are made more memorable. Reading a contextualized body of text, students gain familiarity with many features of written language – the formation and function of sentences, the variety of possible structures, the different ways of connecting ideas – which broaden and enrich their own writing skill. The extensive reading of a play or novel develops the students’ ability to make inference from linguistic clues, and to deduce meaning from context…a literary text can serve as an excellent prompt for oral work…’

To sum up, the following are the benefits of teaching literature as part of language teaching, as given by Collie and Slater (1987):

- It provides valuable authentic material.
- It contributes to language enrichment.
- It contributes to cultural enrichment.
- It fosters personal involvement and motivation in learning.

It is clear, therefore, that the teaching of literature is an essential component of any syllabus and its purpose should be well understood by English teachers. However, many of these objectives will not be fulfilled if the appropriate teaching methodology is not used. Our methodology of teaching must include ways of making the learners read the literature, talk about it and share their ideas, write about it, and participate in the learning and enjoyment of it. Literature is a form of communication, and also a part of our shared culture, and this is why we study it in the curriculum. For example, if a teacher spends most of the time explaining the text, then the time for the other activities, such as discussion, reading independently and finding out the meaning, etc., will be reduced and this would not serve the various purposes we have in mind when we put literature in the curriculum.
In addition to adopting the kinds of methodologies which are best suited to our purpose, we also need to take great care in the selection of the kind of literature we choose to include in our curriculum. The level of the learners in terms of the stage of language development that they are in, is the most crucial consideration. If we try to teach a very complex literary text, and the learners do not yet have the language ability to comprehend it, they will neither enjoy it, nor will they find it interesting to explore it further or discuss it. Therefore, the choice of the right kinds of literature is essential for the teaching of literature. In making this choice, we have to consider various kinds of difficulty; the language may be difficult, or the themes or structures may be complex and learners may not be able to deal with them. In this regard, we cannot say that ancient texts are necessarily difficult and modern ones are easier, because there is often a lot of complexity in modern writing. At the same time, literature from an older time has language which is not used in the present day, and may be difficult for young learners to understand. The length of a piece – whether a poem, short story or prose writing – is another factor to be considered, as longer texts may become tedious for young children and may not hold their attention. These points emphasise the need to take great care of the choice of texts for children, particularly at the primary school level. There is also a strong case for introducing writing tasks as part of the reading of literature so that students can learn to express their own responses, articulate their feelings and opinions and share their perceptions, which is a crucial outcome of the study of literature.

Types of texts: Prose, Fiction and Drama

Each type of text has its own unique features. The teacher needs to understand the nature of each kind of text as a first step towards the construction of certain useful activities and approaches to be used in the class. In this unit, we will look at types of texts usually written in prose – for instance, essays, stories and plays. In the case of prose (non-fiction), there are some facts, ideas or information being presented. Stories have a structure of events and characters. Drama has dialogues between characters and actions. Since these are all different types of literature, they offer different kinds of challenge and reading experience for the language learner, at linguistic, communicative, and cognitive levels. The different genres can be taught separately, or mixed up. It may be useful to organize literature according to themes, and present a unit on each theme e.g. ‘Friendship’, ‘War’, ‘Journeys’ etc., and each unit may include a poem, a story and a prose passage on that theme. This will sensitise readers to reading different kinds of texts and how a particular topic can be looked at – how a ‘poetical’ treatment is unique in its own way, how a story reveals so many dimensions, and how, in prose, a writer tries to explain or analyse the subject. All these perspectives are enriching for the young learners.

13.4 TEACHING PROSE

Often, prose writing is considered to be less interesting than poems or stories. So teachers are faced with the task of motivating the children to read prose, which usually has some information or facts in it. While poetry may have more delight, prose is useful in learning about facts and opinions as it is more message-oriented. Reading prose is a good exercise in understanding
how sentences of different kinds are constructed, and how they are organized to convey ideas. In addition, prose also has its own pleasures – there is ‘prose rhythm’ which we can appreciate when we read a piece of prose aloud.

For effective teaching of prose, a well-structured and short piece of prose writing should be chosen. Let us consider the following example:

The Olympic Games are among the most prominent international sporting events. They are a highly respected event in which nations put their best talents forward, in a spirit of friendliness and healthy competition. The word ‘Olympic’ comes from the word ‘Olympia’ – a place in Greece. Centuries ago, festivals and religious ceremonies were held there in honour of the Greek god Zeus. The ceremonies included games, held every four years, in the summer, around mid-July. Today, the Games are held in different cities of the world every four years, and bring together athletes from all over the world. They are held to promote the development of physical and moral qualities through amateur sports.

The above passage is a little over 100 words, and similar passages up to 200 words can be chosen at the elementary level, while the length of a passage can be longer for intermediate level students. This reduces the linguistic challenge, as the text does not appear so formidable as to deter or demotivate the learner.

The first part of the lesson can be that of giving instructions to the children:

- Underline keywords – or most important words in the passage.
- Underline the words in the passage which are new to you.

The first benefit of this preliminary exercise is that it encourages children to read through the passage and scan it for important words, and unfamiliar words. This also has two other benefits: the teacher does not explain the words in the beginning. This allows the children a chance to read on their own, and the teacher can assess their level of vocabulary. Then the teacher can give the meaning or the gloss of the words which the children themselves pointed out, instead of assuming that each and every word has to be explained. We must remember that even if a lot of words in the passage are not clear or known to a child, at least a few are known, and the child can fit in the unknown into the known, if encouraged to do so. A few words e.g. ‘amateur’ can be explained.

The keywords lead us to the topic of the passage. What is it about? A title can be discussed, with inputs from both the teacher and students. The teacher can ask some more questions e.g. ‘What is Olympia?’, ‘What are the Olympics?’ and ‘Who takes part in the Olympics?’ ‘Why are Olympic games held?’ etc. and ask the students to search the text for the answers. Exercises such as completing the sentence, filling blanks e.g. ‘friendly and ________’, ‘physical and _________’, etc. are useful. The benefit of this, apart from language practice is that the learner will have to search the passage for the information, and will read it again and again. This is our main aim, as the more they read, the more they will appreciate the qualities of the text.
Next, there can be a discussion on sports – favourite sports, last Olympics, great sportspersons etc. There can also be a G.K. quiz about sports. After this, the learners can turn to the passage again to study some of the language e.g. how the past and present is described (the use of was held, were held as opposed to are held); the sentences which are active or passive, (e.g. are held is passive, while bring together is active, but both occur in the same sentence!) etc. The students become familiar with different types of sentences and the way in which the writer may combine them. For instance, the teacher must draw attention to the connectors between sentences which links in the passage e.g. ‘As a result…’ ‘First of all’, ‘Secondly, ‘At the same time…’, ‘However’, ‘The chief aim is to show’, ‘On the contrary’ etc. These show whether the ideas are being added together, or some opposite ideas are being given. It tells us a lot about how our thoughts and ideas can be composed. So it is clear that the teaching of prose can serve several aims.

The teacher must have a knowledge of different types of prose writing. Prose is of several types: expository (it explains, as in certain scientific and informative topics), argumentative (it gives opinions, on different issues or problems), descriptive (it gives descriptions), and narrative (narrates events). The writer’s personality and point of view is often clearly evident in prose writing, and this makes up the style of a particular prose work. Particularly, a prose passage in which the first person ‘I’ is used shows the writer’s point of view more directly. A prose writer may also address the reader directly, using second person. In some cases a writer may use ‘we’ in a general sense while explaining something, thus making the reader share his/her point of view. Sometimes, a prose writer may treat a subject very seriously, or may use satire or humour. He/she may also makes use of images and comparisons. It is usual for prose writers to explain a general point and then give examples, but in some cases writers start with presenting particular examples, and then give a general conclusion.

Let us look at some examples of prose sentences which illustrate the use of different prose styles:

Long, complex sentence, which may need to be broken up into parts e.g. ‘I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and coffee houses.’ (Joseph Addison)

Short, epigrammatic sentences: Reading maketh a full man, writing an exact man and conference a ready man’ (Bacon).

Repetitive, or Biblical style: ‘Love suffreth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things’.

Use of similies and metaphors: ‘his voice rose like a gale’, ‘the hand of death pressed on his eyelids’ etc.

Humourous style: ‘I am, I confess, a devotee of pockets. When I go to a tailor, and he asks me what pockets I want, I tell him: all of them. If you have enough pockets, you seldom lose anything…’ (Robert Lynd)

Similarly, teachers can take up examples from some quotations from other great prose writers, such as Charles Lamb, Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw.
These are interesting, witty, and thought-provoking. Even the tradition of ‘thought for the day’ which is often used in our schools can be used to take up more such examples and discussed in the classroom. It develops both the capacity for thought as well as sensitivity towards language. Perhaps children may not be told explicitly about all these different styles, but the teachers need to be aware of such variations and gradually make the learners familiar with them.

Check Your Progress 1

1. List the reasons for teaching of literature as part of the language teaching curriculum.

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2. Consider the following prose passage and write some exercises for use in teaching this passage:

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The Ganga, especially, is the river of India, beloved of her people, of triumph, her victories and her defeats. She has been a symbol of India’s age long culture and civilization, ever-changing, ever-flowing, and yet ever the same Ganga.

She reminds me of the snow covered peaks and the deep valleys of the Himalayas, which I have loved so much, and of the rich and vast plains, where my life and work has been cast. Smiling and dancing in the morning sunlight, and dark and gloomy and full of mystery as the evening shadows fall, a slow and graceful stream in winter, and a vast roaring thing during the monsoon, broad-bosomed as the sea, and with something of the sea’s power to destroy, the Ganga has been to me a symbol and a memory of the part of India, running into the present, and flowing on to the great ocean of the future.

Jawaharlal Nehru, My Last Will and Testament

Exercise 1

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Exercise 2

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13.5 TEACHING FICTION

Stories are fascinating for children, and they don’t need much encouragement to be involved in reading stories. However, in India, we have strong traditions of oral story-telling, and children may like to listen rather than read. Today, we also have visual media, such as television. Therefore, there is a real concern regarding the development of reading habits. It is often only in the environment of the classroom that children’s interest in reading can be developed. Therefore, the first objective in teaching fiction may be that of encouraging the children to read. Teachers often mistake the teaching of fiction as explaining or recounting the story to children, but this is a retelling, which is bound to be different from the story itself. The teacher may re-tell the story, or ask the children to tell it in their own words, but this can happen only after they have read it, therefore developing their motivation for reading and reading skills is the first priority.

