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**JAGAT GURU NANAK DEV
PUNJAB STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY, PATIALA**

(Established by Act No. 19 of 2019 of the Legislature of State of Punjab)

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)

Core Course (CC): ENGLISH ELECTIVE

SEMESTER-II

**BLAB31202T
READING PROSE**

Head Quarter: C/28, The Lower Mall, Patiala-147001

Website: www.psou.ac.in

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COURSE COORDINATOR AND EDITOR:

DR. GURLEEN AHLUWALIA
Assistant Professor in English
JGND PSOU, Patiala

LIST OF CONSULTANTS/ CONTRIBUTORS

1.	Dr. Manpreet Kaur Sodhi
2.	Dr. Narinder Kumar Neb
3.	Dr. Navdeep Kahol



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PREFACE

Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University, Patiala was established in December 2019 by Act 19 of the Legislature of State of Punjab. It is the first and only Open University of the State, entrusted with the responsibility of making higher education accessible to all, especially to those sections of society who do not have the means, time or opportunity to pursue regular education.

In keeping with the nature of an Open University, this University provides a flexible education system to suit every need. The time given to complete a programme is double the duration of a regular mode programme. Well-designed study material has been prepared in consultation with experts in their respective fields.

The University offers programmes which have been designed to provide relevant, skill-based and employability-enhancing education. The study material provided in this booklet is self-instructional, with self-assessment exercises, and recommendations for further readings. The syllabus has been divided in sections, and provided as units for simplification.

The University has a network of 10 Learner Support Centres/Study Centres, to enable students to make use of reading facilities, and for curriculum-based counselling and practicals. We, at the University, welcome you to be a part of this institution of knowledge.

Prof. Anita Gill
Dean Academic Affairs



**B.A (LIBERAL ARTS)
CORE COURSE (CC): ENGLISH ELECTIVE**

**SEMESTER-II
BLAB31202T: READING PROSE**

MAX.MARKS: 100

EXTERNAL: 70

INTERNAL: 30

PASS: 35%

Credits: 6

Objective:

This course aims to introduce the student to some representative varieties and forms of prose. Besides, the understanding of literary concepts and basic terminology pertaining to prose will help in developing learners' abilities to respond to and appreciate literary texts, both fictional and non-fictional in nature.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES:

Candidates are required to attempt any two questions each from the sections A and B of the question paper and any ten short questions from Section C. They have to attempt questions only at one place and only once. Second or subsequent attempts, unless the earlier ones have been crossed out, shall not be evaluated.

Section A

Understanding Prose: An Introduction to the study of Prose, Varieties of Prose, Forms of Prose: Fiction and Non-Fiction

Terms pertaining to Prose:

1. Satire
2. Allegory
3. Parable
4. Utopia
5. Historical Writing
6. Travelogue
7. Philosophical Writing
8. Essay
9. Biography and Autobiography
10. Irony
11. Atmosphere
12. Euphemism
13. Fable

Novella: The Old Man and The Sea by Ernest Hemingway

Section B

Prescribed book: Essays and Stories from the prescribed book 'Creative Minds', Ed., Board of Editors, Hyderabad, Orient BlackSwan, 2018.

1. Of Studies by Francis Bacon
2. The Trumpet Club by Sir Richard Steele

3. The Man in Black by Oliver GoldSmith
4. Dream Children by Charles Lamb
5. The Thief by Ruskin Bond
6. The Thakur's Well by Premchand (Trans T.C Ghai)
7. The Homecoming by Rabindranath Tagore

Suggested Readings:

- Carter, Ronald and Peter Stockwell, eds., The Language and Literature Reader, New York: Routledge 2008.
- Miller, J. Hillis. On Literature: Thinking in Action, London: Routledge, 2002.
- Thornborrow, Joanna and Shan Wareing, Patterns in Language: An Introduction to Language and Literary Style, London: Routledge, 1998.
- Rees, R.J. English Literature: An Introduction for Foreign Readers, Delhi: Macmillan, 2004.



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CORE COURSE (CC): ENGLISH ELECTIVE

SEMESTER-II

BLAB31202T: READING PROSE

COURSE COORDINATOR AND EDITOR: DR. GURLEEN AHLUWALIA

SECTION A

UNIT NO:	UNIT NAME
UNIT 1	UNDERSTANDING PROSE
UNIT 2	TERMS PERTAINING TO PROSE- 1
UNIT 3	TERMS PERTAINING TO PROSE-II
UNIT 4	NOVELLA: THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA-1
UNIT 5	NOVELLA: THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA-II

SECTION B

**Prescribed book: Essays and Stories from the prescribed book ‘Creative Minds’, Ed.,
Board of Editors, Hyderabad, Orient BlackSwan,2018.**

UNIT NO:	UNIT NAME
UNIT 6	OF STUDIES BY FRANCIS BACON
UNIT 7	THE TRUMPET CLUB BY SIR RICHARD STEELE
UNIT 8	THE MAN IN BLACK BY OLIVER GOLDSMITH
UNIT 9	DREAM CHILDREN BY CHARLES LAMB
UNIT 10	THE THIEF BY RUSKIN BOND
UNIT 11	THE THAKUR’S WELL BY PREMCHAND (TRANS T.C GHAI) THE HOMECOMING BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)
Semester-II

COURSE: READING PROSE

UNIT -1: UNDERSTANDING PROSE

STRUCTURE

1.0 Aims and Objectives

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Prose and verse

1.3 Types of Prose:

1.3.1 Descriptive

1.3.2 Narrative

1.3.3 pository

1.4 Forms of prose:

1.4.1 Fiction – short story, novel

1.4.2 Non-fiction – essay, autobiography, biography

1.5 Summing up

1.6 Glossary

1.7 Suggested Reading

1.8 Questions for Practice

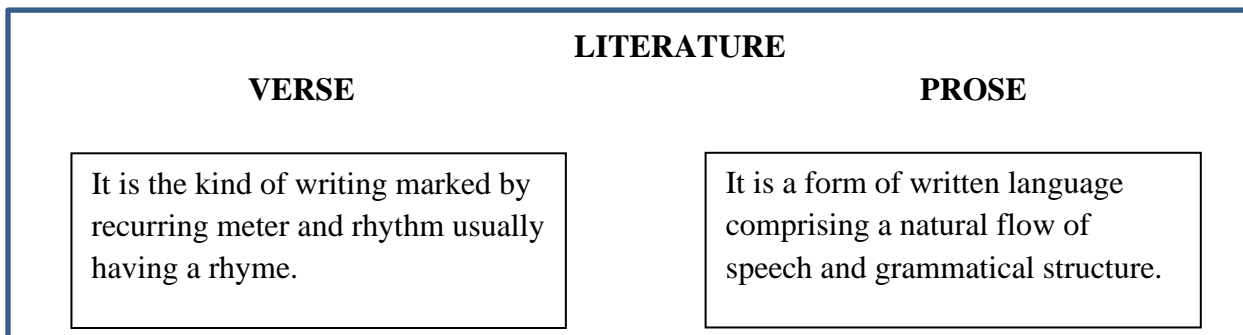
1.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Prose is a broad term covering a lot of literary discourse. After going through this unit, you should be able to

- define prose and identify its chief elements
- differentiate between prose and verse
- describe different types of prose
- discern one prose type from another
- identify basic forms of fictional and non-fictional prose.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Unit 1 will define and analyse the term prose. It will allow you a glimpse into the wide variety of existing English prose and to broadly classify prose. Once you are fully acquainted with the various functions of prose and dive through the illustrative examples, you would be able to appreciate the beauty of prose works prescribed in your syllabus. Prose forms a major part of literature and it differs from its elder sister verse which has been a favourite of literature lovers for a long. Literature is an exercise in language or the use of words marked by its imaginative quality. It is not intended to represent facts and is not judged by its truth. It includes a large body of work. A major part of literature is patterned in some kind of regular units which falls in the category of verse. But a lot has been written which is straightforward and lacks regularity of meter and rhyme. This substantial body of work is called prose.



1.2 PROSE AND VERSE

A lot of literature is marked by the regular recurrence of meter, accent, rhyme, alliteration or parallelism or a combination of these and can be categorized as verse. Take the example of the famous Shakespearean sonnet

**“When to the sessions of sweet silent thought,
I summon up remembrance of things past...”**

We can readily identify verse. But the fact is all literature is not verse. Most of the discourse, written or spoken, not bound into lines or metric patterns is prose. But one should not confuse it with the language of ordinary speech. Ordinary speech can be repetitive, jarring and heavily accented. Now sample this

“A stout old lady was walking with her basket down the middle of a street in Petrograd to the great confusion of the traffic and with no small peril to herself. It was pointed out to her that the pavement was the place for foot-passengers, but she replied: “I’m going to walk where I like. We’ve got liberty now.” It did not occur to the dear old lady that if liberty entitled the foot-passenger to walk down the middle of the road it also entitled the cab-driver to drive on the pavement, and that the end of such liberty would be universal chaos. Everybody would be getting in everybody

else's way and nobody would get anywhere. Individual liberty would have become social anarchy."

The above paragraph introduces A.G. Gardiner's famous essay "The Rule of the Road". You can see that it makes a lot of sense, puts forward the author's point of view strongly and hence is effective. It is a thought-provoking observation in a "world getting liberty-drunk." Thus, it can be said, "Prose is ordinary speech on its best behaviour." When an educated or articulate person adapts the ordinary speech to the higher function of discursive thought, out comes the finished and sophisticated form of language called prose. It is easier to mould an idea into a regular meter of verse. This is the reason prose is a late and sophisticated development in the history of any literature. Having said that there are some rare forms of literature in which both verse and prose intertwine namely poetic prose and the prose poem.

The word prose is derived from the Latin *prosa* or *proversa oratio* meaning straightforward discourse. There are as many styles of prose as there are people to write it. It is evident from the study of users of prose from different ages and countries. Sir Francis Bacon, Sir Thomas Browne, Swift, Addison, Johnson, Fielding, Goldsmith, Jane Austen, Coleridge, Dickens, Henry James, Conrad, Virginia Woolf, the list is endless. They have produced prose of lasting quality in their individualistic styles.

Check Your Progress-1

What is the difference between verse and prose? Elaborate with one example of each of the prose and poetry that you have come across in your reading.

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1.3 TYPES OF PROSE

Now that we are sufficiently familiar with the terms prose and verse, we are ready to explore various types of prose. Prose can be broadly classified as descriptive, narrative or expository depending on the functions they perform. The accompanying examples will make the types clear to you.

TYPES OF PROSE

DESCRIPTIVE

It describes things, setting, place, people as they are seen, heard or imagined by the author.

NARRATIVE

It is the description of events as they happen one after another. It amounts to telling a story.

EXPOSITORY

It is the definition, explanation or interpretation of a subject by an author professing to be an expert.

- **Descriptive Prose**

Descriptive writing gives an account of things, persons and events as they are or as they appear to be or as they are perceived by the author. The descriptive prose enables the reader to see things as they are or as they are seen, heard or imagined by the author/ narrator. Good descriptive prose builds up the atmosphere, provides vivid detail of the persons and surroundings and virtually takes the reader to the scene. The author brilliantly and precisely reproduces what he/ she has seen or imagined. Here is an example of a short story “Dusk” in which the author Hector Hugh Munroe (pen name Saki) goes on to describe the hour of dusk painstakingly which would lend a mysterious aura to the story. He connects the hour to the bearing and state of mind of his protagonist Norman Gortsby.

Norman Gortsby sat on a bench in the Park, with his back to a strip of bush-planted sward, fenced by the park railings, and the Row fronting him across a wide stretch of carriage drive. Hyde Park Corner, with its rattle and hoot of traffic, lay immediately to his right. It was thirty minutes past six on an early March evening, and dusk had fallen heavily over the scene, dusk mitigated by some faint moonlight and many street lamps. There was a wide emptiness over road and sidewalk, and yet there were many unconsidered figures moving silently through the half-light, or dotted unobtrusively on bench and chair, scarcely to be distinguished from the shadowed gloom in which they sat.

The scene pleased Gortsby and harmonized with his present mood. Dusk, to his mind was the hour of the defeated. Men and women, who fought and lost, who hid their fallen fortunes and dead hopes as far as possible from the scrutiny of the curious, came forth in this hour of gloaming, when their shabby clothes and bowed shoulders and unhappy eyes might pass unnoticed, or at any rate, unrecognized.

The above story is a special case in point as hardly any action takes place in the whole story and the interest of the story primarily lies in the description of the scene and characters by the author. The author successfully recreates the twilight hour and by calling it the hour of the defeated gives it a new and imaginative dimension.

- **Narrative Prose**

While in descriptive prose, the author’s focus is the description of a scene, in narrative prose he/ she tries to tell a story through a sequence of actions. In other words, it is a description of events. Narration is a specialized art as it is not an account of happenings linearly or chronologically. It begins at a specific moment with a certain end in view. Whatever happens in a narrative is a part and parcel of its structure. Not even a single action is out of place. This arrangement or unfolding of events is called plot and it is integral to any narrative work. Narrative prose can be used for writing works of fiction or non-fiction. The former will include a short story and novel. The narrative prose dealing with facts includes such forms as biography, autobiography, diary,

speech, travelogue, letter, historical writing etc. Look at the following excerpt from “Photographing Lions by Flash-light” by A. Radclyff Dugmore

We had everything ready by about half-past five, when the boys brought to us our much- needed dinner. After eating it we crawled into a boma, put up the bars of the opening, and settled ourselves down to enjoy a cup of hot coffee and a quiet smoke. We had just finished, and darkness was setting fast on the country, when to our surprise we heard a slight sound in the grass beyond the dead hartebeest. Very soon we were able to distinguish a light shadowy form coming slowly through the grass. Then another and another Lions they were without doubt.

Remember that descriptive or narrative prose are not mutually exclusive which means they are used in combination. It is only when the writer makes use of the right proportion of both that any narrative moves forward and it becomes gripping. If the writer dwells too much on the description, the reader may lose interest in the narrative.

Now events can be external or internal. They may be happening outside or in the mind of a character. In modern fiction, most of the action in the novel takes place in the mind of the character. An outward stimulus triggers a train of thoughts in the mind of one of the characters. This kind of novel was in vogue at the beginning of the 20th century and was called Stream of Consciousness novel. *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf is one such novel.

- **Expository Prose**

Expository prose is a kind of formal prose concerned with defining, explaining and interpreting a subject for the reader. The author assumes the position of an authority on the subject and explains and simplifies it for the reader. Precision, logical presentation, rational approach and valid arguments are some of the tools the writer uses to convince his readers. Writings in some of the fields like science, technology, law, philosophy, economy, politics, literary criticism are mainly written in an expository way. Here is an excerpt from the essay “The Elixir of Life” written by Sir C. V. Raman, an eminent scientist of India. He explains the importance of water in a non-technical language emphasizing that it sustains human life on the earth.

Water is the basis of all life. Every animal and every plant contains a substantial proportion of free and combined water in its body, and no kind of physiological activity is possible in which the fluid does not play an essential part. Water is of course necessary for animal life, while moisture in the soil is equally imperative for the life and growth of plants and trees, though the quantity necessary varies enormously with the species. The conservation and utilization of water is thus fundamental for human welfare.

Another example from S.T. Coleridge’s critical essay “Biographia Literaria” will further clarify my point. Here Coleridge is trying to arrive at a definition of a poem.

A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species (having this object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part.

The first example of prose belongs to the field of science but a layman can easily understand its import whereas Coleridge's prose forms part of literary criticism. Naturally, its style and diction are very pedantic and not easily comprehensible.

Check your progress

Read the following passages and identify the dominant types of prose in each of them:

The man's face fell. He looked wistfully at me for a moment, said 'Good morning,' and went out. I felt a little sorry, and would have called him back, but I found he was returning of his own accord. He came close up to me holding out his offerings and said: 'I brought these few things, sir, for the little one. Will you give them to her?'

(Rabindranath Tagore, *Kabuliwallah*)

.....
.....

Has civilization taught us to be more friendly towards one another? The answer is easy. Robins (the English, not the American species) peck an elderly robin to death whereas men (the English, not the American species) give an elderly man an old-age pension. Within the herd we are more friendly to each other than are many species of animals, but in our attitude towards those outside the herd, in spite of all that has been done by the moralists and religious teachers, our emotions are as ferocious as those of any animal, and our intelligence enables us to give them a scope which is denied to even the most savage beast. It may be hoped, though not very confidently, that the more humane attitude will in time to come prevail, but so far the omens are not very propitious.

(Bertrand Russel, *Ideas that have Helped Mankind*)

.....
.....

There stood the doll's house, a dark, oily, spinach green, picked out with bright yellow. Its two solid little chimneys, glued on to the roof, were painted red and white, and the door, gleaming with yellow varnish, was like a little slab of toffee. Four windows, real windows, were divided into panes by a broad streak of green. There was actually a tiny porch too, painted yellow, with big lumps of congealed paint hanging along the edge.

(Katherine Mansfield, *The Doll's House*)

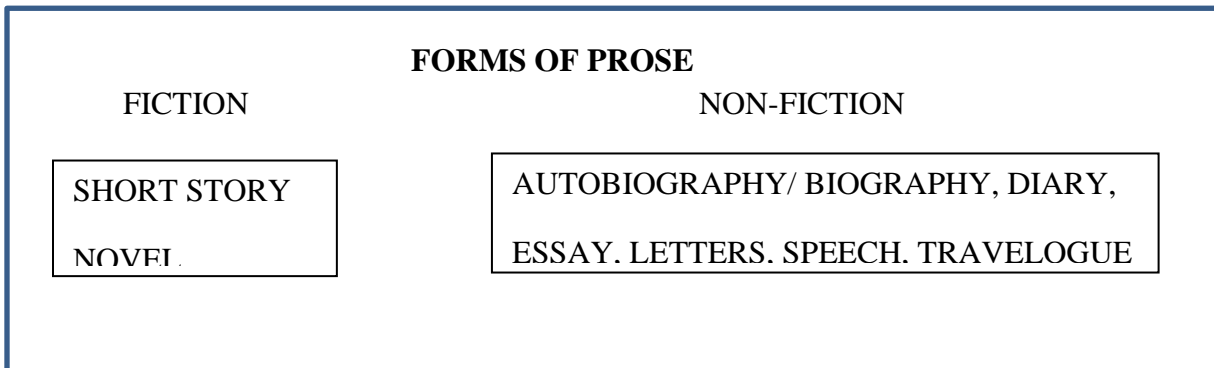
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The study of Natural Science is an essential part of education. You should not become lopsided in your pursuit of Science, like Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin. Herbert Spencer thought that natural science was only valuable subject of study, and Darwin almost lost his capacity for enjoying Art on account of his excessive devotion to Science. But you should give Science its due and a little more.

1.4 FORMS OF PROSE

We just discussed three types of prose in the above section and found out that this categorization is only for the sake of convenience and understanding. The three kinds can co-exist in the same literary work. In fact, they complement one another. A good descriptive passage sets the tone for the impending action. If a writer continues to describe people, places, setting, the flow of the narrative will be stalled. An accomplished author of expository prose makes sufficient use of description and narration to support his arguments and prove his point.

Let us study some common literary forms in prose. They are broadly divided into fiction and non-fiction.



A work of fiction refers to a literary narrative, usually in prose, which is invented rather than based on facts and real happenings. It is a general practice to use the term as a synonym for short

story and novel and at the most novella, a piece of middle length. Non-fiction, on the other hand, includes works that are based on or derived from the life of the author or any historical personage or event. It includes a variety of forms, the most common being essay, biography or autobiography, letter, travelogue, diary, speeches and so on. We are going to briefly discuss these forms in this section. Their detailed description will follow in the next lesson.

- **Fiction**

There are unlimited forms of fictional prose. Two broad categories of prose fiction – short story and novel – are discussed below.

Short Story

Any small work of prose fiction which has a beginning, middle and end like a novel may be called a short story. A good story-teller weaves the action, motives and give and take among its characters in an interesting pattern called plot. Likewise, the plot is the lifeline of a novel too. A plot may be comic, tragic, satiric or romantic.

The story is told from the point of view of either the author or one or more characters or both. There are numerous possibilities in which the author of the short story may choose to present the storyline. More than the story, it is the telling of the story which becomes important. The writer is free to use any mode of representation – be it fantastic, realistic or naturalistic. Some of the forefathers of a short story are myth, legend, exemplum, fable, parable, folk tale. In a “tale” or “story of incident” the focus is on the happening and fall out of events. Many detective and adventure stories fall under this category. “The Gold Bug” by Edgar Allan Poe, the father of the modern short story, is a story of incident. In a story of character, the writer brings out the motives, thoughts and psychological state of the protagonist. Russian writer Anton Chekhov excels in laying bare the mind of his characters. In his story “Grief,” the protagonist is desperate to share his grief with fellow beings over his son’s death.

Novel

This genre needs no introduction as it is the most popular form of literature widely read by the public. The term novel is derived from the Italian *novella* which means a “little new thing.” It referred to a short tale in prose. Now the term is used for such a large variety of writings that it has come to mean any extended work of fiction in prose. It differs from the short story in length and magnitude. It has greater scope for the development of a large number of characters and a more complex plot. Beginning with the 18th century this form has continuously grown and resulted in great literary output. It includes such diverse works of fiction as Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela*, Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*, Thomas Hardy’s *Far from the Madding Crowd*, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Franz Kafka’s *The Trial*.

Originally, novel was supposed to represent characters and actions realistically that is to create a picture of recognizably everyday life in contrast to the genre of “romance.” Novel has come a long way since its origin. It borrowed from every age, stage, culture and country. We have a picaresque novel in which the protagonist, a rogue (*picaro* in Spanish), visits different places, tricks people and shows little change in character throughout his/ her adventures. Daniel Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* falls in this category. Then there is epistolary novel in which the story is told solely through the exchange of letters. Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* is an epistolary novel. Modern Age has thrown up new experiments in novel like a stream of consciousness novel which deals with the flux of ideas in the mind of a character. A broad description of novel will suffice here. We will study more specific forms of prose fiction like utopia, allegory in the next lesson.

- **Non-Fiction**

As already explained non-fiction deals with real people, events, places and milieu. In contrast to imaginative literature, it is not invented. It refers to some external reality outside itself and is always written within a context. A general discussion of the forms of non-fiction prose is sufficient here. We will discuss major genres and concepts under this category in detail in the next lessons. As students, you must be familiar with the term essay. We have been taught to write an essay since we were very young. An essay is a short composition in prose used to express a point of view, discuss a subject or convince the reader to accept a line of thought. It is the most flexible of literary forms. The structure, organization and style of an essay are its important attributes.

Biography and autobiography are other popular forms of non-fiction. Autobiography is the story of the life of an individual written by himself/ herself and biography is written by somebody other than the subject. Another form of autobiographical writing is diary which is a daily, mostly dated, the record of everyday experiences/ events happening in the author’s life. As a genre, it is almost five hundred years old.

Letter writing is an art that requires ease and leisure. The milieu of 18th century England was perfect for the development of this art. The writers are mostly the people of means and position. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Lord Chesterfield are famous for their letters.

Travelogues are the accounts of the writer’s travels in an interesting and informative way. Speech is the spoken form of communication. Some of the famous leaders and reformers have created history by making forceful speeches. Jawahar Lal Nehru’s speech on the eve of Independence still rankles in the minds of all Indians. There is no exhaustive list of non-fiction writings in prose.

There is a wide variety of historical, philosophical, scientific and religious writings that defy any classification. Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) deals with the causes, symptoms and cure of melancholy. Though the subject belongs to the medical stream, the work is an anatomy of human folly rendered more interesting by the grave humour of Burton.

Check your progress

1. What is the difference between fictional and non-fictional forms of prose? List two forms in each category.

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2. Substitute one word

- An extended work of prose fiction
- The sequence of events in a story or novel
- A story with the focus on action
- Novel which is about the flux of ideas in a character's mind
- Novel in which the protagonist is a rogue who visits many places
- Story of one's own life
- An account of one's travels
- The spoken form of prose addressed to an audience

1.5 SUMMING UP

In this unit we discussed

- The difference between prose and verse
- Varieties of prose
- Definition, nature and examples of descriptive, narrative and expository prose
- Forms of prose
- Fiction – short story, novel
- Non-fiction – biography/ autobiography, travelogue, diary, letter, speech

1.6 GLOSSARY

Accented:	spoken with great stress
Alliteration:	recurring sounds in a poetic line
Anarchy:	total chaos in the absence of government
Boma:	a native hut constructed of logs and leaves
Congeaed:	solidified
Discursive:	involving discussion
Dusk:	time of the day before darkness
Hartebeest:	red deer
Imperative:	urgent
Meter:	a system of arranging sounds into units in poetry
Physiological:	related to the normal functioning of living organisms and their organs
Propitious:	favourable
Rattle and hoot:	the sound of traffic
Rhyme:	similar sounding words usually at the end of successive lines
Sonnet:	short poem comprising fourteen lines
Sward:	grassy patch
Unobtrusively:	without getting noticed
Wistfully:	with a feeling of regretful longing

1.7 SUGGESTED READING

1. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by M.H. Abrams
2. *Literary Terms: A Dictionary* by Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz
3. *Prose Literary Terms and Concepts (The Britannica Guide to Literary Elements)* edited by Kathleen Kuiper
4. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* by J.A. Cuddon

1.8 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. What is the difference between fictional and non-fictional forms of prose?
2. Discuss in detail two forms of Prose fiction with examples.
3. How is Descriptive prose different from Narrative Prose?

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)

Semester-II

COURSE: READING PROSE

UNIT-2: TERMS PERTAINING TO PROSE- 1

STRUCTURE

2.0 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Literary Terms

- **Allegory**
- **Fable**
- **Parable**
- **Utopia**
- **Satire**
- **Atmosphere**
- **Euphemism**

2.3 Summing up

2.4 Suggested Reading

2.5 Glossary

2.6 Question for Practice

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- define, explain and trace the origin of forms of fiction – allegory, fable, parable, utopia.
- define, explain and trace the origin of satire, fiction and non-fiction.
- comprehend important concepts related to prose – atmosphere, euphemism.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

We have already discussed the meaning, types and forms of prose in the last section. It is time we take up important forms and concepts related to prose one by one and analyse them in detail. We introduced the terms short story and novel while concluding the last chapter. They are just broad categories and by no means can encompass the vast variety of fiction that has already been written. A short story may be written as a fable or a parable. A novel may be written in the form

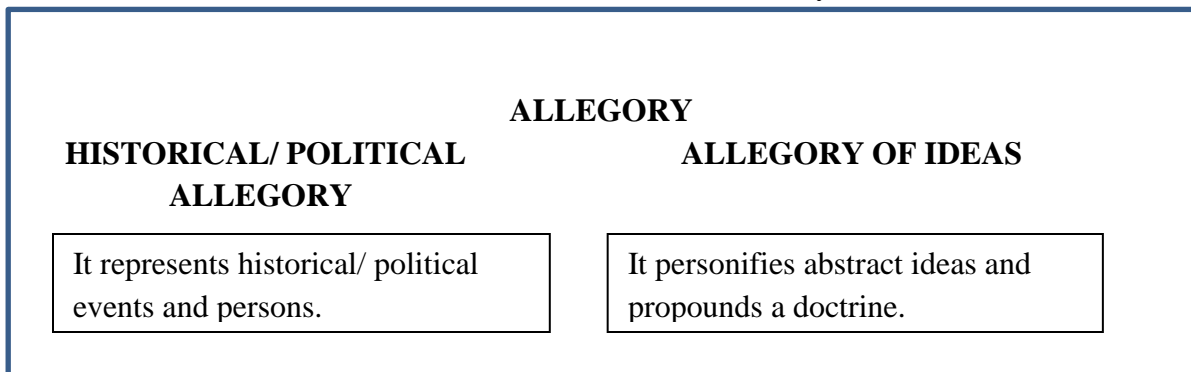
of an allegory or utopia and at the same time, it may function as a satire. It is advisable to club the related terms here for your easy comprehension. In this section, we are going to study the specific genres of fiction and non-fiction produced in different ages of history in England or elsewhere. We will attempt to define them, trace their history, explain and interpret famous examples of the forms in your syllabus. Apart from the forms of prose, we need to comprehend important literary terms/ concepts related to prose. Those, too, will be discussed in these two sections.

2.2 LITERARY TERMS

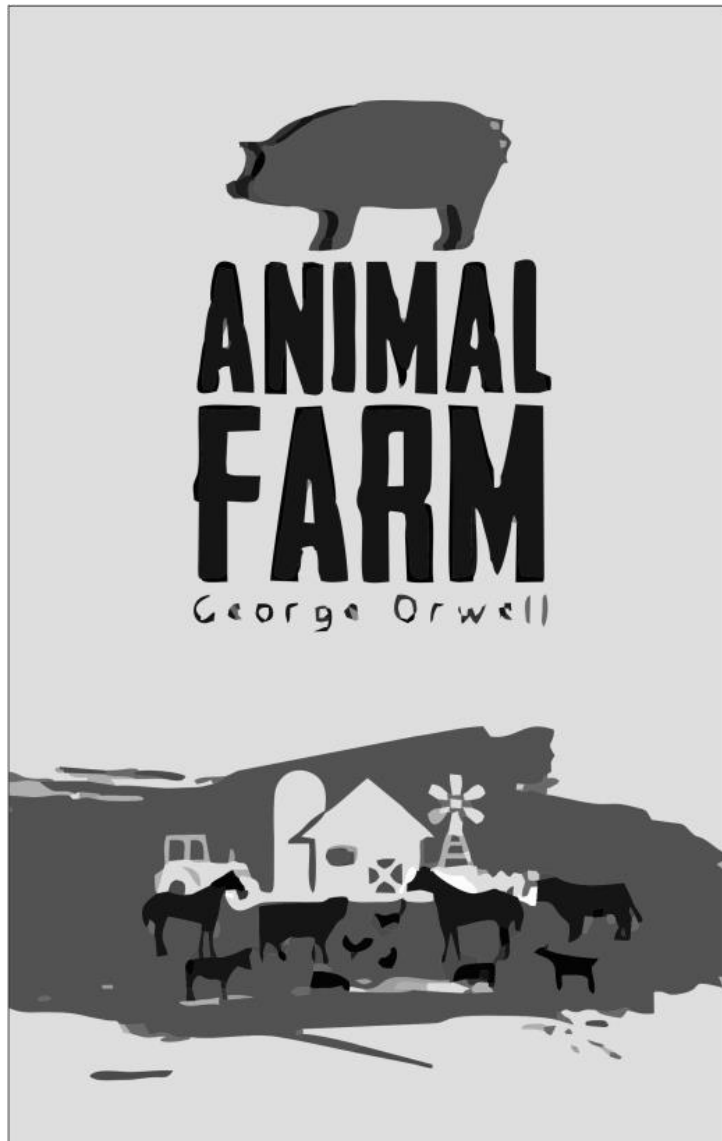
- **Allegory**

The term is derived from Greek *allegoria* which means “speaking otherwise”. It is a story in prose or verse in which the characters, actions and sometimes even the setting are so designed as to generate two levels of meaning – the literal or primary level of meaning and the second underlying meaning. Both run parallel to each other in the narrative. So, the story can be understood at two levels and in some cases at three or four levels.

We come across two common types of allegory in the history of English Literature, one is a **historical** or **political allegory** and the other is the **allegory of ideas**. The former makes use of characters and events from history.



Animal Farm (1945) by George Orwell, a historical and political allegory of the Russian Revolution, mocks the leaders of the revolution who upheld liberty and equality in the beginning but ended up being dictators themselves. The leaders of the revolution are presented as pigs. They force the farmer out of Manor Farm and take control of the farm only to become corrupt and morally deprived by power later on. Another example of allegorical satire is Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*. Interestingly, you may read the above books as children’s books unless you are aware of the political and historical contexts of the works.



***Animal Farm* mocks the leaders of the Russian Revolution**

In the allegory of ideas, the characters personify abstract concepts and the plot represents a doctrine. A famous example is John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) in which the protagonist named Christian, warned by Evangelist flees the City of Destruction and reaches the Celestial City braving great hardships. On the way, he meets many characters explicitly named Mr Worldly Wise Man, Faithful, Hopeful, and the Giant Despair. He passes through places like Vanity Fair and the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The doctrine exemplifies the journey of a Christian for salvation.

The origin of allegory is quite ancient. This method of articulating truth comes naturally to human beings and is universal. Its seeds lay in religion and myth. Classical literature has many instances of the use of allegory. One of its precursors is the dream vision in which the narrator falls asleep and goes through an allegorical dream, for example, Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Chaucer's *House of Fame*.

- **Fable**

Closely associated with allegory is the fable. It is a short narrative in prose or verse preaching a moral or a principle of human behaviour. The narrator or one of the characters states the moral at the end of the story. The characters generally include non-living things or animals. The most common type is the beast fable in which animals talk and behave like human beings. You must have read the fable of the fox and the grapes as a child.

A fox enters a garden full of grapes. The grapes are hanging so high that the fox is not able to get hold of them. Finally, the fox gives up, thinking that the grapes are sour and are not worth the effort. The moral of the story is that human beings belittle what they fail to achieve.

The form seems to have originated in Greece as Aesop, a Greek slave of the sixth century is credited with producing the first known collection of beast fables called *Aesop's Fables*. Chaucer's "The Nun's Priest's Tale" containing the story of the fox and the cock is also a beast fable. *Jataka Tales* is the Indian version of the beast fable in which numerous beast fables are intricately connected exhibiting brilliant craftsmanship.

- **Parable**

Related to allegory and fable, it also means a short and simple story about human beings that illustrates a moral lesson. What is of utmost importance in the story is its message. A parable has been one of the favourite and effective devices used by Jesus Christ as a teacher. His parables of the prodigal son and good Samaritan are very popular. You must have come across the phrase "Good Samaritan" being used quite often. It refers to a kind and helpful person, somebody who comes to the rescue of the needy without any vested interest. It is derived from the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). The Parable of Good Samaritan teaches us to be kind to even those who may not be our friends.

To exemplify the commandment "Love your neighbour as yourself", Jesus narrates the story of a Jew and a Samaritan (belonging to Samaria) who normally would not

get along. A Jew was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers. As he lay injured, a priest passed by. He moved on without helping the man.



