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INTRODUCTION TO SHORT STORY AND BASIC GRAMMAR

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CONTENTS

STORY Section				
No.	**Title**	**Author**	**Editor**	**Page**
1	Justice, faith and appearances	Ms. Aarti Devi		3
2	Childhood, innocence and social realities	Ms. Aarti Devi		36
3	Identity, relationships and human conflict	Ms. Aarti Devi		69
4	Suspense, oppression and social divides	Ms. Aarti Devi		102
Grammar Section				
No.	**Title**	**Author**	**Editor**	**Page**
1	Grammar: Noun and Pronoun	Dr Astha Gupta	Dr. Sandeep Bishnoi	139
2	Verbs and Adverbs	Dr Astha Gupta	Dr. Sandeep Bishnoi	150
3	Adjectives and Prepositions	Dr Astha Gupta	Dr. Sandeep Bishnoi	167
4	Interjections and Conjunctions.	Dr Astha Gupta	Dr. Sandeep Bishnoi	192
5	Grammar: Tenses and Voice	Dr Astha Gupta	Dr. Sandeep Bishnoi	210
6	Narration (Direct and Indirect Speech).	Dr Astha Gupta	Dr. Sandeep Bishnoi	241
7	Literary Terms	Dr Astha Gupta	Dr. Sandeep Bishnoi	257

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Lesson- 1	

JUSTICE, FAITH AND APPEARANCES

(Leo Tolstoy: "God Sees the Truth, But Waits"; Oscar Wilde: "The Model Millionaire"; R.K. Narayan: "The Blind Dog")

Structure

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 Leo Tolstoy: "God Sees the Truth, But Waits"

1.4 Oscar Wilde: "The Model Millionaire"

1.5 R.K. Narayan: "The Blind Dog"

1.6 Comparative Study of the Three Stories

1.7 Check Your Progress (Units 1.3 to 1.5)

1.8 Summary

1.9 Keywords

1.10 Self-Assessment Test

1.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.12 References / Suggested Readings

1.1 Learning Objectives

This chapter opens the study of short fiction in your first semester. It brings together three stories by three very different writers: a Russian moralist, an Irish wit and an Indian observer of small-town life. After studying this chapter carefully, you should be able to:

- explain the main features of the short story as a literary form and recognise them in the stories prescribed for Unit I;
- narrate the plot of each of the three stories in your own words and describe its main characters;
- identify and discuss the central themes of justice, faith, forgiveness, compassion, appearance and reality, and freedom and dependence;
- recognise the use of literary devices such as irony, foreshadowing, flashback, wit, humour and point of view in the three stories;
- compare the three writers with regard to their attitude to life, their narrative technique and their style;
- explain a given passage with reference to its context and answer short and long questions on these stories with confidence.

1.2 Introduction

Dear learner, we all enjoy listening to stories. Long before there were books, grandmothers told stories at night, travellers carried stories from village to village, and priests used stories to teach right conduct. The modern short story is the grown-up descendant of all these older forms. In this chapter you will meet three such stories. Each can be read in less than half an hour, yet each leaf behind a question that stays with the reader for much longer.

Before we go to the stories, let us take a brief look at the form itself. After that, we shall see why these three stories have been placed together in one chapter.

1.2.1 The Short Story as a Literary Form

A short story is a brief work of prose fiction that can usually be read at one sitting. Because it is short, it cannot do what a novel does. It cannot follow a character through many years, or move through many settings and subplots. Instead, it concentrates on a single incident, a single crisis or a single change in a person's life. The American writer Edgar Allan Poe argued in the nineteenth century that a good short story aims at a "single effect", and that every sentence in it should help to produce that effect. Most modern critics still accept this idea in some form.

A short story usually has the following features:

- **Brevity and unity:** The story is short and everything in it is closely connected. Nothing is wasted.
- **Plot:** The sequence of events, usually moving from a beginning (exposition) through a rising action and a crisis to a conclusion. Some stories end with a surprise, others with a quiet realisation.
- **Character:** The people in the story, who are drawn quickly, often through a few well-chosen actions or details.
- **Setting:** The time and place of the story, which may be as important as the people.
- **Theme:** The central idea or view of life that the story expresses. A theme is not the same as the plot. The plot tells you what happens; the theme tells you what it means.
- **Point of view:** The position from which the story is told, such as an outside narrator who knows everything (the omniscient narrator) or a character who tells the story in the first person.
- **Style and tone:** The writer's choice of words, and the mood or attitude (serious, comic, ironic, sorrowful) that these words create.

You will study these terms more fully in Unit IV of your syllabus. For the present, it is enough to know them as tools. We shall use them in this chapter to understand the stories better.

1.2.2 The Three Writers at a Glance

The three stories in this chapter come from three countries and three centuries of experience. The following table gives you a quick overview.

	Leo Tolstoy	Oscar Wilde	R.K. Narayan
Country	Russia	Ireland (worked in England)	India
Life span	1828 to 1910	1854 to 1900	1906 to 2001
Story	"God Sees the Truth, But Waits"	"The Model Millionaire"	"The Blind Dog"
Mood	Serious, spiritual	Light, witty, comic	Gentle, ironic, sad
Central concern	Suffering and forgiveness	Appearance and reality	Freedom and exploitation

Notice how different the three moods are. Yet, as you will discover, all three stories are really about a question of justice: who deserves what, who gets what, and whether the world is fair.

1.2.3 Why These Stories Are Studied Together

The title of this chapter, "Justice, Faith and Appearances", gives you a way of reading the three stories together. In Tolstoy's story an innocent man is punished for a crime he did not commit, and must find out whether justice and faith can survive such an injury. In Wilde's story a young man is rewarded for a small act of kindness, but the reward comes only because the person he helped was not what he seemed to be. In Narayan's story a blind beggar who depends entirely on the kindness of others shows no kindness to the animal that depends entirely on him.

In each story, then, a character is judged, treated or mistreated on the basis of something: guilt, poverty, weakness. In each story, the surface of things hides the truth. As you read the stories one by one, keep these three ideas in your mind and ask yourself in each case: What is fair here? What does the character believe? What is only appearance, and what is real?

Activity 1: Before you begin the stories, write down in three or four lines your own answer to this question: "Is it better to be kind to someone who may never repay you, or to be kind only to those who can help you?" Keep your answer. When you finish the chapter, read it again and see whether your view has changed.

1.3 Leo Tolstoy: "God Sees the Truth, But Waits"

1.3.1 About the Author

Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (known in English as Leo Tolstoy) was born in 1828 on his family estate of Yasnaya Polyana, south of Moscow, and died in 1910. He is regarded as one of the greatest novelists the world has produced. His two huge novels, *War and Peace* (1869) and *Anna Karenina* (1877), are read all over the world. Tolstoy was born into a noble landowning family, served for a time as a soldier, and lived a rather careless life in his youth. Later he became deeply troubled by questions about the meaning of life, wealth, violence and death.

In the later part of his life Tolstoy gave up many of the privileges of his class. He dressed simply, worked in the fields, and came to believe that the teachings of Jesus, especially the ideas of love, humility and non-resistance to evil, should be followed in daily life. He wrote many simple moral tales for ordinary people, and "God Sees the Truth, But Waits" (published in 1872) is among the best known of them. His ideas on non-violence also influenced Mahatma Gandhi, who corresponded with him and named one of his South African settlements after him. This link makes Tolstoy a particularly interesting writer for an Indian reader.

1.3.2 Background and Title of the Story

The story was written at a time when Tolstoy was turning towards a plain, moral and almost folk-tale style. It is based on a Russian proverb. The proverb means that although God knows the truth about every act, He does not always reveal it at once. Truth may remain hidden for a long time, and the innocent may suffer while they wait. The story is a test of this proverb. It asks how long a person can wait for the truth, and what the waiting does to him.

The story is set in Russia in the nineteenth century, in the time of the Tsars. The setting is important because it explains how an innocent man could be convicted so easily. There was no scientific investigation, no fingerprinting, and no real means of defending oneself against circumstantial evidence. The punishments were severe: public flogging with the knout (a heavy whip) and long exile to the mines of Siberia.

1.3.3 Summary of the Story

The merchant of Vladimir. The story begins in the town of Vladimir, where a young merchant named Ivan Dmitrich Aksionov lives. He has two shops and a house of his own. He is handsome, fair-haired, cheerful and fond of singing and playing the guitar. In his youth he drank too much, but after marriage he has largely given up the habit. He is happy, prosperous and has a loving wife and children.

The warning. One summer Aksionov prepares to go to the great fair at Nizhny Novgorod. As he is leaving, his wife begs him not to go. She has had a bad dream. She dreamt that when he came back from the town his hair had turned grey. Aksionov laughs and says she is afraid he will go on a drinking spree at the fair. He tells her not to worry and sets off.

The inn. Halfway on the journey, Aksionov meets a fellow merchant. They have tea together and take rooms next to each other at an inn. Aksionov is not a man to oversleep. He gets up before dawn, wakes his driver, pays the innkeeper and drives on. After travelling about twenty-five miles he stops to feed the horses, rests in the porch of another inn and plays his guitar.

The accusation. While he is playing, a troika (a carriage drawn by three horses) arrives with a police officer and two soldiers. The officer asks Aksionov where he spent the previous night and whether he was alone. When Aksionov tells him, the officer says that the merchant who shared the inn with him was found with his throat cut and that his money has been stolen. The officer asks to search Aksionov's bag. In the bag they find a knife covered in blood. Aksionov is horrified. He swears that he knows nothing about it, but the evidence is against him. He is arrested.

The trial and the wife's doubt. Aksionov is tried at Vladimir and found guilty. He is flogged with the knout, and after the wounds heal, he is sent to Siberia with other convicts. His wife comes to see him in prison with the children. In her sorrow she asks him whether he really did it, and Aksionov, who has not yet lost his faith, says that only God can know the truth and that to Him alone he must appeal. The wife later petitions the Tsar, but the petition is refused. When Aksionov learns that even his wife had doubted him, he tells himself that only God knows the truth and that he must look for hope only from God. From that time, he gives up all hope of help from men.

Twenty-six years in Siberia. Aksionov spends twenty-six years in a Siberian prison. His hair turns white as snow and his beard grows long, thin and grey. He no longer laughs. He walks slowly, speaks little and prays often. In prison he learns to make boots and earns some money. With it he buys a book called *The Lives of the Saints*, which he reads whenever there is light enough. He sings in the prison

church choir. The prison authorities like him because he is gentle. His fellow convicts respect him and call him "Grandfather" and "the Saint". When they have a quarrel, they often bring it to him to settle.

The arrival of Makar Semyonich. One day a new batch of prisoners arrives. Among them is a tall, strong, grey-haired man of about sixty named Makar Semyonich. He says he has been sent to Siberia for something he did not do. Aksionov asks him where he comes from, and when Makar mentions Vladimir, Aksionov asks if he has heard of the merchant Aksionov. Makar says he knows the family. He then asks Aksionov why he is in prison. Aksionov says that he is suffering for his sins, but will not say more. Others tell Makar the story of how Aksionov came to be convicted. On hearing this, Makar looks at Aksionov and says that someone must have put the knife in his bag. If it had been his own bag, he says, a knife could not have been put into it while it was under his head without waking him.

These words make Aksionov suspect that it was Makar who committed the murder. He goes away and cannot sleep. Memories of his old life come to him: his wife as she stood on the day he left, her face, her eyes; the children, little ones as they were then; himself young and merry, sitting on the porch of the inn playing his guitar; the flogging, the executioner and the crowd. He is overcome with rage and wishes to take revenge on Makar.

The tunnel. For many weeks Aksionov does not speak to Makar. One night, as he is walking about the prison, he sees earth rolling out from under one of the bunks. Makar is digging a tunnel to escape. Makar, terrified, grabs hold of Aksionov and threatens to kill him if he tells. Aksionov replies that he has no wish to escape and that Makar had killed him long ago. As for telling, he says, that is as God wills.

The next day, when the prisoners are being taken out to work, the guards discover the tunnel. The governor questions every prisoner, and no one knows anything. Finally he turns to Aksionov, whom everyone trusts to speak the truth. "Old man," he says, "you are a truthful man. Tell me before God, who dug this hole?" Aksionov has a golden chance to take revenge on Makar, who would be flogged almost to death. But he says that he has not seen it and cannot tell. He adds that it may be God's will that he should not tell, and that the governor may do with him as he wishes. The governor is baffled, and the matter is dropped.

The confession. That night, as Aksionov is lying in bed, he hears someone coming and sees Makar standing beside him. Makar asks him why he did not tell and what more he wants from him. Aksionov

does not answer. Then Makar falls at his feet and confesses that it was he who killed the merchant, and that he had put the knife in Aksionov's bag while he slept. He says that he had meant to kill Aksionov too, but he heard a noise outside, hid the knife in the bag and escaped through the window.

Makar begs for forgiveness. He says that he will go to the governor and confess, and that Aksionov will be set free and be able to go home. Aksionov replies bitterly that it is easy for Makar to talk, but that he himself has suffered for twenty-six years. Where could he go now? His wife is dead, his children have forgotten him, and he has nowhere to go. Makar does not get up. He beats his head on the floor and says that when they flogged him with the knout it was easier to bear than it is to see Aksionov now. Yet Aksionov took pity on him and did not tell. "For Christ's sake, forgive me, wretch that I am!" he cries, and begins to sob.

When Aksionov hears Makar sobbing, he begins to weep too. "God will forgive you," he says. "Maybe I am a hundred times worse than you." As he says these words, his heart grows light and the longing for home leaves him. He has no wish to leave the prison now. He only waits for his last hour.

The end. In spite of what Aksionov said, Makar confesses to the authorities. But by the time the order for Aksionov's release arrives, the old man is dead.

Activity 2: Draw a simple timeline of the story on a sheet of paper. Mark the important events (the dream, the inn, the arrest, the trial, the arrival of Makar, the tunnel, the confession and the death) and write one sentence under each. Then mark the point at which you think Aksionov's life changes the most.

1.3.4 Characters

Ivan Dmitrich Aksionov is the central character. At the start of the story, he is a cheerful young man who is fond of the good things of life. He is slightly careless: he laughs off his wife's warning and he drinks tea with a stranger at a roadside inn. His suffering changes him completely. The man who sang and played the guitar becomes the silent, white-haired prisoner who prays and reads about the saints. His real greatness appears only at the end, when he has the power to take revenge on his enemy and instead chooses silence, and later forgiveness. He is a portrait of the Tolstoyan ideal: a man who accepts suffering without hatred.

Makar Semyonich is the real murderer. He is strong, practical and cunning. He is not shown as wholly evil. He lets an innocent man suffer for twenty-six years, but when he sees Aksionov's mercy, he is broken by it. His change of heart shows that Tolstoy believes even a hardened criminal can be moved by love and forgiveness.

Aksionov's wife appears only briefly, yet she is important. Her dream at the beginning foreshadows the future. Her doubt at the trial hurts her husband more than the flogging does. She represents the ordinary human tendency to believe the evidence rather than the person.

The authorities (the police officer, the court and the prison governor) represent human justice. They act according to the evidence in front of them, which is false. They are not cruel by nature, but they are blind. The prison governor, by contrast, shows some respect for Aksionov's honesty and is shown in a better light.

1.3.5 Themes

Injustice and the limits of human justice. The story shows that human courts can make terrible mistakes. Aksionov is convicted on the strength of circumstantial evidence: the blood-stained knife in his bag. No one believes his word. The story suggests that man's justice is limited, and that real justice belongs to God, who "sees the truth".

Faith and patience. The title itself states that God waits. Aksionov, after losing hope in men, places his hope in God and prays all his life. The story is a study of what faith means in the face of long suffering: not a promise of quick reward, but a power to endure and to remain good.

Suffering and spiritual growth. Aksionov's suffering does not destroy him. It makes him gentle, wise and detached. Tolstoy suggests that suffering endured without bitterness can purify a person. The change in Aksionov's appearance, from the fair-haired singer to the white-haired saint, is a visible sign of this inner change.

Forgiveness and mercy. This is the central theme. Aksionov first feels the desire for revenge and is torn by it. But when the chance comes, he refuses to betray Makar. This act of mercy brings about Makar's repentance. The story teaches that forgiveness is stronger than punishment, because it can change a heart in a way that a whip cannot.

Guilt and conscience. Makar goes free for twenty-six years, but is finally defeated by his own conscience. The story shows that guilt is a punishment of its own kind, and that a man cannot escape it simply by escaping the law.

1.3.6 Critical Appreciation

Plot and structure. The plot is simple and moves in a straight line. The story has three clear parts: the happy life of Aksionov, the crime and the punishment, and the long years in prison ending in the confession. Notice the balance. The first part is full of life, music and domestic warmth; the second is full of shock and pain; the third is quiet and spiritual. The writer moves the reader from the outer world of events to the inner world of the soul.

Foreshadowing. Foreshadowing is a hint of what will happen later. In this story it is the wife's dream. She sees her husband with grey hair, and the dream comes true in a terrible way. The reader should also notice that Aksionov, in laughing at the dream, is shown as slightly proud and careless. He is not guilty of the crime, but he is shown to be a man who must learn humility.

Flashback. When Aksionov lies awake after hearing Makar's words, he sees scenes from his past: his wife, his children, his youth, the flogging. This is a use of flashback, the technique of returning to earlier events in a story. Here the flashback is not narrated by the writer but appears in the mind of the character, which allows the reader to feel Aksionov's pain from the inside.

Irony. The title is ironic in a gentle way. God sees the truth, but man does not, and for twenty-six years the truth stays hidden. There is irony also in the ending: the order of release comes only after Aksionov is dead, and in the fact that the real culprit is the man who eventually frees Aksionov from hatred. The most painful irony is that Aksionov, who is innocent, dies in prison, while Makar, who is guilty, is the one who finds peace through confession.

Point of view and style. The story is told by a third-person narrator who knows what goes on in the minds of the characters. The language is plain and direct. There are almost no long descriptions, no ornamental phrases and no comments by the writer. The simple style suits the subject: a plain, moral truth presented without decoration. This kind of writing makes a story feel like a parable, and many readers find that it stays in the mind precisely because it is so unadorned.

Symbols. The knife is the symbol of false evidence, the instrument of the crime and of the punishment. Aksionov's white hair is a symbol of suffering and age but also of purity. The tunnel stands for the prisoner's hope of escape; Aksionov's refusal to betray it stands for his rejection of revenge. Notice also how the guitar, which appears at the beginning when he is happy and again in his memory, becomes a symbol of the lost joy of his earlier life.

1.3.7 A Closer Look at Three Key Moments

The moment of the arrest. The arrest scene is carefully built. Aksionov is sitting in the porch of an inn, playing his guitar, entirely at peace. The writer places the music and the carriage side by side: the happy man and the arrival of the police. The sudden change in mood teaches the reader how quickly life can turn. Notice also that Aksionov's first reaction is not anger but bewilderment. He cannot imagine that anyone could believe him capable of murder, and the reader shares his shock. The scene works because Tolstoy gives us no commentary; he simply lets the facts pile up.

The moment of the governor's question. This is the turning point of the story. The governor asks Aksionov, a man known for his truthfulness, to tell the truth about the tunnel. Aksionov could end his enemy's freedom with one word. He is tempted, and the reader feels the temptation. When he refuses, the reader realises that the twenty-six years have not made him bitter, but have taught him something about the nature of justice and revenge. His reply, that it is God's will if he does not tell, shows that he has handed the question over to a higher power.

The moment of the confession. The scene in which Makar falls at Aksionov's feet is the emotional climax. Both men weep, and in their tears the hatred disappears. It is remarkable that Aksionov, who has the right to be angry, is the one who comforts the guilty man. He says he may be a hundred times worse than Makar. This is not false modesty. It expresses the Tolstoyan belief that every person is a sinner and that no one has the right to look down on another.

1.3.8 The Story as a Parable

A parable is a short story that teaches a moral truth through a simple example. The parables of Jesus in the Gospels are the best-known model, and Tolstoy was strongly influenced by them. "God Sees the Truth, But Waits" has many of the marks of a parable. The characters are types rather than complex individuals. The setting is drawn with only a few strokes. The events follow a clear moral order: wrong,

suffering, repentance and forgiveness. And the lesson is not stated directly, but emerges from the events.

Yet the story is not a mere sermon. Tolstoy gives Aksionov a real human interior. We see his joy at the start, his doubts, his anger and his final peace. This human depth is what raises the story above a simple moral tale. A good short story, remember, can carry a moral without becoming dull, and Tolstoy shows how it can be done. When you write about this story in an examination, try to bring out this double nature: it is a parable in its simplicity, and a psychological drama in its portrayal of a man's inner struggle.

1.3.9 Glossary

- **Knout:** a heavy whip used in Russia as a punishment.
- **Siberia:** the vast cold region of Russia, used for centuries as a place of exile and forced labour.
- **Troika:** a Russian carriage drawn by three horses side by side.
- **Circumstantial evidence:** evidence that suggests a conclusion indirectly, but does not directly prove it.
- **Parable:** a short simple story that teaches a moral or spiritual lesson.

Activity 3: Aksionov decides not to tell the governor about Makar. In your opinion, was it a wise decision? Write a paragraph (about 80 words) giving your reasons, and compare your view with that of a classmate or a friend.

1.4 Oscar Wilde: "The Model Millionaire"

1.4.1 About the Author

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was born in Dublin in 1854 and died in Paris in 1900. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and at Oxford, where he became known for his brilliant conversation and for his belief in "art for art's sake", the idea that art need not serve any moral or social purpose and should be enjoyed for its beauty. He moved to London and soon became the most talked-about wit in the city.

Wilde wrote in almost every form. His fairy tales, such as "The Happy Prince" (1888), are loved by children and adults alike. His only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), is a famous study of beauty, vanity and moral decay. His plays, including *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892) and *The*

Importance of Being Earnest (1895), are comedies of manners in which the upper classes are mocked with sparkling dialogue. In 1895 Wilde was tried and imprisoned, and his prison experience produced the long letter *De Profundis* and the poem *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898). He is remembered above all for his wit: his epigrams and his ability to turn an accepted opinion upside down.

1.4.2 Background and Title of the Story

"The Model Millionaire" first appeared in 1887 under the sub-title "A Note of Admiration", and was later included in the collection *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Stories* (1891). It is a very short comic tale set in Victorian London. The Victorians were extremely conscious of class and money. A young man without income could not hope to marry a girl from a respectable family, however charming he might be. Wilde used this situation to write a light, amusing story, but beneath the humour lies a serious observation about how society judges people by their appearance and wealth.

The title is a clever play on words. A "millionaire model" is a rich man who poses as a model. A "model millionaire" is a millionaire who behaves in an ideal way. Wilde puts both meanings into the title and, as you will see, the last line of the story returns to this joke.

1.4.3 Summary of the Story

The opening epigram. The story opens with a witty general remark: unless one is wealthy, there is no use in being a charming fellow; romance is the privilege of the rich, and the poor should be practical and prosaic. It is better, the narrator adds, to have a permanent income than to be fascinating. This is Wilde's way of announcing that the story is about the place of money in love and life, and that he will treat the subject with a smile.

Hughie Erskine. The hero is a young man named Hughie Erskine. He is very handsome, with a perfect profile, and everyone likes him. But he has no money and no profession. His father left him a cavalry sword and a fifteen-volume *History of the Peninsular War*. Hughie hung the sword over his looking-glass and put the book on a shelf, and he lives on a small allowance of two hundred pounds a year from an old aunt. He has tried various careers, such as the stock exchange, the tea trade and the sherry trade, but he has failed at each one. In the end he is nothing at all: a delightful, harmless young man with a beautiful profile and no occupation.

The proposal that cannot be. Hughie is deeply in love with Laura Merton, the daughter of a retired colonel. The colonel likes Hughie, but he will not hear of an engagement until Hughie can show ten thousand pounds. Hughie, naturally, cannot. He is a young man in love without the means to marry, and he is very unhappy.

In the artist's studio. One morning Hughie goes to see his friend Alan Trevor, a talented painter. He finds Trevor working on a large portrait of a beggar. The beggar, standing on a platform in the studio, is a wizened old man with a face like wrinkled parchment and a most piteous expression. He wears a ragged brown cloak, his boots are patched, and he holds out one hand for alms while his other hand grips a rough stick. Hughie, who has a very kind heart, is moved by the sight. He thinks the old man looks desperately wretched. He says to Trevor that the model is a poor old fellow, and he asks whether the man is paid well for his work.

While the artist is busy with something else for a moment, the old model rests and looks tired. Hughie is overcome with pity. He puts his hand in his pocket, finds a single sovereign (a gold coin worth one pound), and slips it into the old man's hand. It is all the money he has. The beggar starts slightly, a faint smile passes over his face, and he thanks Hughie.

The revelation. Soon afterwards Trevor tells Hughie that the "beggar" is not a beggar at all. He is Baron Hausberg, one of the richest men in Europe, a man who could buy the whole of London without overdrawing his account. The Baron has simply been posing for the picture in a beggar's rags. Hughie, who has just given away his only coin, is astonished and rather embarrassed.

The reward. Pleased by the young man's kindness, the Baron takes an interest in him. He learns who Hughie is and that he is in love but cannot marry for want of money. Soon afterwards, on the occasion of the marriage of Hughie and Laura, a cheque for ten thousand pounds arrives as a wedding present, exactly the sum the colonel had demanded. Hughie and Laura marry. In effect, the sovereign has been repaid many thousand times over.

The final joke. At the end of the story, the painter Trevor makes his closing remark, a play on the words of the title. He says that millionaire models are rare enough, but that model millionaires are rarer still. With this witty remark, Wilde closes his comic tale.

Activity 4: List the three things that Hughie Erskine does NOT have, and the one thing that he does have, according to the first part of the story. Then say in one sentence which of these matters most to the plot.

1.4.4 Characters

Hughie Erskine is a good-natured young man with no ambition. Wilde presents him with amused affection. He is vain about nothing but his profile, and he is a failure in every profession he tries. His one great quality is his generosity. When he sees a man in need, he does not stop to count the cost, even when the coin he gives is the last he has. The story rewards this quality.

Alan Trevor is the painter, and he is Hughie's friend. He is a serious artist with a sharp sense of humour. He is the one who understands the whole situation and he plays the role of the witty commentator. His remarks, especially the last one, carry the humour of the tale.

Baron Hausberg is the "model millionaire". He is enormously rich, but he has a sense of fun, and he is observant. He is amused by his own disguise, and when he finds that Hughie has been kind to him, he rewards him generously. He is Wilde's picture of the ideal rich man: one who uses his wealth with imagination and a sense of justice.

Laura Merton and **Colonel Merton** appear only in the background. Laura is the cause of Hughie's need for money; her father is a representative of Victorian society's practical attitude to marriage. The colonel is not a villain, but he is a typical man of his class, who believes that love must be supported by an income.

1.4.5 Themes

Appearance and reality. This is the main theme of the story. A man who looks like a beggar is really a millionaire. The lesson is that we cannot judge people by their looks, their clothes or their apparent condition. The story asks us to see below the surface. It also quietly raises another question: if the beggar had really been a beggar, would Hughie's kindness have been rewarded? The comic form of the story keeps the question light, but the thoughtful reader will notice it.

Money, love and class. The opening epigram and the colonel's demand for ten thousand pounds show that in Victorian society money was a condition of marriage. The story treats this with gentle satire.

Wilde makes fun of a society that values income above character, but the solution he offers, a rich man's gift, ironically depends on the very power of money that he is criticising.

Kindness and its reward. Hughie acts out of pure sympathy, not out of calculation. He has no idea that the beggar is rich, and he gives away his last coin. The story proposes the old moral that goodness is rewarded. However, Wilde presents this moral as a happy accident rather than as a law of nature. The reward is not certain; it just happens to come.

Irony of situation. The whole story depends on an irony of situation: the man who is pitied is richer than the man who pities him. The hero, who is poor, becomes a giver, and the rich man, in the disguise of a beggar, is a receiver. The reversal gives the story its surprise ending.

1.4.6 Critical Appreciation

Plot and structure. The plot is very compact. It moves from a statement of Hughie's problem, through a single scene in the studio, to a neat reversal and a happy ending. There is no unnecessary detail. The reader is given just enough information, and the surprise, the identity of the beggar, is held back until the right moment. This is the typical structure of the "twist-in-the-tale" story, which you will meet again in later chapters.

Wit and humour. Wit is the quick, clever use of language to produce amusement, often by an unexpected turn of thought. Humour is a broader and gentler kind of amusement arising from situations and characters. Wilde uses both. The opening epigram is witty because it turns a familiar romantic idea upside down. The description of Hughie's sword and history book is humorous because the useless gifts of his father are matched by the equally useless career of the son. The final play on "millionaire models" and "model millionaires" is a pun, a form of wit that depends on the double meaning of words.

Irony. There are different kinds of irony in the story. Situational irony arises from the difference between what we expect and what actually happens: we expect a beggar and find a millionaire. Dramatic irony arises when the reader or another character knows something that a character does not. Here, Trevor knows the beggar's identity while Hughie does not, and Hughie is therefore unaware of the significance of his act. The reader shares Hughie's ignorance until the revelation, which makes the surprise more effective.

Point of view and tone. The story is told by a third-person narrator who is amused, affectionate and slightly mocking. The tone is light throughout. The narrator's comments, for example on Hughie's various careers, are brief and comic. This tone makes the story entertaining and prevents its moral from becoming heavy.

Style. Wilde's style is elegant, polished and conversational. He uses short, balanced sentences and a number of epigrams. His descriptions are exact but economical. The description of the beggar, with the ragged cloak and the patched boots, gives a very quick but complete picture, and it is just this picture that makes the later revelation so telling.

Contrast with Tolstoy. It will help you to compare this story with the one you have just read. Both stories depend on a hidden truth. In Tolstoy the hidden truth is a crime, and it takes twenty-six years to emerge, at a terrible cost. In Wilde the hidden truth is a man's identity, and it is revealed within an hour, to the hero's great profit. The first story is a tragedy of patience; the second is a comedy of surprise.

1.4.7 Victorian Society and the Question of Money

To understand the humour of the story, it helps to know something about the world in which it was written. In Victorian England, marriage among the middle and upper classes was closely tied to property. A girl's family expected a young man to support her in the style to which she was accustomed, and a father such as Colonel Merton thought it only sensible to ask for evidence of an income. Love, in this view, was a fine thing but not a substitute for a bank balance.

Wilde himself lived in this society and often made fun of it. In his plays he returned again and again to the contrast between what people say about money and what they really believe about it. In "The Model Millionaire" the satire is gentle: Colonel Merton is not made out to be wicked, only practical. But the reader notices that the solution to Hughie's problem comes not from hard work or merit, but from a rich man's whim. Is the story therefore an attack on the importance of money, or a quiet acceptance of it? The question is open, and you may argue either way.

1.4.8 The Art of the Epigram

An epigram is a short, memorable statement, often with a surprising twist. Wilde was a master of the form, and his plays are full of epigrams that people still quote today. The first lines of "The Model Millionaire" are good examples. The writer begins with a statement that seems to be about romance, but

then turns it into a comment on money. The effect is to make us smile, and at the same time to make us think.

Look at how the epigram works. It sets up a familiar idea (that a charming person will be loved) and then reverses it (charm is useless without wealth). This reversal is the basic method of Wilde's wit. The same method gives the story its structure: we expect the beggar to be a beggar, and are surprised when he is not. The opening epigram thus prepares us, in a small way, for the surprise of the ending. When you analyse a Wilde story, always ask where the reversal is, because that is usually where the meaning lies.

1.4.9 Glossary

- **Sovereign:** a British gold coin worth one pound.
- **Epigram:** a short, witty and often surprising statement.
- **Prosaic:** ordinary and unimaginative; lacking poetry or romance.
- **Baron:** a nobleman of the lowest rank in the British peerage; here also a title of a wealthy European financier.
- **Pun:** a play on words that depends on two meanings of the same word or on two words that sound alike.

Activity 5: Wilde's title can be read in two ways. Write one sentence explaining each meaning, "millionaire model" and "model millionaire", and say which one fits Baron Hausberg better and why.

1.5 R.K. Narayan: "The Blind Dog"

1.5.1 About the Author

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami, known to the world as R.K. Narayan, was born in Madras (now Chennai) on 10 October 1906 and died there on 13 May 2001. He grew up largely in the care of his grandmother, studied at Maharaja's College in Mysore, and for a short time worked as a teacher before deciding to live by writing alone. This was a bold decision in India in the 1930s, when few writers in English could earn a living.

Narayan's first novel, *Swami and Friends* (1935), was published in England with the help of the novelist Graham Greene, who remained a lifelong friend and supporter. Narayan went on to write many

novels, among them *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The English Teacher* (1945), *The Guide* (1958), for which he received the Sahitya Akademi Award, and *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1961). He also wrote more than two hundred short stories, a number of essays and a memoir, *My Days* (1974). He received the Padma Bhushan in 1964 and the Padma Vibhushan in 2000, and he was nominated to the Rajya Sabha in 1989.

Almost all of Narayan's fiction is set in Malgudi, an imaginary small town in South India. Malgudi has its own river, its railway station, its market place and its eccentric inhabitants. Readers have come to know it so well that it seems like a real place. In Malgudi, Narayan found a small stage on which the whole of human nature could be displayed: pride, greed, love, jealousy, foolishness and kindness.

1.5.2 Background of the Story

"The Blind Dog" is one of the stories collected in *Malgudi Days*, the volume that made Narayan's short fiction known to a wide reading public. As you read it, you will notice that it does not have an elaborate plot. There are no kings, no murders and no sudden strokes of fortune. A blind beggar, a stray dog and a few shopkeepers in a busy market are enough. This is typical of Narayan, who found his subjects in ordinary life and treated them with a quiet, ironic sympathy.

The title may surprise you. The beggar is blind, not the dog. We shall come back to this puzzle when we discuss the themes. For the moment, keep the question in mind: in what sense can the dog be called "blind"?

1.5.3 Summary of the Story

The beggar and the market. The story is set in the market place of Malgudi. Here, day after day, a blind beggar sits with his bowl by the side of the street, asking the passers-by for alms. The shops and stalls around him are busy with buyers and sellers, and the shopkeepers have become used to his presence. He lives with an old woman who gives him shelter. His life is hard and narrow, but it is a settled routine.

The arrival of the dog. One day an ordinary stray dog, one of the common street dogs that nobody notices, takes up a place beside the beggar. It is not a handsome or a high-bred animal. The dog seems to have chosen the beggar as its companion, perhaps because of the food it hopes for or perhaps from

simple fellowship. The beggar, for his part, accepts the dog and shares a little of his food with it. The two become used to each other.

The dog protects the beggar. The dog soon shows its loyalty. There is a boy who comes to the market every Thursday and teases the beggar. He tries to snatch the coins from the bowl and then runs away. This happens week after week, and the blind man is helpless against it. One Thursday the dog bites the boy's wrist and the boy flees in fright. After this, the boy never troubles the beggar again. The dog has proved itself useful.

The old woman dies and the lead is made. After some time, the old woman who sheltered the beggar dies. The beggar is now all alone, and the dog takes her place in his life. At the suggestion of one of the shopkeepers, the beggar ties a rope or lead around the dog's neck and uses the animal to guide him through the streets. The idea works. The beggar is no longer confined to one corner of the market. The dog leads him from street to street, from house to house, and he reaches many more people. His earnings increase.

The dog loses its freedom. But the arrangement has a cost, and it is paid by the dog. Earlier it was a free animal that went where it pleased. Now it is tied to the beggar from morning to night and must walk where the man wants to go. When it hesitates or turns the wrong way, the beggar jerks the rope and sometimes beats or kicks it. The dog is thin and poorly fed. The man who depends on it for his very movements treats it as a mere tool.

The shopkeeper cuts the lead. The traders in the market watch all this and feel pity for the dog. One day, one of them takes a pair of scissors and cuts the dog's lead. The dog is free at last. It runs off at once, glad to be rid of the man and the rope. Its joy at its newly regained freedom is described in a lively way.

The beggar without the dog. Without his guide, the blind man is helpless. He cannot get to the market streets and his earnings fall. He sits hungry and miserable, and in time he is nearly starving.

The return. After some time, the dog comes back. It is weak and hungry, for it has not been able to find enough food on its own. The beggar, instead of being angry, takes it back at once. But he is careful this time: he replaces the old rope with a steel chain so that the dog cannot escape again. There is no sign that he will treat the dog better than before. One of the shopkeepers watches the dog being led away and remarks that now only death can free the animal.

Activity 6: In the story, the dog gains something and loses something by becoming the beggar's guide. Make two columns in your notebook, one headed "What the dog gains" and the other "What the dog loses". Fill in at least three points under each heading. Then decide which column is heavier.

1.5.4 Characters

The blind beggar is a man who has known only hardship, and his blindness makes him wholly dependent on others. Narayan does not present him as a villain, but as a man who has been made hard by his poverty and disability. He is shrewd enough to see how the dog can be of use to him, and he uses it for his own advantage. His treatment of the dog is selfish and cruel. The story shows the irony that a man who lives on the kindness of strangers has no kindness left for the animal that serves him.

The dog is an ordinary stray, and the writer does not give it a name. It is loyal and brave: it defends the beggar against the boy who teases him, and it becomes his eyes. But it is also a creature that wants to be free. When the lead is cut, it runs away with joy. Yet it returns when it is starving, because it cannot support itself. The dog is thus an image of every creature, human or animal, that must choose between freedom with hunger and security with servitude.

The shopkeepers and traders are the chorus of the story. They observe the events and comment on them. One of them proposes the lead; other cuts it out of pity. Their sympathy is real, but it is limited. They can free the dog for a day, but they cannot protect it permanently. The final remark of the shopkeeper, that only death will now free the dog, is an expression of their helplessness.

The boy and the old woman are minor figures. The boy, who teases the beggar every Thursday, shows how the weak can be bullied even by those who are only a little stronger. The old woman, who gives the beggar shelter, represents the small kindnesses that keep the poor alive. Her death is what leaves the beggar alone and drives him to depend entirely on the dog.

1.5.5 Themes

Freedom and bondage. The central theme of the story is the loss of freedom. The dog is free at first, becomes a prisoner, tastes freedom again and goes back to bondage. Narayan does not tell us how to feel; he lets the events speak. The reader, however, cannot fail to see that the dog is the real victim of the story.

Dependence and exploitation. The beggar and the dog depend on each other. The dog needs food; the beggar needs eyes. In an ideal relationship such dependence would lead to affection and care. In the story it leads to exploitation, because the stronger of the two (the one who holds the rope) uses the other. A reader may think of the way in which employers sometimes treat workers or the powerful treat the weak. Some critics have read the story as a parable of this kind.

Cruelty and pity. The story contains both cruelty and pity, and they are shown side by side. The beggar is cruel, but he is also a victim of fate. The traders are kind, but they cannot change the situation. There is no simple division into good and bad. This is typical of Narayan, who sees human beings with an even and understanding eye.

Justice for the weak. If the first story in this chapter asks whether God sees justice, and the second whether the world rewards kindness, this one asks a smaller and sadder question: who will speak for the one who cannot speak? The dog has no voice, no court and no appeal. The shopkeepers' pity is the only justice it gets, and it is incomplete.

The meaning of the title. Why is the story called "The Blind Dog"? The beggar is the blind one, and the dog is his guide. One possible answer is that the title is a proverb in disguise: it is a case of the blind leading the blind. The dog is blind in a figurative sense, because it cannot see that its freedom is not secure, that it cannot survive without a master, and that going back to the man who abused it is no solution. The man is blind in the literal sense, but he is also blind to the dog's feelings. Thus, the title applies, in a way, to both of them. You may wish to find your own answer to this question and compare it with those of your classmates.

1.5.6 Critical Appreciation

Plot and structure. The plot of the story has a circular shape. The dog is free, becomes a captive, is freed and returns to captivity. The beginning and the end are separated only by a longer chain. This circular movement gives the story a feeling of inevitability: nothing has really changed, and nothing is going to change.

Irony. The story is full of quiet irony. The most obvious is that the dog, who is free to see, serves a man who cannot see, and that the man, who needs kindness, gives none. There is also irony in the ending: the dog is "freed" by the shopkeeper, but the freedom leads to hunger and then to a firmer bondage. A

kindly act, then, has an unkind result. The shopkeeper's remark at the end is bitterly ironic as well. It suggests that the only freedom left to the dog is death.

Point of view. The story is told by an objective, third-person narrator who stands somewhat apart from the characters. He describes what is seen in the market and what the characters do, and he does not interfere with comments. He seems to share the point of view of the market people, who watch events from outside. This detachment is part of the story's effect. The narrator does not weep for the dog; he lets the reader do it.

Style and language. Narayan's English is simple, clear and unforced. There are no long, ornamental sentences. The language has a gentle, dry humour, which prevents the story from becoming sentimental even at its saddest moments. Narayan's skill lies in saying a great deal with very few words. When the dog is freed, for instance, a few lively sentences are enough to convey its delight.

Setting. The market place of Malgudi is not just a background. It is a world of buying and selling, where everything has a price and where a living creature can be reduced to a means of earning. This setting gives the story its social meaning. It is a story of the market place in more than one sense.

Contrast with the other two stories. You will notice that this story has no happy reversal, as in Wilde, and no spiritual victory, as in Tolstoy. The ending is neither triumphant nor tragic: it is simply sad and true. Narayan does not offer consolation. He shows life as it is and leaves the judgement to the reader.

1.5.7 Malgudi and Narayan's Art

To read Narayan well, you need to notice how he builds a whole world in a few lines. Malgudi has no great landmarks. It has a market, a river, a bank, a school and a few streets, and yet its people are so alive that they seem to be known to us personally. The place is small, but the human feelings that run through it are universal. This is why Narayan, who wrote about a small town in South India, is read by people all over the world.

The writer's method is one of quiet observation. He does not condemn his characters and he does not praise them. He watches. In "The Blind Dog", for example, he does not say that the beggar is cruel; he shows the beggar pulling the rope and the dog stumbling. The reader makes the judgement. This restraint is the secret of Narayan's power. A writer who cries out too loudly makes the reader feel that he is being told what to think. A writer who observes quietly makes the reader think for himself.

1.5.8 Reading the Ending

The ending of "The Blind Dog" repays careful attention. After all the hope of the dog's escape, we see it returning to the man who treated it so badly. Some readers find this ending depressing. Others feel that it is true to life: a creature that has become used to being fed by a master cannot easily find its own food, and the ties of dependence are stronger than the wish for freedom.

It is also worth thinking about what the beggar does at the end. He forgives the dog, and the reader feels a moment of warmth. But the steel chain tells us that this warmth is only on the surface. The forgiveness is really a way of keeping a useful tool. In this single image, the writer shows how kindness and self-interest can be mixed together in a human heart. When you write about this story, you should therefore not call the beggar simply a bad man. He is a man trapped in his own need, and he is cruel because he is afraid.

1.5.9 Glossary

- **Beggar:** a person who lives by asking others for money or food.
- **Alms:** money or food given to the poor.
- **Lead:** a rope, strap or chain used to hold and guide an animal.
- **Malgudi:** the imaginary South Indian town in which Narayan set most of his fiction.
- **Parable:** a short story with a hidden moral or social meaning.

Activity 7: Imagine that the shopkeeper had not merely cut the dog's lead, but had taken the dog home. Write a short paragraph (about 80 words) on how the story might have ended. Then say whether this ending would have been better or worse as a work of art, and why.

1.6 Comparative Study of the Three Stories

Now that you have studied the three stories separately, let us place them side by side. Comparison is one of the best methods of understanding literature, because the differences between works show up the qualities of each one. The following table gives you a quick summary.

	Tolstoy	Wilde	Narayan
Kind of story	Moral parable	Comic tale with a twist	Realistic sketch of town life
Setting	Russian town, road, Siberian prison	Victorian London, a painter's studio	The market place of Malgudi
Hidden truth	The real murderer	The identity of the beggar	The cruelty beneath a relationship of need
Who is wronged?	An innocent man	No one (a generous man is rewarded)	A helpless animal
Ending	Forgiveness and death	Reward and marriage	Return to bondage
Main literary device	Foreshadowing, flashback, irony	Wit, pun, situational irony	Quiet irony, objective narration
Mood	Solemn and spiritual	Light and humorous	Sad and understated

1.6.1 The Idea of Justice

All three stories ask whether the world is just. Tolstoy shows human justice failing and divine justice working slowly. Aksionov is punished by the court although he is innocent; the truth comes out only after twenty-six years, and justice, if it comes at all, comes too late to help him in this life. For Tolstoy, the real triumph is spiritual: Aksionov rises above the injustice done to him.

Wilde offers a comic version of justice. Hughie's kindness is rewarded in this life and within a short time. But Wilde's tone suggests that we should not rely on such rewards. It is a happy accident, a joke played by a rich man, and the world is not usually so generous.

Narayan gives the least comforting answer of the three. There is no divine justice and no lucky accident. The dog is wronged, and the wrong is not put right. The only justice is the momentary kindness of a shopkeeper, and it changes nothing. Thus, as you read the three stories in this order, the hope for justice becomes weaker: from God's justice, to chance, to no justice at all.

1.6.2 Appearance and Reality

In each story, the surface differs from the truth. In Tolstoy, the blood-stained knife in the bag makes Aksionov look guilty; the real murderer looks innocent and even sympathetic. In Wilde, the man in rags is a millionaire; and the charming, useless young man is capable of true generosity. In Narayan, the relationship between the beggar and the dog looks like a friendly partnership, but in fact it is one of master and slave. In all three, the writers invite us not to trust the first impression.

1.6.3 Faith, Kindness and Forgiveness

Each story also contains an act of the heart. Aksionov's refusal to betray Makar and his later forgiveness are the highest moral acts in the chapter. Hughie's gift of a sovereign is a smaller act, but it comes from the same source of compassion. The shopkeeper's cutting of the lead is a still smaller act of the same kind. In Narayan's story, by contrast, the beggar has no mercy at all. The three stories thus form a scale, from great generosity to ordinary kindness to cruelty, and by looking at it you can see what kind of world each writer believes in.

1.6.4 Narrative Technique

All three stories are told in the third person, but the narrators differ. Tolstoy's narrator is grave and sees into the minds of the characters. Wilde's narrator is amused and mocking, and he prefers to comment. Narayan's narrator is detached and watchful, almost like a spectator in the market. Their styles differ too: Tolstoy is plain and moral, Wilde is polished and witty, Narayan is simple and ironic. Notice, finally, how each writer uses the short length of the story. Tolstoy compresses a whole lifetime into a few pages, Wilde concentrates on a single scene, and Narayan follows a small cycle of events.

Activity 8: Choose any one of the three stories and write a paragraph of about 100 words explaining which character you think deserves the most sympathy, and why. Use at least one of these terms in your answer: irony, theme, plot, point of view.

1.7 Check Your Progress

Answer the following questions in your notebook. Do not look at the text while answering. When you have finished, check your answers against the key given in Section 1.11.

Check Your Progress 1 (Tolstoy)

1. Aksionov was a merchant of the town of _____.

2. What was found in Aksionov's bag that led to his arrest?
3. For how many years did Aksionov remain in Siberia? (a) 6 (b) 16 (c) 26 (d) 36
4. True or False: Aksionov told the governor that Makar had dug the tunnel.
5. Who confessed to the murder of the merchant?
6. What does the dream of Aksionov's wife foreshadow?

Check Your Progress 2 (Wilde)

1. Hughie Erskine received an allowance of _____ pounds a year from his aunt.
2. Who was the girl Hughie wished to marry?
3. How much money did Colonel Merton demand before agreeing to the engagement? (a) 1,000 pounds (b) 5,000 pounds (c) 10,000 pounds (d) 20,000 pounds
4. True or False: Alan Trevor was a poet.
5. What coin did Hughie give to the beggar?
6. Explain the pun in the title "The Model Millionaire" in one or two sentences.

Check Your Progress 3 (Narayan)

1. "The Blind Dog" is included in the collection called _____.
2. Who cut the dog's lead?
3. True or False: The dog bit the boy who teased the beggar every Thursday.
4. True or False: The dog never returned to the beggar.
5. What did the beggar use to replace the old lead when the dog came back?
6. Why do you think the story is called "The Blind Dog"? Answer in two or three sentences.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter you have studied three short stories that approach the questions of justice, faith and appearance from three different directions.

Leo Tolstoy's "God Sees the Truth, But Waits" is the story of Ivan Aksionov, a happy young merchant of Vladimir who is wrongly convicted of murder on the strength of a blood-stained knife found in his bag. He is flogged and sent to Siberia, where he spends twenty-six years, turning from a cheerful man

into a silent, prayerful old man. When he discovers that his fellow prisoner Makar Semyonich is the real murderer, he is filled with a desire for revenge. But when Makar is nearly caught digging a tunnel, Aksionov refuses to inform on him. Moved by this mercy, Makar confesses and begs for forgiveness. Aksionov forgives him and finds peace, but dies before the order for his release arrives. The story is a parable about the limits of human justice, the power of forgiveness and the meaning of patient faith.

Oscar Wilde's "The Model Millionaire" is a short comic story about Hughie Erskine, a charming young man with no money, who cannot marry Laura Merton because her father demands ten thousand pounds. In the studio of his painter friend, Alan Trevor, Hughie pities a ragged old beggar who is posing as a model, and gives him his last sovereign. The beggar turns out to be Baron Hausberg, one of the richest men in Europe, who rewards Hughie with a wedding present of ten thousand pounds. The story depends on irony of situation, wit and a pun in its title, and it gently mocks a society that measures a man by his income.