The correct choice of stories is important as regards their length and their themes. Stories read by children in elementary school are usually short narratives of various kinds. While some stories, like fables, have a clear moral in them, other stories may be purely about adventure, or everyday life. Some stories have a surprise element in the end, a ‘sting in the tail’. For teachers, it is important to appreciate these variations in story-telling. The Russian theorists of narrative make a distinction between the story itself i.e. the bare plot of the events, and the way it is told. The first one is called fabula (story) and the second one is called juzet (discourse). We can understand this as follows:

Story: Events are described in sequence: event A – event B – event C – event D… etc.

Discourse: The sequence of events can be rearranged when narrating them, as for example: event C – event B – event A – event D, or any other combination. It may be noticed that the narrator puts in some information that does not occur in everyday speech, e.g. ‘he said, looking a little ashamed’, ‘she spoke with some hesitation’ adds something extra - some additional language and meaning to the character’s speech (which indicates the discourse, or the particular manner of telling). We need to be alert to such indications in a fictional text as they tell us a lot about the point of view from which the story is told.

Accordingly, a teacher may decide what method is to be adopted for teaching. The discourse in some stories may focus more on description of characters, or a scene, or build an atmosphere. In this case, we need to pay more attention to the language - there may be some striking vocabulary or phrases, some vivid description that can be a pretext for introducing more words to the students. On the other hand, some stories may be very simple as far as the use of language is concerned, but may have some thought, or puzzle, in them, which is a challenge for learners to comprehend. For example, the stories of Mulla Nasruddin, or Akbar-Birbal stories are short, but have some insight or knowledge that the child reader will enjoy discovering by himself or herself, rather than having the teacher explain it. Another example is the ‘Stone Soup’ story. This is a short version of the hearing story:
One day, a traveler reached a house, tired from walking for many hours. He was very hungry. He knocked on the door and asked the lady of the house for some food. She refused, saying she did not have any food in the house. The traveler took a stone out of his bag and said: ‘I have this stone. If you will put some water to boil, I will make soup with this stone.’ The lady put some water to boil in a pot.

He put the stone in the pot, and when the water began to boil, he said: ‘Ah, now it only needs some salt’. The lady gave him some salt. He stirred the water and said, ‘it’s tasty. It will be better if some pieces of carrots and onions are put in. Do you have some spare?’ She brought some pieces of carrots, potatoes and onions and he added them to the water. Then he said, ‘perhaps you have some scraps of meat?’ She had some odd scraps which she gave him. He put those too into the pot. Soon the soup was ready, and he tasted it. ‘It’s perfect!’ And he ate the stone soup and satisfied his hunger.

A story like this can be read aloud and the students can be asked: ‘What have you understood from this story?’ This may encourage them to make inferences about the story, and they may discuss it more. Therefore, different techniques for teaching fiction are to be used depending upon the degree of language complexity, or cognitive challenge. At one level, reading and comprehending the facts of the story, at another level, making inferences regarding the events and characters, fitting these into a framework of understanding, are to be given attention. These aspects are discussed below:

a. Focus on language of description of character and place.

The students may be directed to skim the story and see which character is most prominent. They may then read the sentence in which that character is first mentioned. Sometimes the name of the character is not given initially, but there may be a description or some account of the character’s background. Are there any particular adjectives, or similies used for that character? Can we see from these facts if the story-teller has a particular attitude towards the character – for example, sympathy, dislike, etc?

Let us take the example of Khushwant Singh’s well known story ‘Portrait of a Lady’. The story begins with the following description:

She had always been short and fat and slightly bent. Her face was a criss-cross of wrinkles from everywhere to everywhere. No, we were certain she had always been as we had known her. Old, so terribly old that she could not have grown older. She could never have been pretty, but she was always beautiful. She hobbled about the house in spotless white with one hand resting on her waist to balance her stoop and the other telling the beads of her rosary. Her silver locks were scattered untidily over her pale, puckered face, and her lips moved constantly in inaudible prayer. Yes, she was beautiful. She was like the winter landscape in the mountains, an expanse of pure white serenity, breathing peace and contentment.

The description of character in the story can be classified under the following heads: what the character is compared to, what the character does in daily life, what the character looks like, etc. The activities on this could be:
a) Underline the adjectives (e.g. short, fat, slightly bent, old, not pretty, beautiful). Which of these are positive? Which adjective is the most important in the description?

b) What did she do? The activities she did most often were_______.

Read the story further to see what are the other actions of the grandmother and what these tell us about her.

c) What is she compared to? Why? (Further questions: Are the mountains young or old? What is the colour of mountains in winter? These questions will lead to students understanding the basis of the comparison of the old lady to the mountains)

d) Let us find synonyms for these words: stoop, puckered, inaudible, serenity

e) Which sentence(s) indicate the presence of a narrator?

Students can then be asked to put these facts together. They may even discuss which feature of the character’s description is the most vital and significant in its relevance for the story – is it the character’s physical appearance or other qualities which are most crucial for the story?

Similarly, the teacher can ask the students to read a story and notice the description of a house, village or city, or landscape. What is important in this description? Is it some detail, such as that of a marketplace, or decoration of a room, that may be important for the meaning of the story? It may also be useful to look at repetition – which items in the landscape are mentioned again and again – for instance, the description of a river may recur, thus making it significant. Names of places, or people are particularly important as they may indicate some mythological or cultural aspects hidden in the story.

b. Focus on theme

The beginning and ending of a story is always worth considering very carefully. Some stories may start right from the birth of a character, or from a historical event, and even mention the dates. Some stories may start in the middle of an event, e.g. a war, or a journey, and then go back to where it began. Why does a story-teller start a story at a particular point? The students can treat this as a puzzle which they have to uncover – and different students will give different reasons. The teacher must allow this kind of questioning and sharing of possible answers, as this is an important mental exercise.

The endings of stories can also be discussed – why does the story end at a particular point? The class can be divided into readers who are satisfied with the ending and readers who are not satisfied. Each of them can explain the reasons for their response. Students may be asked to give their own ending to the story. This may be done orally, so that it can be part of the discussion, where other children can ask each other why they chose a particular ending. Or students can be asked to write an ending, and the teacher can help them with some of the language they need for this purpose. One story which can be mentioned in this regard is Mulk Raj Anand’s ‘The Lost Child’. In the end of the story, we do not know whether the child finds its parents or not – would children see this as a satisfactory ending?
‘Sting in the Tale’ stories will have a sharp shock or surprise at the end, or a sudden revelation, which may bring in some realization for the reader, e.g. Guy De Maupassant’s ‘The Diamond Necklace’, O. Henry’s ‘The Gift of the Magi’ etc.

Some other activities that can be done in teaching fiction in the class are:

**Suggestion** consists of the teacher planting some thought, suggesting some idea (even if it seems wrong) and asking the students to read the story to check if the suggestion is correct or not.

**Prediction** can be made, after reading the first paragraph or section of a story, to encourage readers to predict what happens next, or to predict something about the character, and to read further to see if this prediction will come true. We know that literature builds up our expectations, so the game of prediction will lead to some surprises, and will become interesting, while it also encourages the exploring of creative possibilities.

**Visualization**, or the making of pictures, either word pictures, or diagrams/sketches about a place, or a person, will be useful in making the situation real for the students.

**Rewriting the story**, giving a jumbled order of events to be rearranged or gap-filling, rewriting the end of the story, or imagining and giving some more details about a particular character can all be helpful pretexts for using more language, such as activating the use of more vocabulary.

**Summary writing, making thought bubbles**, as if making a comic strip, or a ‘mini saga’ (in which the students are required to sum up the whole story in 50 words), can be challenging activities.

Finally, the challenge of teaching fiction is that all the aims are to be fulfilled without destroying the enjoyment of a good story. Our aim is to make literature more interesting and enriching for our students.

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**Check Your Progress 2**

Here is a short story. What kind of activities can be done in the teaching of this story?

Stan Murch, in a uniform-like blue jacket, stood on the sidewalk in front of the Hilton and watched cab after cab make the loop into the main entrance. Doesn’t anybody drive their own car anymore? Then at last a Chrysler Imperial came hesitantly up the avenue, turned into the driveway and stopped at the entrance. As a woman and several children got out of the right of the car, the driver climbed heavily out on the left. He was a big man with a cigar and a camel hair coat.

Murch was at the door before it was half way open, pulling it the rest of the way and saying, ‘Just leave the keys in, sir’.

‘Right’, said the man with the cigar. He got out, and, just as Murch was about to get behind the wheel, he said: ‘Wait’.

Murch looked at him, ‘Sir?’

‘Here you go, boy’ the man said and pulled a folded dollar bill from his pants pocket and handed it across.
‘Thank you, sir.’ Murch said. He saluted with the hand holding the dollar, climbed behind the wheel, and drove away. He was smiling as he made the right turn out on the street. It wasn’t everyday a man gave you a tip for stealing his car.

Activities:

13.6 TEACHING DRAMA

The teaching of drama in the classroom is most challenging, as drama is primarily speech in action, or dialogue. It can be treated as a story in some ways, but the manner of the unfolding of the action is different. There is no narrative voice, but the characters speak and interact. The study of how characters think and behave is central to drama. Conflict of some kind or another is central to drama. There is a plot, and as it unfolds, the situation brings some conflict and change in the characters.

Drama is also closest to human communicative interaction. It can be of use in language teaching to show how dialogues are spoken and how communication takes place.

Activities in the teaching of drama can be:

a) Written

Filling in blanks in dialogues, or writing more dialogues to add to the existing ones can be activities that students at a slightly more advanced level can do.

Making tables with different points of view on each side, however, can be done by students who have less language proficiency – they can read each character’s speech and assign a position for each character on one or the other side of the table, to show that they belong to opposing sides in a conflict.

Prediction: Could the conversation exchange or dialogue be rewritten in a different way?