The Good Samaritan, a painting by Jacob Jordaens made in 1616 with oil on canvas. Photo: Wiki Commons

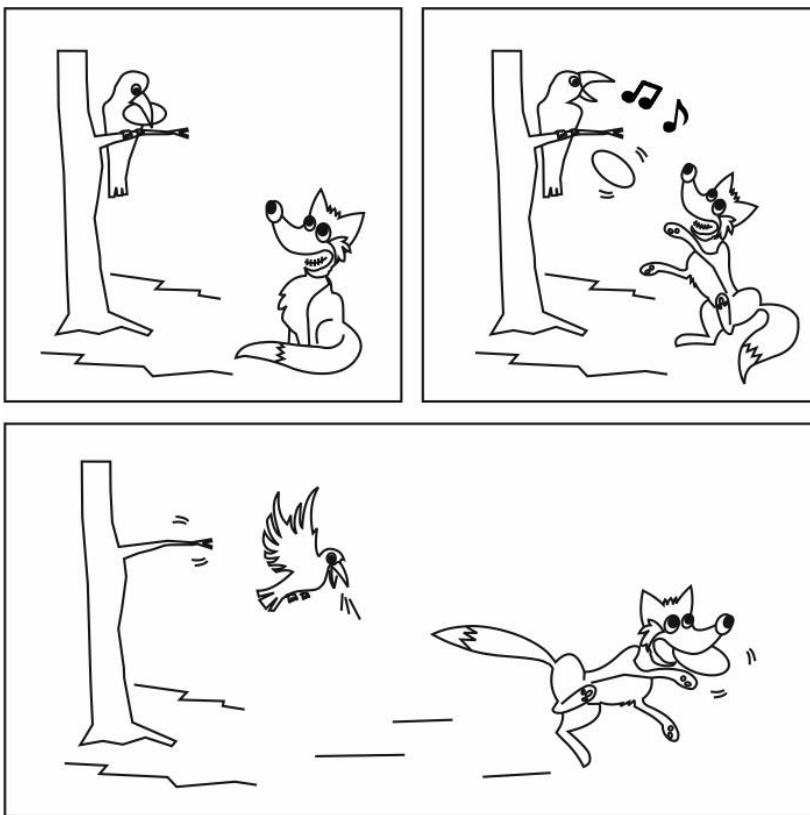
The next person, a Levite and priest's assistant, didn't stop to help the injured man. The third person, a Samaritan, was moved to pity seeing the wounded man. He cleaned his wounds, bandaged him and took him to an inn on his donkey. The parable teaches us to love even our enemies.

Check your progress

A) Fill in the blanks:

- 1) is a short story in which animals talk and behave like human beings.
- 2) is a short story used as an example in a sermon.
- 3) John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is an allegory of
- 4) The allegory of the Russian Revolution written by George Orwell is titled.....

B) Write in your own words a beast fable from the pictures given below.



- **Utopia**

The term was first used by Sir Thomas More as the title of his work about an imaginary republic. *Utopia* published in 1516 is derived from two Greek words –

“eutopia” meaning good place and “outopia” meaning no place. Now the term is applied to a whole range of prose fiction that depicts an ideal place and way of life though such a place has no real existence.

The idea dates back to Plato’s *Republic* in the fourth century B.C. The book talks about the model of a Commonwealth in dialogue form. If it cannot be achieved, it is worth striving for. However, Plato’s utopia seems to be a prototype of the totalitarian state. In his republic, rulers are philosophers, women and goods are shared property and slavery is accepted. There is no place for art in this republic.

Many utopias have been written since More’s *Utopia*. Like More’s *Utopia*, most of them feature an adventurous traveller who happens to find an ideal state in a distant land. Some of them are mere fantasies and some are blueprints for the social and political reforms in their present countries. Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1627), Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* (1888) and William Morris’s *News from Nowhere* (1891) are some of the famous utopias.

Not all literary representations of imaginary countries qualify as utopias as they are intended to be satires on the present systems of governance or modes of thinking. Examples are Samuel Butler’s *Erewhon* (1872) and Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726).

Another related term is **science fiction** which offers the vision of a new technologically advanced world. Writers of the Modern Age like H.G. Wells and Jules Verne delved into this form. Some of the works of utopian science fiction are meant to be satires on the disastrous results of scientific research. These works undertake to show horrible imaginary places which have sprung up in due course of time as a result of our present obsession with technology and its abuse. The term **dystopia** is applied to such works. Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell’s *1984* (1949) fall in this category.

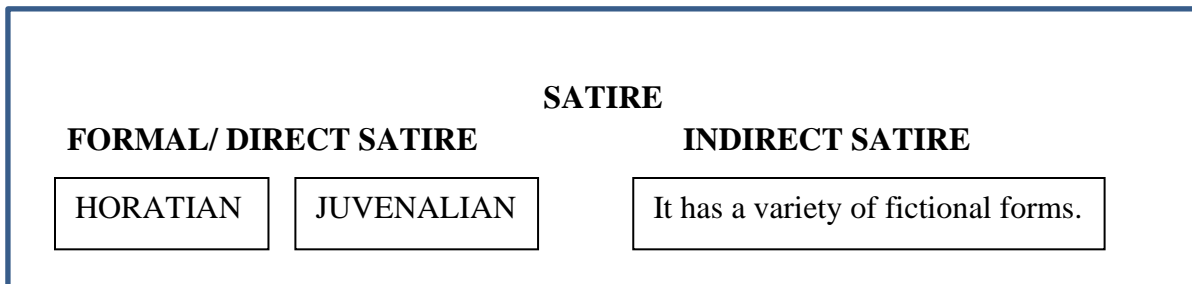
- **Satire**

In literature, the art of belittling a subject -- a person, a type of person, an institution, society or an idea – by ridiculing it is called satire. It does not evoke laughter as an end in itself the way comedy does. Most satirists claim to use laughter as a weapon to reform, correct and improve human behaviour, society, or the whole of mankind. Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* is a satire against the whole of mankind.

The history of satire is long-winding. Satire was introduced by Greek poets and developed by Roman poets Horace and Juvenal. In England, the golden age of satire begins at the end of the 17th century. It flourished in much of the 18th century. Satire is not associated with one particular genre. In the Elizabethan Age and Ages of

Dryden and Pope, plays and poetry have been the vehicles of satire. Ben Johnson’s play *Volpone* (1607) makes fun of the vanity and greed of a frail old man, Corbaccio. Dryden’s *MacFlecknoe* (1682) written in verse mocks contemporary poetaster, Thomas Shadwell. Alexander Pope, the greatest master of satire, rightly said, “Those who are ashamed of nothing else are so of being ridiculous.”

A literary work may have elements of satire. Maybe a certain character or a situation is satiric in the whole work. But there are writings that have an in-built satiric structure. Such works, in verse or prose, are termed satires. We will mainly concern ourselves here with prose satire.



There are two types of satire – **formal** or **direct** and **indirect**. In the formal satire, the satirist speaks in the first person. He may address the reader or a character within the work, called *adversarius*, who elicits a response from the satiric speaker and hence brings out the satire. The formal satire can be further divided into two types – **Horatian satire** and **Juvenalian satire** after the names of their Roman practitioners. In the former, the speaker feels amused on seeing human folly and hypocrisy. Laughing gently at human weaknesses, he is moved to a wry smile than indignation. Horace describes the aim of such satire as “to laugh people out of their vices and follies.” Pope’s *Moral Essays* follow this principle.

Juvenalian satire fields a speaker who gets seriously angry at human vices and aims to evoke contempt, disillusionment and anger from the readers as well. Samuel Johnson’s “The Vanity of Human Wishes” (1749) belongs to this category.

The **indirect satire** is manipulated by the author in a literary form, mostly prose fiction. It does not address the reader directly. Instead, the targets of the satire are the characters who make themselves and their opinions ridiculous through their dialogues and actions. The comments and narrative style of the author enhance the poignancy of the satire. The hilarious story “Uncle Podger Hangs a Picture” by Jerome K. Jerome is a satire on such presumptuous characters. **Menippean** satire is a kind of indirect satire developed by Greek philosopher Menippus. Also called **Varronian** satire, this form is usually written in prose interspersed with the verse at places. The critic Northrop Frye refers to this type as **anatomy** after the title of Robert Burton’s classic

satire *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). This type has several characters representing people from different walks of life, varied professions and points of view. They engage in a debate at a get-together and betray their absurd attitudes. Huxley's last novel *Point Counter Point* (1928) is a Menippean satire. The satiric elements are contained in the long discussions and debates among characters meeting at the weekend at a country manor. Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* is also classified as a Menippean satire.

Check your progress

Provide one word for the following:

- 1) An ideal state that does not exist
- 2) Name of the author who first used the term utopia
- 3) An imaginary horrible place resulting from human misadventures
- 4) Satire with the first-person speaker
- 5) Formal gentle satire meant to evoke amusement only
- 6) Indirect satire having endless discussions among its diverse characters

- **Atmosphere**

Also called mood or ambience, it is the feeling or the intangible quality that pervades a part or whole of a literary work, whether a poem, play, short story or novel. It appeals to the extra-sensory and even the sensory perception of the reader. In the novel *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Bronte, the mysterious aura of Rochester's mansion Thornfield Hall, the muttering, screams, muffled sounds all point towards a hidden secret. The reader's curiosity is heightened by the uncanny and eerie events that keep happening at the mansion. The secret of the mad wife Bertha Rochester is revealed eventually to the heroine Jane Eyre and the reader.

While I paced softly on, the last sound I expected to hear in so still a region, a laugh, struck my ear. It was a curious laugh; distinct, formal, mirthless. I stopped: the sound ceased, only for an instant; it began again, louder: for at first, though distinct, it was very low. It passed off in a clamorous peal that seemed to wake an echo in every lonely chamber; though it originated but in one and I could have pointed out the door whence the accents issued.

- **Euphemism**

The use of a soft and inoffensive expression in place of a harsh and blunt one is called euphemism. Using "to pass away" for death and "comfort station" for the toilet are instances of euphemism in daily life. Euphemistic expressions are common in the official jargon or language of broadcasting and newspapers. For example, the expression "terminal illness" is used for fatal illness and "collateral damage" for war

casualties. In Elizabethan Age, people used the term “zounds” while swearing-in by “God’s Wounds.”

Check your progress

- 1) You must have watched a horror movie in which the atmosphere is built with the audio-visual support. This is done with the help of words in literature. Give one example of a horror story where the author has successfully created an atmosphere of tension and fear.

- 2) Use polite/ euphemistic expressions in place of the underlined words:
 - His grandmother died yesterday.....
 - He has gone to the toilet.
 - They are heading for a divorce.
 - These seats are reserved for the old people.
 - Most government buildings have got ramps for the handicapped.

2.3 SUMMING UP

In this unit we discussed and analysed the following genres and concepts:

- Allegory
- Fable
- Parable
- Utopia, Science Fiction, Dystopia
- Satire
- Atmosphere
- Euphemism

2.4 GLOSSARY

Abstract:	existing only as an idea not as a thing
Blueprint:	a complete plan explaining how to do something
Clamorous:	noisy
Commandment:	one of the ten laws that Christians must obey
Disastrous:	failing completely
Disillusionment:	disappointment when something is not up to expectation
Eerie:	strange and scary
Fantasy:	something unreal and imagined
Hilarious:	evoking laughter
Hypocrisy:	having double standards
Indignation:	anger
Inoffensive:	polite
Intangible:	something that cannot be touched

Manipulated:	skilfully controlled
Mirthless:	lacking happiness
Poetaster:	a person writing inferior poetry
Poignancy:	sharpness, effectiveness
Prodigal:	spendthrift
Republic:	state having an elected government
Ridiculous:	absurd
Salvation:	final liberation

2.5 SUGGESTED READING

1. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by M.H. Abrams
2. *Literary Terms: A Dictionary* by Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz
3. *Prose Literary Terms and Concepts (The Britannica Guide to Literary Elements)* edited by Kathleen Kuiper
4. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* by J.A. Cuddon

2.6 QUESTION FOR PRACTICE

1. What is an allegory? Discuss the types of allegory in detail with example?
2. Define strive? Justify its significance as an important literacy device by citing examples from some literary works?

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)

Semester-II

Course: Reading Prose

UNIT 3 – LITERARY TERMS (CONTINUED)

STRUCTURE

3.0 Aims and Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Literary Terms

- **Autobiography and Biography**
- **Essay**
- **Historical Writing**
- **Irony**
- **Philosophical Writing**
- **Travelogue**

3.3 Summing up

3.4 Suggested Reading

3.5 Glossary

3.6 Question for Practice

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to define, explain, analyse and trace the history of

- Terms of non-fiction prose – Autobiography, biography, essay, historical writing, philosophical writing and travelogue.
- Irony as a literary device in fictional or non-fictional prose.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The last section dealt mainly with the terms of prose fiction. This lesson will give you an insight into the diverse forms of non-fiction which are no less interesting because they refer to

something beyond the text. You must be already familiar with them. We briefly introduced the terms in our first lesson. We are supposed to have essay writing skills since we begin to have a hold over the language. All competition exams must have a question on essay writing. The autobiography or biography of an important and famous person, in part or full, is prescribed in most curricula. Autobiographies of Mahatma Gandhi and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam have been a great favourite among readers. Historical, philosophical and travel writing have yielded very interesting stuff in the past and the process is still going on. You will become aware of the literary output in these genres in the section. Moreover, you will be surprised to know that irony as a literary device is used so often and with such ingenuity in works of literature that it takes a discerning reader to appreciate it.

3.2 LITERARY TERMS

Autobiography

It is the account of a person's life by him or herself. It describes the subject's character and development, experiences, challenges, achievements, anything that is worth mentioning and deserves merit. The first example of autobiography which is remarkable for its self-analysis is *Confessions* written by St Augustine in the 4th century. It can be called a spiritual autobiography as it is about a spiritual crisis in the life of the writer and his subsequent recovery from it. He emerges winner as he finds his Christian identity and true vocation in life. Another example of this kind is John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1696). Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (1642) too is a spiritual testament.

Autobiography has other variants like **memoir** and **diary** or **journal**. In a memoir, the writer focuses on the people he comes across and the transformative events of his/ her life. In a diary or journal, the author keeps a day-to-day record of his personal life for his use and pleasure. It is not originally meant for publication. The diaries of John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys written in the 17th century are very famous. *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1952) by Anne Frank is a moving account of a young girl's daily struggle to come to terms with her life in hiding during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands in World War II.

Biography, according to Dryden, is "the history of particular men's lives." Like autobiography, it also dwells on the subject's personality, experiences, inspiration and influences with the only difference that it is written by somebody other than the subject. The earliest example is *Parallel Lives* written by the Roman historian Plutarch in the 1st century AD. Shakespeare made use of biographical material from this source for many of his plays. In the Middle Ages, the lives of Christian saints became the centrepiece of biographical writing, which is also called **hagiography**. In the 17th century, English biography grew considerably. Izaak Walton's *Lives* unravels the lives of many writers including that of John Donne. James Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1791) is considered one of the best examples in this genre. A biographer consults

multiple sources to join the pieces of his subject's life including interviews, memoirs of contemporaries, archives, personal knowledge and accounts of witnesses. Some of the autobiographies and biographies have been best-sellers. Famous Indian examples of the form are Mahatma Gandhi's *My Experiments with Truth* (1927) and APJ Abdul Kalam's *Wings of Fire* (1999). Indian poet Kamala Das wrote *My Story* which was published in English in 1976. It is one of the most candid and controversial women's autobiographies to date. Autobiographical writing has become very popular like TV reality shows these days. There is such great variety in the style and presentation that the term life narratives is being increasingly used in place of autobiography or biography.

Essay

An essay may be defined as any composition in prose ranging from a few hundred words to book-length which discusses a subject or expresses a point of view in a formal expository style or an informal conversational style. It is one of the most flexible forms of literature. It can be as short as Bacon's *Essays* or as extended as a book like Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. One thing common among all essays is that they address the general reader and are supposed to be non-technical and comprehensible.

ESSAY	
FORMAL	INFORMAL/ PERSONAL
The author is objective and impersonal.	The author uses casual and conversational tone.

An essay can be **formal** or **informal**. The author of a formal essay writes as an expert on the subject in an arranged manner. He will move step by step. You will find specialised articles written by the economic and political analysts on the editorial page of any newspaper. The informal essay, also called a personal essay, is written in a lighter vein. The author connects with the reader at the outset, talks about everyday affairs in a relaxed tone, revealing his personality and emotions during the process. He/ she makes liberal use of humour, anecdotes and examples to enhance the appeal of his essay. Charles Lamb's "Dream Children" is a personal essay in which he dreams about having a family. The essay is full of pathos as it betrays the wishful thinking of Lamb who did not have a family.

Classical writers like Theophrastus and Seneca were already dealing with some form of essay but the term *Essais* was first used by Montaigne in 1580 as the title of his first publication. The term meant "attempts" referring to his rambling and informal discussions on the subject rather than formal and technical treatises. Francis Bacon wrote *Essays* in 1597. They are short compositions in prose on varied subjects, more in the nature of commentaries. "Of Riches", "Of Envy", "Of Marriage and the Single Life" and "Of Truth" are some of his well-known essays.

Alexander Pope chose to write in verse his “Essay on Man” and “Essay on Criticism” which has not been emulated much. The 18th century witnessed the rise of **periodical essay** which was perfected by Richard Steele and Joseph Addison. They published the periodicals *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* respectively which became the vehicles for their essays. The essays reflect the tendencies of 18th century England very minutely. They capture the humdrum of English life including fashion, urban and rural ways, childhood memories and political ideas. Romantic Age ushered in an era of a personal essay of which Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt and Thomas de Quincey are the major exponents. Victorian essayists Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin and Matthew Arnold preferred formal and objective essay. In the 20th century, A.G. Gardiner, Aldous Huxley, G.K. Chesterton are notable essayists. Their essays are quite readable and form part of the curricula of many courses.

Check your progress

- 1) Differentiate between biography and autobiography. _____
- 2) Differentiate between formal and informal essay. _____
- 3) Write a personal essay on “How I Spent my Days in Lockdown during Covid-19 Pandemic.” _____

Historical Writing

Writing about events, persons, practices belonging to the past can be put under the broad term historical writing. It can be fictional or non-fictional. Writing of histories can be extended and detailed work done over years after a lot of research.

The first instances of non-fictional historical writing in English are chronicles which are chronological accounts of events, mostly patronised by Kings and Queens. Otherwise of little merit, Raphael Holinshed’s *Chronicle* (1578-1586) is popular as it was used by Shakespeare for his history plays. Raleigh’s *History of the World* represents the first attempt in English at an interpretation of events. In Puritan Age, Lord Clarendon’s *History of the Rebellion* may not be objective as history but is certainly a classic of literature.

Historical literature was given a new impetus around the middle of the 18th century by two Scotsmen, David Hume and William Robertson. It was taken to a great height by Edward Gibbon who wrote *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Lord Macaulay is credited with writing the masterpiece of historical literature *History of England* (1848-61). He had planned it on a vast scale but ended up covering only the reigns of James II and William III. It is a vivid description of English life and society at the end of the 17th century. His prose style is eloquent, lucid and forceful. The output of historical writing is great in the 20th century. *A Study of History* (completed in 1961) in 12 volumes by A.J. Toynbee and *The Second World War* (completed in

1954) by Winston Churchill deserve special merit. Their prose is marked by accuracy and literary grace.

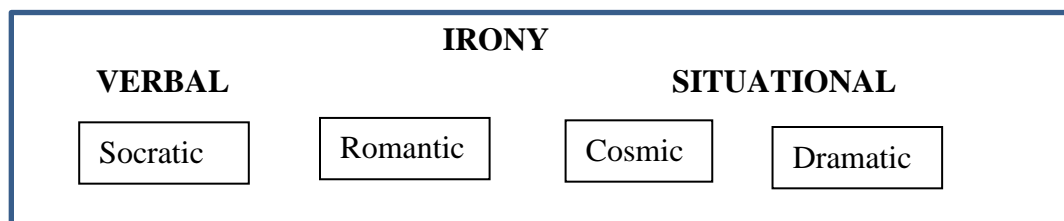
Historical fiction or more commonly historical novel has been a popular form since Sir Walter Scott introduced it in 1814 by writing his first historical novel *Waverley*. The novel dealt with the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. Scott still remains the undisputed master of the form. Historical novel generally studies the impact of historical events on the personal lives of its characters who may be invented by the author. Apart from this, the historical novel captures the customs, society and manners of the period accurately. Other noteworthy historical novels are William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848), Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1869).

Another genre based on history is **history play**. Also called chronicle play, it derives its material from the English chronicles by Raphael Holinshed and others in the Elizabethan Age. Shakespeare wrote series of the chronicle plays covering the reigns of English kings from Richard II to Henry VIII. His plays Richard II and Henry IV have been a great success.

Irony

Irony is a device by which a writer says something but means something else that is the intended meaning is different from the stated one. The term is derived from Greek *eirōn* meaning “dissembler”. The latter was a stock character in Greek comedy who spoke in understatement and pretended to be less intelligent than he was. Though he was feeble and small, he prevailed over the *alazon*, the boastful one.

Irony is put into various uses and all of them retain the sense of hiding the real intention, meaning or situation. You will be conscious of a disparity between the word and their meanings, between expectations and actual happenings and between appearance and reality. There will always be an element of contradiction or absurd in an ironic statement or situation.



Two common classifications of irony are verbal and situational. **Verbal irony**, also called rhetorical irony, is a statement that differs markedly from what the speaker feels or thinks. The situation, context and prior information lend a different and sometimes opposite interpretation to the statement. For example, if a person is making a fool of himself by wearing a weird dress and you compliment the person despite thinking otherwise:

“What a lovely dress!”

This would be a case of ironic reversal.

Situational irony occurs when the events take a different turn from what the protagonist expected or anticipated. The protagonist, who is ignorant, acts in a grossly inappropriate way in the given situation though the reader is aware of the pitfalls. The term naïve hero is applied to such a person. Isabel in American author Henry James’ novel *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) falls for the wrong suitor Osmond as she is oblivious of his schemes.

Irony is subjected to a variety of uses and is named accordingly. **Socratic irony** derives from Plato’s dialogues in which philosopher Socrates follows a clever method to get the better of his opponents in an argument. He pretends to be ignorant, readily agrees with his opponents while continuously probing their points of view ultimately deflating them.

Romantic irony applies to a narrative or dramatic work in which the author begins on a serious note and claims to represent reality. However, the author shatters this illusion later on in the narrative and discloses his role as a master manipulator and arbitrary creator controlling the show. Laurence Sterne used a self-conscious narrator in his novel *Tristram Shandy* (1759).

Cosmic irony or **irony of fate** refers to a structural irony in which the author shows the protagonist at the mercy of a supreme force or God. The work ends tragically for the protagonist who is tossed around by this force. However hard the person tries, he/ she is doomed to an unhappy life. Thomas Hardy employs cosmic irony in his novel *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (1891).

Dramatic irony is used in a play or narrative in which the outcome is already known to the audience. However, the ignorant hero acts inappropriately, expects the opposite and says things that anticipate the events although they unfold differently. Greek tragedies were based on legends already known to the audience. Sophocles’ *Oedipus* is the best-known example of dramatic irony.

Irony serves many purposes. It unravels the truth, condemns, corrects, deflates and is the most potent weapon of satirists. Its vogue increased by the latter half of the 17th century with the rise of satire. Addison, Pope, Steele, Swift have extensively used irony in their satires.

Check your progress

Fill in the blanks:

- 1) A play based on history is called
- 2) The masterpiece of historical literature *History of England* was written by
- 3) The historical novel was introduced by
- 4) *Eiron* is a Greek word that means
- 5) The narrator in Sterne's novel *Tristram Shandy* is
- 6) A protagonist who acts unwisely due to his ignorance of the future is called a hero.
- 7) Structural irony in which the protagonist is at the mercy of a supreme force is called

Philosophical writing

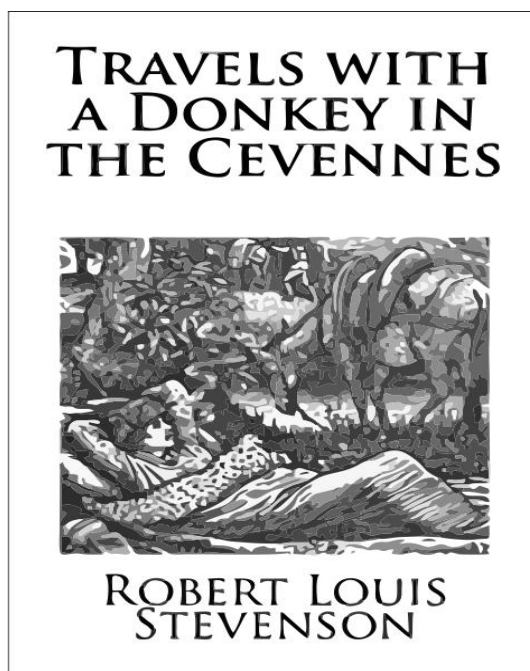
You must have read Shakespeare's famous poem "All the World's a Stage" from his play *As You Like It*. These lines are spoken by a character Jaques who philosophises on everything. He is wise as well as comic. Most of the literature is philosophical, wholly or in parts. In fact, philosophy and literature are like twin brothers. Any piece of writing whether a poem, essay, story or novel, can be philosophical if it propounds a philosophy directly or indirectly. A work of fiction may be the embodiment of a particular philosophy. Or it can be a long treatise where the author directly expresses his philosophical standpoint and slowly works his way into the mind of his readers. Philosophy is said to be the fountainhead of all subjects. It has classical origins. In ancient Greece at the turn of the 4th century BC, Plato created fictionalized characters who exchanged dialogues and discussed a complex philosophical problem. Socrates also appeared as a character in these dialogues. This form was used by many writers of philosophical literature later on. *Meditations* (161-180 AD) by the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius discusses the philosophical subject of stoicism.

In England, Thomas Hobbes wrote his famous philosophical work *Leviathan* (1651). It is the name of a sea monster that he uses to refer to the state. He believes that man is a selfish being and as good as a savage beast. To satisfy his basic instinct, he has to continuously wage a war with others. And to get rid of his insecurities, he tends to surrender his rights to an absolute dictator. In the Age of Johnson, David Hume, influenced by the philosophy of John Locke's materialism, denied the existence of soul or mind. He gave credence only to things that can be proved by one's own experience. His empirical philosophy is contained in his work *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. The country continued to be ruled by this utilitarian philosophy for most of the 19th century till Coleridge and later Sir William Hamilton introduced England to the idealism and transcendental philosophy of German philosophers Kant and Hegel.

Other authors have resorted to writing fictional narratives to address philosophical issues. Thomas Hardy's novel *Jude the Obscure* (1896) was influenced by the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer. His philosophy also influenced modern novelist Joseph Conrad whose *Heart of Darkness* (1902) is a philosophical novel. In Modern Age, Albert Camus' novel *The Outsider* (published in French in 1942 and translated in English in 1946) is the mouthpiece of Existential philosophy. Existential philosophy based on nihilism holds that the existence of human beings on earth is absurd. There is no absolute truth and no meaning can be attributed to human existence. *The Fountainhead* (1943) by Russian American author Ayn Rand is based on the philosophy that individualism is better than collectivism.

Travelogue

It is a form of non-fictional prose which has a huge variety and which dates back to classical times. Its length can vary from an essay to a book. It is now practised by many famous professional or amateur writers. The most eligible to write a travelogue are the adventurers, sailors, diplomats, missionaries and nature lovers. The genre encompasses works as diverse as guide-books, accounts of stay at distant places (travel memoirs), adventure and exploratory tours. Travelling, no doubt, widens the horizons while satiating the gypsy spirit of man. A person's natural curiosity, the spirit of adventure and urge to re-discover oneself through strange travels has given rise to travel literature. But it is to be remembered that in any kind of travel writing, it is the traveller and not the places he visited which lends charm to a travelogue. One such book is *Travels with a Donkey in Cevennes* by R. L. Stevenson. Its chief interest lies in the traveller and not the travel.



The chief interest of *Travels with a Donkey in Cevennes* lies in the traveller and not the travel.

The oldest examples of travel writing are those of Greek geographers Strabo and Pausanias in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. They are a great source of information about ancient people, sects and places. The travel writing deserving literary merit can be assigned to Marco Polo in the 13th century. Medieval China is also known to have produced travel literature of great value. The forms used were narrative, prose, essay and diary.

In England, the 18th century witnessed the rise of the diary form for recording travels. James Cook's diaries (1784) were a hit among readers. Robert Louis Stevenson, mentioned above, can be called a pioneer of tourism literature. Apart from his *Travels with a Donkey*, he also wrote *An Inland Voyage* in 1878. He popularised hiking and camping through his writings. Sometimes travel and nature writing converge resulting in interesting works. Charles Darwin's account of his journey of *HMS Beagle* combines science, natural history and travel. In the 20th century Hilaire Belloc's *The Path to Rome* (1902) and W. Somerset Maugham's *Gentleman in the Parlour* (1930) are important contributions to travel literature. Rebecca West's work on Yugoslavia, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941) is an essay, the form commonly used for travel writing.

Check your progress

Answer the following questions:

- 1) Name of a sea monster and the title of Hobbes' philosophical work _____
- 2) *The Outsider* by Albert Camus is based on the philosophy of _____
- 3) Coleridge was influenced by the transcendental philosophy of German philosophers _____ and _____.
- 4) Nineteenth-century England was dominated by this philosophy _____.
- 5) *Travels with a Donkey* is written by _____.
- 6) A naturalist who wrote *HMS Beagle* _____.

3.3 SUMMING UP

In this section we discussed and explained with examples the following terms:

- Autobiography and biography
- Essay
- Historical writing
- Irony
- Philosophical writing

- Travelogue

3.4GLOSSARY

Absurd:	illogical
Amateur:	a person who takes up work only as a hobby
Anecdotes:	a short amusing story about a real person or happening
Arbitrary:	without following any rule or plan
Archives:	collection of historical documents
Boastful:	one who brags
Candid:	frank
Collectivism:	principle of keeping group above individual
Contradiction:	combination of opposing ideas
Controversial:	causing public uproar
Conversational:	casual
Diplomats:	officials who represent their country in a foreign country
Discerning:	showing good judgement
Dissembler:	one who hides
Empirical:	based on experience and proof
Fountainhead:	original source
Humdrum:	monotonous
Individualism:	putting individual above society
Ingenuity:	skill or craft
Legends:	old stories, part of folklore
Materialism:	belief that money and possessions are the most important in life
Nihilism:	nothingness
Objective:	not influenced by personal feelings
Pathos:	something that moves one to pity
Pioneer:	the leader or initiator
Pitfalls:	hidden dangers
Potent:	powerful
Rambling:	long and confused
Rhetorical:	concerned with the art of speaking or writing formally
Stoicism:	philosophy of bearing pain without showing emotions
Testament:	a covenant between humans and God
Transcendental:	to go beyond or rise above the ordinary
Treatise:	formal book or piece of writing
Utilitarian:	intended to be practical and useful
Vocation:	work that you believe to be suitable for you

3.5 SUGGESTED READING

5. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by M.H. Abrams
6. *Literary Terms: A Dictionary* by Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz
7. *Prose Literary Terms and Concepts (The Britannica Guide to Literary Elements)*
edited by Kathleen Kuiper
8. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* by J.A. Cuddon

3.6 QUESTION FOR PRACTICE

1. **How is a biography different from autobiography?**
2. **What is the difference between a formal and an informal essay?**
3. **Discuss different types of irony.**

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)

Semester-II

COURSE: READING PROSE

UNIT-4: THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA-I

STRUCTURE

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Introduction

4.2 What is a novella?

4.2.1 Function of novella

4.2.2 Check Your Progress-I

4.3 Ernest Hemingway: A Biographical Note

4.3.1 Glossary

4.3.2 Check your Progress-II

4.4 Introduction to *The Old Man and the Sea*

4.4.1 Character List (*The Old Man and The Sea*)

4.4.2 Glossary from the text

4.4.3 Check Your Progress-III

4.5 Important Quotes with Explanation

4.6 Let Us Sum Up

4.7 Suggested Reading

4.8 Question for Practise

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After a careful reading of this unit, you will be able to:

- ✓ Define novella as a literary term
- ✓ Trace its origin and growth
- ✓ Understand the life of Hemingway
- ✓ Analyse the novella and its various characteristics
- ✓ Solve the short revision exercises

- ✓ Learn new glossary words
- ✓ Understand important textual quotations

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall first discuss novella as a literary term and learn its origin, structure and characteristics. We shall also learn how it is different from novel.

Our focus will then shift to Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. You will be introduced to the author through a short biographical note pertaining to his life and works followed by the glossary and some short exercises. Thereafter, you will be introduced to the novella *The Old Man and the Sea* and its various characters. Moreover, you will be studying the important textual quotes and will also be solving short revision exercises.

4.2 WHAT IS A NOVELLA?

A novella is a type of prose fiction, which is shorter than full length novels and longer than short stories. It originates from an Italian word “novella”, which means “new.” It is a well-structured yet short narrative; often satiric or realistic in tone. It usually focuses on one incident, or issue with one or two main characters and takes place at a single location.

Novellas have less pages and words than that of novels. The more obvious difference is that novellas have fewer subplots and conflicts than full length novels. The main narrative of a novella resembles with a straight line and does not use complicated and indirect plot lines, back stories, and multiple points of views. Unlike novels, novellas usually do not have chapters. It is mostly concerned with emotional and personal development of the character rather than dealing with a larger social sphere and events that usually takes place in one place or location. For Example: *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James, *Billy Budd* by Herman Melville, etc.

4.2.1 FUNCTION OF NOVELLA

Novellas are the richest and most rewarding forms of literary genres, because this genre allows an extended development of characters and themes than a short story does, without making detailed structural demands of a complete book. Thus, a novella provides a detailed and intense exploration of the topic, providing both the complete focus of a short story and a broad scope of a novel. Since novellas have ideal short length, they are considered a perfect source for silver screen and film adaptations.

4.2.2 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-I

1. A type of prose fiction, which is shorter than full length novels and longer than short stories is called

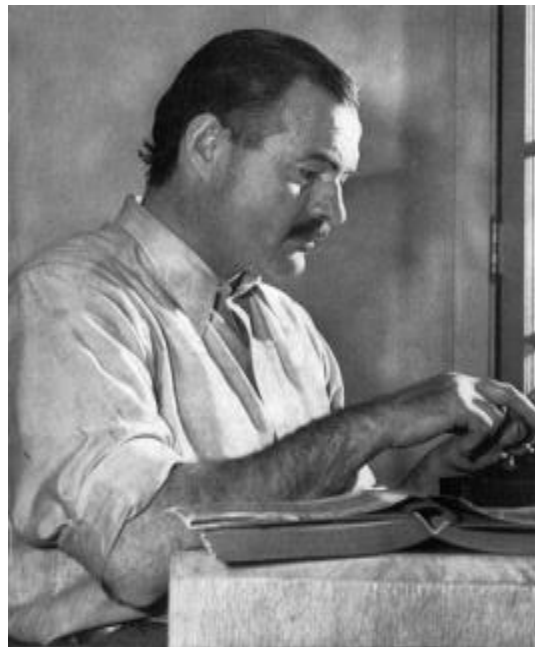
2. The word “novella” originates from an Italian word which means

Answer key:

1. Novella 2. New

4.3 ERNEST HEMINGWAY: A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Ernest Miller Hemingway was born on July 21, 1899 in Cicero (now in Oak Park, Illinois,US). He was a prominent American novelist and short story writer amongst the galaxy of American writers. Most of his work was published between the mid1920’s and the mid 1950’s. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and Nobel Prize in literature in the year 1954.