R.K. Narayan's "The Blind Dog" tells of a blind beggar in the market place of Malgudi who is befriended by a stray dog. The dog protects the man, and later, when the old woman who shelters him dies, becomes his guide. But the beggar ties the dog to a lead and treats it cruelly. When a shopkeeper cuts the lead the dog runs away, but it returns when starving, and the beggar chains it more firmly than before. The story is a quiet study of dependence, exploitation and lost freedom.

In comparing the three stories, you have seen how the hope of justice weakens from Tolstoy to Narayan, how all three stories use the difference between appearance and reality, and how the three writers use the third-person narrator, irony and economy of style in their own ways.

1.9 Keywords

- **Short story:** a brief work of prose fiction, usually read at one sitting, which aims at a single effect.
- **Plot:** the planned sequence of events in a story.
- **Theme:** the central idea or underlying meaning of a literary work.
- **Foreshadowing:** a hint or warning in a story about what is going to happen later.
- **Flashback:** a return in the narrative to an earlier event or time.
- **Irony:** a contrast between what is said or expected and what actually happens or is meant.

- **Wit:** clever and quick use of language to produce amusement.
- **Humour:** the quality of a situation, character or remark that causes amusement.
- **Narrator:** the person or voice that tells the story.
- **Point of view:** the position from which the story is told.
- **Parable:** a short, simple story that teaches a moral or spiritual lesson.
- **Epigram:** a short, witty and often paradoxical saying.

1.10 Self-Assessment Test

Section A: Explain with reference to the context

1. "Unless one is wealthy there is no use in being a charming fellow. Romance is the privilege of the rich, not the profession of the unemployed. The poor should be practical and prosaic." (Oscar Wilde, "The Model Millionaire")
2. "In the town of Vladimir lived a young merchant named Ivan Dmitrich Aksionov. He had two shops and a house of his own." (Leo Tolstoy, "God Sees the Truth, But Waits")

For each passage, name the story and the writer, explain the passage in your own words (about 100 words), and say what it tells us about the character, the situation or the writer's attitude.

Section B: Short-answer questions (70 to 80 words each)

Q1. Why is Aksionov convicted of a crime he did not commit?

Aksionov is convicted because all the evidence points against him. He shared an inn with a merchant who was murdered and robbed that night, and he left early the next morning. When the police searched his bag, they found a knife covered with blood. Aksionov swore he was innocent, but nobody else was suspected and he had no witness. The court trusted this circumstantial evidence, so an innocent man was punished.

Q2. Describe the change that takes place in Aksionov during his years in Siberia.

Before his arrest, Aksionov was a cheerful, prosperous young merchant who loved singing and playing the guitar. During twenty-six years in Siberia, his hair turned white, and he stopped laughing and became quiet and serious. He turned to God, prayed regularly and gave up hope of help from men. At

last, he became calm, gentle and humble, and he even forgave Makar, the real murderer, for destroying his life.

Q3. What is the meaning of the title of Tolstoy's story?

The title comes from a Russian proverb. It means that God knows the truth about everything, but He does not always reveal it at once. The truth may remain hidden for years, and the innocent may suffer while waiting. In the story, Aksionov waits twenty-six years in prison before Makar Semyonich confesses the crime. The title teaches patience, faith in God and the idea that truth finally comes out, though very late.

Q4. Why does Hughie Erskine give a sovereign to the beggar?

Hughie Erskine is a kind-hearted young man, though he is poor himself. In Alan Trevor's studio, he sees an old beggar posing as a model. The man looks thin, tired and miserable, so Hughie feels deep pity for him. While the painter is busy, Hughie quietly puts a gold sovereign into the old man's hand. It was all the money he had, which shows his generous and very sympathetic nature.

Q5. What is the irony in the situation of Baron Hausberg in "The Model Millionaire"?

The irony is that the man who looks like a poor beggar is really Baron Hausberg, one of the richest men in Europe. He is only posing in ragged clothes for a painting. Hughie pities him and gives him a sovereign, not knowing this. We expect the poor man to receive help, but the situation is reversed: the millionaire accepts charity from a penniless young man. This surprise makes the story humorous.

Q6. How does the dog help the blind beggar in "The Blind Dog"?

The dog helps the blind beggar in several ways. At first, it guards him from a boy who teases him and tries to snatch coins from his bowl; the dog bites the boy's wrist and frightens him away. Later, when the old woman dies, the beggar ties a rope round the dog's neck and uses it as his guide. The dog leads him through the streets, so he reaches more people and earns more money.

Q7. What does the shopkeeper's remark at the end of "The Blind Dog" tell us about the dog's future?

After the dog returns, the beggar ties it with a steel chain so it cannot escape again. A shopkeeper watching this remarks that now only death can set the dog free. This tells us that the dog's future is

bleak. It will stay chained to a cruel master, probably poorly fed and badly treated, and it will have no freedom again until it dies. The remark is sad and ironic.

Section C: Essay-type questions (about 300 words each)

1. Discuss "God Sees the Truth, But Waits" as a story of forgiveness.
2. Comment on Tolstoy's use of foreshadowing, flashback and irony in his story.
3. Examine Wilde's use of wit, humour and irony in "The Model Millionaire".
4. "The Blind Dog" is a story about freedom and dependence. Discuss.
5. Compare the treatment of the theme of appearance and reality in any two of the three stories.

Section D: Objective questions

1. Who is the author of "God Sees the Truth, But Waits"?
2. In which country is Tolstoy's story set?
3. Name the painter in "The Model Millionaire".
4. Who is the real murderer in Tolstoy's story?
5. What is Malgudi?
6. Which of the three stories ends with a pun?
7. Which of the three stories is told in the market place of an imaginary Indian town?
8. Define "foreshadowing" in one sentence.

1.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

Check Your Progress 1

1. Vladimir.
2. A blood-stained knife.
3. (c) 26.
4. False. Aksionov said he had not seen it and could not tell.
5. Makar Semyonich.

6. It foreshadows Aksionov's misfortune: his hair turns grey in the long years of imprisonment, and he comes back from the journey a changed man. It also prepares us for the tragedy that follows.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Two hundred.
2. Laura Merton.
3. (c) 10,000 pounds.
4. False. Alan Trevor was a painter.
5. A sovereign (a gold coin worth one pound).
6. A "millionaire model" is a rich man who poses as a model, and a "model millionaire" is a millionaire who is a model of good behaviour. The title plays on the two phrases, and the painter's last remark returns to the joke.

Check Your Progress 3

1. *Malgudi Days*.
2. One of the shopkeepers (traders) of the market.
3. True.
4. False. It returned when it was starving.
5. A steel chain.
6. The beggar is blind, but the dog, too, is blind in a figurative sense. It cannot see that its freedom will not save it, and it goes back to the man who has treated it badly. The phrase also recalls the proverb about the blind leading the blind. The title thus points to the helplessness of both the man and the dog.

1.12 References / Suggested Readings

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Subject: Introduction to Short Story and Basic Grammar	
Course Code- C24ENG101T	**Author:** Ms. Aarti Devi
Lesson- 2	

CHILDHOOD, INNOCENCE AND SOCIAL REALITIES

(Bhisham Sahni: "The Boy with a Catapult"; Munshi Premchand: "The Child"; Mulk Raj Anand: "The Gold Watch")

Structure

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Bhisham Sahni: "The Boy with a Catapult"

2.4 Munshi Premchand: "The Child"

2.5 Mulk Raj Anand: "The Gold Watch"

2.6 Comparative Study of the Three Stories

2.7 Check Your Progress (Units 2.3 to 2.5)

2.8 Summary

2.9 Keywords

2.10 Self-Assessment Test

2.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.12 References / Suggested Readings

2.1 Learning Objectives

In the first chapter you studied three stories that asked whether the world is just. In this chapter you will study three Indian stories that look at the same question from a closer and more human angle. They show how ordinary people, a child, a servant and an office clerk, behave when their hearts are tested and when society presses upon them. After studying this chapter carefully, you should be able to:

- narrate the plot of each of the three stories in your own words and describe the main characters;
- explain how Bhisham Sahni shows a change of heart in a cruel boy, and why the change is believable;
- discuss how Premchand uses the story of a servant and his wife to question caste pride, social prejudice and the narrator's own sense of goodness;
- explain how Mulk Raj Anand uses a simple object, a gold watch, to express the helplessness of a loyal clerk in a colonial workplace;
- identify and discuss the literary terms plot, theme, irony, foreshadowing, point of view and narrator as they appear in these stories;
- compare the three stories and write a clear answer to short and long questions on them.

2.2 Introduction

Dear learner, in your childhood you must have seen the world in very simple colours. Some people were good and some were bad; some things were right and some wrong. As we grow older, we discover that people are less simple than that. A cruel person may have a tender corner in his heart; a respectable person may be hiding a mean thought; and a kind person may be powerless against those who are stronger than he is. The three stories in this chapter explore exactly this discovery.

All three stories were written by Indian writers, and all three belong to the realistic tradition of storytelling. Realism means a faithful picture of ordinary life, drawn from what the writer has seen and not from fantasy. The three writers do not deal with kings or heroes. They show us a schoolboy, a servant who sells snacks in the street, and a clerk in a marmalade company. Yet from these small lives they draw large questions.

2.2.1 Childhood and Innocence in Short Fiction

Childhood has always been a favourite subject of storytellers. A child sees the world with fresh eyes, and he says and does things that grown-up people would hesitate to say or do. Writers use the child for several purposes. Sometimes the child is the hero of the story, and the writer shows us how he learns, grows or changes. Sometimes the child is a silent witness, whose innocence makes the faults of adults easier to see. And sometimes the child is a symbol of purity, hope or a new beginning.

In this chapter you will meet all three uses. In Sahni's story the child is the hero: a schoolboy whose heart changes in the course of a single afternoon. In Premchand's story the child is a baby, and the word "child" in the title points both to the infant and to the innocence that he brings out in the adults around him. In Anand's story the child is a minor but telling figure: a young boy who innocently asks his father for a watch on the very day his father fears the loss of his job.

2.2.2 The Three Writers at a Glance

The following table will help you to place the three writers before you begin the stories.

	Bhisham Sahni	**Munshi Premchand**	**Mulk Raj Anand**
Life span	1915 to 2003	1880 to 1936	1905 to 2004
Wrote mainly in	Hindi	Hindi and Urdu	English
Story	"The Boy with a Catapult"	"The Child"	"The Gold Watch"
Mood	Gentle, hopeful	Tender, morally searching	Sad, ironic
Central concern	Cruelty and change of heart	Prejudice and true goodness	Dignity and helplessness at work

Notice that the first two stories were written originally in Hindi and are read by you in English versions, while Anand wrote his story directly in English. This is a useful reminder that Indian short fiction has flowed through many languages, and that the best of it can be enjoyed in translation.

2.2.3 Why These Stories Are Studied Together

The title of this chapter, "Childhood, Innocence and Social Realities", gives you a way to read the three stories as a group. In each, the world of innocence meets the world of social reality. Bodh Raj, the boy in Sahni's story, meets the reality of a helpless living thing, and his innocence, which had been buried under cruelty, comes to the surface. Gangu, in Premchand's story, meets the social reality of caste, gossip and the harsh judgement of society on a woman, and answers it with a simple human love that

shames the educated narrator. Sudarshan Sharma, in Anand's story, meets the social reality of a colonial workplace and has no answer at all.

As you read, ask yourself three questions about each story. What does the character believe at the beginning? What happens to test that belief? What do we, as readers, feel at the end? You will find that the three stories answer these questions in three very different ways: with hope, with warmth and with sorrow.

Activity 1: Recall one incident from your own childhood in which you did something unkind and later regretted it, or in which someone surprised you by their kindness. Write four or five lines about it. After reading Sahni's story, compare your experience with that of the boy in the story.

2.3 Bhisham Sahni: "The Boy with a Catapult"

2.3.1 About the Author

Bhisham Sahni (1915 to 2003) was one of the most respected Hindi writers of the twentieth century. He was born in Rawalpindi, in what is now Pakistan, and came to India at the time of the Partition in 1947. He was a novelist, a short-story writer, a playwright and an actor, and he taught English literature at Delhi University. He was the younger brother of the well-known film actor Balraj Sahni.

Sahni is best known for his novel *Tamas* (Darkness), a powerful and painful account of the violence of the Partition, which was later made into a television serial. His other works include novels, plays and many short stories in which he writes about the lives of ordinary middle-class people with sympathy and honesty. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan for literature in 1998 and the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship in 2002. His style is simple and direct, and his stories often turn on a moment when a character sees something about life that he had not seen before.

2.3.2 Background and Title of the Story

"The Boy with a Catapult" was written in Hindi and is included in an anthology called *The Best Thirteen*, published in 1983, which gathers thirteen stories from thirteen different Indian languages. The story is a favourite with teachers and students because it is short, clear and full of feeling, and because it carries a moral without becoming a sermon.

A catapult is a Y-shaped stick with an elastic band, used to shoot small stones. Children in India often use it to hit mangoes or to frighten birds. In this story it becomes the central object. At the beginning it

is a weapon, the sign of a boy who enjoys hurting living things. At the end it is gone, and its absence is the sign that something has changed. As you read, notice how Sahni uses this one object to tell the story of a heart.

2.3.3 Summary of the Story

The oddest boy in the school. The story is told in the first person by a boy who looks back on his school days. He tells us that his class had an odd mixture of boys, but the oddest of all was Bodh Raj. Everyone was afraid of him. It was said that if Bodh Raj pinched anyone's arm, the arm swelled up as if from a snake bite. He was utterly callous. He would catch a wasp with his bare fingers, pull out its sting, tie a thread round it and fly it like a kite. He would crush a butterfly between his fingers, or stick a pin through it and fix it to his notebook. The boys even said that if a scorpion stung him, the scorpion would die, and that his blood was so full of venom that a snake bite could do him no harm.

Bodh Raj always had a catapult in his hand and was an excellent shot. His favourite targets were birds. He would stand under a tree, take aim, and the next moment there would be a cry from the bird and a puff of feathers floating down. Or he would climb the tree, take the eggs and destroy the nest. He took pleasure in hurting others. Even his own mother called him a *rakshasa* (a demon). His pockets bulged with strange things: a live parrot, a collection of eggs, a prickly hedgehog. If he quarrelled with anyone, he charged at him head-on like a bull, or kicked and bit him viciously. When school was over and the other boys went home, Bodh Raj set off on his wanderings.

The new bungalow. The narrator's father is promoted at his work, and the family moves into a large old-fashioned bungalow on the outskirts of the city. It has brick floors, high walls, a slanting roof and a garden full of trees and shrubs. The house is comfortable but rather big and empty, and because it is so far from the city the narrator's friends seldom come to visit him. The only exception is Bodh Raj. For him the new house is a very good hunting ground. The trees have many nests, monkeys wander about, and a pair of mongooses lives under the bushes.

Behind the house is a big room where the narrator's mother keeps their extra luggage. The room has become a haunt of pigeons, and their cooing can be heard all day long. Near the broken glass of the ventilator is the nest of a mynah. The floor is littered with feathers, droppings, broken eggs and straws from the nests.

The mother's remark. The narrator's mother does not approve of his friendship with Bodh Raj. But she realises that her son is lonely and needs company. One day she says to him that if his friend is so fond of destroying nests, he should be told to clean their storeroom, because the birds have made it very dirty. The narrator protests that she herself has said that it is cruel to destroy nests. His mother replies that she did not suggest that Bodh Raj should kill the birds; he can remove the nests without harming them.

In the storeroom. The next time Bodh Raj comes, the narrator takes him to the storeroom. It is dark and smelly, as though they had entered the lair of an animal. The narrator is worried. What if, true to form, Bodh Raj destroys the nests, plucks the feathers of the birds and breaks their eggs? Bodh Raj has brought his catapult. He studies the position of the nests under the roof. The mynah's nest is near the ventilator, with bits of cotton wool and rags hanging out of it, and the narrator can see two tiny yellow beaks peeping out. Bodh Raj says that the mynah's young are up there, and notices that it is a Ganga mynah, a bird that is not usually found in these parts. The narrator asks where the parents are. Bodh Raj guesses that they have gone to look for food and will soon be back.

Bodh Raj raises his catapult. The narrator wants to stop him, but before he can open his mouth there is a whizzing sound, and then a loud clang as the pebble hits the iron sheet of the roof. The tiny beaks disappear and the cooing stops, as if all the birds had been frightened into silence. Bodh Raj fires a second pebble, and this time it strikes a beam. Bodh Raj is proud of his aim, but he has missed twice and is very angry with himself. When the chicks peep over the rim of the nest, he tries a third time. The pebble hits the side of the nest. A few straws and bits of cotton wool fall, but the nest is not dislodged.

The kite. Bodh Raj lifts his catapult again. Suddenly a large shadow flits across the room and blocks the light from the ventilator. The two boys look up. A large kite, with its wings spread, is gazing down at them in a threatening manner. The mynah chicks flutter their wings and shriek. Bodh Raj says that the kite has been coming here every day. The narrator now understands why there are broken wings, straw and bits of flesh on the floor: the kite has been raiding the nest again and again.

The kite leaves the ventilator and perches on a rafter. It folds back its wings, shakes its rough neck and looks to the right and left, while the frightened cries of the chicks fill the air. Bodh Raj does not take his eyes off the kite, which is slowly moving towards the nest. The narrator is a bundle of nerves. Bodh Raj raises his catapult and aims at the kite. The narrator shouts that he should not hit the kite, because it will

attack him. Bodh Raj pays no attention, but the pebble misses the bird and hits the ceiling. The kite spreads its wings wide and looks down.

The narrator, frightened, says that they should get out of there. Bodh Raj answers that the kite will eat up the little ones. The narrator remarks that this sounded rather strange coming from Bodh Raj, who had so often destroyed nests himself. Bodh Raj aims again, and the kite flies in a half-circle and settles on a beam. Bodh Raj now hands the catapult and some pebbles to the narrator. He tells him to aim at the kite and keep hitting it so that it cannot settle down. Then he runs and drags a table to the middle of the room. The narrator does not know how to use a catapult. He tries once, but by then the kite has left the beam and flown to another.

The rescue. Bodh Raj brings the table right under the mynah's nest. He places a broken chair on top of the table, climbs on the chair, gently lifts the nest and slowly steps down. "Let us get out of here," he says, and runs towards the door. The narrator follows. They go into the garage, which has only one door and a small window in the back wall. Bodh Raj says that the kite cannot get in there. He climbs on a box and places the nest on a beam.

The mynah's young have become quiet. Standing on the box, Bodh Raj peeps into the nest. The narrator thinks that he will pick up the chicks and put them into his pocket, as he usually does. But Bodh Raj looks at them for a long time and then says that the chicks are thirsty, and asks the narrator to bring some water. They will put it into their mouths drop by drop. The narrator brings a glass of water. Both the chicks, with their beaks open, are panting. Bodh Raj feeds them with drops of water. He tells the narrator not to touch them, and he does not touch them himself. The narrator asks how the parents will know that the chicks are there, and Bodh Raj answers that the parents will look for them.

The change. The two boys stay in the garage for a long time. When Bodh Raj comes the next day, he has neither his catapult nor his pebbles. He carries a bag of seeds. The two boys feed the young mynahs and spend hours watching their antics.

Activity 2: The story moves from the first part (the description of Bodh Raj) through the storeroom scene to the end. In your notebook, write down the three things that Bodh Raj does with the catapult before the kite appears and the one thing that he does with it when the kite appears. What does the difference tell you?

2.3.4 Characters

Bodh Raj is the central figure, and the whole story is the story of his change. At the beginning he is almost a monster. He is feared by his schoolmates and even by his mother, who calls him a demon. His cruelty is not the cruelty of anger but of habit: he hurts small creatures because he enjoys the feeling of power. Yet Sahni does not present him as hopeless. He has real skill and courage, and he is also lonely in his own way, for nobody wants to be his friend except the narrator. When the kite appears, these qualities are turned to a new purpose. He uses his courage to protect the very birds he had come to destroy, and the story ends with him feeding them.

The narrator is a quiet, thoughtful boy, easily frightened by Bodh Raj but also fascinated by him. He is lonely in his big new house and is willing to put up with Bodh Raj for the sake of company. He is not brave, but he is honest, and he is the one who shows pity for the birds first. It is notable that the narrator never lectures Bodh Raj. He simply stays beside him, and in this way, he plays a part in his friend's change.

The mother appears briefly, but her part is important. She does not forbid the friendship, and she does not scold. She makes a quiet suggestion that the nests should be removed without harm. It is possible that she has foreseen what will happen, or it is possible that she only wished to protect the birds. In either case, it is her remark that brings the two boys to the storeroom.

The kite is not a character in the usual sense, but it is the force that changes everything. It is a hunter, like Bodh Raj, and when Bodh Raj sees the kite going after the chicks he sees, as in a mirror, what he himself has been doing.

2.3.5 Themes

Cruelty and compassion. The main theme of the story is the contrast between cruelty and compassion, and the possibility of passing from one to the other. Sahni suggests that no person is wholly cruel. Under the hard surface of Bodh Raj there is a capacity for pity, and it needs only the right moment to appear.

The change of heart. The story is a study of conversion, a sudden change of outlook. Notice that it does not happen because somebody lectures Bodh Raj or punishes him. It happens because he sees the helplessness of the chicks and the cruelty of the kite. The lesson is that real change comes from within, from seeing and feeling, and not from outside pressure.

Loneliness and friendship. Both boys are lonely. The narrator is lonely because his house is far from the city, and Bodh Raj is lonely because everyone is afraid of him. Their friendship, uneasy as it is, gives each of them something. The story suggests that a person who is feared is often a person who is alone, and that friendship can be a quiet teacher.

Man and nature. Sahni shows us a small natural world of birds, monkeys, mongooses and insects. The story asks us to see these creatures as living beings with their own fears and needs. The scene in which Bodh Raj feeds the chicks drop by drop with water is a beautiful picture of how a human being can protect rather than destroy.

Power and responsibility. Bodh Raj has power: he is strong, quick and skilled. At the beginning he uses it to destroy. By the end he uses it to protect. The story therefore carries a gentle moral: power is not good or bad in itself; what matters is the use that we make of it.

2.3.6 Critical Appreciation

Plot and structure. The plot has a clear shape. The first part is exposition: it tells us who Bodh Raj is and what he does. The second part introduces the new house and the storeroom, and the situation begins to build. The climax is the arrival of the kite, and the resolution is the final scene with the bag of seeds. Notice how quickly the story moves in the second half. The events in the storeroom take only a few minutes, but they overturn all that we have been told about Bodh Raj in the first half.

Irony. The story is full of irony, which is a contrast between what we expect and what happens. We expect Bodh Raj to destroy the nests, and he ends up saving one. We expect the narrator to be the protector and Bodh Raj the destroyer, and in the crisis, it is Bodh Raj who acts. There is an irony, too, in the fact that Bodh Raj, who has killed so many birds, is horrified at the thought of the kite doing the same.

Foreshadowing. A hint of what is to come is a technique called foreshadowing. In this story the narrator's fear before the storeroom scene, and Bodh Raj's remark that the kite has been coming every day, prepare us for the crisis. The mother's remark that the nests can be removed without harm also points to the story's theme.

Point of view. The story is told in the first person by a narrator who is himself a character. This is called a first-person point of view. The narrator reports what he sees and what he feels, and this makes the

story intimate and believable. The reader sees Bodh Raj through the eyes of a frightened friend and is therefore all the more surprised when Bodh Raj changes. The story is told in retrospect, that is, as a memory of earlier days.

Symbols. The catapult is the main symbol. It stands for violence and for the boy's pleasure in power. When Bodh Raj comes without it the next day, the reader understands that his heart has changed. The bag of seeds is the opposite symbol: it stands for care and nourishment. The kite stands for destruction in nature, and it also serves as a mirror in which Bodh Raj sees himself.

Style and language. Sahni writes in short, clear sentences. His descriptions are concrete: a wasp tied with a thread, a hedgehog in a pocket, feathers and droppings on the floor. These details make the story lively and also help to show Bodh Raj's character. The language is simple enough for a child to follow, yet the story has a depth that rewards an adult reader.

2.3.7 A Closer Look at Three Key Moments

The mother's suggestion. When the narrator's mother asks that the nests be removed without harm, she is doing something very clever. She does not attack Bodh Raj for his cruelty, since that might only make him more stubborn. Instead, she gives him a task that fits his skill with nests but turns it towards protection. This moment shows that a gentle, indirect approach can sometimes succeed where open criticism fails.

The moment of the two missed shots. In the storeroom Bodh Raj fires several times and misses the mynah's nest. The writer tells us that he was angry with himself for missing. This is the same boy who, the next moment, will risk himself to save the nest. The reader should notice how closely the destroyer and the protector are related. The same skill and the same courage serve both purposes; it is only the aim that changes.

The feeding of the chicks. The scene in which Bodh Raj feeds the chicks with drops of water is the emotional centre of the story. He tells the narrator not to touch the chicks, and he does not touch them himself. This small detail is important: Bodh Raj, who has always handled living things roughly, now takes care not even to touch them. Sahni does not tell us what Bodh Raj is feeling. He lets us see it in his actions.

2.3.8 Can a Person Really Change?

A reader may ask whether the change in Bodh Raj is believable. After all, he was cruel for years, and he changes in an afternoon. There are two answers to this. The first is that the change is prepared for by small signs: the loneliness, the real attention he pays to the mynah ("Ganga mynah"), and the anger he feels when he misses his aim. These show that he is not wholly without feeling. The second answer is that a short story does not claim to give a complete history. It chooses a moment, the turning-point, and shows it with great force. The change that begins in the garage is a beginning, not an end. The bag of seeds the next day tells us that the change is real and that it will last.

The story therefore has a hopeful message. It suggests that even those who seem beyond help can be reached, and that the best way to reach them may be not by punishment but by letting them see the result of their actions. This is a good point to include when you write an examination answer on the theme of the story.

2.3.9 Glossary

- **Catapult:** a Y-shaped stick with an elastic band, used for shooting small stones.
- **Callous:** cruel and without feeling for others.
- **Vindictive:** wishing to take revenge or to hurt others.
- **Rakshasa:** a demon or cruel being in Indian tradition.
- **Mynah:** a common Indian bird of the starling family; the Ganga mynah is a variety.
- **Kite:** a large bird of prey.
- **Godown:** a storeroom or warehouse (Indian English).
- **Retrospective narration:** telling a story as a memory of earlier events.

Activity 3: Imagine that the kite had not appeared. In about 80 words, write what you think Bodh Raj would have done in the storeroom. Then say whether the story would have been better or worse without the kite, and why.

2.4 Munshi Premchand: "The Child"

2.4.1 About the Author

Munshi Premchand was born as Dhanpat Rai Srivastava on 31 July 1880 in the village of Lamahi, near Varanasi, and died on 8 October 1936. He began writing in Urdu under the pen name Nawab Rai and

later adopted the name Premchand. "Munshi" is an honorary prefix. He worked as a teacher until 1921 and then joined Mahatma Gandhi's Non-cooperation Movement. He is often called *Upanyas Samrat*, the Emperor of Novels.

Premchand wrote more than a dozen novels and nearly 250 short stories, as well as essays and translations. He is regarded as the first Hindi author who's writing prominently featured realism. His novels and stories explore the lives of the rural poor and the urban middle class, and he used literature to arouse awareness of social problems such as corruption, child widowhood, poverty, feudalism and colonial rule. His best-known works include the novel *Godaan* (1936) and the story collection *Kafan* (1936). Before Premchand, the short story was not widely accepted as a literary form in most of India, except in Bengal; it was his work that established it in Hindi and Urdu.

2.4.2 Background and Title of the Story

"The Child" is the English version of a Hindi story called "Balak". It is told in the first person by an educated and comfortably placed gentleman who employs several servants. The story belongs to a period when the position of widows in Indian society was a matter of much public debate. A widow was expected to live a life of sacrifice, and a widow who remarried or left her home was condemned by society. Premchand, who himself married a child widow, wrote about this subject with sympathy in several of his works.

The title refers first of all to the baby that Gomti gives birth to. But the word "child" also carries a second meaning. It points to the innocence and goodness that the baby brings out in the people around him, and, in a way, to Gangu himself, whose simple faith is like a child's. In some English versions the story is called "The Immaculate Child", a title that stresses the purity of the baby, whatever the circumstances of his birth.

2.4.3 Summary of the Story

The proud servant. The narrator introduces Gangu, one of his servants. Gangu is an illiterate Brahmin, and he behaves exactly like one. Other servants salaam the master from a distance; Gangu never does. He will not touch the tumbler from which the master has drunk. If the narrator is sweating and no one is near, Gangu picks up the fan, but his manner makes it clear that he is doing the master a favour. He is short-tempered, cannot bear criticism, and thinks it below his dignity to sit with the other servants. Yet the narrator notes some surprising things about him: he is not addicted to bhang, as many men of his

caste are, and he never performs religious rituals or bathes in the river. The narrator reasons, with some irony, that if rich men cling to the privileges of their ancestors, then Gangu has every right to cling to his.

The request. The narrator is a reserved man who does not like to give orders or to listen to servants' complaints and requests for advances. So, one morning he is annoyed to find Gangu standing before him, looking both humble and uneasy. Gangu says that he has not come to ask for money or to complain about anyone. He asks to be relieved of his duties. The narrator, who considers himself a model of humane behaviour, is hurt and asks why. Gangu says that the narrator is a good master, but he is in a situation in which he can no longer work for him, and he does not want the narrator's reputation to suffer because of him.

He then explains. There is a woman, Gomti Devi, who has been expelled from the Widows' Ashram. Gangu wishes to marry her. The narrator is astonished. Gomti had come to the Ashram some years earlier. The officials had married her off three times, and each time she had left her husband after a few weeks or a month and returned. At last, the secretary expelled her, and now she lives in a small room in the neighbourhood and is a source of amusement for the local idlers. The narrator, angry at Gangu's simplicity but also sorry for him, warns him that she will not stay with him even for a week.

Gangu answers that the stories about her are lies spread by people who dislike her. If she left three men, he says, it was because they drove her out. No woman can stay where there is no love, and a wife needs love as well as food and clothing. They thought they had done a favour to a widow by marrying her and expected her to surrender to them completely. She is also sick: sometimes she is seized by fits and speaks wildly. The narrator warns him that he will reap a bitter harvest, but Gangu says that he believes that it will end well, with God's will. The narrator then accepts his resignation. Though he thinks of himself as free from old prejudices, he feels it would be risky to employ a man who is marrying such a woman: there might be troubles, police inquiries, even thefts.

Five months later. Gangu marries Gomti and lives in a hut in the same neighbourhood. He earns his living by selling *chaat* (a spicy street snack). Whenever the narrator meets him in the bazaar he asks about his well-being, because he has become deeply interested in him. He sees Gangu's life as a test of a social and psychological question. His earnings are only eight or ten annas a day, but Gangu always looks happy and self-confident, with the contentment of a satisfied man.

One day the narrator hears that Gomti has run away. To his own surprise he feels a strange pleasure, for he has become envious of Gangu's contentment and has been waiting for a shameful end to it. He meets Gangu in the market the same day. Gangu is shaken and weeping, not from shame but from pain. "Gomti deceived me too," he says. The narrator hides his satisfaction under a show of sympathy and asks whether she has carried away his savings. Gangu says that she took nothing, and that she left behind everything she had. He speaks of her with love. Perhaps he was not good enough for her, he says: she was literate and he was not. She was a blessing to him. The narrator is disappointed, for he had expected an angry complaint. He asks, mockingly, whether he is going to search for her. Gangu says that he will not rest until he has found her, and that his heart tells him she will return.

The baby. The narrator then goes to Nainital on business and returns after a month. Before he has even changed his clothes, Gangu stands in front of him holding a newborn baby. His whole body radiates joy, and the narrator thinks that even Nand could not have been happier when he held the child Krishna in his lap. Gangu says that with the narrator's blessing he has brought Gomti back. She was in a hospital in Lucknow. She had told a woman friend in the neighbourhood where she was, and as soon as Gangu learned it, he rushed there and brought her home. And, he says, he got this baby, over and above.

The narrator, in a mocking tone, asks whether the boy is his son. Gangu answers that the baby is not his; he is the master's, he is God's. The narrator asks how long Gangu has been married and is told that it is the seventh month. The baby is only a month old. The narrator points out that a child cannot be born six months after a marriage. The writer tells us that the arrow had hit its mark. Gangu, who had not thought of this, understands at once why Gomti had run away: she was ashamed, and afraid of him.

Gangu's answer. Gangu then tells the narrator what he had said to Gomti. He had told her that if she did not like him, she could leave him, and he would never trouble her; and that if she ever needed help, she should write to him. He had no complaint against her. In his eyes she was as good as before; indeed, he loved her even more. If she had not turned away from him, she should come with him. He had married her not because she was a goddess but because he loved her and believed that she loved him. The child was his own. He had taken a field that had been sown by someone else, he said, and he would not disown the harvest because another man had sowed the seed. Saying this, Gangu bursts into laughter.

The narrator's change. The narrator forgets to change his clothes. He does not know why, but his eyes fill with tears. Something breaks down his disgust and makes him open his arms. He takes the baby in his lap and kisses his face with an affection that he had perhaps never shown to his own children. Gangu tells him that he is a good man; he has often praised him before Gomti and asked her to come and meet him, but she is too shy. The narrator answers in a voice full of devotion that the veneer of goodness is gone. He says he is good only on the outside and mean within. It is Gangu who is truly good, and the baby is a flower that carries the fragrance of Gangu's goodness. He asks Gangu to take him to meet Gomti, and he walks beside him, holding the baby.

Activity 4: Make a two-column table in your notebook. In the first column write what the narrator believes about himself at the beginning of the story. In the second column write what he says about himself at the end. What has changed?

2.4.4 Characters

Gangu is the moral centre of the story. At the beginning he seems to be only a proud and rather touchy servant, one who insists on the respect due to his caste though he does not follow its practices. But his pride is really a kind of self-respect, and it is joined to a remarkable tenderness. He is ready to give up his job, his security and his good name in society for the sake of a woman whom nobody else will defend. When she deserts him, he does not blame her. When he finds that her child is not his, he does not turn her out. His greatness lies in the fact that he gives love without asking for anything in return, and that he does so without any show of virtue.

The narrator is one of the most interesting characters in Indian short fiction. He is educated, courteous and conscious of being a fair-minded man. He prides himself on being free from prejudices and on treating his servants well. Yet, as the story proceeds, we see his smallness: he cannot bear to hear a servant's request; he judges Gomti without knowing her; he is secretly pleased by Gangu's misfortune; and he taunts him with the baby's birth. He is not a villain, but he is a typical "respectable" man whose goodness is only on the surface. The strength of the story lies in the fact that the narrator himself exposes his faults. At the end he sees them, and the reader respects him for that honesty.

Gomti Devi never appears in person. We see her only through the eyes of others: as a disgrace in the narrator's view, as a blessing in Gangu's. She is a widow who has been treated as an object and passed from one husband to another by the officials of the Ashram. Her repeated flights suggest unhappiness

and fear. When she runs away from Gangu, it is out of shame, not wickedness. Her silence is part of Premchand's point: society speaks about such women but never lets them speak for themselves.

The child is the smallest character, but he is the centre of the story's meaning. He is innocent of all the human trouble that surrounds his birth. In the narrator's eyes he is first a sign of Gomti's guilt; by the end he is a flower of Gangu's goodness.

2.4.5 Themes

True goodness and false goodness. The central theme of the story is the contrast between the narrator's respectable goodness and Gangu's real goodness. The narrator keeps the rules of society and thinks that is enough. Gangu keeps no social rules but loves another human being completely. Premchand suggests that real goodness lies in the heart, not in outward behaviour.

Caste pride and human worth. Gangu is a Brahmin by birth and expects to be respected as one, though he does not perform religious rituals. The story observes this with gentle irony. Yet it also shows that the true worth of a man has nothing to do with caste. The illiterate Brahmin servant teaches his educated master a lesson in morality.

The position of women and widows. The story is a quiet protest against the way society treats widows. Gomti has been married off three times by the officials of an institution, without any regard for her feelings. When she leaves, she is blamed, not those who forced her into the marriages. Gangu is the one man who sees that a woman needs love, not just food and clothing.

Forgiveness and acceptance. Gangu forgives Gomti, and he accepts her child. His comparison of the child to a harvest from a sown field shows his generous way of thinking: what matters is that the life is there and needs care, not who planted it. This is a very different attitude from the narrator's, who is concerned with who is to blame.

Self-knowledge. The story is also about the narrator's discovery of himself. He starts the story proud of his fairness and ends it in confession. This movement, from pride to humility, is the true plot of the story.

2.4.6 Critical Appreciation

Plot and structure. The plot of the story has four movements: Gangu's request to leave; the five months of his marriage; Gomti's flight and return; and the scene with the baby. The tension grows

steadily, since the narrator waits for the marriage to fail and the reader waits to see what will happen to Gangu. The ending is a reversal of the expected result: instead of Gangu's humiliation, we have the narrator's.

Point of view and self-revelation. The story is told in the first person by the narrator, and this is the secret of its power. Because he tells his own story, he shows us his faults without meaning to. Notice how he tells us again and again that he is a model of humane behaviour, and how his own actions contradict it. This kind of narrator, who reveals more about himself than he intends, is a very effective device in fiction. The reader is able to see more than the narrator does, at least for a time.

Irony. Irony is present from the very first paragraph. The narrator describes Gangu's pride in being a Brahmin with amused superiority, but the narrator is himself proud in other ways. There is irony in the fact that the narrator accepts the resignation because he fears for his reputation, while it is Gangu who risks his own. There is irony, too, in the fact that the narrator's taunt about the baby's birth, which he thinks is a clever blow, only shows Gangu's generosity.

Symbols and allusions. The comparison with Nand holding the child Krishna is a reference to Hindu tradition. Krishna was raised by Nand and Yashoda, who were not his birth parents. The comparison suggests that Gangu is a loving foster father, and that the baby, whatever his birth, is a blessed child. The image of the sown field and the harvest, which Gangu uses, is also a symbol: it turns a difficult social question into a simple picture from village life.

Style and language. Premchand's language is plain and conversational. He lets the characters talk, and the dialogue between the narrator and Gangu does much of the work of the story. There is little description, but each detail counts: the fan that Gangu picks up, the tumbler he will not touch, the eight or ten annas he earns. The tone moves from mild irony at the beginning to real feeling at the end.

2.4.7 A Closer Look at Three Key Moments

The narrator's pleasure at Gomti's flight. When the narrator hears that Gomti has run away, he feels a strange pleasure. This is one of the most honest moments in the story. He admits that he had been envious of Gangu's happiness. It is rare for a narrator to confess a shabby feeling so openly, and the confession prepares us for his later change. Without this moment the final scene would be less convincing.

The taunt. The narrator's remark that a baby cannot be born six months after a marriage is meant as a blow. The writer tells us that it hit its target. But what is the target? Gangu, as it turns out, takes the news calmly; his only reaction is to understand why Gomti had run away. The real target of the arrow is the narrator's own pride. When he sees how little the taunt has hurt Gangu, he begins to see how mean it was.

The final embrace. When the narrator takes the baby in his arms, he does so without thinking. The writer says that he did not know what power crushed his feelings of disgust. This is the turning-point, and it is shown in an action, not an argument. Premchand does not explain; he shows. The narrator's later words, that he is good only outwardly, are the result of this moment of feeling.

2.4.8 The Story and Social Reform

Premchand was a writer with a social purpose. He believed that literature should help to improve society, and many of his stories are quiet arguments for reform. "The Child" argues for a kinder treatment of widows, for a wider view of what makes a person worthy, and for the idea that love is stronger than social rules. But note that the story does not lecture. It makes its argument through a single human situation and trusts the reader to draw the conclusion.

This is an important lesson for you as a student of literature. A story may have a message, but a good story shows its message in action and does not announce it. When you write about "The Child", you should try to show how Premchand does this: through the narrator's self-revelation, through Gangu's simple speech and through the final scene with the baby.

2.4.9 Glossary

- **Brahmin:** a member of the priestly caste in the Hindu social order.
- **Syce:** a groom or servant who looks after horses.
- **Bhang:** an intoxicating preparation made from the leaves of the hemp plant.
- **Hazoor:** a respectful form of address to a master or superior.
- **Ashram:** a place of religious retreat or, here, a home for widows.
- **Mohalla:** a neighbourhood or locality in an Indian town.
- **Chaat:** a spicy snack sold in the street.

- **Anna:** an old Indian coin; sixteen annas made a rupee.

Activity 5: Gangu says that he took a field that someone else had sown and will not disown the harvest. In about 80 words, explain what he means in your own words, and say whether you think this is a good way to look at a child's birth.

2.5 Mulk Raj Anand: "The Gold Watch"

2.5.1 About the Author

Mulk Raj Anand was born on 12 December 1905 in Peshawar, in what is now Pakistan, and died in Pune on 28 September 2004. He studied at Khalsa College, Amritsar, where he graduated with honours in 1924, and then went to England for further study. He lived there for many years, mixed with writers and thinkers of the time, and became deeply interested in the condition of the poor in India. He took an active interest in the Indian independence movement and returned to India in 1947.

Anand is regarded as one of the founders of Indian writing in English. His first novel, *Untouchable* (1935), the story of one day in the life of a young sweeper named Bakha, was published with an introduction by the English novelist E.M. Forster and established his reputation. It was followed by *Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), a novel set on the tea plantations of Assam. His trilogy, *The Village*, *Across the Black Waters* and *The Sword and the Sickle*, followed the life of a peasant boy named Lalu. Later he began a long autobiographical series called *Seven Ages of Man*, which opened with *Seven Summers* (1951). He was a prolific writer of short stories as well, and he lamented that his stories were not given enough attention. He is known above all for his sympathetic picture of the lives of the poor and the working classes in traditional Indian society.

2.5.2 Background and Title of the Story

"The Gold Watch" is one of the best-known short stories of Indian writing in English and is widely anthologised. It is set in India in the last years of British rule, in the Bombay office of a British firm, Henry King and Company, which makes and sells marmalade. The story therefore belongs to the colonial period, in which Indian clerks worked under British managers in business houses that existed largely to make money for owners overseas.

The title refers to a gift: a gold watch with an inscription, which the General Manager, Mr. Acton, presents to a clerk. A gold watch was a traditional gift to an employee on his retirement. In ordinary

circumstances it would be a sign of honour. In this story, however, it is a sign of dismissal in disguise, and the irony of the title grows as the story proceeds. The watch also suggests time, which is the central pressure on the clerk: the time that he has given to the company and the time that he now has left.

2.5.3 Summary of the Story

The smile. The story begins with a remark that there was nothing about the smile of Mr. Acton, when he came over to the table of Srijut Sudarshan Sharma, which foretold disaster. The reader soon understands why the word "disaster" is used. Mr. Acton is a stern, hard-working English manager. He is conscientious and a hard driver, known as a shrewd businessman, so devoted to the task of spreading the monopoly of King's Marmalade and other products that his wife is said to have left him after three months of marriage and never returned to India. He is not known to smile much. Sharma is a dispatch clerk who has served the firm for many years with honesty and discipline.

On this day Mr. Acton comes to Sharma's table with a smile and tells him that he has something special for him. It is a gold watch, he says, with an inscription on it, and Sharma should come to see him on Monday morning. Sharma thanks him. But as soon as Mr. Acton has gone, Sharma begins to worry. Why should the General Manager bring him a present? He remembers that such gifts are given to people who are about to leave the firm.

The weekend of fear. Sharma goes home with his mind in a turmoil. He thinks of his family and of the small provident fund that will be all he has to live on if he loses his job. His son is still a boy and his education is not complete. He cannot bring himself to tell his wife the full cause of his worry, and he tries to behave as usual. At home his wife and son are delighted to hear that Mr. Acton is going to give him a gold watch. The young son, Hari, asks his father to give him the silver watch that he is now using when the gold one comes. His mother says that Hari should wait until his father has received the gold watch, and then he will surely give him the silver one. In an ordinary way Sharma would have agreed with his wife's sentiments. Now, however, he knows that the silver watch and the gold watch have different meanings for him, and he cannot share the family's pleasure. Quietly, almost sadly, he tells Hari that he may have the silver watch. He no longer thinks that he will need it.

All through the weekend Sharma tries to hide his fear under forced cheerfulness. His wife notices that he has not eaten, but he does not tell her the reason. Later he thinks over Mr. Acton's promise of a gold

watch with an inscription, and he concludes that the gift means that he is going to be removed from his post.

Monday morning. On Monday Sharma is called to Mr. Acton's office. Mr. Acton speaks in praise of his long and faithful service and then tells him that the company has decided that he should retire before the usual age. The gold watch, with its inscription, is a token of the firm's appreciation. Sharma is overcome. He feels humiliated, and the gift seems to him like charity given to a beggar. His eyes fill with tears of frustration, and he is covered with sweat. In his confusion he drops the watch on the table. He is unable to protest. He says "Thank you, sir" and accepts the decision.

The colleagues and the way home. When Sharma comes out of the office, his colleagues gather around him. They admire the gold watch and speak of Mr. Acton's generosity. None of them dares to question the decision. On the way home Sharma finds that the watch, which had been dropped on Mr. Acton's table, works only when it is shaken. The gift that was to honour him has already begun to fail, and the reader understands that this broken watch is an image of Sharma's own condition.

Activity 6: Read the story summary once more and list in your notebook the people who know about Sharma's retirement before Sharma himself does, and those who know after. What does this tell you about the way the company treats its employees?

2.5.4 Characters

Srijut Sudarshan Sharma is a typical middle-class Indian clerk of the colonial period. He is hard-working, honest, anxious and dependent on his job. He has spent years of his life in the service of the firm and has never questioned the justice of his position. His chief quality is his silence. He is never rude, never angry, and never speaks up for himself, even when the blow falls. This is not because he feels nothing. On the contrary, he feels intensely, and Anand tells us this through his sweating, his tears and his sleepless worry. But he has been trained to obey, and he cannot do anything else.

Mr. Acton is the General Manager, an Englishman who represents the colonial employer. He is described as stern and hard-working, devoted to the firm, and not given to smiling. His one smile in the story is therefore a deceptive one. He is not shown as a monster. He seems to believe that he is being generous with the gold watch. But his treatment of Sharma is cold and mechanical. He is concerned with what the firm needs and does not think of what the man will do after his years of service. His own

unhappy domestic life, hinted at in the story, suggests that he, too, is a person who has given his whole life to the business.

Hari is Sharma's young son. He is a child, and he sees the gold watch only as a source of a new gift for himself. His innocence is in sharp contrast with his father's anxiety. It is through Hari that Anand brings in the theme of childhood, which links this story with the two earlier stories of this chapter. Hari does not know that his request for the silver watch comes on the day when his father's whole future is in danger.

Sharma's wife appears briefly. She is warm, practical and pleased at the idea of the gold watch. Her innocent happiness makes Sharma's silence more painful.

The colleagues are the chorus of the story. They are not hostile. They admire the watch and speak well of Mr. Acton. But their reaction shows how completely the clerks have accepted the system. None of them questions it.

2.5.5 Themes

Colonial power and exploitation. The story is a picture of the relationship between a British firm and its Indian workers. The firm takes the loyalty and labour of its clerks and gives them very little in return. When the clerk is no longer useful, he is dismissed with a gift. The marmalade company and its "King's Marmalade" stand for the whole British commercial empire in India.

Insecurity of the middle class. Sharma lives in fear of losing his job, because he has nothing else to depend on. The provident fund will not be enough for the family's needs, and his son has still to be educated. The story is a realistic portrayal of the insecurity of the lower middle class, which has no power and no protection.

Dignity and humiliation. Sharma has done nothing wrong, but he is made to feel small. The gift he is given adds to his humiliation, because it asks him to be grateful. The story is a study of the way in which a person can be hurt by politeness and kind words.

The silence of the powerless. Sharma does not protest. His colleagues do not protest. The story suggests that the greatest weakness of the clerks is their silence, and that the system continues because those who suffer under it accept it.

Appearance and reality. Like the stories in the first chapter, this story rests on a difference between what seems to be and what is. The gold watch appears to be a reward, but it is in fact a punishment. Mr. Acton's smile appears to be friendly, but it hides bad news.

2.5.6 Critical Appreciation

Plot and structure. The story has a very simple plot, which can be told in a few sentences. What gives it its power is the careful building of suspense. We know from the first line that something bad is coming. We follow Sharma's fear through the weekend, and we wait for the confirmation on Monday. The ending is not dramatic. It is quiet and sad, and it is all the stronger for that.

Irony. The story has many ironies. The most important is the irony of the gold watch itself: it is a gift that is also a blow. There is an irony in the fact that Hari asks for the silver watch just when Sharma is losing his job. There is an irony in Mr. Acton's smile, which is meant to be kind and which makes Sharma afraid. And there is an irony in the fact that the gold watch, the symbol of the firm's generosity, turns out to be faulty. Anand does not point out these ironies. He leaves the reader to discover them.

Symbolism. The gold watch is the central symbol. A watch measures time, and time is what Sharma has given to the firm. The watch is also a token of the firm's power: it keeps the time by which Sharma has had to live his working life. Gold stands for value and honour, but the watch that goes only when it is shaken tells us that the honour is false. The silver watch that Sharma gives to his son is a second symbol. It stands for the family and for what Sharma can still give, and it is a sign that he has accepted his fate.

Point of view and tone. The story is told by a third-person narrator who stays close to Sharma and tells us what he fears and feels. At the same time the narrator describes Mr. Acton with a dry humour, almost as if from outside. This mixture of sympathy and ironic detachment gives the story its tone. It is neither bitter nor sentimental. It is sad, and the sadness is quiet.