Exploring relationships between characters: Who are the friends? Who are opposites, who are similar to each other? Comparisons and contrasts between characters can be made. For example, take the following exchange:

Cratchit: Er, pardon me, Mr Scrooge, but there’s a gentleman to see you.

Scrooge: What about, Cratchit?

Cratchit: He didn’t say, sir.

Gentleman: Ah, good afternoon, sir. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr Scrooge or Mr Marley?

Scrooge: Mr Marley, my former partner, has been dead these seven years. He died seven years ago this very night.
Gentleman: Then I have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner.

Scrooge: What do you want?

Gentleman: At this festive season, Mr Scrooge, we try to make some slight provision for the poor and destitute. Many thousands are in want of common necessities.

Scrooge: Are there no prisons?

Gentleman: Oh, plenty of prisons.

Scrooge: And the workhouses? Are they still in operation?

Gentleman: I wish I could say they were not. How much shall I put you down for, Mr Scrooge?

Scrooge: Nothing.

Gentleman: Nothing?

Scrooge: Exactly. Let these deserving people of yours go to the establishments I have mentioned.

Gentleman: Most of them would rather die than do that.

Scrooge: Then let them do that and help decrease the surplus population. I’m busy. Good afternoon to you.

Gentleman: Very good, Mr Scrooge. A very Merry Christmas to you!

Goes out.

Scrooge: Charity! Pah! Humbug!

(adapted from Charles Dickens’ novel *A Christmas Carol*, extracted from CBSE *Interact in English*, Literature Reader)

Even in such a short extract, there are several possibilities for writing activities. The students can be asked to define Scrooge’s character, or write about the situation- what is the occasion, what happens on such an occasion, and whether the expected response is given or not, and the reason why it is not. Since Scrooge refuses to give charity on Christmas, this is a sign of his character. From this we see simply that character and action are linked in this play. Once the students become aware of this, they can write a good summary or description of the plot or character.

**Themes:** The movement of the plot can be traced by making a diagram of the plot. This can be put up in the form of a chart, as a summary. Some of the activities used in teaching fiction could also be useful in drama, as drama has a narrative aspect. Endings, for instance, are important in drama, as in stories. The activities can be based on recreation of some scenes or dialogues in a play, which may change the direction of the plot.

There is also opportunity for vocabulary practice in drama e.g. in the above extract, we can find out the opposites of words as: ‘the opposite of liberality is_______’, ‘the opposite of destitute is_______’ etc. Using more vocabulary, the students can attempt to write a piece on the condition of poor people, or what should be done for the poor and needy especially, on festivals.
b) Oral

Oral activities such as loud reading of extracts, with gestures, will be of use in practice of spoken language at different levels: emphasis, tone and pronunciation. Conversations can be developed from the play, as in the extract above, the students can enact another imaginary conversation with Scrooge. One student would speak as Scrooge, and another would persuade him to donate something for poor people.

We can build on other kinds of opportunities that this extract provides. Normally, we exchange greetings on meeting someone and say something when we take leave at the end of a conversation. We also have ways of greeting people on festive occasions. Students can make a list of different kinds of greetings and leave-takings for different occasions, formal and informal. They can also discuss whether this is a modern way of speaking, and how our spoken interaction today can be very different.

It would be useful for students to enact a play, or prepare and present a play in order to understand the kind of interaction which takes place in drama.

13.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have tried to understand the importance of teaching literature and the manner in which we can approach the teaching of different forms of literature in the classroom. Each type of writing poses a challenge and we have to be quite creative in thinking about ways to make literature both interesting and useful in the context of language learning. Prose texts can be used for studying ways in which information and arguments are presented; fiction can be used for studying how stories are told and how they are understood, how characters are presented; and drama combines character and action in a constant play of the language of dialogue. In all these instances, the choice of words and arrangement of sentences and the building of connections in the text are aspects of language use that learners can benefit from studying. The literary text is a vast and enriching field for the language learner.

13.8 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READING

It will be useful to introduce students to the short stories of many great writers, both Indian and those from other countries, such as Rabindranath Tagore, Anton Chekhov, Leo Tolstoy, Rudyard Kipling and many others. Many other useful collections and anthologies are suggested in Collie and Slater, referred to below.


13.9 ANSWERS

Test your understanding-I

a. Read the relevant section (13.3) for answering this question.

b. Some suggestions for activities are:

You could start with a question about the length of the sentences. Students can count the words in each sentence (they like to do that) and see how long they are. Then we can discuss why a particular sentence is long – what bits of information does it contain? Does it repeat something? Can we cut it down to make it shorter? If we cut it, what important meaning will be lost?

Other activities can be thought of: on the images in which the river is portrayed; or open-ended such as ‘the Ganga stands for________’. Students can be asked to describe some other place (river, mountain, sea, forest) with the help of vocabulary from the passage. Feel free to make as many exercises as you want.

Test your understanding-II

Some suggestions for activities are:

Key questions for the story can be asked, for example: Who is Murch?

How does he succeed in stealing the man’s car?

You can think about a prediction activity too: will the students be able to predict what happens? Or is this a case of reading backwards, in order to comprehend.

The descriptions of the characters can also be the basis of activity e.g. Why is the description of Murch’s jacket so important? Is he pretending to be someone else? What do you infer by the appearance of the man who owns the car?

This story builds on background knowledge (of big hotels, of the practice of giving the keys of one’s car to an attendant for parking it, etc). You may think of ways in which students can guess what happens in such situations.

You can also make exercises on some aspect of language, or suggest some writing exercise e.g. describing the man’s reaction when he comes out and finds his car has been stolen.
UNIT 14  TEACHING LITERARY TEXTS-II

Structure

14.1 Objectives
14.2 Introduction
14.3 The Language of Poetry
14.4 Types of Poetry
14.5 Activities and Exercises in Teaching Poetry
14.6 Let Us Sum Up
14.7 References and Suggested Reading
14.8 Answers

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Teachers love to teach poetry. But we must reflect on what the teaching of poetry actually means. Often, teachers feel they should make the idea in a poem clear to the students, and so they adopt the method of explanation. However, the basic question regarding poetry is the same as that of other texts and that is: the development of the ability to read. Students will not really comprehend the meaning of a poem until they read it themselves. And indeed when they do read it, they will discover many meanings in it. Therefore, in poetry, the reading of the text is even more crucial, because a poetic text has many layers. It cannot be reduced to one idea only. The teacher’s primary task is to help students to read, and further to discuss and write about the poem. Simply trying to explain a poem will not enable a student to read and appreciate it. The particular kind of challenge that a poetic text offers to the readers, teachers and students, is not only of factual reading, but that of making inferences, reading between the lines and uncovering the implied meanings. In other words, reading poetry demands more advanced reading skills. It is only when students read the poems themselves that they can appreciate the particular quality of the poetic text. If the teacher explains the meaning of a poem, it will be reduced to mere paraphrase. The essence of the language will be lost, and this will amount to destroying the delicate balance of words and feelings that a poem creates. Instead of enjoying poetry, students will find it boring.

To this, we may add the aspect of speech or sounds. Poetry is meant to be spoken and heard. In fact, for many centuries before poems were printed in books, people recited and sang them, and thus remembered them. Speaking and listening are important skill areas as much as reading and writing, as far as poetry is concerned.

This brings us to consider the language of poetry which is of a particular kind. It functions in ways that are different from an ordinary, everyday use of language. The Czech linguist Roman Jacobson identified the various functions of language, such as giving messages, expressing ideas etc. The
**poetic function** is a special function of language. It is not that of conveying a message directly. Here the language functions to draw attention to itself.

This happens through the choice of words and sentences and the combination of these in such a way that our attention is captured by the language itself. Some particular features in a poem may jump out at us, and have an immediate effect. Even if it is only a sound, if it is repeated in a pattern, we notice it. If a word is repeated again and again, we recognize it as important. It stands out against other sounds or words which are not so prominent. In other words, one particular item of language – at any level, be it sounds, words or sentences — may be foregrounded. The items that are foregrounded stand out and are remembered.

Such repetitions create patterns of sounds and words, and create a unique text. To this may be added some other unusual kind of sentence or the coining of new words. This may be a deviation, and it may be so different from our common everyday use of language that it may seem that the poet is deliberately mocking the rules of grammar and word formation. Such uses of language in poetry create such a unique text that any attempt to try and reduce it to a paraphrase destroys its very basis. An oft-quoted example of this deviant construction and use of vocabulary is ‘a grief ago’ (Dylan Thomas).

Perhaps it is because of these special qualities of language in poetry, that the question may arise as to whether reading poetry is a useful component in the language teaching syllabus. Since we do not actually use poetic language in day to day communication, many people believe that it is unnecessary to teach poetry to develop communication skills in second language learning. But as we have discussed in the previous unit, literature provides interesting contexts and original material for the language learner, and to some extent, this applies to poetry also. Teachers may question the need to go into the language of poetry in much depth, as it may not be directly useful in the classroom. Young children may not understand technical aspects of metre, or other levels of linguistic analysis of a poem. But we must accept that this knowledge will serve us well in many ways. Firstly, it will help teachers to see which poems are most appropriate for different levels of students. As it is with other forms of literature, the right selection of poems is important. Different poems appeal to different age groups. A poem may appear to be simple on the surface, but may be quite complex. It is only when the teacher explores the nature of poetry that a judgement about the simplicity or complexity of poems can be made. Secondly, the teacher will be able to pick up those aspects of the poem which are most significant, and develop some activities and exercises on these aspects. In other words, greater familiarity with the language of the poem will make it easier for the teacher to devise a wide range of exercises on the poem, which will develop the students’ awareness and enjoyment of poetry. Once this is done, students will be encouraged to read more, which will continue the process of their language development and skills of comprehension.

### 14.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:
appreciate the essential characteristics of a poetic text and understand what makes such a text different from other forms of literature;

explore various approaches to teaching poetry, taking into account both the aspect of language and the task of overall appreciation of poetry; and

teach poetry in the classroom as part of teaching English as a second language.

14.3 THE LANGUAGE OF POETRY

We can go a little further into understanding the language of poetry, starting from the first level, that is, of sounds. Let us remember that poetry makes some part of the language prominent by repetition, creating parallelism, or by changing the order of words in sentences, or by making comparisons and indicating different meanings of words.