His father Clarence Edmonds Hemingway was a physician and his mother Grace Hall Hemingway was a musician. His mother, a devout and religious lady, taught her son to play the cello despite Hemingway’s disinterestedness to learn, but he admitted later in his life that music contributed to his writing style. When Hemingway was in his youth age, he learnt to hunt, fish and camp in the woods from his father as the family used to go for summer **excursions** (check glossary on page 9-10) to Windemere on Walloon Lake, Michigan. These outdoor activities and his deep love of hunting and fishing infused a lot of passion, enthusiasm and love for adventurous life in him. It also formed lasting impressions that became ingredients for his short stories and other writings.

In high school, Hemingway was a football and a boxing player. Years later, he disclosed to people that it was a boxing accident that was responsible for his defective eyesight. Hemingway was always self-conscious of his shortcomings and the **stigma** of having a slight speech defect continuously hampered Hemingway's confidence.

Hemingway began his writing career quite early. He became a reporter for The Trapeze, his high-school newspaper, and he published a couple of stories in the Tabula, the school's literary magazine. After completing high school, he worked as a reporter for a few months for The Kansas City, earning fifteen dollars a week where he learnt the art of writing short sentences and construct good stories. He soon realized that a major part of Kansas City life was filled with unrest due to crime and impulsive violence. It was an exciting time for the **naive**, eager young man from the north woods who was determined to learn how to write well.

A few months passed, and despite the satisfying pace of his life and the thrill of seeing his work in print, Hemingway realized that most of the young men he knew were leaving to take part in the war in Europe. Hemingway's father opposed the decision of his son's joining the army, and Hemingway himself was unsure whether he would be accepted in the army with a defective eyesight. Hemingway came across Theodore Brumback, a fellow reporter with vision in only one eye at the Star, who suggested that Hemingway can volunteer for the American Field Service as an ambulance driver. Hemingway's yearning to join the war effort was rekindled, and six months after he began his career as a newspaper reporter, he and Brumback resigned from the Star, bid farewell to their families, and headed to New York for the physicals.



In December 1917, he was rejected by US Army for poor eyesight, so he signed up a Red Cross Recruitment to be an Ambulance driver in Italy. At Bordeaux, France, Hemingway and Brumback boarded a train and went to Milan, Italy. A **munitions** factory exploded shortly after

they had settled and Hemingway worked a few weeks making routine ambulance runs and transporting dying and wounded men to hospitals. Thereafter, he grew impatient and left for The Italian Front which involved a series of battles at the border between Austria and Hungary in World War I.

In 1918, he returned home as he was seriously wounded. The experience that he underwent during wartime formed the foundation for his novel *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). An Austrian projectile exploded in the trenches and sent **shrapnel** ripping into his legs. A few days later, he boarded a train and returned to Milan. Later, he recalled that he had felt life slipping from him. It is believed by some critics that this experience haunted Hemingway with a continual fear of death and a need to test his courage that lasted for the rest of his life.

A few months later, as the war ended, Hemingway returned to the States with a limp and a fleeting moment of celebrity. At home in Oak Park, Illinois, Hemingway immediately felt homesick for Italy. Sometime later, he received a letter from a nurse with whom he had fallen in love when he was hospitalized. She wrote that she had fallen in love with an Italian lieutenant. Ten years later, this nurse became the model for the **valiant** Catherine Barkeley in *A Farewell to Arms*.

Returning to the north woods to find his emotional moorings, Hemingway fished, wrote some short-story sketches, and enjoyed a brief romance. He also spoke to women's clubs about his wartime adventures, and one of the women in the audience, a Toronto matron, was so impressed with Hemingway that she hired him as a companion for her lame son. Tutoring the boy and filling a scrapbook with writings in Canada, Hemingway then headed back to the Midwest, where he met Hadley Richardson, seven years older than he and an heiress to a small trust fund.

Hadley fell in love with Hemingway. Hemingway's mother thought that Hadley was exactly what her rootless son needed; she implored Hemingway to change his gypsy lifestyle, give up travels and part-time jobs and settle down in life. Despite his fears that marriage would destroy his way of living, Hemingway married Hadley, and they set up housekeeping, living on income from her trust fund. Due to the exhaustion of limited resources, Hemingway's good nature was depleted and friends urged him to move to Paris, where living expenses would be cheaper.



In Paris, Hemingway and Hadley lived in the Latin Quarter, a bohemian enclave of artists, poets, and writers. The Toronto Sun bought Hemingway's articles as well as his political sketches and Hemingway was pleased about the short stories he was writing. He was twenty-three years old and felt that he'd finally hit his stride as an author with his own style.

After covering the war between Greece and Turkey for the New York Sun, Hemingway returned to Paris and continued writing Nick Adams tales. He was insisted by the Toronto Star to cover the Lausanne Peace Conference. As a result, he urged Hadley to join him, and she did so. As she was bringing all of his short stories, sketches, and poems in a bag which was stolen in the Lyon train station. Hemingway was so stunned with disbelief at the terrible loss that he immediately returned to Paris to look for the carbon copies of his stories. He was pretty sure that Hadley hadn't packed them along with the originals, but he was quite disappointed because she had. Hemingway had lost everything that he'd written.

After the loss of his **manuscripts**, Hemingway followed American **expatriate** and writer Gertrude Stein's advice to go to Spain; she promised him that he'd find new stories there. After his sojourn in Spain, Hemingway returned to Paris and from there to Canada, where Hadley gave birth to their first child. Afterward, Hemingway returned to Paris, where he began writing "Big Two-Hearted River." From there, he went to Austria, where he wrote more Nick Adams stories, as well as "Hills Like White Elephants."

Hemingway and Hadley were divorced in 1927, and he married Pauline Pfeiffer, an Arkansas heiress. She accompanied him to Africa, travelling 300 miles by train to reach Nairobi, and onward to the Kapti Plains, the foothills of the Ngong Hills. Africa became the setting for two of Hemingway's most famous short stories — “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” and “The Snows of Kilimanjaro.” In April of 1936, Hemingway published an essay in Esquire magazine entitled “On the Blue Water: A Gulf Stream Letter,” which contained a paragraph about an old man who went fishing alone in a skiff far out at sea, landed a huge marlin, and then lost much of it to sharks. As early as 1939, the year he moved to Cuba, Hemingway began planning an expansion of this kernel into a fully developed story that would become part of a larger volume.



In 1940, Hemingway and Pauline were divorced, and he married writer Martha Gellhorn. They toured China, thereafter established a residence in Cuba. When World War II began, Hemingway volunteered his services and his fishing boat, the *Pilar*, and cooperated with the naval intelligence of the United States as a German submarine spotter in the Caribbean.

In 1944, Hemingway married Mary Welsh, a Time magazine correspondent after his divorce with Martha. The couple lived in Venice for some time, and returned to Havana, Cuba. In 1950, *Across the River and into the Trees* appeared, but it was neither a critical nor a popular success. His short novel *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), however, restored Hemingway's literary stature, and he was awarded the 1953 Pulitzer Prize in literature.

In January 1954, Hemingway was off for another of his many African safaris and was reported dead after two airplane crashes in two days. He survived, though, despite severe internal and spinal injuries and a concussion. When he read newspaper obituary notices about his death, he

noted with great pleasure that they were favourable. That same year, Hemingway received the Swedish Academy's Nobel Prize in literature, "for his powerful style forming mastery of the art of modern narration, as most recently evidenced in *The Old Man and the Sea*."

During the next few years, Hemingway was not happy, and during 1961, he was periodically plagued by high blood pressure and clinical depression. He received shock therapy during two long confinements at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, but most of the prescribed treatment for his depression was of little value. Hemingway died July 2, 1961, at his home, the result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.



It seems as if there were always two facets of Hemingway. One was the adventurer and the other was the skilful, sensitive author who patiently wrote, rewrote, and edited his work. Hemingway is considered by literary critics to be one of the world's finest along with short-story writers like William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, and John Steinbeck.

4.3.1 GLOSSARY

- | | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Excursion: | outing |
| Stigma: | disgrace |
| Naive: | Immature |

Munitions:	weapons
Shrapnel:	fragment of a bomb, shell or other object thrown out by an explosion.
Valiant:	brave
Manuscripts:	a book, document or a piece of music written by hand rather than typed or printed.
Expatriate:	a person who is living in a country which is not his own.

4.3.2 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-II

- Ernest Hemingway began his writing career as a reporter for which city's newspaper?
 - Kansas City
 - Louisville
 - St. Louis
 - Atlanta
- Ernest Hemingway served as an ambulance driver during which American military conflict?
 - The 100 Years War
 - The Civil War
 - World War I
 - World War II
- In 1921, Hemingway became part of a group of notable expat writers living in _____.
 - London
 - Paris
 - Venice
 - Lisbon
- In 1936, Hemingway wrote a piece about a Cuban fisherman dragged to sea by a giant marlin for ___ magazine.
 - Life
 - Vogue
 - Esquire
 - National Geographic
- Which literary award did *The Old Man and the Sea* win in 1953?
 - The Pulitzer Prize
 - The Nobel Prize
 - The National Book Award
 - The Booker Prize

6. After his divorce with Pauline, Hemingway married writer
- (a) Martha Gellhorn
 - (b) Hadley Richardson
 - (c) Gertrude Stein
 - (d) Mary Welsh

Answer key:

1. (a) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (a) 6. (a)

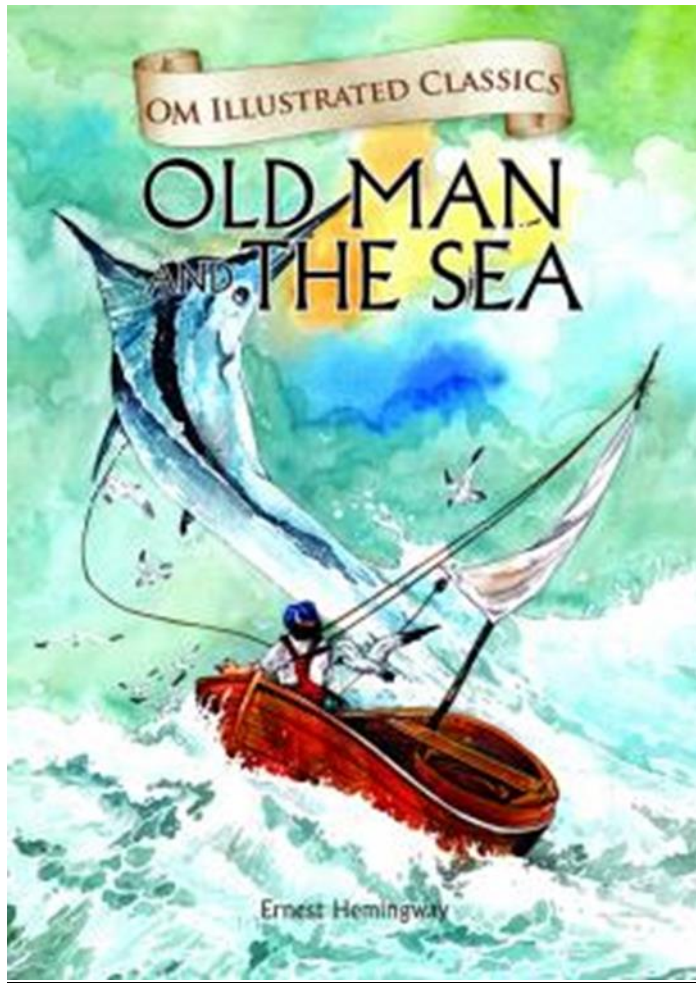
OVERVIEW:

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

Author:	Ernest Hemingway
Year Published:	1952
Type:	Novella
Genre:	Allegory

4.4 INTRODUCTION TO *THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA*

Santiago, the protagonist and the old man in the novella, has an obsession to catch the biggest marlin in the deep sea. But even after 84 days at sea, the deprived old man is unable to break the bad luck that seems to be following him around. While the whole village of fishermen has given up on him, it's only his young apprentice, Manolin, who supports his passion, but he too is forbidden by his parents to accompany the old man into the sea. The 85th day changes everything. Alone, for the next three days, Santiago fights with the forces of nature and with the shortcomings brought on by his old age in search of the great catch. One of Ernest Hemingway's best works, *The Old Man and the Sea*, explores the themes of mortality, honour-in-defeat and man's place in nature. The title 'The Old Man and the Sea' refers to the novella's main character, Santiago, an old fisherman, whose struggle with a marlin plays out in the open sea, symbolizing mankind's epic struggle with nature.



4.4.1 CHARACTER LIST

- **Santiago:** The novella's central character. A dedicated fisherman who taught Manolin everything he knows about fishing, Santiago is now old and poor and has gone 84 days without a catch.
- **Manolin:** A young man from the fishing village who has fished with Santiago since the age of five and now cares for the old man. Manolin recently began fishing with another fisherman whom his parents consider luckier than Santiago.
- **Martin:** The owner of the Terrace (his name is Spanish for St. Martin), he sends food and drink to Santiago through Manolin.
- **Rogelio:** A man of the village who on occasion helps Santiago with the fishing net.
- **Marlin:** An eighteen-foot bluish billfish and a catch of legendary proportions.
- **Mako:** A mackerel shark (dentuso in Spanish) that is a voracious and frightening killer known for its rows of large, sharp teeth.
- **Shovel-nosed sharks:** The scavenger sharks (galanos in Spanish) that destroy the marlin.

4.4.2 GLOSSARY FROM THE TEXT

Albacore	A large pelagic tuna with long pectoral fins.
Bodega	A small Hispanic grocery.
Bonito	Any of several marine food and game fishes of the genus <i>Sarda</i> , related to the tuna.
Coagulate	To congeal, as a fluid.
Cumulus	A type of cloud characterized by dense individual elements in the form of puffs, mounds, or towers.
Fathom	A nautical measurement equal to six feet.
Filament	A long, slender series of attached cells, as in some algae and fungi.
Gaff	A large iron hook attached to a pole, used to catch large fish.
Gunwale	The upper edge of the side of a boat.
Iridescent	Having many lustrous colors like the rainbow.
Loggerhead	A rounded post, in the stern of a fishing boat, around which the harpoon line is passed.
Mako	A mackerel shark.
Oakum	Loosely twisted hemp or jute fiber filled with tar, used in caulking seams and packing joints.
Phosphorescence	The persistent emission of light without burning, following exposure to radiations.
Plankton	A mass of floating organisms, primarily microscopic algae and protozoa.
Rapier	A small sword used for thrusting.
sargasso weed	Any seaweed of the genus <i>Sargassum</i> , commonly known as gulfweed.

Scythe	An agricultural tool with a long, curving blade fastened at an angle to a handle.
Skiff	A flatbottomed open boat with a pointed bow and a square stern.
Tern	An aquatic bird related to a gull but usually with a more slender body and bill, and smaller feet.

4.4.3 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-III

Match the word meanings of Column A with that of Column B:

Column A	Column B
Expatriate:	A large pelagic tuna with long pectoral fins.
Naive:	a book, document or a piece of music written by hand rather than typed or printed.
Munitions:	a person who is living in a country which is not his own.
Shrapnel:	Immature
Manuscripts:	fragment of a bomb, shell or other object thrown out by an explosion.
Albacore	A flatbottomed open boat with a pointed bow and a square
Scythe	A mackerel shark
Bonito	Any of several marine food and game fishes of the genus <i>Sarda</i> , related to the tuna.
Skiff	weapons
Mako	An agricultural tool with a long, curving blade fastened at an angle to a handle.

4.5 IMPORTANT QUOTES WITH EXPLANATIONS

1. **“Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated.”**

Here, the narrator describes the physical attributes of Santiago. Santiago's wrinkled skin riddled with scars and blotches shows the effects from his many years in the sun, but his eyes reveal he's young at heart. Despite his recent streak of bad luck, Santiago retains confidence and optimism that his skills remain strong.

- 2. But he thought, I keep them with precision. Only I have no luck anymore. But who knows? Maybe today. Every day is a new day. It is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact. Then when luck comes you are ready.**

When Santiago first goes out to sea, he puts his lines in the water and thinks about how other fishermen fail to be as precise with their lines. He acknowledges the benefit of luck but asserts the superiority of skill and accuracy to being lucky. His pride in his craft and reliance on his own skill and knowledge of fishing keep him hopeful.

- 3. "Imagine if each day a man must try to kill the moon, he thought. The moon runs away. But imagine if a man each day should have to try to kill the sun? We were born lucky, he thought."**

Santiago contemplates the fact that he plans to kill the fish despite his feelings of respect. He looks up at the sky and considers the situation from a heavenly perspective, comparing his quarry to elements beyond his control such as the sun or the moon. He realizes he operates in exactly the sphere in which he belongs and feels gratitude that he only needs to contend with fish and not greater matters. As a skilled fisherman, Santiago knows what he must do to defeat the marlin. He also understands that other forces of nature are beyond him.

- 4. "Anyone can be a fisherman in May."**

Santiago says this to Manolin after the latter reminds him to keep warm, since it is September. It is more difficult to be a fisherman when it is cold outside, but Santiago is up for the challenge. This quotation demonstrates the unique quality that makes a man a fisherman; in the days that follow, Santiago will struggle with his decision to make his living catching and killing fish, but there is nothing else he can do. Even though he is not successful in bringing home the meat of the marlin, he succeeds in his determination.

- 5. "If sharks come, God pity him and me."**

Santiago says this aloud to himself while he trails the marlin. He is determined to be "worthy of the great DiMaggio," who is able to play baseball even with a bone spur. This quotation foreshadows the coming of the sharks who will eat all the meat of the marlin before Santiago is able to return to shore. It implies that the marlin and Santiago are one, united against the

ravaging sharks. This sentiment is contrary to the battle that is staged between man and fish as Santiago tries to outlast the marlin.

6. “Fish... I'll stay with you until I am dead.”

Santiago says this to the marlin after he has hooked it and it tries to make a lurch forward in the middle of the night. He has a lot of line left, so he is at an advantage against the fish. But he knows it will drain him of his strength to trail the fish until it loses energy and eventually dies, so Santiago says this to express his commitment to that task. Either he will die or the fish will die, or both.

7. “Fish... I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends.”

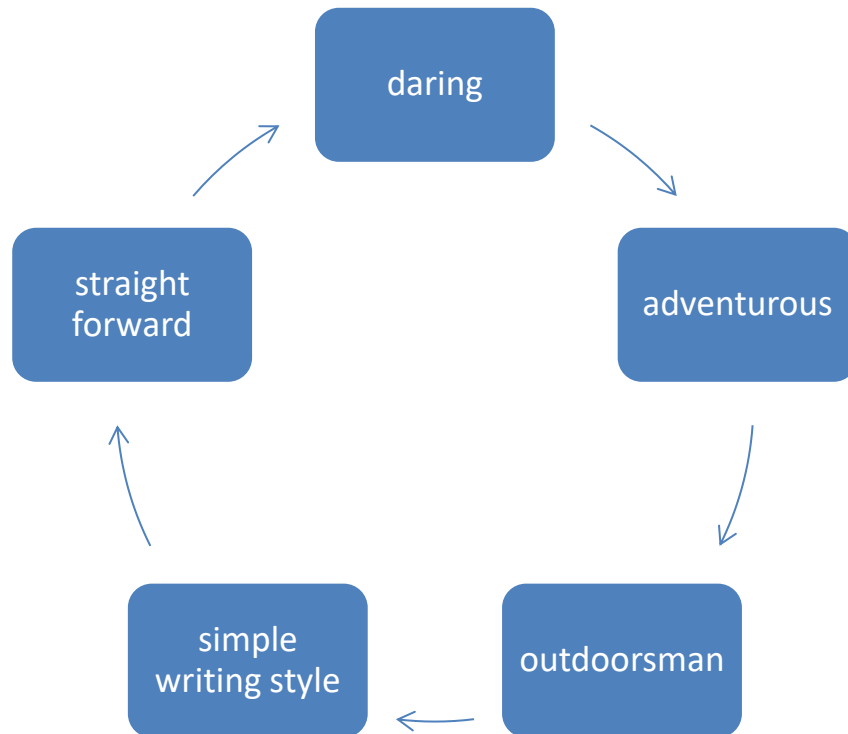
Santiago says this to the fish before the bird approaches his boat for a chat. He talks to the fish as if it is his equal in battle, and he has great respect for it as a noble creature. He speaks of his commitment to fulfilling his job as a fisherman, because it is more than a job - it is his entire life. All that Santiago is as a man is wrapped up in his task of killing the marlin and bringing it home. Loving and respecting it is not mutually exclusive with killing it.

8. He no longer dreamed of storms, nor of women, nor of great occurrences, nor of great fish, nor fights, nor contests of strength, nor of his wife. He only dreamed of places now and of the lions on the beach. They played like young cats in the dusk and he loved them as he loved the boy.”

This passage, which describes Santiago’s dreams on the night before he sets out for his fishing expedition, simultaneously confirms and moves beyond Hemingway’s immediately recognizable vision of the universe. The lions here are at play and thus suggest a time of youth and ease, a source of comfort and renewal for Santiago. They are also linked explicitly to Manolin, a connection that is made apparent at the end of the novel as the boy watches over his aged friend as Santiago’s dream of the lions returns.

4.6 LET US SUM UP

- A novella is a type of prose fiction, which is shorter than full length novels and longer than short stories. It is a well-structured yet short narrative; often satiric or realistic in tone.
- Ernest Miller Hemingway (July 21, 1899- July 2, 1961) was a prominent American novelist and short story writer amongst the galaxy of American writers. He was awarded the **Pulitzer Prize in 1953** and **Nobel Prize in literature in the year 1954**.
- Let’s have a quick look at Hemingway’s personality traits:



- The Old Man and the Sea refers to the novella's main character, Santiago, an old fisherman, whose struggle with a marlin plays out in the open sea, symbolizing mankind's epic struggle with nature.

4.7 SUGGESTED READING

1. Brenner, Gerry. *The Old Man and the Sea: Story of a Common Man*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991.
2. Hurley, C. Harold, ed. Hemingway's Debt to Baseball in *The Old Man and the Sea: A Collection of Critical Readings*. Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1992.

4.8 QUESTION FOR PRACTICE

1. Write a brief note on Ernest Hemingway?
2. Enlist the Characters of the novella 'The Old Man and the Sea'?
3. How is a novella different from a novel?

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)

Semester-II

COURSE: READING PROSE

Unit-5 THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA-II

STRUCTURE

- 5.0 Objectives**
- 5.1 Introduction**
- 5.2 Summary and analysis of *The Old Man and The Sea***
 - 5.2.1 Check Your Progress-I**
- 5.3 Themes**
 - 5.3.1 Check Your Progress-II**
- 5.4 Symbols**
- 5.5 Motifs**
 - 5.5.1 Check Your Progress-III**
- 5.6 Let Us Sum Up**
- 5.7 Suggested Reading**

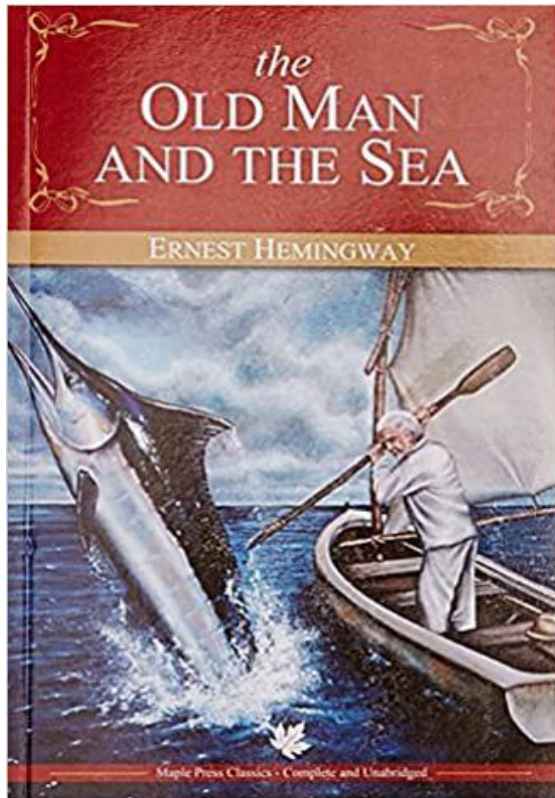
5.0 OBJECTIVES

After a careful reading of this unit, you will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the story of the novella
- ✓ Solve the exercises pertaining to the novella
- ✓ Understand the themes, symbols and motifs
- ✓ Solve the short revision exercises
- ✓ Learn new glossary words

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall first discuss Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. Thereafter, you will be studying the novella and we will be discussing its theme and various other aspects. Towards the end, you will check your progress by solving short revision exercises pertaining to your understanding of the text.



5.2 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF *THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA*

Hemingway started writing *The Old Man and the Sea* at his home near Havana in the year 1951. *The Old Man and the Sea* is the story of a consistent struggle between an old, seasoned fisherman and the greatest catch of his life. For eighty-four days, Santiago, the protagonist of the novel who is an aged Cuban fisherman goes out to sea and returns empty-handed. The parents of this young, devoted apprentice and friend, Manolin feel that Santiago is quite unlucky. Thus, they force the boy to leave the old man in order to fish in a more prosperous boat. In spite of all this, the boy continues to care for the old man upon his return each night. He helps carry home the old man's equipment, keeps him company, and brings him food. They discuss the latest developments in American baseball, especially the trials of the old man's hero, Joe DiMaggio.

Santiago is confident that his unproductive streak will soon come to an end, and he resolves to sail out farther than usual the next day.

On the eighty-fifth day of his unlucky attempts, Santiago does as he had promised and sails far beyond the island's shallow coastal waters, venturing into the Gulf Stream. He prepares his lines and drops them. At noon, a big fish, which he knows is a marlin, takes the bait that Santiago has placed one hundred fathoms deep in the waters. The old man expertly hooks the fish, but he cannot pull it in. Instead, the fish pulls the boat all through the day and night for the next two days. The entire time, Santiago endures constant pain from the fishing line as the fish lunges, leaps, or makes a dash for freedom. Although wounded and weary, the old man feels a deep empathy and admiration for the marlin, his brother in suffering, strength, and resolve.

On the third day the fish tires, and Santiago, sleep-deprived, aching, and nearly delirious, manages to pull the marlin in close enough to kill it with a harpoon thrust. Dead beside the skiff, the marlin is the largest Santiago has ever seen. He lashes it to his boat, raises the small mast, and sets sail for home. While Santiago is excited by the price that the marlin will bring at market, he is more concerned that the people who will eat the fish are unworthy of its greatness.

As Santiago sails on with the fish, the marlin's blood leaves a trail in the water and attracts sharks. The first to attack is a great mako shark, which Santiago manages to slay with the harpoon. In the struggle, the old man loses the harpoon and lengths of valuable rope, which leaves him vulnerable to other shark attacks. The old man fights off the successive vicious predators as best he can, stabbing at them with a crude spear he makes by lashing a knife to an oar, and even clubbing them with the boat's tiller. Although he kills several sharks, more and more appear, and by the time night falls, Santiago's continued fight against the **scavengers** (hunters) is useless. They **devour** (gulp) the marlin's precious meat, leaving only skeleton, head, and tail. Santiago **chastises** (rebuke) himself for going "out too far," and for sacrificing his great and worthy opponent. He arrives home before daybreak, stumbles back to his shack, and sleeps very deeply.

The next morning, a crowd of amazed fishermen gather around the skeletal **carcass** (corpse) of the fish, which is still lashed to the boat. Knowing nothing of the old man's struggle, tourists at a nearby café observe the remains of the giant marlin and mistake it for a shark. Manolin, who has been worried sick over the old man's absence, is moved to tears when he finds Santiago safe in his bed. The boy fetches the old man some coffee and the daily papers with the baseball scores, and watches him sleep. When the old man wakes, the two agree to fish as partners once more. The old man returns to sleep and dreams his usual dream of lions at play on the beaches of Africa.

The novella is truly universal in its consideration of the plight of an old man struggling against age, poverty, loneliness, and mortality to maintain his identity and dignity, re-establish his

reputation in the community, and ensure for all time his relationship with those he loves and to whom he hopes to pass on everything he values most. Ultimately, Santiago's heroic struggle not only redeems himself but inspires and spiritually enriches those around him.

5.2.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-I

1. When the novella opens, how long has it been since Santiago last caught a fish?

- (a) 40 days
- (b) 84 days
- (c) 87 days
- (d) 120 days

2. How does Hemingway describe Santiago's eyes?

- (a) They are full of pain.
- (b) They are blank with defeat.
- (c) They betray the weariness of his soul.
- (d) They are the colour of the sea.

3. Who is Santiago's hero?

- (a) Harry Truman
- (b) Joe DiMaggio
- (c) Dick Sisler
- (d) Fidel Castro

4. What hangs on the wall of the old man's shack?

- (a) A photograph of his wife
- (b) The latest baseball scores
- (c) A mounted fish
- (d) Pictures

5. On the night before he promises Manolin to go "far out" to sea, of what does Santiago dream?

- (a) A great storm
- (b) A beautiful woman
- (c) Lions on the beach
- (d) A wrestling match

6. Why does Santiago not let his lines drift like the other fishermen?

- (a) He is a stubborn man who prefers the old-fashioned way of fishing.
 - (b) He believes it is imprecise, and he strives always to be exact.
 - (c) It is dangerous, as he might become tangled with another boat.
 - (d) He is no longer young or strong enough to control a drifting line.
7. What kind of fish does Santiago first catch?
- (a) A tuna
 - (b) A marlin
 - (c) A shrimp
 - (d) A Portuguese man-of-war
8. As his first full day of fighting with the fish wears on, what does Santiago begin to think about his adversary?
- (a) He praises the fish because it promises to bring a wonderful price at market.
 - (b) He considers that he and the marlin are brothers, joined by the fact that they both ventured far out beyond all people and dangers in the water.
 - (c) He detests the fish for its vigour and vitality.
 - (d) He believes that the fish is a test of his worth, sent to him by God.
9. How does Santiago finally kill the marlin?
- (a) He harpoons it through the heart.
 - (b) He stabs it between the eyes.
 - (c) He lashes it to the inside of the boat.
 - (d) He bashes its head with his club.
10. How long does it take for the sharks to arrive and attack the marlin?
- (a) Ten minutes
 - (b) Six hours
 - (c) One hour
 - (d) A full day
11. After the shark attack, Santiago reflects that destruction is inevitable. How does he articulate this philosophy?
- (a) The world is such an inhospitable place that no death should be mourned.
 - (b) Out, out, brief candle!
 - (c) Even the worthiest opponents must fall.
 - (d) Everything in the world kills everything else in some way.
12. What happens upon the old man's return to his fishing village?
- (a) Manolin promises to sail with him.
 - (b) The fishermen mock Santiago for the folly of sailing out so far.
 - (c) Tourists ask the old man to recount his adventures.
 - (d) A statue is erected in his honor.
13. Where does the story take place?
- (a) Canary Islands

- (b) Cuba
- (c) Marshall Island
- (d) Puerto Rico

14. In what month does the story take place?

- (a) May
- (b) October
- (c) September
- (d) July

15. What does Santiago call the sea?

- (a) La Mar
- (b) El Mar
- (c) Dorado
- (d) Salao

Answer Key

1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (b) 4. (d) 5. (c) 6. (b) 7. (a)
8. (b) 9. (a) 10. (c) 11. (d) 12. (a) 13. (b) 14. (c)
15. (a)

5.3 THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA-THEMES

Ernest Hemingway is a famous American writer who describes Santiago as a man who dares to face deformity and pain of life by his own individual life force. In the face of **perseverance** (continued effort), dignity and strong will, he single handedly **confronts** (meets) the fate of failure and death.

The theme of this book is man's capacity to withstand and transcend hardship of time and circumstance. The idea is conveyed through Santiago's adventures with the Marlin and with the sharks. Hemingway depicts the circumstances and the elemental tests of endurance which Santiago undergoes. He is projected as a hero because he fights not only against the marlin, but with all the obstacles that he faces through his life. Man can be destroyed, but cannot be defeated. becomes a philosophical idea which is known as human existence.

PERSEVERANCE

The Old Man and the Sea portrays the theme of perseverance in different ways and on different levels. Although the old man has not caught a fish in 84 days, he does not curse his fate. Instead, he keeps trying even harder by fishing farther out in the open sea than anyone else. Similarly, the marlin does not surrender when it's caught but uses its size and strength to pull the old man's skiff even farther out to sea, thus making it a **formidable adversary** (difficult challenge). Finally, Santiago defeats the mighty fish in spite of its size and strength because he is willing to endure exhaustion, hunger, thirst, and pain. The same willpower that enabled the old man's hero, Joe DiMaggio, to play a flawless game despite painful injuries enables the old man to wait out his opponent's strength. Finally, when the sharks attack and feed on the marlin until nothing is left, the old man kills or fends them off one by one, despite losing a weapon with each confrontation until he has nothing left but his bare fists.

Returning home with nothing except the skeleton to bear witness to the greatest catch of his life and his skiff badly damaged, Santiago is not defeated, nor is his spirit broken. Like Jesus bearing his cross, Santiago will carry his mast to and from his skiff day in and day out, doing what fishermen are meant to do.

PAIN AND SUFFERING

The theme of pain and suffering is closely connected to that of perseverance and appears in several ways. Pain is the price a fisherman must pay for a bountiful (generous) catch. The old man's hands are stained with scars which reveal the history of struggles with opponents out at sea. These scars depict a sign of age, hardship, suffering, strength, willpower, and victory. To be a fisherman means enduring pain and there can be no gain without undergoing any pain-cuts on the hands, arms, face, and back of a fisherman as he tries to hold and reel in the fish.

However, the theme of pain and suffering goes deeper. The capacity to endure pain and suffering distinguishes humans from other creatures. Although a strong opponent, eventually the marlin gives up and allows itself to be reeled in while the old man keeps going despite physical exhaustion, three painful wounds, a cramping hand, and alternating hunger pangs and disgust after eating raw fish. Furthermore, his capacity for pain and suffering distinguishes Santiago from other fishermen. Just as Joe DiMaggio overcame painful injuries to pull off an unparalleled hitting streak, Santiago defies odds that younger, stronger, and perhaps more successful fishermen do not try. None of them has ever fished as far out or encountered a fish as large, strong, and magnificent as Santiago has. The old man's ability to endure pain and suffering establishes him as a hero who rises above others.

Suffering is another major issue explored in the novella as both the hunter and the hunted suffer. Hemingway imparts the message that in the struggle for survival, lives are lost, bodies are broken and much pain is experienced. Even pleasure comes to man in the form of pain and vice versa. The greater the pleasure is, the harder the pain. DiMaggio, the baseball superstar, endures much pain caused by the bone spur in his heel. He does not give up the struggle on account of his

suffering but plays on. Judging by the loss of the fish to the sharks, one could conclude that Santiago's suffering is in vain: a fruitless struggle. But hunting itself is a fascinating sport, full of excitement and wonders. In other words, it is not the end that matters but the entire process of existing. Santiago's physical and psychological suffering quickens the feeling of empathy in the reader. The reader is moved with pity as the fisherman feels faint and dizzy. His suffering arouses natural pity and sensitivity.