Style and language. Anand writes in plain, direct English, with some of the rhythm of Indian speech. Domestic detail is used to great effect: the family at home, the untouched meal, the small boy asking for a watch. These details make the reader feel the weight of what Sharma is hiding. The story is a good example of the realist method of showing ordinary life as it is.

2.5.7 A Closer Look at Three Key Moments

Mr. Acton's smile. The story opens with this smile because it contains the whole situation. A smile from a manager who seldom smiles is a warning. By telling us at once that nothing in the smile suggested disaster, the narrator makes us suspect that disaster is exactly what it hides. This is a fine example of irony used in the opening sentence of a story.

Hari asks for the silver watch. This is the most painful moment of the weekend. The family is delighted, and Hari speaks as a child speaks. For Sharma, every word is a blow, because he knows what the gold watch really means. He hides his feelings and tells Hari that he may have the silver watch. We see in that one gesture his love for his son, his acceptance of what is to come, and his inability to share his fear.

The dropped watch. When Sharma drops the gold watch in his confusion on Mr. Acton's table, it is as if his body speaks what his tongue cannot say. The watch is damaged, and its failure on the way home tells us that the honour it was meant to represent is empty. It is an effective example of an object doing the work of a whole paragraph of explanation.

2.5.8 The Realist Tradition in Indian Writing

Anand belonged to a group of writers in the 1930s and 1940s who believed that literature should deal with the real problems of society: poverty, caste, labour and colonial rule. Premchand, whom you have just studied, was a great influence on this movement. Anand's method in "The Gold Watch" is to take a very small incident and let it carry a large meaning. This method, sometimes called social realism, is found in the best stories of the period.

It would be wrong, however, to think of the story only as a protest. It is also a deeply human story. Sharma is not just a type; he is a man with a family, a fear and a quiet dignity of his own. When you write about the story, remember to speak of both its social meaning and its human feeling.

2.5.9 Glossary

- **Dispatch clerk:** an office worker in charge of sending out goods or documents.
- **Provident fund:** a fund into which an employee and employer pay money, to be given to the employee on retirement.
- **Marmalade:** a preserve made from oranges or other citrus fruit.
- **Monopoly:** exclusive control of a trade or product.

- **Inscription:** words written or engraved on an object.
- **Colonial:** relating to the rule of one country over another.
- **Social realism:** a kind of art or writing that shows social conditions, especially those of the poor, as they are.

Activity 7: Imagine that Sharma had spoken up in Mr. Acton's office. In about 80 words, write what he might have said. Then explain why you think Anand chose to make him say nothing.

2.6 Comparative Study of the Three Stories

Now that you have studied the three stories one by one, let us place them side by side. The following table gives you a quick comparison.

	Sahni	**Premchand**	**Anand**
Narrator	First person (a schoolboy looking back)	First person (an educated employer)	Third person, close to the clerk
Setting	A school and an old bungalow	A town, a mohalla, a bazaar	A British firm's office in Bombay
Role of the child	The hero (Bodh Raj)	The baby, a symbol of innocence	Hari, an innocent witness
Who changes?	Bodh Raj	The narrator	No one (the system stays unchanged)
Ending	Hopeful	Warm and moving	Quiet and sad
Main device	Irony, foreshadowing, symbol	Self-revealing narrator, irony	Symbol, irony, understatement
Mood	Gentle and hopeful	Tender and searching	Sad and restrained

2.6.1 Childhood and Innocence

In all three stories a child, or the idea of a child, plays an important part, though in very different ways. In Sahni's story the child is the hero. Bodh Raj starts as a cruel boy, but when he sees helplessness before him, his innocence comes back to him. In Premchand's story the child is the baby whose very existence shames the narrator's prejudice. He does nothing, yet he changes a heart. In Anand's story the child, Hari, is a minor figure, but his innocent request for the silver watch makes his father's fear more painful for the reader. In this way the three writers use childhood to show the contrast between the simplicity of a young heart and the complications of the adult world.

2.6.2 The Change of Heart

The stories by Sahni and Premchand are both stories of a change of heart. In "The Boy with a Catapult" the change is in the hero, a boy who gives up cruelty. In "The Child" it is in the narrator, a respectable man who gives up false pride. In both cases the change comes suddenly and is brought about not by argument but by an experience. Bodh Raj sees the helpless chicks; the narrator sees Gangu's generous love. Anand's story is different. There is no change of heart, either in the manager or in the clerk. The system goes on as before. In this sense Anand's story is the most pessimistic of the three, and it is the one that comes closest to a protest against society.

2.6.3 Social Realities

Each story rests on a firm background of social reality. In Sahni's story it is the lonely life of a middle-class family on the edge of a city. In Premchand's it is caste pride, the position of widows and the social judgement of women. In Anand's it is colonial rule and the insecurity of the Indian clerk. The three writers do not lecture about these things. They let the stories show them, and this is why they are still moving today.

2.6.4 Narrative Technique

Two of the stories are told in the first person and one in the third. The first-person narrators are very different. Sahni's narrator is a boy who observes Bodh Raj and reports what he sees; he is a witness. Premchand's narrator is a grown man who tells his own story and, without meaning to, shows his own faults; he is a self-revealing narrator. Anand's third-person narrator is detached but sympathetic, and he describes Mr. Acton with quiet humour and Sharma with pity. All three narrators use understatement: they never tell the reader what to feel. The reader is trusted to see the meaning for himself.

Activity 8: Choose one of the three stories and write a paragraph of about 100 words explaining how the choice of narrator affects the way we understand the story. Use at least one of the terms: point of view, irony, theme or narrator.

2.7 Check Your Progress

Answer the following questions in your notebook. Do not look at the text while answering. When you have finished, check your answers against the key given in Section 2.11.

Check Your Progress 1 (Sahni)

1. Who was the oddest boy in the narrator's school?
2. Why did the narrator's family move to a large bungalow on the outskirts of the city?
3. Whose nest was near the ventilator in the storeroom? (a) a sparrow (b) a mynah (c) a crow (d) a parrot
4. True or False: Bodh Raj hit the kite with his catapult.
5. What did Bodh Raj bring on the day after the rescue, instead of his catapult?
6. What does the catapult symbolise in the story?

Check Your Progress 2 (Premchand)

1. Gangu belonged to the _____ caste.
2. Gomti Devi had been expelled from which institution?
3. How did Gangu earn his living after he left the narrator's service? (a) by driving a cart (b) by selling chaat (c) by farming (d) by teaching
4. True or False: Gangu refused to accept the baby as his own.
5. In which city was Gomti found?
6. What does Gangu mean when he speaks of a sown field and its harvest?

Check Your Progress 3 (Anand)

1. Name the firm in which Sharma worked.
2. What gift did Mr. Acton promise to Sharma?
3. What was Sharma's job in the firm? (a) peon (b) dispatch clerk (c) accountant (d) manager

4. True or False: Sharma protested openly against the early retirement.
5. To whom did Sharma give his silver watch?
6. Why is the title "The Gold Watch" ironic? Answer in two or three sentences.

2.8 Summary

In this chapter you have studied three Indian short stories in which innocence meets social reality.

Bhisham Sahni's "The Boy with a Catapult" is the story of Bodh Raj, a schoolboy who is the terror of his class. He kills birds with his catapult, destroys nests and hurts insects for pleasure. The narrator, a lonely boy, has moved to a big bungalow on the edge of the city, where Bodh Raj becomes his only visitor. In a storeroom behind the house Bodh Raj prepares to shoot at a mynah's nest, but a kite appears and threatens the chicks. Bodh Raj tries to drive off the kite, then moves the nest to the garage and feeds the chicks with water. The next day he comes with a bag of seeds and without his catapult. The story is a gentle account of a change of heart.

Munshi Premchand's "The Child" is told by an educated employer about his servant Gangu, a proud illiterate Brahmin. Gangu asks to leave his job because he wishes to marry Gomti Devi, a widow expelled from the Widows' Ashram. The narrator warns him against the marriage but accepts his resignation. Gangu's marriage seems happy until Gomti runs away. Gangu finds her in a hospital in Lucknow, where she has given birth to a baby, and brings her back. The narrator mocks him by pointing out that the baby was born six months after the marriage. Gangu, with simple generosity, says that the child is his own. Moved and ashamed, the narrator takes the baby in his arms and admits that he himself is good only on the outside.

Mulk Raj Anand's "The Gold Watch" is the story of Srijut Sudarshan Sharma, a loyal dispatch clerk in the Bombay office of a British marmalade firm. His manager, Mr. Acton, promises him a gold watch with an inscription. Sharma understands that this means early retirement, and he spends an anxious weekend, hiding his fear from his family. His young son Hari asks for his silver watch, and Sharma gives it to him. On Monday Mr. Acton gives him the gold watch and the news of his retirement. Sharma cannot protest. The watch, dropped in his confusion, goes only when shaken, and becomes a symbol of his own condition.

By comparing the three stories you have seen how each writer uses childhood and innocence differently, how two stories end in a change of heart while the third ends in silent acceptance, and how realistic detail, irony and symbol give each story its power.

2.9 Keywords

- **Realism:** a way of writing that shows ordinary life as it really is.
- **Social realism:** writing that shows the conditions of society, especially of the poor, truthfully.
- **First-person narrator:** a narrator who is a character in the story and says "I".
- **Third-person narrator:** a narrator who stands outside the story and tells it using "he", "she" and "they".
- **Irony:** a contrast between what is expected or said and what actually happens or is meant.
- **Foreshadowing:** a hint in a story of what will happen later.
- **Symbol:** an object or action that stands for an idea beyond itself.
- **Theme:** the central idea of a literary work.
- **Plot:** the planned sequence of events in a story.
- **Climax:** the point of highest tension in a story.
- **Retrospective narration:** telling a story as a memory of earlier events.
- **Understatement:** saying less than one means, in order to give greater force.

2.10 Self-Assessment Test

Section A: Explain with reference to the context

1. Bodh Raj hands the catapult to the narrator and tells him to keep aiming at the kite so that it cannot settle. (Bhisham Sahni, "The Boy with a Catapult")
2. Gangu tells the narrator that the child is his own, because he took a field already sown by another and will not disown the harvest. (Munshi Premchand, "The Child")
3. On the way home Sharma finds that the gold watch goes only when it is shaken. (Mulk Raj Anand, "The Gold Watch")

For each, state who the speaker or the person concerned is, what the occasion is, and what the incident tells us about the character or the theme (about 100 words each).

Section B: Short-answer questions (70 to 80 words each)

1. Describe the cruelty of Bodh Raj as it is shown at the beginning of Sahni's story.

At the beginning, Bodh Raj is shown as a feared and callous boy. He catches a wasp, pulls out its sting, ties a thread to it and flies it like a kite. He crushes butterflies or pins them to his notebook. With his catapult he shoots birds and destroys nests and eggs. He enjoys hurting others, and even his own mother calls him a demon. Everyone in the class is afraid of him.

2. What part does the narrator's mother play in the story "The Boy with a Catapult"?

The narrator's mother plays a small but important part. She does not like his friendship with Bodh Raj, but she knows her son is lonely. When the birds make the storeroom dirty, she suggests that Bodh Raj, who loves nests, should clean it. She adds that he can remove the nests without harming the birds. Her remark takes the boys to the storeroom, and this leads to the kite scene and Bodh Raj's change.

3. How does the kite change Bodh Raj's behaviour?

In the storeroom, a large kite appears and threatens the helpless mynah chicks. Bodh Raj, who had often destroyed nests himself, is now alarmed. He aims his catapult at the kite and tells the narrator to keep hitting it. Then he climbs up, lifts the nest and carries it safely to the garage. He feeds the chicks water and does not touch them. Next day he comes without his catapult, carrying a bag of seeds.

4. Why does Gangu wish to leave the narrator's service?

Gangu wishes to marry Gomti Devi, a widow who has been expelled from the Widows' Ashram. People gossip about her, and she has left three husbands. Gangu does not ask for money or complain about anyone. He says the narrator is a good master, but he cannot work for him in this situation. He does not want the narrator's reputation to suffer because of his marriage, so he asks to be relieved of his duties.

5. How does the narrator react when he first learns that Gomti has run away?

When the narrator hears that Gomti has run away, he feels a strange pleasure. He has become jealous of Gangu's contentment and has been waiting for it to end in shame. He meets Gangu and hides his satisfaction behind a show of sympathy. He asks whether she has taken Gangu's savings, and he mocks him by asking if he will search for her. He is disappointed when Gangu speaks of her with love.

6. Why is the narrator ashamed at the end of "The Child"?

At the end, the narrator sees Gangu's true goodness. Gangu accepts Gomti's child as his own, though the baby was born only six months after their marriage. The narrator had mocked him, and he had thought of himself as a model of humane behaviour. Moved, he takes the baby in his arms. He admits that his goodness is only on the outside and that he is mean within, while Gangu is truly good.

7. Describe the way in which Mr. Acton tells Sharma about his retirement.

Mr. Acton first comes to Sharma's table with an unusual smile and promises him a gold watch with an inscription. On Monday he calls Sharma to his office and praises his long and faithful service. Then he tells him that the company has decided he should retire before the usual age. The gold watch is presented as a token of the firm's appreciation, but the polite words hide the unpleasant news and leave Sharma humiliated.

8. What does the silver watch stand for in "The Gold Watch"?

The silver watch stands for the family and for what Sharma can still give. His son Hari asks for it when the gold watch arrives, and Sharma gives it quietly, saying he will no longer need it. By giving it away, Sharma shows that he has already accepted the loss of his job. It is also a contrast to the gold watch, which is the firm's false and faulty gift.

Section C: Essay-type questions (about 300 words each)

1. Discuss "The Boy with a Catapult" as a story of change of heart.
2. Show how Sahni uses irony and symbol in "The Boy with a Catapult".
3. Write a character sketch of Gangu and the narrator in "The Child". Which of the two is the real hero of the story?
4. "The Gold Watch" is a criticism of colonial rule. Discuss.
5. Compare the treatment of childhood and innocence in any two of the three stories.

Section D: Objective questions

1. Who is the author of "The Boy with a Catapult"?
2. What is the Hindi title of Premchand's "The Child"?
3. Name the author of "The Gold Watch".

4. Name the British firm in which Sharma worked.
5. What did Gangu sell after leaving his job?
6. Which Hindi novel of Sahni deals with the Partition?
7. Name the narrator's son who asks for the silver watch in "The Gold Watch".
8. Define "irony" in one sentence.

2.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

Check Your Progress 1

1. Bodh Raj.
2. The narrator's father was given a promotion, and the family moved into a large old-style bungalow on the outskirts of the city.
3. (b) a mynah.
4. False. His pebble missed the kite.
5. A bag of seeds.
6. The catapult symbolises violence and the boy's pleasure in hurting living things. Its absence at the end shows that he has changed.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Brahmin.
2. The Widows' Ashram.
3. (b) by selling chaat.
4. False. He accepted the baby as his own.
5. Lucknow (in a hospital).
6. He means that he married Gomti knowing her past, and that he will not reject the child just because another man was responsible for his birth. Like a farmer who takes a field that someone else had sown, he accepts the harvest with love.

Check Your Progress 3

1. Henry King and Company.

2. A gold watch with an inscription.
3. (b) dispatch clerk.
4. False. He accepted the decision silently and thanked Mr. Acton.
5. To his young son, Hari.
6. The title is ironic because a gold watch is normally a gift of honour, but here it is the sign that Sharma is being dismissed before his time. Moreover, the watch itself proves faulty, so the gift that was meant to honour him is already failing.

2.12 References / Suggested Readings

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Subject: Introduction to Short Story and Basic Grammar	
Course Code- C24ENG101T	**Author:** Ms. Aarti Devi
Lesson- 3	

IDENTITY, RELATIONSHIPS AND HUMAN CONFLICT

(Anita Desai: "Games at Twilight"; Shashi Deshpande: "My Beloved Charioteer"; Saadat Hasan Manto: "The Dog of Tithwal")

Structure

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Anita Desai: "Games at Twilight"

3.4 Shashi Deshpande: "My Beloved Charioteer"

3.5 Saadat Hasan Manto: "The Dog of Tithwal"

3.6 Comparative Study of the Three Stories

3.7 Check Your Progress (Units 3.3 to 3.5)

3.8 Summary

3.9 Keywords

3.10 Self-Assessment Test

3.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.12 References / Suggested Readings

3.1 Learning Objectives

Unit II of your syllabus moves from the stories of Unit I to a wider range of modern stories by Indian and world writers. This chapter takes up the first three stories of the unit, all by Indian writers. Each of them asks, in a different way, the question "Who am I, and where do I belong?" After studying this chapter carefully, you should be able to:

- narrate the plot of each of the three stories in your own words and describe the main characters;
- explain how Anita Desai uses a simple children's game to show a child's need to be noticed and valued;
- discuss how Shashi Deshpande presents the relationships between three generations of women and the silent burdens that they carry;
- explain how Saadat Hasan Manto uses the death of a stray dog to expose the absurdity of border hatred after the Partition;
- identify and discuss the literary terms point of view, symbol, irony, foreshadowing and setting as they are used in the three stories;
- compare the three stories and answer short and long questions on them with confidence.

3.2 Introduction

Dear learner, each one of us carries a picture of himself or herself. We think of ourselves as a brother or a sister, a mother or a daughter, an Indian or a villager or a student. Part of this picture is made by us, but a large part is made by other people: by what they say to us, how they treat us and whether they notice us at all. When this outer picture does not match the inner one, we suffer. The three stories in this chapter are about that kind of suffering.

In the first story, a small boy wants others to recognise him and is forgotten. In the second, an old woman wants her daughter to see her as a person and not only as a mother. In the third, soldiers on two sides of a border demand that a stray dog should declare whether he is Indian or Pakistani. In each case, identity, which means the sense of who one is, is bound up with relationships and with conflict.

3.2.1 Identity and Belonging in the Modern Story

Older stories, such as the folk tale or the parable, usually ended with a clear lesson. The modern short story, which grew up in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is more interested in the inner life of its characters. It often has no obvious hero or villain, and it often ends without a neat solution. A modern story may end on a single moment of understanding, which critics sometimes call an epiphany (a sudden insight into the truth of a situation).

You will find that all three stories in this chapter have such a moment. Ravi in Desai's story suddenly understands that no one has missed him. Ajji in Deshpande's story hears a child's voice calling her back

to the present, after she has broken a long silence. And in Manto's story the soldiers' casual remarks over the dead dog show, without comment from the writer, what the conflict has done to them.

These stories also share an interest in the way people are placed in a social order. Desai's children have a pecking order of their own, with the eldest at the top and the youngest at the bottom. Deshpande's women are placed in a family order in which a wife must always be available to her husband. Manto's soldiers are placed in an order of nations. Each writer asks us to look at this order and to question it.

3.2.2 The Three Writers at a Glance

	Anita Desai	**Shashi Deshpande**	**Saadat Hasan Manto**
Born	1937, Mussoorie	1938, Dharwad	1912, Samrala (Punjab)
Wrote in	English	English	Urdu
Story	"Games at Twilight"	"My Beloved Charioteer"	"The Dog of Tithwal"
Mood	Psychological, poignant	Quiet, searching	Ironic, tragic
Central concern	Childhood and recognition	Women, family and silence	Partition and the absurdity of hatred

You may notice that two of the writers are women, and that both of them write about the inner world of the home. The third, Manto, writes about a border post in the mountains. But, as you will see, the borders that matter most in these stories are the invisible ones between people.

3.2.3 Why These Stories Are Studied Together

The title of this chapter, "Identity, Relationships and Human Conflict", gives you a way to read the three stories as a group. In Desai's story the conflict is between a small boy's dream of glory and the indifference of the group. In Deshpande's story the conflict is between a mother and a daughter, each

locked in her own grief. In Manto's story the conflict is between two armies that are very much alike but have been taught to hate each other.

As you read, ask yourself three questions of each story. Who is the person who feels unseen or unheard? What does that person want? And does the story give them what they want? You will find that only one of the three stories gives a real, if partial, answer to the last question; the other two leave the wound open.

Activity 1: Think of a time when you felt left out of a group or ignored by someone close to you. Write four or five lines about how you felt. After reading Desai's story, compare your own feelings with those of Ravi.

3.3 Anita Desai: "Games at Twilight"

3.3.1 About the Author

Anita Desai was born in 1937 in Mussoorie, in the Himalayan foothills, to a Bengali father and a German mother, and grew up in Delhi. She grew up speaking several languages, German at home, Hindi and Urdu in the streets, and English at school, and she chose English for her writing, which she began as a child. Her fiction is known for its attention to the inner lives of sensitive, often lonely characters, who are placed in a family or a society that does not understand them.

Her novels include *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), which won the Sahitya Akademi Award, *Clear Light of Day* (1980), *In Custody* (1984) and *Fasting, Feasting* (1999). Three of these were shortlisted for the Booker Prize. She has also written children's books, among them *The Village by the Sea*, and several collections of short stories. Her daughter, Kiran Desai, is also a novelist and won the Booker Prize in 2006 for *The Inheritance of Loss*. Anita Desai has been honoured with the Padma Bhushan.

3.3.2 Background and Title of the Story

"Games at Twilight" was published in 1978 as the title story of Desai's collection *Games at Twilight and Other Stories*. It is a good example of what critics call a psychological story: one in which the real events take place in the mind of a character. On the surface nothing much happens. A group of children plays a game of hide-and-seek on a summer evening. But inside this simple frame, Desai builds a moving study of a small boy's hopes and humiliation.

The title has two meanings. Twilight is the time of the day between sunset and darkness. It is the time when a game begins to end, when children are called indoors, and it is also, in a larger sense, a time of change and loss. The word "games" suggests play and innocence, but the story shows that even a children's game can be a serious matter for the person playing it. Notice how the title prepares you for a story in which brightness slowly gives way to shadow.

3.3.3 Summary of the Story

The children are let out. The story opens on a hot summer afternoon in an Indian city. The children of the house have been kept indoors all day, away from the dangerous heat of the sun. They feel shut in and restless, and they are almost bursting with energy. When they are finally allowed out, they rush into the garden with shouts of joy. After some quarrelling, they decide to play hide-and-seek.

The roles in the group. The game quickly shows who is who among the children. Raghu, the eldest, is a big, strong boy and a football champion. He has the loudest voice, and it is he who is chosen as "It", the one who must seek the others. Mira, one of the girls, acts like a little mother to the rest. Manu, one of the youngest, is easily caught. In the middle, but not a leader, is Ravi, a small and sensitive boy who longs to be as strong and admired as Raghu but is not.

Ravi's hiding place. Raghu counts and the children scatter. Ravi first hides behind the garage, which is locked. From there he hears his little brother crying: Raghu has already found him. Ravi is afraid that he will be the next to be caught. As the sound of Raghu's whistling and of his heavy footsteps comes nearer, Ravi panics and slips through a small gap into an abandoned shed that stands next to the garage.

In the shed. The shed is dark and damp. It is full of rubbish and discarded things, and it is alive with moths and crawling insects. At first Ravi is frightened. But as he stands in the dark, he understands that nobody in the world would think of looking for him in such a place. His fear gives way to a feeling of safety, and then to excitement. Outside, Raghu whistles and strikes the wall with his stick, but he goes away without finding him.

Ravi begins to dream. He imagines how he will come out at the very end of the game, when everyone else has been caught. He imagines the astonishment of the older children and of Raghu himself. He sees himself as a champion, hailed and admired by all. The thought of so much glory makes him smile almost shyly in the darkness. He is so absorbed in this dream that he forgets the passage of time. Meanwhile the shadows outside lengthen and twilight comes on.

The mistake and the disappointment. At last Ravi remembers that, according to the rules of the game, he must run to the veranda and touch the "den" to win. He darts out of the shed and runs across the garden to claim his victory. But the garden is quiet and the game is over. The other children have long since been caught and have gone on to something else. No one has remembered that Ravi was still hiding. They are now playing another game, and when he arrives shouting that he has won, no one takes any notice.

He cries out at the top of his voice that he has won. He weeps with anger and humiliation. But the children are engrossed in their new game, and the little drama of his victory passes unnoticed. Ravi realises that his triumph has no meaning because no one has seen it. The story ends with Ravi feeling hurt, powerless and unimportant, and he withdraws from the group.

Activity 2: In your notebook, write down three feelings that Ravi has in the shed (for example fear, relief and pride) and the exact point in the story at which each feeling arises. Then mark the point at which his mood changes completely.

3.3.4 Characters

Ravi is the central character, and the story is told largely through his mind. He is small and sensitive, and he is aware that he does not count for much among the older children. This awareness fuels his dream of glory. Desai shows him as both comic and pathetic: comic in the extravagance of his imaginings, pathetic in the cruelty of the ending. We do not blame him for his dream; we feel his hurt as our own.

Raghu, the eldest, represents strength and authority. He is the "It" of the game, the leader of the group and the one whom the younger children admire and fear. He is not a cruel boy, but he is thoughtless, and the others do not wonder what has become of Ravi because they do not think of him as important enough to be missed.

Mira takes the part of the mother in the group. Her role is to organise and to look after the younger ones. She shows that even in a children's game the roles of the grown-up world are repeated: the strong boy leads and the older girl nurtures.

Manu is Ravi's little brother, one of the youngest players. He is caught first and cries. His crying sets off Ravi's panic. He represents the weakest position in the group, a position that Ravi is afraid of falling into.

The other children, the cousins and neighbours, appear only as a crowd. They are the "group" whose recognition Ravi wants, and their collective indifference is the cause of his pain.

3.3.5 Themes

The need for recognition. The main theme is the human need to be seen and valued. Ravi does not simply want to win the game; he wants to be acknowledged as someone who can win. When no one notices, the victory loses all its meaning. This is a theme that we meet again and again in modern fiction: a person is not fully himself unless others recognise him.

Childhood fantasy and disillusionment. Children live partly in a world of imagination, and Ravi's dream in the shed is a good example. But the story shows how the real-world breaks into that imagined world. The shock of the ending is an early lesson in disillusionment, the loss of a cherished illusion.

Social hierarchy. Even among children there is a pecking order. The eldest is strong, the girl is the helper, the youngest is the weakest. Ravi's hope is to climb in this order by a single brilliant act, and the story shows that he fails. The idea that the order of the adult world appears in the children's world is a mark of Desai's social observation.

Fear and safety. The shed is at first a place of fear, then a refuge, and finally a place from which Ravi emerges to face a harder reality. The story suggests that our hiding places, whether physical or imagined, give only a temporary safety. Sooner or later, we must come out.

Loneliness and alienation. In the last scene Ravi is cut off from the others, although they are only a few yards away. This sense of alienation, of being a stranger among one's own, is one of the most important themes in Desai's fiction.

3.3.6 Critical Appreciation

Plot and structure. The plot is simple and moves in a clear line: the restlessness of the children, the game, the hiding, the dream and the shock. Notice that most of the story takes place in the shed, in Ravi's mind. The actual action, the game, occupies a few lines. This proportion, in which the inner event is given more space than the outer, is typical of the psychological story.

Point of view. According to critics, Desai begins the story from a detached, third-person viewpoint, describing the children from outside. As Ravi enters the shed, the narration moves inside his mind, and we see and feel everything as he does. This shift is very skilful. It allows Desai first to show the group as a whole and then to bring us close to one child, so that his disappointment hurts us more.

Setting and atmosphere. The summer heat, the quiet garden, the dark shed and the falling twilight are not mere background. Desai uses them to build a mood. At the beginning the heat is oppressive and the children are shut in; at the end the cool dusk and the silence of the garden make Ravi's isolation more complete.

Symbols. The shed is the main symbol. It stands for hidden fears and for the place where we run to escape, and it also stands for isolation, since Ravi is cut off from the others while he is inside it. The "den", the home base that must be touched to win, stands for recognition and belonging. Twilight itself is a symbol of the end of childhood innocence, the approach of the grown-up world with its disappointments.

Irony. The story is full of irony. Ravi wins the game by hiding so well, but the very success of his hiding is the cause of his loss. He is so well hidden that he is forgotten. The victory he dreams of is real and yet meaningless. There is irony, too, in the contrast between the length and splendour of his daydream and the swiftness and bluntness of the ending.

Style. Desai writes in a rich, sensuous language full of images of heat, light, smell and sound. She describes the shed with great care, and the dust and insects come alive for the reader. Her sentences are longer and more flowing than those of Narayan or Sahni, which you have already read, and they carry the reader into the rhythm of a child's excited thoughts.

3.3.7 A Closer Look at Three Key Moments

The moment of choosing the shed. Ravi does not choose a good hiding place by planning; he is driven into it by fear. This is important. His victory is therefore an accident, not an achievement, and the reader can see that his dream of glory rests on very weak ground. The story quietly shows how much of what we call success is a matter of chance.

The moment of the daydream. The most striking part of the story is Ravi's long daydream in the shed. He imagines all that will follow his victory, and he imagines it so vividly that it seems real. Desai does

not laugh at him. She lets us enter his dream and feel its sweetness, so that we, too, are disappointed when it is broken.

The moment of the return. When Ravi rushes out and finds that no one remembers him, Desai does not describe the scene at length. She shows him crying out, and she shows the children paying no attention. The silence of the other children is crueller than any word. The scene teaches us that the worst pain is not to be attacked, but to be ignored.

3.3.8 Twilight and the Passage of Time

Many readers have pointed out that the story is about time as well as about a game. Ravi loses track of time in the shed, and when he emerges, he finds that the world has moved on. The children of the story are at the age when they are beginning to discover that the world does not wait for anyone. The twilight setting underlines this lesson. It is a time of passing, of the end of a day and, symbolically, of the end of childhood's sense that the world revolves around oneself.

The story therefore has a universal meaning. We all, at some time, have been in the position of Ravi: so, occupied with our own plans and dreams that we do not notice that others have gone elsewhere, or so eager to be noticed that we are hurt by silence. It is this recognition that makes the story much more than an account of a children's game.

3.3.9 Glossary

- **Twilight:** the faint light in the sky after sunset and before dark.
- **Den:** in the game of hide-and-seek, the home base that a hiding player must reach to win.
- **Hierarchy:** an arrangement of people in order of rank or importance.
- **Disillusionment:** the painful loss of a belief or hope that one has cherished.
- **Alienation:** a feeling of being cut off from others or from one's surroundings.
- **Epiphany:** a sudden moment of insight into the truth of a situation.

Activity 3: Rewrite the last scene of the story from the point of view of Mira or Raghu in about 100 words. How would they explain that they forgot about Ravi? What does this show about the way different people see the same event?

3.4 Shashi Deshpande: "My Beloved Charioteer"

3.4.1 About the Author

Shashi Deshpande was born in 1938 in Dharwad, in Karnataka. She is the daughter of the well-known Kannada dramatist and Sanskrit scholar Shriranga. She studied economics and law before turning to writing, and she began her career as a writer of short stories in the early 1970s. She later became a novelist and now lives in Bangalore.

Her first novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, appeared in 1980. Her novel *That Long Silence* (1988) won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990. She has also written several short-story collections, among them *The Legacy*, *The Miracle*, *It Was the Nightingale* and *It Was Dark* (1986), as well as books for children and a book of essays. She received the Padma Shri in 2009. Her fiction is known for its quiet, honest portrayal of middle-class Indian women, their roles as daughters, wives and mothers, and the silences in which they often live.

3.4.2 Background and Title of the Story

"My Beloved Charioteer" comes from the collection *It Was Dark* (1986) and has been reprinted in an anthology of stories by Indian women writers called *The Inner Courtyard*. The title of the anthology is a good clue to the kind of world that the story shows: the inner courtyard of an Indian house, where women live, work and carry on their private struggles, away from the public gaze.

The title of the story refers to a famous scene in the *Mahabharata*. In the great battle of Kurukshetra, Lord Krishna acts as the charioteer of the warrior Arjuna and urges him not to falter. Deshpande uses this religious and cultural memory in a very small, domestic setting. The "battle" in her story is a quiet one, fought in a kitchen and in a dead man's room, and the "charioteer" is not a god but a little girl. As you read, try to find out who drives the story forward and who is urged on.

3.4.3 Summary of the Story

The morning routine. The story is told in the first person by an old woman whom everyone in the house calls Ajji, the Kannada and Marathi word for grandmother. It opens early in the morning. Ajji is waiting for the sounds that she loves: the rush of small feet, the slam of the bathroom door, and then the bare feet running towards her. Her granddaughter Priti comes into the kitchen, rosy and tousled. Ajji reproaches her for banging the doors, for fear of waking her mother, but Priti says cheerfully that Mummy will not wake for hours.

This is their daily routine, a game that both plays. Priti asks whether Ajji has had her tea, and Ajji, who has secretly had a cup an hour earlier, can never confess it, because the child's joy lies in believing that Ajji has waited for her. They bargain over brushing teeth, whispering like conspirators so as not to disturb the sleeper. Ajji pretends to be firm but knows that Priti is never deceived: the child knows that Ajji is on her side. At last, they compromise on tea for Ajji and milk for Priti, and for a few minutes they are perfectly happy. Then Priti goes off to school, and silence settles on the house.

The silence of the house. Ajji had grown used to this silence over the past seven years. It never seemed terrible to her. She tells us that it used to be filled with the friendly ghosts of voices from her past: her younger brother, an aunt who had loved her when she was a child, and two infant sons who never grew up. But since her daughter Aarti came back to live in the house, these friendly ghosts have left. Aarti is a bitter woman who shares the silence with her mother without sharing anything else.

Aarti. Aarti wakes late. When Ajji has finished her bath and prayers and is cooking lunch, she hears her stirring. Aarti comes into the kitchen without a word and drinks her tea in hungry gulps as if she had been thirsting for hours. Earlier, Ajji used to ask her whether she had slept well. One day Aarti put down her cup with a trembling hand and said that she had not slept well since her husband Madhav died, and never would, and that she has to take something every night to close her eyes. She asked her mother never to ask again. Ajji reflects that she carried this daughter inside her for nine months and felt every beat of her heart; yet now she can do nothing for her, and her efforts to help only make things worse.

The old griefs. Ajji's own husband died suddenly, and the circumstances of his death still weigh on her. He had told her not to inform Aarti, especially at that time, because he did not want to frighten her, and Ajji, in the habit of obedience, which dies harder than any other habit, did not dare to disobey. The next day he had a heart attack and died instantly. When Aarti came home, she asked angrily why she had not been told earlier. Three months afterwards Priti was born, so that she never saw her grandfather. Once, seeing his photograph, she asked who he was, and when Ajji said "your grandfather", she asked what he was to Ajji. The innocent question released a flood of feelings in Ajji, who answered bluntly, "My husband."

The two widows. Ajji worries every day about whether Aarti will enjoy her food and whether one day she will talk and laugh again. But one day when Aarti did laugh, it frightened Ajji. It was a burst of loud

laughter, and she said that this was the right atmosphere for a pair of desolate widows. Ajji remembers her own mother, a widow whose head was shaved, who wore coarse red saris and was stripped of all ornaments for the rest of her life. And she thinks of Aarti, who neglects herself for days and then one day dresses up and puts flowers in her hair, and yet whose face has the dry look of a desert.

Ajji understands that life has been cruel to Aarti. She loved her father and he died. She loved her husband even more than her child, and he died too, leaving Priti to her. Children, Ajji says, are more sensitive than we think. Priti once asked if she could sleep in Ajji's room at night, because she could tell her stories and there were many things that she remembered only at night. When Ajji said that her mother was with her, the child said that when she tried to talk to Mummy, she was told to go to sleep and not to bother her, and that Mummy never sleeps but only reads and smokes, and that she does not like the smell.

Ajji's anger. Aarti smokes incessantly now. At first, she tried to hide it, but not for long. Ajji says that in her own father's house it was thought wrong even for a man to smoke, but today she would gladly let her daughter smoke if it made her happy. But it does not: Aarti puffs out smoke as if she is breathing out bitterness. She goes about in an old gown with her hair tied up with a rubber band. One day, looking at an old photograph, Priti said wistfully that Mummy was so pretty. The child's pride in her mother roused in Ajji a rage against Aarti, who seemed to her like a child sulking because she did not have what she wanted and wilfully ignoring what she had.

Once Ajji asked her why she did not go out. Aarti said there was nowhere she wanted to go, because everywhere she saw couples, and she could murder them when she saw them talking and laughing. This frightened Ajji, who wonders in what way she has failed as a mother: the fault, she thinks, must be partly hers. Another day Aarti harshly asked Priti whether she remembered her father. The frightened child burst into tears afterwards and clung to Ajji. Ajji felt pity, not for the child, but for Aarti, who could turn happiness into a wrong. But she says nothing. She has never shared anything with her daughter and has never learnt to win anyone's love. In her imagination she tells Aarti that she cannot hold on to grief, as water poured into cupped palms seeps through. But she knows she is fooling herself, because she lacks the courage to speak.

The photograph. Aarti spends whole afternoons in what was her father's room. Ajji keeps the room just as it was, dusting and sweeping it with care, but strangely it still has a neglected look. She hears

Aarti moving about in it, and the thought hurts: even after his death, the father can give his daughter something that Ajji cannot. One day, the pain becomes unbearable. She goes and opens the door. Aarti is sitting on his chair with her feet on his table, smoking and staring at nothing. Startled, she moves her feet and knocks down his photograph, which falls face down. The glass cracks. Aarti, apologising, picks it up and promises to have it mended the next day.

The confrontation. Ajji tells her sharply that she does not want it mended. She does not wish to see it in the house again. Aarti is stunned and says that he is her father. Ajji answers that he is her father, but asks what he was to her. She tells Aarti that on the day he died she felt that everything had slipped from her hands, like that, and she makes the gesture of letting water slip through her fingers, and there was nothing left. Aarti cries that she is also his daughter, and asks whether she is nothing. Ajji tells her that she is just smoke and a bit of ash, like the cigarettes she smokes, like her own marriage. Aarti is hurt and her eyes are anguished. But Ajji forces herself to go on. She has nothing to lose but the child's love, and she feels that this love cannot be destroyed by what she is doing. On the contrary, she feels that Priti is with her now, giving her strength for the battle, urging her on. It is at this moment that she thinks of her granddaughter as her beloved charioteer.

Ajji's own story. For the first time, Ajji tells her daughter about her marriage. She lived with the man for twenty-five years. She knew what he liked and disliked: his tea boiling hot, his bath water lukewarm, no stones in his rice. She knew that he did not like tears, and therefore when her two baby sons died, she wept alone and in secret. She combed her hair before he woke because he disliked seeing women with loose hair. Once a year he bought her two saris, always in colours she hated, and he never asked her what she wanted, and she never told him. Her mother-in-law had told her bluntly what a wife's duties were: she must always be available to him. So, at night she lay beside him, afraid even to get up for a glass of water or to cough, and when he said "You can go", she went, and when he said "Come here", she went.

Ajji knows that these things should not be said to a daughter, and that she has no control over herself, like a river in the monsoon. She then tells Aarti that one day she heard her and Madhav talking and laughing in their room, and she stood outside and wondered what they could be talking about. She felt like a child unable to read, looking at a book. Until then she had hoped that one day her husband would

say that he was pleased with her; that day she knew that it would never happen, and she envied her own daughter. When he died, she felt like Priti does when school is over and the bell rings.

Aarti begs her not to go on, and the glass splinters again as she bangs the photograph. Ajji says that it is not the dead who need our compassion but the living, not the dead who crave loyalty but the living. Aarti says that she does not want to hear. Ajji realises that she is making her daughter see her parents as people, which is another kind of growing up, and a painful one.

The ending. Ajji has forced Aarti to look at her, but she wonders with a shrinking heart what will happen if Aarti does not like what she sees. Aarti springs up and glares at her, then runs out of the room. Ajji realises what she has done. At that moment she hears the cry of Priti, home from school: "Ajji, I'm home. Where are you?" And Ajji, answering loudly, says that she is here.

Activity 4: List in two columns the things that Ajji "knew" about her husband and the things that her husband never knew about her. What does the difference tell you about their marriage?

3.4.4 Characters

Ajji is the narrator and the centre of the story. She is an old widow, patient and hard-working, who has spent her whole life putting others first. Her outward manner is gentle and she appears to be dutiful and silent. But Deshpande lets us enter her mind and shows us years of suppressed feeling. She has a sharp sense of humour in the morning scene with Priti, an aching pity for her daughter, and a hidden anger that finally bursts out. She is not a heroine in the usual sense: she is hurt, she is jealous, and she is aware of her own faults.

Aarti is Ajji's daughter and Priti's mother. She is a young widow whose grief has turned into bitterness. She has shut herself up in her dead father's room and in her own memories. She smokes, hardly sleeps and cannot talk to her mother or her child. She is not a cold woman but a wounded one. Her harshness to Priti comes from pain, not from lack of love. Her sense of loss, which Ajji does not at first understand, is as real as Ajji's own.

Priti is Aarti's young daughter, a lively schoolgirl. She is the one source of warmth in the house. She is cheerful, mischievous and affectionate, and she sees things clearly with a child's honesty. It is she who brings Ajji back to the present at the end of the story. In the sense of the title, she is the charioteer: the one who gives strength and drives the story to its turning point.

Ajji's husband never appears in person, but he is a powerful presence. He is shown through the habits that he imposed on his wife, and through the photograph that Ajji wants to throw away. He stands for the patriarchal authority of the traditional Indian household, in which the wife's duty is to obey.

Madhav is Aarti's husband. We learn of him only through other people's memories. He represents the warm and equal companionship that Ajji never had and that Aarti lost.

3.4.5 Themes

Women and silence. The story is about the silence in which women live. Ajji has been silent for most of her life: she wept in secret, she combed her hair before her husband woke, and she never told him what she felt. Her silence is broken only once, in the final scene, and the effect is violent. Deshpande suggests that silence is both a form of obedience and a form of suffering.

The patriarchal family. The story shows a marriage in which the husband's wishes are law. Ajji's mother-in-law tells her that a wife must always be available. Her husband's likes and dislikes decide how she dresses, eats, cries and sleeps. The story does not shout against this system. It simply shows its cost, through a life lived under its rules.

Mother and daughter. The relationship between Ajji and Aarti is distant, formal and wounded. Ajji has never shared anything with her daughter, and the two have not learnt how to speak to each other. At the same time, they are linked by the same kind of loss. The story asks whether a mother and a daughter can ever really know each other, and suggests that they can do so only if they are willing to be hurt.

Grief and its different forms. The two widows grieve in different ways. Aarti grieves aloud, in bitterness and neglect; Ajji grieves in silence, and in her case the grief is complicated by the fact that she does not mourn her husband but is glad to be free. The story shows that grief is not a single feeling, and that it depends on what the dead person meant to us.

Innocence as a healing power. Priti is the one who heals. Her cheerfulness, her honesty and her love bring warmth into a house of silence. The story suggests that the innocence of a child, which sees people simply as people, can reach those who are closed to everyone else.

The living and the dead. Ajji's most important line of argument is that the living deserves more compassion than the dead. Aarti has turned her father's room into a shrine, and Ajji is determined to

break the shrine. The story argues that to live wholly in the past is a form of neglect of the people who are alive in the present.

3.4.6 Critical Appreciation

Plot and structure. The story takes place within a single day, but it spreads over many years through memory. It begins with the happy morning and ends with the confrontation and the return of Priti from school. Between these two points, Ajji's thoughts move back and forth between present and past. This is a skilful combination of the present scene and a series of flashbacks, and it allows Deshpande to give a whole family history in a few pages.

Point of view. The story is told in the first person by Ajji. This gives it intimacy, since we hear her thoughts directly. It also makes us aware of her limits. Ajji sees Aarti through the eyes of a hurt mother, and she is not always fair to her. A careful reader will notice that the narrator herself admits to envy and to anger, and that the story is therefore a self-portrait as well as a portrait of a family.

Symbols. The photograph is the main symbol. It stands for the dead husband and for the patriarchal authority that he represents, and its cracked glass stands for the breaking of that authority. The father's room is the symbol of the past that Aarti cannot leave. Water slipping through cupped palms is Ajji's image for the futility of holding on to grief. The school bell, which she compares to her feeling at her husband's death, is an image of release.

Irony. There is a quiet irony in the fact that the room of the man who dominated Ajji's life gives her, in the end, the opportunity to speak. There is irony too in the fact that Ajji, who has been silent all her life, uses her voice at the moment when she wounds her daughter most deeply. And the title itself is ironic in a gentle way: the charioteer of the epic is a god and a counsellor, while the charioteer of this story is a small girl who does not know what she has done.

Allusion. The title is an example of allusion, a reference to a well-known event or text, in this case to the *Bhagavad Gita*, in which Krishna drives Arjuna's chariot and tells him to do his duty. Deshpande reverses the meaning. Ajji is the one who has been told for all her life to do her duty; now she acts for herself, urged on by a child.

Style and tone. The language is plain and quiet, full of everyday words: tea, rice, saris, kitchen. There is no violent action and no raised voice until the final scene. This restraint makes the final outburst more

powerful. The tone is subdued and tender, and there are touches of humour, especially in the morning scene.

3.4.7 A Closer Look at Three Key Moments

The morning scene. The opening is more than a charming picture of a child and her grandmother. It establishes the relationship that will carry the story, and it shows what Ajji has been denied elsewhere: a person who delights in her company and who sees her as a friend. When we read the scene again after the ending, we understand why Ajji draws strength from Priti.

The breaking of the photograph. The accidental fall of the photograph is the turning point. Without this small event, Ajji might have continued in silence. The cracked glass releases something in her. She says that she never wants to see the photograph again, and it is her anger at the photograph that leads her to speak.

Priti's voice at the end. The last line of the story is Priti's call from the door. It tells us that the world outside the quarrel goes on, and that Ajji is still wanted. It also tells us that the story is not a victory. Ajji has said what she needed to say, but she does not know whether Aarti will forgive her. The call of the child brings her back to the ordinary world with a mixture of relief and fear.

3.4.8 Who Is the Beloved Charioteer?

Students often ask who the "beloved charioteer" of the title is. In the text, the phrase appears at the moment when Ajji feels the child's love giving her strength for the battle. This makes Priti the most natural answer. She is the one who urges Ajji on, as Krishna urged Arjuna, and she is the one whose love Ajji will not lose even if she loses her daughter.

Some readers prefer a wider reading. In a way, every one of the characters drives another: Ajji drives Aarti to face her past; Aarti, by her suffering, drives Ajji to speak. You may use either answer in an examination, but you should always support it with a reference to the scene in the text, and you should mention the allusion to the *Mahabharata*, which is the key to the title.

3.4.9 Glossary

- **Ajji:** grandmother (a word used in Kannada and Marathi).
- **Charioteer:** the driver of a chariot; in the *Mahabharata*, Krishna is Arjuna's charioteer.
- **Patriarchy:** a social system in which men hold power and authority, especially in the family.

- **Allusion:** an indirect reference to a person, event or text that the reader is expected to recognise.
- **Flashback:** a return in the narrative to an earlier event.
- **Bereavement:** the state of having lost a loved one by death.

Activity 5: Imagine that Aarti writes a diary entry on the night after the confrontation. In about 100 words, write what she might say about her mother and about herself.

3.5 Saadat Hasan Manto: "The Dog of Tithwal"

3.5.1 About the Author

Saadat Hasan Manto was born on 11 May 1912 at Samrala, in the Punjab, and died in Lahore on 18 January 1955, before he was forty-three. He wrote in Urdu and is regarded as one of the greatest short-story writers of the subcontinent. He was an unsettled student and left college, but he read widely, and he was deeply influenced by the nineteenth-century French and Russian realists. He worked as a journalist, a film-magazine editor, a radio and film scriptwriter and a writer of essays and sketches, and he wrote more than two hundred and fifty short stories.

Manto was associated with the Progressive Writers' Movement, which began in 1935 and urged writers to deal with social injustice. He wrote about the poor, about prostitutes, about the mistreatment of women and about the hypocrisy of respectable people. Some of his stories, such as "Thanda Gosht" (Colder than Ice), were charged with obscenity, and he was tried several times. For most of his life he struggled to make a living.

Manto was living and working in Bombay at the time of the Partition. As a Muslim, he felt increasingly uneasy there, and in 1948 he moved to Lahore. He never felt at home in Pakistan and he missed Bombay. His Partition stories, among them "Toba Tek Singh", "Khol Do" (The Return) and "The Dog of Tithwal", are among the most powerful of all writings on the subject. Manto looks at the great tragedy not from the heights of politics but from the level of the people who suffered.

3.5.2 Background and Title of the Story

The Urdu title of the story is "Tetwal ka Kutta". It was translated into English by Khalid Hasan, and was first published in English in the collection *Kingdom's End and Other Stories* (1987). In 2021 a new collection of Manto's stories was published under the title *The Dog of Tithwal*.

To understand the story, you need to know its historical background. In 1947 British India was divided into two countries, India and Pakistan. The division was made on religious lines, and it led to terrible violence. Millions of people left their homes and crossed the new borders as refugees, and hundreds of thousands were killed. In 1947 and 1948 the two new countries fought a war over Kashmir. Tithwal is a place in the mountains on the Kashmir front, and the story is set there, with the two armies facing each other across a valley. By the time of the story, the fighting has become a stalemate, and the soldiers are bored and tired.

The title tells you at once that the story is not about a hero or a battle but about a dog. This is Manto's way of making the reader ask what really matters in a war. Keep the title in mind as you read: a dog cannot understand nations and borders, and that is the whole point.