Sounds

Various kinds of sound repetition occur in poetry. There is a purpose to these – the poem becomes easy to remember, and to recite. Take the following lines from ‘Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ by Coleridge:

The wild breeze blew, the white foam flew
The furrow followed free
We were the first that ever burst
Into the silent sea.

Here we see the repetition of the first consonant in the beginning of the words e.g. /b/ in breeze, blew; /f/ in foam, flew, furrow, followed, free; /s/ in silent, sea. This is called alliteration. Other than the first consonant in the words, there may be repetition of other consonants, e.g. /s/ and /t/ in first, burst, silent. This is consonance. Similarly, there is repetition of vowel sounds e.g. /ai/ in wild, white, silent; /i:/ in breeze, free, sea; /u:/ in blew, flew, etc. This is assonance. Taken together, all these sound repetitions create a pattern which becomes clear when we read the poem aloud. They also create rhyme, as the last sounds are repeated e.g. blew-flew, free-sea, first-burst.

Metre is another feature peculiar to poetry. You may have often felt that words and lines in poetry sound musical. How does this happen? Along with the patterns of sounds, there are patterns of lines in poetry. A line in poetry is different from a sentence. A break is made after few syllables to make a line, and this pattern is continued over several lines. This is the metre, which is the length of each line in a poem. As in the above example, there are four lines, but are there four sentences? The breaking up of a sentence into lines creates a special kind of rhythm, which is not the same as the rhythm when the sentence is read in continuation. This poetic rhythm is created by the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line. Again, taking the example of the above, we can trace the pattern of stressed (/) and unstressed (X) syllables as follows:
The wild breeze blew, the white foam flew.

The furrow followed free.

We were the first that ever burst

Into the silent sea.

Looking at the above lines, you will notice the similarity of patterns of lines 1 and 3 on one hand and lines 2 and 4 on the other. This opposition of two sets of patterns creates another pattern. While lines 1 and 2 consist of complete sentences, lines 3 and 4 are the continuation of one sentence. This is a run-on line, in which the line stops, but the sentence continues to the next line.

In this context, it will be useful to remember that the teaching of English in India occurs in a multilingual environment. The sound patterns such as those mentioned above are just as much a feature of poetry in other languages as they are in English, so the teachers may take up some poems from the students’ first language, or mother tongue, just to use their sensitivity towards sounds in their own language to help them to be sensitive to the sounds of English.

Words

Poetry contains words which have been carefully chosen both for their sound effects as well as their meanings. For long, it was felt that poetry has special words, of ‘high’ vocabulary, or old-sounding words, such as ‘steed’ (for horse) and ‘tresses’ (for hair). But if we look at poems carefully, we find that the words used are not always difficult or infrequent. They are used differently, and sometimes at different places in sentences than they are normally placed, or as another part of speech than the one to which they belong, and their meanings may thus change. But poets do not only choose words. They also invent them.

They can twist words by adding a prefix, or suffix, where it is not usually placed. For example, we have words like ‘foretell’, ‘foresee’ but not ‘foresuffer’ (which the poet T.S. Eliot uses). Gerald Manley Hopkins another famous poet also coins words. In the poem ‘Inversnaid’ he uses the word ‘twindles’ which is a combination of ‘twines’ and ‘dwindles’.

Sentences

There is grammar in poetry, but it is used in many different ways. The normal order of words or phrases is changed or reversed. Take the following example:

Home is the hunter, home from the hill

And the sailor home from the sea.
In the normal sentence structure, we would have: ‘the hunter is home from the hill’ which is a Subject-Verb-Adverbial pattern. Here we have a reverse of that: Adverbial-Verb-Subject. The subject is mentioned last. The effect of this is to give more emphasis to the word ‘home’, which is mentioned three times in the two lines – so it is obvious that the idea of home is very significant here. But the normal pattern is restored in the second line, so this sets up a contrast between sentence pattern 1, which is ‘reversal of word order’ and sentence pattern 2 which is ‘restoring the word order’. Of such parallels and contrasts is poetry made!

**Discourse**

Discourse is a higher level of organization of language. It is not just a matter of sentences, but how the sentences are put together to make a coherent text and create meaning. To understand discourse we must be aware of the context of the situation and the speech event: Who is speaking? To whom? What is the situation? What is the background which it is assumed that the speaker/writer and reader/listener share? What is not shared? Are there any silences or gaps in the communication? If there is an addressee, is he/she human, animal, plant, god or goddess, or is it unclear who is being addressed? Why? What is overstated, or given too much attention, and is there an attempt to persuade other people?

We will know the answers to these questions when we trace aspects of language such as pronouns (the use of I, we, they, us, my, your, etc.), sentence connections (then, now, but, though etc), word choices, sentence forms such as active/passive, references to names, people and things from a particular environment or culture. All these are significant in poetry and can be noticed by an alert reader.

**Check Your Progress 1**

1. Make a list of repetition of sounds in the following lines:
   - Cannon to the right of them
   - Cannon to the left of them
   - Volleyed and thundered
   - Into the valley of death
   - Rode the six hundred.

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

2. What do you understand by the terms ‘foregrounding’ and ‘deviation’ of language in poetry? Give examples from your reading of poetry.

   .............................................................................................................
   .............................................................................................................
   .............................................................................................................
14.4 TYPES OF POETRY

Poetry takes many forms, and there are some which children may find quite interesting, in their shape, or rhythm, or play with words. We know how nursery rhymes, doggerel, sing-song chants etc., fascinate children from an early age. In India, we often hear children repeating some doggerel about political parties at election time, even though they don’t understand what it means; or singing lines of Hindi film songs or advertisements, just for the pleasure of the rhythm. Some of the types of poetry of interest to teachers in providing variety in the classroom are discussed below.

Visual poetry

Poems are often written in different visual and graphic forms, presenting pictures which demonstrate the theme of the poem. A well-known example is that of a poem by George Herbert, a seventeenth century poet, ‘Easter Wings’:

\[
\text{Lord, who created man in wealth and store} \\
\text{Though foolishly he lost the same} \\
\text{Decaying more and more} \\
\text{Till he became} \\
\text{Most poor} \\
\text{With thee} \\
\text{O let me rise} \\
\text{As larks, harmoniously,} \\
\text{And sing this day thy victories} \\
\text{Then shall the fall further the flight in me}
\]

The setting of the poem as a pair of angel’s wings presents the theme of the poem – that of a prayer for resurrection, very much in keeping with the spirit of Easter. Poems can be seen as shape and movement, and shape of a sound or letter can be presented in many interesting ways (children are fascinated by Google graphic in which the word ‘Google’ is presented in multifarious forms).

Limericks

These are simple forms, but have rhyme, word play and humour, often irreverent, and all these are forms which children love and delight in. Some examples:

i. There was an old man with a beard

  Who said, ‘its just as I feared! \\
  Two owls and a hen, \\
  Four larks and a wren \\
  Have all built their nests in my beard!’
ii. There was a young lady whose chin

  Resembled the point of a pin

  So she had it made sharp,

  And purchased a harp

  And played several tunes with her chin.

Nonsense verse

Why do you think young children like nonsense verse, or nursery rhymes whose meanings they don’t understand? It is the pleasure of the sounds, and the rhythm that they enjoy. But even more than that, they enjoy the freedom, the liberation from meaning, which is as important for the human soul as the creation of meaning. Language binds us as much as it helps us, and to be free of the fixed structures of language is to be in world of pure joy, as that of music, play and dance. Look at the following lines chosen by an eight year old child, describing the rain:

  Dot a dot dot a dot dot/ on the window pane
  Speck a speck spack, fleck a fleck flack/on the window pane
  Slosh a glosch slosh a glosch/slither and slather a glide
  A puddle a jump, a huddle a jump, a pudmuddle jump and slide.

Or from Lewis Carroll’s ‘Jabberwocky’:

  One, two! One two! And through and through
  The vorpal blade went snicker snack
  He left it dead and with its head
  He went galumphing back
  O has thou slain the jabberwock?
  Come to my arms, my beamish boy
  O frabjous day! Calloo, callay!
  He chortled in his joy.

Ballads and Narrative poems

These poems tell stories, in a traditional simple form, which is the ballad, such as The Lady of Shallot (Tennyson) or the The Diverting History of John Gilpin (Cowper), while The Highwayman (Alfred Noyes) is a narrative of mystery which many children love. Lesser known but extremely rhythmic is Browning’s verse rendering of the Pied Piper of Hamlin. Some poems are in the form of a dialogue, (a question-answer sequence), or even a monologue (a speaker speaks to a listener, but the listener does not speak).

Descriptive poetry

When poems describe a character, or a scene or a landscape, they often succeed in drawing vivid pictures e.g. of seasons, of birds and animals and
even family members, particularly parents and grandparents. These are rich in images, some of which may be familiar, and some rather startling or strange. Many Romantic poems of nature are simple and appealing to children.

**Lyric poetry**

This type of poetry resembles song, and very expressive of personal feelings. Examples are poems like Blake’s *Songs of innocence*, Tennyson’s *The Brook*, Walter de la Mare’s *If I were Lord of Tartary*, and many odes by the Romantic poets.

**Haiku**

This is a Japanese form, very short, with seventeen syllables in all, and captures a single moment. It is a form of meditation, but children today may be more attracted to it because it is short. These days there is also SMS poetry, very short and sent to people on mobile phones. Today’s children are quite comfortable with such forms, and learn to use language in a very concise manner. Students may respond well to examples of haiku such as the following:

1. The tower high
   
   I climb; there, on that fir top,
   
   Sits a butterfly!

2. here on the mountain pass
   
   Somehow they draw one’s heart so-
   
   Violets on the grass.

**14.5 ACTIVITIES AND EXERCISES IN TEACHING POETRY**

**Pre-reading** is important as a warm up activity, a way of approaching the text by linking it with the students’ own experiences and associations before looking at the way in which the poem presents an experience or situation. Pre-reading can take several forms: questions, anecdotes, use of pictures to start a discussion etc. For instance, if a poem is about neighbours, the teacher may ask:

Do you know your neighbours? Who are they? What do they do? Do you like them?