One of the great lessons of the novella is courage or endurance in hardship. The old man and the fish have more or less the same degree of endurance. The conquest of the marlin brings the old man much suffering but Santiago respects enormously the fighting spirit of the marlin with whom he is wrestling. The reader pities both man and beast because they both bleed and are tired. The danger of fighting in the dark is highlighted by Santiago. He wishes he could see the strong fish towing him and his skiff so that he could know the enormity of the problem that faces him.

CIRCLE OF LIFE

Life and death are prominent themes in *The Old Man and the Sea*. The old man muses that the sea, a symbol for nature itself, is simultaneously beautiful and cruel because it gives life and takes it away. Sea turtles swallow jellyfish, hawks hunt warblers, sharks devour marlins, and men catch fish. Each creature has its place in the food chain that keeps the circle of life going. The death of one creature provides life for another. The seemingly opposing forces of life and death are in fact in perfect balance.

However, there is another aspect to this theme. Although Santiago appreciates the circle of life and recognizes his own place within it, he fights hard to rise above it and survive. He risks his life sailing out farther and staying longer than anyone to catch a fish large enough to provide meat for him to eat and sell. He defends his catch against sharks and sustains the one life he has. Hemingway shows that what distinguishes humans from other creatures is the desire to persevere as individuals.

PHYSICAL STRENGTH AND SKILL

In his epic struggle with the marlin, Santiago realizes that he is not quite as strong as he used to be. The old man makes up for that loss of vitality and strength with superior knowledge and skill. He knows how to read nature, how to handle the line to gauge the movement of the fish, and he knows how to interpret these movements. That's not all—he also knows himself and his own limits. He knows exactly how far to push himself and how to counteract the harrowing effects of the long struggle on his physical strength. He knows exactly when to eat and when to rest, and he uses his skill to overcome his limitations. When he loses one weapon after another as he battles the sharks, the old man uses the resources at his disposal to create the makeshift weapons that keep him alive. However, throughout the story, it becomes clear that despite the old man's

physical prowess, skill, and willingness to take risks, he lacks luck and therefore cannot find material success.

PRIDE, HONOUR AND RESPECT

Although the old man is humble and seems to care little about the other fishermen's opinions, he is proud of his skills and wants recognition for them. After all, he wishes Manolin were there with him, not only to help him fish and dispel loneliness, but also to show the boy what kind of man he is and to witness the greatest catch of his life. The catch is so great because the fish's size, strength, and perseverance—the marlin pulls the skiff for days—make it an opponent worthy of the old man's respect. Defeating it in a struggle that takes everything the old man has in turn demands respect from others. It matters little that he does not meet the original objective in catching the fish, to return with meat to eat and sell. The villagers' admiration for the magnificent skeleton tied to the old man's skiff shows there is honour in honest defeat. It is the struggle itself that counts, the willingness to exert all of one's strength, no matter what the outcome may be.

HUNTING OR SURVIVAL

Hemingway portrays life in *The Old Man and the Sea* as a matter of survival. He seems to view survival instinct as primary. All other considerations are secondary. The struggle for survival as shown in the novel is not just between Man and Nature but between one element and another. Hemingway's sympathies are no doubt for the poor and powerless.

5.3.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-II

Arrange the following events in the correct sequence as they occur in the novella:

1. He feels kinship to the fish, pulling the boat farther out.
2. Santiago kills the marlin and ties it to his skiff.
3. Attending to Santiago, Manolin vows they'll fish together.
4. Santiago has not caught a fish in 84 days.
5. Santiago returns with the skeleton and carries his mast.
6. Santiago hooks an 18-foot marlin.
7. Tired, hungry, and in pain, Santiago thinks of Joe DiMaggio.
8. The fishing line injures Santiago.

9. Santiago's hand cramps.
10. Santiago fends off sharks as they eat the marlin's flesh.
11. Santiago catches a dolphin and kills it for food.
12. Santiago sets out to fish on the 85th day.

Answer Key

1. Santiago has not caught a fish in 84 days.
2. Santiago sets out to fish on the 85th day.
3. Santiago hooks an 18-foot marlin.
4. He feels kinship to the fish, pulling the boat farther out.
5. The fishing line injures Santiago.
6. Santiago catches a dolphin and kills it for food.
7. Santiago's hand cramps.
8. Tired, hungry, and in pain, Santiago thinks of Joe DiMaggio.
9. Santiago kills the marlin and ties it to his skiff.
10. Santiago fends off sharks as they eat the marlin's flesh.
11. Santiago returns with the skeleton and carries his mast.
12. Attending to Santiago, Manolin vows they'll fish together.

5.4 THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA-SYMBOLS

The Old Man and the Sea is rich in meaning. Virtually every element operates on two levels, revealing a deeper symbolic meaning beneath its literal function. Nothing that happens in the novella is only what it seems. Instead the novella is an allegory, elevating the story of Santiago's epic struggle with the marlin to humankind's universal struggle for survival.

The **marlin** symbolizes the majesty of nature. With its sheer size, strength, and tenacity as evidenced in its pulling Santiago's skiff for several days, the marlin is a formidable opponent. Unlike other fish, this marlin does not fight the hook but instead uses it to fight the old man. The marlin seems successful at first, as the old man must hold on to the fishing line so hard he is injured in the process. Watching the marlin put up so strong a fight, the old man feels more and

more akin to this creature and begins to draw parallels. Although they seem to be mortal enemies in the universal battle between predator and prey, Santiago realizes in the end they are brothers because they are in this fight for the same reason: to survive.

Although both the marlin and the old man are part of the natural order of life, locked in the struggle between predator and prey, perseverance distinguishes the two. To triumph in his struggle against the marlin, the old man must dig deep within himself to overcome not only the marlin's strength but his own limitations: age, exhaustion, pain, hunger, and thirst. The battle between the two is not merely the attempt of a fisherman trying to reel in his catch and go home. This particular marlin brings out the best in Santiago by pushing him to his limits. The battle becomes a symbol of the constant struggle of an individual for survival within nature, a struggle won only by one's willingness to go beyond what seems humanly possible. The marlin also can represent Hemingway's writing and career. In this sense, it's the writing Hemingway has worked on for his entire life that he tries to hold onto.

The **mast** of the old man's skiff is an allusion to the Christian cross, which in turn symbolizes pain and suffering for a greater good. The three bleeding wounds Santiago suffers as he sails underneath the mast of his skiff allude to the three wounds of Jesus Christ as he was nailed to the cross, suffering to atone for humankind's sins. At the end of the story, Santiago carries the mast to the shack similar to the way Jesus carried the cross, symbolizing that Santiago has accepted his fate as Jesus accepted his. Santiago will continue to fish no matter what, alone and lonely, neither asking for help or miracles nor to succeed and live better. He will simply do, unquestioningly, what individuals must: struggle to survive.

Joe DiMaggio, the legendary New York Yankees outfielder whose 56-game hitting streak that ended in 1941 still remains the world record, symbolizes perseverance and persistence as well as skill. In Santiago's eyes, the hitting streak alone makes DiMaggio formidable, yet DiMaggio achieved this feat despite painful injuries such as the bone spurs repeatedly mentioned in the novella. Much like DiMaggio, Santiago defies the odds and catches the greatest fish of his career after a long dry spell, survives for days out on the ocean without proper supplies, and emerges the victor against aggressive sharks. His skill and perseverance while facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles make him a hero worthy of respect even though he does not succeed in bringing home his catch.

Symbolizing the brute force of destruction, the **sharks** are mindless creatures following their base instincts: the bloodlust that lures them to their prey. Yet their very bloodlust also lures them to their death. As they take bites out of the marlin in a feeding frenzy, they come close enough to the skiff for Santiago to kill them. What sustains them kills them. Neither their lives nor their deaths serve any purpose. Defeating them with sheer willpower and innovation, Santiago not only survives himself but also defends the magnificent marlin. He brings home the skeleton and thus captures the creature's majesty and glory.

In a different interpretation, the sharks also symbolize all the critics Hemingway faced in real life. Hemingway hadn't produced much writing publicly in many years, and his most recent publication had received a negative reception. This novella seems to liken those critics to sharks who circle and pounce.

Manolin, the young boy who loves, admires, and cares for the old man, symbolizes hope and the future. He is Santiago's only friend and companion; his help, literally, sustains the old man. Manolin is there every night helping pack up Santiago's gear and providing food to make sure the old man won't starve. Furthermore, he is the old man's apprentice. Although at the beginning of the story he fishes on another boat, Manolin has learned everything he knows from Santiago. Promising to fix the battered skiff and to return to fishing with the old man, Manolin offers the help the old man needs to keep going. Manolin believes in the old man and therefore will carry on his legacy and bear witness to his achievement.

5.5 MOTIFS (IDEA USED MANY TIMES IN A PIECE OF WRITING)

The **lions**, a connection to youth and virility, are a recurring motif. The old man repeatedly dreams about lions playing on the beaches of his past. Their playfulness suggests Santiago sees them not as predators but as carefree creatures and part of his youth. Santiago returns to this dream each time he faces a seemingly insurmountable obstacle: on the night of the 84th day without a catch, on the open sea as the elements threaten to defeat him, and on the night he returns home without a catch yet again. Taking him back to his youth, the dream reminds him of his own vitality and strength, reenergizing his determination to keep going against all odds. Additionally, Santiago's dream of the lions at the very end of the story signals hope that Santiago's strength, perseverance, and skill will live on forever as Manolin will carry on his legacy.

Santiago's hands are mentioned several times throughout the story. When the old man first appears, they are full of age spots, hinting at the old man's age, and marked with scars, implying the physical toll a fisherman pays. In his struggle with the marlin, the old man suffers a new cut on one hand and a severe cramp in the other; however, he does not give up, and he fights through his pain. Suggestive of the wounds Christ suffered on the cross, the old man's scarred hands represent his willingness to endure pain and suffering. In the end it is his strong willpower that enables Santiago to survive his ordeal. Although he returns without his catch, the marlin's skeleton is a testament to his feat.

5.5.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-III

Answer the following questions:

1. Comment on the statement "A Man Can Be Destroyed But Not Defeated"
.....
.....

2. How is Santiago a hero in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*?

3. What does the marlin symbolize in *The Old Man and the Sea*?

4. What is the significance of the title in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*?

5.6 LET US SUM UP

- For eighty-four days, Santiago, the protagonist of the novel who is an aged Cuban fisherman goes out to sea and returns empty-handed. The 85th day changes everything as Santiago fights with the forces of nature and with the shortcomings brought on by his old age in search of the great catch.
- The novella is truly universal in its consideration of the plight of an old man struggling against age, poverty, loneliness, and mortality to maintain his identity and dignity, re-establish his reputation in the community
- The novella is an allegory portraying man’s capacity to withstand and transcend hardship of time and circumstance for the universal struggle for survival.
- There is symbolic significance in the novel. Marlin symbolizes the majesty of nature, the mast of the old man's skiff is an allusion to the Christian cross, which symbolizes pain and suffering for a greater good. While Joe DiMaggio symbolizes perseverance, persistence and skill, Manolin symbolizes hope and the future.
- The lions are a recurring motif in the novella which are a connection to youth and virility. Santiago’s scarred hands also represent his willingness to endure pain and suffering.

5.7 SUGGESTED READING

1. Baker, Carlos. *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist* (4th ed.). Princeton University Press. 1972.
2. Bryfonski, Dedrai. *Death in Ernest Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea*. Greenhaven, 2014
3. Jobses, Katharine T., ed. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Old Man and the Sea*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall. 1968.
4. Mellow, James R. *Hemingway: A Life Without Consequences*. New York: Houghton Mifflin. 1992.

5.8 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. What significance do the lions on the beach or Joe DiMaggio have for the old man?
2. Draw a character sketch of Santiago.
3. “A man can be destroyed but not defeated,” says the old man after the first shark attack. At the end of the story, is the old man defeated? Why or why not?

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)

Semester-II

COURSE: READING PROSE

UNIT-6: FRANCIS BACON: OF STUDIES

STRUCTURE

6.0 Objectives

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Biographical Note

6.2.1 Bacon's Works

6.3 What is an Essay?

6.3.1. About the Essay: Of Studies

6.3.2 Text of the Essay: Of Studies

6.3.3 Glossary

6.3.4 Summary: Of Studies

6.4 Division and Subdivision of Ideas

6.5 Bacon as an Essayist

6.6 Exercises for Explanation

6.7 Let us Sum Up

6.8 Unit- End Questions

6.9 Further Readings

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After a study of the lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Define an essay
- Explain Bacon's essay 'Of Studies'
- Divide and subdivide ideas in an essay or any other piece of writing
- Answer questions on the content and style of Francis Bacon's essay 'Of Studies'
- Analyze an essay

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will study Francis Bacon's essay, 'Of Studies'. The details given in biographical note bring out a close relation between Bacon's life and his works. Before discussing the essay we have described the term 'essay' in simple language. It is followed by an introduction to the essay and the text. The summary of the essay will introduce the main ideas presented in 'Of Studies'. In the tabulated division of ideas, given after the summary, you will notice Bacon's art of organizing his subject in an effective way. We have discussed Bacon as an essayist to help you list some important features of his art of essay writing. These ideas will be useful in the analysis of his essay.

You will find some activities in the form of exercises to mark your progress in the process of learning.

The answers to the 'Check Your Progress' activities are given at the end of the unit.

The exercises on the explanation of the extracts from the essay are intended to add to your skill in analyzing the essay.

6.2 BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Francis Bacon's essays are known for their innovative themes and unique style. A study of his essays demands some information about his life and thoughts as his writings are much influenced by his experiences, ideas and beliefs. We see two aspects of Bacon's personality as pointed out in these words, "Laying aside opinions of others, and relying only upon the facts of Bacon's life, we find on the one side the politician, cold calculating, selfish, and on the other the literary and scientific man with an impressive devotion to truth for its own great sake: here is a man using questionable means to advance his own interests, and there a man seeking with zeal and endless labor to penetrate the secret ways of Nature, with no other object than to advance the interests of his fellow men" (Long).

Sir Francis Bacon was born on 22 January 1561 at York House in London. Bacon was closely associated with the royal court from his childhood as his mother's sister was married to William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley, a statesman of the Queen. He expressed his dislike for the English education system of the times and Aristotle's philosophy for being dry and without any utility. He received early education at Cambridge and went to France to study diplomacy and statistics. Bacon stated that he had three goals: to uncover truth, to serve his country, and to serve his church. He sought to further these ends by seeking a prestigious post. In 1580, he applied for a position in the Queen's court but failed. He became a barrister in 1582. He became an M.P in 1586 when he won a by-election for Bossiney, Ormwall, and then again in 1584, and 1586.

About this time, he again approached his powerful uncle for help; this move was followed by his rapid progress at the bar. In 1588 he became MP for Liverpool and for Middlesex in 1593.

He received the designation of the Queen's Council in 1597. Elizabeth 1, the Queen of England made him her legal adviser. The Queen would address him as "The young lord keeper". He was knighted in 1603 when James VI came to power. He became Baron Verulam in 1618 and Viscount St Alban in 1621.

His essays on love and friendship reveal many aspects of his life. We can see that his pragmatic attitude and intellectuality made him cold and cruel. He is considered the follower of Machiavelli who propagated the difference between private and public morality. It was during one of his own thought-out scientific experiments that he died in 1626.

His belief in self advancement and consideration for practical advantages of things show his utilitarian thoughts, His emphasis on learning, scientific knowledge, and always keeping man in the center of things make him a Renaissance man.

6.2.1 Bacon's Works

Francis Bacon is the pioneer of the modern essay in English. He introduced this form of writing in English literature that flourished in later years and became highly popular. Bacon, of course, borrowed the concept of essay from a French writer Montaigne's 'Essais' published in 1580 but his knowledge, scientific temper, and experience added much more to the art of essay writing. He was a versatile thinker and writer who could express his genius in Latin, and English with equal ease and expertise. Before proceeding to analyze the essay let's have a look at some of his most significant works.

Francis Bacon's Latin works were mainly concerned with the exposition of his classical theories. His works in English bring out his contribution to the development and popularity of English Essay.

'Essays' was Bacon's first collection of ten essays which appeared in 1597 and its second and third editions were published in (1612) and (1625). The second edition consisted of thirty eight, and the third edition included fifty eight essays. These essays focus on familiar subjects, and utilitarian wisdom.

'The Advancement of Learning', published in 1625, contains Bacon's philosophy. In fact, this work is based on Bacon's Latin work *De Augmentis Scientiarum* published in 1623. 'The Advancement of Learning' is significant work on the history of science and philosophy. It contributed a great deal to the history of English prose.

Apart from his works in prose, Bacon also tried his hand in writing history from a scientific point of view in his 'History of Henry VII (1622). Bacon died before the completion of his work, 'New Atlantis', which was modeled on Thomas More's 'Utopia'.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: 1

Choose the correct answers:

i. Bacon wrote in:

- a) English only b) Latin only c) English and Latin

ii. Bacon's first collection of essays contained:

- a) Fifteen essays b) ten essays c) seventeen essays

iii. Bacon was made a Knight by:

- a) Henry1 b) Richards I c) James 1

iv. Bacon is considered the follower of:

- a) Shakespeare b) Lord Burleigh c) Machiavelli

6.3 WHAT IS AN ESSAY

An essay is a form of composition in prose. It has a moderate length. The word 'essay' is taken from the French word 'Essai' and in English literature it was adopted by Bacon from Montaigne. Essays can be of various types like personal or informal, and formal, persuasive, expository, narrative, descriptive, argumentative. Unlike a thesis or an article, an essay has wide range of readers. An essay is not addressed to special or limited audience. Its main purpose is to provide delight. Essay is written in a simple and conversational style to draw the attention of the reader. A good essay has new and interesting ideas presented in an equally interesting style. An essay can include small incidents and anecdotes to make it interesting. In brief, an essay can be on any subject or topic, having relevance for all. Its language is simple and the writer uses an effective style to make his ideas interesting and delightful.

6.3.1 ABOUT THE ESSAY: OF STUDIES

Francis Bacon's essay 'Of Studies', deals with the advantages, nature, and the influence of studies on human mind. The essay talks about different types of books and the way these books should be studied. Here you will also find Bacon's views on the attitude of different people towards studies. Bacon explains the way books provide us with practical wisdom. The ideas expressed in these essays can be used by all of us. This essay is significant for yet another reason. Nearly all the qualities of Bacon's art of essay writing can be observed in it. You will see that Bacon makes a statement and then explains it. This style of writing proves very helpful in understanding the content of the essay. The ideas expressed and the way Bacon presents them in an ordered way makes the essay interesting and attractive for the readers.

6.3.2 TEXT: 'OF STUDIES'

STUDIES serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment, and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best, from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants that need pruning, by study; and studies themselves, do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books, else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know, that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. Abeunt studia in mores. Nay, there is no stound or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body, may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen; for they are cymnisectores. If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

6.3.3 Glossary

For ability	to make one able
Retiring	retirement
Disposition	arrangement
Plots	planning: the modern word, 'plotting' is a metaphor from surveying
Humour	here, eccentricity
Studies ... experience	the sense is that theoretical knowledge acquired by study is too vague for use, unless the application is limited by experience

Admire	wonder at
Without	outside
Curiously	here carefully (derived from Latin ‘curiose’)
Arguments	subjects
Flashy	here tasteless; the most famous instance of its use is in Milton’s Lycidas: ‘their lean and flashy songs’
Conference	conversation
Writing	taking notes
Present	ready, as in the psalms: a ‘present help in trouble’
Witty	imaginative
Abeunt...mores	‘tastes become character’: this is from Ovid’s Epistle of Sappho to Phaon Heroides.
Stand	hindrance
Bowling	the act of bowling in the game of cricket
Schoolmen	the philosophical teaching of the medieval universities was based upon Aristotle’s theories and upon the ethical and metaphysical doctrines of Christianity as laid down by the priests

6.3.4 SUMMARY: OF STUDIES

The essay starts with an explanation of the uses of studies or knowledge. According to Bacon studies can be used for three purposes. We can use studies for entertainment or pleasure that he calls delight. They can be used for making our speech more impressive. In this case study serves a decorative purpose. Studies help in making appropriate judgment. Bacon says, “Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for utility.” He explains that studies serve the purpose of pleasure when we read in our idle hours for personal happiness. Our speech or discussion on a subject appears attractive to others due to studies. It adds to the ornamental value of the language we use and the arguments we put forward. The use of decorative vocabulary and terms becomes possible with the help of studies. These elements in one’s language make one look an expert in the use of language. Studies serve another purpose of enabling us to make appropriate judgment. It is through studies that one learns new ideas and uses them to make judgments and form opinions in life.

After discussing these three purposes or uses of studies Bacon cautions us to make a judicious use of studies. One should not spend most of one’s time on studies to seek pleasure as it makes one lazy and sluggish. The overuse of studies in one’s speech and language makes it artificial. Our forming opinions and judgments wholly on the basis of our study is not appropriate. Such decisions are often away from reality. It is our experience in life that adds the element of perfection to our studies. On the other hand, studies have the ability to enrich our experience. Bacon compares the development and growth of human mind to that of a plant. We see that the unwanted leaves and branches of a plant have to be trimmed for its proper development. In the same way, experience teaches us to check, in a way prune, unwanted and unhealthy or irrelevant ideas that come from books and their study. Studies perform the same

function in giving direction to our experience and life. In other words, human mind is moulded and shaped by studies and studies add wisdom to our experience.

Bacon tells about the attitude of different types of people towards studies. Crafty or cunning people criticize studies. Simple, ordinary people admire studies whereas wise men use studies for the valuable ideas presented in books. Studies provide wisdom to deal with different situations in life. It does not mean that the ideas given in books are used as such. We make use of the ideas and wisdom gained from books on the basis of our observation of life. In other words, the ideas taken from books are not mechanically applied. One should read books to learn about life in a better way.

All books do not have equal significance and value. We need not study all books with the same devotion and attention. Only parts of some books are important. These books should be read in parts. There are books that do not carry much importance. Such books do not need careful study and one can hurriedly go through them without paying much attention. There are certain books that need to be chewed i.e. studied very carefully and in detail. Reading books is significant as it has a special value for us. It is reading that has the ability to make man complete in his wisdom. A person well-versed in discussing things is always ready to express ideas, and the practice of writing makes a person exact i.e. perfect or disciplined.

Different disciplines of study influence people in different ways. The study of History makes people wise, it makes poets expert in using their wit. In the same way, the study of other subjects sharpens other faculties of human mind. Bacon explains that different types of exercises and sports can cure different diseases of the body in the same way the study of different subjects is recommended for different weaknesses or drawbacks of the mind.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: II

i. Choose the correct option:

According to Bacon natural abilities are like :

a) books b) knowledge c) plants

ii. State true or false :

All books have equal importance and should be studied in the same way. (True \False)

iii. Some books are to be chewed means:

a) They should be eaten up b) studied carelessly c) read carefully

iv. Some books should be swallowed indicates that:

a) These books are to be sold b) one should hurriedly go through them c. only selected parts of these books are to be studied.

v. Fill in the blank by selecting the correct option:

Bacon thinks that makes men wise and poets witty.

a) poetry b) science c) history

6.4 DIVISION AND SUBDIVISION OF IDEAS

Now look at the following table to see the way Bacon has organized his arguments in the essay: Pick up the lines from the text of the essay and match them with the different sections or parts of the table given below:

	OF STUDIES	
	Advantages or Uses of Studies	
Delight	Ornament	Ability
Reading for pleasure and enjoyment	Reading to make our discourse impressive and language attractive	Reading to make judgment and understand life better
	Precautions\Advice	
Devoting too much time on studies results in laziness	Over use of studies for to make our speech impressive is likely to make our speech look hollow and artificial.	Over dependence on Studies for making judgments in life is considered a whim of the scholar having no understanding of life.
	Experience and Studies	
	Bacon compares the role of studies in life and experience to the pruning of a plant for its proper growth	
Experience		Studies

Experience teaches us to relate the significant and relevant ideas taken from studies to life .It enables us to keep the unhealthy ideas away.		Studies teach us to mould and change ourselves in a better way. They direct our experience on the right path,
	Attitude Towards Studies	
Cunning\Crafty People	Simple\Ordinary People	Wise People
Condemn or Criticize Studies	Admire Studies	Use Studies
	Types of Books and the Ways they should be Read	
Books to be Tasted	Books to be Swallowed	Books to be Digested
Only the parts of these books are to be read. No need of a complete study of these books.	Only a casual reading of these books is enough. There is no need to carefully study even the parts of such books.	These books are given a careful and attentive reading. Their detailed study is essential.
	Reading as compared to Conferencing or the art of discussion and writing.	
Reading	Conferencing	Writing
Makes a complete man	Prepares one to express	Makes a person disciplined

	ideas according to the occasion.	and well organized in life.
	Subjects of Studies and Human faculties	
Subjects		Human faculties
History ,		Wisdom, wit.
Mathematics		Subtlety of mind \reasoning
Philosophy		Deep thought

6.5 BACON AS AN ESSAYIST

Francis Bacon's essays concentrate on thoughts related to practical wisdom. The views expressed in his essays are based on his observation and experience. It is said that Bacon deduces general maxims from his own observations. It shows his keen interest in men and manners. He treats his subject scientifically and always explores practical value of things. While writing about studies he says, "Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business". It reveals that his approach is always practical and pragmatic. It is due to this quality of his writings that he is often considered the follower of utilitarianism in which everything is valued due to its practical utility only.

The thematic range of Bacon's essays is very vast and varied. He writes on a variety of subjects. In a letter to his uncle Burleigh, Bacon wrote that he had taken all knowledge to be his province. His interest in various branches of knowledge can be seen from his essays on moral, ethical and metaphysical issues. In his essays, Bacon discusses friends, parents, children, truth, love marriage, studies, kingdoms, revenge, death, and a host of other issues in detail and with great skill. His subjects range from aesthetics to morality. Despite the vast variety of subjects Bacon treats all the ideas with equal command and depth of knowledge.

The use of wit, humour and proverbial wisdom make his essays popular among the readers. He was aware of his popularity as an essayist as his words reveal, " My essays come home to men's business and bosoms". His essays are a source of guidance in practical life . Every thought in his essays is quite striking and full of commonsense wisdom. His treatment of even commonplace subjects with full sincerity and seriousness draws the reader's attention. The main reason of his

popularity as an essayist is his dealing with the subjects of common interest of the people. Instead of talking about romance and philosophy Bacon talks about human environment. His concern is more with the facts than theory. These elements in his essays attract the readers.

Bacon's distinct prose style makes his writings interesting and attractive. His style is precise and condensed. The beginnings of his essays are sudden, and striking. For example, "Revenge is a kind of wild justice". He chooses short sentences with simple structure. Bacon's belief in scientific learning and knowledge comes out in his essays where we see him providing explanations to the statements he makes. Instead of making vague statements or leaving much to the reader, he explains the ideas in concrete and clear terms. For example in the essay 'Of Studies' Bacon first makes the statement, 'Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some to be chewed and digested'. The next part of the sentence analyzes and explains it.

Bacon uses epigrammatic style that presents highly condensed ideas in a few words and in small sentences. For example, the very first sentence of the essay 'Of Studies', "Studies serve for delight, for ornament and ability". His use of apparently contradictory ideas or paradox does not allow the reader to remain passive. It requires complete attention of the reader to understand the full import of his views. For example when he says, 'Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested;' it seems a contradictory view on books. But the explanation that follows makes the idea clear.

Bacon uses simple and short sentences instead of complex and complicated long ones. When he writes a long sentence, he prefers a compound one instead of the complex one. He repeats the structure of the first coordinate clause that helps in understanding it. For example, in "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man", the sentence can be broken into small independent sentences. The repetition of sentence structure, punctuation marks, and certain words for emphasis are some of the regular features of his prose style.

The systematic arrangement of arguments in his essays provides an organic unity to the whole structure. It also reveals his organizational skill in the development of thought. The logical development of ideas and use of reasoning instead of emotional appeal or personal views add to the persuasive quality of his essays.

Check your Progress: III

Answer the following questions by selecting the correct answer:

i. Bacon's essays are full of:

a) practical wisdom b) romantic ideas c) scientific theories

ii. the ideas expressed in Bacon's essays are based on:

a) his study of science only b) his observation and experience c) his bookish knowledge

iii. The long sentences used in Bacon's essays are usually:

a) Simple b) complex c) compound

iv. Bacon uses:

a) Epigrammatic and aphoristic style b) autobiographical style c) conversational style.

PLEASE NOTE: The information provided in the discussion above will help you analyze different features of Francis Bacon’s essay ‘Of Studies’. Now we will analyze some extracts from the essay and identify different features of his art of essay writing.

6.6 EXERCISES FOR EXPLANATION

Exercise I. Explain the following extract with reference to the context:

“Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment, and disposition of business.”

Analysis: These are the opening lines of the essay ‘Of Studies’ by Francis Bacon. The essay explains different uses of studies, types of books, the way they should be studied. These lines tell us about three main advantages of studies. Study of books provides delight. It gives us pleasure in our free time. It serves the purpose of an ornament as it makes our speech impressive. Study of books is useful in making judgment. It helps us in taking wise decisions..

The ideas expressed in these lines are full of practical wisdom. Bacon tells us about the uses of reading books. The use of simple sentence structure and the explanation of the main ideas in subsequent sentences makes the understanding of the extract easy and quick.

Please Note: The exercise given above shows how we have proceeded for the explanation of the extract:

- i. Given the name of the author and the essay from which the extract has been taken.
- ii. Explained, in brief, the main thrust of the essay.
- iii. Described the ideas given in the extract.
- iv. Made a comment on the way the ideas have been expressed in the extract.

Now you can take help of this pattern and do the exercises given below:

Exercise 2. Explain the following extract with reference to the context:

“To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience.....”

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

Exercise 3. Explain the following extract with reference to the context:

‘Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.’

.....

6.7 LET US SUM UP

- *An essay is a form of prose which can be on any topic and of a moderate length.
- *Francis Bacon borrowed the idea of essay from a French writer Montaigne. Bacon is considered the father of modern essay in English.
- *His essay ‘Of Studies’ is about the advantages of reading books and using learning for practical purposes in life.
- *There are different categories of books and the ways to read them are also varied.
- *Bacon’s emphasis is on the practical utility of studies.
- *The ideas presented in his essay focus on matters of everyday concerns. .
- *His use of aphoristic, pithy and compact style enables him to express several ideas in single sentence.
- *Bacon’s essays have a special appeal for all.
- *His essays have a well-organized, logical and uniform structure

6.8 UNIT-END QUESTIONS

1. What, according to Francis Bacon, are the chief uses of studies?
2. On the basis of your study of the essay ‘Of Studies’, explain the different types of books and the way these books are to be read.
3. Discuss three main features of Bacon’s prose style with examples from his essay ‘Of Studies’.
4. Give a brief summary of the essay.
5. Bacon’s essays are said to be lacking in emotional warmth and feelings. Do you agree with these views? Why?
6. There are several sentences that strike like proverbs, for example, “To spend too much time in studies is sloth”. Write five sentences which are similar to this, and explain their meaning also.

6.9 FURTHER READINGS

- *Long , J. William, *English Literature : Its History and its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World*
- *Rai Vikramadity *Bacon Essays* ; Doaba House .
- *Apart from this the reading of Francis Bacon’s essays like ‘Of Love’ Of Religion, ‘Of Truth’ ‘Of Friendship’ can also be helpful.

Check Your Progress I.

Answers: i. c ii. b iii .c iv c

Check your Progress II.

Answers: i. c ii. False iii. c iv b v c

Check your Progress III

Answers: i. a ii b iii c iv a.

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)

Semester-II

COURSE: READING PROSE

Unit-7: RICHARD STEELE: THE TRUMPET CLUB

STRUCTURE:

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Introduction

7.2. Biographical Note

7.3 Periodical Essay

7.3.1 The Tatler

7.4 What is a Satire?

7.5. About the Essay: The Trumpet Club

7.5.1. Text: The Trumpet Club

7.5.2 Glossary

7.5.3 Summary: The Trumpet Club

7.6. Exercises

7.7 Style

7.8.1Exercises

7.9 Let us Sum up

7.10 Unit end questions

7.11 Further Readings

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- i. Define and explain periodical essay.
- ii. Write on Steele's contribution to the periodical essay.
- iii. Define and describe satire.
- iii. Mark and illustrate features of Steele's prose style.
- iv. Analyze the essay.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study of Steele's essay, we have started with details about his life and works. Steele's contribution to periodical essay and the journal 'The Tatler' started by him is given after this. It is followed by some details about periodical essay and the reasons that led to its popularity. Steele's association with another great essayist Addison contributed a lot for the development of this genre. You will learn how the periodical essay flourished due to their cooperation and efforts.

Steele's essay is a satire on the club culture of his times. We have explained the term Satire so that you can identify the elements of satire and explain the satirical nature of Steele's essay.

The summary of the essay will give you a fair idea about the main ideas expressed in it. You can use it to answer questions on the essay. The part of the study related to the style of the essay brings out different artistic features of Steele's art of writing.

You can check your progress in the understating of the essay by solving the exercises and matching your answers with the correct ones given at the end. The exercises related to the explanation of extracts from the essay are aimed to improve your analytical skills.

7.2. BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

RICHARD STEELE

Richard Steele (1672-1729), a great essayist and dramatist, was born in Dublin Ireland. Little is known about his early childhood except the fact that his parents were poor and he was brought up by his aunt and uncle, Lady Katherine Milday, and Henry Gasioignl. He went to school at the age of fourteen, and later joined Oxford University in 1689. His first poem was on the death of Queen Mary II. He became Captain in the Coldstream Guards. He wrote *The Christian Hero* in 1701. His first play *The Fiscal* was a satire on hypocrisy. Steele left his job in 1705 and tried his hand as a writer. His second play *The Lying Lover* was published in 1702.

At that time, political pamphlets were written against the opponents by the writers supporting Whigs or the Tories. Steele directed his political writings against the Tory group as he was a supporter of the Whigs. After the death of his first wife Margaret Ford Stretch he married Mary Seurlock. At that time he was the editor of 'The London Gazette', the government periodical. After some time he established his own periodical 'The Tatler'. It brought out essays about men and manners, and life at the clubs visited by upper sections of society. He expressed anti-Tory ideas in several of his pamphlets. He was elected an M. P. in 1713. The Tory majority expelled him. George I made him a Secretary of the royal stables and awarded him with Knighthood. His last play *The Conscious Lovers* was published in 1729. His achievements as an essayist began with 'The Tattler' and flourished in association with Addison as he started contributing to 'The Spectator'.