3.5.3 Summary of the Story

The peaceful mountains. The story begins by describing a stretch of mountainous country at the end of September, where the Indian and Pakistani soldiers have been entrenched in their positions for several weeks. Neither side has the advantage; there are no air forces involved and no heavy guns. It is more a standoff than a battle. The air is heavy with the scent of wild flowers, the bees buzz lazily and the birds sing as they always have. A stream zigzags through the valley between the two hills. Manto compares nature to a beautiful symphony and the soldiers with their guns to the discordant notes in it.

The Indian camp. The story opens in the Indian camp. Jamadar Harnam Singh is on night watch. At two o'clock he wakes Ganda Singh to take over and lies down, singing a Punjabi folk song about a pair of shoes studded with stars, which his sweetheart wants and which he will buy even if he has to sell his buffalo. The young soldier Banta Singh, who has a sweet voice, joins in with a song of love and sorrow. A sadness settles upon the men, as if they had been reminded that life is about love rather than war.

The dog arrives. The song is interrupted by the barking of a dog. Banta Singh goes into the bushes and returns with a stray dog, wagging its tail. He names him Jhun Jhun. The soldiers are cheerful and pleased to see him. But Harnam Singh, who has been singing so tenderly a minute earlier, suddenly turns hard. He says that the dog cannot be fed if he is a Pakistani dog, and he orders the dog to prove his identity. The other soldiers think it is a joke, but he goes on to say that all Pakistanis, even dogs, will be shot. The dog senses the change in tone and trembles, and this seems to please Harnam Singh. One soldier leads the others in shouts of "India Zindabad". Banta Singh, who does not take the matter

seriously, hangs a sign around the dog's neck with his name and the information that he is an Indian dog. He says that Jhun Jhun is only a poor refugee.

The Pakistani camp. The next morning the dog turns up in the Pakistani camp. It turns out that he had spent a few days with the Pakistani soldiers before he went to the Indian camp. The Pakistani soldiers are also tired of the war, which has been dragging on for months. Subedar Himmat Khan twirls his moustache over a map of the Tithwal sector, while the soldier Bashir begins to sing a song about a sweetheart who has spent the night somewhere else. When the dog appears, Himmat Khan turns the question of the song, "Where did you spend the night?", into an accusation against the dog. Bashir takes it as a joke, but Himmat Khan throws a pebble at the dog.

Bashir finds the sign around the dog's neck. The soldiers puzzle over it in case it is a code. Himmat Khan reports the matter to his platoon commander, who ignores it because it seems meaningless. The Pakistanis then give the dog a new name and put a sign around his neck saying that he is a Pakistani dog. Himmat Khan sends him back to the Indian side, telling him to carry the message to his "family", the enemy. The dog trots off. Himmat Khan, feeling bored, fires a shot in the air, and then decides to fire at the Indians. The Indians, who are also bored, reply. For half an hour the two sides exchange fire, which, the narrator remarks, was a complete waste of time.

The death. Meanwhile, the dog has set off back across the hill. When he comes around the hill where the Pakistani soldiers are positioned, Himmat Khan, who is exasperated at his return, fires at him. The bullets strike the stones around him. The dog, terrified and bewildered, runs towards the Pakistani post, and again Himmat Khan fires. Then Harnam Singh, watching from the other side, also fires. The two soldiers, on opposite sides, amuse themselves by frightening the dog, until Harnam Singh's bullet wounds him.

Himmat Khan will not let the wounded dog return, and tells him that it is his duty to go on towards the enemy. The wounded dog drags himself in the direction of Harnam Singh, and Harnam Singh shoots and kills him. Himmat Khan says regretfully that the poor creature has been martyred. Harnam Singh runs his hand over the warm barrel of his rifle and says that he died a dog's death.

Activity 6: List the similarities between the Indian and the Pakistani soldiers in the story (for example, they both sing love songs, both are bored, both groom themselves). Then say in one sentence what Manto wants us to learn from these similarities.

3.5.4 Characters

Jhun Jhun is the dog, and he is the victim of the story. He is friendly, trusting and unable to understand why the men, who are so much alike, are enemies. He goes to both camps with the same friendly wag of the tail. For him, both sets of soldiers are simply men who feed and pet him. His innocence stands for the innocence of the ordinary people, the refugees and the uprooted, who were caught between two sides at the time of the Partition. His death is a picture in miniature of theirs.

Jamadar Harnam Singh is the Indian soldier who is first introduced. He has a soft side, shown in his song, but he also has a cruel streak. He is the one who demands that the dog prove his nationality, who wounds him and who finally kills him. He is a man who has been taught to see enemies everywhere. His contradictory behaviour, tender in one moment and hard in the next, is the key to Manto's idea of how war damages ordinary human beings.

Banta Singh is the youngest soldier on the Indian side and the one with the sweet voice. He is the only character who sees the dog as the dog is: a poor refugee. He represents the possibility of common sense and kindness. But his voice is a small one, and it is silenced by the louder voices around him.

Subedar Himmat Khan is the Pakistani counterpart of Harnam Singh. He is vain and bored, and he sends the dog to the enemy as a "messenger", then refuses to let him come back. He takes pleasure in frightening the dog, and when it is killed, he does not regret the cruelty of his own part but uses the dog's death for his own purpose, calling it a martyrdom. In him, as in Harnam Singh, we see how hatred makes a man blind.

Bashir, Ganda Singh and the other soldiers are the ordinary men on both sides. They sing, they cook breakfast, they joke. Their very ordinariness is a reminder that the soldiers on both sides are fellow human beings.

3.5.5 Themes

The futility of hatred and war. The story shows a war that has lost all meaning. The soldiers sit in their trenches for weeks, firing a few shots at fixed times, and neither side can advance. They are bored, and their boredom becomes cruelty. The dog is the only victim in this war, and his death solves nothing. Manto suggests that when the real enemy cannot be defeated, men will invent one.

The absurdity of nationality. The most startling idea in the story is that a stray dog must say whether he is Indian or Pakistani. This is, of course, ridiculous, and Manto means us to see that the demand is no less ridiculous when it is made of human beings. The border, which the dog crosses with ease, is an artificial line, and it has no meaning for the dog or for nature.

Sameness behind the difference. The two camps are nearly mirror images. Both are on hills of the same height, both have songs of love, both light fires, both have a soldier who is vain about his appearance, and both think the other side is the villain. Manto takes care to show no preference for either side. The reader is left to see that the war is between two groups of men who are the same in everything except the names they have been given.

Innocence destroyed. The dog is innocent in every way. He does not understand the quarrel, he bears no malice and he trusts everyone. His destruction by men who claim to be defending their homelands is the story's final and most terrible irony. In this sense the dog stands for all the innocent victims of the Partition.

Man and nature. The setting is a place of peace and beauty, and the story makes a deliberate contrast between nature's harmony and the discord created by men. The birds sing, the flowers bloom, the seasons pass in peace, while the soldiers kill. Manto suggests that human beings are the only creatures who create borders and defend them with violence.

3.5.6 Critical Appreciation

Plot and structure. The plot has a simple and powerful structure. It begins with a calm scene, builds through the arrival of the dog and his two receptions, and ends in a brief and brutal climax. There are no wasted words. The story is built around a symmetry: the Indian camp and the Pakistani camp, the two songs, the two signs and the two rifles. This symmetry is not accidental; it is the form that carries the meaning.

Setting. Manto begins with a wide picture of the mountains, as if he were looking down from above, and then he narrows his view to the men, and finally to the dog. This movement from the large to the small is very effective. At first the soldiers seem small and unimportant against the landscape, and by the end the dog is the only one who matters.

Irony. The story is rich in irony. The soldiers sing sweet songs of love, and a minute later they threaten a dog. Both sides accuse the dog of spying, and both fire at him. When he dies, one calls it a martyrdom and the other calls it a dog's death. The two phrases, though opposite in meaning, come from men who have each used the dog for his own cause. There is also a bitter irony in the fact that Himmat Khan, who calls the dog a martyr, is himself responsible for the cruelty that led to his death.

Foreshadowing. From the moment the dog arrives, Harnam Singh's harsh reaction hints at the tragedy to come. The mood of the camp is a mood of idleness and boredom, and the reader senses that it will end in some act of violence. Himmat Khan's behaviour in the other camp repeats the hint. By the time the dog starts running between the two sides, we know that he cannot be saved.

Point of view and style. Manto uses an objective, third-person narrator who tells us what happens without commenting on it. The style is direct, almost like that of a news report. There are no long sermons and no cries of protest. The writer lets the facts speak for themselves, and the effect is more powerful for the restraint. The dialogue is simple and natural, and the dark humour of some of the remarks makes the tragedy all the more bitter.

Symbols. The dog is the main symbol. He stands for the refugee, for the innocent and for the common humanity that the soldiers have lost sight of. The signs hung round his neck stand for the labels of identity, which are put on people from outside. The stream in the valley stands for the line of division, and the songs stand for the love and longing that both sides share.

3.5.7 A Closer Look at Three Key Moments

The sudden change in Harnam Singh. A moment before the dog arrives, Harnam Singh has been singing a tender song. When the dog appears, he suddenly makes a harsh demand. This sudden change shows how thin the surface of kindness can be, and how readily a man trained for war will turn gentleness into suspicion.

The two signs. The sign hung round the dog's neck by Banta Singh and the sign hung round it by the Pakistani soldiers are the story's most telling detail. Each side believes that it is giving the dog an identity, and each side believes that the other's sign is a trick or a code. The dog, which cannot read, carries both messages without knowing it, and so he becomes a living picture of the people who were forced to carry the labels of nations that they had never chosen.

The two comments at the end. The story ends with two remarks over the dead dog. One calls him a martyr, the other says that he died a dog's death. Notice that the two soldiers are looking at the same body, and that neither shows grief. Both remarks are about the cause and not about the dog. Manto does not add any comment of his own, because none is needed.

3.5.8 The Dog as a Symbol of the Refugee

Banta Singh's phrase, "a poor refugee", is the key to the story. At the time of the Partition, millions of people were forced to leave the homes in which they had lived for generations and to cross a border to a place where they had no home. They were treated as aliens, suspected, hunted and sometimes killed. The dog, who moves from one camp to the other and is suspected by both, is exactly in this position.

There is a second level of meaning. In many cultures, the dog is a symbol of loyalty. Jhun Jhun is loyal to everyone and trusts everyone. His death is therefore also the death of trust. When the soldiers shoot him, they are shooting the very quality of friendly loyalty that holds human society together. This is why the story, which is only a few pages long, leaves such a strong impression.

3.5.9 Glossary

- **Partition:** the division of British India into India and Pakistan in 1947.
- **Jamadar and Subedar:** ranks of junior commissioned officers in the Indian and Pakistani armies.
- **Refugee:** a person forced to leave his home and country because of war or persecution.
- **Martyr:** a person who dies for a cause or belief.
- **Zindabad:** an Urdu and Hindi word meaning "long live".
- **Stalemate:** a situation in which neither side can win or make progress.

Activity 7: Write a paragraph of about 100 words to show how the title of Manto's story ("The Dog of Tithwal") tells us something important about the writer's attitude to war. Use at least one word from the glossary.

3.6 Comparative Study of the Three Stories

Now that you have studied the three stories separately, let us place them side by side. The table gives a quick summary, and the paragraphs that follow draw out the main points of comparison.

	Desai	Deshpande	Manto
Kind of story	Psychological story of childhood	Family story told as a confession	Satirical, tragic Partition story
Setting	A garden and a shed on a summer evening	The kitchen and a dead man's room	A mountain front in Kashmir
Who is unseen?	A small boy	An old woman and her grief	A stray dog (the refugee)
Moment of insight	Ravi finds he has been forgotten	Ajji speaks; Priti calls her back	Soldiers comment on the dead dog
Ending	Silence and isolation	Open and uncertain	Cold and ironic
Point of view	Third person, moving into the boy's mind	First person (Ajji)	Objective third person
Main device	Symbol (the shed), irony	Flashback, allusion, symbol	Irony, symmetry, understatement

3.6.1 Identity: Being Seen and Being Labelled

All three stories are concerned with identity, but they approach it from different sides. In Desai, identity depends on the recognition of others: Ravi is not fully himself until the other children see him as a winner. In Deshpande, Ajji has been defined all her life by her duties as a wife and mother, and her identity as a person has been hidden. In Manto, identity is something that is put on from outside, like the sign around the dog's neck. The stories thus show three dangers: being unnoticed, being defined by others' expectations, and being labelled by the powerful.

3.6.2 Relationships and Their Failures

Each of the stories also shows a relationship that fails. The children in Desai's story are brothers, sisters and cousins, yet they forget one of their own. The mother and daughter in Deshpande's story share a house and a loss but cannot speak to each other. The soldiers in Manto's story are bound together by a

common humanity but are divided by the border. In each case, the failure is one of attention: people do not really look at one another.

3.6.3 The Role of the Child

There are children in two of the three stories, and the way in which they are shown is worth comparing. Ravi is the hero of his own story, a child with a child's hopes and hurts. Priti is a child who acts as a healer for the adults. In Manto's story, the "child" is the dog, the innocent creature that trusts everyone. In all three, innocence is shown as something precious and fragile, easily overlooked by the grown-up world.

3.6.4 Conflict: Inner and Outer

The conflict in Desai's story is almost wholly inner: it is the clash between Ravi's dream and reality. In Deshpande's story the conflict is both inner and outer, as Ajji struggles with her own long silence and then with her daughter. In Manto's story the conflict is outer and public, a war between two armies. Yet Manto, too, shows the inner conflict in each soldier, who is caught between kindness and the hardness that war demands. You will see that the outward scale of the conflict is not what makes it important; each story shows how conflict enters ordinary life and hurts those who are least able to defend themselves.

3.6.5 Narrative Technique

The three writers use different narrative voices. Desai begins as an outside observer and then moves inside Ravi's mind. Deshpande uses a first-person narrator, which gives her story the warmth and the bias of a personal confession. Manto uses a neutral voice, which gives his story the cold clarity of a report. These are good examples of how the choice of point of view affects the feeling of a story. Notice also that all three writers rely on a small number of symbols (the shed, the photograph, the dog) to carry their meaning.

Activity 8: Choose any two of the three stories and write a paragraph of about 100 words comparing the way in which each shows a person who is not noticed or not heard. Use at least two of these terms in your answer: symbol, irony, point of view, setting.

3.7 Check Your Progress

Answer the following questions in your notebook. Do not look at the text while answering. When you have finished, check your answers against the key given in Section 3.11.

Check Your Progress 1 (Desai)

1. In "Games at Twilight", the children play a game of _____.
2. Who is chosen to be "It" in the game?
3. Where does Ravi hide? (a) behind a tree (b) in an abandoned shed (c) in the kitchen (d) on the roof
4. True or False: Ravi is discovered by Raghu.
5. What must a hiding player do to win the game, according to the rules?
6. What is the "bitter lesson" that Ravi learns at the end of the story? Answer in two or three sentences.

Check Your Progress 2 (Deshpande)

1. The story "My Beloved Charioteer" is narrated by _____.
2. Who is Aarti's daughter?
3. Which epic does the title of the story refer to? (a) the *Ramayana* (b) the *Mahabharata* (c) the *Iliad* (d) the *Odyssey*
4. True or False: Ajji wants Aarti to get the broken photograph repaired.
5. What did Ajji's mother-in-law tell her about a wife's duties?
6. Why does Ajji say that she envied her daughter? Answer in two or three sentences.

Check Your Progress 3 (Manto)

1. "The Dog of Tithwal" is set against the background of the _____ of India in 1947.
2. What name does Banta Singh give to the dog?
3. Who says that the dog "died a dog's death"? (a) Banta Singh (b) Bashir (c) Jamadar Harnam Singh (d) Ganda Singh
4. True or False: Subedar Himmat Khan is a soldier in the Indian army.
5. What does Banta Singh call the dog when he first sees him?

6. Why is the dog an important symbol in the story? Answer in two or three sentences.

3.8 Summary

In this chapter you have studied three stories by Indian writers on the themes of identity, relationships and human conflict.

Anita Desai's "Games at Twilight" tells how a group of children, kept indoors by the summer heat, is let out to play hide-and-seek. Ravi, a small and sensitive boy who is overshadowed by his older brother Raghu, hides in a dark shed and, while he waits, dreams of the glory he will win by remaining undiscovered. When at last he runs out to claim his victory, he finds that the game is long over and that no one remembers him. The story is a psychological study of childhood fantasy, the need for recognition and the pain of being ignored.

Shashi Deshpande's "My Beloved Charioteer" is narrated by an old widow, Ajji, who lives with her widowed daughter Aarti and her granddaughter Priti. Priti brings joy to the house, but Aarti, in her grief, has withdrawn into bitterness. When a photograph of Ajji's husband is broken, Ajji breaks a lifetime of silence and tells her daughter of a marriage in which she was expected to obey and to be always available. The story ends as Priti calls her grandmother from the door. The title alludes to Krishna, the charioteer of Arjuna in the *Mahabharata*, and the "charioteer" of the story is Priti, whose love gives Ajji strength.

Saadat Hasan Manto's "The Dog of Tithwal" is set on the Kashmir front soon after the Partition. A stray dog, Jhun Jhun, wanders between the Indian and Pakistani camps. Each side labels him as belonging to the other, and when he returns to the camp he came from, he is shot at by both. He is wounded by the Indian jamadar and then shot dead. The Pakistani subedar calls it a martyrdom and the Indian jamadar says that the dog died a dog's death. The story is a bitter comment on the absurdity of borders and hatred.

In comparing the three stories you have seen how each presents a person whom others do not see or hear, how each uses a small symbol to carry a large meaning, and how the choice of narrator affects the way in which we respond to the story.

3.9 Keywords

- **Identity:** the sense of who one is; the qualities that make a person or group distinct.

- **Psychological story:** a story that concentrates on the inner thoughts and feelings of its characters.
- **Point of view:** the position from which a story is told.
- **Symbol:** an object, person or event that stands for a larger idea.
- **Irony:** a contrast between what is expected and what happens, or between what is said and what is meant.
- **Flashback:** a return to an earlier event in the narrative.
- **Allusion:** an indirect reference to a person, event or text outside the story.
- **Epiphany:** a sudden moment of understanding.
- **Foreshadowing:** a hint of what will happen later in the story.
- **Setting:** the time and place in which a story happens.
- **Patriarchy:** a social system in which men hold the authority.
- **Partition:** the division of British India into India and Pakistan in 1947.

3.10 Self-Assessment Test

Section A: Explain with reference to the context

1. Ravi, hidden in the shed, imagines the astonishment of the older children when he comes out at the end of the game. (Anita Desai, "Games at Twilight")
2. Ajji tells Aarti that her father, whose photograph has fallen and cracked, was nothing to her, and that Aarti is "just smoke and a bit of ash". (Shashi Deshpande, "My Beloved Charioteer")
3. The soldiers remark over the dead dog that one has been "martyred" and that the other "died a dog's death". (Saadat Hasan Manto, "The Dog of Tithwal")

For each of the three situations above, name the story and the writer, explain the situation in your own words (about 100 words), and say what it tells us about the character or the writer's attitude.

Section B: Short-answer questions (70 to 80 words each)

1. **Why does Ravi forget the rules of the game in the shed?**

Ravi hides in a dark, dusty shed so that Raghu cannot find him. At first, he is frightened, but slowly he relaxes. He begins to dream of the glory he will enjoy when he wins and the older children admire him. Lost in these happy thoughts, he forgets the rest of the game: he must run out to the veranda and touch the "den" to win. He had remembered only the hiding.

2. **What happens when Ravi emerges from the shed?**

   At twilight, Ravi finally comes out of the shed, proud and excited, ready to claim his victory by touching the "den". But he discovers that the game of hide-and-seek ended long ago. The other children have started a new game, and nobody even noticed that he was missing. His great victory means nothing to them. Ravi feels deeply hurt, unimportant and forgotten, and his dream of glory is completely broken.

3. **Describe the morning routine of Ajji and Priti in "My Beloved Charioteer".**

   Ajji looks after Priti every morning. She dresses her, and the two have tea together. Then Ajji makes breakfast and sends Priti to school. Aarti takes no part in this routine. She spends nights awake and smoking, so she rises late. By then Ajji is already cooking lunch, and when she hears Aarti moving about, she makes her tea. Priti finds comfort in her grandmother, and Ajji's only happiness is Priti.

4. **Why is Aarti unable to talk to her daughter and her mother?**

   After her husband Madhavan dies, Aarti is crushed by grief. She lives in memories of the past, shuts herself away, and stops caring about the present. She cannot show love to her small daughter Priti and often scolds her instead, even though the child needs her. She also loved her father more than her mother, and she feels distant from Ajji and angry with her. So, she does not speak to either of them.

5. **What does the photograph stand for in "My Beloved Charioteer"?**

   The photograph of Aarti's father stands for the false, idealised picture of him that Aarti carries in her mind. She loves and worships him, but she does not know how he dominated Ajji's life. When Aarti accidentally breaks the photo frame, Ajji at last tells her the truth about her suffering. So, the broken frame stands for the end of Aarti's illusion and the breaking of the silence between them.

6. **Why does Harnam Singh demand that the dog prove his identity?**

Harnam Singh is an Indian soldier on a mountain border during the conflict with Pakistan. When a stray dog appears, he first jokes that a Pakistani dog will not be fed and may even be shot. He then orders the dog to prove its identity. When the dog only wags its tail, he says all dogs do that. His demand shows how war makes people see even an innocent animal as friend or enemy.

7. **Why is the dog called "a poor refugee" by Banta Singh?**

   Banta Singh, the youngest Indian soldier, finds the dog wandering alone in the bushes. He calls it a "poor refugee" because it is a homeless stray, lost and frightened, like the people who were uprooted during the Partition. He feels pity for it and, unlike Harnam Singh, does not treat it as a possible enemy. His words show his kindness, and they also quietly hint at the sufferings of displaced people.

Section C: Essay-type questions (about 300 words each)

1. Discuss "Games at Twilight" as a story of a child's search for recognition.
2. Comment on Desai's use of symbols (the shed, the den, the twilight) in her story.
3. Examine the relationship between Ajji, Aarti and Priti in "My Beloved Charioteer".
4. Who is the "beloved charioteer" of Deshpande's story? Discuss with reference to the text.
5. "The Dog of Tithwal" is a story about the absurdity of borders. Discuss.

Section D: Objective questions

1. Who is the author of "Games at Twilight"?
2. Who is the narrator of "My Beloved Charioteer"?
3. In which language did Manto write?
4. Name the dog in Manto's story.
5. In which collection was "Games at Twilight" published?
6. Which character in "My Beloved Charioteer" never appears in person but is a powerful presence?
7. Which of the three stories is told in the first person?
8. Define "symbol" in one sentence.

3.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

Check Your Progress 1

1. Hide-and-seek.
2. Raghu, the eldest.
3. (b) in an abandoned shed.
4. False. Raghu does not find him.
5. He must run to the veranda and touch the "den".
6. Ravi learns that his victory has no value because no one has noticed it. He had hoped to be recognised as a champion, but the other children had long forgotten him, and he realises how unimportant he is to them.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Ajji (the grandmother).
2. Priti.
3. (b) the *Mahabharata*.
4. False. She says that she does not want to see it again.
5. That a wife must always be available to her husband.
6. Ajji once heard Aarti and Madhav talking and laughing in their room, and she realised that she had never had such closeness with her husband. She had hoped that he would one day say that he was pleased with her, and she saw that it would never happen, so she envied her daughter.

Check Your Progress 3

1. Partition.
2. Jhun Jhun.
3. (c) Jamadar Harnam Singh.
4. False. He is a soldier in the Pakistani army.
5. A poor refugee.
6. The dog stands for the innocent victims of the Partition, the refugees who were caught between two sides. He trusts both sets of soldiers, he does not understand the border, and he is killed by

men who want him to choose a nationality. His death shows the absurdity of the hatred between the two armies.

3.12 References / Suggested Readings

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Subject: Introduction to Short Story and Basic Grammar	
Course Code- C24ENG101T	**Author:** Ms. Aarti Devi
Lesson- 4	

SUSPENSE, OPPRESSION AND SOCIAL DIVIDES

(Agatha Christie: "Wasp's Nest"; Zora Neale Hurston: "Sweat"; Nadine Gordimer: "Once upon a Time")

Structure

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Agatha Christie: "Wasp's Nest"

4.4 Zora Neale Hurston: "Sweat"

4.5 Nadine Gordimer: "Once upon a Time"

4.6 Comparative Study of the Three Stories

4.7 Check Your Progress (Units 4.3 to 4.5)

4.8 Summary

4.9 Keywords

4.10 Self-Assessment Test

4.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.12 References / Suggested Readings

4.1 Learning Objectives

In the earlier chapters of this course, you studied stories from Russia, Ireland and India. In this chapter you move to Britain, the United States and South Africa. The three stories you will read here are very different in form: one is a detective tale, one is a story of a struggling marriage, and one is a fable for

adults. Yet they share a common concern. In each of them, hatred, fear or cruelty grows quietly in ordinary surroundings until it reaches a crisis. After studying this chapter carefully, you should be able to:

- narrate the plot of each of the three stories in your own words and describe the main characters;
- explain how Agatha Christie builds suspense and a surprising reversal in a very short detective story;
- discuss how Zora Neale Hurston presents domestic oppression, the dignity of labour and the idea of poetic justice in "Sweat";
- explain how Nadine Gordimer uses a fairy-tale frame to criticise fear, wealth and racial separation under apartheid;
- identify and discuss literary terms such as suspense, irony, foreshadowing, symbol, frame narrative and point of view as they appear in these stories;
- compare the three stories and answer short and long questions on them with confidence.

4.2 Introduction

Dear learner, we all know the feeling of suspense. We feel it when we wait for exam results, or when we watch the last over of a cricket match. Suspense is the anxious uncertainty about what will happen next. Writers of short stories use it in order to keep the reader turning the page, but good writers also use it for a deeper purpose: to make us feel the pressure that surrounds their characters.

In this chapter you will see suspense used in three ways. In Christie's story it is the suspense of a puzzle: what is the crime that has not happened yet, and who is going to commit it? In Hurston's story it is the suspense of slow danger: a woman who is bullied in her own home waits to see how far her husband will go. In Gordimer's story it is the suspense of dread: the reader senses from the very first paragraphs that the safety measures of a frightened family will lead to something terrible.

4.2.1 Suspense, Oppression and Social Division

The title of this chapter contains three ideas. **Suspense** we have already met. **Oppression** means the cruel or unjust use of power over another person or group. It may take the form of a husband's violence against his wife, or a government's laws against its own people. **Social divides** are the walls, both real

and imaginary, that separate one group of people from another: rich from poor, men from women, one race from another.

You will see that these ideas are present in all three stories, though in different degrees. In Christie's story the divide is a very small one: a rivalry between two men for the love of one woman. In Hurston's story the divide is within a marriage and within a community. In Gordimer's story the divide runs through the whole of a country. As you read, observe how the scale of the conflict grows, and how the effect of the stories grows with it.

4.2.2 The Three Writers at a Glance

The following table gives you a quick overview of the three writers and their stories.

	Agatha Christie	**Zora Neale Hurston**	**Nadine Gordimer**
Country	England	United States	South Africa
Life span	1890 to 1976	1891 to 1960	1923 to 2014
Story	"Wasp's Nest"	"Sweat"	"Once upon a Time"
Kind of story	Detective story	Realistic tale of a marriage	Fable for adults
Central concern	Hatred and its prevention	Labour, cruelty and justice	Fear, wealth and apartheid

4.2.3 Why These Stories Are Studied Together

The three stories look different on the surface, but they have a hidden resemblance. In each, a person tries to deal with fear, hatred or jealousy by planning or building something. John Harrison, in Christie's story, builds a plan of revenge. Sykes, in Hurston's story, builds a trap for his wife. The family in Gordimer's story builds a wall. In each case the plan turns against the person who made it, or is stopped at the last moment. This pattern is called **irony of fate**, and it will help you to read all three stories together.

As you read, ask yourself three questions. What is the character afraid of or angry about? What does the character do about it? And what is the result? You will find that the three stories give three different answers: rescue, retribution and tragedy.

Activity 1: Think of a news report or an incident from your own surroundings in which a person's fear or anger led to a harmful action that came back upon himself. Write four or five lines about it. After reading the three stories, compare your example with the plots of these stories.

4.3 Agatha Christie: "Wasp's Nest"

4.3.1 About the Author

Dame Agatha Mary Clarissa Christie (1890 to 1976) is often called the "Queen of Crime". She was an English writer who produced sixty-six detective novels and fourteen collections of short stories, and she is the best-selling novelist of all time. Her most famous creations are the Belgian detective Hercule Poirot, the quiet old lady detective Miss Marple, and the husband-and-wife team of Tommy and Tuppence. Among her best-known works are *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926), *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934) and the play *The Mousetrap,* which has run in London for longer than any other play. She was made a Dame of the British Empire in 1971.

Christie's stories follow the pattern of the classic detective story, in which a puzzle is set before the reader and solved by a clever investigator. She is admired for her ingenious plots, her use of surprise and her skill at hiding the truth in plain sight. Her style is simple and clear, with a great deal of dialogue, and this makes her stories easy to read and difficult to forget.

4.3.2 Background and Title of the Story

The story was first published in a London newspaper, the *Daily Mail*, on 20 November 1928. It appeared in book form much later, in the collection *Poirot's Early Cases* (1974). The original title is usually printed as "Wasps' Nest", but your syllabus uses the form "Wasp's Nest". Christie herself later turned the story into a short play for television, and it was also made into an episode of the television series *Agatha Christie's Poirot*.

You should notice something unusual about this detective story. In most such stories a murder takes place first and the detective then finds out who did it. Here, nobody has been killed when the story

begins. Poirot has come to prevent a murder before it happens. This makes the story rather like a race against time, and it is one reason why the story feels so tense even though it is very short.

4.3.3 Summary of the Story

The visitor. The story opens on a warm August evening in an English country garden. A man named John Harrison, a large man with a thin, pale face, comes out on to his terrace to enjoy the evening. The roses are in bloom and the sweet peas are fragrant. Suddenly he hears the creak of the garden gate and sees an elegant little figure walking up the path. It is the famous detective Hercule Poirot. Harrison is delighted and surprised, and he welcomes his guest and offers him a drink. Poirot asks only for plain soda water, and he complains that the heat has made his moustache droop.

A crime not yet committed. Harrison asks Poirot what has brought him to this quiet place. Poirot answers that it is his work. Harrison is amused, because the neighbourhood is so peaceful. But Poirot says gravely that he is investigating a murder. When Harrison asks who has been killed, Poirot replies that nobody has been killed yet. He is investigating a murder that has not been committed, and he adds that it is much better to investigate a crime before it happens, because then it can be prevented. Harrison thinks this is nonsense, but he notices that Poirot is looking at him in a strange way. Poirot says that he needs Harrison's help.

The wasps' nest. Then Poirot suddenly changes the subject. He points to a wasps' nest in the garden and says that Harrison should destroy it. Harrison replies that he is going to do so. In fact, his friend Claude Langton is coming that very evening to do it. Langton, he explains, will use petrol and a garden syringe, and he will bring his own syringe because it is easier to handle than Harrison's. Poirot then remarks that there is another way to destroy a wasps' nest: with cyanide of potassium. Harrison says that this is a dangerous poison and a risky thing to keep in the house. Poirot agrees and repeats, very seriously, that it is a deadly poison.

The poison register. Poirot then tells Harrison that he went to the chemist's shop in the nearby town of Barchester that afternoon, and in order to buy something for himself he had to sign the poison register. He saw the last entry in the register. It was for cyanide of potassium, and the signature was that of Claude Langton. Harrison is surprised. He says that Langton had recently told him he would never think of using such a substance and that the chemists should not sell it for such purposes.

The two rivals. Poirot looks out over the roses and asks quietly whether Harrison likes Langton. Harrison is startled by the question. He says of course he likes him. Poirot says that he wondered also whether Langton likes Harrison. He then speaks openly: Harrison is engaged to Miss Molly Deane, whom Poirot knows to be charming and beautiful. But before she became engaged to Harrison, she was engaged to Claude Langton, and she broke the engagement to be with Harrison. Poirot says that it is too much to expect Langton to have forgotten and forgiven everything.

Harrison replies that Langton has taken it in a very sporting spirit and has been wonderfully friendly to him. Poirot says that this is just what he finds strange. A man who feels hatred, he says, knows how to wait for the right time. He adds that the English are very foolish. They believe they can deceive everyone but cannot be deceived themselves, and because of their trust in the "good sportsman" they sometimes die before their time. Harrison now understands. "You are warning me," he says. "You are warning me against Claude Langton." Poirot nods. Harrison protests that such things do not happen in England. A man who has been jilted does not stab or poison his rival. Poirot answers that Langton is about to kill several thousand wasps, so one should not say that he would not hurt a fly.

Poirot's return. Poirot takes hold of Harrison and almost shakes him. He points to the wasps returning peacefully to their nest at the end of the day, and says that within the hour their doom will come and they know nothing of it. There is nobody to tell them, because they have no Hercule Poirot. He asks what time Langton is expected, and Harrison says nine o'clock. Poirot says that he will return at nine, and that he looks forward to seeing the famous English sportsmanship at work. He then walks away down the path, and the garden gate creaks again.

Once in the road, Poirot's manner changes. His gaiety disappears and his face becomes grave and anxious. He looks at his watch. It is ten minutes past eight. He wonders whether he ought to have stayed, and for a moment he seems to turn back. Then he walks on towards the village. When he returns, it is a few minutes before nine. The evening is quiet and clear, with hardly any wind, and the stillness seems threatening. Poirot feels afraid without knowing exactly why.

The meeting with Langton. As Poirot reaches the gate, Claude Langton comes hurrying out. He is startled to see Poirot. Poirot says that Langton is early and asks whether he has destroyed the wasps' nest. Langton replies that he has not. He has only been sitting and talking with Harrison, and he is in a

hurry now. He tells Poirot that Harrison is on the terrace, and then he leaves quickly. Poirot looks after him and sees a nervous, good-looking young man with a rather weak mouth.

The revelation. Poirot finds Harrison sitting motionless in his chair, dazed. Poirot asks if he has suffered any bad effects from the soda. Harrison is puzzled. Poirot apologises and explains that he has put some of it into Harrison's pocket. He says that a detective meets criminals, and some of them teach him strange things. Once he helped a pickpocket who was falsely accused, and the man, in gratitude, taught him his trade. Poirot can now empty a man's pocket without the man knowing, and he has done so to Harrison, leaving ordinary soda crystals in place of what was there.

Poirot observes that anyone who wants to carry poison so that he can slip it quickly into a glass without being seen will carry it in his right-hand jacket pocket, and nowhere else. He takes out some white crystals and mutters that it is extremely dangerous to carry them loose in a pocket. Then, calmly, he takes a wide-necked bottle from his own pocket, puts the crystals into it, and fills it with plain water at the table. He corks it and shakes it until the crystals have dissolved. Harrison watches him as if spellbound. Poirot walks to the wasps' nest, turns his face away and pours the liquid over it. The wasps that are returning settle, move a little and lie still. Others come crawling out and share the same fate. Poirot watches for a few moments, nods, and walks back to the terrace. "A quick death," he says. "A very quick death."

Harrison asks how much Poirot knows. Poirot explains. He saw Langton's name in the poison register, and soon afterwards he met Langton by chance. Langton told him he had bought the cyanide at Harrison's own request, to destroy the wasps' nest. That struck Poirot as strange, because at the dinner where they had met, Harrison had spoken in favour of petrol and had said that buying cyanide was dangerous and unnecessary. Poirot also knew something else. He had seen Langton and Molly Deane together at a moment when they thought nobody was watching, and he understood that the old misunderstandings between them were gone and that Molly was being drawn back to her first love. And, thirdly, he had seen Harrison coming out of a doctor's house in Harley Street, a street famous for its specialist doctors. Poirot knew what kind of illness that doctor treated, and he saw on Harrison's face the look of a man who has been condemned. Harrison admits that the doctor gave him only two months to live. Poirot also saw something else in his face: hatred, which Harrison had not troubled to hide because he thought nobody was looking.

Poirot goes on to explain the trick of the evening. He had asked Harrison a few trap questions. Harrison had denied that he had asked Langton to buy the cyanide, or rather he had pretended to be surprised that Langton had bought it. At first Harrison had been thrown off his balance by Poirot's arrival, but soon he saw how useful Poirot's presence might be, and he encouraged Poirot's suspicions. Poirot knew from Langton himself that he was to come at half past eight, but Harrison told Poirot nine o'clock, so that everything would be over before Poirot returned.

The real plan. Harrison cries out that he wishes Poirot had not come. When Poirot says that he deals in murder, Harrison says that it would be suicide. Poirot answers sharply that it would be murder. The death Harrison would have suffered would have been quick and easy. But the death he intended for Langton would be the worst a man can die. Langton had bought the poison. He would visit Harrison and be alone with him. Harrison would suddenly die, the cyanide would be found in his glass, and Claude Langton would be hanged. That was Harrison's plan.

The ending. Poirot then speaks to Harrison with great kindness. He says that he came because he liked him. He reminds Harrison that he is a dying man who has lost the girl he loved, but that one thing is certain: he is not a murderer. He asks Harrison to tell him honestly whether he is glad or sorry that Poirot came. For a moment there is silence. Then Harrison straightens up. His face now has a look of dignity, the look of a man who has overcome his lower instincts. He holds out his hand across the table and cries, "Thank heaven you came!"

Activity 2: Make a table with two columns headed "What Poirot says to Harrison" and "What Poirot really means". Fill in at least four rows using the conversation on the terrace (for example, the remarks about the wasps' nest, the poison register and the English sportsman).

4.3.4 Characters

Hercule Poirot is the Belgian detective who appears in more than thirty of Christie's novels and many of her short stories. He is vain about his moustache, fussy about his clothes, and very proud of his "little grey cells". In this story we see another side of him. He is not only clever but kind. He does not simply catch a criminal; he saves a man from becoming one. His method is a mixture of observation (the poison register, the look on a man's face), psychology (his understanding of jealousy and hatred) and a little theatre (his remarks about the wasps and the English sportsman, intended to shock Harrison into thought).

John Harrison is the unexpected centre of the story. At first, we see him as a pleasant host who loves his garden. Only gradually does the reader realise that he is a dying man consumed by a hidden hatred, who has coolly planned a terrible revenge. His final change, from schemer to a man who is thankful to be stopped, is the emotional heart of the story. It shows that he is not wholly bad, and that something better in him was waiting to be called out.

Claude Langton appears only briefly and says very little. He is a good-looking, nervous young man with a rather weak mouth, who is on friendly terms with a man whom he has reason to dislike. He is the intended victim of the plan, though he does not know it. The reader should notice that Christie does not say whether he is in fact a good man or a bad one. He is a pawn in Harrison's scheme.

Molly Deane never appears in the story and is only talked about. She is the cause of the rivalry between the two men. Her absence is a good example of how a short story can use a character who never speaks: she is the silent centre around which the plot moves.

4.3.5 Themes

Jealousy and hatred. The main theme is the way in which jealousy and hatred can grow in secret. Harrison seems calm and friendly, but his heart is full of bitterness. Poirot's remark that a man who hates knows how to wait for the right time expresses this idea in a single sentence.

Appearance and reality. As in the stories you read in the first chapter, the surface hides the truth. A pleasant garden hides a plot. A friendly manner hides hatred. A simple jar of soda crystals takes the place of a deadly poison. The reader, like Poirot's victim, is made to see that nothing is quite as it appears.

Prevention and mercy. Unlike many detective stories, this one is not about punishment. Poirot does not call the police or arrest anyone. He prevents the crime and then gives the would-be murderer a chance to repent. The story suggests that it is better to stop a wrong than to avenge it, and that the best justice may be the one that allows a man to recover his better self.

The English character. Poirot twice mocks the English belief in the "good sportsman", who is always assumed to be honest and generous. Christie, writing about her own countrymen with gentle humour, suggests that this trust can make people blind to danger. This is a good example of social comment in a popular story.

4.3.6 Critical Appreciation

Plot and structure. The plot is built on a simple idea: a crime stopped before it happens. The story has a clear movement: the arrival of Poirot, the talk about the wasps' nest, Poirot's departure and return, the meeting with Langton, and the final revelation. Notice the careful timing. Poirot says he will return at nine and looks at his watch at ten past eight; the reader feels the clock ticking. Writers call this device a **ticking clock**, and it is one of the oldest methods of creating suspense.

Suspense. Suspense arises when the reader knows or senses that something dangerous is about to happen, but does not yet know what. Christie produces it in several ways. Poirot's strange behaviour makes us ask what he knows. His repeated emphasis on the word "poison" makes us uneasy. His change of mood in the road, from gaiety to anxiety, tells us that the danger is real. And his own sense of fear, as he approaches the gate for the second time, passes to the reader.

Irony and reversal. The story is full of irony. Poirot tells Harrison that he is trying to prevent a murder, and Harrison believes the victim is himself. The real situation is the other way round: Harrison is the planner of the crime. There is irony too in the idea that the very poison meant for a human being is used, at the end, to kill wasps. And there is a final, happy irony in Harrison's thanks: he is grateful to the man who has ruined his plan.

Foreshadowing and the symbol of the wasps' nest. The wasps' nest is the central symbol. It is a place where hidden danger lives quietly, in the middle of a beautiful garden. In the same way, Harrison's hatred lives quietly in the middle of a friendly circle. Poirot's remarks about the wasps, which seem at first to be small talk, foreshadow what he is going to do and also describe what he sees in Harrison. His remark that the wasps are returning peacefully, not knowing of their doom, is a hint that Langton, too, is unaware of his danger.

Point of view and style. The story is told in the third person. For the first part we see events mainly through Harrison's eyes, which allows the reader to share his surprise at Poirot's strange remarks. When Poirot leaves the garden, the narrator follows him, and for a moment we see his anxiety. This change of viewpoint is skilful, because it lets us into Poirot's mind at exactly the moment when we need to feel his fear. The language is simple, the dialogue is lively, and the descriptions are brief. Christie never wastes a word.

4.3.7 A Closer Look at Three Key Moments

The soda crystals. The trick with the soda is the most surprising moment in the story. Poirot has already changed the crystals in Harrison's pocket, so that the murder, if it were attempted, would fail. The reader learns of it only when Poirot reveals it, and so the effect of surprise is complete. The trick is also an example of Christie's method: she tells the reader just enough to make the solution possible, but not enough to give it away.

"Thank heaven you came!" The last sentence is the emotional turning point. Until then, Harrison has been a villain. In these few words, he becomes a man again. Notice that Poirot, by his question about whether Harrison is glad or sorry, has given him a chance to choose. The story therefore ends not with an arrest but with a moral victory.

4.3.8 The Detective Story as a Form

It will help you to know something about the form to which this story belongs. A detective story, in its classic form, contains a crime, a detective, a group of suspects, a series of clues and a solution that surprises the reader but is fair to him. The writer must give all the clues, though she may disguise them. In "Wasp's Nest" the clues are the poison register, Langton's explanation, the engagement to Molly Deane, the visit to Harley Street and the difference in the times given by Langton and by Harrison. If you read the story a second time, you will see that every one of them is present before the solution is given.

4.3.9 Glossary

- **Cyanide of potassium:** a very powerful and fast-acting poison.
- **Poison register:** a book in which a chemist records the sale of dangerous poisons and the names of the buyers.
- **Syringe:** here, a garden sprayer for pumping liquid.
- **Harley Street:** a street in London famous for its private specialist doctors.
- **Terrace:** a flat, paved area next to a house.
- **Sporting (spirit):** fair and generous in the way one accepts defeat.
- **Suspense:** the anxious expectation of what is going to happen.

Activity 3: In about 80 words, write what you think might have happened if Poirot had not come that evening. Then say which of the clues you consider the most important in Poirot's solution, and why.

4.4 Zora Neale Hurston: "Sweat"

4.4.1 About the Author

Zora Neale Hurston (1891 to 1960) was an American writer and anthropologist who became one of the leading figures of the Harlem Renaissance, a great flowering of African American art and writing in the 1920s. She grew up in Eatonville, Florida, a town governed entirely by black citizens, and the people and speech of that part of Florida remained the main material of her writing. She studied anthropology in New York, where she was taught by the well-known scholar Franz Boas, and she travelled through the southern United States collecting folk tales and songs.

Hurston's best-known novel is *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). She also wrote the folklore collection *Mules and Men* (1935) and an autobiography, *Dust Tracks on a Road* (1942). In her lifetime she knew both success and poverty, and she died in 1960 largely forgotten. In the 1970s the writer Alice Walker drew attention to her work, and since then she has been recognised as one of the most important American writers of the twentieth century. Hurston's special gift is her ear for speech. She wrote the language of her characters as they actually spoke it, in the dialect of rural Florida, and she filled it with humour, proverbs and vivid comparisons.

4.4.2 Background and Title of the Story

"Sweat" was first published in 1926 in a magazine called *Fire!!*, which was started by a group of young black writers in New York, among them Langston Hughes and Hurston herself. The magazine was meant to express the new spirit of the younger generation and to speak freely about the lives of ordinary black people, without trying to please the respectable middle class. It had only one issue, but it became famous.

The story is set in a small, all-black town in Florida near Orlando, in the early twentieth century. The setting is important. The people are poor and the work available to women like Delia is hard: she washes the clothes of white families. The title is simple and powerful. "Sweat" is the physical proof of labour. It is also the sweat of fear, and, as you will see, the main symbol of the story. Delia's sweat has built her house, and it is her claim to it.

4.4.3 Summary of the Story

A Sunday night. The story opens at eleven o'clock on a Sunday night in spring. Delia Jones, a washerwoman, ought to have been in bed two hours ago, but Monday is her busiest day. She collects the soiled clothes of her customers on Saturday when she returns the clean ones, and on Sunday night, after church, she sorts them and puts the white things to soak. This saves her half a day. She is sitting on the kitchen floor sorting the clothes, humming a sad tune and wondering where her husband, Sykes, has gone with her horse and buckboard (a light, open wagon).

Suddenly something long, round and black falls on her shoulders and slides to the floor. Terror seizes her and she cannot move or cry out for a full minute. Then she sees that it is only the bull whip her husband likes to carry when he drives. He stands in the doorway, bent double with laughter at her fright. Delia protests that he knows how afraid she is of snakes. Sykes answers that this is exactly why he did it.

The quarrel. Sykes then complains that he has told her again and again to keep the white people's clothes out of his house. He kicks the clothes into a heap, and when Delia gathers them again, he stands in her way, hoping for an argument. She tells him that she wants no quarrel that night, as she has just come from taking communion at church. He sneers at her as a hypocrite who sings and shouts in church and then washes clothes on the Sabbath. He tramples on the whitest pile. He threatens that if she gives him any lip, he will throw the clothes out and put his fist in her face.

At this moment, something changes in Delia. Her usual meekness slips from her like a blown scarf. She is on her feet, her small body and bony hands defying the big man. She reminds him that she has been married to him for fifteen years and has taken in washing for fifteen years: "Sweat, sweat, sweat!" She tells him that her tub of suds has filled his stomach more often than his own hands have, and that her sweat has paid for the house. She says she will go on sweating in it. She seizes an iron skillet from the stove, and this unexpected act cows him. He does not strike her, as he usually does. She tells him that the woman he is running around with will not come into her house to pile up on her sweat and blood, and that she intends to stay there until she is carried out feet first.

Sykes threatens that she will be carried out sooner than she expects. He says he is tired of her and hates thin women. But he is a little awed by this new Delia and slips out, slamming the gate. Delia knows where he has gone, and she knows he will not return before daybreak.

Delia's memories. Lying awake, Delia looks back on her marriage. Two months after the wedding Sykes gave her the first brutal beating. Within the first year he had begun to make trips to Orlando with all his wages and to come home penniless. Now she is no longer soft and young, and she knows it is too late to hope for love. But she still has her little home, which she built for her old age and where she has planted trees and flowers one by one. Before she falls asleep, she says to herself that whatever goes over the Devil's back must come under his belly: sooner or later, Sykes, like everybody else, will reap what he has sown. After this, she feels that she has built a spiritual wall against him. He wakes her later by kicking her feet and snatching the covers.

The men on the porch. The following Saturday, a very hot day near the end of July, Delia drives her pony cart, heaped with clean laundry, along the road past Joe Clarke's store. The men on the porch are too hot even to throw the cane-knots. They comment on Delia's hard work and on how Sykes is not worth the powder and shot it would take to kill him. They say that he has beaten her enough to kill three women, and that she was a pretty young woman when he married her. One of the men, Old Man Anderson, even suggests that they should take Sykes and his woman to the swamp and whip them. Joe Clarke, the storekeeper, says that no law can make a man decent if it is not in him. He compares men like Sykes to people who chew sugar cane: they squeeze and grind a wife until every drop of pleasure is wrung out, and then they throw her away. The men agree, but then their talk turns to a melon, and when Sykes and his mistress Bertha come to the store, the men fall silent and soon leave. Sykes orders lavishly for Bertha, and he makes sure that Delia sees it as she drives past on her way home. After the couple have left, the men go back to their watermelon and make cruel jokes about Bertha's looks. In all their talk against Sykes, none of them does anything.

Bertha and the summer. Bertha has been in town three months. Sykes pays her rent at the only house that would take her in, and he takes her to dances in Winter Park. He tells her that the town and the house are hers for the asking, and that he will turn Delia out as soon as he can. Delia, meanwhile, goes through her sufferings with patience. She tries to be blind and deaf to the village. The quarrels between husband and wife become constant. July burns into August, and the heat falls like a million hot arrows on the earth.