Or students can be asked to complete a sentence like: ‘A good neighbour_________’

If it is a poem about a season, pictures can be collected (as those on calendars) e.g. Christmas and New Year cards have pictures of snow. Students can be asked to describe these pictures. Then the focus can be narrowed down to questions: What do people do in this season? Does anyone travel? How do you feel in a season like this? Will you stay at home or go out? What do animals do in this season? These question-answer activities will serve to provide a context, and help in introducing a poem like Robert Frost’s *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*.
Reading for keywords, or foregrounded (repeated, unusual) words or phrases: Students can be asked to skim through the poem quickly, and say which words, or sounds, jump out and grab their attention. Some of these will be common among most students, others may notice something that no-one else has perceived. The teacher must accept all these, and use the blackboard to put up all the prominent items. Students can then be asked to read the poem again, with particular attention to the items listed on the board, and note down, or tell the teacher if they notice that some things are repeated. They can also work in pairs at this stage and read the poem together to make their observations. At this stage, they need not write full sentences, but jot down words, or line numbers – in short, simple note-making may be encouraged at this point.

Grammar activities: Of the various kinds of exercises that are possible in grammar, the ones which suit poetry are exercises of rearrangement of sentences and phrases and substitution of parts of speech. As discussed above, poets often reorder the regular word order, and an exercise in which the ‘normal’ order of the sentence is rearranged, will be useful for students in getting more familiarity with grammatical patterns. The use of tenses can also be practiced. Let us consider the following quatrain from ‘Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam’:

The moving finger writes, and having writ, moves on
Nor all they piety and wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line
Nor all they tears wash a word of it.

There is the use of a particular kind of present tense (writes, moves), which indicates a universal truth (e.g. the sun rises). Other examples of the same use of present can be practiced by the students. Then there is the use of ‘shall’ which indicates the obligation to do something (e.g. I shall go), in ‘shall lure it back’, ‘shall wash’. But this is combined with a negative ‘nor’, which means that ‘it shall not be done’, or ‘it is not possible’. Students can be given similar sentences for practice of use of ‘shall’ and ‘shall not’, ‘will’ and ‘will not’, ‘can’ and ‘can not’ etc. Then, the example of the use of non-finite verb, ‘having writ’, can be a chance to explore the use of non-finite forms of the verb, which are often used to add to the meaning of a sentence. In this way, grammatical forms and their meanings are linked and can be understood more clearly than isolated exercises in grammar which are based only on rules and not on meaning and use.

Another useful exercise in grammar is that of filling in blanks in sentences, by blanking out some parts of speech. Some poems can be useful in both substitution and blank filling, as the verse from Jabberwocky in Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland shows:

It was brillig and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe
All mimsy were the borogoves
And the mome raths outgrabe.
The words which are in italics are all ‘form’ words and those not in italics are ‘function’ words. The difference between form and function words can be made clear by this example. Even if the ‘form’ words are all nonsense words, the ‘function’ words give the grammatical structure that connects all the ‘form’ words, and this shows that the ‘form’ words are nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Students can then substitute their own words in the place of these nonsense words e.g. morning/evening for ‘brillig’, ‘happy birds’ for ‘slithy toves’, and so on. This exercise sharpens the students’ understanding of grammatical relationships.

Another example illustrates the use of blank filling. Let us take up the following lines:

Day after day, day after day we stuck
Nor ________, nor __________
As idle as a ____________ship
Upon a __________ ocean.

Here, the nouns and adjectives are blanked out. It may be made clear to students that they have to choose the right words, e.g. the second blank in line 2 should have a word that rhymes with the last word in line 4, ‘ocean’. They should be allowed to experiment with several words to see if they ‘fit’, and also convey meaning. Only then can we give the actual words: ‘Nor breath, nor motion/As idle as a painted ship/upon a painted ocean.’ This will surprise the students. Why is the word ‘painted’ repeated? Couldn’t the poet have chosen something else? But the repetition actually strengthens the sense of stillness and unreality of being stuck in the middle of the sea, so there is a reason for the poet to use it. Such gentle explorations into grammar and meaning are aids to the understanding of language in a much more friendly way than explanations of rules.

Vocabulary: This is a fertile area with regard to poetry. Students can read through the poem to see which words are repeated, and which synonyms of those words are used. Words can be substituted by their synonyms, and the teacher can discuss whether the synonym conveys the same meaning, or makes a difference.

For example, in Wordsworth’s poem ‘The Daffodils’, the word ‘lonely’ occurs in the first line. Students may be asked to see if there are words with a similar meaning, and may find them, such as ‘solitary’. After noting these, students can be asked to see if there are words showing other moods and make a list, e.g. ‘happy’, ‘gay’ and ‘jocund’ on one hand, and ‘vacant’, ‘pensive’ as the antonyms. They will see how patterns of similarity and contrast are built up in this way.

Another example illustrates how unfamiliar words are often used within a simple grammatical structure. Many readers of ‘The Brook’ by Tennyson have the impression that it is a very simple poem, and it is often prescribed even at primary school. But let us see the vocabulary: is it familiar? Look at the italicized words:
Questions can be asked: Is bicker actually a word in English? If so, how is it used? We say about people, 'they were bickering', meaning ‘quarreling’, but can we say this about a brook? What does this tell us about the brook? Why is it said that it ‘bickers’? Though it may not seem important, a small word like this gives a lot of indications about the poem. The sound made by the running water may be similar to the murmuring of people when they argue, and this strengthens the element of personification of the brook as a person, which is already evident in the use of first person ‘I’.

Further, we may explore other words: ‘haunt’, ‘sally’ etc. We can check them from the dictionary. Which words are still being used today, and which are not much in use? What is the difference between a brook, a stream, a river?

This may also be related to the title of the poem. In fact, students can be asked to give their own titles, picking up some other important words in the poem, and the teacher can ask them: ‘why do you want to give this title?’ This can also lead to the teacher suggesting other similar words or synonyms and putting them on the board for students to note down and consider their meanings.

**Images** in poetry are made of words. Words are also used to compare two dissimilar things. Young learners need not be burdened with definitions of ‘simile’, ‘metaphor’ etc., but they can certainly be encouraged to see what is being compared, to what, and discuss why the comparison is made. Robert Burns makes a simple set of comparisons:

‘My love is like a red, red rose/ That’s newly sprung in June.

My love is like a melody/That’s sweetly sung in tune.’

So many things are evident here: rhyme, repetition, alliterations etc. All these bring about relationships between ‘my love=rose=melody’ and along with this, the feeling of summer (June), and music (tune). All these ideas get linked. Even in a simple comparison, such as ‘the moon’s a balloon’ (e.g. Cummings) has a unique combination of sound and meaning. Here, language expands and students get a sense of its wonder and its possibilities. It is this which makes us love a language and we try to express ourselves in it.

**Listening** to the poems being read out or recited by teachers and students, as well as on tapes and CDs, proves invaluable in developing an ear for the tone, musicality and rhythm of the language. It can be encouraged by specific listening activities, such as listening and repeating, listening and filling in blanks, listening and identifying words, rhymes etc.

**Speaking and writing** can be integrated in the reading of poetry. Instead of writing tasks being random, they can be related to the poem e.g. a poem about a season can be the basis for the students to write about their favorite season, or give an account of the activities done in different seasons. If the poem is in the form of a dialogue, the dialogue can be enacted, and a
dialogue in the poem can be continued by asking students to imagine what more can be said.

Speaking in the form of discussion can be encouraged at all times, and even if the children speak in their mother tongue, this should be allowed, as it will help them to overcome their hesitation in talking about their responses. If they write out a few lines, they can be asked to read them out. It is also suggested that different opinions should be encouraged. All students do not like all poems, and it is obvious that they should be free to dislike a poem, and at the same time, be asked to give reasons why they dislike it. This activity is vital for developing the kind of critical thinking that we wish to foster in our students through the teaching of literature.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Make some exercises in teaching grammar and vocabulary based on the following extract of poetry:

   Slowly silently now the moon
   Walks the night in her silver shoon;
   This way and that she peers, and sees,
   Silver fruit upon silver trees;
   One by one the casements catch
   Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
   Couched in his kennel, like a log,
   With paws of silver sleeps the dog.
   A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
   With silver claws and silver eye;
   And moveless fish in the water gleam, ........................................
   By silver reeds in a silver stream.

   Walter de la Mare

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

2. What are the sound patterns in the above lines, and how can they be used for developing pronunciation?

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

3. Consider the phrases: ‘the trumpet of liberty’ (John Taylor) and ‘all the world’s a stage’ (Shakespeare). For each one, construct some parallel structures that can help in language practice.

   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................
14.6 LET US SUM UP

Teachers may feel that they need to give their students a ‘central idea’ or definite meaning of a poem in the form of a summary or paraphrase. On the other hand, there is the view that ‘a poem should not mean but be’, that is, there is no single or definite meaning in a poem. It is open to interpretation by readers in any way. The way to achieve both these aims is to first provide students with opportunities to discover meaning. The urge to make meaning is an essential part of language learning and cannot be denied. Along with this, there is also the need to negotiate or share meaning with others. The classroom is the arena where this process is undertaken and the social construction of meaning can take place in a reasonably encouraging environment.

14.7 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READING


Webexhibits.org/poetry through the ages

Teachers are advised to use the internet for live readings and recordings of poetry, which can be downloaded and put on CDs for the students to listen.

14.8 ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. You may notice the repetition of sharp consonants – particularly /d/. The rhythm may appear to be that of marching ‘right, left’ and the parallelism may suggest the order of the marching army. Other things to note may be: reversal of word order, rhyme, impact of words such as ‘volleyed’, ‘thundered’ etc. Taking these together, you can form an impression of the use of language in this extract from Tennyson’s ‘Charge of The Light Brigade’. You can read the full poem to see how this language shapes the poem and the ideas in it.

2. When one particular item of language – be it sounds, words or sentences – is repeated again and again so that it stands out against other sounds or words is known as foregrounding of language in poetry.