7.3 PERIODICAL ESSAY

One of the most discussed varieties if English prose is periodical essay. The origin of periodical essay is associated with the establishment of the periodical press in the eighteenth century. A

number of periodicals (journals, magazines etc that appear after a fixed interval of time or period) started appearing. The essay published in these magazines acquired recognition as 'periodical essay'. During this time, the reviews meant to express the author's opinion were considered a part of the newspaper. It implies that the reviews in a newspaper were treated similar to information or news. Defoe's 'Review of The Affairs of France and All Europe' (1704-1712), 'The Tatler' (170-1711), 'The Spectator' (1711-12), and 'The Guardian' (1713) established by Steele, and Addison were the most influential periodicals that contributed to the development of English prose and the periodical essay.

The rise of the periodical essay is attributed to the developed of a wealthy and respectable middle class, the neutral and non-political attitude of the periodicals like 'The Tatler' and 'The Spectator'. The third reason of the popularity of the periodicals and the periodical essay was that they addressed the earlier ignored women readers also. Addison expresses this view in these words, "I never expounded any party with violence, and am resolved to observe exact neutrality between the Whigs and Tories". It brings out the non-partisan nature of the essays that found positive response from the two opposite political groups. The variety of subjects of contemporary interest added to the appeal of the essay for the people.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I:

Choose the correct answer:

i. Richard Steele was brought up by his:

a) parents b) uncle and aunt c) elder brother

ii. *The Lying Lover* is the name of his:

a) second play b) first play c) his friend

iii. He supported :

a) The Whigs b) The Tories c) Neither Whigs nor Tories

iv. The term periodical is used for:

a) Steele's essays only b) Tatler only c) for magazines and journals that appeared after a fixed interval of time

v. Name two important periodicals of Steele's times.

*Richard Steele is one of the most influential pioneers of periodical essay. His journal 'The Tatler' published essays of this kind and he wrote several periodical essays for other journals also. The contribution of Steele can be assessed from the role of the journal he devoted to the publication of these essays. The following information about 'The Tatler' gives useful hints about its role and the type of essays published in it.

7.3.1: THE TATLER

'The Tatler' founded by Richard Steele appeared three times a week. The purpose of 'The Tatler', according to Steele, "is to expose the false art of life, to puff off the disguises of cunning, vanity and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our discourse and our behavior."(Long) Steele published most of his essays in this journal under the pseudonym Isaac

Bickerstaff. When Addison came to know this, he too started contributing his essays to this journal. Steele accepted Addison's advice and suggestions concerning the journal.

There were essays on a various topics in each issue of 'The Tatler'. The essays from different coffee-houses were included in it. The incidents concerning pleasure, entertainment and gallant actions emanated from White's Chocolate House. Will's Coffee House was associated with essays on poetry, and the essays on learning came from another club. Steele's writings which appeared in 'The Tatler' offer glimpse of life at the coffee-houses of those times. It was under the influence of Addison that 'The Tatler' started publishing more discussions on people and books.

Richard Steele stopped the publication of 'The Tatler' on 2 January 1711. Steele and Addison jointly started 'The Spectator' on 1 March 1711. It was published daily. It stopped publishing on 6 December 1712. It was later revived by Addison alone. 'The Spectator' lasted until December 1714. This journal contained 635 essays which included 274 by Addison, 240 by Steele while 121 essays were contributed by other friends.

Check Your Progress II:

Choose the correct answer::

i. The purpose of 'The Tatler' was to

a) propagate simplicity in life and behaviour b. criticize simplicity in life c. appreciate the rich.

ii. Select the correct answer:

Isaac Bictorstaff was: a) the fictitious name of Richard Steele b) the name of Steele's friend c) the name of a journal

iii. Addison and Steele jointly started the journal :

a) The Tatler b) The Guardian c) The Spectator

iv. Choose the correct answer :

a) Steele contributed more essays to 'The Spectator, than Addison b) Addison contributed more essays to 'The Spectator' than Steele c) Defoe contributed more essays to 'The Spectator' than Steele and Addison.

*Steele's essay 'The Trumpet Club' is a satire on the manners and behaviour of the people of the 18th century England. The satire is particularly directed against those who frequented different clubs.

Before a reading of this essay, it will be useful to understand features of a satire. Read the meaning and explanation of the term given below and note down its characteristic features for a study of Steele's essay.

7.4 WHAT IS A SATIRE?

Satire is a form of writing aimed to expose and criticize follies and drawbacks or abuses in individual, and society to bring improvement in them. The way these vices are mocked at or ridiculed, amuses the reader. When an individual is made the subject of satire, the satire is directed against the individual's follies and whims, not against the individual. Here again, the writer of satire criticizes or makes fun of only those drawbacks or inadequacies which can be corrected, for example greed, dishonesty, the habit of telling lies, and other such traits in an individual. But a satire is not welcomed if it ridicules or makes fun of some natural deformities in a person or handicaps like lameness, deafness, stammering etc,

A satire is amusing and pleasing. It is different from a comedy as its purpose is not pleasure or entertainment only. It is aimed to bring improvement in people and societies.

There are writings not deliberately written as satires. In these writings, description of some character or a situation is amusing and it suggests need for improvement that an individual or a society needs. This kind of a satire is considered indirect.

Direct satire is deliberate and addressed to the audience or some character in the writing itself. It is of two types. The speaker's comments and descriptions are aimed to evoke an amusing attitude towards the subject of satire. The second type of the direct satire is aimed to evoke a response of contempt from the readers.

Check Your Progress III

Choose the correct answer:

i. Satire is a kind of writing that:

- a) appreciates good qualities of people
- b) mocks at the drawbacks and vices in individuals and society
- c) presents tragic incidents

ii. Satire is directed against those follies and drawbacks which :

- a) can be corrected b) are incorrigible c) are seen in men only

iii. Satire is :

- a) different from comedy b) is not different from comedy c) is like a tragedy

iv. The purpose of satire is to :

- a) amuse and entertain only b) to evoke a feeling of contempt c) amuse and improve

7.5 ABOUT THE ESSAY: THE TRUMPET CLUB

The essay 'The Trumpet Club' is a satire on the activities and behaviour of the people who visit clubs. They indulge in meaningless chitchat for hours together. Their conversation often focuses on the same issues and there is nothing new or refreshing in it. These people take pride in the little knowledge they have. In this essay, Steele makes fun of his companions whose

conversation is monotonous and boring. He begins the essay with an amusing account of his attitude towards the conversation of his friends. He seems to appreciate their discourse. The way he praises the conversation for making him feel sleepy reveals his dislike for it. He provides interesting details about the club and the activities of the members of this club. It offers an interesting and amusing reading.

7.5.1 TEXT: THE TRUMPET CLUB

"I am much beholden to old age, which has increased my eagerness for conversation in proportion as it has lessened my appetites of hunger and thirst."

After having applied my mind with more than ordinary attention to my studies, it is my usual custom to relax and unbend it in the conversation of such as are rather easy than shining companions. This I find particularly necessary for me before I retire to rest, in order to draw my slumbers upon me by degrees, and fall asleep insensibly. This is the particular use I make of a set of heavy honest men, with whom I have passed many hours with much indolence, though not with great pleasure. Their conversation is a kind of preparative for sleep: It takes the mind down from its abstractions, leads it into the familiar traces of thought, and lulls it into that state of tranquility, which is the condition of a thinking man when he is but half awake. After this, my reader will not be surprised to hear the account which I am about to give of a club of my own contemporaries, among whom I pass two or three hours every evening. This I look upon as taking my first nap before I go to bed. The truth of it is, I should think myself unjust to posterity, as well as to the society at the *Trumpet* of which I am a member, did not I in some part of my writings give an account of the persons among whom I have passed almost a sixth part of my Time for these last forty years. our club consisted originally of fifteen; but partly by the severity of the law in arbitrary times, and partly by the natural effects of old age, we are at present reduced to a third part of that number: In which however we have this consolation, That the best company is said to consist of five persons. I must confess, besides the afore-mentioned benefit which I meet with in the conversation of this select society, I am not the less pleased with the company, in that I find myself the greatest wit among them, and am heard as their oracle in all points of learning and difficulty.

Sir *Jeoffrey Notch*, who is the oldest of the club, has been in possession of the right-hand chair time out of mind, and is the only man among us that has the liberty of stirring the fire. This our foreman is a gentleman of an ancient family, that came to a great estate some years before he had discretion, and run it out in hounds, horses, and cock-fighting; for which reason he looks upon himself as an honest worthy gentleman who has had misfortunes in the world, and calls every thriving man a pitiful upstart.

Major *Matchlock* is the next senior, who served in the last Civil Wars, and has all the battles by heart. He does not think any action in Europe worth talking of since the fight of *Marston-Moor* and every night tells us of his having been knocked off his horse at the Rising of the *London* apprentices [in 1647] for which he is in great esteem amongst us.

Honest old *Dick Reptile* is the third of our society: He is a good-natured indolent man, who speaks little himself, but laughs at our jokes, and brings his young nephew along with him, a youth of eighteen years old, to show him good company, and give him a taste of the world. This young fellow sits generally silent; but whenever he opens his mouth, or laughs at anything that passes, he is constantly told by his uncle after a jocular manner, "Ay, ay, *Jack*, you young men think us fools; but we old men know you are."

The greatest wit of our company, next to me, is a bencher of the neighboring inn, who in his youth frequented the ordinaries about *chairing cross*, and pretends to have been intimate with *Jack Ogle*. He has about ten distichs of *Hudibras* without Book, and never leaves the Club till he has applied them all. If any modern wit be mentioned, or any town frolic spoken of, he shakes his head at the dullness of the present age, and tells us a story of *Jack Ogle*.

For my own Part, I am esteemed among them, because they see I am something respected by others, though at the same time I understand by their behaviour, that I am considered by them as a man of a great deal of learning, but no knowledge of the world; insomuch that the Major sometimes, in the height of his military pride, calls me the philosopher: and Sir *Jeoffrey* no longer ago than last night, upon a dispute what day of the month it was then in *Holland*, pulled his pipe out of his mouth, and cried, "What does the scholar say to it?"

Our club meets precisely at six o' clock in the evening; but I did not come last night till half an hour after seven, by which means I escaped the Battle of *Naseby*, which the Major usually begins at about three quarters after six; I found also, that my good friend the bencher had already spent three of his distichs, and only waiting an opportunity to hear a sermon spoken of, that he might introduce the couplet where *a stick* rhymes to *ecclesiastic*. At my entrance into the room, they were naming a red petticoat and a cloak, by which I found that the bencher had been diverting them with a story of *Jack Ogle*.

I had no sooner taken my seat, but Sir *Jeoffrey*, to show his good will towards me, gave me a pipe of his own tobacco, and stirred up the fire. I look upon it as a point of morality, to be obliged by those who endeavor to oblige me; and therefore in requital for his kindness, and to set the conversation a going, I took the best occasion I could to put him upon telling us the story of old *Gantlett*, which he always does with very particular concern. He traced up his descent on both sides for several generations, describing his diet and manner of life, with his several Battles, and particularly that in which he fell. This *Gantlett* was a game-cock, upon whose head the Knight in his youth had won five hundred pounds, and lost two thousand. this naturally set the Major upon the account of *Edge hill* Fight, and ended in a Duel of *Jack Ogle's*.

Old *Reptile* was extremely attentive to all that was said, though it was the same he had heard every night for these twenty years, and upon all occasions winked upon his nephew to mind what passed.

This many suffice to give the world a taste of our innocent conversation, which we spun out till about ten of the clock, when my maid came with a Lanthorn to light me home. I could not but reflect with myself as I was going out upon the talkative humour of old men, and the little figure which that part of life makes in one who cannot employ this natural propensity in discourses

which would make him venerable. I must own, it makes me very melancholy in company, when I hear a young man begin a story; and have often observed, that one of a quarter of an hour long in a man of five and twenty, gathers circumstances every time he tells it, till it grows into a long *Canterbury Tale* of two hours by that time he is three-score.

The only way of avoiding such a trifling and frivolous old age, is, to lay up in our way to it such stores of knowledge and observation as may make us useful and agreeable in our declining years. The mind of man in a long life will become a magazine of wisdom or folly, and will consequently discharge itself in something impertinent or improving. For which reason, as there is nothing more ridiculous than an old trifling story-teller, so there is nothing more venerable than one who has turned his experience to the entertainment and advantage of mankind.

In short, we who are in the last stage of life, and are apt to indulge ourselves in talk, ought to consider, if what we speak be worth being heard, and endeavor to make our discourse like that of *Nestor*, which *Homer* compares to the flowing of honey for its sweetness.

I am afraid I shall be thought guilty of this excess I am speaking of, when I cannot conclude without observing, that Milton certainly thought of this passage in *Homer*, when in his description of an eloquent spirit, he says, *His Tongue dropped Manna*.

7.5.2 Glossary:

Take ... tranquility	to bring one down from abstract thinking to more practical, down-to-earth preoccupations
Severity of the law	a reference to large gatherings being considered against the law during troublesome times
Before... discretion	referring to a phase in one's life wherein one has no wisdom and is full of rashness and unnecessary valour
Bencher	one who frequents the benches anywhere
Distich	a pair of verse lines
Battle of Naseby	the key battle of the first English Civil War. On 14 June 1645, the main army of King Charles I was defeated by the Parliamentarian New Model Army commanded by Sir Thomas Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell.
Story of old Gantlett	refers to a game cock and cock-fighting which was very popular at the time. As much as 500 guineas were staked on an inter-county match.
Magazine	here, treasure
Nestor	one of the kings of ancient Greece, and one who later was fond of giving advice to other warriors. Homer was very partial to him and describes him as a man of 'sweet words' a 'clear-voiced orator', and whose voice 'flows sweeter than honey'.

7.5.3 SUMMARY

'The Trumpet Club' is an amusing account of the eccentric habits and activities of the people who indulge in meaningless conversation. These people often show off their skill in discussing certain subjects. These people believe that only they have the competence to talk about the incidents or happenings they consider important and significant. The very title of the essay suggests that the club going to be discussed in this essay has members who like to show off and drum their conversational skill. The word trumpet means talking about something publicly in a proud or enthusiastic way. Thus, the very title of the essay indicates the nature of the members of the club to show off their ability in the art of talking too much and that too on trivial subjects.

Richard Steele opens the essay with an amusing note by expressing a sense of gratitude to old age for increasing his interest in conversation and bringing down his hunger for food. In other words, in old age conversation appears more important than food. He tells us about his habit of talking to his companions before going to sleep. He considers it a kind of soothing exercise as the conversation of these people is not intellectual or serious. It is rather sleep-inducing and simple and does not require much effort for its understanding. The subjects they talk about are familiar and already known to him. In a way, their conversation has nothing new in it.

Steele then moves on to talk about the club and its members. He describes each member's interest in a particular subject or incident and the way each one of them talks about it daily. Steele gives details about the club and its members. He says that the club originally had fifteen members but now the number has come down to five. It is due to the consequences of old age i.e. some of them are perhaps dead while others are too old to come and join. Steele expresses his delight for being a member of the club. He visits the club for two reasons: i. It provides him an opportunity to sleep. ii. The other members of the club respect his learning.

In the next part of the essay, Steele gives details about each members of the club including himself. At first, he talks about Sir Jeffrey Notch, the oldest member of the club. He belonged to rich family that owned a huge estate. Before wisdom could dawn on him, he had lost all his wealth in gambling over cock-fights and other such sports. He considers all these things a matter of his honesty. The men flourishing in their career are like pitiful beginners for him. This member of the club always talks about his gambling days and the way he lost his wealth.

The next member Steele describes is Major Matchlock. This man takes pride in talking about the fight of Marston Moor in which he was knocked off his horse. He narrates the incident time and again. He thinks that no other incident is as significant as this battle and the others should talk about, and discuss this fight only. The other members of the club show great respect for the Major Matchlock for his talking about this incident repeatedly.

The third member that the writer introduces to the readers is Dick Reptile. He brings his young nephew with him to introduce to the members of the club. He considers these members a very good company for others. He expects his nephew to learn the tastes of the world from the members of this club. Dick Reptile tells his nephew that the old men consider the young boys foolish as compared to the wise men from the club.

While talking about the bencher, another member of the club, Steele describes him as the only other wise man, except Steele, there in the club. The irony in Steele's description of this man as a greatest wit comes out when he explains the reason of this man's wisdom. He explains that the bencher is considered witty as he has memorized a few verses from the couplets of Hudibras, and likes telling the story of *Jack Ogle* time and again.

The members of the club respect the narrator i.e. Steele, only because they have seen other people doing so. But they do not know why people have respect for him. They consider him a learned man but they think he has no knowledge of the world. Therefore, taking pride in his military pride the Major once called him philosopher, and Sir Jeffrey referred to him as a scholar in a derogatory sense. They did this while disputing what day of the month it was in Holland.

Talking about the activities of the club the writer mentions things they discuss everyday. He tells that the club meets at six in the evening. The previous night, he reached the club half-an-hour after seven, the Major had already talked about the Battle of Naseby as he usually begins talking about it at three quarters after six, at the fixed time. At that time the bencher had already recited three of his verses as he did every evening. It shows the mechanical nature of their daily routine. There was the same discussion about rhyming the couplet with words like 'a stick with ecclesiastic'. It indicates that the bencher had been telling the same story of Jack Ogle in the same way, and at the same time.

One day, Sir Jeffrey offered his seat to the writer. In return to this favour, the author asked this man to tell the story of the old Gantlett that Sir Jeffrey liked to narrate. He started giving an account of his several gambling games, and particularly of the one in which Gantlett, the game cock caused his fall. Jeffrey in his youth had played the game by staking money upon the head of this game-cock. As the Major saw this man telling the story of his gambling match, he felt inspired to give an account of the Edge Hill fight. Thus, each one of these members was eager to talk about his favourite subject. It was a daily practice at the club. In fact, the writer talks about these people to show how the people there always discussed trivial matters and took pride in doing so.

In the end, the author offers advice to all of us. We should have a lot of knowledge and information so that our conversation is liked by others. If we want our discourse appreciated it has to be full of wisdom like that of Nestor, the wise man of ancient Greece praised by Homer.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS IV:

Fill in the blanks choosing the correct answer:

- i. Steele likes the conversation of the members of the club because :
 - a) it makes him feel sleepy
 - b) entertains him
 - c) he learns many new things from their conversation.
- ii. The number of the members of the club has :
 - a) Increased
 - b) come down
 - c) remained the same

- iii. The members of the club meet:
 - a) every week b) every month c) every evening.
- iv. Old *Reptile* had heard the same conversation for:
 - a) five years b) ten years c) twenty years

7.6 EXERCISES

*Dear students, we have talked about features of satire. From a reading of the essay , you must have noticed that this essay has a number elements of satire. You will be able to analyze the essay as a satire by doing the following exercises.

.1 Exercise I Solved: Read the extract given below and trace the elements of satire in it:

“Their conversation is a kind of preparative for sleep: It takes the mind down from its abstractions, leads it into the familiar traces of thought, and lulls it into that state of tranquility, which is the condition of a thinking man when he is but half awake.”

Explanation: In this extract, Richard Steele talks about the importance he gives to the conversation of the members of the club. He exposes the futility and insignificance of their conversation in a humorous way. He values the conversation not for adding to his knowledge, pleasure or wisdom. It rather makes him feel sleepy. It shows that the conversation has no utility. The writer has described the weaknesses of the members of the club in an amusing way. The deliberate attempt to make fun of their behaviour makes the satire direct. However, the satire here is acceptable and welcome as it is directed against the drawbacks which can be corrected. It is aimed to suggest an improvement in the conversation of the members of the club.

Exercises for Practice:

Exercise 2: “He does not think any action in Europe worth talking of since the fight of *Marston-Moor* and every night tells us of his having been knocked off his horse at the rising of the *London Apprentices* [in 1647] for which he is in great Esteem amongst us.”

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Exercise 3: Our club meets precisely at six o’ clock in the evening; but I did not come last night till half an hour after seven, by which means I escaped the Battle of *Naseby*, which the Major usually begins at about three quarters after six;.....”

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7.7 STYLE

Some of the significant aspects of Richard Steele’s style are given below:

Use of imagination and creativity: Steele’s depiction of characters that come alive before the reader’s eyes is his special feat. He selects, imagines and portrays to make these imaginary characters come alive before us. With few strokes of the pen he has successfully presented a variety of men with all their eccentricities and preferences.

Originality: Steele’s ideas and thoughts expressed in the essay are new and fresh. It makes his essay interesting. He talks about the boredom caused by repetition of the same subject in conversation. His treatment of the issue is original. This element of originality of ideas and the way he presents them is a unique feature of Steele’s essays.

Tone: He uses a friendly and natural tone. It develops an association between the reader and the author.

Simple Language: Steele does not use bombastic or affected language. His expressions are simple. He uses ordinary language that makes his writing highly communicative.

Indirect way of Expression: Instead of saying disagreeable things about the members of the club and their conversation in a straight forward way, he uses indirect expressions bordering on irony. For example, he calls his companions, ‘easy than shining’, instead of saying that they lacked wit and were very ordinary people.

Use of Contrast: It is another device used by the writer to have an amusing effect. For example, he refers to the bencher as the greatest wit, but the explanation of his greatness exposes his weakness that highlights the contrast between what Steel says and what he means. It makes the description ironical.

Note: Students please refer to Unit 6 to see how the extracts can be explained and do the following exercises:

7.8 EXERCISES

Exercise: Explain the following extract with reference to context:

“Their conversation is a kind of preparative for sleep: It takes the mind down from its abstractions, leads it into the familiar traces of thought, and lulls it into that state of tranquility, which is the condition of a thinking man when he is but half awake.”

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Exercise: Explain the following extract with reference to context:

.....”I am something respected by others, though at the same time I understand by their behaviour, that I am considered by them as a man of a great deal of learning, but no knowledge

of the world; in so much that the Major sometimes, in the height of his military pride, calls me the philosopher.....”

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Exercise: Explain the following extract with reference to context:

‘This our foreman is a gentleman of an ancient family, that came to a great estate some years before he had discretion, and run it out in hounds, horses, and cock-fighting; for which reason he looks upon himself as an honest worthy gentleman who has had misfortunes in the world,.....’

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7.9 LET US SUM UP

- * Richard Steele is a famous essayist of the eighteenth century.
- * He established a journal titled ‘The Tatler’ and worked in association with Addison.
- * The essay ‘The Trumpet Club’ is a satire on the behaviour and manners of the people who take pride in showing off their art of conversation and keep on talking on the same issues repeatedly.
- * Steele describes members of the club one by one and gives amusing details about them to explain his point.
- * He uses irony, amusing details and develops the essay like a story.
- * The essay conveys a useful message in a very interesting way.

7.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- i. What are the reasons of Steele’s interest in the conversation of the members of the club?
- ii. What does the wrier say about Major Matchlock?
- iii. Give a brief description of the club.
- iv. What kind of a person is the narrator or the writer?
- v. Describe any two members of the club.
- vi. Write a note on humour in the essay.

7.11 FURTHER READINGS

*. George Philip Krapp, *The Rise English Literary Prose*, Oxford University Press.

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

*Meyers, Carol, "Advisors of the age of reason: The periodical essays of Steele, Addison, Johnson, and Goldsmith" (1962). *Honors Projects*. 24.

ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES:

Check your progress I. Answers : i. b ii. a. iii. a iv. c. v. The Tatler , The Spectator

Check Your Progress II. Answers: i. a) ii. a iii. c iv. b

Check Your Progress III. Answers: i. b. ii. a. iii. a. iv. c.

Check Your Progress IV. Answers: i. a. ii. b. iii. c. iv. c.

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)

Semester-II

COURSE: READING PROSE

Unit-8: OLIVER GOLDSMITH: THE MAN IN BLACK

STRUCTURE

8.0 Objectives

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Biographical Note

8.2.1 Literary Background

8.2.2 Goldsmith and the Character Essay

8.3 About the Essay: The Man in Black

8.3.1 Text: The Man in Black

8.3.2 Glossary

8.3.3 Summary: The Man in Black

8.4 Satire

8.5 Structure and Style

8.5.1 Exercises on Structure and Style

8.6 Use of Prose

8.6.1. Exercise on Identifying variety of prose

8.7. Explanation with reference to context

8.8 Let us sum up

8.9 Unit End Questions

8.10 Further Readings

8.0 OBJECTIVES

The lesson is aimed to enable you to:

- Explain significant features of Goldsmith's essay 'The Man in Black'
- Describe Character essay
- Examine the essay 'The Man in Black' as a satire
- Answer analytical questions on the essay.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The unit starts with details about Goldsmith's life and his career as a writer. In his struggling days he used to write ballads for beggars, and other insignificant writings like pamphlets and illustrations for slogans and cartoons. He got recognition as a writer only after he was praised by Dr. Johnson. In the next part, you will be introduced to the character-essay, followed by the text of the essay along with the vocabulary for a better understanding of the essay. We have also explained the main ideas in the 'summary' for your convenience. After this, you will find a brief discussion on the essay as a satire. You can use the points about the style while analyzing the essay.

The explanation about the varieties of prose given in this part will help you in identifying the kind or kinds of prose used in the essay. The exercises for explanation of some extracts follow the description of different aspects of the essays mentioned above.

The answers to the 'Check Your Progress' activities have been given at the end. You are advised to do the exercises on your own and check the correct answers later.

8.2 BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Goldsmith is famous for his contribution to periodical essay. He wrote essays for 'The Monthly Review' and the 'Bee'. His noteworthy work 'The Citizen of the World' started appearing in 'The Public Ledger' after the close of the journal the 'Bee'. Goldsmith's 'The Citizen of the World' is considered one of the finest collections of essays. It brought him close to the literary position held by Addison, the most popular essayist of the times. His essays are original in thought. One finds minute observation of human nature in Goldsmith's essays. His 'The Citizen of the World' is alleged to be written from the point of view of a Chinese traveler Altangi. Goldsmith's literary achievement is usually related to 'The Traveler' 1764, 'The Deserted Village' (1770 'The Good Natured Man', 'She Stoops to Conquer' and 'The Vicar of Wakefield'. 'The Traveler' is a long poem that offers reflections on the social life of a number of countries, and the destruction of nature. The observations presented here are based on Goldsmith's own views and experiences. His 'The Deserted Village' was appreciated more by audiences than literary critics. 'The Good Natured Man', and 'She Stoops to Conquer', are the two comedies. 'The Vicar of Wakefield' is Goldsmith's only novel. It focuses on the homely life with romantic interest.

Goldsmith was born in Ireland, and belonged to a poor family. Glimpses of father's character are seen in Goldsmith's creation Dr. Primrose in 'The Vicar of Wakefield'. He went to Trinity College Dublin and earned for his upkeep by writing ballads for street singers. He left college for some time and came back to complete his degree in 1749. He was a failure as a teacher. He tried his hand at learning law, and studied medicine but earned some success as singer of songs only. Unfortunately, he fell ill when he was in his forty seventh year and died of fever in 1774. Goldsmith found acceptance and respect in the world of letters when Dr. Johnson praised him in

his Latin epitaph on Goldsmith's death, "Let not his frailties, be remembered; he was a very great man!" "Quoted by J. Long"

Check Your Progress: I

i. Name two literary journals in which Goldsmith's essays were published:

ii. Choose the correct answer:

Oliver Goldsmith was considered an important writer like: a) Smith b) Addison c) Steele

iii. Fill in the blank with the correct answer:

'The Good Natured Man' is a (comedy, tragedy, long essay)

iv. Select the correct answer:

Goldsmith was a successful teacher (True \ False)

v. Choose the correct answer:

Goldsmith died in the year:

a) 1774 b) 1749 c) 1770

vi. Which of the following is the name of his novel:

a) 'The Vicar of the Wakefield' b) The Dawn c) The Citizen of the World

8.2.1 LITERARY BACKGROUND

The eighteenth century was the age of periodical essay, a genre which began, grew to maturity, and then declined within this era. Daniel Defoe's Review was among the first to appear on the London scene (1704-1713); it was followed by perhaps the best-known and most successful periodicals in English literature, Richard Steele's 'The Tatler' (1709-1711) and Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's 'The Spectator' (1711-1712). There were many other less successful essay series which followed, but it was not until the latter half of the century that the essay became a prominent genre which was widely read by the general public.

In the early eighteenth century periodical essay dominated the literary prose. The chief writers and propagators of essay were Defoe, Richard Steele and Addison. In the eighteenth century, the essay was gradually absorbed into the newspapers of the day as a "feature". The only periodical that appeared regularly was Dr. Samuel Johnson's 'The Rambler' which ran into 208 numbers from 1750 to 1752. The essay mostly existed in newspapers of the day. The struggling writers found it easy to write for newspapers as the writers did not have to take the risk of borrowing money to publish their collections or wait for the periodicals to appear. Moreover, they did not have to worry about meeting the deadlines as they wrote independently. There were numerous newspapers in which the essays irregularly appeared as 'features'.

After 1750 regular essay series of a literary nature was published by different newspapers. For example, 'Daily Advertiser' printed Sir John Hill's 'Inspector' (1751- 1753); the 'Universal

Chronicle' of John Payne for two years published the 104 numbers of Johnson's 'Idler'. Newspapers generally employed an essayist like other contributors. The contributors to the eighteenth-century newspapers were hack writers associated with the metaphorical Grub Street to indicate the low standard of their writings. This street actually existed in the seventeenth century near Moorfields. The term "Grub Street" thus came to be associated with the insignificant or hack writers. Most of them used to write for pamphlets consisting of a single page with a doggerel verse or illustrated by a cartoon.

Against this background, Goldsmith came to London in 1756 and began writing. The circumstances at that time provided an opportunity to struggling writers to survive by hack writing. Oliver Goldsmith used this kind of writing to earn money from 1757-1762. Another trend that prevailed in those times was of mania for "Chinoiserie". The reports from China by Christian missionaries depicted a glorious picture of artistic culture of the Chinese. Goldsmith's use of the imaginary character of Altangi in his essays is related to this trend.

8.2.2 GOLDSMITH AND THE CHARACTER ESSAY

Character essay captures the essentials of a character in words. Addison and Steele used this form of writing by successfully creating Sir Roger de Coverley and Will Wimble in their writings. Samuel Johnson's name is associated with Dick Minim and Mr. Sober. In his 'The Citizen of the World' Goldsmith also develops his essays around some character.

A character essay is used to delineate several of the weaknesses in a single person to satirize a wide range of human frailties. In this device the writer exaggerates or caricatures a character's faults while not directly mentioning any specific person or class of people. In the essays of Addison and Steele, we see that instead of directly attacking the Tory party, they created deformed or caricatured character of Sir Roger de Coverley to criticize Tory traits. While making fun of this character, they were actually mocking at the Tory party. The depiction of this character was so effective and artistic that it fascinated their readers. Goldsmith too realized these advantages of character essay when he created his cast of characters in 'The Citizen Papers. His creation of the character of the man in black is an example of this type of essay.

Check Your Progress II:

Select the correct answer to fill in the blanks:

- i. Roger de Coverley was a) an imaginary character created by Addison and Steele b) was a king c) an imaginary character created by Goldsmith.

- ii. The writers associated with were considered insignificant. a) periodicals b) the Grub Street c) Daily advertiser

- iii. Before Goldsmith, the essayists like wrote character essay. a) James and Steele b) Addison and Steele c) Mr. Sober

iv. Essays appeared in newspapers as in the late eighteenth century. a) reports, b) 'feature' c) news

8.3 ABOUT THE ESSAY: THE MAN IN BLACK

The narrator in this essay is assumed to be a Chinese traveler who explains his experience of meeting the man in black. This man was an eccentric like other people of his country. He expresses his dislike for begging and showing kindness to others. He wants the government to put all the beggars into prison. He criticizes the beggars as impostors and criminals. But he helps all the beggars he meets on his way. The narrator describes three incidents to show how the man in black behaved in an eccentric way. He talks ill of beggars but actually he is very kind and sympathetic towards them. He shouts at the sailor and calls him an impostor. But the very next moment he gets ready to help this beggar. In the last incident, he is left with no money to help the poor woman. He hands over the matches bought from the sailor to help the woman. Earlier he tried to hide his benevolent nature from the narrator, but he fails to do so in the last incident.

8.3.1 Text: THE MAN IN BLACK

Though fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few. The Man in Black, whom I have often mentioned, is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinctured with some strange inconsistencies; and he may be justly termed a humorist in a nation of humorists. Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence; though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love. I have known him profess himself a man-hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion; and, while his looks were softened into pity, I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill-nature. Some affect humanity and tenderness, others boast of having such dispositions from nature; but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings, as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.

In one of our late excursions into the country, happening to discourse upon the provision that was made for the poor in England, he seemed amazed how any of his countrymen could be so foolishly weak as to relieve occasional objects of charity, when the laws had made such ample provision for their support. "In every parish-house," says he, "the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on; they want no more, I desire no more myself; yet still they seem discontented. I am surprised at the inactivity of our magistrates in not taking up such vagrants, who are only a weight upon the industrious; I am surprised that the people are found to relieve them, when they must be at the same time sensible that it in some measure encourages idleness, extravagance, and imposture. Were I to advise any man for whom I had the least regard, I would caution him by all means not to be imposed upon by their false pretences; let me assure you, sir, they are imposters, every one of them; and rather merit a prison than relief."

He was proceeding in this strain earnestly, to dissuade me from an imprudence of which I am seldom guilty, when an old man, who still had about him the remnants of tattered finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common beggar, but forced into the shameful profession to support a dying wife and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, his story had not the least influence upon me; but it was quite otherwise with the Man in Black: I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive, that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.

As he had fancied himself quite unperceived, he continued, as we proceeded, to rail against beggars with as much animosity as before: he threw in some episodes on his own amazing prudence and economy, with his profound skill in discovering impostors; he explained the manner in which he would deal with beggars, were he a magistrate; hinted at enlarging some of the prisons for their reception, and told two stories of ladies that were robbed by beggar men. He was beginning a third to the same purpose, when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity, and blessing our limbs. I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend looking wistfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

He now, therefore, assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, demanding in what engagement he was thus disabled and rendered unfit for service. The sailor replied in a tone as angrily as he, that he had been an officer on board a private ship of war, and that he had lost his leg abroad, in defense of those who did nothing at home. At this reply, all my friend's importance vanished in a moment; he had not a single question more to ask: he now only studied what method he should take to relieve him unobserved. He had, however, no easy part to act, as he was obliged to preserve the appearance of ill-nature before me, and yet relieve himself by relieving the sailor. Casting, therefore, a furious look upon some bundles of chips which the fellow carried in a string at his back, my friend demanded how he sold his matches; but, not waiting for a reply, desired in a surly tone to have a shilling's worth. The sailor seemed at first surprised at his demand, but soon recollected himself, and presenting his whole bundle, "Here master," says he, "take all my cargo, and a blessing into the bargain."