The snake. One day Delia comes home to find Sykes already there. He is standing in the kitchen door and will not let her pass. There is a soap box beside the steps. He pushes her back and tells her to look

in it, because he has brought her something. She sees a huge rattlesnake and nearly faints. She begs him to take it away, because she is afraid even of earthworms. He answers that the snake is going to stay until it dies. He says it is a nice snake and anybody who does not like it can leave.

The villagers come to see the snake. Sykes boasts that he caught the six-foot rattler easily because it was full of frogs, and that he is a snake charmer. The men tell him that the best way to deal with a rattlesnake is a heavy hickory club on its head. The snake stays. After two or three days, it digests its meal and becomes lively, rattling at every movement. One day Delia sees its chalky fangs hanging in the wire mesh of the box, and this time she does not run. She stands in a "red fury" for a long time, looking at the creature that is her torment.

Delia's answer. That night Delia asks Sykes at the table to take the snake away. She says she has put up with his starving and beating her, but he has killed all her insides by bringing it. Sykes answers that the snake will go only when he is ready, and that she has not yet taken half of what she will take if she stays around him. Delia pushes back her plate and says quietly that she hates him, to the same degree as she once loved him. She has taken so much that her belly is full up to her neck. That is why she has moved her church membership to Woodbridge, so that she no longer has to take communion with him. She tells him that he may stay with his woman as much as he likes, but he must keep away from her and her house. She also warns him that the next time he lays a hand on her, she will go to the white folks about him. Her cup, she says, has run over.

Sykes is astonished and has difficulty working up a fury to answer her. He says that he hates her too, and has hated her for years. He mocks her appearance, and says that he will not be driven from his house. But although he leaves threatening her, he does not carry out any of his threats. He does not return that night.

The love feast. The next day is Sunday. Delia is glad that she does not have to quarrel before she hitches up her pony and drives four miles to Woodbridge. She stays for the night service, a "love feast", which is warm and full of spirit. In the emotion of the service her troubles seem to be carried away, and she drives home singing a hymn about crossing the river Jordan in a calm time.

When she reaches the barn and the kitchen door, she calls out to the snake in its box, asking why the "old Satan" is not making his usual noise. There is no reply. She goes into the house with a new hope. Perhaps her threat to go to the white folks has frightened Sykes. Perhaps he is sorry. Fifteen years of

misery have brought Delia to the stage where she would hope for almost anything. She feels in the match safe behind the stove and finds only one match; Sykes has taken nearly half a box. Somehow, she also knows that he has brought Bertha to her house in her absence, and this puts her into a new fury.

She decides to sort the clothes in the bedroom, where the hamper stands by the foot of the iron bed. She carries in the lamp, singing the hymn again. She throws back the lid of the basket almost gaily. Then, in horror and terror, she springs back. The snake is lying in the basket. At first, it moves sluggishly, but as she turns round and round, jumping up and down in an insanity of fear, it begins to stir vigorously. She sees it pouring its "awful beauty" from the basket upon the bed. She seizes the lamp and runs to the kitchen. The wind from the open door blows out the light, and the darkness adds to her terror. She runs to the yard, slams the door, and climbs up into the hay barn. There she lies for an hour or more, a gibbering wreck.

Gradually she becomes quiet and then coherent. A cold, bloody rage stalks through her. Hours pass: a time of looking inward, a time of looking back, and then a mixture of both. Out of this comes an awful calm. She says to herself that she has done her best, and that if things are not right, God knows it is not her fault. She falls into a twitching sleep and wakes to a faint grey sky.

The dawn. There is a loud hollow sound below. She peers out and sees Sykes at the wood-pile, smashing the wire-covered box. He hurries to the kitchen door, but hangs about outside for some minutes before he enters, and stands for a while inside before he closes the door behind him. The grey in the sky is spreading. Delia climbs down without fear now and crouches beneath the low bedroom window. The drawn blind shuts out the dawn but the thin walls hold back no sound.

Inside, Sykes hears nothing until he knocks a pot lid off the stove while trying to reach the match safe in the dark. He had emptied his pockets at Bertha's. The snake seems to wake under the stove, and Sykes makes a quick leap into the bedroom. In spite of the gin he has drunk, his head is clearing. He mutters that he wishes he could strike a light. The rattling stops for a moment as he stands paralysed. Then the whirr begins again, closer, right under his feet this time. His mind is flattened down to primitive instinct, and he leaps onto the bed.

Outside, Delia hears a cry that might have come from a maddened chimpanzee or a stricken gorilla: all the terror, horror and rage that a man can express without a recognisable human sound. There is a tremendous stir inside, another series of animal screams, the whirr of the reptile, and then a violent

tearing of the blind from the window, which lets in the red dawn. A huge brown hand seizes the window stick. There are great dull blows upon the wooden floor, long after the rattle of the snake has stopped. Delia sees and hears all this from beneath the window and it makes her ill. She creeps over to her flower-bed of four-o'clocks and stretches out on the cool earth to recover.

The end. She hears Sykes calling her in a despairing voice, "as one who expected no answer". The sun creeps up and he goes on calling. She cannot move, because her legs have gone weak. She hears him moan and stumble about. She gets up from her flower-bed. As she nears the door, she hears him call out hopefully, asking if it is she. She sees him on his hands and knees. He creeps an inch or two towards her, which is all that he is able to do. She sees his horribly swollen neck and his one open eye shining with hope. A surge of pity, too strong to bear, carries her away from that eye, which must see the tubs, and the lamp. Orlando with its doctors is too far. She can scarcely reach the Chinaberry tree, where she waits in the growing heat, while inside she knows that the cold river is creeping up and up to put out that eye, which must know by now that she knew.

Activity 4: Delia says several times in the story that she has "taken" a great deal from Sykes. Make a list of five things Sykes does to Delia, in the order in which they occur in the story. Beside each one, write what Delia does in reply. What do you notice about the way her replies change?

4.4.4 Characters

Delia Jones is the heroine. She is a small, thin, hard-working woman who has been married for fifteen years and has been beaten since the second month of her marriage. She is religious, patient and honest. She earns the family's living by washing clothes and she has built her little house with her own labour. It would be a mistake to see her as only a victim. When she is pushed too far, she shows great courage: she seizes the skillet, she tells her husband that she hates him, and she moves her church membership. The story shows her slow change from endurance to resistance. Her final act (or failure to act) is the hardest to judge, and we shall discuss it below.

Sykes Jones is the villain. He is lazy, cruel and unfaithful. He does no work and lives on his wife's earnings, yet he hates the clothes she washes because they are a sign of her independence. He treats her with contempt and takes pleasure in her fear. He tries to humiliate her in public by lavishing money on his mistress. His boast that he knows how to handle snakes, and his decision to use a snake as a weapon,

prepare us for his end. Note that his cruelty is not only physical. He tries to take away the house that Delia has paid for, and he uses her fear of snakes to torment her.

The men on the porch (Joe Clarke, Elijah Moseley, Walter Thomas, Jim Merchant and others) form a chorus, like the chorus in Greek drama, which comments on the action. They see clearly that Sykes is wicked. They speak of whipping him or running him out of town. But in the end, they do nothing, except joke and eat watermelon. They represent a community that sees injustice and does not act.

4.4.5 Themes

Domestic violence and oppression. The main theme is the cruelty of a husband to his wife. Hurston shows that oppression is not only a matter of blows. It includes mockery, sudden frights, the waste of the wife's earnings, public humiliation and, at last, an attempt on her life. Written in 1926, the story was far ahead of its time in speaking about a subject that was usually kept silent.

Labour and dignity. "Sweat" is a story about work. Delia works every day of the week, and her work earns her the right to her house and to her self-respect. When she says that her sweat has paid for the house and that she can keep on sweating in it, she is speaking about the dignity of labour. Sykes, who contributes nothing, claims everything. The story therefore also raises questions of who has the right to own and enjoy the fruits of work.

Retribution and poetic justice. Poetic justice is the idea that good is rewarded and evil is punished in a fitting way. Sykes dies of the very snake that he meant to kill Delia. Delia herself had hinted at this: she had said that Sykes would reap what he had sown. The snake, the instrument of Sykes's cruelty, becomes the instrument of his fate.

Religion and faith. Delia is a churchgoer, and her faith gives her strength. She takes communion, she goes to the love feast and she sings hymns about crossing the river, Jordan. Sykes mocks her faith. Yet Hurston does not simply praise religion. Delia's faith helps her to endure, but it does not help her to forgive. In the last scene, her faith and her hatred seem to meet in a very troubling way.

The silence of the community. The men on the porch talk bitterly of Sykes, but they do nothing. Hurston suggests that a society which sees wrong and says nothing shares in it. This is a theme that will come back to you in Gordimer's story, where a whole society refuses to look at its own injustice.

4.4.6 Critical Appreciation

Plot and structure. The plot of the story is built in a series of scenes, each of which increases the tension. There are the whip and the quarrel, the talk on the porch, the arrival of the snake, the open fight about the snake, the discovery of the snake in the basket, and the death of Sykes. In each scene Sykes goes a step further, and Delia goes a step further in her resistance. The final scene brings both movements to an end. The story is therefore an example of rising action, in which each event is a little more intense than the last, leading up to a climax.

Foreshadowing and the snake. Hurston prepares the ending from the very beginning. In the first scene, Sykes throws a bull whip at Delia that looks like a snake, and he enjoys her fear. In the second part, a real snake is introduced. In the last part, the same snake is the cause of Sykes's death. The reader should notice also the remark that "snakes went blind in shedding" in the dog days, which is a hint that snakes are dangerous in the heat. Notice too that Sykes boasts that he knows how to handle snakes and "charm" them. His pride makes his death all the more ironic.

Irony. The great irony of the story is that the plan Sykes made to kill Delia kills him instead. There is also irony in the fact that he is trapped in the dark with the snake because he had used up the matches at Bertha's house. Even the dawn works against him: when he finds that he cannot strike a light, his own carelessness is the cause of his end.

Symbol. The word "sweat" gives the story its title and its main symbol. It stands for work, for suffering and for the physical cost of life. Delia's sweat gives her a claim on the house, and in the last scene, as she waits in the "growing heat" by the Chinaberry tree, sweat becomes the sign of her own tension. The snake is another symbol. It stands for the evil that Sykes has brought into the house, and it recalls the serpent of the Garden of Eden. Delia herself calls it "Satan". The house is a third symbol, for Delia's independence and her self-respect.

Language and dialect. One of the first things you will notice in this story is the language. Hurston writes the speech of her characters in the dialect of rural Florida. You will read forms such as "Ah" for "I", "tuh" for "to", "mah" for "my" and "Gawd" for "God". This may make the reading slow at first, but it gives the story its life and its truth. The characters speak with humour and imagination. Compare Joe Clarke's image of the sugar-cane chew with the plain language of the narrator, which is rich in comparisons of its own. This mixture of plain speech and poetic description is a mark of Hurston's style.

4.4.7 A Closer Look at Three Key Moments

The conversation on the porch. The talk of the men on Joe Clarke's porch is an important scene because it shows the attitude of the community. The men are full of sympathy but they do nothing. Joe Clarke's comparison of a wife to a sugar-cane chew is one of the best-remembered images in the story. It says that some men use a woman as they use a piece of cane: they take all her sweetness, and then throw away the rest. The scene is also full of humour, which makes the cruelty seem all the more shocking by contrast.

The last paragraph. The ending is one of the most discussed in American short fiction. Delia sees Sykes, swollen with poison, and sees that he is hoping for help. A "surge of pity" comes over her, and she cannot bear his eye. But she does not go to him. She goes to the Chinaberry tree and waits. The story gives no judgement. It tells us what Delia does and what she knows, but not whether she is right.

4.4.8 Is Delia Guilty?

Readers have long argued about the ending. Some say that Delia has done nothing wrong: she did not put the snake in the basket, and Sykes is a victim of his own cruelty. Others say that by refusing to help a dying man, even a man who has tried to kill her, Delia becomes guilty of a kind of murder. A third view is that Hurston deliberately leaves the question open, in order to show that the line between victim and wrongdoer is not always clear.

There are points in the text to support each of these views. For the first, there is the fact that Delia has been warned, from the beginning, that Sykes would be punished by his own deeds. For the second, there is the "surge of pity" that she cannot bear, which suggests that she knows she ought to help. For the third, there is the narrator's careful silence. In an examination, it is best to mention more than one view and then to give your own conclusion, supported by evidence from the story.

4.4.9 Glossary

- **Washerwoman:** a woman who earns her living by washing other people's clothes.
- **Buckboard:** a light, open four-wheeled carriage or wagon.
- **Sacrament / communion:** the Christian rite of sharing bread and wine in church.
- **Love feast:** a Christian gathering with prayer, singing and testimony.
- **Dog days:** the hottest days of summer.

- **Chinaberry tree:** a tree common in the southern United States.
- **Dialect:** a form of a language spoken in one region or by one group of people.
- **Poetic justice:** an outcome in which good is rewarded and evil punished in a fitting way.

Activity 5: Read aloud, or write out, three lines of dialogue from the story that you find especially vivid. Rewrite each of them in standard English. What has been gained, and what has been lost, in the change?

4.5 Nadine Gordimer: "Once upon a Time"

4.5.1 About the Author

Nadine Gordimer (1923 to 2014) was a South African novelist and short-story writer. She was born in a mining town near Johannesburg and lived most of her life in South Africa. She began to write as a young girl and published her first stories while she was still in her teens. Over a long career she wrote many novels, among them *The Conservationist* (1974), *Burger's Daughter* (1979), *July's People* (1981) and *My Son's Story* (1990), and a large number of short stories. In 1991 she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Gordimer lived under apartheid, the system of legal racial separation that governed South Africa from 1948 until the early 1990s. Under apartheid, people were classified by race, and black South Africans were denied the vote, the freedom to live where they chose, and a fair share of the country's wealth. Gordimer was a white writer, but she was a firm opponent of the system and took an active part in the struggle against it. Several of her books were banned by the government of the time. Her writing is serious, precise and unsentimental. She tries to show how a political system enters into the most private parts of human life: love, family, friendship and fear.

4.5.2 Background and Title of the Story

"Once upon a Time" was first published in the late 1980s and was included in the collection *Jump and Other Stories* (1991), which contains sixteen stories on life in South Africa during the last years of apartheid. The story was written at a time of great tension. The government had declared states of emergency, black communities were in revolt, and white suburbs were putting up walls, alarms and electric gates. Within a few years, Nelson Mandela would be released from prison and apartheid would begin to end.

The title is an ironic one. “Once upon a time” is the traditional opening of a fairy tale, and a fairy tale usually ends with the words “and they all lived happily ever after”. Gordimer uses the form of the fairy tale, but she turns it into a story in which nobody lives happily ever after. The contrast between the innocent form and the horrifying content is the main source of the story’s power.

4.5.3 Summary of the Story

The frame: a writer who cannot sleep. The story begins in the voice of the author herself. She tells us that she has been asked to contribute a story to a collection for children. She refuses. She says that no writer should be asked to produce a story on demand, and that a writer’s freedom must not be taken for granted. After making this protest, she goes to bed. In the middle of the night, she is woken by a noise. She lies there, frightened, thinking that an intruder has entered the house. Her heart pounds, and she tries to think of what she should do. At last, she realises that the noise is only the creaking of the old floorboards. But she is now wide awake and cannot sleep, and in order to calm herself she begins to tell herself a bedtime story. This is the story that follows. We see, therefore, that the tale of the family is a kind of fairy tale born of the writer’s own fear.

The happy family. The bedtime story is told in the third person, in the manner of a fairy tale. A man, his wife and their little boy live in a comfortable suburban house. The characters have no names. They are called simply “the husband”, “the wife” and “the little boy”. They love one another, and their love is expressed in their house, their possessions and their servants. They live in a quiet white suburb, and they believe that they are living happily ever after. The husband’s mother, a “wise old witch” as the story calls her, advises them to take every precaution to protect themselves.

The first precautions. They follow her advice. They join a medical benefit society, take out insurance policies and licence the family dog. They also join a neighbourhood watch organisation, which gives them a plaque to put on their gate. The plaque carries a stern message: “You have been warned.” The words are meant for intruders, but in the story, they also seem to be a warning to the reader.

The fear of the outside world. In another part of the city, where “people of another colour” live, there are riots. People of that colour are not allowed into the suburb except as servants, but the wife is afraid of the unrest. To calm her, the husband builds a security wall and puts up electronic gates around the house. Soon there are burglaries in the suburb, and in a neighbouring house the maid is tied up and gagged by thieves. The family now puts metal bars on every window and installs a very sensitive

burglar alarm. The alarm goes off at the slightest movement, even that of the family cat, and it often sets off the alarms of neighbouring houses.

The failure of the measures. In spite of all this, the burglaries continue. The thieves use the din of many alarms to saw through the window bars. Householders begin to distrust their servants and dismiss them, and groups of unemployed people begin to gather in the streets of the suburb. The family does not dismiss its own servants, but it reduces the hours when they may come to the house. The husband fears that a group of the unemployed might climb the wall and gates, and the wife agrees that the wall should be raised. The husband's mother helps by giving them a gift of extra bricks for Christmas. For the little boy she also gives a book of fairy tales.

The coil of razor wire. One day the husband and wife see how easily the family cat can climb over the raised wall. They realise that if a cat can climb it, so can a person. They do not know what to do. They go for a walk with the little boy and the dog, to look at what the neighbours have done. On the top of one wall, they see a coil of wire set with razor-sharp blades. They think this is the answer. They call in a firm with the name "Dragon's Teeth", which describes itself as the provider of "total security", and the firm installs a coil of razor wire along the top of their wall. The wife is pleased by how fearsome it looks, though she worries that the cat will try to climb the wall.

The fairy tale and the little boy. That evening, the mother reads to the little boy from his new book of fairy tales. The story she reads is "Sleeping Beauty", in which a prince hacks his way through a thicket of thorns, guarded by a dragon, in order to reach the sleeping princess and wake her. The little boy listens. The next day he sees the coil of razor wire on the wall, and it seems to him like the thicket in the story. He wants to be the prince. He tries to climb the wall and pass through the wire.

The death of the boy. The razor-sharp blades catch him at once: his knees, his hands and his head. He screams, and as he struggles, he is entangled more deeply in the coil. The gardener, whom the family has been paying all along, is seen trying to free the child, but the coil is a mass of sharp teeth. The boy's body, now a bleeding mass, can be got out only with a great effort. The parents, the housemaid and the gardener carry the child into the house. The measures taken to keep out danger have brought the greatest harm in the world on the person the parents love most.

Activity 6: List, in order, the security measures taken by the family in the story (from the first precautions to the razor wire). Next to each, write the fear that led to it. What do you notice about the way the fears and the measures grow?

4.5.4 Characters

You will notice that the characters in this story have no names. They are the husband, the wife, the little boy, the husband's mother, the maid and the gardener. This is typical of the fairy tale, in which characters are types and not individuals. By giving us types rather than persons, Gordimer makes the family stand for a whole class of people: the white, comfortable suburban householders of her country.

The husband and the wife are decent people. They love each other and their son. They are not cruel, and there is nothing in the story to suggest that they hate anyone. Their fault is a quieter one: they are afraid, and they allow their fear to rule their lives. They do not question whether the fear is justified. They do not ask why so many people in the country have been shut out of the suburbs and are poor and angry. They only ask how to keep them out. Their response to every danger is to build something higher or sharper.

The little boy is the innocent figure at the centre of the story. He understands nothing of his parents' fears. For him the wall is a thicket from a fairy tale and he is the prince. His innocence is what makes his death so terrible. He is not guilty of anything, yet he pays the price of his parents' choices.

The husband's mother is the "wise old witch" who advises the family. In a fairy tale a witch often gives advice that leads to disaster, and here her advice does the same. She is also the one who gives the extra bricks and the book of fairy tales, two gifts that, in different ways, prepare the death of the child.

The maid and the gardener are the servants who live outside the safe world of the family but work within it. They are the "people of another colour" whom the family allows in only in a fixed role. It is the gardener who is seen trying to save the boy. It is a sad irony that those whom the family fears are the ones who come to its help.

4.5.5 Themes

Fear and the illusion of security. The central theme is the way in which fear drives people to build walls, and the way in which the walls give them only an illusion of safety. Each security measure leads

to another, because none of them removes the cause of the fear. The story shows that a person who builds his life around fear is not made safe by it but is, in the end, destroyed.

Apartheid and racial division. The story is set in South Africa under apartheid, and the "people of another colour" are the black majority, who were shut out of the white suburbs. The wall and the razor wire stand for the system of separation. Gordimer does not say that the black people are dangerous. She shows us that it is the white family that is afraid. Her point is that a society built upon separation and injustice lives in constant fear of those whom it has wronged.

Wealth and inequality. The family has comfort and possessions, and the story makes it clear that these are the cause of its fear. The more one has, the more one has to protect. The unemployed who gather in the streets are not described as wicked. They are poor and out of work. The contrast between the rich suburb and the poor outside is an important part of the story.

The innocent victim. The little boy is entirely innocent, yet he is the one who dies. This is a common pattern in stories about social injustice: the next generation pays for the choices of the present one. Gordimer suggests that the wall that was built to protect the children of one group will, sooner or later, destroy them.

Storytelling and moral responsibility. The frame of the story, in which a writer refuses to write a children's story and then tells one anyway, raises a question about the writer's duty. Gordimer suggests that a writer cannot be forced to write, but also that she cannot avoid telling the truth about the world in which she lives. Even a fairy tale for children, told at night to calm one's own fear, can carry a serious message.

4.5.6 Critical Appreciation

Frame narrative. A frame narrative is a story that contains another story. In "Once upon a Time", the outer story is about the writer who wakes at night. The inner story is the bedtime story that she tells herself. The frame serves several purposes. It makes the fairy tale seem natural, because it is told by someone who is frightened and cannot sleep. It also links the fear of the writer to the fear of the family, and so suggests that the fear in the story is not only that of the characters, but ours as well. The reader may ask whether the writer's fear, which turns out to be groundless (the noise was only a creaking floor), is a small version of the family's fear.

The use of the fairy tale. Gordimer borrows the signs of the fairy tale: the opening formula, the nameless characters, the wise old witch, the gifts, the quest, the thicket of thorns, the dragon. She then turns them against the form. In a fairy tale the prince succeeds and everyone lives happily ever after. In Gordimer's story, the child who imitates the prince is killed. The effect is to shock the reader, who has been lulled by the familiar manner of the telling. It is the sharp difference between the manner of the story and its matter that gives it its chilling effect.

Irony. The story is built on irony. The company that installs the razor wire is called "Dragon's Teeth", and the couple does not see that a "dragon's teeth" is an odd thing to place on one's own wall. The measures that are meant to protect the child kill him. The servants, whom the family has been guarding against, are the ones who try to save him. And the words on the plaque, "You have been warned", prove true in a way that the family never meant.

Foreshadowing. The ending is hinted at throughout. The wife's worry that the cat might climb the coil prepares us for something being caught in it. The dragon and the thorn thicket in the bedtime story are another hint: the boy's reading of the wire as a thicket is exactly what the earlier fairy tale had set up. A careful reader will notice that the story could not end in any other way.

Symbols. The wall is the most important symbol. It stands for apartheid, for the separation of rich from poor and of white from black, and for the fear that makes people shut themselves in. The coil of razor wire is its sharpest form, a symbol of a system that cuts those who touch it. The plaque is a symbol of the official "warning" that society gives to those whom it keeps out. The fairy-tale book stands for innocence, and the thicket of thorns links the book to the wall.

4.5.7 A Closer Look at Three Key Moments

The cat on the wall. The moment when the husband and wife see the cat climb the wall is the point at which they decide to use the razor wire. Notice that it is not an intruder, but a cat, that shows them the weakness in their defences. The cat is another small innocent creature, and its easy climb prepares us for the climb of the boy. The scene shows how the logic of fear works: any sign of weakness calls for a harsher remedy.

The prince and the thicket. The reading of "Sleeping Beauty" to the boy brings together two main images of the story. The prince, who breaks through the thorns to wake the sleeper, is a symbol of courage and love. The boy, who imitates him, is a symbol of innocence. By placing the fairy tale next to

the razor wire, Gordimer makes the reader see what the parents cannot: that the wall they have built is a thicket of death, and that the child will take it for a place of adventure.

4.5.8 Glossary

- **Apartheid:** the system of legal racial separation in South Africa from 1948 to the early 1990s; the word means "apartness".
- **Frame narrative:** a story that surrounds and introduces another story.
- **Fable / fairy tale:** a short, simple tale, often with magical elements and a moral.
- **Neighbourhood watch:** a group of residents who organise to guard their area against crime.
- **Razor wire:** a coil of wire with sharp blades, used on walls and fences.
- **Illusion:** a false idea or belief; something that seems real but is not.
- **Dragon's teeth:** in Greek myth, teeth sown in the ground that grew into armed warriors; here, the name of the security firm.

Activity 7: Write a short paragraph (about 80 words) explaining what the wall means in the story. Then say whether you think walls and fences in real life can ever solve the problems that make people afraid, giving one example from your own surroundings.

4.6 Comparative Study of the Three Stories

Now that you have studied the three stories separately, let us place them side by side. The table below summarises their main points. After it, we shall discuss the most important points of comparison.

	Christie	**Hurston**	**Gordimer**
Kind of story	Detective story with a reversal	Realistic story of a marriage	Fable in the form of a fairy tale
Setting	An English country garden	A small Florida town	A walled white suburb in South Africa

	Christie	Hurston	Gordimer
Source of danger	A plan of revenge	A cruel husband and a rattlesnake	Fear, and the walls built from it
Who suffers?	No one (the crime is prevented)	The husband, who dies of his own trap	An innocent child
Ending	Rescue and repentance	Retribution	Tragedy
Main devices	Suspense, irony, symbol of the wasps' nest	Foreshadowing, dialect, symbol of sweat	Frame narrative, irony, fairy-tale form
Social concern	English "good sportsman" ideal	Domestic oppression and labour	Apartheid and inequality

4.6.1 Suspense and Structure

All three stories keep the reader in suspense, but in different ways. Christie uses the suspense of a puzzle and a ticking clock: we want to know what Poirot knows and whether he will arrive in time. Hurston uses the suspense of a slowly building danger: we see the snake arrive and we know it will be used, but we do not know how. Gordimer uses the suspense of dread: from the opening scene of the frightened writer, we feel that something terrible is coming. In each case, the writer arranges the events so that each one is a little more intense than the last, until the climax.

4.6.2 Oppression and Power

Each story shows one person or group holding power over another. In Christie's story, Harrison plans to use the law itself as a weapon, so that Langton will be hanged for a crime he did not commit. In Hurston's story, Sykes uses his physical strength and Delia's fear to dominate her. In Gordimer's story, a whole class uses walls, laws and wire to keep another class out. The three stories therefore show oppression at three different scales: between two men, between a husband and wife, and between sections of a nation.

4.6.3 Plans that Turn Against the Planner

In all three stories, the plan that is meant to protect or to harm backfires. Harrison's plan is stopped by Poirot and his poison is turned against the wasps. Sykes's trap kills Sykes. The family's security wall kills the child. This is the pattern of **irony of fate**, in which events turn out in the opposite way from what a character expects or intends. It is useful to remember that in Christie's story the irony is gentle and ends in a rescue, in Hurston's it is hard and ends in retribution, and in Gordimer's it is cruel and ends in loss.

It is also interesting to compare the three endings. In Christie's story, a man is given a chance to turn from evil. In Hurston's story, there is no such chance, and a woman who has suffered long stands by while her tormentor dies. In Gordimer's story, there is no chance of rescue at all. If you read the three endings in this order, you will see that the hope of mercy becomes smaller each time.

4.6.4 Social Divides and Narrative Technique

The divides in the stories grow from the personal to the political. In Christie's story it is a rivalry in love; in Hurston's it is the division between husband and wife and between the community and the one who is wronged; in Gordimer's it is the division between races and classes. Notice that in Hurston's and Gordimer's stories, those who are on the outside of power (Delia, and the servants) are shown with sympathy.

The narrators also differ. Christie's narrator is neutral and gives us just enough information to follow the plot. Hurston's narrator is close to Delia and uses rich, poetic language. Gordimer's narrator takes the voice of a storyteller telling a bedtime tale, and the cool voice of the narrator is a mask for anger. In all three, the writers trust the reader to draw the conclusion without being told.

Activity 8: Choose any two of the three stories and write a paragraph of about 100 words comparing the way in which each uses irony. Use at least one example from each story.

4.7 Check Your Progress

Answer the following questions in your notebook. Do not look at the text while answering. When you have finished, check your answers against the key given in Section 4.11.

Check Your Progress 1 (Christie)

1. Poirot tells Harrison that he is investigating a murder which has not yet been _____.
2. Whose name did Poirot see in the poison register at the chemist's shop in Barchester?

3. How, according to Harrison, was Claude Langton going to destroy the wasps' nest? (a) with cyanide (b) with petrol and a garden syringe (c) with fire (d) with smoke
4. True or False: Harrison is a perfectly healthy man.
5. What did Poirot put into Harrison's pocket in place of the poison?
6. What was Harrison's real plan against Claude Langton?

Check Your Progress 2 (Hurston)

1. Delia Jones earns her living as a _____.
2. For how many years had Delia been married to Sykes? (a) 5 (b) 10 (c) 15 (d) 20
3. True or False: Sykes brought the rattlesnake home to protect Delia.
4. Who is Bertha?
5. Where does Delia hide after finding the snake in the clothes basket?
6. Why do you think the story is called "Sweat"? Answer in two or three sentences.

Check Your Progress 3 (Gordimer)

1. What is the name of the company that installs the razor wire?
2. True or False: The characters in the bedtime story have personal names.
3. Which fairy tale does the mother read to the little boy?
4. Who gives the family the extra bricks?
5. What do the words on the plaque from the neighbourhood watch say?
6. Why is the death of the little boy ironic? Answer in two or three sentences.

4.8 Summary

In this chapter you have studied three stories in which suspense, oppression and social division lead to a crisis.

Agatha Christie's "Wasp's Nest" is a short detective story in which Hercule Poirot visits his friend John Harrison in order to prevent a murder that has not yet been committed. Poirot draws attention to a wasps' nest in the garden and to the fact that Harrison's friend Claude Langton, who was once engaged to Harrison's fiancée Molly Deane, has bought cyanide. Harrison is secretly dying, with only two

months to live, and hates Langton. His plan is to poison himself in such a way that Langton will be hanged for the crime. Poirot secretly replaces the poison in Harrison's pocket with harmless soda, destroys the wasps' nest with the solution, and explains his reasoning. He appeals to Harrison's better nature, and Harrison thanks him for coming. The story is a study of hidden hatred, suspense and mercy.

Zora Neale Hurston's "Sweat" is the story of Delia Jones, a washerwoman in a small Florida town, who has supported her lazy and cruel husband Sykes for fifteen years. Sykes beats her, takes a mistress named Bertha, and tries to terrify her by bringing home a rattlesnake. Delia finally stands up to him and tells him that she hates him. When she comes home from church, she finds the snake in her clothes basket and flees to the hay barn. Sykes, coming home in the dark, is bitten by the snake that he had meant for her. Delia hears him call for help, but she does not go to him. The story deals with domestic violence, the dignity of labour and poetic justice.

Nadine Gordimer's "Once upon a Time" opens with a writer who cannot sleep after imagining an intruder, and who tells herself a bedtime story. It is the story of a family of three who live in a white suburb and who, out of fear of crime and of "people of another colour", add one security measure after another: insurance, a plaque, a wall and electronic gates, window bars, an alarm and finally a coil of razor wire named "Dragon's Teeth". The little boy, who has been read the story of "Sleeping Beauty", tries to climb through the wire like the prince in the fairy tale, and is killed. The story is a fable about fear, apartheid and the illusion of security.

In comparing the stories, you have seen that all three show a plan that turns against its maker, that all three use irony and foreshadowing, and that the social divide grows wider from one story to the next: from a rivalry between two men, to a cruel marriage, to a nation divided by race.

4.9 Keywords

- **Suspense:** the anxious uncertainty about what will happen next in a story.
- **Oppression:** the cruel or unjust use of power over others.
- **Irony:** a contrast between what is expected and what actually happens.
- **Foreshadowing:** a hint of what is going to happen later in the story.
- **Symbol:** an object or image that stands for a larger idea.
- **Frame narrative:** a story that contains another story within it.

- **Poetic justice:** an outcome in which good is rewarded and evil is punished in a fitting way.
- **Dialect:** a form of a language spoken in a particular region or by a particular group.
- **Detective story:** a story in which a crime is investigated and solved by a detective.
- **Point of view:** the position from which a story is told.
- **Apartheid:** the system of legal racial separation in South Africa.
- **Fable:** a short story, often with a moral, that conveys a general truth.

4.10 Self-Assessment Test

Section A: Explain with reference to the context

1. "Sweat, sweat, sweat! Work and sweat, cry and sweat, pray and sweat!" (Zora Neale Hurston, "Sweat")
2. "Mah sweat is done paid for this house and Ah reckon Ah kin keep on sweatin' in it." (Zora Neale Hurston, "Sweat")

For each passage, name the story and the writer, state who says these words and to whom, explain the passage in your own words (about 100 words), and say what it tells us about the speaker and the situation.

Section B: Short-answer questions (70 to 80 words each)

1. **Why has Poirot come to visit John Harrison?**
   Poirot visits his old friend John Harrison with a hidden purpose. He says he is in the area to look into a murder that has not yet happened. In truth, he has sensed danger in the tense triangle between Harrison, his fiancée Molly Deane and her former fiancé Claude Langton. Poirot has come to warn Harrison and to prevent a crime before it takes place, which makes this an unusual case for him.
2. **What is the importance of the wasps' nest in "Wasps' Nest"?**
   The wasps' nest is the cover for Harrison's secret plan. He asks Langton to destroy it and to buy cyanide for that purpose, so Langton's name is entered in the chemist's poison book. Harrison actually plans to use that cyanide to kill himself so that Langton will be blamed and hanged.

Poirot uses the nest to begin the conversation and to hint at what he knows. So, it is both a clever excuse and a trap.

3. How does Poirot find out Harrison's real plan?

Poirot learns the plan by joining small clues. At the chemist's he sees that Langton signed for cyanide, saying Harrison asked for it, yet Harrison denies this. He sees Molly and Langton growing close again, and he sees Harrison leaving a Harley Street doctor like a man with bad news. He concludes that Harrison is dying and means to die by cyanide so that Langton hangs. Poirot secretly swaps the poison for washing soda.

4. Describe the relationship between Delia and Sykes.

Delia and Sykes share an abusive and unequal marriage of fifteen years. Delia works hard washing clothes for white families and has toiled to keep her home. Sykes beats and insults her, spends her earnings on his mistress Bertha, and wants Delia out so that Bertha can move in. Any love she felt has been killed by his cruelty. She lives in constant fear, yet in the end she firmly refuses to leave.

6. What is the importance of the snake in "Sweat"?

The rattlesnake is Sykes's weapon of terror. Knowing that Delia is deathly afraid of snakes, he brings it home in a box to frighten her out of her house. It stands for evil and for Sykes's cruelty, like the serpent in the Garden of Eden. It also brings both irony and poetic justice: the snake meant to destroy Delia bites Sykes and kills him, so Delia is finally free of her tormentor.

7. What security measures does the family take in "Once upon a Time"?

The family adds one security measure after another. First, they put up a Neighbourhood Watch sign and install electronic gates. When burglaries begin, they fit bars on the doors and windows and set up a burglar alarm. Then they raise the garden wall. Finally, they hire a company called Dragon's Teeth to fix coils of razor-edged wire on the walls, believing this will keep every intruder out and their little boy safe.

8. Why does the little boy try to climb the wall?

The boy's mother reads him the story of Sleeping Beauty, in which a brave prince fights through a thicket of thorns to wake the princess. The next day the boy wants to play the prince. He thinks the new razor-wire wall is the thicket of thorns. He drags a ladder to the wall and climbs it. He is caught in the Dragon's Teeth coils and dies, a tragic result of his parents' fear.

Section C: Essay-type questions (about 300 words each)

1. Discuss “Wasp’s Nest” as a detective story. How does Christie create suspense?
2. Examine the theme of oppression in “Sweat”.
3. “Sweat” is a story about labour and dignity. Discuss.
4. Discuss “Once upon a Time” as a story about fear and the illusion of security.
5. Compare the use of irony in any two of the three stories.

Section D: Objective questions

1. Who is the detective in “Wasp’s Nest”?
2. In which country is Hurston’s story set?
3. Name the magazine in which “Sweat” was first published.
4. Who is Molly Deane?
5. What does the word “apartheid” mean?
6. In which collection was “Once upon a Time” published?
7. Which of the three stories uses a frame narrative?
8. Define “irony” in one sentence.

4.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

Check Your Progress 1

1. Committed.
2. Claude Langton.
3. (b) with petrol and a garden syringe.
4. False. Harrison has been told by a doctor that he has only two months to live.
5. Ordinary soda (crystals).
6. Harrison planned to poison himself with cyanide that Langton had bought, so that Langton would be blamed for the death and hanged.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Washerwoman.
2. (c) 15.
3. False. He brought it to terrify her, and later put it in her clothes basket.
4. Bertha is Sykes's mistress, who comes from another town.
5. She hides in the hay barn.
6. "Sweat" stands for Delia's hard labour, by which she has paid for her house and supported her husband. It is also the sweat of fear and of suffering. The word sums up her claim to her house and her dignity.

Check Your Progress 3

1. Dragon's Teeth.
2. False. They are called only "the husband", "the wife" and "the little boy".
3. "Sleeping Beauty".
4. The husband's mother.
5. "You have been warned."
6. The razor wire was put up to protect the child and the family, but it is the cause of the child's death. The boy, who has been reading a fairy tale, takes the wire for the thicket that the prince must cross. The measures taken out of fear thus bring about the very loss that the parents feared most.

4.12 References / Suggested Readings

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GRAMMAR

SECTION

Subject: Introduction to Short Story and Basic Grammar	
Course Code- C24ENG101T	Author: Dr. Astha Gupta
Lesson- 1	Editor: Dr. Sandeep Bishnoi

Introduction to Noun and Pronoun (Part of Speech)

Structure of Lesson

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 Main Body of the Text

1.3.1 Definition of Noun

1.3.2 Types of Noun

a. Proper noun

b. Common Noun

c. Abstract Noun

d. Concrete noun

e. Collective noun

f. Countable and Uncountable noun

1.4 Noun Usage

1.4.1 Number: Singular and Plural Noun

1.4.2 Noun: Gender

1.4.3 General rules of changing gender

1.5 **Further Main Body of the Text**

1.5.1 Pronoun - Persons

1.5.2 Gender of the Pronoun

1.5.3 Types of Pronoun-

a.Personal Pronoun

b. Reflexive Pronoun

c. Emphatic Pronoun

d. Demonstrative Pronoun

e. Indefinite Pronoun

f. Distributive Pronoun

g. Relative Pronoun

1.6 Check Your Progress

1.7 Summary

1.8 Keywords

1.9 Self-Assessment Test

1.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.11 References /Suggested Readings

1.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- To identify various parts of the speech; choose their correct form and use them effectively.
- Define noun and pronoun.
- Explain all types of noun.
- Use all types of pronoun.

1.2- Introduction

Learning about the parts of speech is the first step in grammar study just as learning the letters of the Alphabet is the first step to being able to read and write. From learning the Parts of Speech, we begin to understand the use or function of words and how words are joined together to make meaningful communication. To understand what a part of speech is, you must understand the idea of putting similar things together into groups or categories. Let's look at some examples of categories. From learning the parts of speech, we begin to understand the use or function of words and how words are joined together to make meaningful communication. To understand what a part of speech is, you must understand the idea of putting similar things together into groups or categories.

1.3 Main Body of the Text

1.3.1- Definition of Noun

A Noun is a word used as the name of a person, place, or a thing. It includes the name of an object that we can perceive through our senses (sight, smell, touch, hearing, taste) as well as an object about which we can think but cannot perceive through the senses.

1.3.2 Types of Noun

a. **Proper noun**: They are the names of particular persons, places, animal, objects, etc. A proper name is always written with a capital letter in the beginning.

   For Example: Himalaya is the tallest mountain in India. Here Himalaya and India are the names of one specific mountain and one specific country respectively and cannot be applied to any another mountain and country; and hence they are proper names.

b. **Common noun**: Nouns other than proper nouns are called common nouns.

For example -In the above given sentence, mountain is a general category indicating the geographical structure and hence it is a common noun. Common nouns can be Abstract nouns or Concrete nouns.

c. **Abstract noun**: Abstract nouns denote the ideas, qualities, and emotions about which we can think but which cannot be perceived by using our senses.

   For Example: courage, kindness, beauty, honesty etc.

d. **Concrete noun**: Concrete nouns denote the animate or inanimate objects that can be perceived through our senses.

   For Example- book, road, cup, telephone water, noise etc.

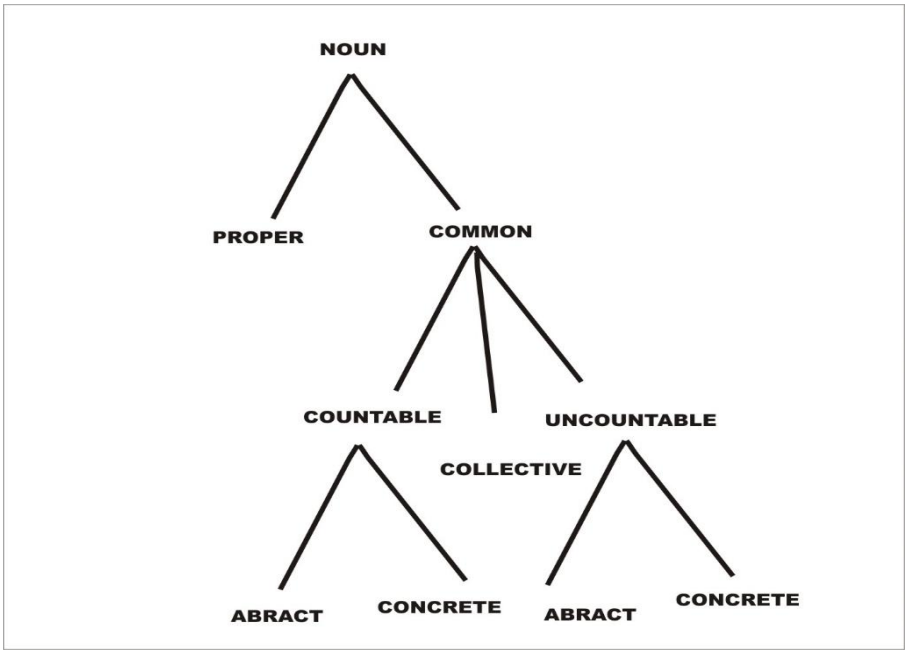
e. **Collective noun**: They stand for a group of persons, animals, birds etc and various other objects which are taken together as a unit.

   For Example: Army, fleet, police, herd, swarm, flock and so on.

f. **Countable and Uncountable noun**: Countable nouns are the names of the objects that can be counted. Countable nouns have both singular and plural form.

For Example- cat, person, note, table etc.

Uncountable nouns are the names of materials, substances, concepts, qualities and such things which are not individual objects and cannot be divided into separate elements. For example: milk, sugar, cake, kindness, love, water, smoke, electricity. Uncountable nouns are always treated as singular form and they use singular verb.



1.4 Noun Usage

1.4.1: Number: Singular and Plural Noun

A noun that denotes single number is called singular For Example: boy, crow, bag,

A noun that denotes many numbers is called plural. For Example: boys, crows, bags,

General Rules to form plural: The plural form of most of the nouns can be obtained by adding‘s’ to the singular form. For Example: Boy, Tree, River, Cap Boys, Trees, Rivers, Caps . In nouns ending in s, sh, Ch., x, and z, the plural form is obtained by adding ‘es’ to the singular form.

For Example: Class, Bush, Watch, Box, Quiz, Fuzz Classes, Bushes, Watches, Boxes, Quizzes, Fuzzes

Note : In case of nouns ending in ‘z’ , if the noun has double z at the end in the singular form then ‘es’ is directly added to the singular form to form the plural ; but if the singular form has single ‘z’ at the end then ’z’ is added to the singular form before adding ‘es’ to form the plural

i) Nouns ending in ‘y’ and preceded by consonant form the plurals by changing ‘y’ to ‘I’ and adding ’es ’to the singular form.

For Example: Lady Duty Story Berries, Ladies Duties Stories Berries

ii) In nouns ending in ‘o’, plurals are formed by adding ‘es’ or ‘s’ to the singular form.

For Example: Mango Buffalo Piano Ratio

Mangoes, Buffaloes, pianos, Ratios

iii) Nouns ending in ‘f’ or ‘fe’ form their plural by changing ‘f or ‘fe’ to ‘v’ and adding ‘es’ to the singular form.

For Example: Mango, Buffalo, Piano, Ratio

For Example: Leaf Self Life, Leaves Selves lives

There are exceptions to this rule. Some instances are given below.

For Example: Roof Chief Dwarfs

Roofs Chiefs Dwarfs

iv) In few noun plurals are formed by changing inside vowel of the singular form.

For Example: Man, Tooth Mouse Foot

Men Teeth Mice Feet

Note: The plural forms of compound nouns given below Mother-in-law Step-son Passer-by Commander-in-chief Mothers-in-law Step-sons Passers-by Commanders-in-chief.

1.4.2: Noun: Gender: Gender means sex distinction. In English There are two genders – Masculine and Feminine. The absence of gender implies Neuter gender.

A Noun that expresses maleness is called masculine gender. A Noun that expresses femaleness is called feminine gender. A Noun that can be used to express maleness as well as femaleness is called a common noun. A Noun that is used to denote a genderless thing is called a neuter noun.

1.4.3: General rules of changing gender

- Some nouns have specially assigned words for feminine gender.

  For Example: Boy Father Son Boar Cock Bull Girl Mother Daughter Sow Hen Cow

- In some nouns the feminine form is obtained by adding ‘ess’ to the masculine form.
  For Example: Host Lion Priest Baron, Hostess Lioness Priestess Baroness
- In some nouns the inner vowel is dropped and ’ess’ is added to the masculine form to get feminine form.
  For Example: Actor Master Waite Emperor, Actress Mistress Waitress Empress
- Though the suffix ‘ess’ is commonly used to change the gender there are some irregular suffixes used to form the feminine form. For Example: Czar Hero Signor, Czarina Heroine Signor.
- Sometimes a word is placed before or after the masculine noun to form the feminine form.
  For Example: Bull- calf He-goat Grand-father Milk –man Cow-calf She-goat Grand-mother Milk-maid General Rules to form plural Mothers-in-law Step-sons Passers-by Commanders.

1.5 Further Main Body of the Text

1.5.1 Pronoun: Persons

Pronoun is a word used in the place of a noun.

For Example: Neeta woke up late. Neeta slept late at night.

Neeta woke up late, because she slept late at night. Here ‘She’ is used instead of Neeta, so it is a Pronoun. Since nouns follow number and gender, pronouns too follow them. ‘He’ is masculine pronoun, ‘she’ is feminine and ‘it’ is neuter one ‘.’ He, She, It, I, singular pronouns while ‘we’, ‘our’, ‘us’, ‘they’ are plural pronouns. When we talk to others, we refer to ourselves as ‘I’ or ‘we’; the person to whom we are talking as you and the person or thing about we are talking as ‘he’, ’she ’or ‘it’. This is called, persons. Thus, the relationship between the addresser, the addressee and the subject of the address is called persons. There are three persons in English language. See the table below.

Persons Singular Plural

1st I we

2nd you

3rd he they, She, They, It, they

1.5.2 - Gender of the pronoun

- First Person Pronouns: Masculine or Feminine

- Second Person Pronouns: Masculine or Feminine
- Third Person Pronouns: He –Masculine
- She-Feminine

It-Neuter

They- Any gender can be applied as per the specification.

1.5.3- Types of Pronoun

a. Personal Pronoun

The pronouns that denote various persons are called personal pronoun. Generally, 'it' substitutes a noun representing inanimate object, so it is called impersonal pronoun.

Read the following sentences carefully to understanding the use of impersonal pronouns

It was at school that the two friends met.

It was raining heavily.

Note that 'it' does not work as a substitute for any noun.

b. Reflexive Pronoun: When 'self' is added to personal pronouns, compound personal pronouns are formed.

For Example- Myself, himself depending upon the use of the compound personal pronouns, there are two types.

Read the following sentences carefully.

i) ram killed himself in despair.

ii) At last they found themselves sitting in the stadium.

Here you will notice that, the compound personal pronouns are the objects of the respective verbs and they refer to the respective subjects. Here, 'himself' refers to 'he' and 'ourselves' refer to 'we'. Thus, they help to reflect the action back to the subject. Hence, they are called Reflexive Pronouns.

c. Emphatic Pronoun: Here you will notice that compound personal pronouns (words in bold) are used to emphasize the action; and hence they are called Emphatic pronouns.

I myself saw the girl yesterday.

You yourself have to do it.

d. Demonstrative Pronoun: The pronouns that are used to refer to and point out the objects are called Demonstrative Pronouns.

For Example:

i) That is his house.

ii) These are my options for the extracurricular activities.

iii) Both the dresses are of reasonable price but this one is cheaper than that.

Here 'that', 'these' and' both' point out the objects that are the subjects of the respective sentences.

e. Indefinite Pronoun: In all the above given sentences,' one', 'none', 'they', 'someone' refer to person or persons in general but they do not stand for a particular person or persons. Hence, they are called Indefinite pronouns. Thus, the pronouns that refer to a person, persons or things in general are called Indefinite pronouns

Read the following sentences carefully.

a) One should exercise regularly to stay healthy.

b) None of her arguments were true.

c) They believed him to be a generous man.

d) Someone should come forward.