Sometimes poets use words or sentences which are so different from our common everyday use of language, it is called deviation of language in poetry. e.g. ‘a grief ago’ (Dylan Thomas).
Check Your Progress 2

1. Some aspects of the poem that you can pick up can be:

   Grammar: Adverbs ‘slowly, silently’ are in the beginning of the line. Why? Rearrangement exercise: The sentence can be re-arranged. What nouns and pronouns are used (e.g. ‘she’ for the moon)?

   Vocabulary: Students can guess the meaning of ‘shoon’. They can be asked to count the number of times the word ‘silver’ is mentioned. Why? Can the poem be given the title ‘Silver’? Or can it be given the title ‘The Moon’ or ‘The Silver Moon’ or ‘Silver Light’? It can be fun to explore these alternatives and justify them. Then, there is a word like ‘moveless’. Can ‘-less’ be added to ‘move’ in the same way as ‘timeless’, ‘baseless’ etc? The poet could have written ‘unmoving’ instead of ‘moveless’, but why is this unusual word brought in? Could it be for preserving the metre (‘unmoving’ is three syllables, ‘moveless’ is two syllables)?

2. The sounds of ‘s’ and ‘sh’ can be practiced. Tongue twisters can also be used for practice of these sounds. The rhyme scheme can also be noticed (it is simple ‘aa, bb, cc’).

3. The structure of the first phrase is ‘the _______ of _________’. This can be filled in. (example: the god of small things – Arundhati Roy) The structure of the second phrase is ‘________ is_______’, which is a simple equation. (example: ‘life is a walking shadow’ — Shakespeare)
UNIT 15 VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Structure

15.1 Objectives
15.2 Introduction
15.3 Active and Passive Vocabulary
15.4 Content Words and Function Words
15.5 Some Difficulties in Learning English Vocabulary
15.6 Techniques for Presenting Vocabulary
15.7 Word Building: Affixation and Compounding
15.8 Using a Dictionary and a Thesaurus
15.9 Vocabulary Games
15.10 Let Us Sum Up
15.11 References and Suggested Readings
15.12 Answers

15.1 OBJECTIVES

After you have read this lesson, you should be able to:

- differentiate between active and passive vocabulary;
- distinguish content and function words;
- discuss with appropriate examples how homonyms, homophones, homographs or idiomatic expressions make language learning difficult;
- enumerate a few techniques for presenting vocabulary in a classroom situation;
- justify the use of dictionary and thesaurus to expand vocabulary; and
- organize vocabulary games in your classroom.

15.2 INTRODUCTION

Like bricks when laid out properly, correctly and with some imagination can build up simple walls or complex design for buildings and mansions, not to talk of other structures, similarly a language user uses different words to construct sentences – both single word sentences or longer ones. But just as bricks alone are not adequate, and they need to be strengthened by use of mortar/concrete mixture, similarly words alone may not be adequate. The appropriacy of the word chosen, the word order in which it is placed, the nuance of the meaning – everything play an important role. In this lesson, we will read how words – oral or written – are gradually learnt and how a learner, over the years, adds to the initial word base.
**15.3 ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOCABULARY**

Just think for a moment. Can you use all the words the moment you have heard them or have read them once? Do you use all the unfamiliar words – the meanings of which you have guessed while reading or listening – in your speech or writing? Some words you may, some you might not. But you start understanding those words if you hear or read them again and again. Our listening and reading vocabulary is much more than our speaking or writing vocabulary.

The words that you can use appropriately when you say or write something form what is known as your **active** vocabulary and those that you have an idea of or can guess the meaning of, but cannot use confidently form a part of your **passive** vocabulary. Our **active** vocabulary is more limited (smaller) than our **passive** vocabulary. As teachers we try our best to increase the repertoire of both active and passive vocabulary of our students with continual review, reuse and recycling of words as there is a transition period for words to pass from **passive** to **active** vocabulary. All of us master those words first that we need to use in our communication with others. And we add to our word base over the years.

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**Check Your Progress 1**

1. Given below are a few words. Under which category ‘**Active**’ or ‘**Passive**’ would you put them?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antiseptic</th>
<th>Anomaly</th>
<th>Forte</th>
<th>Herbarium</th>
<th>Paroxysm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

i. Consult a dictionary to find out the meaning and pronunciation of the words (given above) if you do not know.

ii. Compare your list with someone in your family or one of your friends. Does the list differ?

2. Look at the following words:

- Rapport
- Abdicate
- Recede
- Maverick

Would memorizing the meaning and pronunciation of these words help you in using them immediately in your speech? Give at least one reason for your answer.
15.4 CONTENT WORDS AND FUNCTION WORDS

Read the following sentences:

1. I saw a beautiful bird sitting on a branch of a gulmohar tree.

2. Pari, my five year old granddaughter, wants to wear blue jeans all the time. She cries loudly whenever her parents ask her to put on a frock, however beautiful.

Look at the underlined words carefully, once again. Even as isolated discrete words they carry some meaning. These words, if you observe carefully, are nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. These words are called content words. On the other hand, the words which are not underlined are function words. These words are more frequently used and carry some grammatical meaning. These words which are also known as structure words, are modal and auxiliary verbs, determiners, prepositions and conjunctions.

New learners learn content words first. The list of such words are open, in the sense that new words are added to this list over the years, e.g. think of the word helipad or smart phone. Did these words exist some hundred years ago? Why were these words added to the list of words that are so commonly used today? Think and write your answer here.

On the other hand, function words are a much smaller set, although more frequently used and the word list is a closed one, i.e. no new determiners or prepositions have been added to this list.

Content and function words need different teaching approaches. While the meaning of content words can be explained and exemplified in a variety of ways, function words are learnt through continued use in a range of different situations. We shall come back to the teaching of content words in a later section of this unit.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Which of the following words would you consider of recent origin?
   - Phishing
   - hand blender
   - milk shake
   - Cute
   - clone
   - pod
   - Flash mob
   - blue tooth
   - smart card
   - smiley

2. Look for the meanings of the words given in question 1. Use a dictionary to decide the part of speech these words belong to.

3. Discuss with someone you know how long these words have been in circulation.
15.5 SOME DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH VOCABULARY

Learners of English as Second Language may find a few stumbling blocks in mastering this language. In this section we shall look at a few of these difficulties.

One Word Many Meanings (Homonyms)

Homonyms are words which have the same spelling and pronunciation but different meanings in different contexts. In the following sentences, the word club has different meanings.

As a child, you might have gone to a local club in your colony. You might have seen the picture of Bhim with a club in his hand in Mahabharat serial on television, and if you play cards, you have to deal with clubs in the pack. You might suggest to a student to club two paragraphs together to make the writing more compact.

- A club is an association of people with common interest (first sentence).
- A club is a heavy stick with a thick end, used as a hand weapon (Bhim with a club in his hand).
- Clubs is one of the four suits in a conventional pack of playing cards.
- In the third sentence, club means combine.

Let us take another example.

1. She went to her room and lay down on the bed.
2. My husband is busy preparing a bed for the pancies.
3. Heat the curry thoroughly and serve it on a bed of rice.

You will notice that the word bed has different meanings in the examples given above. You understand the meaning from the context in which the word has been used. E.g. the context of the first sentence is a piece of furniture, in the second sentence the context is the area in a garden so that plants can be grown in it, whereas “a bed of rice” in a recipe would mean a layer of rice.
These contexts give the clues about the meaning of the word *bed* or *club*. Read the examples given above again and look at the words that give you the clues about the situation.

In English, there are many such words where the spelling (written form) and pronunciation (sound) are the same but they have different meanings in different contexts. As a teacher, your examples (to explain the word) must emphasize the context in which a particular word is used. Also, as a teacher, you would teach the most frequent use of the word first. For example ‘to lie down on a bed’. It is better not to teach all the situations at the same time because that would be confusing for your learners. The other meanings are learnt gradually over a period of time. Hence, we can say that learning words is a continual process. There is a lot to be learnt about a word and it may be learnt in different ways.

---

**Check Your Progress 3**

1. Look at the following sentences.
   
i. The Kalindi King Park is located on the **banks** of the River Yamuna.
   
   ii. Most of the **banks** in our area are closed on Sundays.
   
   iii. The aeroplane **banked** steeply before it landed.

   Which word will you teach your class IV students in a vernacular medium rural school first? Why?
   
   .....................................................................................................
   
   .....................................................................................................
   
   .....................................................................................................

2. There are many **fans** in the room.

   Is this sentence ambiguous in meaning? Give a reason for your answer.
   
   .....................................................................................................
   
   .....................................................................................................
   
   .....................................................................................................
   
   .....................................................................................................

3. What are the different meanings of the word *light*? Use the word in sentences to bring out the different meanings. Compare your answers with any dictionary.
   
   .....................................................................................................
   
   .....................................................................................................
   
   .....................................................................................................
   
   .....................................................................................................
   
   .....................................................................................................
   
   .....................................................................................................
Same Sound Different Form and meanings (Homophones)

Look at the following set of words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>stationary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>bow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is common in the different set of words?

Yes. You have got it right. The pronunciation (sound) of both the words are exactly the same but the written form (spelling) are different. The meanings of the words are also different. Which spelling to use is decided by the context in which the word is used. Such pair of words – with identical sound but different spelling and different meanings – are known as **homophones**.

homo = same
phone = sound

**Check Your Progress 4**

1. You must have noticed the warning on many cars / taxies in India - *Keep distance. Power Break*. What is wrong? Why?

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

2. Your students frequently make mistakes in using *there* – *their*. How can you teach them the correct use of these two words? Give two suggestions.

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

3. Give examples of five sets of homophones that you would like to teach your students in the lower classes.

.............................................................................................................
.............................................................................................................
.............................................................................................................
.............................................................................................................
.............................................................................................................
Same Form Different Sound and Meaning (Homographs)

Now let us look at a different set of examples.

1a The Director’s Secretary took down the **minutes**.
1b Even **minute** details are taken care of by a diligent organizer.

2a Warriors, in earlier days, fought with **bows** and arrows.
2b We **bow** our head to the martyrs of our freedom movement.

What do you notice in the above examples? Write it in a sentence here.