It is impossible to describe with what an air of triumph my friend marched off with his new purchase: he assured me that he was firmly of opinion that those fellows must have stolen their goods who could thus afford to sell them for half value. He informed me of several different uses to which those chips might be applied; he expatiated largely upon the savings that would result from lighting candles with a match, instead of thrusting them into the fire. He averred, that he would as soon have parted with a tooth as his money to those vagabonds, unless for some valuable consideration. I cannot tell how long this panegyric upon frugality and matches might

have continued, had not his attention been called off by another object more distressful than either of the former. A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch, who in the deepest distress still aimed at good-humour, was an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding: his vivacity and his discourse were instantly interrupted; upon this occasion his very dissimulation had forsaken him.

Even in my presence he immediately applied his hands to his pockets, in order to relieve her; but guess his confusion, when he found he had already given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's visage was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to search for some time, but to no purpose, till, at length recollecting himself, with a face of ineffable good-nature, as he had no money, he put into her hands his shilling's worth of matches.

8.3.2 GLOSSARY:

Tinctured ... inconsistencies	coloured with some variations in belief or thought that do not make sense
Humourist... humourits	a person typical of his nation where people are used to cracking jokes, especially in writing
generous... profusion	showing the quality of excessive benevolence
prodigy... prudence	a perfect example of miserliness, thrift and wisdom
replete... maxims	full of very unappealing and self-centered sayings and theories
seemed... benevolence	appeared to be averse to showing off his naturally charitable nature
vagrant	homeless wanderer
prepossessed	influenced in favour of
harangue	a long speech blaming someone for something
expatiate	to speak or write a lot in detail about
aver	to state forcefully
panegyric	a speech or piece of writing praising someone highly
ineffable	too wonderful to be described
actuate	to cause to act
scrivener	one whose work is to write out contracts or official documents
sponge	to eat out of like a parasite, especially with regard to using someone else's money

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS III:

Answer the following questions by selecting the correct option:

i. The assumed narrator in the essay is :

a) Goldsmith b) Altangi c) the man in black

ii. The man in black is

a) really kind and generous to the poor b) appears kind and generous c) kind to Altangi only

iii. The man in black says that the poor :

a) should be helped b) should be put into prison c) should be killed

iv. The man in black bought the matches from the sailor because :

a) the matches were cheap b) they looked beautiful c) he wanted to help the sailor

8.3.3 SUMMARY

‘The Man in Black’ is an extract from ‘The Citizen of the World’. It is believed that Goldsmith describes and comments on the English people, and the English culture through an imagined Chinese traveller named Altangi visiting England. Through this character, the writer satirizes the whims and eccentricities of the English society. ‘The Man in Black’ develops like a story. The narrator tells what happens when the man in black meets poor beggars.

In the beginning, the narrator Altangi admits that he has great respect for the man in black. Of course this man looks eccentric like other people of his country. There are inconsistencies in this man. He pretends to be miserly and prudent, but he is generous and kind at heart. He speaks like a selfish person despite his sympathy and compassion for others. Altangi says that he has seen people boasting of their kind heartedness. There are people who pretend generosity. Only this man in black is the one who always tries to hide his feelings of tenderness for others. This man fails to maintain his false show of harshness. His attempts to hide his natural goodness fail when his false show of harshness is revealed the moment he is a bit careless in hiding his real feelings.

The traveler explains the disparity in the behaviour of the man in black. He tells us about one of his leisurely walks in the countryside in the company of the man. During one of these wanderings they started discussing poverty in England, and the arrangements made by the government of England for the poor people’s help. The man in black calls the poor people lazy hypocrites. He explained to the narrator that the poor already got help in terms of food and clothes and did not need anything more. He was surprised that the law enforcing authorities were not checking those parasites living on other people’s help. These beggars were a burden on the hard working people. The money given to the idlers encourages them to shirk work. It makes them spendthrifts. The Man in Black would advise others not to be influenced by the false show of poverty of the idle people who received help from others and the government. He was so annoyed that he expressed his desire to send all the poor beggars to prison.

When the man in black was expressing his views against charity and trying to tell his companion that helping the poor was something unwise, a poor old man came there. The old man requested the narrator and his companion for help. This old man explained that he was not a professional

beggar. He had to beg to support his dying wife and five starving children. The story of the old man had no effect on the narrator. Altangi noticed that the man who was expressing his dislike for beggars and talking against helping them had a keen desire to help this old beggar: "I could easily perceive, that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children". But he did not want that his companion Altangi should know this. He was heisting in giving money to the beggar. The narrator noticed this and pretended to look aside. It provided a chance to the man to give money to the old man. With a false show of anger, he tells the beggar to go and work for his livelihood instead of troubling passengers.

He thought that the disparity in his behaviour was not noticed by the narrator. He continues to berate beggars and claim that he was an expert in exposing impostors. He even told two stories of women who were robbed by beggars. The man in black was going to narrate another story when a sailor with wooden leg approaches them for help. The narrator was ready to ignore this beggar but the man in black asked the narrator to stop. He wanted to show his expertise in exposing impostors. He questions the sailor about the reason of his disability and being unfit for service. At this, the sailor angrily replies that he worked as an officer at a private ship and had lost his leg in a war defending those who did nothing at home. On hearing this, the man in black had no more questions for the sailor. He now wanted to find the way to help him without being noticed by the narrator. It was not something easy for him as he had to appear harsh while he helped the sailor unobserved. He asked the sailor about the chips that he carried and before he could tell the price, the man in black bought a shilling's worth of chips to help the sailor. The sailor was surprised at his behaviour. He blessed this man and told him that he could have the whole bundle. The man in black pretends that he had bought the chips very cheap.

He expressed dislike for helping such people. He said that the sailor must have stolen the chips that he sold them very cheap. This man in black was talking about the uses of chips when another beggar appeared. This beggar looked more miserable than the earlier ones. It was a woman in her worn out rags. She tried to sing a ballad for begging. Her voice was sad. She seemed to be crying rather than singing. The man in black could not bear the miserable plight of the woman. He started searching his pockets for money without bothering about the presence of Altangi. When he found no money, he looked unhappy than the beggar woman for not being able to help her. Suddenly, he is reminded of the bundle of chips he had bought from the sailor. He thrusts this bundle into the hands of the woman to help her and moves on.

8.4 SATIRE

A satire, we know (as discussed in unit 7) is an amusing writing directed against some follies or drawbacks in individuals or a society. The purpose of a satire is to amuse the reader and suggest improvement in the person or the society that forms the subject of the satire. We also discussed how a direct and an indirect satire functions. While discussing the essay, 'The Man in Black' as a satire we can use all the points discussed about a satire there.

In this essay, Goldsmith's satire is directed against the people who make attempts to appear what they are not. Man in Black is a character essay, as we have already discussed. Goldsmith

uses the character created in this essay for the purpose of the satire. . But Goldsmith draws two extremely opposite characters; the man in black , and Altangi. The man in black is guided by his emotions whereas Altangi acts according to his intellect and reason. The presentation of these two characters simultaneously, broadens the range of the satire.

On the one hand, it satirizes the man in black for being what he is not. He tries to hide his feelings of benevolence and tries helps the beggars even beyond his means. He says one thing but does something else. He goes to the extreme in showing kindness and generosity. Altangi condemns and satirizes this behaviour throughout the essay. He is mocked at for trying to become what he is not.

Seen from a different point of view, the essay can be considered a satire on the attitude and behaviour that Altangi represents. The man in black is not accepted in the world which lacks compassion, sympathy, and kindness for others. These habits in the man in black are criticized by Altangi. It suggests that the world is such that the man in black must shun his compassionate nature to find acceptance. Apart from this, the man in black is mocked at for not making a show of his generosity.

As a character-essay, ‘The Man in Black’, describes two characters to satirize two extreme positions in life. It implies that the essay asks us to follow the golden path. It suggests that one should neither be too emotional like the man in black, nor should one make fun of those who do not want to make a show of their benevolence and want to help others.

8.5 STRUCTURE and STYLE

Goldsmith develops this essay like a story. The narrator assumed to be Altangi tells us a story about the man in black. He narrates different incidents. Each story involves a twist. It begins with the man in black lashing out at the beggars and begging but ends in his helping the beggar.

The speaker in this essay narrates different incidents in a sequence. It gives this essay the structure of a story in which incidents and happenings are carefully arranged to organize the narrative.

The treatment of the details in the essay is amusing and humorous. The element of contrast in the situation and disparity in the behaviour of the man in black are the main source of amusement in the essay.

Irony in the behaviour of the man in black is observed in the whole essay. The man speaks against the beggars. He criticizes these people as impostors and a burden on the hard working people. On the other hand he is always in search of an opportunity to help them.

8.5.1. EXERCISES ON STRUCTURE AND STYLE

Exercise 1: In the essay, the incident related to the sailor is given before the incident of the beggar woman. Do you think this arrangement of the incidents can be disturbed? Why?

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EXERCISE 2: How does the situation in case of the incident related to the sailor end in a sudden twist?

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8.6. USE OF PROSE

To identify the kind of prose used in this essay, you can use the information about the varieties of prose given below:

i. NARRATIVE PROSE:

This variety of prose is used to describe incidents and actions in words. These actions and happenings can be actual or imagined. Narratives have the ability to recreate the happenings in the mind of the reader. The description in narrative form carries a sense of the time in its sequence. In other words, it indicates what happens when i.e. it helps in arranging the happenings in a time sequence.

ii. DESCRIPTIVE PROSE: It is a variety of prose that provides word pictures of objects and people. This type of writing presents things as they appear to be. The reader can imagine the way different things as they appeared to the writer. Descriptive prose is used in fictional, and non-fictional writings. In fictional writings these descriptions are often used to develop a setting or circumstances for the incidents and happenings. Non-fictional descriptions help the readers create an image of the things, objects and people using the details given by the writer.

EXPOSITORY PROSE:

This kind of writing is aimed to examine an idea or a subject and explain it in a clear manner to the reader. It requires evidence, arguments, facts and explanations etc. to make the idea understandable and logically acceptable to the reader. It is often informative and full of new ideas. The writer of an expository work is to provide the smallest details that help understand the theme or the idea taken up for discussion. An expository work is more effective if the writer presents the ideas with the assumption that the reader does not know much about the subject. It will urge the writer to make things simple and lucid for the reader. Expository writing explains and describes a particular subject in detail. Expository writings seem similar to descriptive ones but the expository works of prose require greater skill in logically arranging the arguments. You can have a look at the following passage to identify different features of expository writing. It will help you learn how to write and organize arguments in an exposition.

8.6.1. EXERCISE ON IDENTIFYING VARIETY OF PROSE

EXERCISE: Two extracts from the essay are given below. Identify and explain the predominant variety of prose used in the following:

I. The Man in Black, whom I have often mentioned, is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinctured with some strange inconsistencies; and he may be justly termed a humorist in a nation of humorists. Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence;

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2. He now, therefore, assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, demanding in what engagement he was thus disabled and rendered unfit for service. The sailor replied in a tone as angrily as he, that he had been an officer on board a private ship of war, and that he had lost his leg abroad, in defense of those who did nothing at home

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8.7. EXERCISES ON EXPLANATION WITH REFERENE TO CONTEXT

Exercise 1. Explain the following extract with reference to context :

He takes as much pains to hide his feelings, as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.

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EXERCISE 2: Explain the following extract with reference to context :

He was beginning a third to the same purpose, when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity, and blessing our limbs. I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend looking wistfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

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8.8 LET'S SUM UP

- i. Goldsmith came to London when the struggling writers earned their bread by writing pamphlets and other insignificant works.
- ii. Newspapers published essays as 'features' and these features did not appear regularly or at fixed intervals.
- iii. Numerous newspapers employed essay writers.
- iv. Goldsmith wrote character-essays in his collection of essays 'The Citizen of the World'.
- vi. An assumed Chinese traveller named Altangi is created in his character essays.
- v. The man in black describes the disparity in the behaviour of this character.
- vi. The essay narrates the incidents in which the man in black helps beggars despite showing his dislike for them.
- vii. He tries to hide his kind nature but it gets revealed in the end.
- viii. The essay develops like a story with well defined arrangement of incidents.
- ix. The predominant varieties of prose used in this essay are descriptive, and narrative.

8.9 UNIT END QUESTIONS:

- i. Summarize the view of the man in black about beggars.
- ii. How did the man in black help the handicapped sailor?
- iii. Describe the man in black on the basis of the information given by the narrator.
- iv. Narrate in your own words the incidents described in this essay.
- v. Bring out the humorous situations given in the essay.

8.10 FURTHER READINGS:

Meyers, Carol, "Advisors of the age of reason: The periodical essays of Steele, Addison, Johnson, and Goldsmith" (1962). *Honors Projects*. 24.

George Philip Krapp, *The Rise English Literary Prose*, Oxford University Press.

ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS ACTIVITY:

Check Your Progress I:

- i. Monthly Review, Bee ii. b iii. comely iv. false v. a vi. A

Check Your Progress II:

- i. a ii. b iii. b iv. b

Check Your Progress III:

- i. b ii. a iii. b iv. c

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)

Semester-II

COURSE: READING PROSE

UNIT-9: CHARLES LAMB: DREAM CHILDREN

STRUCTURE

9.0 Objectives

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Biographical Note

9.3. About the Essay; Dream Children

9.4 Text of the Essay: Dream Children

9.5 Glossary

9.6 Summary: Dream Children

9.7 Elements of a Story /fiction

9.8 Style

9.9 Analyzing extracts from the essay

9.10. Let us sum up

9.11 Unit end questions

9.12. Further Readings

9.0 OBJECTIVES:

After reading this lesson, students will be able to :

- i. Explain the essay ‘ Dream Children’
- ii. Trace fictional elements in the essay.
- iii. Describe the style used in the essay
- iv. Analyze the essay and answer questions related to the essay.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The unit on Charles Lamb’s ‘Dream Children’ begins with details about his life and works. He had a miserable childhood, poverty stricken young age, and a long unsuccessful career as a writer. We have given details about the hardships he faced in life and the way he gives

expression to his experiences in his essays. After these details, the sections about the essay, the text of the essay and its summary give you a fair view of the ideas presented in ‘Dream Children’. We have also listed the aspects of the essay that tend to make it fictional in nature. The discussion on Lamb’s style will help you in explaining some salient features of Lamb’s art of essay-writing.

The exercises for the explanation of extracts from the essay will give you an opportunity to put the ideas you have learnt about the essay into practice. You will find the unit end questions useful in marking the outcome of your learning.

9.2 BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Charles Lamb, born on 10th February 1775 was the youngest son of John Lamb. He attended Christ’s Hospital, a free boarding school meant for the education of poor children. Samuel Taylor was his schoolmate. In 1789, he left school and started working as a clerk in the East India Company. He continued working there for more than three decades.

Charles had to look after his insane sister Mary Lamb who stabbed their mother to death in 1796. In 1799, their father died, and Mary Lamb started living with Charles Lamb for the rest of her life. He also spent a few weeks in mental asylum in 1795. His life was full of miseries. In 1796, Lamb started his literary career with *Poems on Various Subjects*. Lamb published *A Tale of Rosamund Gray*, in 1798. He started contributing short articles to newspapers in London by 1901. He published a blank verse play *John Woodville* in 1802. In December 1806, Lamb’s two-act circus play, *Mr. H.*, met great admiration at the theatre.

Charles and Mary together published a collection *Tales from Shakespeare* in 1807. It was a prose adaptation of Shakespeare’s plays. Encouraged by its success, he published a children’s version of Homer’s *Odyssey* and *The Adventures of Ulysses* in 1808. Another collection in collaboration with Mary was published in 1809 titled *Mrs. Leicester’s School*, and *Poetry for Children*. In 1881, he published “The Tragedies of Shakespeare,” and “On the Genius and Character of Hogarth” in the journal of Leigh Hunt. Some his friends included the literary writers like William Wordsworth, Coleridge, William Hazlitt, Robert Southey, and Hunt.

He earned fame as an essayist under the pseudonym Elia from 1820 to 1825. These essays were published in London Magazine. These essays, like his letters, reveal his humorist personality. Mary and Lamb adopted an orphan girl Emma Isola in 1823, and in 1824 his ill health forced him to retire from his job as a clerk. After five weeks of Coleridge’s death, Lamb also died on 27th December 1834.

A special feature of Lamb’s essays is that his biography can be reconstructed by patching different essays together and eliminating the fiction mixed with true incidents. The details about his life make these essays personal and informal. Despite being informal and autobiographical, his essays earned great popularity among the readers. One important reason of their popularity is their universal appeal. They have many things common with the experiences of others.

Check Your Progress I:

i. Choose the correct statements about Charles Lamb:

a) Lamb suffered mental illness b) Lamb married twice c) Lamb wanted to marry an actress.

ii. Fill in the blank with the correct option:

He used the name instead of his real name for the essays he contributed to a journal.

a) Lamb b) Elia c) Gray

iii. Choose the correct answer:

Lamb's autobiographical essays:

a) have nothing common with people's experiences in general b) are about other people's experiences only c. have many experiences common with others.

iv. Choose the correct answer :

'Tales from Shakespeare', was published in the year: a) 1807 b) 1732) c) 1823

9.3 ABOUT THE ESSAY

"Dream Children", is one of Lamb's Elia essays published in the London Magazine. It focuses on the author's telling a story about his grandmother to his imaginary children. This essay has several interesting and amusing details and descriptions that make it interesting. His description of the grandmother, the large house in which she lived, and the details about the garden are wonderful. The account of his experiences with his brother John L adds to the amusement of the reader. The reactions of the children, the mention of the incidents narrated in the ballad, and his thoughts about the ghosts of two infants add the element of fantasy and surprise. The disappearance of the children at the end of the essay brings a sudden twist. The conversational style and vivid descriptions of different scenes add to the charm of this essay.

9.4 TEXT OF THE ESSAY: DREAM CHILDREN

Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when they were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great uncle, or agrandanie, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great- grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived), which had been the scene — so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country — of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreast; till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put on one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say how religious and how good

their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it, too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up and looked as awkward as if someone were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C's tawdry gilt drawing room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "That would be foolish indeed." And then I told how when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor and some of the gentry, too, of the neighborhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good, indeed, that she knew all the Psalter by heart; aye, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told her what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was: and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer, — here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till upon my looking grave, it desisted, — the best dancer, I was saying, in the country, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came and bowed her down with pain: but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she used to sleep by herself in alone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said, "Those innocents would do her no harm;" and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she, — and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Caesars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out,- — sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me — and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then — and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at, — or in lying upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me, — or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too long with oranges and the limes

in that grateful warmth, or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent frisking: I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flowers of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be "Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren " said to love their uncle John L , because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the country in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out, — and yet he loved the old great house and gardens, too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries, — and how their uncle grew up to a man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great- grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame- footed boy — for he was a good bit older than me — many a mile when I could not walk for pain; — and how in after-life he became lame-footed, too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not yet been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is between life and death, as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarreling with him (for we quarreled some- times), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when they took off his limb. Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning they had on was not for Uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how, for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W---n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant to maidens, — when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are

we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name" — and immediately awakening, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side, — but John L, (or James Eli) was gone forever.

9.5 GLOSSARY

Granddame	archaic term for grandmother
Norfolk	a county on the eastern coast of England
Children of the Wood	an ancient ballad which tells the story of two children who suffer various misfortunes before getting lost in the woods .
Robin Redbreasts	in the same ballad, the bird Robin Redbreasts finds the children and covers them with leaves providing them with a pious and decent burial .
Upbraid	scold; to find fault with someone or something
Abbey	buildings occupied by a religious community
Tawdry	gaudy ; that which is bright and flashy yet of poor quality
Gilt	covered in a fine layer of gold
Concourse	a large number of people
Gentry	the upper class; people of high social standing
Psalmtery	here, referring to Psalms, sacred songs according to Christian or Jewish worship
Esteemed	here , considered
Apparition	ghost ; vision
Tapestry	a wall hanging made of woven fabric
Nectarine	a type of peach
Dace	a small freshwater fish
Pike	a large fresh water fish which is a predator
Friskings	here , implying the playful movement of the dace that which attracts or tempts someone
Bait	that which attracts or tempts someone into doing something
Lame –footed	unable to walk due to injury or illness
Make allowances	to take something into consideration or to treat someone with care due to their circumstances
Betwixt	archaic term for between
Quarrel	argument; disagreement
“We are not ... name”	the children reveal that they are not his children, nor do they exist, but that they are simply the stuff of dreams . This

is hinted at earlier when the narrator mentions how his grandmother 'believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept'.

Lethe

according to Greek mythology , Lethe was a river in the underworld and its waters , when drunk , allowed the souls of the dead to forget their lives on earth.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II

i. Choose the correct option:

John and Alice are :

- a) The children of the narrator's brother b) imaginary children of the speaker in the essay c) The children of Aunt Field .

ii. Choose the correct answer :

Lady Field is:

- a) the author's grandmother b) author's mother c) author's sister

iii. Select the correct answer :

The old lady Field lived in a big house in Norfolk:

- a).as a tenant b). as a care taker c.) as she owned the house

iv. Choose the correct answer:

The incident mentioned in the ballad was:

- a. surprising b. tragic c. comic

v. Select the correct option :

The writer told the children:

- a) about his grandmother b) about his brother John L. c) about the grandmother's house and the garden in it. d) all of them

vi. Choose the correct answer:

i. The narrator in the essay:

- a). explains how he told a story to the children John and Alice
b) is telling the story to the children at present
c) is telling the story to Lady Field

9.6 SUMMARY OF THE ESSAY: DREAM CHILDREN

The writer talks about children's interest in the stories about their grandfathers, great-grandfathers and other such relatives. It was in this spirit that the narrator's own children asked him to tell them about their great-grandmother i.e. his grandmother Lady Field. They knew about the house where she used to live. The house of the great-grandmother Lady Field was about a hundred times bigger than that of the narrator's father. The house in which she lived actually belonged to a rich nobleman. The author's grandmother, the great-grandmother of the children, Lady Field lived in that house only as a care-taker. The children who want to listen about their

great-grandmother are aware of the tragic incident that had taken place in that house. They had heard the ballad “The Children in the Wood” that narrated this story. The story narrated in this ballad was about a tragic incident and this story could be seen carved on the wooden chimney. Later, a rich person replaced this wooden chimney with the chimney made of marble. Alice, the little girl child listening to the story was happy that there was no story on the new chimney. Alice put on a pleasant and tender expression on her face like that of her mother.

At this stage, the narrator started telling the children about their great-grandmother Field. He tells them that the old woman was a religious-minded lady respected by all. She did not own the house in which she lived but she was just like an owner as the man who owned that house had left it to her and started living somewhere else. As long as she lived in the house, she maintained its dignity. When the house was pulled down, all its possessions were taken to the other house where the owner lived. The ornaments of the old house looked awkward in the new house. The writer says that they looked like the tombs from Abbey put into a drawing room. . One of the two children listening to the story was John, Alice’s brother. At this stage he smiled as if to say that it was foolish to keep the ornaments of the old house in the new one.

The writer tells the children that the great-grandmother Field’s funeral was attended by the poor and the other gentle folk. She was such a religious woman that she had learnt the Testament by heart. When she heard this, Alice spread her hands. The writer then describes the grandmother as a tall and graceful woman. She was respected as the best dancer. Alice’s foot moved involuntarily when she heard this. She stopped moving her foot when the narrator looked at her in a grave manner. The writer continues telling that unfortunately a cruel disease cancer struck his grandmother and caused much pain to her, and her body bent down. But it could not destroy or weaken her spirits. The old lady used to sleep alone in a lonely room. She often imagined that there were ghosts of children near the staircase close to her. But she was not afraid of the ghosts as she believed that they would not harm her. The narrator tells that he was afraid of ghosts that the grandmother talked about and he would ask the maid to sleep nearby though he had never seen those infants i.e. ghosts.

The writer then tells the children about his visits to his grandmother’s house during his childhood. There he would gaze at the old marble busts of twelve Caesars that had been the Emperors of Rome. He would imagine that those marble busts had come alive or he himself had turned into a marble bust. He used to wander in the big house with its empty rooms, spacious old-fashioned gardens. He noticed a variety of fruits there. He amusingly tells that he would enjoy these things and imagine, “myself ripening too along with oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth”. He enjoyed watching fresh water fish more than sweet flowers or peaches, and oranges that he considered ‘common bait of children’.

The child John placed a bunch of grapes on the plate before the narrator but it was noticed by his sister as he had thought of sharing the grapes with her. But now both the children considered the grapes irrelevant. He continues telling the children that his grandmother had a special affection for John L, the writer's brother and the children's uncle.

It shifts the narration to the details about Uncle John L. He was a brave and handsome man. He liked to ride a horse. Uncle John carried the writer on his back whenever he was injured and in pain, but the narrator never helped his brother John L. whenever he was unable to walk. The death of his brother John L had a great impact on the narrator. It was only after the death of his brother John L that the narrator realized his love for him. The narrator says that he did not weep over the death of his brother but his brother must have wept if the narrator had died. He wished John L alive again to have an opportunity to quarrel with him.

The children, as the narrator tells, wanted him to stop talking about their uncle and were eager to know about their dead mother. He tells the children about his courting their mother named Alice Wn for seven long years. The narrator felt that the girl Alice resembled her mother so much that he could not say 'whose that bright hair was' and this resemblance of their hair made him doubt that it was the daughter or her mother listening to the story. At this stage, John and his sister Alice, the children listening to the story grew fainter to the narrator's view. He realized that the children were not there in reality. He felt the impact of their unspoken words as if telling him, "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all". The narrator suddenly realized that it was just a dream about his children; in fact he was a bachelor. He was just daydreaming about telling a story to his children.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS III

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the correct option:

".....Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall"

i. The word 'children' in these lines refers to :

- a) John and Alice b) the children mentioned in the ballad c) the author and his brother

John

ii. Read the extract given below and fill in the blank with the correct option :

"I was saying, in the country, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came and bowed her down with pain: but it could never bend her good spirits...."

While saying these things the narrator appears:

- a pleased b serious c non-serious

iii. Choose the correct option:

When the narrator's brother John L died:

a) he cried loudly b) he did not cry at all c) got frightened

iv. Choose the correct answer :

The children insisted that the narrator should tell them the story about :

a) their uncle b) the ghosts of the infants c) their dead mother

9.7 ELEMENTS OF A STORY \FICTION IN THE ESSAY

The essay 'Dream Children' is the narration of a dream. The very title suggests that the children mentioned in the essay are not real and the details given in the essay are imaginary. The essay develops like a story. It consists of a number of small incidents like the tragic episode mentioned in the ballad, the large house of Lady Field, the death of the narrator's brother, and the ghosts of the infants near the staircase. The creation of the atmosphere with exaggerated details like the description of the grandmother's house makes it a piece of fiction.

The ending of the essay reveals that the whole narration is not based on facts. The writer admits that he was just daydreaming about telling a story to his children. Charles is known for mixing facts with fiction. The facts in the essay are only suggested through references to his real life experiences. The reader has to locate the elements of reality by referring to the details about Lamb's life.

The essay, like a story, has a beginning, middle and an ending. It starts with the children's request to the narrator to tell them a story. It results in his giving details descriptions that form the middle, and the sudden twist that in the situation marks the ending. The atmosphere of suspense about the great-grandmother's house, the story about the miserable children and their cruel uncle, the details about the garden add a fictional touch to the essay.

9.8 STYLE

Charles Lamb is known for writing personal and autobiographical essays. His style matches the subject matter that he presents in his essays. As his essays are informal, the style used is conversational and relaxed. The presentation in his essays is generally intended to amuse the reader. His use of tone and the absence of satirical elements make his essays amusing and pleasing. Some of the important features of his style can be observed from his 'Dream Children' also.

The sentence structure in the essay specially draws the attention of the readers. Lamb uses long sentences with conjunctions and linkers. It makes the narration conversational and informal. The minute gestures and small details are given without showing any hurry. It tends to extend the sentences into lengthy structures. There are sentences having more than twenty to fifty words each. Here is an example of such a sentence, "It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me, the other evening to bear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene – so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country – of the tragic incidents of which they had become lately familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood."

However, the use of simple vocabulary, and the use of conjunctions help the reader in understanding these lengthy sentences.

Another prominent feature of sentence structure in Charles Lamb's 'Dream Children' is the repeated use of certain words. For example, in this essay he has used the words 'and' 'how', and 'then' several times. His use of the personal pronoun 'I' mark the personal and autobiographical nature of the essay. The word 'how' is often used for emphasis 'and' to link words, phrases, and sentences. The word 'then' has been used to make the shift from one idea to the other, and specify the time. Look at the example given below for the repeated use of the words 'then' 'and' 'how', "then I went on to say, how religious and 'how good their great grandmother field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house... ." The repetition of words makes the style conversational and tends to develop a link between the author and the reader as the speaker and the listener.

A sudden change in situation is an effective device in several stories. It adds an element of surprise to the writing. The same thing happens in this essay. The narrator startles the reader in the end. The narrator is telling a story to the children all of a sudden they turn out to be a figment of his imagination only. They were not there at all. It surprises the readers.

The evocative style used by Charles Lamb makes the essay fascinating and interesting. It has the ability to draw word-pictures that the readers can imagine and visualize. Even the imaginary details given by him look real. For example, the description of the garden evokes the whole scene before the readers' eyes as in case of these words about the large house of Lady Field, "that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out," In the same way, his description of the reactions of the children listening to his story add to such details in the essay.

A clever mixing of humour and pathos makes the essay quite charming and interesting. The humour in the essay is innocent instead of being satirical. He gives details about children's thoughts and reactions, his own attitude towards different incidents as a child adds humour to the story. On the other hand, the reality that the readers face at the end of the essay makes the situation pathetic. Lamb's amusing reaction as a child to the death of his brother, innocent thoughts about the fruits and flowers , and the ghosts of the infants amuse the readers. But this comic and pleasing situation does not remain so for long. At the end of the essay, it is really pathetic that a man who does not have children imagines telling a story to them. On the other hand, it is quite amusing to find a bachelor daydreaming about his telling a story to his children.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: IV

i. Find the word which has been repeatedly used in this extract:

"Then I went on to say how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house,..."

ii. Read the lines given below and answer the question that follows by selecting the correct option:

.” that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again or to be turned into marble with them.....”

These lines bring out:

a) innocent thoughts of the narrator as a child b) the feelings of John c) the beauty of the garden

III. CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTION:

The essay ‘Dream Children’ has :

a) autobiographical elements in it b) amusing details c) an element of pathos d) all these things in it

9.9 ANALYZING THE EXTRACTS

*Look at the following exercise for the analysis of extracts from the essay.

EXERCISE: Explain the extract with reference to context:

“Then I told how she used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said, 'Those innocents would do her no harm.....”

EXPLANATION:

The extract has been taken from Charles Lamb’s essay, “Dream Children”. In this essay the speaker tells about his narrating a story about his grandmother and his imagined children’s great-grandmother to them. While telling the story he describes her as a religious and kind-hearted lady. The old lady used to sleep alone in a lonely chamber. She believed that she could realize the presence of the ghosts of two children moving up and down the staircase. But she was not afraid of the ghosts as she thought they would not harm her.

The narrator talks about the incident which happened in his childhood. It shows the children’s fears and the way their imagination works. It also provides a hint about the imaginary children the writer talks about. We see in the end that they are as unreal as the ghosts of the infants.

YOU CAN SEE HOW THE EXTRACT HAS BEEN EXPLAINED:

1. The reference to the author and the essay is given.
2. A very brief comment about the subject of the essay and the situation in which the extract occurs is given..
3. It follows the explanation of the ideas expressed in the extract.
4. There is s brief description of the implications of the details given in the extract.

EXERCISE 1. Explain the following extract with reference to context:

“ And then I told how when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor and some of the gentry, too, of the neighborhood for many miles round, to show their

respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good, indeed, that she knew all the Psalter by heart; aye, and a great part of the Testament besides”.

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Exercise 2. Explain the following extract with reference to context:

“..... till a cruel disease , called a cancer , came , and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits”

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Exercise 3: Explain the following extract with reference to context:

“Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Caesars, that had been Emperors of Rome,.....”

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EXERCISE 4. Explain the following with reference to context:

‘.....I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side, — but John L, {or James Eli) was gone forever.’

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.....

9.10 LET US SUM UP:

- i. Charles Lamb is known for introducing informal essay .
- ii. He contributed essays to the periodical ‘The London Magazine’.
- iii. His essays are informal and autobiographical.
- iv. In the essay ‘Dream Children: A Reverie’, the author tells about his narrating a story to the imagined children.
- v. The essay has references to his brother and the actress he loved.
- vi. The elements of a short-story can be observed in this essay.
- vii The essay is an example of the mixture of fact and fiction.
- viii. The essay has the element of amusement and pathos.
- ix.. Use of long sentences, repetition of certain words, and amusing tone are some of the prominent features of his prose style.

9.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS:

- i. Give a character-sketch of Lady Field.
- ii. How the situation changes in the end and what impact does it have on the narrator?
- iii. Discuss the way Lamb mixes amusement and pathos in ‘Dream Children’.
- iv. What does Charles Lamb say about John Lamb?
- v. Justify the title of the essay ‘Dream Children: A Reverie’.
- vi. Give a brief summary of the essay in your own words.

9.12 FURTHER READINGS:

- * Life of Charles Lamb, E.V. Lucas, G.P. Putman and Sons, London, 1905
- *.Young Charles Lamb, by Winifred Courtney, New York University Press, 1982

ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS ACTIVITIES:

Check Your Progress I;

Answers : i. a and c ii. b iii c iv c

Check Your Progress II:

Answers : i. b ii. a iii .b iv b v. d.

Check Your Progress III:

i. b ii. b iii. b iv. c

Check Your Progress IV:

i. how ii. a iii. d

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)
Semester-II

Course: Reading Prose

Unit-10: Ruskin Bond : The Thief

STRUCTURE:

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction

10.2. A Biographical Note

10.3. Elements of a Short Story

10.4. About the Story

10.4.1 Text

10.4.2 Glossary

10.4.3 Summary

10.5 Characterization

10.6 Analyzing the Theme

10.7 Plot

10.8 Title

10.9 Explanation of extracts from the story

10.10 Let us Sum Up

10.11 Unit-End Questions

10.12 Further Readings

10.0 OBJECTIVES

A study of this lesson is aimed to enable you to :

- i. Define and explain a short-story and its constituent parts.
- ii. Describe different features of a short -story
- iii. Explain Ruskin Bond's story 'The Thief'
- iv. Analyze the story

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will study Ruskin Bond's short-story 'The Thief'. Before discussing the story, a brief note about Ruskin Bond and his writings is given. After this, we have explained the term short-story and its characteristic features like setting, characters, plot, theme, narrator etc. It will give you information about this form of literature and the things you should keep in mind while describing, and analyzing a short-story. It is followed by views about the story and the text of the story. We have given a summary of the story to facilitate you in explaining and analyzing the story.

The activity based analysis of the story will add to your skill in describing significant features of the story.

You can see the correct answers to the Check Your Progress exercises at the end of the unit.