Note: In the sentence number (d) above, you will notice that 'someone' is a compound word and it is called compound indefinite pronoun. Other such pronouns are 'anyone, 'anybody', 'anything', 'everyone', 'everybody', 'everything' 'none',' 'nobody', 'nothing', 'somebody', 'something' 'another'.

f. Distributive Pronoun: Here you will notice that 'each', 'either', 'neither' refer to the persons or things, one at a time; and hence they are called Distributive Pronouns. Thus, the pronouns that are used to denote singular person or thing one at a time are called Distributive Pronouns. They always use singular verb.

- Each of the boys took his turn on the guard duty.
- Either of us should go at the railway station.
- Neither of the key was fitting the lock.

g. Relative Pronoun: Thus, the pronoun that refers to or relates to the antecedent is called Relative Pronoun 'who', 'whom', 'what', 'which', 'whose' and 'that' are the Relative Pronouns. Adding 'ever' and 'so ever' to the Relative Pronouns, (except 'that') you get Compound Relative Pronouns, 'whosoever', 'whoever', 'whomsoever', 'whichever,', 'whatsoever', 'whatever'.

Seema is the girl. We met Seema at the mall yesterday.

Seema is the girl whom we met at the mall yesterday

. Here you will observe that 'whom, the pronoun stands for 'Seema' the antecedent.

For Example: Whoever comes first will get the seat.

1.6 Check Your Progress

Pick out Nouns and Pronouns in the following sentences.

1. Recognize the kinds of Noun-

a) An apple was lying on the table.
b) Love begets love.
c) We cannot live without Air.
d) The jury has given its verdict.
e) The Hindus regards Krishna as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

2. Use appropriate Pronoun-

a) When I have guests, I myself cook dinner for ……
b) When she realized her mistake, she laughed at ……
c) Susie prevented me from entering ……. room.
d) She yelled at …… without any provocation.
e) That is ……

3. Recognize Noun in the sentences-

a) They arrived early but at the wrong station.
b) We counted only six different colours in the rainbow.
c) The man was trying to steal a horse with a cart full of apple.

1.7 Summary

• A noun is a word used to name a person, animal, place, thing, and abstract idea.

• A common noun is a noun referring to a person, place, or thing in a general sense-usually, you should write it with a capital letter only when it begins a sentence.

• A concrete noun is a noun which names anything (or anyone) that you can perceive

through your physical senses: touch, sight, taste, hearing, or smell.

• A countable noun (or count noun) is a noun with both a singular and a plural form, and

it names anything (or anyone) that you can count.

• A collective Noun is a noun naming a group of things, animals, or persons.

• A personal Pronoun refers to a specific person or thing and changes its form to indicate person, number, gender, and case.

• A demonstrative pronoun points to and identifies a noun or a pronoun.

• An indefinite pronoun is a pronoun referring to an identifiable but not specified person or thing. An indefinite pronoun conveys the idea of all, any, none, or some.

1.8 Keywords

- **Noun**: It is name of person, place or things.
- **Interrogative Pronoun**: Used to ask questions.
- **Intensive Pronoun**: Used to emphasise its antecedent.

1.9 Self- Assessment Questions (SAQ)

State whether the following statements are true or false:

a) ‘He’ is an objective pronoun.
b) Interrogative pronoun used to ask questions.
c) Whomever is an Interrogative pronoun.
d) Myself is a Reflexive pronoun.

1.10 Answers to Check your progress:

Ans.1

a) **(**Pen – Common Noun; table – Common Noun)

b) (Love – Abstract Noun)

c) (Water – Material Noun)

d) (Jury – collective noun; verdict – Abstract Noun)

e) (Hindus – Proper Noun; Krishna – Proper Noun; Incarnation – Common Noun; Vishnu – Proper Noun)

Ans.2

a) When I have guests, I myself cook dinner for them.

b) When she realized her mistake, she laughed at herself.

c) Sam prevented me from entering his room.

d) She yelled at me without any provocation.

e) That is mine.

Ans.3

a) They arrived early but at the wrong station.

b) We counted only six different colours in the rainbow

c) The man was trying to steal a horse with a cart full of apple

1.11 References /Suggested Readings:

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- http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/plurals.htm

Subject: Introduction to Short Story and Basic Grammar	
Course Code- C24ENG101T	Author: Dr. Astha Gupta
Lesson- 2	Editor: Dr. Sandeep Bishnoi

Introduction to Verbs and Adverbs (Part of Speech)

Structure of Lesson

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Main Body of the Text

2.3.0 Verbs and Its Classification

2.3.1 Helping Verbs

2.3.2 Main verbs

2.3.3 Transitive and Intransitive verbs

a. **Transitive Verbs**
b. **Intransitive Verbs**

2.3.4 Linking Verbs

2.3.5 Dynamic and Stative verbs

2.3.6 Regular and Irregular Verbs

2.4 Application-Verbs and Tenses

2.4.1 Verbs and Tenses Usage

a. **Present Indefinite Tense/ Simple Present**
b. **Present Continuous Tense**
c. **Present Perfect Tense**
d. **Present Perfect Continuous Tense**
e. **Past Indefinite Tense/ Simple Past**
f. **Past Continuous Tense**

g. **Past Perfect Tense**

h. **Past Perfect Continuous Tense**

i. **Future Indefinite Tense/ Simple Future**

j. **Future Continuous Tense**

k. **Future Perfect Tense**

l. **Future Perfect Continuous Tense**

2.5 Further Main Body of the Text

2.5.0 Adverbs and Its Classification

2.5.1 Adverbs

2.5.2 Adverbs of Manner

2.5.3 Adverbs of Place or Location

2.5.4 Adverbs of Time

2.5.5 Adverbs of Degree

2.6 Usage of Adverbs

2.6.1 Adverbs Modifying Adjectives

2.6.2 Adverbs Modifying Adverbs

2.6.3 Adverbs Modifying Nouns

2.6.4 Adverbs Modifying Noun Phrases

2.6.5 Adverbs Modifying Determiners, Pronouns

2.7 Check Your Progress

2.8 Summary

2.9 Keywords

2.10 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

2.11 Answers to check your progress

2.12 References/ Suggested Readings

2.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Know about verbs and adverbs
- Explain helping verbs and main verbs
- Explain present, past and future tenses.

2.2 Introduction

The verb is king in English. The shortest sentence contains a verb. You can make a one-word sentence with a verb, for example: “Stop!” You cannot make a one-word sentence with any other type of word. Verbs are sometimes described as “action words”. This is partly true. Many verbs give the idea of action, of “doing” something. For example, words like run, fight, do and works all convey action. But some verbs do not give the idea of action; they give the idea of existence, of state, of being”. For example, verbs like be, exist, seem and belong all convey state.

A verb always has a subject. (In the sentence “John speaks English”, John is the subject and speaks is the verb.) In simple terms, therefore, we can say that verbs are words that tell us what a subject does or is; they describe:

• action (Ram plays football.)

• state (Anthony seems kind.)

There is something very special about verbs in English. Most other words (adjectives, adverbs, prepositions etc. do not change in form (although nouns can have singular and plural forms). But almost all verbs change in form. For example, the verb to work has five forms:

• to work, work, works, worked, working

Of course, this is still very few forms compared to some languages which may have thirty or more forms for a single verb.

2.3 Main Body of the Text

2.3.0 Verbs and Its Classification

A word or phrase that describes an action, condition, or experience:

The words "run", "keep", and "feel" are all verbs.

Verbs Classification. We divide verbs into two broad classifications:

2.3.1 Helping Verbs –

Helping verbs have no meaning on their own. They are necessary for the grammatical structure of a sentence, but they do not tell us very much alone. We usually use helping verbs with main verbs. They "help" the main verb (which has the real meaning). There are only about 15 helping verbs in English, and we divide them into two basic groups:

Notes - Helping verbs are also called "auxiliary verbs. Primary helping verbs (3 verbs).These are the verbs be, do, and have.

Note that we can use these three verbs as helping verbs or as main verbs. On this page we talk about them as helping verbs. We use them in the following cases:

• **be**

to make continuous tenses (He is watching TV.)

to make the passive (Small fish are eaten by big fish.)

• **have**

to make perfect tenses (I have finished my homework.)

• **do**

to make negatives (I do not like you.)

to ask questions (Do you want some coffee?)

to show emphasis (I do want you to pass your exam.)

to stand for a main verb in some constructions (He speaks faster than she does.)

Modal helping verbs (10 verbs)

We use modal helping verbs to "modify" the meaning of the main verb in some way. A modal helping verb expresses necessity or possibility, and changes the main verb in that sense. These are the modal verbs:

• **can, could**

• **may, might**

• **will, would**,

• **shall, should**

• **must**

• **ought to**

Here are examples using modal verbs:

• I can't speak Chinese.

• John may arrive late.

• Would you like a cup of coffee?

• You should see a doctor.

• I really must go now.

Semi-modal verbs (3 verbs)

• **need**

• **dare**

• **used to**

Task Write down 10 sentences containing helping verb and main verb and mention the types of verb.

Imagine that A stranger walks into your room and says:

• I can.

• People must.

• The Earth will.

Do you understand anything? Has this person communicated anything to you? Probably not! That's because these verbs are helping verbs and have no meaning on their own. They are necessary for the grammatical structure of the sentence, but they do not tell us very much alone. We usually use helping verbs with main verbs. They "help" the main verb. (The sentences in the above examples are therefore incomplete. They need at least a main verb to complete the, there are only about 15 helping verbs.

2.3.2 Main Verbs

Main verbs have meaning on their own (unlike helping verbs). There are thousands of main verbs, and we can classify them in several ways:

Notes - Main verbs are also called "lexical verbs".

Now imagine that the same stranger walks into your room and says:

• I teach.

• People eat.

• The Earth rotates.

Do you understand something? Has this person communicated something to you? Probably yes! Not a lot, but something. That's because these verbs are main verbs and have meaning on their own. They tell us something. Of course, there are thousands of main verbs. In the following table we see example sentences with helping verbs and main verbs.

Notice that all of these sentences have a main verb. Only some of them have a helping verb.

John likes coffee.

You lied to me.

They are happy.

The children are playing.

We must go now.

I do not want any.

2.3.3 Transitive and intransitive verbs

A transitive verb takes a direct object: Somebody killed the President. An intransitive verb does not have a direct object: He died. Many verbs, like speak, can be transitive or intransitive.

Look at these examples:

a. Transitive:

• I saw an elephant.

• We are watching TV.

• He speaks English.

b. Intransitive:

• He has arrived.

• John goes to school.

2.3.4 Linking verbs

A linking verb does not have much meaning in itself. It "links" the subject to what is said about the subject. Usually, a linking verb shows equality (=) or a change to a different state or place (>). Linking verbs are always intransitive (but not all intransitive verbs are linking verbs).

• Mary is a teacher. (Mary = teacher)

• Tara is beautiful. (Tara = beautiful)

• That sounds interesting. (that = interesting)

• The sky became dark. (the sky > dark)

• The bread has gone bad. (bread > bad)

2.3.5 Dynamic and stative verbs

Some verbs describe action. They are called "dynamic", and can be used with continuous tenses. Other verbs describe state (non-action, a situation). They are called "stative", and cannot normally be used with continuous tenses (though some of them can be used with continuous tenses with change in meaning).

Dynamic verbs (examples):

• hit, explode, fight, run, go

Stative verbs (examples):

• be

• like, love, prefer, wish

• impress, please, surprise

• hear, see, sound

• belong to, consist of, contain, include, need

• appear, resemble, seem

2.3.6 Regular and Irregular Verbs

This is more a question of vocabulary than of grammar. The only real difference between regular and irregular verbs is that they have different endings for their past tense and past participle forms. For

regular verbs, the past tense ending and past participle ending is always the same: . For irregular verbs, the past tense ending and the past participle ending is variable, so it is necessary to learn them by heart.

regular verbs: base, past tense, past participle

• look, looked, looked

• work, worked, worked

irregular verbs: base, past tense, past participle

• buy, bought, bought

• cut, cut, cut

• do, did, done

- **Regular verbs-**

English regular verbs change their form very little (unlike irregular verbs). The past tense and past participle of regular verbs end in – ed, for example: work, worked, worked But you should note the following points:

1 Some verbs can be both regular and irregular, for example: learn, learned, learned learn, learnt, learnt.

2. Some verbs change their meaning depending on whether they are regular or irregular, for example "to hang": regular hang, hanged, hanged to kill or die, by dropping with a rope around the neck irregular hang, hung, hung to fix something (for example, a picture) at the top so that the lower part is free

3. The present tense of some regular verbs is the same as the past tense of some irregular verbs:

regular found, founded, founded

irregular find, found, found

- **Irregular verbs** –

Irregular verbs are an important feature of English. We use irregular verbs a lot when speaking, less when writing. Of course, the most famous English verb of all, the verb "to be", is irregular. What is the difference between regular verbs and irregular verbs? Base Form Past Simple, Past Participle With regular verbs, the rule is simple...

The past simple and past participle finish finished always end in-ed:

stop stopped, stopped

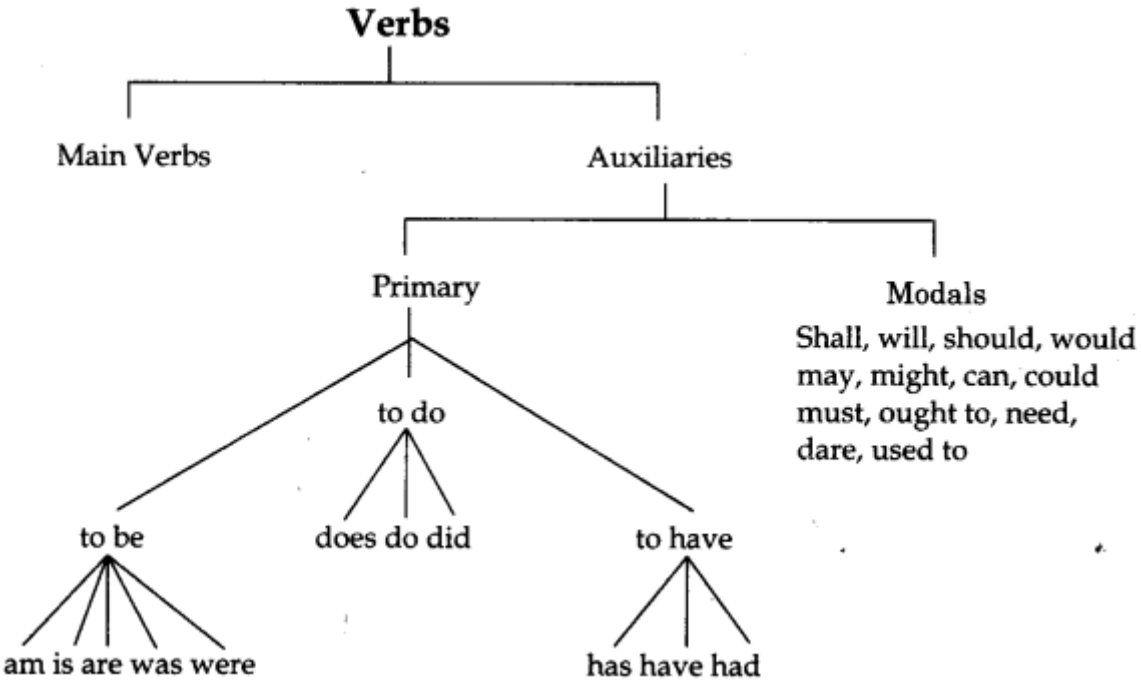
work, worked, worked

But with irregular verbs, there is no rule...

Sometimes the verb changes completely: sing, sang, sung

Sometimes there is "half" a change: buy, bought, bought

Sometimes there is no change: cut, cut, cut.



2.4 Application- Verbs and Tenses

2.4.1 Verbs and Tenses Usage

a. Present Indefinite Tense/ Simple Present -Subject + main verb (V1)

Ram plays cricket. Rita swims.

Negative - Subject + don't/ doesn't main verb (V1)

Ram does not play cricket.

They do not swim.

b. Present Continuous Tense - Subject + (Is/Are) + main verb + ing.

She is staying in London.

Rita is playing.

Negative - Subject + (Is/Are) + not + main verb + ing.

Sita is not staying in London.

They are not playing football.

c. Present Perfect Tense -Subject + auxiliary verb (Has/Have) + past participle (V3)

I have done.

She has played tennis.

Negative - Subject + auxiliary verb (Has/Have) + not + past participle (V3)

I have not done.

She has not played tennis.

d. Present Perfect Continuous Tense - subject + Has/have + auxiliary verb (been) + main verb + ing

I have been doing.

You have been talking too much.

Negative - Subject + Has/have + not + auxiliary verb (been) + main verb + ing

You had not been playing tennis.

It had not been working well.

e. Past Indefinite Tense/ Simple Past - Subject + V2

I sang.

He went to school.

Negative - Subject + did not + V1

He did not come.

They did not speak English.

f. Past Continuous Tense - Subject + auxiliary verb BE (Was/Were) + main verb + ing

I was doing. You were working

Subject + auxiliary verb BE (Was/Were) + not + main verb + ing

I was not doing.

They were not playing football.

g. Past Perfect Tense - Subject + (Had) + past participle (V3)

I had sung.

Ram had finished his work.

Negative- Subject + (Had) + not + past participle (V3)

I had not sung.

Ram had not finished his work.

h. Past Perfect Continuous Tense - Subject + Had + Been + Main verb + ing

I had been doing.

You had been playing tennis.

Negative - Subject +Had + not + Been + Main verb + ing

You had not been playing tennis.

Reema has not been running.

i. Future IndefiniteTense/ Simple Future - subject + auxiliary verb (will) + main verb (V1)

I will do.

Mohan will play cricket.

Negative - Subject + auxiliary verb (will) not + main verb (V1)

She will not play. They will not play

j. Future Continuous Tense - subject + auxiliary verb (will) + auxiliary verb BE + main verb +Ing

I will be doing.

You will be lying on a beach tomorrow.

Negative - subject + auxiliary verb (will) + not + auxiliary verb BE + main verb) + Ing

I will not be doing.

You will not be lying on a beach tomorrow.

k. Future Perfect Tense - Subject +auxiliary verb (will) + auxiliary verb have/ + past participle (V3)

I will have done.

You will have forgotten me by then.

Negative - Subject + (will) + not have + past participle (V3)

I will not have done.

She will not have gone to school.

l. Future Perfect Continuous Tense - Subject + will + have + auxiliary verb been + main verb + Ing

I will have been doing.

You will have been travelling for two days.

Negative - Subject + will + not + have + auxiliary verb been + main verb + Ing

I will not have been doing.

You will not have been travelling for two days.

2.5 Further Main Body of the Text

2.5.0 Adverbs and Its Classification

2.5.1 Adverbs:

An adverb is a word that modifies the meaning of a Verb; an Adjective; another adverb; a Noun or Noun Phrase; Determiner; a Numeral; a Pronoun; or a Prepositional Phrase and can sometimes be used as a Complement of a Preposition.

Adverbs Spelling Notes-

• Adjectives ending-l still take -ly; careful-carefully.

• Adjectives ending-y change to-ily; lucky-luckily.

• Adjectives ending “ble”, change to-bly responsible-responsibly.

2.5.2 Adverbs of Manner-

Adverbs of manner modify a verb to describe the way the action is done.

Example: She did the work carefully.

('Carefully' modifies the verb to describe the way the work was done, as opposed to quickly, carelessly, etc.)

2.5.3 Adverbs of Place or Location-

Adverbs of place show where the action is done.

Example: They live locally.

2.5.4 Adverbs of Time-

Adverbs of time show when an action is done, or the duration or frequency. Example: He did it yesterday. (When)

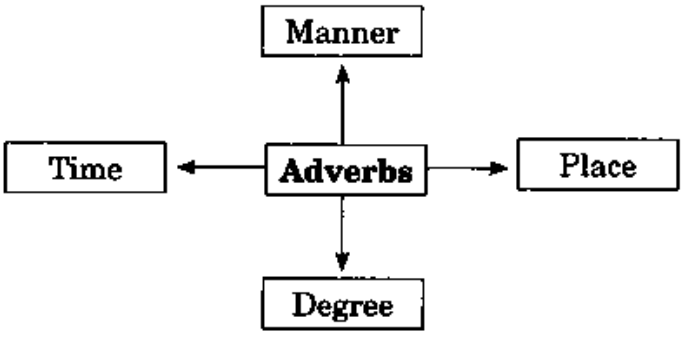
They are permanently busy. (Duration)

She never does it. (Frequency)

2.5.5 Adverbs of Degree-

Adverbs of degree increase or decrease the effect of the verb.

Example: I completely agree with you. (This increases the effect of the verb, whereas 'partially would decrease it.



2.6 Usage of Adverbs

2.6.1 Adverbs Modifying Adjectives-

An adjective can be modified by an adverb, which precedes the adjective, except 'enough' which comes after.

Example: That's really good.

It was a terribly difficult time for all of us. It wasn't good enough. ('Enough' comes after the adjective.)

2.6.2 Adverbs Modifying Adverbs- An adverb can modify another. As with adjectives, the adverb precedes the one it is modifying with 'enough' being the exception again.

Example: She did it really well.

He didn't come last night, funnily enough.

Task How adverb is different with adjective, explain with example.

2.6.3 Adverbs Modifying Nouns-

Adverbs can modify nouns to indicate time or place. Example: The concert tomorrow

Example: The room upstairs

2.6.4 Adverbs Modifying Noun Phrases-

Some adverbs of degree can modify noun phrases.

Example: We had quite a good time.

They're such good friends. Quite; rather; such; what (What a day!) can be used in this way.

2.6.5 Adverbs Modifying Determiners, Pronouns-

Adverbs such as almost; nearly; hardly; about, etc., can be used:

Example: Almost everybody came in the end.

2.7 Check your progress-

a. Do exercises related to verb and adverb-

1. She saw a ghost. (Transitive/Intransitive)
2. My vase dropped and broke into pieces. (Transitive/Intransitive)
3. The deer _____ fighting.
4. The natives of this island _____ a friendly people.
5. A pair of gloves _____ what they have been looking for the whole hour.
6. He was taken _____ in the middle of the night. (bad, badly)
7. My mother works _____ to support the family. (hard, hardly)

8. I carried the statue _____ in both hands. (careful, carefully)

b. **Choose the most suitable adverb from the following to fill in each blank:**

across, anywhere, around, backwards, over

1. In the park, you can go _____ and find a place to sit.

2. We thought it was fun to swim _____ the river.

3. They are there but we are not going _____ to talk to them.

4. There were many people walking _____ in the park.

c. Choose the most suitable adverb from the following to fill in each blank:

always, ever, just, nearly, never, only, slightly, still, unusually, quietly.

1. We hardly_____ see him go to church.

2. My father is _____late for work.

d. Place the adverbs in bracket in the correct position in the sentence.

1. We walked to get there on time. (quickly)

2. The rain had stopped when I arrived. (already)

3.I have finished my exercise book. (nearly).

2.8 Summary

• The verb is king in English. The shortest sentence contains a verb.

• Most adverbs in English are formed by adding -ly to an Adjective. An adverb is a word that modifies the meaning of a Verb; an Adjective; another adverb; a Noun or Noun Phrase; Determiner; a Numeral; a Pronoun; or a Prepositional Phrase and can sometimes be used as a Complement of a Preposition.

2.9 Keywords

Auxiliary verbs: Helping verbs also called ‘Auxiliary verbs.

Lexical verbs: Main verbs also called ‘Lexical verbs.

Ought to: It is a modal helping verb.

Used to: It is semi-modal helping verb and partly like main verb.

Adverb: The word that modifies the meaning of a verb.

2.10 Self- Assessment Questions (SAQs)

– State whether the following statements are true or false:

1. Helping verb is also called ‘lexical verb, why?

2 Difference between Main Verb and Helping Verb?

3. What is adverb? Explain with examples.

4. What is others name of helping verb and main verb?

5. Explain different types of verbs.

2.11 Answers to Check Your Progress-

a. 1. (Transitive verbs – object: ghost)

2. (Intransitive verbs – no object)

3. The deer are fighting.

4. The natives of this island are a friendly people.

5. A pair of gloves is what they have been looking for the whole hour.

6. He was taken bad in the middle of the night

7. My mother works hard to support the family.

8. I carried the statue carefully in both hands.5

b. - Ans. Choose the most suitable adverbs from the following to fill in each blank:

across, anywhere, around, backwards, over .

1. In the park, you can go anywhere and find a place to sit.

2. We thought it was fun to swim across the river.

3. They are there but we are not going over to talk to them.

4. There were many people walking around in the park

c. Ans. Choose the most suitable adverbs from the following to fill in each blank:

always, ever, just, nearly, never, only, quiet, slightly, still, unusually

1. We hardly ever see him go to church.

2. My father is never late for work.

d. Place the adverbs in bracket in the correct position in the sentence answers. 1.We walked quickly to get there on time.

2. The rain had already stopped when I arrived.

3. I have nearly finished my exercise book.

2.12 References / Suggested Readings-

- Books English for Competitive Exams, By DR. R.P. Bhatnagar
- Unique Quintessence of General English, Edited by DR. S. Sen & Others and revised by DR. G.S. Man Sukhmani.
- A Background to the Study of English Literature, D.K. Patnaik, Swastik Publications .
- Online links
    - http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/adverbs.htm
    - http://www.english-language-grammar-guide.com/types-of-verbs.html

Subject: Introduction to Short Story and Basic Grammar	
Course Code- C24ENG101T	Author: Dr. Astha Gupta
Lesson – 3	Editor: Dr. Sandeep Bishnoi

Introduction to Adjectives and Prepositions (Part of Speech)

Structure of Lesson

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Main Body of the Text

3.3.0 Adjectives and Its Classification

3.3.1 Adjectives

3.3.2 Kinds of Adjectives

a. **Proper Adjective**
b. **Descriptive Adjective**
c. **Quantitative Adjective**
d. **Numeral Adjective**
e. **Demonstrative Adjective**
f. **Distributive Adjectives**
g. **Interrogative Adjectives**
h. **Exclamatory Adjectives**
i. **Possessive Adjective**
j. **Emphasising Adjective**

3.3.3 Comparison of Adjectives

3.3.4 Position of Adjectives

3.3.5 Degrees of Adjectives

3.4 Usage of Adjectives

3.4.1 Adjectives subject to subjective measure

3.4.2 Capitalizing Proper Adjectives

3.4.3 Collective Adjectives

3.4.4 Adjectival Opposites

3.5 Further Main Body of the Text

3.5.0 Prepositions and Its Types

3.5.1 Prepositions

3.5.2 Prepositions of Time: at, on, and in

3.5.3 Prepositions of Place: at, on, and in

3.5.4 Prepositions of Location: in, at, and on and No Preposition

3.5.5 Prepositions of Time: for and since

3.6 Preposition and Its Usage

3.6.1 Prepositions with Nouns, Adjectives, and Verbs

3.6.2 Unnecessary Prepositions-

3.6.3 Important Words with Preposition

3.7 Check Your Progress

3.8 Summary

3.9 Keywords

3.10 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

3.11 Answers to check your progress

3.12 Answers to check your progress

3.13 References/ Suggested Readings

3.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

• Explain about parts of speech

• Understand the adjectives

• Use preposition in the sentences.

3.2 Introduction-

Based on their use and functions, words are categorized into several types or parts of speech. The parts of speech explain how a word is used in a sentence. There are eight parts of speech such as Nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, preposition, conjunction and interjection. Adjective and Preposition are the important parts of grammar to qualify noun and pronoun. Adjective is a word, when used with a noun or pronoun add something to the meaning of noun or pronoun.

3.3 Main Body of the Text

3.3.0 Adjectives and Its Classification

3.3.1 Adjectives-

Adjectives are words that describe or modify another person or thing in the sentence. The Articles—a, an, and the—are adjectives. It is a word, when used with a noun or pronoun add something to the meaning of noun or pronoun.

1. She is a good singer.
2. I want some milk.
3. Radha gave me five rupees.
4. This is my book.

3.3.2 Kinds of Adjectives

1. **Proper Adjective**
2. **Descriptive Adjective/Adjective of Quality**
3. **Quantitative Adjective/Adjective of Quality**
4. **Numeral Adjective/ Adjective of Number**
5. **Demonstrative Adjective**
6. **Distributive Adjective**
7. **Interrogative Adjective**
8. **Exclamatory Adjective**

9. Possessive Adjective

10. Emphasizing Adjective

a. Proper Adjective:

These Adjectives are formed from proper Nouns. They always begin with a capital letter. For e.g. Indian Army, I enjoy Italian food.

b. Descriptive Adjective:

These adjectives show the quality or condition of a person or a thing.

Delhi is a big city.

I have a black dog.

She is a beautiful lady.

c. Quantitative Adjective:

These adjectives tell us about the quantity or degree of a thing for eg. Any, all, whole, no, none, some, little, enough, sufficient, full, entire etc.

d. Numeral Adjective:

Adjective of number show how many persons or things are meant, or in what order a person or thing stands. For e.g. one, two, first, second, all, none, some, any, several, sundry, certain, every, either, neither, each etc.

e. Demonstrative Adjective: These adjectives point out which person or thing is meant e.g. this, that, these, those, such some, etc.

f. Distributive Adjectives: These adjectives show that the persons or things are to be taken independently or in separate lots. E.g. each, every, either, neither etc.

g. Interrogative Adjectives: What, which and whose, when, they are used with nouns to ask questions, are called Interrogative adjectives; as,

Whose pen is this?

Which road should we take?

h. Exclamatory Adjectives: These adjectives are used in an exclamatory sense.

What a beautiful garden!

What a piece of art!

i. Possessive Adjective:

My, his, her, your, their, our, are possessive adjectives which indicate possession, when used before a noun to qualify it.

j.Emphasising Adjectives:

These adjectives are used before the noun to emphasize the noun. For e.g. He took his own car. Formation of Adjectives. Many Adjectives are formed from Nouns:

Noun	**Adjective**	**Noun**	**Adjective**
Boy	Boyish	Dirt	Dirty
Care	Careful	Courage	Courageous
Sense	Senseless	Envy	Envious
Silk	Silken	King	Kingly
Gold	Golden	Gift	Gifted
Play	Playful	Storm	Stormy
Hope	Hopeful	Pardon	Pardonable

Some Adjectives are formed from verbs:

Verb	**Adjective**	**Verb**	**Adjective**
Tire	Tireless	Move	Moveable
Talk	Talkative	Cease	Ceaseless

Some Adjectives are formed from other Adjectives:

Adjective	**Adjective**	**Adjective**	**Adjective**
Tragic	Tragical	White	Whitish
Three	Threefold	Black	Blackish
Sick	Sick	Brave	Bravely

3.3.3 Comparison of Adjectives

Comparison of adjective can be shown by changing the forms of adjectives. Look at the following sentences:

1. Radha's mango is sweet.
2. Ram's mango is sweeter than Radha's.
3. Gopal's mango is the sweetest of all.

The Adjective sweet is said to be in positive degree.

The Adjective sweeter is said to be in comparative degree.

The Adjective sweetest is said to be in superlative degree.

Comparative degree is used when comparison is made between two things. Superlative degree is used when more than two things are compared.

Formation of Comparative and superlative:

Positive	**Comparative**	**Superlative**
Clever	Cleverer	Cleverest
Kind	Kinder	Kindest
Young	Younger	Youngest
Great	Greater	Greatest
Fast	Faster	Fastest
Large	Larger	Largest
Busy	Busier	Busiest
Easy	Easier	Easiest
Wealthy	Wealthier	Wealthiest
Beautiful	More beautiful	Most beautiful
Learned	More learned	Most learned
Difficult	More difficult	Most difficult
Good	Better	Best

Bad	Worse	Worst
Much (quantity)	More	Most
Many (Number)	More	Most
Little	Less	Least

Exercises:

Pick out the adjectives in the following sentences, also identify the type of adjective.

1. He is a man of few words.
2. Every student has a book.
3. Alwar is a small city.
4. He gave me ten books.
5. Raman is a good boy.
6. Ankita won second prize.
7. My brother lives in next house.
8. He was absent last week.
9. This boy is stronger than Ravi.
10. I have taught you many things

3.3.4 Position of Adjectives

Adverbs which often seem capable of popping up almost anywhere in a sentence, adjectives nearly always appear immediately before the noun or noun phrase that they modify. Sometimes they appear in a string of adjectives, and when they do, they appear in a set order according to category. When indefinite pronouns—such as something, someone, and anybody— are modified by an adjective, the adjective comes after the pronoun: Anyone capable of doing something horrible to someone nice should be punished.

3.3.5 Degrees of Adjectives:

Adjectives can express degrees of modification:

• Gladys is a rich woman, but Josie is richer than Gladys, and Sadie is the richest woman

in town.

Notes- The degrees of comparison are known as the positive, the comparative, and the superlative.

(Actually, only the comparative and superlative show degrees.) We use the comparative for comparing two things and the superlative for comparing three or more things. Notice that the word than frequently accompanies the comparative and the word the precedes the superlative. The inflected suffixes-Er and-Est suffice to form most comparatives and superlatives, when a two-syllable adjective ends in (happier and happiest); otherwise we use more and most when an adjective has more than one syllable.

Positive, Comparative, Superlative

Rich Richer Richest

Lovely lovelier loveliest

Beautiful, more beautiful, most beautiful

Certain adjectives have irregular forms in the comparative and superlative degrees:

Irregular Comparative and Superlative Forms

good, better, best

bad, worse, worst

Note- Premodifiers with Degrees of Adjectives Both adverbs and adjectives in their comparative and superlative forms can be accompanied by premodifiers, single words and phrases, that intensify the degree.

• We were a lot more careful this time.

• He works a lot less carefully than the other jeweller in town.

• We like his work so much better.

• You'll get your watch back all the faster.

The categories in the following table can be described as follows:

(i) Determiners—articles and other limiters.

(ii) Observation—post determiners and limiter adjectives (e.g., a real hero, a perfect idiot)

3.4 Usage of Adjectives

3.4.1 Adjectives subject to subjective measure

(e.g., beautiful, interesting)

(iii) Size and Shape—adjectives subject to objective measure (e.g., wealthy, large, round)

(iv) Age—adjectives denoting age (e.g., young, old, new, ancient)

(v) Colour—adjectives denoting colour (e.g., red, black, pale)

(vi) Origin—denominal adjectives denoting source of noun (e.g., French, American, Canadian)

(vii) Material—denominal adjectives denoting what something is made of (e.g., woolen, metallic, wooden)

(viii) Qualifier—final limiter, often regarded as part of the noun (e.g., rocking chair, hunting cabin, passenger car, book cover) Determiner Observation Physical Description Origin Material Qualifier Noun .Size Shape Age Colour ,a beautiful old Italian touring car , an expensive antique silver mirror, four gorgeous long- red silk roses, stemmed, her short black hair , our big old English sheep, dog, those square wooden hat boxes that dilapidated little hunting cabin several enormous young American basketball players ,some delicious Thai food.

.3.4.2 Capitalizing Proper Adjectives:

When an adjective owes its origins to a proper noun, it should probably be capitalized. Thus we write about Christian music, French fries, the English Parliament, the Ming Dynasty, a Faulknerian style, democracy. Some periods of time have taken on the status of proper adjectives: the Nixon era, a Renaissance/Romantic/Victorian poet (but a contemporary novelist and medieval writer). Directional and seasonal adjectives are not capitalized unless they’re part of a title: We took the northwest route during the spring thaw. We stayed there until the town’s annual Fall Festival of Small Appliances.

3.4.3 Collective Adjectives

When the definite article is combined with an adjective describing a class or group of people, the resulting phrase can act as a noun: the poor, the rich, the oppressed, the homeless, the lonely, the unlettered, the unwashed, the gathered, the dear departed. The difference between a Collective Noun (which is usually regarded as singular but which can be plural in certain contexts) and a collective adjective is that the latter is always plural and requires a plural verb:

• The rural poor have been ignored by the media.

• The rich of Connecticut are responsible.

• The young at heart are always a joy to be around.

3.4.4 Adjectival Opposites –

The opposite or the negative aspect of an adjective can be formed in a number of ways. One way, of course, is to find an adjective to mean the opposite—an antonym. The opposite of beautiful is ugly, the opposite of tall is short. A thesaurus can help you find an appropriate opposite. Another way to form the opposite of an adjective is with a number of prefixes. The opposite of fortunate is unfortunate, the opposite of prudent is imprudent, the opposite of considerate is inconsiderate, the opposite of honorable is dishonorable, the opposite of alcoholic is non- alcoholic, the opposite of being properly filed is misfiled. If you are not sure of the spelling of adjectives modified in this way by prefixes (or which is the appropriate prefix), you will have to consult a dictionary, as the rules for the selection of a prefix are complex and too shifty to be trusted. The meaning itself can be tricky; for instance, flammable and inflammable mean the same thing.

A third means for creating the opposite of an adjective is to combine it with less or least to create a comparison which points in the opposite direction. He swims well. He knows only too well who the murderer is. However, when using a linking verb or a verb that has to do with the five human senses, you want to use the adjective instead.

• We were annoyed by the elephants.

• We were bored by the ringmaster.

- **Adjectives:** The most common of the so-called a- adjectives are ablaze, afloat, afraid, aghast, alert, alike,

alive, alone, aloof, ashamed, asleep, averse, awake, aware. These adjectives will primarily

show up as predicate adjectives (i.e., they come after a linking verb).

• The children were ashamed.

• The professor remained aloof.

• The trees were ablaze.

Occasionally, however, you will find a- adjectives before the word they modify: the alert patient, the aloof physician. Most of them, when found before the word they modify, are themselves modified: the nearly awake student, the terribly alone scholar. And a- adjectives are sometimes modified by "very much": very much afraid, very much alone, very much ashamed, etc.

3.5 Further Main Body of the Text

3.5.0 Prepositions and Its Types

3.5.1 Prepositions-

a) The dog sat under the table.

b) The book is on the table.

In sentence (a) 'under' join the words 'sat' and 'the table' and shows the relationship between them. Also 'on' join the words 'is' and' the table. Thus, a Preposition is defined as a word that is written before a noun or pronoun, and which shows the relation of the person or thing or quality denoted by that noun or pronoun to something else.

Prepositions: In, out, off, of, up, down, for, at, to, from, by, till, with, within, without, through , above, below, beneath, beside, beyond, between, underneath, across, outside.

Read the following sentences carefully.

a) Come in

b) The biscuits are in the jar.

Here in the first sentence, 'in' gives the information about the verb 'come', so it is an adverb. But in the second sentence 'in' join the words 'are' and 'the jar' and it shows the relationship between them and therefore is –

A preposition describes a relationship between other words in a sentence. In itself, a word like "in" or "after" is rather meaningless and hard to define in mere words.

Notes- When you do try to define a preposition like "in" or "between" or "on," you invariably use your hands to show how something is situated in relationship to something else.

Prepositions are nearly always combined with other words in structures called preposition phrases. Prepositional phrases can be made up of a million different words, but they tend to be built the same: a

preposition followed by a determiner and an adjective or two, followed by a pronoun or noun (called the object of the preposition). This whole phrase, in turn, takes on a modifying role, acting as an adjective or an adverb, locating something in time and space, modifying a noun, or telling when or where or under what conditions something happened. Is it any wonder that prepositions create such troubles for students for whom English is a second language? We say we are at the hospital to visit a friend who is in the hospital. We lie in bed but on the couch. We watch a film at the theatre but on television. For native speakers, these little words present little difficulty, but try to learn another language, any other language, and you will quickly discover that prepositions are troublesome wherever you live and learn.

3.5.2 Prepositions of Time: at, on, and in

We use at to designate specific times.

The train is due at 12:15 p.m.

We use on to designate days and dates.

My brother is coming on Monday.

We're having a party on the Fourth of July.

We use in for nonspecific times during a day, a month, a season, or a year.

She likes to jog in the morning.

It's too cold in winter to run outside.

He started the job in 1971.

He's going to quit in August.

3.5.3 Prepositions of Place: at, on, and in

We use at for specific addresses.

We use on to designate names of streets, avenues, etc.

Her house is on Tughlaq Road.

And we use in for the names of land-areas (towns, counties, states, countries, and continents).

She lives in Durham.

Durham is in Windham County.

Windham County is in Connecticut.

3.5.4 Prepositions of Location: in, at, and on and No Preposition

The bedroom home, the ceiling downstairs, the car, the library, the floor downtown, the class, the office, the horse inside.

The library, school*, the plane, outside, school, work, the train upstairs, uptown

* You may sometimes use different prepositions for these locations. Prepositions of Movement: to and No Preposition like use to, in order to, express movement toward a place. They were driving to work together. She's going to the dentist's office this morning. toward and towards are also helpful prepositions to express movement. These are simply variant spellings of the same word; use whichever sounds better to you. We're moving toward the light. This is a big step towards the project's completion. With the words home, downtown, uptown, inside, outside, downstairs, upstairs, we use no preposition.

Grandma went upstairs

Grandpa went home.

They both went outside.

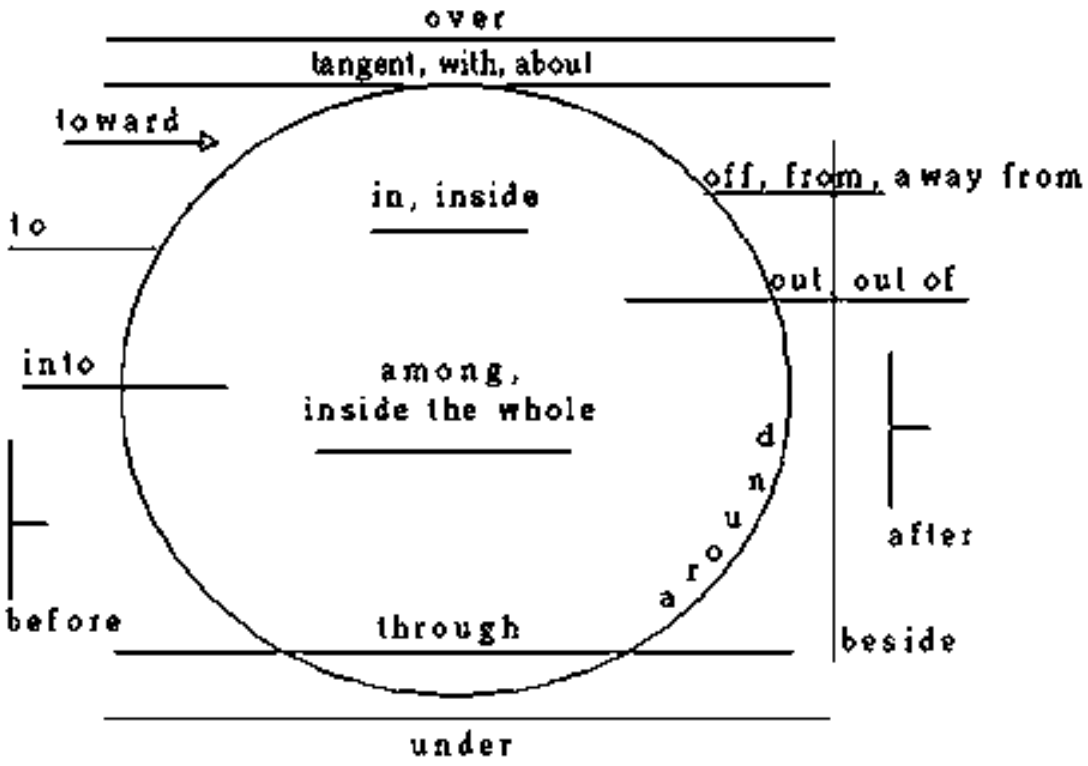
3.5.5 Prepositions of Time: for and since

We use for when we measure time (seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years).

He held his breath for seven minutes.

She's lived there for seven years.

The British and Irish have been quarrelling for seven centuries.



3.6 Prepositions and Its Usage

3.6.1 Prepositions with Nouns, Adjectives, and Verbs-

Prepositions are sometimes so firmly wedded to other words that they have practically become one word. This occurs in three categories: nouns, adjectives, and verbs.

Summary - Nouns and Prepositions, approval of fondness for need for ,awareness of grasp of participation in, belief in hatred of reason for, concern for hope for respect for confusion about interest in success, in desire for love of understanding of Adjectives and Prepositions, afraid of fond of proud of angry at happy about similar to aware of interested in sorry for capable of jealous of sure of careless about made of tired of familiar with married to worried about Verbs and Prepositions apologize for give up prepare for ask about grow up study for ask for look for talk about belong to look forward to think about bring up look up trust in care for makeup work for C GT.;/A combination of verb and preposition is called a phrasal verb. The word that is joined to the verb is then called a particle. Please refer to the brief section we have prepared on phrasal verbs for an explanation. Idiomatic Expressions with Prepositions.

• agree to a proposal, with a person, on a price, in principle

• argue about a matter, with a person, for or against a proposition

• compare to to show likenesses, with to show differences (sometimes similarities)

• correspond to a thing, with a person

• differ from an unlike thing, with a person

• live at an address, in a house or city, on a street, with other people

3.6.2 Unnecessary Prepositions

In everyday speech, we fall into some bad habits, using prepositions where they are not necessary. It would be a good idea to eliminate these words altogether, but we must be especially careful not to use them in formal, academic prose.

• The book fell off of the desk.

• He threw the book out of the window.

• She wouldn't let the cat inside of the house. [or use "in"]

• Where did they go to?

• Put the lamp in back of the couch. [use "behind" instead]

• Where is your college at?

Prepositions in Parallel Form When two words or phrases are used in parallel and require the same preposition to be idiomatically correct, the preposition does not have to be used twice. The female was both attracted by and distracted by the male's dance. Did u know? However, when the idiomatic use of phrases calls for different prepositions, we must be careful not to omit one of them. The children were interested in and disgusted by the movie. It was clear that this player could both contribute to and learn from every game he played. He was fascinated by and enamored of this beguiling woman.

3.6.3 Important Words with Preposition

abhorrence of

abound with

abounding in

absolve from

abundant with /on

accord with

acquiesce in

acquit of

adapted for (by nature)

adapted to (purpose)

admit of

affinity between

afflict with

agree on (a matter or point)

agree to (a proposal)

agree with (a person, statement, opinion)

aggravate by

alien to

amenable to

angry at / about a thing

angry with a person (or at to stress the anger itself)

associated with

averse to/ from

begin by doing something

begin from a point

begin with an act

benefits of the benefactor

benefits to the beneficiary

bestow upon

bored with or by (not of)

capable of

capacity for

Centre on

change for (a thing)

change with (a person)

chary of

cognizant of

compare to (to show similarities)

compare with (to note points of difference)

compatible with

comply with

under the conditions

confer on (to bestow upon)

confer with

confide in (trust in)

confide to (entrust to)

conform to

in conformity with

congratulate on

connive at

consequent upon

content oneself with

content others by

contrast (v.) with

contrast (n.) to or with

convenient for (purpose)

convenient to (person)

conversant with

correspond to (a thing; resemble)

correspond with (a person)

deficient in

derogatory to

die for (a cause)

die of (an illness)

differ from (be different)

differ with (disagree)

different from

disappointed of (what we cannot have)

disappointed in (what we have)

dissent from (not to)

distaste for

embark money in

embark on a ship, career

essential to

exception to (a rule, statement)

exempt from

forbid to do

free from or of

glad at (a piece of news)

glad of (a possession)

guiltless of

identical with

impatient of (things)

impatient with (persons)

impervious to

immune from an obligation

immune to a disease

incidental to

inculcate upon someone (not with)

independent of

indicative of

ineligible for

infected with

infested with

inflict upon

influence over/ with (a person)

influence on /upon/ in (persons or things)

infuse into someone

(take the) initiative in

(on one's own) initiative

insensible to

insight into

inspired by

instill into

invest in a business

invest with an office

involve in

irrespective of

join in a game

join with a person or thing

labor at a task

labour for a person, an end

labour in a cause

labour under disadvantages

live by labour

live for riches

martyr for (a cause)

martyr to (a disease, etc.)

at a moment's notice

on the spur of the moment

negligent of (noun)

oblivious of (not to)

parallel with or to

part from (persons)

part with (things)

perpendicular to

point at a thing

point to a fact

possessed of wealth

possessed with an idea

prefer one to the other

preferable to

preference for

prevail against (things)

prevail upon (persons)

provide (someone) with (something)

profuse in

profusion of

provide against ill luck

provide for an emergency

pursuant to

in pursuance of

recommend that she do (not “recommend her to do”)

reconcile to (thing)

reconcile with (person)

regard as

with reference to

regard for a person

with regard to a subject

relevant to

bring relief to suffering

replace with (but “is replaced by “)

report on or to (not into)

resentful of

responsible for (something)

responsible to (someone)

result from an event

result in a failure

the result of an investigation

find satisfaction in an improvement

the satisfaction of knowing

give satisfaction to a person

satisfied of (fact)

satisfied with (things)

secure against attack

secure from harm

secure in a position

sensitive to

substitute for

suggest that he do (not “suggest him to do”)

susceptible to

taste for (art, etc.)

taste of (food)

thirst for/after (knowledge)

unconscious of (not to)

at variance on topics

at variance with a person

3.7 Check your progress

Fill in the blanks using correct Adjective:

1. Of the two sisters, Susie is the ……

Older oldest

2. Mumbai is ……. from Kochi than Bangalore.

Further farther

3. She could become an actor or a model – she chose the …….. option.

Later latter

4. She is still on good terms with her ……. boyfriend.

Former then

5. I cannot walk any ……farther/further

2. Fill in the blanks with an appropriate preposition.

(1). The child ran …….. the road.