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

Did you notice that the spelling in both the sets of sentences are the same? What about the sound (pronunciation) and meaning? Consult a dictionary if you are not sure. Such pair of words are termed homographs.

homo = same

graph = writing

In the above examples, did the context of the word help you in deciding the meaning? If yes, then write down the pronunciation and meanings of the words **minute** in sentences 1a and 1b and **bow** in sentences 2a and 2b.

**Check Your Progress 5**

1. ‘The words **lead** (v) and **lead** (n) are homographs as are the words **live** (v) and **live** (adj). Explain with suitable example.
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................

2. Give examples of another set of homograph (other than the ones mentioned here). Use them in your sentences to bring out the difference in meaning. Consult a dictionary to check the pronunciation.
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................

**Idiomatic Expressions** mean the same as to lend someone money? What does **from hand to mouth** mean? Who in your family is the **apple of your eye**? Or for what matter do you **have a green thumb**?

As an experienced and adroit user of the language you know the meaning of such ‘idiomatic expressions’ and you are well aware that these **frozen** expressions mean something which is totally different than the sum total of
the individual words. The meaning cannot be derived from the individual words and must be **learnt** as a complete unit of meaning. And this understanding is acquired slowly, gradually and with constant contact with the language. A new learner can definitely find such expressions baffling and problematic. As teachers you have to understand that idioms have to be learnt as complete expressions and often cause problems for new learners.

### Check Your Progress 6

1. Explain the meaning of the underlined idioms.
   a. I refuse to **play second fiddle** to my younger sister any more. I have had enough.
   b. I am sorry I cannot listen to you now. I am **pressed for time**.
   c. I’d better write in my notebook. I have a head like a sieve.

2. Substitute the underlined words with the appropriate idiom given in the box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A skeleton in the cupboard</th>
<th>make short work of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drop a line</td>
<td>get the message</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   a. You needn’t look at your watch again. I’ve **understood what you want me to do** and I’ll go now.

   b. It is commonly said that every family has a **secret or embarrassing fact which no one likes to discuss**.

   c. Don’t forget to **write to us** as soon as you arrive in Delhi.

3. Think of four idiomatic expressions in your **mother tongue** that use different body parts e.g. **to have a finger in every pie**. Find out if there are English equivalent to those expressions in your mother tongue. Two examples in Hindi are given below:
   - oongli pe nachaana
   - Sar aankon pe bithaana
Levels of formality and the connotations of some words also pose practical problems for learners of a second language. In learning a new language there is a tendency to use the more formal language in normal conversational situations or vice versa i.e. use a slang or colloquial expression inappropriately. Similarly the positive or negative connotations of some words might create difficulty to the learners. We all know how we applaud the firmness, determination or resoluteness (words indicating approval) of people we like whereas we deplore the stubbornness, obstinacy and pigheadedness (terms indicating disapproval) of those whom we don’t like in exactly the same situations. Similarly the same person can be fat or plump to different persons. It takes a long time for the learners to catch such nuances of the language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check Your Progress 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Write formal (f), informal (inf), approved or disapproved against the words given below. Consult a dictionary, if necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laudatory .................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sissy .....................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirt cheap .................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soporific ..................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15.6 TECHNIQUES FOR PRESENTING VOCABULARY

In a second language learning situations, a teacher plays a significant role in expanding the ‘word power’ of the learners through various techniques. In this section, we will discuss a few of them.

Visual Aids

For very young learners or learners at beginners level, a new word can be explained as quickly and efficiently as possible through the following aids.

**Realia** or the use of real objects in the classroom e.g. a briefcase, a purse, a pen, an egg or an orchid. But the use of such realia is limited to things that can easily be taken to a classroom.

**Pictures** which include blackboard drawings, wall pictures, charts, flash cards and any other non-technical visual representation. A picture can also be used to create a situation or context.

a. Look at the picture given below. This obviously is a kitchen in an urban setting. How will you use this picture in teaching vocabulary to your student in a semi urban school in India?

![Kitchen Image]
b. What changes would you need to make to depict a typical (conservative) rural Indian kitchen? List the changes.

**Mime, action and gestures** can explain actions (like walking, running) or reactions (like fury, sorrow, surprise or joy).

**Hyponyms (word categories)**

Orange is a fruit and so is an apple, banana or a mango. The word *fruit* is a *superordinate* while the name of other fruits given above are the hyponyms. Similarly, learners are familiar with different items in the world around them. Given below are some examples of this category of sense relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superordinate</th>
<th>Hyponyms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>shirt, trousers, frock, kurta…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees</td>
<td>neem, banyan, gulmohar, acacia…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different methods of cooking</td>
<td>boil, simmer, bake, roast, deep fry, stir fry, sauté…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colours</td>
<td>blue, red, white, crimson, aquamarine, seagreen, ochre…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Collocation (word partnerships)**

When two terms are used together frequently, they are said to collocate, e.g. we can use the word colour in the following combination:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>bright colour, favourite colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>Colour blind, eye/hair colour, Colour film, photograph, Colour television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preposition</td>
<td>In colour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Collins Cobuild Advanced Illustrated Dictionary*

**Check Your Progress 8**

1. Read the words given below in the rectangle. Put them in proper categories. One is done for you as an example. In some you have to write the categories in the boxes.
2. We often use certain words in combination with others. An example is given for you. Use a dictionary, if necessary.

Money  make, ............
Friend  close, ............

Antonyms (opposites)
The term *antonym* is used to refer to words which have an opposite meaning. But there are pairs of words which contrast in terms of a scale, e.g. hot/cold; tall/short; easy/difficult. These opposites are *gradable*. For example, if we put hot/cold (water) at two ends of a continuum, we get something like this.

Scalding hot → boiling hot → warm → lukewarm → tepid → quite cold → freezing cold

But think of opposites male/female. Such meanings are *non gradable* or *mutually exclusive*. A boy cannot be a girl or a dead person cannot be alive/living.

Synonyms (Similar Meaning)
Every language has groups of lexical items which are very similar in meaning (Synonym) but are never identical. For example: *angry, annoyed, upset* and *irritated* may be synonyms but each word differ slightly from the others. As a teacher, you have to pay attention to synonyms if you wish to encourage your students to choose appropriate words in different types of writing.

Check Your Progress 9
1. Make a word continuum for the pair big/small.
   Huge → very big → ... → very small ? tiny
   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................

2. Make a matching exercise for your class V students to teach (non-gradable) opposites e.g. black / white.
   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................

3. Can words like *limp, hobble, stroll, saunter, march, stride, trudge* and *trek* be used as synonyms of walk? Consult a dictionary and give reasons for your answer.
   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................

4. How many synonyms are there for the word glamour? Write them here.
   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................
**Reading Comprehension**

**Associated Words**

It is possible to draw on the knowledge of the world that the learners bring to school. For example, look at the graphic illustrations of a kitchen given earlier in this section. There are several picture dictionaries produced for children which give such associated words. Before you read further on, try completing this semantic map.

People surging forward as the train enters

![Semantic Map]

Do you think these words and phrase can be used to develop a paragraph? A scene at a railway station? Justify your answer.

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

**Word Chart**

Given below is a word chart on **cricket** in which you will find a number of words (nearly 20) hidden. How many can you find? An example is given for you. (some words are written from top to bottom, some left to right, some right to left and some diagonally).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Ask your learners to make a list of action words associated with cricket (e.g. batting, fielding) and any other sports they like.

2. Prepare a word chart on any other sports, festivals or curricular topics (geometry, plants, animals etc.)
15.7 WORD BUILDING: AFFIXATION AND COMPOUNDING

Affixation

We can build new words in English with the use of prefixes and suffixes to the base word. For example, to the word mortal we can use the prefix im to make a new word immortal and we can get the word immortalise by adding the suffix -ise. Similarly, the word agree can take the prefix dis- to make a new word disagree and another word disagreement with the suffix -ment.

Use of prefixes like im-, dis- or multi- when added to the root word gives it a different meaning. For example:

- un - uncommon, unable
- in - inconvenient, injustice
- dis - disadvantage, disagree
- il - illegal, illegible
- ir - irregular, irrelevant
- im - impossible, impatient
- multi - multilingual, multifaceted
- fore - forenoon,

Here are some suffixes:

- Age bag-baggage, post-postage
  - dom kind-kingdom, star-stardom
  - hood state-statehood, boy-boyhood
  - ism hero-heroism, Hindu-Hinduism

Compounding

Compounds are made up of two or more parts which can also occur independently as words. These separate words are combined to form other new words which are listed separately in the dictionary and have separate meanings.

Blackboard

Flowerpot

Armchair
Check Your Progress 10

1. Choose the correct prefix from the prefixes given in brackets to express the kind of meaning indicated for each of the words given below:

   i. Contented (mal-, dis-, un-) negative
   |
   |
   |

   ii. Represent (non-, mal-, mis-) ‘wrongly’
   |
   |
   |

   iii. Inform (mal-, mis-, dis-) ‘incorrectly’
   |
   |
   |

   iv. Active (ultra-, in-, hyper-) ‘extremely’
   |
   |
   |

   v. Comfortable (un-, dis-, non-) negative
   |
   |
   |


2. Match the words in Column A with those in Column B to form compounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brain</td>
<td>pour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>down</td>
<td>felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>draw</td>
<td>case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heart</td>
<td>back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stairs</td>
<td>torm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15.8 USING A DICTIONARY AND A THESAURUS

Can we think of teaching of vocabulary to our learners without a dictionary? How many times have we asked you to consult a dictionary to answer different questions in this lesson?

While all dictionaries are of help in checking and learning of pronunciation with the correct stress pattern, meaning in contexts (with examples) or grammar of a word (e.g. the part of speech it belongs to; whether transitive or intransitive in case of a verb or whether countable or uncountable in case of a noun), a dictionary like the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2002 edition) (OALD) gives the origin of the word.

For example, Gordian Knot which means a very difficult or impossible task or problem. Then in origin of the word it mentioned:

‘ORIGIN’: From the legend in which King Gordius tied a very complicated knot and said that who ever untied it would become the ruler of Asia. Alexander the Great cut through the knot with his sword.