10.2 BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Ruskin Bond, the son of Edith Clarke and Aubrey Bond was born on May 19, 1934 in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, India. His father served in Royal Air Force of the British Government. His parents got divorced when Bond was eight years old, and his mother got married to an Indian. After the death of his father, Bond moved to Dehradun and lived with his grandfather. Thus, he had a disturbed and miserable childhood. He received his early education from Bishop Cotton School in Shimla. During his school years he won Hailey Literature Prize and the Irwin Divinity Prize. In 1952, he completed his graduation and moved to England and stayed at his aunt's house for four years.

His favourite writers were T.E. Hume, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte, and Rudyard Kipling. He wrote a novel 'The Room on the Roof', when he was seventeen. It brought him success, and he got John Llewellyn Rhys memorial prize for this novel when it was first published four years later. It inspired him to write its sequel, 'Vagrants in the Valley'.

He returned to India and worked as a journalist in Delhi and Dehradun. He shifted to Mussourie and started freelance writing in 1963. His essays and articles have appeared in several magazines and newspapers. He has written over three hundred short-stories, essays, and novels, and over thirty children books. His autobiographical writings include, 'Scenes From a Writer's Life', and 'The Lamp is Lit: Leaves From a Journal'.

'Some of his more significant works are: 'Blue Umbrella, 'A Flight of Pigeons', and 'Funny Side Up'. A BBC TV series is based on his first novel, and his short story Susanna's Seven Husbands' was adapted into a film 'Saat Khoon Moaf. The film Junoon is inspired by his 'Flight of Pigeons'.

Bond is known for his autobiographical and semi-autobiographical stories about children. He is considered a pioneer of child literature in India. The influence of his childhood days on his writings can be understood from Bond's own words, "I don't suppose I would have written so much about childhood or even about other children if my own childhood had been all happiness and light". Ruskin Bond's characters are from the middle class. He chose his characters from his surroundings. Some of them resemble the real characters in his life.

He lives with his adopted family.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I:

Choose the correct option to answer the following questions:

- i. Ruskin Bond was born in : a) Shimla b) Dehradun c) Kasauli.
- ii. Ruskin Bond lived with his in Dehradun.
a) Father b) mother c) grandfather
- iii. The title of one of his novels is a) The Room on the Roof b) Susanna's Seven Husbands c) 'The Roof on the Room'.
- iv. Bond's writings are mainly about a) the old people b) about women only c) children

NOTE: Dear students the following discussion about short-story will help you in marking characteristic features of a short- story. It will help you in the analysis of the story.

10.3 WHAT IS A STORY?

A short story is a form of fictional prose. It is a short narrative with focus on a single event. Its development indicates a pattern of beginning, middle, and a definite conclusion. The arrangement of incidents, thought, action, and characters develops a structure or pattern that forms its plot. It focuses on the outcome of an action or the situation involved.

There are several types of short story depending on its subject matter, the narrative structure, and purpose. A story can be based on fantasy, science , reality or state of mind .

10.3.1 ELEMENTS OF A SHORT-STORY:

Setting: it refers to the historical time, social circumstances, and location of the narrative i.e. the incidents. The setting of an incident in a story at a particular place is its physical location. Setting in a story can be traced from the description of geographical location, references to time, and description of surroundings etc.

Characters: The imaginary or real people who are assigned specific roles in a narrative are the characters. The actions, thoughts, and the situations related to these people are the focus of a story. A story has a limited number of characters.

Plot: The arrangement or the sequence of incidents narrated in the story is called plot. Plot is different from story. The story of a narrative is about what it tells The plot relates to how the story has been told. Plot of a story can be chronological. The incidents in it follow a linear order in which one incident leads to the other. But the order of incidents in a plot may not always

develop like this. Writers can disturb the order of the incidents according to their convenience and the purpose of the story.

Narrator: The person who tells the story is called the narrator. The narrator and the author are not necessarily the same. When the narrator uses the pronoun 'I', we should not confuse him/her with the writer.

Theme: It is the central idea or message that the story conveys. The writer can express the theme directly by using his or her own words. The writer can choose some character to convey the message. The theme can be conveyed through the arrangement and outcome of incidents and their result. The experiences of characters are also used to express theme of a story.

Point of view: It indicates the perspective or view of the story-teller and reveals his/her attitude to the experiences depicted in the story. It can be biased or objective. It depends on the author that from whose point of view or understanding he or she wants to tell the story. The change in point of view causes a shift in the focus of the story.

Conflict: It is a kind of struggle that the story presents. The outcome of this struggle is the main attraction for the reader of a story. This conflict can be between people, or ideas. Sometimes it happens in the mind of the characters involving some moral dilemma. All these forms of conflict have an attraction for the readers. . The story may or may not resolve the conflict.

Climax: The point or the situation at which the events in a story take a major turn is called the climax. It brings a change in the atmosphere of the story. Climax should not be confused with the ending of the story. It sometimes happens much before the ending.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Choose the correct option to answer the following questions:

- i. A short-story focuses on: a) many incidents b) mainly on one incident c) two incidents
- ii. The plot of a story means a) the summary of the incidents b) the ideas expressed in a story c) the arrangement of the incidents in a story.
- iii. The narrator of a short-story is a) the writer of the story b) the one who tells the story c) the main character of the story.
- iv. The theme of the story is :
 - a) the idea or message expressed in it b) the title of the story c) the main incident of the story.

10.4. ABOUT THE STORY: 'THE THIEF'

This story is about a young thief. He narrates the incident which brought a transformation in him. He goes to a young man with the intention of robbing him. This fifteen year old thief wins the confidence of the young man named Arun and starts working for him. The thief lives with Arun and comes to know about his trusting nature. He learns that Arun was not particular about money. The thief keeps on changing his names to dodge the police. He starts living with Arun as Deepak and commits a theft in his house. But he fails to run away with the stolen money and

comes back to return it to Arun. The story brings out the way a transformation takes place in Deepak, a thief. You will find the details in the story interesting and amusing.

10.4.1. TEXT: THE THIEF

I was still a thief when I met Arun and though I was only fifteen I was an experienced and fairly successful hand.

Arun was watching the wrestlers when I approached him. He was about twenty, a tall, lean fellow, and he looked kind and simple enough for my purpose. I hadn't had much luck of late and thought I might be able to get into this young person's confidence. He seemed quite fascinated by the wrestling. Two well-oiled men slid about in the soft mud, grunting and slapping their thighs. When I drew Arun into conversation, he didn't seem to realize I was a stranger.

'You look like a wrestler yourself,' I said

'So do you,' he replied, which put me out of my stride for a moment because at the time I was rather thin and bony and not very impressive physically.

'Yes,' I said. 'I wrestle sometimes.'

'What's your name?'

'Deepak,' I lied.

Deepak was about my fifth name I had earlier called myself Ranbir, Sudhir, Trilok and Surinder. After this preliminary exchange Arun confined himself to comments on the match, and I didn't have much to say. After a while he walked away from the crowd of spectators. I followed him.

'Hello,' he said. 'Enjoying yourself?'

I gave him my most appealing smile. 'I want to work for you,' I said.

He didn't stop walking. 'And what makes you think I want someone to work for me?'

'Well,' I said, 'I've been wandering about all day looking for the best person to work for. When I saw you I knew that no one else had a chance.'

'You flatter me,' he said.

'That's all right.'

'But you can't work for me.'

'Why not?'

'Because I can't pay you.'

I thought that over for a minute. Perhaps I had misjudged my man.

'Can you feed me?' I asked.

'Can you cook?' he countered.

'I can cook'; I lied.

'If you can cook,' he said, 'I'll feed you.'

He took me to his room and told me I could sleep in the veranda. But I was nearly back on the street that night. The meal I cooked must have been pretty awful because Arun gave it to the neighbor's cat and told me to be off. But I just hung around smiling in my most appealing way

and then he couldn't help laughing. He sat down on the bed and laughed for a full five minutes and later patted me on the head and said, 'never mind', he'd teach me to cook in the morning. Not only did he teach me to cook but he taught me to write my name and his and said he would soon teach me to write whole sentences and add money on paper when you didn't have any in your pocket!

It was quite pleasant working for Arun. I made the tea in the morning and later went out shopping. I would take my time buying the day's supplies and make a profit of about twenty-five paisa a day. I would tell Arun that rice was fifty-six paisa a pond (it generally was), but I would get it at fifty paisa a pound. I think he knew I made a little this way but he didn't mind. He wasn't giving me a regular wage.

I was really grateful to Arun for teaching me to write. I knew that once I could write like an educated man there would be no limit to what I could achieve. It might even be an incentive to be honest.

Arun made money by fits and starts. He would be borrowing one week, lending the next. He would keep worrying about his next cheque but as soon as it arrived he would go out and celebrate lavishly.

One evening he came home with a wad of notes and at night I saw him tuck the bundles under his mattress at the head of the bed. I had been working for Arun for nearly a fortnight and, apart from the shopping, hadn't done much to exploit him. I had every opportunity for doing so. I had a key to the front door which meant I had access to the room whenever Arun was out. He was the most trusting person I had ever met. And that was why I couldn't make up my mind to rob him.

It's easy to rob a greedy man because he deserves to be robbed. It's easy to rob a rich man because he can afford to be robbed. But it's difficult to rob a poor man, even one who really doesn't care if he's robbed. A rich man or a greedy man or a careful man wouldn't keep his money under a pillow or mattress. He'd lock it up in a safe place. Arun had put his money where it would be child's play for me to remove it without his knowledge.

It's time I did some real work, I told myself. I'm getting out of practice... If I don't take the money, he'll only waste it on his friends... He doesn't even pay me...

Arun was asleep. Moonlight came in from the veranda and fell across the bed. I sat up on the floor, my blanket wrapped round me, considering the situation. There was quite a lot of money in that wad and if I took it I would have to leave town – I might make the 10.30 express to Amritsar...

Slipping out of the blanket, I crept on all fours through the door and up to the bed and peeped at Arun. He was sleeping peacefully with a soft and easy breathing. His face was clear and unlined. Even I had more markings on my face, though mine were mostly scars.

My hand took on an identity of its own as it slid around under the mattress, the fingers searching for the notes. They found them and I drew them out without a crackle.

Arun sighed in his sleep and turned on his side, towards me. My free hand was resting on the bed and his hair touched my fingers.

I was frightened when his hair touched my finger, and crawled quickly and quietly out of the room. When I was in the street I began to run. I ran down the bazaar road to the station. The shops were all closed but a few lights were on in the upper windows. I had the notes at my waist, held there by the string of my pyjamas. I felt I had to stop and count the notes though I knew it might make me late for the train. It was already 10.20 by the clock tower. I slowed down to a walk and my fingers flicked through the notes. There were about a hundred rupees in fives. A good haul. I could live like a prince for a month or two.

When I reached the station I did not stop at the ticket office (I had never bought a ticket in my life) but dashed straight onto the platform. The Amritsar Express was just moving out. It was moving slowly enough for me to be able to jump on the footboard of one of the carriages but I hesitated for some urgent, unexplainable reason.

I hesitated long enough for the train to leave without me.

When it had gone and the noise and busy confusion of the platform had subsided. I found myself standing alone on the deserted platform. The knowledge that I had a hundred stolen rupees in my pyjamas only increased my feeling of isolation and loneliness. I had no idea where to spend the night.

I had never kept any friends because sometimes friends can be one's undoing. I didn't want to make myself conspicuous by staying at a hotel. And the only person I knew really well in town was the person I had robbed!

Leaving the station, I walked slowly through the bazaar keeping to dark, deserted alley. I kept thinking of Arun. He would still be asleep, blissfully unaware of his loss.

I have made a study of men's faces when they have lost something of material value. The greedy man shows panic, the rich man shows anger, the poor man shows fear. But I knew that neither panic nor anger nor fear would show on Arun's face when he discovered the theft; only a terrible sadness not for the loss of the money but for my having betrayed his trust.

I found myself on the maidaan and sat down on a bench with my feet tucked up under my haunches. The night was a little cold and I regretted not having brought Arun's blanket along. A light drizzle added to my discomfort. Soon it was raining heavily. My shirt and *pyjamas* stuck to my skin and a cold wind brought the rain whipping across my face. I told myself that sleeping on a bench was something I should have been used to by now but the veranda had softened me.

I walked back to the bazaar and sat down on the steps of a closed shop. A few vagrants lay beside me, rolled up tight in thin blankets. The clock showed midnight. I felt for the notes. They were still with me but had lost their crispness and were damp with rainwater.

Arun's money, in the morning he would probably have given me a rupee to go to the pictures but now I had it all. No more cooking his meals, running to the bazaar, or learning to write whole sentences. Whole sentences...

They were something I had forgotten in the excitement of a hundred rupees. Whole sentences, I knew, could one day bring me more than a hundred rupees. It was a simple matter to steal (and sometimes just as simple to be caught) but to be a really big man, a wise and successful man, that was something. I should go back to Arun, I told myself, if only to learn how to write.

Perhaps it was also concern for Arun that drew me back. A sense of sympathy is one of my weaknesses, and through hesitation over a theft I had often been caught. A successful thief must be pitiless. I was fond of Arun. My affection for him, my sense of sympathy, but most of all my desire to write whole sentences, drew me back to the room.

I hurried back to the room extremely nervous, for it is easier to steal something than to return it undetected. If I was caught beside the bed now, with money in my hand, or with my hand under the mattress, there could be only one explanation; that I was actually stealing. If Arun woke up I would be lost.

I opened the door clumsily and stood in the doorway in clouded moonlight. Gradually my eyes became accustomed to the darkness of the room. Arun was still asleep. I went on all fours again and crept noiselessly to the head of the bed. My hand came up with the notes. I felt his breath on my fingers. I was fascinated by his tranquil features and easy breathing and remained motionless for a minute. Then my hand explored the mattress found the edge, slipped under it with the notes. I awoke late next morning to find that Arun had already made the tea. I found it difficult to face him in the harsh light of day. His hand was stretched out towards me. There was a five-rupee note between his fingers. My heart sank.

‘I made some money yesterday,’ he said. ‘Now you’ll get paid regularly.’ My spirit rose as rapidly as it had fallen. I congratulated myself on having returned the money.

But when I took the note, I realized that he knew everything. The note was still wet from last night’s rain.

‘Today I’ll teach you to write a little more than your name,’ he said. He knew but neither his lips nor his eyes said anything about their knowing.

I smiled at Arun in my most appealing way. And the smile came by itself, without my knowing it.

10.4.2. Glossary:

hand	here, a person with a lot of experience in something
lean	thin
put... stride	here, confuse
preliminary	something that happens or is done before something more important
spectators	people watching a show, game or other event
appealing	here, showing that one wants help
flatter	to say nice things that may not be true about someone to try and get something from them
misjudge	to incorrectly think something of someone
counter	to speak or act against someone
veranda	a roofed platform along the outside of a house
pleasant	likeable
regular wage	a fixed amount of money paid in exchange for work
incentive	something that helps or encourages one to do something

in fits and starts	when something does not happen smoothly, but keeps starting and stopping; here, not regularly
lavishly	richly, luxuriously; spending money without control
wad	a bundle of something
fortnight	a period of two weeks
exploit	to take advantage of someone; to gain something unfairly or illegally
peep	to look quickly and secretively at someone or something
bazaar	marketplace
haul	a large quantity of something got at one time
isolation	the state of being alone
undoing	a person's ruin
conspicuous	standing out and clearly noticeable
deserted	abandoned; here, empty
blissfully	happily
material value	here, money
betray	to be disloyal
<i>mairaan</i>	an open space in a town, used as a parade ground
haunches	referring to the hips and thighs of a human
regret	to feel sad or disappointed
vagrants	people without a home; beggars
sympathy	feelings of pity and sadness for someone else's situation
undetected	not discovered or noticed
accustomed	here, become used to something
tranquil	calm
features	here, parts of the face
motionless	still, not moving
heart sank	here, to experience a combination of fear and sadness

Check Your Progress III:

Answer the following questions :

- i. How many characters are there in this story?
- ii. How old is Arun?
- iii. The narrator of the story is a) Arun b) Ruskin Bond c) Deepak
- iv. The young thief in the story smiled:
 - a) once only b) twice c) thrice
- v. When the narrator smiled for the last time in the story , his smile was:
 - a) genuine b) false c) full of hatred

10.4.3. SUMMARY

The narrator of the story is a fifteen-year-old boy named Deepak. He is a thief and he uses different names on different occasions and in different situations to dodge the police. One day, he meets a man of about twenty years, named Arun. The young boy Deepak considers Arun a suitable target. Arun was watching a wrestling match and Deepak tries to make friends by telling him that he (Arun) looked like a wrestler. The young boy tells that his name was Deepak. (We know Deepak is not his real name).

After a brief conversation Deepak put on the most appealing look and expressed his desire to work for this young man Arun. When Arun shows his inability to pay him, the boy gets ready to work for him just for food. He tells a lie to Arun that he could cook. He does this to win Arun's trust to cheat him later.

Deepak's claim that he could cook turned out false when he failed to cook good food and Arun had to throw it to a cat. Arun did not get angry. Gradually, Arun taught the boy to write his name and assured that he would teach Deepak to write complete sentences and to add numbers. Deepak thought that he would be able to achieve much in life if he learnt writing like an educated man.

While working for Arun, the boy starts pocketing money. He manages to take away a rupee or so every day as he is sent to get essentials for Arun from the market. Arun ignores this cheating. Showing his trust, Arun gives Deepak the key to his room. It makes easy for the thief Deepak to enter Arun's room. After a few days Deepak comes to know that Arun was a freelance writer. Having no regular income, sometimes Arun has to borrow from his friends. On certain occasions, Arun gets a lot of money from his writings but he spends the money recklessly.

One day Arun comes home with a bundle of currency notes as a publisher has bought his book. Arun puts the money under a mattress. Deepak notices him hiding the money there. He has been living with Arun for about a month. He thinks that he has not been able to steal anything substantial due to Arun's trusting nature. He thinks that it is difficult to rob a carefree man like Arun as robbing a person like him does not give any pleasure.

Finally, Deepak decides to steal the money that Arun has put under the mattress. He is prompted to take this decision as he thinks that Arun would waste the money by spending it recklessly, and he was not paying any wages to Deepak. He decides to take away the bundle of notes and leave the town by the 10:30 Amritsar Express. Deepak goes out of the room with the stolen money and tucks the notes in his pyjama string. He counts and finds that he had stolen a hundred rupees. Deepak goes to the railway station, and reaches the platform without getting a ticket as he does not believe in buying a ticket. He finds the Amritsar Express moving but for some unexplainable reason does not board the train. The train has left and Deepak wanders on the deserted platform.

He does not know where to go. He thinks that staying on the platform for long would raise suspicion. His staying in some hotel would be risky. Deepak has no friends because in his profession friends could be a greater trouble.

In the whole town, he knew only Arun, the man he had just robbed. He starts walking through the bazaar and looks at the faces of the people. He thinks that he can have a look at the face and tell about the reactions of people on being robbed. In such a situation a greedy man is full of fear, and a rich man gets angry. But a poor man adopts a sense of resignation or indifference. Deepak feels that Arun would feel sad, not because of the loss of money, but because of the breach of trust.

Deepak goes and sits on a bench in the maidaan. It starts raining. His clothes get wet. He goes and takes shelter at the Clock Tower. At midnight, he feels the damp notes in his *pyjama* – string. A feeling of remorse takes over him. He thinks that had he not committed the theft perhaps Arun would have given him two or three rupees to go to the cinema. Another thought torments him. If he had not robbed Arun, he would have educated him. Education would have made him a great and respected person. This profession of stealing would not take him anywhere. These thoughts force him to go back to Arun and learn reading and writing.

He returns to Arun's room and finds him still asleep. He gently places the bundle of notes under the mattress and goes to sleep. The next morning he finds that Arun has got up earlier and already prepared the tea. Arun gives a five rupee note to Deepak telling that he had earned some money the previous day. He also assures Deepak that he would pay his wages regularly. Deepak feels happy and takes the note. He notices that it was still wet because of the night rain.

Deepak realizes that his master knows about the theft but does not say anything about it. Arun had knowingly ignored the theft. The incident of the theft brings a change in Deepak. He smiles at Arun. Now his smile is not deceitful as it used to be.

10.5 CHARACTERIZATION

You can use the following points while analyzing characters in a story:

- i. Does the character play a central role?
- ii. Physical appearance, family and social background of the character.
- iii. His/her beliefs, ideas thoughts , and the way he\she acts upon them.
- iv. The changes , if any, noticed in the character .
- v. The special traits of the characters that the story reveals
- vi. The incidents, dialogues and descriptions that indicate the qualities of a character.

Exercise: Explain the qualities of Arun's character that the following sentences and phrases reveal :

1. “He was about twenty, a tall, lean fellow, and he looked kind and simple enough for my purpose.”

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2. “Arun made money by fits and starts. He would be borrowing one week, lending the next. He would keep worrying about his next cheque but as soon as it arrived he would go out and celebrate lavishly.”

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3. I had every opportunity for doing so. I had a key to the front door which meant I had access to the room whenever Arun was out. He was the most trusting person I had ever met. And that was why I couldn't make up my mind to rob him.

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You must have noticed that certain descriptions and dialogues in a story reveal specific traits of characters. Find examples of descriptions, incidents and dialogues that reveal the following traits of Deepak's character:

- i. Age, looks
- ii. Habit of telling lies and stealing
- iii. His interest in education.
- iv. His expertise in stealing
- v. His inherent goodness.

10.6. ANALYZING THE THEME

Deepak is a thief. He starts working with Arun with the intention to rob him. He wins Arun's trust and commits a theft in his house. But he does not like betraying the trust and comes back to return the stolen money. This kind of behaviour of a thief tells us that a bad person like Deepak can also have something good in him.

Please Note: The idea that even a thief or a bad person has something good in him forms one of the themes of the story.

*There are some other ideas that come out of this story.

You can trace those ideas from different incidents, situations, characters and their behaviour.

10.6.1 EXERCISE:

Analyze some incidents in the story that convey the idea:

- *Trust and generosity have a positive Influence on others.
- * Never betray trust
- *Education can bring great achievements in life.
- * Do not trust strangers

10.7. ANALYZING THE PLOT STRUCTURE:

The plot of this story moves in a sequential order. The incidents are arranged in the pattern in which they occur:

You see that the first important incident or happening is Deepak’s meeting with Arun. The second main incident takes place when Deepak goes to live with Arun.

EXERCISE:

Mention some important incidents in the plot of the story ‘The Thief’ and arrange them in the way they occur.

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10.8 THE TITLE

The title of a story is always significant. It is supposed to indicate the thrust of the story or its theme. Sometimes it is linked to the traits of the main character. The name of the main character can also be used as a title if the story is about the personality of the central figure. These elements determine the relevance of the title.

Now you can use these ideas and examine the suitability of the title of the story. ‘The Thief’

You can suggest some other title to this story that you believe to be more suitable. It should be based on logical arguments.

10.9. EXPLANATION OF EXTRACTS FROM THE STORY

Extracts from a story are examined and analyzed to find their relevance for the explanation of the plot, theme, character or any other aspect of the story. These exercises will enable you to explain the extracts and show their relevance in the story. You should have a look at the solved exercise given below to attempt the analysis of other extracts.

Explain the Following extracts with reference to context:

“I said, ‘I’ve been wandering about all day looking for the best person to work for. When I saw you I knew that no one else had a chance.’”

Explanation: Deepak, the narrator talks about his first meeting with Arun, in Ruskin Bond’s story ‘The Thief’. Deepak wants to win over Arun’s trust as he has a plan to rob him. He calls Arun the best person to flatter him. Deepak tells Arun that he was ready to work for him as he considers him the best person.

This extract tells about the first meeting between Deepak and Arun. This first meeting results in Deepak’s stay with Arun and the other happenings that take place later. It also shows that Deepak is very clever and uses the art of flattery to impress strangers.

Exercise : Explain the extract given below with reference to context:

“ I hesitated long enough for the train to leave without me”.

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Exercise : Explain the extract given below with reference to context:

“.....He was the most trusting person I had ever met. And that was why I couldn’t make up my mind to rob him..... “

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Exercise : Explain the extract given below with reference to context:

“I smiled at Arun in my most appealing way. And the smile came by itself, without my knowing it. ‘

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10.10 LET US SUM UP:

- *Ruskin Bond is a popular short-story writer. He has written numerous stories about children.
- *Short-story has some special features like focus on single incident, limited number of characters. The other elements of a story are, setting, plot, theme, characters, conflict, climax.

- * The Thief is a story in which a fifteen year old boy narrates the incident that resulted in his transformation.
- * The generosity and compassion of the man robbed by the thief are the main reasons of the change that comes in this young thief.
- * Arun and Deepak, are the two main characters in the story.
- * The title of the story is appropriate
- * The descriptions, incidents, dialogues and situations bring out different traits of characters in the story.

10.11 NIT END QUESTIONS:

- i. Describe the first meeting between the narrator and Arun.
- ii. Deepak hesitates in robbing Arun. What makes Deepak take the decision to rob Arun?
- iii. Why does he come back to return the stolen money?
- iv Why does the narrator say that it was pleasant working for Arun?
- v. Why does Deepak not want to rob Arun earlier?
- vi. Explain Deepak’s views on the reactions of different types of people on being robbed.
- vii. Describe the narrator’s behaviour after his robbing Arun up to his putting the money back under the mattress.

10.12 Further Readings:

Abrams, M.H., A Glossary of Literary Terms. Bangalore: Prison Books Pvt.Ltd., 1993
 Bond Ruskin,. “Scenes From a Writer’s Life”, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 1997.
 Iyenger, K.R.S., *Indian Writing in English*. 5th Edition, New Delhi : Sterling Publishers, 1999
 Reid, Ian .The Critical Idioms : The short story. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1977

ANSWERS TO THE CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES:

Check Your Progress I.

Answers: i. c) ii.c) iii a) iv. c)

Check Your Progress II.

Answers: i. b) ii. c)iii. b)iv a)

Check Your Progress III.

Answers: i. Two ii. He is around twenty years old. iii.C iv. c) v. a)

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)
SEMESTER-II
COURSE: READING PROSE

UNIT-11: MUNSHI PREM CHAND: THAKUR'S WELL

(Please Note: Unit no 11 has Two Parts: A and B)

PART A

STRUCTURE:

11.A .0 Objectives

11. A.1. Introduction

11.A.2. Biographical Note

11. A.3. About the Story

11. A.3.1 Text: Thakur's Well

11. A.3.2 Glossary About the essay

11. A.3.3 Summary: Thakur's Well

11. A.4 Theme of the Story

11. A.5 Characterization

11. A.6 Plot Structure of the Story

11. A 7 Setting: Thakur's Well

11. A 8 Title of the Story

11. A.9 Let us Sum Up

11. A 10 Questions on Comprehension

11. A. 11 Further Readings

11.A.0 Objectives:

The reading of this unit (Part A and B) is aimed to enable you to :

- Explain the stories in your own words
- Write the themes of the stories
- List the important features of these stories
- Answer comprehension questions on these stories
- Describe and analyze different features of the stories discussed in this unit.

11A.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we have discussed two stories. You are advised to consult the previous unit (Unit 10 on Ruskin Bond) to revise your understanding of the details about a short-story, and its constituents like setting, character, plot etc. The focus in the first part of this unit is Munshi Prem Chand's story 'The Thakur's Well', and the second part takes up the story 'The Home Coming' by Rabindranath Tagore. In this unit, you will find different activities to understand, describe and then analyze the stories.

Part-A of this unit concentrates on Munshi Prem Chand's story 'Thakur's Well'.

There are exercises to mark outcome of your learning. The answers to the 'Check Your Progress' A-I and A II exercises are given at the end of Part A – of this unit. You can see the correct answers there.

11. A. 2. BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Munshi Prem Chand is a well known Hindi short story writer. He was born on 31 July 1880 in Lamhi village near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. His birth name was Dhanpat Rai, Srivastav. Before adopting the name Munshi Prem Chand, he wrote under the pen name Nawab Rai. He is known as 'Upanyas Samrat' for his contribution to Hindi fiction that includes around a dozen novels and more than two hundred short-stories.

He was the fourth child of Ajaib Lal, and Anandi Devi. His father was a clerk in a post-office. He got his early education in a *madrassa* at Lalpur village and learned Urdu and Persian languages. His mother died and his father remarried. He studied at Queen's College, and got married at the age of 15. He stopped his studies after the death of his father in 1897. Later he became a school teacher, his stories and articles in Urdu appeared in a magazine 'Zamana'.

His wife left him due to her constant quarrels with his stepmother. He married a child widow Shivarani Devi in 1906. He was much criticized for this.

Munshi Prem Chand started writing in Hindi in 1914. His earlier writings were in Urdu. The title of his first Hindi writing was 'Saut'

He tried his hand in Hindi films and got the job of a script writer at Bombay. He was the script writer of the film 'Mazdoor'. His most popular novel is *Godaan*. He died on 8 October 1936. Many of his works have been translated into different languages of the world. The story 'Thakur's Well', is English translation of his story 'Thakur Ka Kuan'. It has been translated by T.C. Ghai.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-AI:

Choose the correct option :

i. Nawab Rai was

a) the name of Prem Chand's pen-friend b) the pen name of Munshi Prem Chand c) the name of his friend.

ii. Munshi Prem Chand got married for the first time at the age of

a) five b) fifteen c) twenty five

iii. He was criticized for

a) writing stories b) marrying a child widow c) for changing his name

iv. He got early education at a :

a) government school b) public school c) madrasa

v. Fill in the blank with the correct option :

He worked as a at Bombay.

a. actor b) villain c) script-writer

vi. Fill in the blank with the correct option :

Munshi Prem Chand started writing in in 1914.

a) Urdu b) Hindi c) English

11.A. 3. ABOUT THE STORY: THAKUR'S WELL

Thakur's well is a story about the caste based differences that make the lives of the untouchables miserable. This story is about Jokhu and Gangi who are unable to get clean water from the well of the village landlord because of the feudal system and the caste discriminations. The fear of the upper castes and the village landlords does not allow these people to raise their voice against their oppression. In the story, Gangi goes to get water from the Thakur's well during the night. But her courage fails when she finds the Thakur coming towards the well. She runs away without taking water.

11.A. 3. 1.TEXT: THAKUR'S WELL

As Jokhu brought the *lota* to his lips to drink, he found that the water smelled foul. He said to Gangi, 'What kind of water is this? It stinks. My throat's dry, and you're making me drink this unclean water.'

Gangi used to store up all the water in the evening. The well was far away, and it was difficult to walk the distance again and again. The water she had brought yesterday was good. What could have gone wrong today, she wondered. She brought the *lota* to her nose. Yes, it was stinking. An animal must have fallen into the well and drowned. But where would she get the water from now?

No one would let her draw water from the Thakur's well. They would drive her away from a distance. Sahuji's well was at the other end of the village. But who would let her draw water from there? And there was no fourth well in the village.

Jokhu had been ill for many days. He was thirsty and kept quiet for some time. Then he said, 'I can't hold my thirst any more. Come, I'll squeeze my nose and drink a little bit.'

Gangi didn't let him. She knew that drinking this unclean water would aggravate his illness, but she didn't know that boiling would make it safe for drinking. She said, 'You can't drink this water. God knows what animal it was. I'll bring water from somewhere.'

Jokhu looked at her with surprise. 'Where will you bring it from?'

There are two wells: the Thakur's and the Sahu's. Won't they let me have even one potful?'

'You'll get only broken arms and legs, nothing else. Sit quietly. The Brahmin will curse, the Thakur wield his *lathi*, and Sahuji charge five for one. No one feels our pain. Even when we die,

no one comes to condole, least of all to lend his shoulder to the bier. How do you expect such people to let you draw water?’

This was the bitter truth. Gangi kept quiet, she did not let him drink the stinking water.

It was nine o’clock in the night. The exhausted labourers had gone to sleep. A few idlers were gathered outside the Thakur’s door. The times for showing valour in the battlefield were gone; they were talking of battles won in the law courts. How the Thakur had bribed the *thanedar* and saved his skin. How cleverly he had obtained the copy of a landmark court judgment. The court officials had said that the copy couldn’t be given. Some demanded fifty, others a hundred. He was able to obtain the copy without paying a single penny! One should know the tricks of the trade.

It was then that Gangi arrived to draw water from the well.

A faint light from the street oil-lamp was falling on the well. Gangi came and sat close to the platform around the well, sheltering herself, and waited for an opportunity. Everyone drank from this well. They alone were forbidden. Gangi’s rebellious heart began to hit out at traditional society’s restrictions and compulsions. What makes us low, and them high? Just because they are wearing a string round their necks! All these people are so crooked, each one more than the other. They file false cases against others. Only the other day the Thakur poached the shepherd’s sheep, then slaughtered and ate it up. And this *panditji*’s house is a round-the-year den of gamblers. And this very Sahuji adulterates ghee with oil. They make us labour for them, but are reluctant to pay for it. In what way are they higher than us? We don’t go shouting in the streets, like them, that we are superior. Whenever I walk through the village, they look at me with lusty eyes, and their hearts fill with envy. Yet they pride themselves on their superiority!

She heard the sound of footsteps at the well. Her heart began to beat furiously. Hell would break loose if she was caught. She picked up the pitcher and the rope and, bending herself low, walked away towards a tree and hid herself in its dark shadow. They would show her no mercy. They had beaten up poor Mahgu so badly that he had kept spitting blood for month— just he had refused to work without being paid! And they are higher!

Two women had come to the well to draw water. They were talking.

‘They’ve come in to eat, and have ordered us to bring fresh water.’

‘These men become agitated if they find us resting for a while.’

‘They didn’t have the decency to come here and draw water for themselves. They only know to give orders, as if we were their bondswomen.’

‘What else are you, if not a bondswoman? They give you food and clothing. And you snatch a few rupees from them, off and on. How are bondswomen different?’

‘Don’t insult me, sister. I’m not able to relax ever for a short while. Had I labored like this at another’s household, life would have been a lot easier. And he would have been grateful too. Kill yourself with work, yet no one’s pleased.’

Both the women walked away after drawing water. Gangi came out of the tree’s shadow and walked towards the well. The idlers had gone away. The Thakur too had shut the door from the inside and was readying himself to sleep in the courtyard. Gangi heaved a sigh of relief. All

seemed clear now. Even the prince, who had gone to steal *amrita*, would not have taken such care. Gangi came to the edge of the well. Seldom had she experienced such a sense of triumph!. She tied one end of the rope round the pitcher's neck. She peered to her right and left, like a soldier readying himself to pierce the enemy's defenses. If she were caught now, there would be no forgiveness at all. At last, invoking the gods, she lowered the pitcher into the well.

The pitcher sank into the water gently, making no sound at all. Gangi pulled the rope up quickly, and the pitcher came up to the top. Even a powerful wrestler couldn't have drawn up the pitcher so swiftly.

Before Gangi could catch the pitcher and rest it on the edge of the well, the Thakur's door opened suddenly. A lion's look could not have been more frightening than this sound. The rope slipped through her hands and the pitcher went hurtling down the well and hit the water with a loud thud. One could hear the water rippling for a few moments.