Over across above

2. The news from ……. the borders is quite disquieting.

Along across over

3. I got up early ……the morning.

on in at

4. He accused me ……. stealing his money.

About for of

5. I am afraid …… spiders.

About of at

6. Do you agree …… his decision to quit?

About with to

3.8 Summary

• Adjectives are words that describe or modify another person or thing in the sentence.

• If a group of words containing a subject and verb acts as an adjective, it is called an Adjective Clause.

• The most common of the so-called a- adjectives are ablaze, afloat, afraid, aghast, alert, alike, alive, alone, aloof, ashamed, asleep, averse, awake, aware.

• A combination of verb and preposition is called a phrasal verb.

3.9 Keywords

Articles: A, An, and The are the articles.

Degrees: Used to compare the adjectives.

Comparative: Used for comparing two things.

Superlative: Used for comparing three or more things.

Determiners: Articles and other limiters.

Qualifiers: Find limiter, often regarded as part of the noun.

A-Adjectives: The words ablaze, afloat, afraid, aghast, alert, alike, alive, alone, asleep etc.

3.10 Self- Assessment Test

Fill in the blanks:

1. Adjectives have ..... types of degrees.

2. Biggest is the ..... degree.

3. The word ..... comes after comparative degree.

4. Prepositions describes a ..... between other words in a sentence.

1. Write down all parts of speech and explain.
2. Define adjectives and explain with examples
3. What is preposition and how it is used?

3.11 Answers: Self -Assessment

1. three 2. superlative

3. than 4. relationship

3.12 Answers to check your progress

Adjectives-

1. Of the two sisters, Susie is the older.

2. Mumbai is farther from Kochi than Bangalore.

3. She was happy when she got the job but two weeks later she was fired.

4. She is still on good terms with her former boyfriend.

5. I cannot walk any farther / further.

Prepositions-

1. The child ran across the road.

2. The news from across the borders is quite disquieting.

3. I got up early in the morning.

4. He accused me of stealing his money.

5. I am afraid of spiders.

6. Do you agree with his decision to quit?

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Introduction to Interjections and Conjunctions

Structure of Lesson

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Main Body of the Text

4.3.0 Interjections

4.3.1 Meaning and Definition of Interjection

4.3.2 Characteristics of Interjections

4.3.3 Kinds of Interjections

4.3.4 Interjectional Phrases

4.3.5 Punctuation of Interjections

4.3.6 "O" and "Oh"

4.4 Usage of Interjections

4.4.1 Interjection or Another Part of Speech?

4.4.2 Interjections in Speech and Writing

4.4.3 Interjections in Direct and Indirect Speech

4.4.4 Common Errors in the Use of Interjections

4.4.5 Exercises: Interjections

4.5 Further Main Body of the Text

4.5.0 Conjunctions and Its Types

4.5.1 Conjunctions

4.5.2. Conjunctions: Its Types

a) Coordinating Conjunctions

b) Subordinating Conjunctions

4.5.3 Coordinating Conjunctions

• and, but, or, yet, for, nor, so

4.5.4 Subordinating clause

after, before, since—

4.5.5 Common Subordinating Conjunctions

4.6 Usage of Conjunctions

4.6.1 Correlative Conjunctions

4.6.2 Conjunctive Adverbs

4.6.3 Other Conjunctions

4.6.4 Omitting That

4.7 Check Your Progress

4.8 Summary

4.9 Keywords

4.10 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

4.11 Answers to Check your Progress

4.12 References/ Suggested Readings

4.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

• Define interjections and use them correctly in speech and writing

• Use of conjunctions

• Write sentences using conjunctions.

4.2 Introduction. An interjection is a word or a short group of words that expresses a sudden and strong feeling such as joy, sorrow, surprise, anger, approval or pain. It is one of the eight parts of speech. Words like Hurrah!, Alas!, Wow! and Ouch! show the feeling of the speaker at the moment of speaking. An interjection stands apart from the rest of the sentence and has no grammatical connection with the other words in it. In this lesson you will study interjections, their kinds, their punctuation and their use in speech and writing. You will also study conjunctions, the words that join words, phrases and clauses.

Conjunctions The simple, little conjunctions are called coordinating conjunctions (you can click on the words to see specific descriptions of each one Coordinating Conjunctions• and, but, or, yet, for, nor, so

(It may help you remember these conjunctions by recalling that they all have fewer than four letters. Also, remember the acronym FANBOYS: For-And-Nor-But-Or-Yet-So. Be careful of the words then and now; neither is a coordinating conjunction, so what we say about coordinating conjunctions' roles in a sentence and punctuation does not apply to those two words). When a coordinating conjunction connects two independent clauses, it is often (but not always) accompanied by a comma:

4.3 Main Body of the Text

4.3.0 Interjections

4.3.1 Meaning and Definition of Interjection

The word interjection comes from two Latin words meaning "to throw in between". An interjection is thrown into speech or writing to show what the speaker feels at that moment. It may show joy, sorrow, surprise, approval, anger, disgust, pain or fear.

Definition: An interjection is a word (or a short group of words) that expresses a sudden feeling or emotion of the mind.

Read the following sentences:

Hurrah! We have won the match.

Alas! The old man is dead.

Wow! What a beautiful place this is!

Ouch! That hurts.

In each sentence the first word (Hurrah, Alas, Wow, Ouch) tells us what the speaker feels. It is not joined grammatically to any other word. If we remove the interjection, the rest of the sentence is still complete in grammar. This is the most important thing to remember about interjections.

4.3.2 Characteristics of Interjections

The main characteristics of an interjection are given below.

a. An interjection expresses feeling; it does not name a person, place or thing, and it does not tell us about an action.

b. It has no grammatical connection with the rest of the sentence. It does not join, modify or govern any other word.

c. It does not change its form. It has no plural, no tense and no degrees of comparison.

d. It is used mostly in conversation, in the dialogue of stories and plays, in informal letters and in speeches. It is rarely used in formal writing such as reports and applications.

e. It may be a single word (Alas!), a group of words (Good heavens!) or even a natural sound (Ouch!, Hmm!).

4.3.3 Kinds of Interjections

Interjections are usually classified according to the feeling they express. The chief kinds are given below, with examples.

a. Joy or delight: Hurrah!, Hurray!, Wow!

Hurrah! Our team has won the cup.

b. Sorrow or grief: Alas!, Oh dear!

Alas! The poor man has lost everything.

c. Surprise or wonder: Oh!, Ah!, What!

What! You have passed in the first division?

d. Approval or applause: Bravo!, Well done!

Bravo! You have played a fine innings.

e. Contempt or disgust: Fie!, Ugh!, Pooh!

Fie! You should be ashamed of telling a lie.

f. Attention or calling: Hey!, Hello!, Listen!

Hey! Wait for me.

g. Greeting or farewell: Hello!, Hi!, Goodbye!, Welcome!

Welcome! Please come in.

h. Sudden pain: Ouch!, Ow!

Ouch! I have burnt my finger.

i. Fear or alarm: Help!, Beware!, Oh no!

Help! The house is on fire.

j. Relief: Phew!, Whew!

Phew! That was a narrow escape.

k. A request for silence: Hush!, Shh!, Silence!

Hush! The baby is asleep.

l. Hesitation or doubt: Hmm!, Um!, Er!

Hmm! I am not sure about the answer.

m. Mistake or embarrassment: Oops!

Oops! I have dropped the glass.

4.3.4 Interjectional Phrases

Sometimes a group of words does the work of a single interjection. Such a group is called an interjectional phrase. Common interjectional phrases are Good heavens!, My goodness!, Good gracious!, Dear me!, Thank goodness! and Well done! Read the following sentences:

Good heavens! I have left my wallet at home.

Thank goodness! The rain has stopped.

Dear me! How tired you look.

My goodness! What a huge crowd!

4.3.5 Punctuation of Interjections

An interjection is usually followed by an exclamation mark (!). When the feeling is strong, the exclamation mark is placed after the interjection, and the sentence that follows begins with a capital letter. When the feeling is mild, or when the interjection is closely tied to the sentence, a comma is placed after it, and the exclamation mark (if needed) comes at the end of the sentence. Compare the following:

Alas! The poor man is dead. (strong feeling – exclamation mark, then a capital letter)

Oh, what a lovely garden! (mild feeling – comma, then a small letter)

Well, I think you are right. (mild feeling – comma)

He was, alas, too late to save his friend. (interjection inside a sentence – commas on both sides)

Some interjections are questions in tone. They are followed by a question mark, as in "Eh? What did you say?"

4.3.6 "O" and "Oh"

Students often confuse "O" and "Oh". "O" is used before a noun to address a person or a thing (this use is called the vocative). It is written with a capital letter and is not followed by a comma or an exclamation mark. "Oh" expresses a feeling and is followed by an exclamation mark or a comma. Compare:

O Lord, forgive us our mistakes. ("O" is used in addressing)

Oh! What a surprise! ("Oh" shows surprise)

Oh, I am sorry. ("Oh" shows regret)

Exercises: Interjections

Pick out the interjection in each of the following sentences as in the example.

Hurrah! We have won the match. – Hurrah

1. Alas! The poor beggar is dead.

2. Oh, what a lovely painting!

3. Ouch! I have cut my finger.

4. Hush! The baby is sleeping.

5. Bravo! You have done very well.

Answers:

1. Alas 2. Oh 3. Ouch 4. Hush 5. Bravo

4.4 Usage of Interjections

4.4.1 Interjection or Another Part of Speech?

Some words that are used as interjections are also used as other parts of speech. The part of speech of a word is decided by the work that the word does in the sentence. If the word expresses a feeling and stands apart from the rest of the sentence, it is an interjection. Compare:

Well! That is a surprise. (interjection)

He plays the guitar well. (adverb)

Silence! The court is in session. (noun used as an interjection)

The silence was broken by a loud cry. (noun)

Good! You have finished your work. (adjective used as an interjection)

She is a good teacher. (adjective)

4.4.2 Interjections in Speech and Writing

In speech, interjections and the tone of the voice together show the speaker's feeling directly. In writing, interjections are used mostly in the dialogue of stories and plays, in informal letters, personal e-mails and text messages, and in speeches. In formal writing such as essays, reports and applications, interjections should be avoided. A writer should show feeling through well-chosen words instead. Compare the following:

Informal: Wow! That was a great performance, Meena.

Formal: The performance was excellent.

4.4.3 Interjections in Direct and Indirect Speech

In direct speech the interjection is kept inside the quotation marks. In indirect speech the interjection is dropped. The feeling is shown instead by the reporting verb or phrase, such as exclaimed with joy,

exclaimed with sorrow or applauded, and the exclamatory sentence is changed into a statement joined by the conjunction that. The pronouns and tenses are changed according to the usual rules (you will study these rules in Lesson 6). Read the following examples:

Direct: He said, "Hurrah! We have won the match."

Indirect: He exclaimed with joy that they had won the match.

Direct: She said, "Alas! I am ruined."

Indirect: She exclaimed with sorrow that she was ruined.

Direct: The coach said to the player, "Bravo! You have played well."

Indirect: The coach applauded the player, saying that he had played well.

The following table shows the reporting phrases that are commonly used for different interjections.

Interjection	**Feeling**	**Reporting phrase in indirect speech**
Hurrah!	Joy	exclaimed with joy
Alas!	Sorrow	exclaimed with sorrow
Oh! / What!	Surprise	exclaimed with surprise
Bravo! / Well done!	Approval	applauded
Ugh!	Disgust	exclaimed with disgust
Fie!	Contempt	exclaimed with contempt
Ouch!	Pain	cried out in pain
Phew!	Relief	exclaimed with relief

4.4.4 Common Errors in the Use of Interjections

a. Using a full stop instead of an exclamation mark. Wrong: Alas. He is dead. Correct: Alas! He is dead.

b. Beginning the next sentence with a small letter after an exclamation mark. Wrong: Hurrah! we have won. Correct: Hurrah! We have won.

c. Using many exclamation marks together. Wrong: Wow!!! Great!!! Correct: Wow! Great! One exclamation mark is enough for each interjection.

d. Confusing "O" and "Oh". Wrong: Oh Lord, save us. Correct: O Lord, save us.

e. Using too many interjections in formal writing. Interjections should be used sparingly, and only where the feeling is real.

Note: Hurrah, Hurray and Hooray are all accepted spellings of the same interjection.

4.4.5 Exercises: Interjections

Exercise A: Fill in the blanks with a suitable interjection from the box. Use each word once.

Hurrah, Alas, Bravo, Ugh, Phew, Hello

1. _____! I have passed the examination.

2. _____! All my savings have been lost.

3. _____! This milk has turned sour.

4. _____! That was a narrow escape; the car missed me by an inch.

5. _____! What a brilliant performance. You deserve a prize.

6. _____, is that Rohan speaking?

Answers:

1. Hurrah 2. Alas 3. Ugh 4. Phew 5. Bravo 6. Hello

Exercise B: Change the following sentences into indirect speech.

1. He said, "Alas! I am ruined."

2. She said, "Hurrah! I have won the prize."

3. The teacher said to the boy, "Bravo! You have done well."

Answers:

1. He exclaimed with sorrow that he was ruined.

2. She exclaimed with joy that she had won the prize.

3. The teacher applauded the boy, saying that he had done well.

Exercise C: Punctuate the following sentences correctly.

1. oh what a lovely garden

2. alas the poor man is dead

3. hush the baby is sleeping

Answers:

1. Oh, what a lovely garden!

2. Alas! The poor man is dead.

3. Hush! The baby is sleeping.

4.5 Further Main Body of the Text

4.5.0 Conjunctions and Its Types

4.5.1 Conjunctions

Some words are satisfied spending an evening at home, alone, eating ice-cream right out of the box, watching Seinfeld re-runs on TV, or reading a good book. Others aren't happy unless they're out on the town, mixing it up with other words; they're joiners and they just can't help themselves. A conjunction is a joiner, a word that connects (conjoins) parts of a sentence. In sentence a), 'and' join the two words. In sentence b), 'but' join the two sentences. Thus, Conjunction is a word which merely joins together two sentences or two words. Conjunctions: and, or, if, that, but, where, or, also, still, since, only, after, before, because, as, neither, nor, either, or, not only, but also

4.5.2. Conjunction: Its Type

a) Coordinating Conjunctions

b) Subordinating Conjunctions

Read the following sentences carefully.

i) I waited on the station but the train did not arrive.

ii) Since you asked, I am going to tell you the story**.**

Here in the first sentence, 'I waited on the station' and 'the train did not arrive' are two independent clauses; joined by the conjunction 'but'. They can stand as the sentences of complete meaning if separated, by removing the joining conjunction. They are called main/ principal clauses. Thus, conjunctions which join together the two or more independent clauses are called

4.5.3 Coordinating Conjunctions. The simple, little conjunctions are called coordinating conjunctions (you can click on the words to see specific descriptions of each one): In the second sentence, 'since' is conjunction and 'since you asked 'and 'I am going to tell you the story.' are the two clauses. Second clause can stand on its own as an independent sentence and it is the main clause. However, the first clause depends on the second clause for its complete meaning.

Coordinating Conjunctions

• and, but, or, yet, for, nor, so

(It may help you remember these conjunctions by recalling that they all have fewer than four letters. Also, remember the acronym FANBOYS: For-And-Nor-But-Or-Yet-So. Be careful of the words then and now; neither is a coordinating conjunction, so what we say about coordinating conjunctions' roles in a sentence and punctuation does not apply to those two words).

When a coordinating conjunction connects two independent clauses, it is often (but not always) accompanied by a comma:

• Ulysses wants to play for UConn, but he has had trouble meeting the academic requirements.

When the two independent clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction are nicely balanced or brief, many writers will omit the comma:

• Ulysses has a great jump shot but he isn't quick on his feet.

The comma is always correct when used to separate two independent clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction.

A comma is also correct when and is used to attach the last item of a serial list, although many writers (especially in newspapers) will omit that final comma:

• Ulysses spent his summer studying basic math, writing, and reading comprehension.

When a coordinating conjunction is used to connect all the elements in a series, a comma is not used:

• Presbyterians and Methodists and Baptists are the prevalent Protestant congregations in Oklahoma.

A comma is also used with but when expressing a contrast:

AND

(a) To suggest that one idea is chronologically sequential to another: Tashonda sent in her applications and waited by the phone for a response."

(b) To suggest that one idea is the result of another: "Willie heard the weather report and promptly boarded up his house."

(c) To suggest that one idea is in contrast to another (frequently replaced by but in this usage): "Juanita is brilliant and Shalimar has a pleasant personality.

(d) To suggest an element of surprise (sometimes replaced by yet in this usage): "Hartford is a rich city and suffers from many symptoms of urban blight."

(e) To suggest that one clause is dependent upon another, conditionally (usually the first clause is an imperative): "Use your credit cards frequently and you'll soon find yourself deep in debt." (f) To suggest a kind of "comment" on the first clause: "Charlie became addicted to gambling — and that surprised no one who knew him."

BUT

(a) To suggest a contrast that is unexpected in light of the first clause: "Joey lost a fortune in the stock market, but he still seems able to live quite comfortably."

(b) To suggest in an affirmative sense what the first part of the sentence implied in a negative way (sometimes replaced by on the contrary): "The club never invested foolishly, but used the services of a sage investment counsellor."

(c) To connect two ideas with the meaning of "with the exception of" (and then the second word takes over as subject): "Everybody but Golden breath is trying out for the team."

OR

(a) To suggest that only one possibility can be realized, excluding one or the other: "You can study hard for this exam or you can fail."

(b) To suggest the inclusive combination of alternatives: "We can broil chicken on the grill tonight, or we can just eat leftovers.

(c) To suggest a refinement of the first clause: "Smith College is the premier all-women's college in the country, or so it seems to most Smith College alumnae**."**

(d) To suggest a restatement or "correction" of the first part of the sentence: "There are no rattlesnakes in this canyon, or so our guide tells us."

(e) To suggest a negative condition: "The New Hampshire state motto is the rather grim "Live free or die."

(f) To suggest a negative alternative without the use of an imperative

(g) "They must approve his political style or they wouldn't keep electing him mayor."

4.5.4 Subordinating clause.

subordinating conjunction and the clause 'since you asked' is, Thus, conjunctions which join one or more dependent or subordinate clauses to the independent or main clause are called subordinating conjunctions.

1.The sentence in which two or more principal or main clauses are joined together by the coordinating conjunctions is called Compound sentence.

ii) The sentence in which one or more subordinate clauses are joined to the principal or main clause, by the subordinating conjunctions, is called Complex sentence.

iii) The sentence made of only one clause, one subject and one predicate with one verb,) is called simple sentence. Notice that some of the subordinating conjunctions in the table below—4 are also prepositions, but as subordinators they are being used to introduce a clause and to

subordinate the following clause to the independent element in the sentence.

as though rather than whenever

because since where

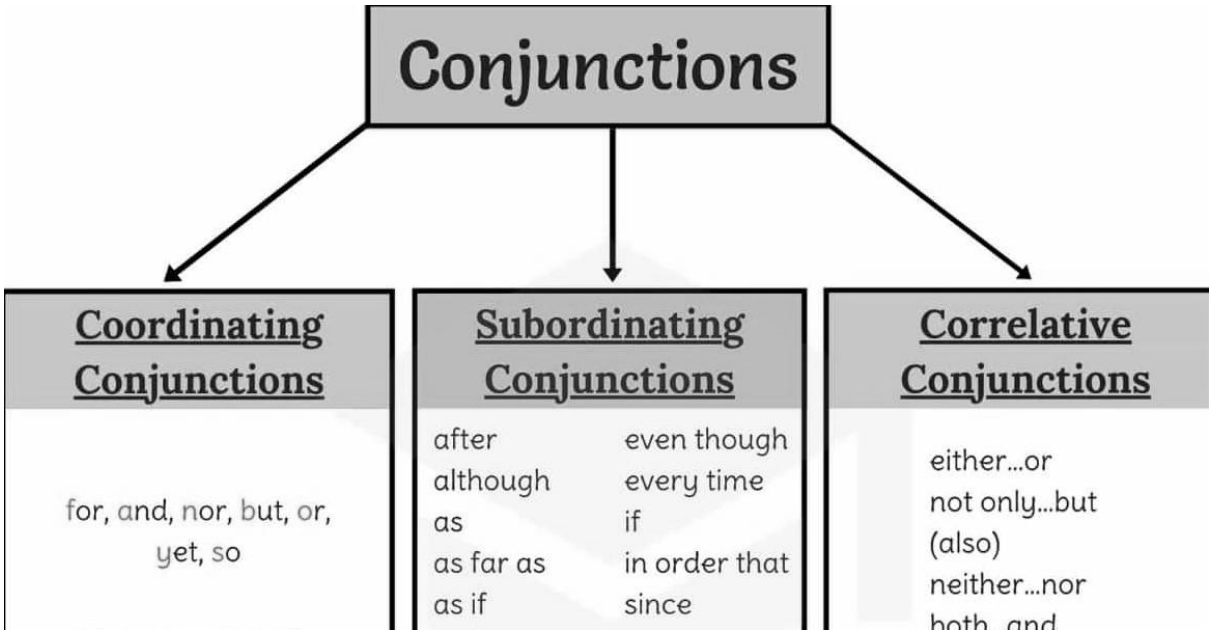
before so that whereas

even if than wherever

even though that while

4.5.5 Common Subordinating Conjunctions

Strictly speaking, the word like is a preposition, not a conjunction. It can, therefore, be used to introduce a prepositional phrase ("My brother is tall like my father"), but it should not be used to introduce a clause ("My brother can't play the piano as he did before the accident" or "It looks like as if basketball is quickly overtaking baseball as America's national sport.").



4.6 Usage of Conjunctions

4.6.1 Correlative Conjunctions:

Some conjunctions combine with other words to form what are called correlative conjunctions. They always travel in pairs, joining various sentence elements that should be treated as grammatically equal.

• She led the team not only in statistics but also by virtue of her enthusiasm.

• Polonius said, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be."

• Whether you win this race or lose it doesn't matter as long as you do your best.

Correlative conjunctions sometimes create problems in parallel form.

both . . . and neither . . . nor

not only . . . but also whether . . . or

not . . . but as . . . as

either . . . or

4.6.2 Conjunctive Adverbs

The conjunctive adverbs such as however, moreover, nevertheless, consequently, as a result are used to create complex relationships between ideas.

4.6.3 Other Conjunctions

The conjunction NOR is not extinct, but it is not used nearly as often as the other conjunctions, so it might feel a bit odd when nor does come up in conversation or writing. Its most common use is as the little brother in the correlative pair, neither-nor.

• He is neither sane nor brilliant.

• That is neither what I said nor what I meant. It can be used with other negative expressions:

• That is not what I meant to say, nor should you interpret my statement as an admission of guilt. It is possible to use nor without a preceding negative element, but it is unusual and, to an extent, rather stuffy: Be careful of the conjunction SO. Sometimes it can connect two independent clauses along with a comma, but sometimes it can't. For instance, in this sentence,

• Soto is not the only Olympic athlete in his family, so are his brother, sister, and his Uncle Chet. where the word so means "as well" or "in addition," most careful writers would use a semicolon between the two independent clauses. In the following sentence, where so is acting like a minor-league "therefore," the conjunction and the comma are adequate to the task:

• Soto has always been nervous in large gatherings, so it is no surprise that he avoids crowds of his adoring fans**.**

4.6.4 Omitting That

The word that is used as a conjunction to connect a subordinate clause to a preceding verb. In this construction that is sometimes called the "expletive that." Indeed, the word is often omitted to good effect, but the very fact of easy omission causes some editors to take out the red pen and strike out the conjunction that wherever it appears. In the following sentences, we can happily omit the that (or keep it, depending on how the sentence sounds to us):

• Isabel knew [that] she was about to be fired.

• She definitely felt [that] her fellow employees hadn't supported her.

• I hope [that] she doesn't blame me.

4.7 Check your progress-

Fill in the blanks using appropriate interjections and conjunctions

1. _____! We have won the match. (Hurrah, Alas, Ugh)

2. _____! The poor man has lost his job. (Bravo, Alas, Hurrah)

3. _____! You have topped the university. (Bravo, Ugh, Hush)

4. _____! I have burnt my hand. (Ouch, Hurrah, Bravo)

5. _____! The baby is fast asleep. (Hush, Hurrah, Alas)

6. This is the place _____ we stayed last time we visited. (where, when, how)

7. _____ you win first place, you will receive a prize. (wherever, if, unless)

8. You won't pass the test _____ you study. (when, if, unless)

9. She is _____ intelligent _____ hardworking. (not only / but also, either / or, as / as)

10. You can _____ stay here _____ come with us. (both / and, either / or, neither / nor)

4.8 Summary

• An interjection is a word or a short group of words that expresses a sudden strong feeling such as joy, sorrow, surprise, approval, disgust or pain.

• An interjection has no grammatical connection with the rest of the sentence and does not change its form.

• Interjections are classified by the feeling they express: joy (Hurrah!), sorrow (Alas!), surprise (Oh!), approval (Bravo!), disgust (Ugh!), pain (Ouch!), relief (Phew!) and so on.

• An interjection is followed by an exclamation mark or a comma. "O" is used in addressing and "Oh" is used to express feeling.

• In indirect speech the interjection is dropped, and the feeling is shown by the reporting verb, as in "exclaimed with joy that …".

• Some words are satisfied spending an evening at home, alone, eating ice-cream right out of the box, watching Seinfeld re-runs on TV, or reading a good book. Others aren't happy unless they're out on the

town, mixing it up with other words; they're joiners and they just can't help themselves. A conjunction is a joiner, a word that connects (conjoins) parts of a sentence.

• Some conjunctions combine with other words to form what are called correlative conjunctions.

• The conjunctive adverbs such as however, moreover, nevertheless, consequently, as a result are used to create complex relationships between ideas.

4.9 Keywords

Interjection: A word or phrase that expresses a sudden strong feeling.

Conjunction: A word that connects parts of a sentence.

Yet: It is coordinating conjunction.

Exclamation mark: The punctuation mark (!) that is usually placed after an interjection.

4.10 Self- Assessment Questions (SAQs)

Questions 1 to 3: State whether the following statements are true or false. Answer Questions 4 and 5 in your notebook.

1. An interjection is grammatically connected with the other words in a sentence.

2. The word "Alas" expresses sorrow.

3. "O" and "Oh" are used in the same way.

4. Write down ten interjections and use each one in a sentence.

5. Write down ten conjunctions and use them in sentences.

4.11 Answers to Check your Progress-

1. Hurrah 2. Alas 3. Bravo 4. Ouch 5. Hush 6. where 7. If 8. unless 9. not only / but also 10. either / or

Answers to SAQs 1 to 3: 1. False 2. True 3. False

4.12 References/ Suggested Readings

- Books English for Competitive Exams, By DR. R.P. Bhatnagar
- Unique Quintessence of General English, Edited by DR. S. Sen & Others and revised by DR. G.S. Mansukh ani.

- A Background to the Study of English Literature, D.K. Patnaik, Swastik Publications
- High School English Grammar and Composition, by P.C. Wren and H. Martin, S. Chand Publishing.
- Online links:
    - www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca/hypergrammar/preposit.html
    - http://www.dl.ket.org/latin2/grammar/ch34-degofadj.htm

Subject: Introduction to Short Story and Basic Grammar	
Course Code- CV24ENG101T	Author: Dr. Astha Gupta
Lesson- 5	Editor: Dr. Sandeep Bishnoi
Introduction to Tenses and Active and Passive voice	

Structure of Lesson

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Main Body of the Text

5.3.0Tense and Its Types

5.3.1 Tense

5.3.2 Types of Tenses

a. **Present Tense**
b. **Past Tense**
c. **Future Tense**

5.3.3 Present Tense

a. Simple present Tense.

b. Present Continuous Tense.

c. Present Perfect Tense.

d. Present Perfect Continuous Tense

5.3.4 Past Tense

a. Past Indefinite Tense/ Simple Past

b. Past Continuous Tense:

c. Past Perfect Tense

d. Past Perfect Continuous Tense:

5.3.5 Future Tense

a. Simple future / Future Indefinite Tense

b. Future Continuous Tense

c. Future Perfect Tense

d. Future Perfect Continuous Tense

5.4 Further Main Body of the Text

5.4.0 Voice- Active and Passive

5.4.1 Active Voice and Passive Voice

5.4.2 Difference between Active Voice and Passive Voice:

5.4.3 General Rules to change the Voice:

5.4.4 Transitive and Intransitive Verbs:

5.5 Check Your Progress

5.6 Summary

5.7 Keywords

5.8 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

5.9 Answers to check your progress

5.10 References/ Suggested Readings

5.1 Learning Objectives:

The objectives of this chapter are: Students will be able to recognize the past, present and future tenses of regular and irregular verbs. In this lesson we shall study about Active Voice and Passive Voice. We will also study general rules of changing the verbs from Active voice to Passive voice and vice versa. Students will understand that verbs change form depending on their relationship to time the objectives of this lesson are:

1. To give an introduction to Voice in Language.
2. To learn about Transitive Verbs and Intransitive Verbs.

3. To make students aware of general rules of changing the Verbs in Active and Passive Voice.

5.2 Introduction:

In English grammar, verbs are often used in a way that it indicates or denotes the time when an event occurred. These verbs that take up different forms to indicate the time of an action, event or condition by changing its form are called as Tenses. The word "tense" means "time". It is used in relation to a verb. It tells us about an action which occurs or about the state of a thing which exists. "Tense is the form of a verb which shows the time of an action and its degree of completeness." Along with the knowledge of correct grammar, it is important to know its correct practical use. In this part, you will study sentences in larger context for social as well as academic purposes. You will learn to construct and synthesize the sentences. You have learned earlier that the verb denotes action. The action may be happening in the present time or it may have happened in the past time or it may happen in the future. Thus, depending upon the time of the action or state there are three tenses of the verbs.

a) **Present Tense**: In this tense the verb shows that the action is in the present time
b) **Past tense**: In this tense the verb indicates that the action has happened in the past.
c) **Future tense**: In this tense the verb in dictates that the action will happen in the future. Depending upon the completeness or incompleteness of the action each tense is further divided into four types.

i) Simple: In this the action is simply mentioned.

ii) Continuous: In this the action is incomplete and ongoing.

iii) Perfect: In this the action completes.

iv) Perfect Continuous: In this the action is ongoing at the time

of reporting the speech. Voice is that property of the Verb which shows whether the subject is performing or experiencing the action. We have two types of Voice:

(a)Active Voice (b) Passive Voice.

Active Voice describes a sentence where the subject performs the action stated by the verb. Whereas in Passive Voice sentences, the subject is acted upon by the verb.

An action of a subject, in relation to an object, is expressed in two ways. These two ways expressing action of a subject are known as voice i.e. Active Voice and Passive Voice. Let us try to understand it with the help of some examples:

Ram kills a snake. (Active Voice)

A snake is killed by Rama. (Passive Voice)

5.3 Main Body of the Text

5.3.0 Tense and Its Types

5.3.1 Tense:

Tense means time. The content of this lesson shall be presented as below

- Tenses
- Types of Tenses
- Present Tense
- Use of Present tenses
- Exercises for practice

5.3.2 Types of Tenses:

There are three types of Tenses i.e.

a. The Present Tense,

b. The Past Tense and

c. The Future Tense

Depending upon the present, past or future event. With each of these tenses, there are four aspects associated with it. An aspect here refers to the nature of action performed by the verb. Each of these three tenses has further four forms:

1. Indefinite or Simple
2. Continuous or Progressive
3. Perfect
4. Perfect Continuous

The students must also know about the forms of the verbs before they are told about tenses in detail. There are three form of the verb.

1. Present or the first form
2. Past or the second form
3. Past Participle or the third form for e.g.

Go	Went	Gone
Called	Called	Called

There is another form also known as present participle form which is formed by adding "Ing" to the first form of the verb. e.g.:

Smile + Ing = Smiling

Go + Ing = Going

Play +Ing = Playing

Now, let us study the use of Tenses in detail.

5.3.3 Present Tense

This tense is used to refer or indicate to something that occurs in the present. It is of four types**:**

a. **Simple present Tense.**
b. **Present Continuous Tense.**
c. **Present Perfect Tense.**
d. **Present Perfect Continuous Tense.**

a. Simple Present Tense:

The simple present or indefinite present tense is used to describe an action, event or condition that is occurring in the present while being spoken about or written for e.g.

The boys play.

Cows eat grass.

The present indefinite tense is formed with the first form of the verb i.e.

Sub + First form of the verb

Sentence	Subject: I, We, You, They Noun (Plural)	He, She, It, Noun (Singular)
Sentence	Ist form of Verb	Ist form + s/es
Negative	do not + 1st form	does not + 1st form
Interrogative	do+Subject+1st form+.?	Does + Subject + 1st form…?

Use of Simple Present Tense:

The simple present tense is used to express:

(a) Habitual action e.g.

i) The School starts at 8 a.m.

ii) Mohan goes to office every day at 9 a.m.

(b) The Simple present tense is used to describe universal truth, scientific facts and what is always stated as true e.g.

i) The earth moves round the sun.

ii) Water boils at 100degree C.

(c) Planned future action which must happen in the near future, e.g.

1) Our examination begins tomorrow.

2) We leave Delhi at 9 a.m. on Monday.

(d) It is also used in newspaper headlines. e.g.

1. PM congratulates victorious Indian Team.

(e) The simple present is also used to describe processes, to give instructions or to give running commentary. e.g.

1. Sachin hits the six.

(f) Conditional sentences when they refer to some future action, e.g.

1) If you work hard, you will pass.

2) Unless you run fast, you will miss the train.

(g) Adverbs and adverbial phrases like usually, frequently, occasionally, often, seldom, sometimes, generally, rarely, daily, everyday etc. e.g.

1) I go to my friend's house every week.

2) Mohan seldom goes to play cricket.

EXERCISE – I

Rewrite the following sentences into their negative and interrogative forms:

a) I come to school by bus.

b) Mohit studies every day.

c) My sister lives in Mumbai.

d) Radha is a singer.

Use Simple Present tense in the following sentences:

1) My sister…… (receive) the letter daily.

2) Mohan always…… (speak) the truth.

3) Most trains ……. (not run) on time.

4) If it …… (rain), we will not play the match.

5) If you…… (go) to Delhi, tell him to ring me.

b. Present Continuous Tense

) Present continuous tense is used to denote an action which is going on at the time of speaking. Look at the following examples:

He is playing the piano.

She is dancing on the stage.

These sentences show that the actions are in progress at the present moment. In other words, we can say that Present Continuous tense is used for the action which is happening simultaneously at the time of action. This tense is also used with words like now, still, today, while, at the present moment, when they refer to the action in progress. Look at the following table:

Affirmative sentences is/am/are + 1st form + Ing

Negative sentences is not / am not / are not +1st form + Ing

Interrogative sentences is/am/are + subject… And question mark in the end.

For e.g. I am singing a song now.

I am not singing a song now.

Am I singing a song now?

Am I not singing a song now?

Use of Present Continuous tense:

- It is used to describe definite and immediate future action. For example

- I am going to Delhi tonight.
- We are attending the party tonight.

- It is used to say that we are in the middle of an action. For example

- I am waiting for the bus.
- The wind is blowing.

- It is also used when we are in the middle of something, but not necessarily/actually at the moment of speaking. For example.

- He is reading a novel these days.
- We are working on a new project.

Note: There are number of verbs which are not normally used in the present continuous tense. These are: Verbs of perception: See, taste, smell, notice, etc. Verbs used to express feelings or states of mind: love, want, desire, wish, refuse, forgive, care, hate, adore, like, dislike admire etc.

Incorrect	**Correct**
These grapes are tasting sour.	These grapes taste sour.
I am thinking you are wrong.	I think you are wrong.

EXERCISE 1

Change the following into the Present Continuous tense: -

a) The airplanes fly in the sky.

b) The doctor examines the patient.

c) The gardener waters the plants.

d) Mohan swims in the tank at this time.

EXERCISE 2

Fill in the blanks with Present Continuous tense:

a) Rita ……. (comb) her hair.

b) You can't see him, he…… (sleep) at the moment.

c) The train…… the platform. (leave)

d) The washing ……. on the line. (hang

C. Present Perfect Tense

Present Perfect Tense is used in the sentences which began its action in the past but it will be completed in the present. Present perfect Tense is used to express a recently completed action which can be denoted by words like first now, already, yet, recently, lately e.g.

Study the following table:

Affirmative sentences	Has/Have + 3rd form
Negative sentences	Has not + Have not + 3rd
Interrogative sentences	Has/Have before subject and Question mark in the end.

For e.g. I have done my work.

I have not done my work.

Have I done my work?

Have I not done my work?

Note: Special care is to be taken in case of sentences where past time like yesterday, last week, last month, last year, ago, etc. are mentioned. You are required to use here Past Indefinite Tense and not Present Perfect Tense.

USES OF PRESENT PERFECT TENSE

The present perfect Tense is used to show that an action done in the past has an effect or relevance at the present time.

For example –

1) Seema, are you still reading the book?

2) He has read The Discovery of India. (So, he knows the story)

- To talk about activities completed in the immediate past:

1) I have just heard the news.

2) She has just gone out.

- To indicate actions where the time of the action is not given (but is not indefinite)

1) Suman has gone to Amritsar.

2) Have you seen him walking by?

Exercise – I

Use the Present Perfect tense:

a) The cat …… (steal) the fish.

b) You……. (see) him lately.

c) His flight ……. (take off) already.

d) I …… (know) him to be a serious man.

Exercise – 2

Use the Present Perfect Tense:

a) I just……. (wash) that floor.

b) The movie……. (be) released recently.

c) The film ……. just (begin**)**

d) My brother …… (not pay) the telephone bill yet.

d. **Present Perfect Continuous Tense**

The Present perfect Progressive (continuous) tense is a combination of the Present Perfect and the Present Progressive tenses, in form / has / have + been + V1 + Ing) as well as in meaning.

In Present Perfect Continuous tense, the action began sometime in the past but it is still continuing in the present.

Affirmative sentences	Has been / Have been + 1st form + Ing
Negative sentences	Has not been /Have not been + 1st form + Ing.
Interrogative sentences	Has/Have+ Subject + been.?

Look at the following sentences –

You have been playing.

You have not been playing.

Have you been playing**?**

It should be noted that you are supposed to use for and since before the given time. For is to be used to express the period of time i.e. for five years, for three days, for four hours, etc. Since is to be used to express the point of time i.e. since 2014, since March, since 5'O clock, since Wednesday etc.

Special care is to be taken in sentences where time factor is not given and you should use Present Continuous Tense. If the number of times is mentioned, you are required to use Present Perfect Tense.

Exercises

Fill in the blanks with the Present Perfect Continuous tense:

1) My brother is a writer. He…… (write) novels for 5 years.

2) He…… (fly) kites since morning.

3) Harshit……. (not keep) good health for three days.

4) We ……(live) here since 2001.

5) …….. she …….(knit) her sweater for two hours.

5.3.4 Past Tense:

The Past tense is a grammatical tense whose principal function is to place an action or situation in past time. Past tense in English has two semantic features: -

• The speaker conceptualizes the event as having occurred at some specific time in the past.

• The event is presented as wholly located in the past, in a time frame that is separated from the present. James Joyce was born in Dublin 1882. He lived in Ireland until 1904 and spent rest of his life abroad. Here "was born" is interpreted referring to a point of time, while "lived" and "spent" are interpreted as being of longer duration.

a. Past Indefinite Tense/ Simple Past:

The Simple past is used to say that an event occurred or that something was the case at a particular time in the past.

Mohan ran a thorn into his foot yesterday.

You lived in my neighbourhood last year.

Uses Of Simple Past

1. If we want to say that a situation existed over a period of time in the past, we use the simple past- M.F. Hussain lived abroad in his last year.

2. When we talk about an activity that took place regularly or repeatedly in the past, but which no longer occurs, we use simple past.

-When my grandmother was alive, she fed sparrows early in the morning every day. used to is also used to express such situations. However, unlike 'would', 'used to' can also describe past states and situations. 'Used to' is not common in negative situations.

I'm not quite as healthy as I used to be.

1.When we talk of something that happened in the past, and we mention a situation existed at that time, we use the simple past. All the streets in this part of old Delhi look alike. Study the table: -

Affirmative	2nd form of the verb.
Negative	did not + 1st form of the verb.
Interrogative	Did – Subject + 1st form….?

For e.g.

He played cricket.

He did not play cricket.

Did he play cricket?

Did he not play cricket?

Exercise - 1

Complete the sentences using simple past tense: ---

1) She……. (call) me last night.

2) Columbus ……. (discover) America.

3) Last year it …… (not rain) heavily.

4) Gopal … (not attend) the office yesterday.

5) My health has improved since I…… (go) to Nainital.

Exercise – 2

Change the following sentences into negative and Interrogative sentences: -

1) Your father hates the poor.

2) I know his name.

3) He came to see me.

4) The thieves broke into his house.

5) He played tennis.

b. Past Continuous Tense:

The Past Continuous Tense is often used to denote an action which continued for some time in the past. The most common use of the past continuous/progressive is to talk about what was already happening at a particular past moment.

When I got up this morning, it was raining.

Affirmative was /were + 1st form + Ing

Negative was not / were not + 1st form + Ing

Interrogative was / were + subject...?

Uses of Past Continuous Tense

1. Past Continuous tense is used in the sentences where we have adverbs like continually, constantly, forever etc.

   The patient was continually asking for help.

2. Past continuous tense is used for temporary actions and situations. When we talk about longer, more permanent situations, we usually use the simple past:

   I was running downstairs when I slipped and fell.

3. Used without a time expression, the past continuous can indicate gradual development. When used with a point in time, it expresses an action which began before that time and probably continued after it.

   -At nine, she was having dinner.

4. When the conjunction 'while' is used to connect two or more clauses, we make use of Past Continuous tense in both the clauses. e.g.

-While I was reading, my brother was playing piano.

Exercise

Use the Past Continuous tense:

1) She cut her finger while she…… (cut) potatoes.

2) The children…… (play) when I saw them.

3) While Radha was singing, Suman ……. (dance)

4) He … (not read) his books after the examination.

c. Past Perfect Tense

Past perfect tense is used to express an action which has been completed in the past before a particular moment. We use the past perfect to go back to an earlier past time, to talk about things that had already happened at the time we are talking about. For e.g. I explained that I had forgotten my keys.

Affirmative`	had + 3rd form
Negative	had not + 3rd form

Interrogative had – subject .. ?

He had finished his work before I went out.

He had not finished his work before I went out.

Had he finished his work before I went out?

Had he not finished his work before I went out?

Usually this tense is used in simple sentences where words like till, before, already, since etc. come.

Uses of Past Perfect Tense

1.It is commonly used in 'reported speech' after past verbs like said, told asked, explained, thought, wondered, etc.

I thought I had sent the cheque a week before.

2. We make use of past perfect tense and past indefinite tense in two clauses of a sentence when there are two actions taking place, one of which happens before the other. E.g. The bell had already rung before I reached the college.

3. Past perfect is also used in conditional sentences for e.g. If you had worked hard, you would have passed.

4. It is also used to express unfulfilled desire of the past. e.g. I wish I had gone there.

The Past Perfect can be used with 'till' / 'until' and 'before' to emphasize the completion or expected completion of an action. He refused to go till he had seen all the details of the case.

Exercise

1.He…. (not revise) his courses till then.

2.He……. (take) his breakfast before he left for the college.

3.I thought that my sister……(come)

d. Past Perfect Continuous Tense:

Past Perfect Continuous Tense is used when the action began in the past and it continued and it was still continuing at the appointed time in the past. The Past Perfect Continuous tense is not used with verbs that are not used in continuous form, except with want and sometimes, wish:

The child was delighted with his new toy. He had been wanting one for a long time.

Affirmative	Had been + 1st form +Ing
Negative	Had not been + 1st form + Ing
Interrogative	Had + Subject – been -?

Exercise

1. Sudesh……. (work) in the company for six years before she…… (leave) it.
2. He ……. (sleep) for two hours when the thieves went into his house.
3. She……. (prepare) tea for five minutes when the guests came.
4. His finger… (not bleed) for half an hour when the doctor checked it.

5.3.5 Future Tense

In English, there are four ways of discussing future time:

a. **Simple future / Future Indefinite Tense**
b. **Future Continuous Tense**
c. **Future Perfect Tense**
d. **Future Perfect Continuous Tense**

a. Simple Future Tense

Future Indefinite Tense is used to express an action which is believed to take place sometime in future. This tense is used to express intention, determination, duty, offer, assurance etc.

Take a look at the following sentences:

You shall go home today.

I will sing today.

You shall play tomorrow.

The function will begin at 9 00 am.

Affirmative	Will / shall + 1st form
Negative	Will not / shall not + 1st form
Interrogative	Will / shall – subject -?

For e.g.

I shall go to Delhi.

I shall not go to Delhi.

Shall I go to Delhi?

Shall I not go to Delhi?

Use of 'will' and 'shall'

Will is used for:

- Intention, Determination, Invitation, Assurance.
- Request or offering help.
- Planned future incident / event.
- Spontaneous decisions.

Shall is used for:

- Duty: You shall defend your motherland.
- Suggestion: Shall we go for a coffee.
- Offer: Shall I bring a glass of water for you?
- Rules: You shall obey the traffic rules**.**

Exercise-

Use Simple Future tense and convert each of the sentences into negative and interrogative sentences:

1. She……my friend to the park. (take)
2. They……. a house soon. (buy)
3. I ……. the party. (attend)
4. Will you…… the salt? (pass)
5. He …… drinking soon? (stop)

b. Future Continuous Tense

Future Continuous tense is used to express an action that is going on at a given point of time in the future. It is used to express future action that will begin in future and continue after a given period of time. The following table gives the various forms of the simple future continuous tense:

Affirmative	Will be / shall be +1st form + Ing
Negative	Will not be / shall not be + 1st form + Ing

Interrogative Will / shall - subject – be?

This tense is used to express future events that are planned for e.g.

-I will be staying here till the exams are over.

This tense is not used in conditional clauses. In its place, we use the Present Perfect tense. e.g.

-When we have finished our homework, we shall play.

In Interrogative sentences this tense is used to get information in a polite manner for e.g.

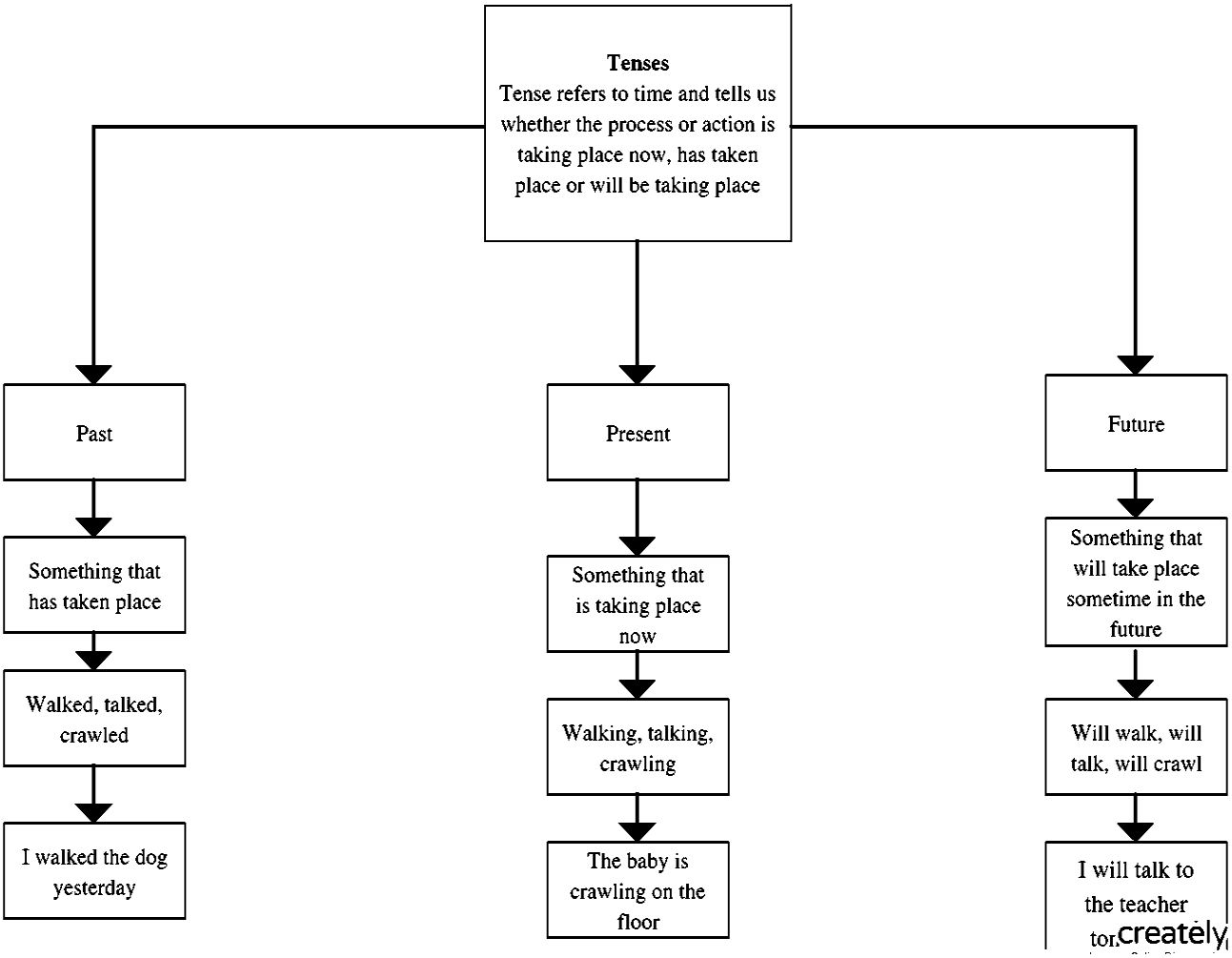
Will you be coming with us to watch the movie

We shall be singing.