Moreover, dictionaries like the Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995 edition), includes a picture dictionary (e.g. on kitchen, bicycles etc) as does Advanced Oxford or Collins Cobuild.
The last dictionary mentioned here also includes word Webs or topic related vocabulary through encyclopedia – like readings combined with related art work, word partnerships (collocations) and word links (word origin) e.g. (geo=earth; geography; geology, geopolitical) or even usage like less and fewer. You also have used the dictionary to decide whether a particular word is formal, informal, and shows approval and disapproval to complete your task set in Check your progress 7. While the language of literary Criticism of OALD is very informative; the Text Messaging and Emoticons included in Collins Cobuild is very handy in an age of e-mails and SMSs. In other words, a dictionary is not only a useful reference material but also a treasure house of information to build up the vocabulary of your learners.

In higher classes, you will find both the thesaurus and the dictionary extremely beneficial in reading and writing tasks.

### Check Your Progress 11

1. Substitute the word **nice** in the following paragraph. Change sentence construction, if necessary.

   It was a **nice** morning. We went out for a **nice** picnic to a **nice** park near our house. The food was **nice** and we played **nice** games. We enjoyed the **nice** outing.

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

2a Make a cross word puzzle of **ten** new words that your students have recently learnt.

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

2b Ask your students to write clues (across and down) (using a dictionary, if necessary.)

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

### 15.9 VOCABULARY GAMES

You can revise and consolidate vocabulary presented in the classroom through a variety of games in a classroom.

The basic aim of vocabulary games is to increase the students repertoire of words – perhaps by extending his/her vocabulary or perhaps by giving him/her practice in using what s/he already knows. Some examples of vocabulary games which can be easily arranged in classrooms are given below.

**Word chains:** A word is written on the board. The next word has to begin with last letter of the preceding word.

Class → soldier → rucksack → kangaroo, etc.
**Reading Comprehension**

**Associated words:** Words related to a particular situation is listed down.

Garden → gardener → plants → seedlings, etc.

**Semantic mapping:** is simple to implement and can be adapted to meet a variety of objectives. You can use the following procedure:

1. Choose a word or topic
2. Write the word on chalkboard/chart paper
3. Ask students what kind of information they would like to include.
4. Encourage students to think of and write as many related words as possible.
5. Write the words under appropriate heading.
6. Have a class discussion, using the map as a guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make a semantic map for <strong>trains</strong>. Some hints are given here:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogie/coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locomotive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caboose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication cord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compartment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The simple and compound Game:** Choose a base word. Ask students to produce as many words as they can which contain the base word e.g. if the word chosen is **self**, then the words selfless, yourself, myself, self made, self pity and many more.

In “**Wordfinder**” the students are given a word and they have to make as many words as they can from the letters in it. How many words do you think you can make from the word grandmother? You can also allow your students to use their dictionaries to check possible answers.

In **Word Search Game** the students are given a scrambled word from which they have to find the original word and make as many words as they can from the letters in it. You can assign a score to each word. One who gets the total score first wins the game. This game can be played at individual or group level.

One example is given here:
There are eight letters in the box. Rearrange the letters to find the original word and make as many meaningful words as you can. A word should have minimum three letters in it. While assigning score to each word you can consider the number of letters in a word as the criteria.

- 5 points for three letter words
- 10 points for four letter words
- 15 points for five/seven letter words
- 25 points for the original word

Total score = 65 points

Some of the words you can make from the letters in the box are:

AGE
DRAG
RAGE
GRADE
GARDEN
GARDENER

Unscramble the word is a game in which the learners are required to find a word from a set of scrambled letters. The teacher can choose a theme and make a series of related words in scrambled letter form. The theme works as a hint for the learners. You can use themes from across the curriculum. Two examples are done for you.

a) Unscramble the following words.

**Hint:** All the words are related to Mathematics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrambled</th>
<th>Unscrambled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IUUDSAR</td>
<td>RADIUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETMEAIID</td>
<td>DIAMETER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMEREPTER</td>
<td>PERIMETER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAEA</td>
<td>AREA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MULOEV</td>
<td>VOLUME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLAITREG</td>
<td>TRIANGLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQRSAU</td>
<td>SQUARE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCNRLEGEA</td>
<td>RECTANGLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GANLE</td>
<td>ANGLE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) Unscramble the following words.

**Hint:** All the words are related to PLANT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOLFRE</th>
<th>FLOWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OCTOOMN</td>
<td>MONOCOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAMITS</td>
<td>STIGMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLPNEO</td>
<td>POLLEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMALIEFN</td>
<td>FILAMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAENTS</td>
<td>STAMEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHTNAR</td>
<td>ANETHER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSLAEE</td>
<td>LEAVES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are a few examples. There are many more games that you can choose from, depending on the level that you teach.

### 15.10 LET US SUM UP

Isolated words are difficult to remember. When we learn words and phrases, our memory tries to group words that go together so that one word of phrase reminds us another. We have discussed some of these in different sections of this lesson e.g.

- Related to the same topic (*Associated words* e.g. the picture on kitchen)
- Examples of a more general word (*superordinate* – *Hyonyms*, e.g. Furniture – table, chair etc.)
- Similar in meaning (*synonyms* e.g. lazy – indolent)
- Opposite in meaning (*mix*-separate)
- Arranged along a scale (*word continuum* e.g. letter – word – phrase – sentence – paragraph – page – chapte – book)
- Built from the same basic word (*Affixation, Compound words* e.g. Type – retype (prefix) , child – children (suffix), type + write (compound words)

However, you must have observed that all the techniques discussed in the lesson are applicable to teaching of **content words.** Teaching of Function/Structure words is dealt with in the unit on Teaching of Grammar.

Secondly, a word is rarely learnt at one go. Hence, the need to **review, revise** and **recycle** words at frequent intervals so that the learning is spiral and a new aspect is added gradually over the years. Last but not the least, is the use of the mother tongue in providing a quick word meaning in a classroom. While it is easier to **give / supply** a mother tongue equivalent and classroom saves time, the technique should be sparingly used and must never be a practice. A classroom is the only place to listen to and use the second language, and hence optimal use of available time in absolutely necessary.
Moreover, vocabulary teaching does not end in school. It continues well into our adult life. It is a life-long process. Also our passive vocabulary is much larger than our active vocabulary.

Different techniques – Separately and in combination – may be effectively used for teaching, expanding and consolidating student vocabulary. Dictionary and Thesaurus are very important reference material and students should be taught and encouraged to use the same. Vocabulary games make learning / revising of known words enjoyable.

15.11 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS


UKOU.(1980). Words and Their Meanings. Milton Keynes:UKOU

15.12 ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. Open ended and answers will vary.

2. We do not learn those words which we don’t use. Also to use a word one must know the meaning, the pronunciation, the context in which the word can be used, the other words that need to be used with that particular word and also the grammar of the word.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Phishing, iPod, Blue tooth, Smart Card, Smiley

2. a) Phishing (noun) – The practice of trying to trick people into giving secret financial information. (computing)

b) Handblend, Milkshake, Clone (n/v),
   iPod, Flashmob, Bluetooth, smart card, smiley (noun)
   cute (adjective)

3. Do it in yourself.
Reading Comprehension

Check Your Progress 3

1  i  located……. River (context). Real Life Context – Location
   ii  Most of the …………. our area are closed (Context). Real Life
       Context (Financial Institution)
   iii  aeroplane …….. before it landed (context). Real Life context –
       Aircraft changing direction.

Students may be familiar with both (i) and (ii) in their real life. (iii) may
be difficult because many of them may not have travelled by air. Can
refer to pictures, movies, etc.

2  The Context is not clear. Which fan are we talking about? – The ceiling,
table or pedestal fans in a room or the ardent admirers (as in the fans
of Aamir Khan)

3  There was no light in the room.

I prefer light colour paint on walls.

I am very light sleeper.

Let have some light refreshment.

Check Your Progress 4

1  The correct word should have been brake. The person who has got it
written does not know the difference of meaning between break and
brake.

2  a)  Explain that there refers to place/location whereas their refers to
people.
   b)  Practice the words in fill in the blanks separately to establish meaning
       and then in both kinds of meanings.

3  Blue – blew; see – sea; sale – sail; son – sun; piece - peace.

Check Your Progress 5

1  a)  Good leaders lead (v) from the front.

       Use a lead (n) pencil to draw and sketch.
   b)  We live (v) in the capital city of India.

       Be careful of live (adjective) wires. / A live (adjective) telecast of the
       final tennis match.

2  Do it yourself.

Check Your Progress 6

1  a)  If you play second fiddle to someone, your position is less important
although you work together; if you have had enough, you are
unhappy with a situation and want it to stop.
   b)  have no time.
   c)  If you have a head like a sieve you do tend to forget important
things.

2  a)  get the message.
   b)  a skeleton in the cupboard.
   c)  drop a line.
Check Your Progress 7

Laudatory – formal
Smart alec – informal, disapproval
Dirt cheap – informal
Dude – informal
Sissy – informal, disapproval
Felicitous – formal
Soporific – formal
Clobber – informal

Check Your Progress 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super ordinate</th>
<th>Hyponyms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Dwellings (human)</td>
<td>Villa, wigwam, apartment, mansion, bungalow, igloo, tent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Countries</td>
<td>Canada, Iceland, Norway, Scotland, Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Furniture</td>
<td>Sofa, coffee table, chaise longue, chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Animals (Extinct)</td>
<td>Mammoth, dinosaurs, duckbilled platypus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Make : mess; comment; money; suggestion
Close : contest/election; contact; friend; family; connection; attention
Hair (colour) : golden; red; black; white; grey; auburn; salt and pepper; blonde
Hair (style) : long; short; frizzy; permed; straight; shoulder/waist/knee length; curly

Check Your Progress 9

2. Do it yourself.
3. Do it yourself.
4. Do it yourself.

Check Your Progress 10

1. i. Contented (mal-, dis-, un-) negative discontented
     ii. Represent (non-, mal-, mis-) ‘wrongly’ misrepresent
     iii. Inform (mal-, mis-, dis-) ‘incorrectly’ misinform
     iv. Active (ultra-, in-, hyper-) ‘extremely’ hyperactive
     v. Comfortable (un-, dis-, non-) negative uncomfortable
2. Brainstorm
   Downpour
   Drawback
   Heartfelt
   Staircase