The Thakur advanced towards the well, shouting, 'Who's there? Who's there?' Gangi jumped from the well's platform and ran furiously away.

When she reached home, she found Jokhu drinking the dirty water.

11.A. 3. 2. Glossary :

stinking	having a foul smell
aggravate	to worsen/increase the effect of; to heighten
condole	to offer sympathy on the loss of a loved one
bier	a frame in which the coffin or a corpse is placed before burial
polluted	contaminated with some harmful or poisonous substance
landmark court judgement	a reputed judgment or verdict delivered by a court of law, having an influence on other such judgments
compulsion	pressure exerted to make someone succumb
petty	small-minded
poach	to trespass on another's territory and hunt animal
slaughter	to kill mercilessly
adulterate	to mix something in a manner to deceive and reduce the quality of something
lust	to desire someone
agitated	here, angry and annoyed
idler	one who merely wastes time and does not do anything constructive
amrita	Hindi for the nectar of immortality
heave a sigh of relief	to feel relieved and at ease
pitcher	a large jug, usually earthen
ripple s	light waves on the surface of water

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS A- II:

Choose the correct answer:

i. Jokhu does not drink water brought by Gangi because:

a) it is not sweet and tasty b) it is not fresh c) it stinks

ii. Jokhu thinks that :

a) Only Sahuji could give them water b) the landlord will get money for water c) nobody would give them water.

iii. Gangi goes to get water from the Thakur's well and finds :

a) some people discussing the Thakur's activities b) the Thakur standing there c) that an animal has fallen in the well.

iv. Gangi comes back :

a) with a bucket full of water b) without taking water c) and complains against the Thakur

11. A. 3. 3. SUMMARY : THAKUR'S WELL

It is a story about the untouchables who have to suffer discriminations in the traditional caste based society. Munishi Prem Chand's story translated from Hindi into English by T. C. Ghai portrays a realistic picture of the pain and sorrows of the so called low caste people at the hands of the upper castes in a village.

Gangi and Jokhu belonged to an untouchable family. Jokhu is sick and thirsty. He tries to drink water out of a *lota*, tumbler, but it stinks. Gangi had brought that water a day before as the well is at the far end of the village. She puts the water close to her nose and finds it smelling foul. She asks Jokhu not to drink that water as some dead animal must have spoiled the water of the well. But she cannot go and bring water from any other well in the village. The landlord of the village called Thakur owns a well and won't allow the low caste people like Jokhu and Gangi take water from his well. The other well belongs to Sahuji who charges money for water. Jokhu and Gangi do not have money to buy water. The third well belongs to the Brahmans who dislike untouchables. Due to their low caste, Jokhu and Gangi are helpless. Jokhu knows that no one would help them. The upper castes do not even touch the bier of an untouchable.

Gangi plans to get water from the Thakur's well during the night. It is nine o'clock when she goes there. She finds some idlers in front of the Thakur's door. They were talking about the way Thakur had bribed the *thanedar* and saved his skin. He could get the copy of court judgment using his power. Gangi finds the light of the oil lamp falling on the well and takes shelter of the platform around the well. While waiting for an opportunity to get water stealthily, she has some rebellious thoughts about the caste system and discrimination against the untouchables.

She thinks there was nothing that made people like the Thakur superior to others. All these upper castes indulged in immoral and criminal acts. She thinks, "they stole, they cheated, they bribed in court then how were they so high and mighty?" As she thought this hiding near the Thakur's

well to steal water, she hears someone approaching the well. She felt afraid that she'll be beaten if caught hiding there. She hides herself in the shadow of a tree.

Gangi finds two women who had come to take water from the well. She hears these women expressing their anguish against the men folk. They said that men prefer to sit idle and make the women work. They treat women like their slaves. These women went away after filling their buckets with water. Gangi moved towards the well to get water. She knew that the upper caste people would punish her if she was caught taking water from the landlord's well. She throws the bucket tied to the rope into the well. There is no sound of the bucket going deep into the well. The moment she is about to get hold of the bucket that she had pulled out of the well, the landlord's door opens. She gets frightened and the bucket fell into the water with a splash. The landlord ran towards the well shouting. Gangi ran away and reached home. She found Jokhu drinking that stinking contaminated water.

She could not get even a lota a (small trembler) of clean water for sick Jhokhu just for being a low caste.

11.A. 4. THEME OF THE STORY

The story is about caste based differences. It shows the plight of the untouchables. Jokhu has to drink stinking water because of the caste based discriminations. Gangi goes to take water from the Thakur's well during the night . She knew that nobody would allow her to take water as she was an untouchable. If the Thakur comes to know that Gangi was taking water from his well, he will beat her. This fear does not allow her to take water and she has to come back without taking water.

All these details in the story express the theme of untouchability the story.

You can notice other details in the story related to the same idea. For example:

“They would drive her away from a distance”.

“No one feels our pain. Even when we die, no one comes to condole, least of all to lend his shoulder to the bier.”

Now explain the way these details bring out the theme of caste based differences and the negative attitude of the upper castes towards the untouchables.

The rejection and criticism of this social system based on discrimination against untouchables is the other related theme of the story. The writer conveys the message that these caste based differences are false and hollow. In the story, Gangi speaks about it.

Explain the following lines to show that Gangi rejects the idea of superiority of the upper castes:

*What makes us low, and them high? Just because they are wearing a string round their necks!

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

*"Only the other day the Thakur poached the shepherd's sheep, then slaughtered and ate it up. And this *panditji's* house is a round-the-year den of gamblers. And this very Sahuji adulterates ghee with oil"

.....

.....

.....

.....

11.A. 5. CHARACTERIZATION : THAKUR'S WELL

There are two main characters in the story. We know little about Jokhu except that he belongs to the untouchable family and he is sick and thirsty. At the end of the story we find him drinking stale, stinking water. It shows that he has accepted his fate. He does not even wait for Gangi to tell him that she could not bring the water for him.

Now how did we learn even these details about Jokhu:

i. The description that the author gives , for example, . 'Gangi and Jokhu belonged to an untouchable family 'My throat's dry' 'Jokhu had been ill for many days'.

There are details in the story which reveal that Jokhu is a person who has accepted his fate and does not believe in making any attempt to change his position. For example, when Gangi wants to go and bring water for him he says: "'You'll get only broken arms and legs, nothing else. Sit quietly".

Please Note: Sometimes you get information about a character from what the other people say about him or her. For example, Gangi says a number of things about people of the village that tell us about their character.

Now describe some traits of the Thakur's character and personality from the details given below:

- i. 'The Brahmin will curse, the Thakur wield his *lathi*, and Sahuji charge five for one.'
- ii. 'He was able to obtain the copy without paying a single penny! One should know the tricks of the trade.'
- iii. 'How the Thakur had bribed the *thanedar* and saved his skin.'
- iv. Only the other day the Thakur poached the shepherd's sheep, then slaughtered and ate it up.
- v. 'The Thakur advanced towards the well, shouting, 'Who's there? Who's there?' Gangi jumped from the well's platform and ran furiously away.'

11.A. 6. PLOT STRUCTURE : THAKUR'S WELL

For an understanding of the term plot , you can refer to the lesson on Ruskin Bond .
Answers to the following questions will help you identify and describe the plot of this story:

- i. The plot of the story focuses on :
- a) Gangi's struggle for water b) Jokhu's ailment c) Thakur bribing the thanedar.
-

ii. Arrange the incidents as they occur in the plot structure of the story

- a. . The idlers and the women are seen near the well. b. Gangi hides herself near the well c) Jokhu drinks stinking water d Jokhu falls ill e Gangi fails to bring water.
-
-
-

iii. All the incidents in the story:

- a) look realistic b imaginary, and false.
- iv. The incidents presented in the story :
- a happen in a sequence b) happen in a disorderly way
- v. The ending of the story is :
- a happy b sad

11.A. 7. SETTING AND LOCATION : THAKUR'S WELL

The answers to the following questions will help you write about the setting of the story:

- i. Where do the happenings in the story take place?
-
- ii. Is it a modern society or a traditional society to which the characters in the story belong?
-
- iii. Is the social system feudal or democratic and treating all as equals?
-
- iv. How are women treated by their men in this society?
-
-

11.A. 8. TITLE OF THE STORY: THAKUR'S WELL

You will be able to describe the suitability of the title after going through the following points:

- * The Thakur's well directly refers to the well owned by the Thakur and it also suggests the power of the upper castes in society.
- * Gangi's struggle to get water from the Thakur's well is the focus of the story.
- * The Thakur's well signifies the power of the upper castes that the story criticizes.
- * No other title is as suitable as this . For example, if the story is given the title after the main character Gangi, it will not be appropriate. The story is about the power of the upper castes that

the Thakur's well signifies. Gangi is a character which shows the way the power of the upper castes is represented through this well.

* 'Untouchably' as the title of the story will destroy interest in the story as it will reveal that the story is about this theme

11. A. 9.LET US SUM UP

*Munshi Prem Chand is a well known Hindi short-story writer. His stories have been translated in many languages of the world. His stories depict a realistic picture of society of his times

*The story 'Thakur's Well' brings out the sufferings of a poor family in an Indian village because of the evil of untouchability and the power of the feudal lords.

* Gangi and Jokhu are the two main characters.

*The story moves around Gangi's failed attempts to get clean water for Jokhu.

*The story is set in a village and its plot follows a linear pattern.

*It has a suitable title.

11.A. 10. QUESTIONS ON COMPREHENSION:

- i. Why is Gangi unable to get water in the beginning of the story?
- ii. Give a brief description of the character of the Thakur.
- iii. What were Gangi's thoughts while she waited near the well to get water?
- iv. What were the women talking when they came to get water from the Thakur's well?
- v. What happens at the end of the story?
- vi. Do you think Jokhu and Gangi are the victims of the social system? How?
- vii. Comment on the ending of the story.

11.A. 11. FURTHER READINGS:

Abrams, M.H.,A Glossary of Literary Terms. Bangalore: Prison Books Pvt.Ltd., 1993.

Note: You can read a few more stories by Munshi Prem Chand.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

ANSWERS AI: i. b ii. b iii. b iv c v. c.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

ANSWERS AII:

i. c ii c iii a iv b

BACHELOR OF ARTS (LIBERAL ARTS)

Semester-II

Course: Reading Prose

UNIT-11: Rabindranath Tagore: The Homecoming

(Please Note: Unit no 11 has Two Parts: A and B)

PART: B

STRUCTURE

11B .0 Objectives

11. B.1. Introduction

11B.2. Biographical Note

11. B.3. About the Story : The Homecoming

11. B.3.1. Text: The Homecoming

11B.3.2. Glossary :The Homecoming

11. B.3.3. Summary: The Homecoming

11. B.4. Theme of the Story

11. B.5. Characterization

11. B.6. Plot Structure of the Story

11. B 7.Setting: The Homecoming

11. B 8. Title of the Story

11. B.9. Let us Sum Up

11. B 10.Questions on Comprehension

11. B. 11. Further Readings

11. B. 0. OBJECTIVES:

The study of this part of the unit is aimed to enable you to :

- Re-write the story ' The Homecoming' in your own words
- Locate the theme of the story

- List important features of the story
- Answer comprehension questions on the story
- Describe and analyze different features of the story

11.B. 1. INTRODUCTION

In this part of the unit we have explained different features of the story ‘The Homecoming’ by Rabindranath Tagore. After the note on the author’s life and works, you will find details about the story and its summary in simple language. We have given different activities to guide you in answering the questions on various issues of the story. You will find the exercise useful in exploring different aspects of the story.

The questions on comprehension are intended to mark the outcome of your learning. The ‘Check Your Progress Exercises’, help you revisit and see the things you have understood. You can check the correct answers to these exercises from their solutions given at the end of the unit.

11. B.2. BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Rabindranath Tagore, the son of Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi, was born on 7 May 1861 in Calcutta. His father was a religious reformer. He sent Rabindranath Tagore to England for his education but he came back after two years leaving his studies incomplete. After coming back, he started reading books and wrote poems in Bengali. His first collection of poems which got recognition as a work of art was ‘Manasi’.

He went to Bangladesh in 1891 and stayed there looking after his family’s estates. There he lived among the villagers for ten years and developed a sympathy for them. His stories written during this time depicted the life of the rural folk. Satyajit Ray, a famous film director adapted Tagore’s stories in films.

In the year 1901, he founded a school in rural West Bengal at Shantiniketan. This school later became Visva-Bharati University in 1921. He got the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. His most celebrated work is ‘Gitanjali’, He received Knighthood from the British Government in 1915 but he repudiated it as a mark of his protest against the Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre in 1919.

Tagore is mostly known for his poetry. He wrote several other works of literature including novels, short-stories, drama, songs, and travelogues. He is the author of our National Anthem.

Tagore died on 7 August 1941

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS B-I:

Choose the correct option:

i. Rabindranath Tagore came back from England

a. leaving his studies incomplete b) after completing his studies c) to meet his mother

ii. Fill in the blank choosing the correct option :

..... adapted Tagore’s stories to films.

a) Debendernath Tagore b) Manasi c) Sayajit Ray

iii. Choose the correct answer:

The school founded by Tagore developed and became

a) a university b) a hospital c) a park

iv. Tagore got Nobel Prize in the year

a) 1919 b) 1929) c 1913

11.B.3.ABOUT THE STORY: THE HOME-COMING

Rabindranath Tagore's story, 'The Home Coming', is about Phatik Chakravorti's sufferings, struggle and the mental pain he experiences as a child. The fourteen year old boy suffers because of his mother's failure to understand his tender mind and giving preference to his younger brother Makhan. His mother considers him a nuisance and sends him away to live with his uncle in Calcutta. The boy suffers loneliness and isolation there away from his home. The story brings out the way the failure to understand the problems of young children results in their physical and mental sufferings.

11.B.3.1. TEXT: THE HOME-COMING

Phatik Chakravorty was ringleader among the boys of the village. A new mischief got into his head. There was a heavy log lying on the mud-flat of the river waiting to be shaped into a mast for a boat. He decided that they should all work together to shift the log from its place and roll it away. The owner of the log would be angry and surprised, and they would all enjoy the fun. Every one seconded the proposal, and it was carried unanimously.

But just as the fun was about to begin, Makhan, Phatik's younger brother, sauntered up, and sat down on the log in front of them all without a word. The boys were puzzled for a moment. He was pushed, rather timidly, by one of the boys and told to get up but he remained quite unconcerned. He appeared like a young philosopher meditating on the futility of games. Phatik was furious. "Makhan," he cried, "if you don't get down this minute I'll thrash you!"

Makhan only moved to a more comfortable position.

Now, if Phatik was to keep his regal dignity before the public, it was clear he ought to carry out his threat. But his courage failed him in such a crisis. His fertile brain, however, rapidly seized upon a new maneuver which would discomfit his brother and afford his followers an added amusement. He gave the word of command to roll the log and Makhan over together. Makhan heard the order, and made it a point of honour to stick on. But he overlooked the fact, like those who attempt earthly fame in other matters, that there was peril in it.

The boys began to heave at the log with all their might, calling out, "One, two, three ,go," At the word "go" the log went; and with it went Makhan's philosophy, glory and all.

All the other boys shouted themselves hoarse with delight. But Phatik was a little frightened. He knew what was coming. And, sure enough, Makhan rose from Mother Earth blind as Fate and screaming like the Furies. He rushed at Phatik and scratched his face and beat him and kicked him, and then went crying home. The first act of the drama was over .

Phatik wiped his face, and sat down on the edge of a sunken barge on the river bank, and began to chew a piece of grass. A boat came up to the landing, and a middle-aged man, with grey hair and dark moustache, stepped ashore. He saw the boy sitting there doing nothing, and asked him where the Chakravortis lived. Phatik went on chewing the grass, and said: "Over there," but it was quite impossible to tell where he pointed. The stranger asked him again. He swung his legs to and fro on the side of the barge, and said; "Go and find out," and continued to chew the grass as before.

But now a servant came down from the house, and told Phatik his mother wanted him. Phatik refused to move. But the servant was the master on this occasion. He took Phatik roughly, and carried him, kicking and struggling in impotent rage.

When Phatik came into the house, his mother saw him. She called out angrily: "So you have been hitting Makhan again?"

Phatik answered indignantly: "No, I haven't; who told you that?"

"His mother shouted: "Don't tell lies! You have."

Phatik said, "I tell you, I haven't. You ask Makhan!" But Makhan thought it best to stick to his previous statement. He said: "Yes, mother. Phatik did hit me."

"Phatik's patience was already exhausted. He could not hear this injustice. He rushed at Makhan, and hammered him with blows: "Take that" he cried, "and that, and that, for telling lies."

His mother took Makhan's side in a moment, and pulled Phatik away, beating him with her hands. When Phatik pushed her aside, she shouted out: "What! you little villain! Would you hit your own mother?"

It was just at this critical juncture that the grey-haired stranger arrived. He asked what the matter was. Phatik looked sheepish and ashamed.

But when his mother stepped back and looked at the stranger, her anger was changed to surprise. For she recognized her brother, and cried: "Why, Dada! Where have you come from?" As she said these words, she bowed to the ground and touched his feet. Her brother had gone away soon after she had married, and he had started business in Bombay. His sister had lost her husband while he was in Bombay. Bishamber had now come back to Calcutta, and had at once made enquiries about his sister. He had then hastened to see her as soon as he found out where she was.

The next few days were full of rejoicing. The brother asked after the education of the two boys. He was told by his sister that Phatik was a perpetual nuisance. He was lazy, disobedient, and wild. But Makhan was as good as gold, as quiet as a lamb, and very fond of reading, Bishamber kindly offered to take Phatik off his sister's hands, and educate him with his own children in Calcutta. The widowed mother readily agreed. When his uncle asked Phatik if he would like to go to Calcutta with him his joy knew no bounds and he said, "Oh, yes, uncle!" In a way that made it quite clear that he meant it.

It was an immense relief to the mother to get rid of Phatik. She was prejudiced against the boy, and no love was lost between the two brothers. She daily feared that he would either drown Makhan in the river, or break his head in a fight, or run him into some danger or other. At the same time she was somewhat distressed to see Phatik's extreme eagerness to get away.

Phatik, as soon as all was settled, kept asking his uncle every minute when they were to start. He was on pins and needles all day long with excitement, and lay awake most of the night. He bequeathed to Makhan, in perpetuity, his fishing-rod, his big kite and his marbles. Indeed, at this time of departure his generosity towards Makhan was unbounded.

When they reached Calcutta, Phatik made the acquaintance of his aunt for the first time. She was by no means pleased with this unnecessary addition to her family. She found her own three boys quite enough to manage without taking any one else.

And to bring a village lad of fourteen into their midst was terribly upsetting. Bishamber should really have thought twice before committing such an indiscretion.

In this world of human affairs there is no worse nuisance than a boy at the age of fourteen. He is neither ornamental, nor useful. It is impossible to shower affection on him as on a little boy; and he is always getting in the way. If he talks with a childish lisp he is called a baby, and if he answers in a grown-up way he is called impertinent. In fact any talk at all from him is resented. Then he is at the unattractive, growing age. He grows out of his clothes with indecent haste; his voice grows hoarse and breaks and quavers; his face grows suddenly angular and unsightly. It is easy to excuse the shortcomings of early childhood, but it is hard to tolerate even unavoidable lapses in a boy of fourteen. The lad himself becomes painfully self-conscious. When he talks with elderly people he is either unduly forward, or else so unduly shy that he appears ashamed of his very existence.

Yet it is at this very age when in his heart of hearts a young lad most craves for recognition and love; and he becomes the devoted slave of anyone who shows him consideration. But none dare openly love him, for that would be regarded as undue indulgence and therefore bad for the boy. So, what with scolding and chiding, he becomes very much like a stray dog that has lost his master.

For a boy of fourteen his own home is the only Paradise. To live in a strange house with strange people is little short of torture, while the height of bliss is to receive the kind looks of women, and never to be slighted by them.

It was anguish to Phatik to be the unwelcome guest in his aunt's house, despised by this elderly woman, and slighted, on every occasion. If she ever asked him to do anything for her, he would be so overjoyed that he would overdo it; and then she would tell him not to be so stupid, but to get on with his lessons.

The cramped atmosphere of neglect in his aunt's house oppressed Phatik so much that he felt that he could hardly breathe. He wanted to go out into the open country and fill his lungs and breathe freely. But there was no open country to go to. Surrounded on all sides by Calcutta houses and walls, he would dream night after night of his village home, and longed to be back there. He remembered the glorious meadow where he used to fly his kite all day long; the broad

river-banks where he would wander about the day singing and shouting for joy; the narrow brook where he could go and dive and swim at any time he liked. He thought of his band of boy companions over whom he was despot; and, above all, the memory of that tyrant mother of his, who had such a prejudice against him, occupied him day and night. A kind of physical love like that of animals; a longing to be in the presence of the one who is loved; an inexpressible wistfulness during absence; a silent cry of the inmost heart for the mother, like the lowing of a calf in the twilight;-this love, which was almost an animal instinct, agitated the shy, nervous, lean, uncouth and ugly boy. No one could understand it, but it preyed upon his mind continually.

There was no more backward boy in the whole school than Phatik. He gaped and remained silent when the teacher asked him a question, and like an over laden ass patiently suffered all the blows that came down on his back. When other boys were out at play, he stood wistfully by the window and gazed at the roofs of the distant houses .And if by chance he saw children playing on the open terrace of any roof, his heart would ache with longing. One day he summoned up all his courage, and asked his uncle: "Uncle, when can I go home?"

His uncle answered; "Wait till the holidays come." But the holidays would not come till November, and there was a long time still to wait .

One day Phatik lost his lesson-book. Even with the help of books he had found it very difficult indeed to prepare his lesson. Now it was impossible. Day after day the teacher would cane him unmercifully. His condition became so abjectly miserable that even his cousins were ashamed to know him. They began to jeer and insult him more than the other boys. He went to his aunt at last, and told her that he had lost his book.

His aunt pursed her lips in contempt, and said: "You great clumsy, country lout. How can I afford, with all my family, to buy you new books five times a month?"

That night, on his way back from school, Phatik had a bad headache with a fit of shivering. He felt he was going to have an attack of malarial fever. His one great fear was that he would be a nuisance to his aunt.

The next morning Phatik was nowhere to be seen. All searches in the neighborhood proved futile. The rain had been pouring in torrents all night, and those who went out in search of the boy got drenched through to the skin. At last Bishamber asked help from the police.

At the end of the day a police van stopped at the door before the house. It was still raining and the streets were all flooded. Two constables brought out Phatik in their arms and placed him before Bishamber. He was wet through from head to foot, muddy all over, his face and eyes flushed red with fever, and his limbs all trembling. Bishamber carried him in his arms, and took him into the inner apartments. When his wife saw him, she exclaimed; "What a heap of trouble this boy has given us. Hadn't you better send him home?"

Phatik heard her words, and sobbed out loud: "Uncle, I was just going home; but they dragged me back again".

The fever rose very high, and all that night the boy was delirious. Bishamber brought in a doctor. Phatik opened his eyes which were flushed with fever, and looked up to the ceiling, and said vacantly: "Uncle, have the holidays come yet? May I go home?"

Bishamber wiped the tears from his own eyes, and took Phatik's lean and burning hands in his own, and sat by him through the night. The boy began again to mutter. At last his voice became excited: "Mother," he cried, "Don't beat me like that! Mother! I am telling the truth!"

The next day Phatik became conscious for a short time. He turned his eyes about the room, as if expecting someone to come. At last, with an air of disappointment, his head sank back on the pillow. He turned his face to the wall with a deep sigh.

Bishamber knew his thoughts, and, bending down his head, whispered: "Phatik, I have sent for your mother." The day went by. The doctor said in a troubled voice that the boy's condition was critical.

Phatik began to cry out; "By the mark! --three fathoms. By the mark-- four fathoms. By the mark-." He had heard the sailor on the river- steamer calling out the mark on the plumb-line. Now he was himself plumbing an unfathomable sea.

Later in the day Phatik's mother burst into the room like a whirlwind, and began to toss from side to side and moan and cry in a loud voice.

Bishamber tried to calm her agitation, but she flung herself on the bed, and cried:"Phatik, my darling, my darling."

Phatik stopped his restless movements for a moment. His hands ceased beating up and down. He said: "Eh?" His mother cried again: "Phatik, my darling, my darling." Phatik very slowly turned his head and, without seeing anybody, said: "Mother, the holidays have come."

11. B.3.2. Glossary

ringleader	the leader of a small group
mast	a vertical pole on a ship or boat, used to support sails
mudflat	a stretch of flat, muddy land by the side of a river
second	to agree to something or support a proposal
unanimously	without disagreement
saunter	to walk in a leisurely manner
timidly	in a shy or unsure manner
meditate	to carefully think about something
futility	uselessness
thrash	to beat up
crisis	here, a moment of importance
peril	danger
hoarse	(of a voice) deep and harsh sounding, as if from shouting, illness or emotion
furies	(from greek mythology) spirits of punishments
indignantly	to behave in an angry or annoyed way as a result of something perceived to be unjust
sullenly	in a bad mood

prejudice	unreasonably finding fault with or disliking someone or something
unbounded	appearing to have no limits
indiscretion	behavior that is unwise or displays a lack of good judgment
ornamental	here, good-looking
impertinent	rude or disrespectfully
resent	to feel bitter towards someone or about something

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS B-II:

i. The name of Phatik's younger brother is :

a) Makhan b) Bishamber c) Mohan

ii. Choose the correct option:

a) Phatik's mother loves him more than his younger brother b) Phatik has great affection for his younger brother. c) Phatik's mother takes sides with his younger brother .

iii. Choose the correct answer:

a) Phatik welcomes his Uncle Bishembar near the bank of the river b) On their first meeting Bishamber offers sweets to Phatik. C) Bishembar asks him where the Chakravortis lived.

iv. Phatik promptly agrees to go to Calcutta because:

a) he loved his uncle b) liked his aunt's children c) wanted to go away from his home and mother.

v. When Phatik goes missing:

a) his uncle brings him back home b) his mother takes him back to his uncle's home c) police men bring him back.

vi. Phatik's aunt:

a) wants him to go back to his village b) wants him to work hard in his studies c) beats him everyday

11. B. 3.3.SUMMARY

Phatik Chakravorty is a mischievous boy. He is the ringleader among the village boys. He plans a mischief for fun. There is a heavy log meant for making a mast for a boat. The boys want to roll it away. They think that the owner of the log would be angry and they will have a hearty laugh at it. Before they could do this, Phatik's younger brother Makhan goes and sits over the log as if challenging Phatik's authority. Phatik asks him to get up but he does not agree. Phatik asks the boys to roll the log away and they follow his command. They roll the log and Makhan gets hurt.

He gets up and attacks Phatik by scratching his face and kicking him. He goes home crying. Phatik is irritated but he keeps sitting on the banks of the river.

At this time, a middle aged man comes there in a boat and asks Phatik about the Chakravorty house. As Phatik is upset due to his quarrel with his brother he does not bother to pay attention to the stranger and asks him to go and find the house himself. He does not realize that the stranger wanted to know the way to Phatik's house only, and this stranger was actually his uncle.

As the stranger leaves, a servant from Phatik's house comes and forcibly takes him home. His mother accuses him of having beaten his younger brother Makhan. Phatik tries to prove his innocence but his mother does not believe him. When Makhan persists telling lies, and complaining that Phatik had hit him, Phatik loses his patience as it was something unjust that he could not tolerate. He starts beating Makhan. The mother sides with his younger brother and showers blows on him calling him a villain.

The man, who had asked Phatik the way to the Chakravorty house, comes there. He turns out to be Phatik's maternal uncle, his mother's brother. He had gone and started living in Bombay immediately after the marriage of his sister, Phatik's mother. His name is Bishamber and he has come back to Calcutta. Phatik's father had died when Bishamber was in Bombay. He was visiting his sister after a long time.

Phatik's mother tells her brother Bishamber that the boy Phatik was disobedient and unruly. He offers to take Phatik to Calcutta and educate him with his own children. Phatik is happy to go with his uncle. His mother feels relieved as she wants to get rid of the boy. She feared that Phatik could cause harm to his younger brother. But she was also pained to see Phatik's eagerness to leave. Phatik leaves his playthings for Makhan. He looks very generous and kind to Makhan at the time of his departure.

On reaching Calcutta, Phatik meets his aunt, Bishamber's wife, for the first time. She is not happy to receive Phatik in her home. She considers him a burden on the family. She already finds it difficult to manage her own three sons.

The writer then explains the problems of the boys at the age of fourteen. A boy in this age is always a nuisance because of certain traits of his age. His voice is hoarse, and he looks shabby. He can neither be treated as a child nor an adult. But an affectionate and sympathetic attitude can make a young boy obedient and respectful.

Phatik is pained to see that his aunt dislikes him. All his attempts to please the Aunt turn futile. The atmosphere of the house is suffocating. He wants to go out in the open and have some freedom. He remembers his house and wants to go back. He has no interest in studies. He rather longs to enjoy as he used to in his village. He asks his uncle about going back home in the village. The uncle tells him that he could go during the holidays in November only. It was a long time for him to wait for the holidays.

One day Phatik loses his book and fails to prepare his lessons. He is caned at school for not preparing his lessons. His condition in the school becomes so miserable that his cousins start insulting him more than the other boys. His aunt scolds him for losing the book. Phatik feels sick. He does not want to tell this to his aunt as he fears that it would trouble her more.

The next day, the boy Phatik is not seen anywhere there. His uncle and other people of the neighborhood go in search of him. They get drenched in the rain. seeks help of the police. The policemen find out the boy at the end of the day.

The boy had fever and he was drenched in rain. Bishamber brings him home. His wife asks him to take the boy back to his home in Calcutta. On hearing the aunt's words, Phatik tells his uncle that he was on his way to his home when the police caught and brought him back. Due to high fever, he is semi-conscious.

His uncle calls in a doctor. In his delirium Phatik repeatedly said, "Uncle, have the holidays come yet? May I go home?" Sometimes he would speak aloud that he was speaking the truth.

The next morning, Phatik looked at the door as if expecting someone to come and take him home. His uncle tells him that he had already sent for his mother. Phatik keeps dreaming about his life in the village. His mother arrives. When she calls him showing her affection, he utters these words only, "Mother, the holidays have come". The story comes to an end leaving us thoughtful and sympathetic for this young boy.

11.B.4. CHARACTERIZATION: THE HOMECOMING

A. Pick up the traits that you find in the Character of Phatik and draw his character-sketch:

- i. Obedient and Disciplined. ii. Innocent
- iii. Mischievous iv. Disobedient v. Takes interest in Studies
- vi. Has no interest in studies. vii. Feels homesick
- viii . Can live away from home ix. Popular among his friends x. Self-respecting

B. Select the relevant sentences for the character-sketch of Phatik's mother:

- i. Easily misguided.
- ii. Understands the problems of her children
- iii. Fails to understand the problems of her children
- iv. Has deep understanding of child psychology.
- v. Biased
- vi. Careless
- vii. Prefers to depend upon others
- viii. Tries to face the situation.
- ix. Takes impulsive decisions
- x. Thinks much before taking a decision

11. B.5. THEME: THE HOMECOMING

Choose the ideas out of the ones given below which relate to the theme of the story:

- i. The parents' failure to understand the problems of their children can harm them.
- ii. It is difficult for a child to stay away from home.

- iii. Children should not visit their aunts and uncles.
- iv. There is no place like home.
- v. Mischievous children should be beaten and sent away from home.

11. B.6. PLOT STRUCTURE OF THE STORY

Answering the following questions will help you develop the plot structure of this story:

What is the first important incident in the story?

- i. The quarrel between Phatik and Makhan
- ii. The arrival of uncle Bishamber
- iii. The servant coming to take Phatik home.

SELECT THE CORRECT OPTION:

The Second significant happening is :

- i. Bishamber's meeting his sister
- ii. Phatik meeting his uncle for the first time
- iii. Phatik's going away to Calcutta with his uncle
- iv. His aunt meeting him in Calcutta

Pick up the correct option:

The third important happening in the story is :

- i. Phatik's losing the book
- ii. His going to school
- iii. His not taking interest in studies

The fourth significant happening in the story is? :

- i. Phatik's running away from home and falling ill
- ii. His uncle seeking the help of the police
- iii. Phatik's getting drenched in the rain.

The story ends with.....:

- i. Phatik asking his uncle to take him back home
- ii. The arrival of Phatik's mother and his uttering the last sentence
- iii. Bishambertelling Phatik that he would take the boy to his home.

The ending of the story is:

Tragic,

Comic

Neither tragic nor comic

11.B.7. TITLE OF THE STORY

We have explained here what makes the title of this story relevant and significant:

One meaning of the title is related to Phatik's longing to return home. Therefore, it is home coming for him.

The deeper meaning of the title implies that man's ultimate home is the abode of God. Man finds peace only at his real home.

Note: A story does not have only one relevant title. We can explore other titles also. You can take hints from the above explanation about the title and do the following exercise.

Exercise: Pick up the other statements which can be used as the title of this story and explain why?

- i. Go east go west home is the best
- ii. Phatik and Shankar
- iii. Bishamber the Uncle
- iv. A Cruel Aunt
- v. Children need Understanding and Care

11.B.8. SETTING AND LOCATION: THE HOMECOMING

Pick up the correct options to describe the setting and location of the story ‘The Home Coming’.

- i. Do the names and other details indicate anything about the place where the story is set?
.....
- ii. What information do we get about the setting of the story from the details where the children are playing in the beginning?
.....
- iii. Name the places i.e. villages and cities , if any ,where the story is set.
.....
- iv. Do the happenings presented in the story occur at the same place?
.....

11.B.9. LET US SUM UP

- Rabindranath is a world famous Nobel laureate .
- His story ‘The Homecoming’ is about the problems that careless handling of children causes.
- It is a touching story of Phatik’s miseries resulting from his mother’s biased attitude against him.
- The importance of home in one’s life is a major theme of the story.
- The story brings out the way a child feels isolated and lonely when displaced from his surroundings,
- The story has a well developed plot, a suitable title and interesting characters.

11.B.10. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- i. How does the conflict between Phatik and his younger brother bring?
- ii. Describe Phatik’ first meeting with his uncle Bishamber.
- iii. Why is Phatik happy to go to his uncle’s house at Calcutta?
- iv. How is Phatik treated by his Aunt? Illustrate your answer with examples from the story.
- v. What does the writer say about a fourteen year old boy?

- vi. What happens after Phatik learns that he will have to wait for a long time before going back to his village?
- vii. Give a brief character –sketch of Phatik.

11. B.11.FURTHER READINGS

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Kaur , Mohinder Critical Study of Tagore's Short Stories. S. Chand and Company. Delhi: 1989

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

ANSWERS B-I : i. a ii. c iii. a iv c

ANSWERS B-II: i. a ii. c iii. c iv c v. c vi.a