We shall not be singing.

Shall we be singing?

Shall we not be singing?



Exercise-

Fill in the blanks with future continuous tense:

1. Don't ring up now, Sohna ……. (rest) at this time.
2. Rohan's sister…… (marry) today.
3. Rahul …. (buy) a car soon.
4. Soham …. all day today for her birthday (shop)
5. After some years, people……. (go) to Moon for holiday.

c. Future Perfect Tense"

Future perfect Tense is used to express the completion of an action or event in the future. This tense form is used to talk about a future action that can be completed in a particular time.

Look at the sentence below**:** The gardener will have watered the plants before the sun rises.

Affirmative	Will/shall+have+3rd form verb
Negative	Will/shall not+have+3rd form
Interrogative	Will /shall +subject+have+3rd form of verb

Exercise-

Fill in the blanks with Future Perfect tense forms of the words given in brackets and also convert the sentences into negative and interrogative forms:

1. Rajesh…. by the time you call him. (sleep)
2. The Police……the thief by now. (catch)
3. I……. my work by the time you come back home. (finish)
4. I …… ten thousand rupees by the year end. (save)

d. Future Perfect Continuous Tense:

Future Perfect Continuous tense expresses the continuity of an action up to a specific time in future. This tense form is used to express actions that began in the past and which will be in progress over a period of time that will end in the future. Look at the sentence below: By the end of the year, I shall have been working in the college for 11 years.

The following table gives the various form of the Future Perfect Continuous tense:

Affirmative	Will have been / shall have been + 1st form + ing
Negative	Will not have been /shall not have been + 1st form + ing
Interrogative	Will / shall – subject – have been?

I shall have been doing washing tomorrow.

I shall not have been doing washing tomorrow.

Shall I have been doing washing tomorrow?

Shall I not have been doing washing tomorrow?

Use Future Perfect Continuous tense in the following sentences: -

1. In another two years, they …… (work) here for five years.
2. By the time father retires, I …… for five years. (retire)
3. We ……. the live match. (watch)
4. When I come back to you at 6 O' clock, you…… (rest) for 3 hours.

5.4 Further Main Body of the Text

5.4.0 Voice- Active and Passive

5.4.1 Active Voice and Passive Voice

When the sentence is presented though the point of view of the subject; the subject is the agent of the action and the action verb is used to denote the action, it called active voice. They have a subject a verb and a direct object.

For Example: Mr. Sharma clicked the photograph. Here 'Mr. Sharma', the subject is the doer of the action. The action is indicated by the action verb 'clicked 'The object of the action is 'photograph'. When the sentence is presented from the point of view of the 'object'; the subject is not the agent of the action and the action is shown through the passive verb, it is called the Passive voice. The sentence has only an object, and a verb. The subject placed at the end can be omitted.

For Example: The photograph was clicked by Mr. Sharma.

Here object 'photograph' is given the main position, and the action is denoted by the passive verb, 'was clicked'. The subject Mr. Sharma can be omitted.

Read the following sentence carefully.

The grandmother gave the sweets to me. (Active Voice) Here,' sweets' is the direct object and 'me' is indirect object. We can change this sentence into passive form by two ways.

i) The sweets were given to me by the grandmother.

5.4.2 Difference between Active Voice and Passive Voice:

To understand the difference in both voices, we should focus on the subject and the object of a sentence. We know that every sentence has a subject, a verb and an object. The sequence of subject and object as in Active Voice, is reversed when it is expressed in Passive Voice. Read the following example for better understanding this difference –

Active Voice Radha loves Geeta. (Subject) (Verb) Active form

Passive Voice Geeta is loved by Radha.

(Subject) (Verb) (Object) (Passive form)

Active Voice: Subject +Verb +object

Passive Voice: Object+ Verb+ Subject

Apart from reversing the sequence of subject and object, the form of the verb of sentence also changes in both Voices. The only form of verb used in Passive Voice is the 3rd form of the verb which is also called Past Participle.

It will be noticed that when the Verb is changed from the Active Voice to Passive voice, the object of the transitive verb in the Active Voice becomes the subject of the Verb in the Passive Voice. Since the object of a verb in the active voice becomes the subject of the passive form, it follows that only Transitive Verbs can be used in the passive voice, because an Intransitive Verb has no object.

5.4.3 General Rules to change the Voice:

Rules for changing Active Voices into Passive Voices are as follows:

1.As mentioned earlier, the structure of sentence will be reversed in Passive Voice. The places of the subject and the object will interchange. While changing from Active Voice to Passive Voice subject will shift to the place of Object and the object will take the place of subject in Passive Voice.

Example: Radha lights the candle. (Active Voice)

The candle is lighted by Radha. (Passive Voice)

2.If object have the pronoun of objective case change it with the help of this rule:

Me = I Us = We

You= you him= He

Her = She it = It

Then = They Whom = who

If subject have the pronoun of nomination case change it with the help of this rule, like: -

I = by me we = by us

You = by you He = by him

She = by her it = by it

They= by them who = by whom

The passive voice is formed with the suitable tense of the verb be followed by the past participle. Study this table:

Tense (or Modal+ base)	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Simple present	take	am taken
	takes	is taken/are taken
Present Continuous	am taking	am being taken
	is taking	is being taken
	are taking	are being taken
Present Perfect	has taken	has been taken
	have taken	have been taken

Simple Past	took	was taken/were taken
Past Continuous	was taking	was being taken
	we're taking	were being taken
Past perfect	had taken	had been taken
Simple Future	will take	will be taken
	shall take	shall be taken
Can/may/must etc + base	can take	can be taken
	must take	must be taken

3. Only Past Participle form or 3rd form of verb (e.g. taken etc.) will always be used as main verb in passive voices for all tenses. No other form of verb will be used as main verb. It can be seen in all the examples given on this page.

4. The word "by" will be used before subject in the passive voice. Example:

The peon opened the gate. (Active Voice)

The gate was opened by the peon. (Passive Voice)

5. The Active Voice is used when the agent (i.e. doer of the action) is to be made prominent; the Passive, when the person or thing acted upon is to be made prominent. The passive is generally preferred when the active form would use an indefinite or vague pronoun or noun (somebody, people, we, they etc.) as subject; that is, when we do not have the clear idea about agent or do not know who the agent is. For example:

Active = I have been invited to the party.

Passive = Someone has invited me to the party.

Active = My pen has been stolen.

Passive = Somebody has stolen my pen.

5.4.4 Transitive and Intransitive Verbs:

We have already learnt that a verb is a word that expresses action, feeling or existence. Many verbs can be both transitive and intransitive. An action verb with a direct object is transitive while an action verb with no direct object is intransitive. Now study the following sentences:

(a) Ram laughs. (b) Rajat plays.

(b) Sita dances. (d) Suraj sleeps.

In these sentences no object is used with verb (laughs, dances, plays, sleeps) and the meaning of the sentence is also clear so these words are intransitive verbs. When an object is used with the verb it is called Transitive verb. Let us see these examples:

1. Ram writes a letter.
2. Gita plays tennis.
3. Neha loves her mother.
4. Sachin sings a song.

In these sentences object letter, tennis, mother, and song are respectively used for the verbs writes, plays, loves, and sings. These words are intransitive verbs.

Read the examples:

	Transitive Verb	**Intransitive Verb**
1.	Open all the windows	the car stopped
2.	The boys fly their kites.	Birds fly
3.	The driver stopped the car.	The glass broke.
4.	He broke the glass.	Sit there

We can notice in the following examples that a Transitive verb is one that is used with an object. In the following sentences open, fly, stopped and broke are transitive verbs. Similarly stopped, fly, broke and sit are intransitive verbs. So, we can conclude that a transitive verb is that which is used with an object and an intransitive verb does not have an object.

Change from Active Voice to Passive Voice:

Note the changes from Active Voice to Passive Voice in these sentences.

	Active Voice	Passive Voice
1.	The hunter killed the lion.	The lion was killed by the hunter.
2.	I write a letter.	A letter is written by me.
3.	I eat an apple.	An apple is eaten by me.
4.	He bought a car.	A car was bought by him.

As studied earlier it can be noticed that the sequence of the subject and the object of the sentence is reversed while converting the sentence from Active voice to passive voice.

Active Voice = Subject + Verb + Object

Passive Voice = Object + Verb + Subject

Let us see some more examples: - When Verb that take both a direct and an indirect object in the Active voice are changed to the Passive, either object may become the subject of the Passive Verb, while the other is retained.

Transitive verb with two objects

Sometimes Verb has two objects in which one object is person and the other is thing. Person is the indirect object and thing is the direct object. Remember, many a times Indirect object comes first and direct object comes at the second position. For example:

1. Mr. Sharma teaches us Hindi.

2. Ram gave a gift to me.

3. Mother told me a story.

Exercises

Change the following sentences so that the verbs will be in the Passive Voice.

1. He loves me.

2. She lights the candle.

3. He is driving a car.

4. She is watering the plants.

5. Who is singing a song?

6. I am not running a race.

7. She has not stolen my book.

Change the following sentences so that the verbs will be in the Active Voice:

1. All the milk was drunk by the cat.
2. I was not expected by them.
3. The windows have been cleaned.
4. A letter is written by me.
5. A camera is bought by him.
6. The dish had not been tested by me.

Study the Table:

Tense	**Active Voice**	**Passive Voice**
Present Indefinite	1st form+/s/es	is/am/are/+ 3rd form
(Negative)	do not/does not+1st form	is/am/are+not+3rd form
Present continuous	is/am/are+V1+ing	is/am/are+being+V3
(Negative)	is/am/are+not+1stform+ing	is/am/are+not+being+3rd form
Present perfect	has/have+3rd form	has/have+been+3rd form
(Negative)	has/have+not+3rd form	has/ have +not been+3rd form
Past Indefinite	2nd form	was/were+3rd form
(Negative)	did not+1st form	was/were+not+3rd form
Past continuous	was/were+1st form +ing	was/were+being+3rd form
(Negative)	was/were+not+1st form + ing	was/were+not+being+3rd form
Past perfect	had+ 3rd form	had been + 3rd form
(Negative)	had not + 3rd form	had not+ been+ 3rd form
Future Indefinite	will/shall+1st form	will/shall+ be+ 3rd form
(Negative)	will/shall not + 1st form	will/shall+ not be +3rd form

Future Perfect will/shall+ have + 3rd form will/shall+have+been+3rd form

5.5 Check your Progress -

A. Fill the gaps with the correct tenses.

1. I (learn) …… English for seven years now.
2. But last year I (not / work) …… hard enough for English, that's why my marks (not / be) … really that good then.
3. As I (pass / want) ……. my English exam successfully next year, I (study) harder… this term.
4. During my last summer holidays, my parents (send) …… me on a language course to London.
5. It (be) …. great and I think I (learn) …. a lot.
6. Before I (go) …. to London, I (not / enjoy) …. learning English.

B. Change into passive voice

1.We had lost the key. -

2.They had started a fight. –

3.The sun rises from the east

4.Reema can do skydiving.

5. I ate the strawberry pie

5.6 SUMMARY

The concept of English verb tenses is very important in establishing effective communication. Hence, if you want to maintain both ways of communication better, that is, speaking and writing you need to gain mastery over English tenses, because a command of twelve basic tenses of English language will aid you immensely in gaining effective communication skills. The term, tense, has been derived from the Latin word “tempus” meaning time. Since there are many ways in which we express the time of action, we use tenses.

- **TYPES OF TENSES**

Present- Simple Present -Base verb (+ es/es for third person):

I watch the news every day.

Present Continuous-am/is/are + present participle:

I am watching the news.

Present Perfect-Has/have + past participle:

I have watched the news already.

Present Perfect Continuous-Has/have + been + present participle:

I have been watching the news since I was a teenager.

Past -Simple Past- Verb+ ed or irregular verb:

I watched the news.

Past Continuous - Was/were + present participle:

I was watching the news.

Past Perfect- Had + past participle:

I had watched the news before I went to bed.

Past Perfect Continuous- I had been watching the news for 20 minutes before you came home.

Future- Simple Future- Will+ verb

Am/is/are + going to + verb

I will watch the news / I am going to watch the news.

Future Continuous- Will be + present participle

Am/is/are + going to be + present participle:

I will be watching the news at 9pm. / I am going to be watching the news at 9pm.

Future Perfect- Will have + past participle

Am/is/are + going to have + past participle

I will have watched the news before 10pm. / I am going to have watched the news.

Future Perfect Continuous- Will have been + present participle

Am/is/are + going to have been + present participle

- **Active and Passive voice**: Words come together to form a sentence and these sentences can be formed in more than one way. The way these sentences are made make a lot of difference in writing **Active voice**: When a subject is directly acting on the object, the sentence is written in Active voice **Passive voice**: When the object is acted upon by the subject, the sentence is written in Passive voice. In both the above sentences, the meaning remains the same and only the structure is what that changes. Usually, the structure or sequence of the subject, verb, and object expressed in the active voice sentence gets reversed in the passive voice of the same sentence. To understand the difference, just focus on how the subject and object change the structure of the sentences in the table below:

Active Voice	**Passive Voice**
I ate the strawberry pie	The strawberry pie was eaten by me
I bought a Honda car	A Honda car was bought by meet object as the subject)
I bought a Honda car	A Honda car was bought by me
The sun rises from the east	East is where the sun rises from
Reema can do skydiving.	Sky diving can be done by Reema

Note- how the meaning has stayed the same throughout.

5.7 KEYWORDS

Simple Present Tense: it is used to describe an action, event or condition in simple way.

Present Continuous Tense: It is used to denote an action which is going on at the time of speaking.

Present Perfect Tense: It is used in the sentences which began its action in the past but it will be completed in the present**.**

The Past tense is a grammatical tense whose principal function is to place an action or situation in past time.

Simple Future Tense: it is used to express an action which is believed to take place in future

Subject it refers to the person or thing that is doing the action expressed by the verb.

Object: Object in a sentence as the entity that is acted upon by the subject.

5.8 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

Q1. Explain Present Tense and its types?

Q2. Describe Present Indefinite and Present Continuous tense with suitable examples?

Q3. Explain Past Tense and its types?

Q4. How will you differentiate between Past Perfect and Past Perfect Continuous tense?

Q5. Explain Future Tense with its types?

Q6. Write a short note on Active Voice with suitable examples.?

Q7. Write a short note on Passive Voice with suitable examples.?

Q8. Discuss in detail Transitive Verbs?

5.9 Answers to Check Your Progress-

A-Tenses

1. I have been learning English for seven years now.

2.But last year I was not working hard enough for English, that's why my marks were not really that good then.

3.As I want to pass my English exam successfully next year, I am going to study harder this term.

4.During my last summer holidays, my parents sent me on a language course to London.

5. It was great and I think I learned a lot.

6.Before I went to London, I had not enjoyed learning English**.**

B. voice -

1.The tables had been cleaned by Joe.

2.We had lost the key. - The key had been lost by us.

3, East is where the sun rises from hey had started a fight. –

4. A fight had been started by them.

5. Skydiving can be done by Reema.

6. The strawberry pie was eaten by me.

5.10 References/ Suggested Readings

- New Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary.
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Introduction to Narration

Structure of Lesson

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Main Body of the Text

6.3.0 Reported Speech

6.3.1 Narration (Direct and Indirect speech)

6.3.2 Direct Speech

6.3.3 Indirect Speech

6.3.4 Change the adverbs of the Direct Speech.

6.3.5 Rules of change of Pronouns

6.4 Rules for Speech

6.4.1 Rules of change of verb or Tense

6.4.2 Rules for Change in Narration of different type of sentences

a. Assertive Sentences

b. Interrogative Sentences

6.4.3 Reporting exclamatory sentences

6.5 Check Your Progress

6.6 Summary

6.7 Keywords

6.8 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

6.9 Answers to check your progress

6.10 References/ Suggested Readings

6.1 Learning Objectives:

- To make the students to choose words with greater precision
- To acquaint the students with the specialist vocabulary associated with communication and literary area.
- To make the students learn to communicate knowledge and ideas in appropriate way.
- To inculcate among the student's skill to identify words and/or phrases related to the topic.
- This part will help you to analyze sentences structurally and functionally for the practical usage. -To give valuable knowledge of narration to students.

6.2 Introduction:

Vocabulary, or word meaning, is one of the keys to comprehension. Student's develop vocabulary indirectly through reading, listening, and speaking. Students' background knowledge and prior experiences play a large role in vocabulary development. They build connections between known words and unknown words and develop a deeper understanding of their reading. Along with the knowledge of correct grammar, it is important to know its correct practical use. In this part, you will study sentences in larger context for social as well as academic purposes. You will learn to construct and synthesize the sentences. You will also learn to transform the sentences without changing their meaning.

In this unit, vocabulary exercises are provided. These exercises encourage students to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions from context. The purpose of reading the prose, "On Saying Please" is to pose one or more questions for students to consider as they read the piece, giving them some aspect, feature, or idea on which to focus their attention. Students will be referred back to these questions after they read and discuss the piece to confirm their understanding. Expansion questions are interpretive and require a critical thinking. These questions lend themselves to various interpretations, and allow students to connect their personal experiences to the literature. The questions in this section deal with issues of values clarification, requiring students to reflect on their personal values as these relate to the unit themes.

6.3 Main Body of the Text

6.3.0 Reported Speech

6.3.1 Narration (Direct and Indirect speech)

When we want to report a conversation to someone who was absent at the time of actual conversation, we can do it by two ways.

i) Quoting of the actual speech of the speaker is called Direct Speech.

ii) Reporting the speech of the speaker into one's own words is called Indirect or Reported Speech. For Example: Leena said, I am helping my mother now."

(Direct Speech) Leena said that she was helping her then. (Indirect Speech) The direct speech is marked with double inverted commas. Here 'said' is called principle or reporting verb. There are some changes made while changing the direct speech into indirect speech. Rules of changing the Direct Speech to Indirect /Reported Speech.

i) Remove the double inverted commas and use the conjunction 'that' after the reporting verb.

ii) If the reporting verb is in the past tense then change the whole speech into the past tense. But if the reporting verb is in the present tense then do not change the tense.

For Example:

a) She said, "I like shopping." (Reporting verb 'said' is in past tense. Direct speech – simple present tense) She said that she liked shopping. (Direct speech changes to simple past tense)

b) she says, "I like shopping." (Reporting verb 'says' is in present tense. Direct speech - simple present tense) She says that she likes shopping.

Note- The changes in the tense of the direct speech in other cases.

c. I am going to the mall" said Vishal. (Present continuous tense)

Vishal said that he was going to the mall. (Past continuous tense)

d) The teacher said, 'Radha' has passed with good grades."(Present perfect tense)

The teacher told that Radha had passed with good grades. (Past perfect tense)

Art of reporting the words of a speaker is called Narration. There are two main ways of reporting the words of a speaker.

a. Direct Speech

b. Indirect Speech

6.3.2 Direct Speech- In this form, the actual words of the speaker are put in quotes “”.

Ex: -

Rama said,” I am very busy now.”

In the above example the Speaker i.e

Rama is known as Reporter,

said is known as Reporting verb and

“I am very busy now.” is known as Reported Speech.

6.3.3 Indirect Speech

In this form, the actual words of the speaker are transformed and said/written in a simple manner.

Ex: Rama said that he was very busy then. Basic rules to convert a Direct Speech to Indirect Speech. There are five basic things that have to be changed while converting a Direct speech to an Indirect speech. To change the reporting verb according to the reported speech. To remove the inverted comma ’s from the direct speech and replace them with an appropriate conjunction. To change the pronoun of reported speech accordingly.

6.3.4 Change the adverbs of the Direct Speech.

Active - Rajiv said to me,” I shall go to the picture today”

Passive - Rajiv told me that he would go to the picture that day.

In the above example-

Reporting verb said to is changed into told. Inverted Commas are replaced by the conjunction that Reported speech’s pronoun I is changed into He.

Reported speech’s verb shall go is changed into would go. As another change today is changed with the word that day.

6.3.5 Rules of change of Pronouns:

Nominative	Possessive	Objective	Reflexive
I	My	Me	Myself
We	Our	Us	Ourselves
You	Yours	You	Yourself
He	His	Him	Himself
She	Her	Her	Herself
They	Their	Them	Themselves

Pronouns are changed according to a rule designated as SON where

S stands for Subject

O stands for Object

N stands for No change.

First person changes to subject of Reporting Verb

Second person changes to Object of Reporting Verb

There is no change if it is a Third person.

Rule No 1.

1st Person pronoun of Reported speech is changed according to the Subject of Reporting verb.

Direct: She says, “I am in tenth class.

Indirect: She says that she is in tenth class.

Direct: I say, “I am an honest man.”

Indirect: I say that I am an honest man.

Rule No 2.- 2nd Person pronoun of Reported speech is changed according to Object of Reporting verb.

Direct: She says to me, “you have done your work”

Indirect: She tells me that I have done my work.

Direct: She says to her, “You have done your work”

Indirect: She tells her that she has done her work.

Direct: I say to them, "you have done your work."

Indirect: I tell them that they have done their work.

Rule No 3- 3rd Person Pronoun of Reported speech is not changed.

Direct: He says, "He does not work hard"

Indirect: He says that he does not work hard.

Direct: Everybody says, "They have spoken the truth"

Indirect: Everybody says that they have spoken the truth

6.4 Rules for Speech

6.4.1 Rules of change of verb or Tense

Rule No.1

If reporting verb is given in Present or Future tense then there will be no change in the verb or tense of Reported speech.

Direct: The teacher says, "Gayatri performs on the stage"

Indirect: The teacher says that Gayatri performs on the stage.

Direct: The teacher is saying, "Gayatri performs on the stage"

Indirect: The teacher is saying that Gayatri performs on the stage.

Direct: The teacher will say, "Gayatri is performing on the stage"

Indirect: The teacher will say that Gayatri is performing on the stage.

Rule No.2

If reporting verb is given in Past tense then the tense of the verb of Reported Speech will change into corresponding Past tense.

Direct: The teacher said, "I am suffering from fever."

Indirect: The teacher said that she was suffering from fever.

Direct: She said to me, "I took the breakfast in the morning".

Indirect: She told me that she had taken the breakfast in the morning.

-- Corresponding Changes to past form in an indirect speech from the verb in Reported speech.

Simple present changes to Simple Past

Present Continuous changes to Past Continuous

Present Perfect changes to Past Perfect

Present Perfect Continuous changes to Past Perfect Continuous

Simple Past changes to Past Perfect

Past Continuous changes to Past Perfect Continuous

In Future Tense will/Shall changes to would

Can changes to Could

May changes to Might

Some of the exceptional cases of Rule 2

Exception 1:

If Reporting speech has Universal Truth or Habitual fact then there is no change in the Tense.

Direct: Our teacher said, "The earth is round"

Indirect: Our teacher said that the earth is round. (Universal Truth)

Direct: Rajiv said to me, "He plays with right hand"

Indirect: Rajiv told me that he plays with the right hand. (Habitual fact)

Exception 2:

If reporting speech has Past Historical Fact then there is no change in the Tense.

Direct: Our teacher said, "Asoka left war after the conquest of Kalinga".

Indirect: Our teacher said that Asoka left war after the conquest of Kalinga.

Exception 3:

If Reporting speech has two actions to be happening at a time when there is no change in the Tense.

Direct: She said "My wife was making lunch when I was studying"

Indirect: She said that her wife was making lunch when she was studying.

Exception 4:

If Reporting speech has some Imagined Condition then there is no change in the Tense.

Direct: She said, "If I were rich, I would help him."

Indirect: She said that if she were rich, she would help her.

Exception 5:

If Reporting speech contains had 3rd form, to-infinitive and would, could, should, must, might, ought to etc. then there is no change in the Tense.

Direct: She said to me, "You should obey your elders."

Indirect: She told me that I should obey my elders.

Some other small changes that used to take place while changing Direct Speech to Indirect Speech.

Here	**Changes to**	**There**
Now	**Changes to**	**Then**
This	**Changes to**	**That**
These	**Changes to**	**Those**
Today	**Changes to**	**That day**
To-night	**Changes to**	**That night**
Yesterday	**Changes to**	**the previous day**
Last night	**Changes to**	**the previous night**
Last week	**Changes to**	**the previous week**
Tomorrow	**Changes to**	**the next day**
Next Week	**Changes to**	**the following week**
Ago	**Changes to**	**Before**
Thus,	**Changes to**	**so**
Hence	**Changes to**	**Thence**

Hither	**Changes to**	**Thither**
Come	**Changes to**	**Go**

Note- in indirect speech we talk about such incidents that are after the time of reporting and had happened away from the place of reporting therefore the words that show nearness has to be replaced by the words that show distance.

Some exception in these changes-

1.Come is changed to go if there is some word given after come that shows nearness.

2. If this, here and now points to such a thing, place or time that is in front of the speaker then no change takes place in Indirect Narration.

6.4.2 Rules for Change in Narration of different type of sentences

a. Assertive Sentences

Rule 1-

If there is no object after Reporting verb there it should not be changed.

If there is some object after Reporting verb then say is changed to tell, says to tells and said to told.

According to the context said to can be replaced by replied, informed, stated, added, remarked, asserted, assured, pleaded, reminded, reported or complained etc.

Rule 2

Put conjunction that in place of " ".Change the pronouns of the Reported speech as enlisted earlier.

Examples showing some Assertive Sentences Changed into Indirect form.

Direct: She said to me, "I shall sleep now"

Indirect: She told me that she would play then.

Direct: He said, "My brother's marriage comes off next month."

Indirect: He said that his brother's marriage would come off the following month.

b. - Interrogative Sentences

Rule 1

An interrogative sentence is meant to ask questions, therefore, Reporting verb said/said to is changed to asked.

Said to can also be changed into enquired or demanded

Rule 2

If question is formed with the help of any of the helping verbs like is/are/am, was/were, has/have, do/does, will/would etc then " __" are to be replaced by if or whether

If the question is formed with the help of words starting with "Wh ' like who, whose, what, whom, when etc (also known as W family) or How then to replace "___" no conjunction is used.

Rule 3

In these sentences question form of the sentence is removed and full-stop is put at the end of the sentence.

Helping verb is /are/am, was/were etc should be put after the subject.

If the interrogative sentence is expressing positive feeling then do/does of the Direct speech is removed while converting it into Indirect speech.

If the interrogative sentence is expressing negative feeling then do/does of the Direct speech is changed into did while converting it into Indirect speech.

Did or has/have the interrogative sentence is changed to had.

Rule 4

Pronouns and verbs are changed according to the set rule of Narration. 4. Modals:

c. Modal verbs like shall, will, can, may change in reported speech. Let's follow some examples:

Direct: John said, "I will be there."

Indirect: John promised that he would be there.

Direct: The boy said, "May I come in?"

Indirect: The boy asked if he could come in. (note: may become could when it implies permission)

Direct: "I may not call you." Said Bobby.

Indirect: Bobby said that she might not call me.

Direct: “I shall practice more.” said Barbara.

Indirect: Barbara said that she would practice more.

Direct: Joseph said, “Shall I buy the car?”

Indirect: Joseph asked if he should buy the car.

Note: shall become should if it implies a question.

6.4.3 Reporting exclamatory sentences:

To change direct exclamatory speeches to the indirect one we need to replace interjection (hurrah, wow, alas, oh, etc.) with joining clause ‘that’ and the exclamatory wh-words (what, how) will be replaced by ‘very’ before the adjective in the reported clause.

Examples:

Direct: Clare said, “Hurrah! Barcelona won the match!”

Indirect: Clare exclaimed with joy that Barcelona had won the match.

Direct: I said, “Alas! My pet died.”

Indirect: I exclaimed with grief that my pet had died. We will use ‘to’ as joining clause before the reported command or request, and the reported verb will be changed according to the moods of the sentence (e.g., ordered, requested, urged, advised, forbade or begged)

Example:

Direct: The man said, “Please, bring me a chair.”

Indirect: The man requested to bring him a chair.

Direct: The officer said, “Fall back!”

Indirect: The officer ordered to fall back.

Direct: Mother said, “Listen to your elders.”

Indirect: Mother advised me to listen to my elders.

Direct: Mr. Murphy said, “Do not go near the house.”

Indirect: Mr. Murphy forbade going near the house**.**

6.5 Check Your Progress-

1.change appropriate direct speech into indirect speech.

1. I said to him, "Will you go to Delhi?

(1) I asked him will he go to Delhi.

(2) I said to him would he go to Delhi.

(3) I asked him if he would go to Delhi.

(4) I said to him would you go to Delhi.

2. He said, 'I have read this novel.'

(1) He said that he has read this novel.

(2) He said that he had read that novel.

(3) He said that he read that novel.

(4) He said that he had read this novel.

3. Tania said to her friend, 'Can you lend me an umbrella?'

(1) Please give me an umbrella Tania requested her friend.

(2) Will you lend me your umbrella; Tania asked her friend.

(3) Tania requested her friend to lend her an umbrella

(4) Tania asked her friend to give her an umbrella.

4. Sita said, 'I may go there.'

(1) Sita says that she may go there.

(2) Sita says that she Is going there.

(3) Sita said that she will go there.

(4) Sita said that she might go there.

5. My friend requested me to bring him a sandwich.

(1) He said, 'My friend, please bring me a sandwich.'

(2) My friend said, 'Will you bring me a sandwich.'

(3) 'Please bring me a sandwich', said my friend.

(4) 'Please bring my friend a sandwich', said he.

6. He said, 'If I had the tools, I could mend the car.'

(1) He said that if he had the tools, he could mend the car.

(2) He tells that he had the tools he could mend the car.

(3) He said I could mend the car if I have the tools.

(4) He told he could mend the car.

7. She said to the children, 'You mustn't play with fire.

(1) She told the children they were not to play with fire.

(2) She told the children that they mustn't play with fire.

(3) She told the children not to play with fire.

(4) She told the children they are not to play with fire.

8. Everybody says, 'How well she sings!'

(1) Everybody comments that she sings well.

(2) Everybody says how well she sings.

(3) Everybody tells that she sang very well.

(4) Everybody says that she sang well.

9. He says that he is very sorry.

(1) He said, 'He was very sorry'.

(2) He says, 'I am very sorry'.

(3) He said, 'He is very sorry'.

(4) He told me. 'I felt sorry'.

10. Daman says, 'Priya is working in Ahmedabad.'

(1 Daman say that Priya was working in Ahmedabad.

(2 Daman said that Priya was working in Ahmedabad.

(3) Daman said that Priya works in Ahmedabad.

(4) Daman says that Priya is working in Ahmedabad.

11. Anne said. 'It is time to leave for the meeting.'

(1) Anne said that it was time to leave for the meeting.

(2) Anne told that it is time to leave for the meeting.

(3) Anne said its time to leave for the meeting.

(4) Anne said that it was time for the meeting.

12. The old man said that he would soon be leaving the world.

(1) The old man said, "I shall soon be leaving the world."

(2) The old man said. "I am soon leaving the world."

(3) The old man said, "I would soon leave the world."

(4) The old man said, "I am going to leave the world soon."

6.6 Summary –

There are three degrees of comparison-positive, comparative and superlative .Paired conjunctions can be used to join two sentences without changing the meaning Depending on the point of view of presentation of the sentence, There are two voices: Active, and Passive There are three tenses in English grammar: Present, Past, and Future. They are further divided into simple, continuous, perfect and perfect continuous. Speech can be reported in two ways: Direct, and Indirect.

Reported Speech-

i) Remove the double inverted commas and use the conjunction 'that' after the reporting verb.

ii) If the reporting verb is in the past tense then change the whole speech into the past tense. But if the reporting verb is in the present tense then do not change the tense.

For Example:

a) She said, "I like shopping." (Reporting verb 'said' is in past tense. Direct speech – simple present tense) She said that she liked shopping. (Direct speech changes to simple past tense)

b) she says, "I like shopping." (Reporting verb 'says' is in present tense. Direct speech - simple present tense) She says that she likes shopping.

Note- The changes in the tense of the direct speech in other cases.

sentence)

She enquired whether she can come to my house.

b) The judge said to the accused, answer the question."(Imperative sentence)

The judge commanded the accused to answer the question.

c) She said, 'How generous of me to help me!" (Exclamatory sentence)

She exclaimed that it was very generous of him to help her.

d)"do not do it again please. "She told him. (Request)

She begged him not to do that again.

10) He is a better basketball player than everyone else in the

team. (Change the degree to superlative)

11) Teacher announced, "I have corrected all the answer

sheets." (Change to indirect speech)

6.7 Keywords-

- Quoting of the actual speech of the speaker is called Direct Speech.
- Reporting the speech of the speaker into one's own words is called Indirect or Reported Speech. For Example: Leena said, I am helping my mother now."
- Remove the double inverted commas and use the conjunction 'that' after the reporting verb.
- If the reporting verb is in the past tense then change the whole speech into the past tense.

6.8 Self- Assessment Questions (SAQs):

1. Explain direct and indirect speech?

2. Use direct sentences into indirect speech with explanation?

6.9 Answers to check your progress

1. Answers of direct speech into indirect speech

1. (3) ,2. (2) ,3. (3) ,4. (4), 5. (3), 6. (1), 7. (2) , 8. (1) , 9. (2 ,10. (4),

11. (1), 12. (1)

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LITERARY TERMS

Structure

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Main Body of the Text

7.3.1 Short Story

7.3.2 Fiction and Non-fiction

7.3.3 Plot

7.3.4 Theme

7.4 Further Main Body of the Text

7.4.1 Foreshadowing

7.4.2 Flashback

7.4.3 Irony

7.4.4 Wit

7.4.5 Humour

7.4.6 Narrator

7.4.7 Point of View

7.4.8 Putting It All Together: Analysing a Story

7.5 Check Your Progress

7.6 Summary

7.7 Keywords

7.8 Self-Assessment Test

7.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.10 References / Suggested Readings

7.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

- **define** a short story and explain its main features;
- **distinguish** between fiction and non-fiction and give examples of each;
- **explain** plot and **identify** its stages (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution) in a story;
- **state** the theme of a story and separate it from its subject and its moral;
- **recognise** foreshadowing and flashback and explain why writers use them;
- **classify** verbal, situational and dramatic irony and give an example of each;
- **differentiate** between wit and humour;
- **describe** the different kinds of narrator and points of view, and show how they change the way a story is told; and
- **use** these literary terms correctly while discussing and writing about stories.

7.2 Introduction

Dear learner, think of the last time you told a friend about a film or a story you enjoyed. Without noticing it, you made many choices. You decided where to begin, what to hold back, whose side to show, and how to make your friend laugh or gasp. Writers make exactly the same choices, only with more care. The words we use to talk about those choices are called **literary terms**.

Literary terms are the working vocabulary of readers, teachers and critics. A doctor uses terms such as *pulse* and *diagnosis* to talk about the body, and a student of literature uses terms such as *plot* and *irony* to talk about a text. When you know the term, you can see the technique. A reader who knows what foreshadowing is will notice a small hint on the first page of a story that a casual reader would miss. A

reader who knows the difference between a narrator and an author will not make the common mistake of blaming the writer for the opinions of a character.

This chapter introduces eleven basic terms: **short story, fiction and non-fiction, plot, theme, foreshadowing, flashback, irony, wit, humour, narrator** and **point of view**. We will study them in two parts. The first part (Section 7.3) deals with the *building blocks* of a story: what kind of text it is, how events are arranged, and what the story is really about. The second part (Section 7.4) deals with *techniques and voice*: how a writer hints, looks back, surprises, amuses and chooses who will tell the story.

7.3 Main Body of the Text

7.3.1 Short Story

What is a short story?

A **short story** is a brief work of prose fiction that can usually be read in one sitting, often in under an hour. It deals with a limited number of characters and one main situation or conflict, and it aims to create a single, unified impression on the reader. It is shorter than a **novella** (a work of middle length) and much shorter than a **novel**, but the shortness is not a weakness. In a good short story, every sentence has a job to do.

The American writer Edgar Allan Poe, in his well-known 1742 review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, argued that a short tale should be planned from the start to produce one "effect" on the reader, and that nothing should be included that does not serve that effect. This idea of *unity of effect* is still the most useful way to understand the form.

Main features of a short story

- **Brevity.** It is short enough to be read at one time, which keeps the reader's attention unbroken.
- **Unity.** Character, setting, action and language all work towards one central impression or idea.
- **Economy.** There is little room for long descriptions or side stories. A single detail, such as a torn shawl or an open window, often carries a great deal of meaning.
- **Limited characters.** Usually there is one main character (the *protagonist*) and a few others. The writer reveals character through a moment of crisis rather than through a whole life.

- **A focused conflict.** There is one main struggle, whether between two people, within a person's mind, or between a person and society or nature.
- **A significant ending.** Many short stories end with a turn, a realisation or a surprise that makes the reader look back at everything that came before.

Elements of a short story

Before we study the terms that follow, it will help you to know the basic ingredients of any story. Most short stories are built from the following elements.

- **Setting:** the time and place of the action, and often the social and emotional atmosphere. A setting may simply be a background, or it may shape the events, as the sleepy village square does in *The Lottery*.
- **Characters:** the people (or animals) in the story. The *protagonist* is the central character; the *antagonist* is the person or force that opposes the protagonist.
- **Plot:** the arrangement of events.
- **Theme:** the central idea.
- **Narrator:** who tells the story.
- **Tone and style:** the writer's attitude to the subject (serious, tender, comic, bitter) and the choice of words and sentence patterns through which it is conveyed.

Characters are often described in pairs of opposites. A **flat character** has one or two main qualities and does not change, such as the miserly moneylender in a folk tale. A **round character** is complex, has strengths and weaknesses, and may surprise us. A **static character** remains the same from beginning to end, whereas a **dynamic character** changes in some important way as a result of the events. Rahmat in *Kabuliwala* is a round character: he is rough and fearsome in appearance, tender and homesick in his heart.

Some forms related to the short story

- **Anecdote:** a very brief account of a single amusing or interesting incident.
- **Sketch:** a short descriptive piece, with little plot, that gives a picture of a person or place.

- **Fable and parable:** short tales with a clear moral lesson, often using animals or symbolic figures.
- **Flash fiction (micro-fiction):** a complete story told in a few hundred words or even fewer.
- **Novella:** a longer work, typically too long for one sitting but shorter than a novel.

A short history

Storytelling is very old. In India we have the *Jataka* tales, the *Panchatantra* and the *Kathasaritsagara*, which are collections of short narratives told to teach, advise and entertain. The *modern* short story, however, as a deliberately crafted literary form with psychological depth and artistic unity, took shape in the nineteenth century. Writers such as Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne in America, Nikolai Gogol and Anton Chekhov in Russia, and Guy de Maupassant in France gave it its characteristic shape. In India, Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali and Munshi Premchand in Hindi and Urdu made the short story a major form of expression for ordinary Indian life, and their stories are still read in schools and universities.

Example: Tagore's *Kabuliwala*

A writer living in Calcutta befriends an Afghan dry-fruit seller, Rahmat, who becomes a favourite of the writer's five-year-old daughter Mini. Rahmat sees in Mini the daughter he has left behind in Afghanistan. After he is imprisoned for hurting a customer in a quarrel, years pass. He returns on the very day of Mini's wedding, and the father, moved by Rahmat's love for his own child, helps him to return home.

Notice the features: very few characters, one central relationship, a single emotional effect (the shared feeling of fatherhood across class and nationality), and an ending that completes the idea without any lecture.

Activity 1

Read any short story of your choice (for example, *Kabuliwala* or *Idgah*). Then answer in your notebook: (a) How long did it take to read? (b) Who is the protagonist? (c) What is the main conflict? (d) Write one sentence that states the single impression the story left on you.

7.3.2 Fiction and Non-fiction

Fiction

Fiction is writing that comes from the author's imagination. The characters, events and sometimes even the places are invented, although they may be based on real life. The word comes from the Latin *fingere*, "to shape" or "to make". Fiction does not claim to report facts. It claims to tell a *truth about human life* through an invented story. The main forms of prose fiction are the novel, the novella and the short story. Fantasy, science fiction, detective fiction, historical fiction and romance are well-known *genres* of fiction.

Non-fiction

Non-fiction is writing that presents real people, real events or real ideas, and that the author offers as true and factual. Its basic promise to the reader is accuracy. Common forms are biography, autobiography, memoir, diary, letters, essay, travelogue, history, speech and journalism. Gandhi's *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's *Wings of Fire* and Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India* are examples that many of you already know.

The difference at a glance

Point	Fiction	Non-fiction
Source	Imagination of the author	Real events, people, facts and ideas
Main purpose	To entertain, move and explore human experience	To inform, explain, argue or record
Promise to the reader	"This could be true"; the reader accepts invention	"This is true"; the reader expects accuracy
Can it be checked?	Not as history, though it may be true to life	Yes, against records, witnesses and evidence
Examples	Novel, short story, fable, fantasy	Biography, essay, memoir, news report, travelogue

Where the line becomes blurred

In practice, the border between the two is not always sharp. **Historical fiction** places invented characters in real historical settings. **Autobiographical fiction** draws heavily on the author's own life but changes names and events. In the other direction, **creative non-fiction** uses the techniques of fiction, such as scenes, dialogue and suspense, to tell a true story. Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1966), a reconstruction of a real murder case, was even described by its author as a "non-fiction novel". A good reader asks a simple question: *What does the author claim about this text?* If the author claims it is a factual account, we judge it by accuracy. If not, we judge it by imagination, form and insight.

Activity 2

Classify each of the following as fiction or non-fiction, and name the form: (a) a newspaper editorial, (b) *The Gift of the Magi*, (c) the diary of a student during the lockdown, (d) a story about a talking crow, (e) a biography of Kalpana Chawla. Then write one example from your own reading of a text that is hard to classify, and explain why.

7.3.3 Plot

Meaning of plot

Plot is the planned arrangement of events in a story. It is not just *what happens*; it is *what happens in what order and why*. The novelist E.M. Forster, in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), explained the difference with a simple example. If we say that the king died and then the queen died, that is a **story**, because it only lists events in time. If we say that the king died and then the queen died of grief, that is a **plot**, because the second event is now linked to the first by cause. Plot, in other words, is story plus *causation* and *design*.

Stages of plot

The German writer Gustav Freytag, in his study of drama (1763), described a five-part pattern that is now widely used to analyse stories as well. It is sometimes called **Freytag's Pyramid**.

Stage	What happens
1. Exposition	The writer introduces the setting, the main characters and the background. The reader learns who, where and when.

Stage	What happens
2. Rising action	A conflict begins and complications follow. Tension increases step by step.
3. Climax	The turning point and the moment of highest tension. The conflict reaches its peak and something decisive happens.
4. Falling action	The results of the climax unfold. Tension reduces and loose ends begin to be tied.
5. Resolution (dénouement)	The conflict is settled, or its outcome is made clear. The story closes.

Not every story has all five parts in a neat order. Many modern short stories begin close to the climax (this is called starting *in medias res*, a Latin phrase meaning "in the middle of things") and some end abruptly with no formal resolution, leaving the reader to think.

Conflict: the engine of plot

Without **conflict** there is no plot. Conflict is the struggle between opposing forces. It may be **external** (a character against another person, against nature, or against society) or **internal** (a character against his or her own fear, guilt or desire). In *Kabuliwala*, for example, the father's conflict is mainly internal: he is torn between his suspicion of the Afghan stranger and his growing affection for him.

Kinds of plot structure

- **Linear (chronological) plot:** events are told in the order in which they happened.
- **Non-linear plot:** the order is rearranged, using flashbacks or jumps in time, to create suspense or meaning.
- **Episodic plot:** a series of loosely connected incidents held together by a central character or theme.
- **Circular plot:** the story ends at or near the point where it began, but with changed meaning.

- **Subplot:** a smaller story running alongside the main plot, which supports or contrasts with it.

Example: Plot of Premchand's *Idgah*

Exposition: It is the morning of Eid in a village, and children are going to the fair. Hamid, a small orphan boy, lives with his poor grandmother Amina and has only a few coins.

Rising action: At the fair, Hamid's friends spend their money on sweets and toys and tease him for being poor. Hamid is tempted but holds back.

Climax: Hamid remembers that his grandmother burns her fingers while baking rotis, and buys a pair of iron tongs instead of a toy.

Falling action: His friends laugh at him, and Hamid defends the tongs with clever arguments that they are stronger than all their toys.

Resolution: At home, Amina scolds him for spending on himself, learns the truth and is overcome with love for the child.

Another example: Plot of O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*

Exposition: Della and Jim are a poor young couple in a small flat, each owning one prized possession: her long hair and his gold watch. It is Christmas Eve and Della has only a very small amount saved.

Rising action: Della decides to sell her hair, and buys a platinum chain for Jim's watch.

Climax: Jim comes home, stares at her cropped hair in shock, and gives her a set of expensive combs.

Falling action: Della offers him the chain and he reveals he has sold the watch to buy the combs.

Resolution: The narrator closes by calling their act of mutual sacrifice a true gift, comparing it with the wise gift-givers of the Christmas story.

Activity 3

Draw Freytag's pyramid in your notebook (a triangle with a rising left side and a falling right side). Choose a short story you have read and write one sentence in each of the five places. Then answer: which event is the climax and why?

7.3.4 Theme

Meaning of theme

The **theme** of a story is its central idea or underlying insight about life, the thing the whole story is really *about* beneath the events. It is the general truth, question or observation that the story invites the reader to think over. A theme is usually expressed as a full statement rather than a single word. "Love" is a *subject*; "love can overcome the barriers of class and nationality" is a *theme*.

Theme, subject, moral and motif

Term	Meaning
Subject	What the story is about in a word or phrase, such as friendship, poverty, war or old age.
Theme	What the story says or suggests about that subject, expressed as an idea or statement.
Moral	A direct lesson or instruction, common in fables and parables. Many good stories have a theme but no moral.
Motif	A repeated image, object or phrase that supports the theme, for example the repeated sound of the heart in *The Tell-Tale Heart*.

How do we find the theme?

A theme is usually *implied* rather than stated. The reader has to work it out. The following questions will help you:

- What is the central conflict, and how is it settled?
- How does the main character change, or fail to change, by the end?
- What does the title suggest?
- Which images, objects or phrases are repeated?
- What does the ending make me think about, apart from the plot itself?

A story may have one **major theme** and several **minor themes**. In *Idgah*, the major theme is perhaps the unselfish love of a child for an elder, and the minor themes include poverty, the pressure of peer opinion and the dignity of the poor. Two readers may state a theme in different words, and that is

acceptable as long as each can support the reading with evidence from the text. A theme should always be *grounded in the text*, not invented from personal opinion.

Worked example: finding the theme of *The Lottery*

Step 1 (conflict): An ordinary village holds a yearly lottery, and the winner is stoned to death. Tessie Hutchinson protests only when her own family is chosen.

Step 2 (title and tone): "Lottery" normally suggests luck and reward. The calm, cheerful tone of the opening is in sharp contrast with the terrible ending.

Step 3 (repeated details): Old Man Warner's remark that there has always been a lottery, and the villagers' reluctance to question it, are repeated several times.

Statement of theme: Harmful traditions survive when people follow them without questioning, and are often opposed only when they affect oneself.

Activity 4

For each story named below, write one theme as a full sentence: (a) *The Gift of the Magi* (sacrifice and love), (b) *The Lottery* (blind adherence to tradition), (c) *The Story of an Hour* (personal freedom and marriage). Then give one detail from the story that supports your sentence.

7.4 Further Main Body of the Text

In the previous part we studied the basic structure of stories. In this part we study the *techniques* writers use to shape the reader's experience and the *voice* through which a story is told.

7.4.1 Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is the use of hints, clues or warnings early in a story to suggest what will happen later. It prepares the reader for future events and makes the ending feel both surprising and, in hindsight, inevitable. Foreshadowing can be direct (a character says, "Something terrible is going to happen") or very subtle (a dark cloud, a locked door, an object that is mentioned twice).

Foreshadowing works in two ways. For the first-time reader it creates **suspense** and a sense that something is coming. For the second-time reader it creates **pleasure in recognition**, as the hints now become visible. A useful principle, often linked with the Russian dramatist Anton Chekhov, is that if a

gun is shown on the wall in the first act, it should be fired by the last act. In other words, a significant object should not be introduced for no reason.

How writers foreshadow

- **Through the title:** a title such as *The Tell-Tale Heart* hints that the heart will betray the narrator.
- **Through setting and weather:** storms, darkness, silence or an unusually bright day may warn of coming events.
- **Through dialogue:** a character may make a remark, a joke or a prediction that turns out to be true.
- **Through objects and symbols:** a weapon, a letter, a locked room or an unexplained sound may return later in the story.
- **Through mood:** an uneasy tone, even in a cheerful scene, signals that all is not well.

Examples of foreshadowing

The Story of an Hour (Kate Chopin): The first sentence tells us that Mrs Mallard has a weak heart, and the people around her take great care in breaking the news of her husband's death. This detail prepares us for the heart-related ending.

The Lottery (Shirley Jackson): On the bright summer morning of the opening, the village boys are quietly collecting stones. The harmless-looking detail is a warning of the violent ending.

Activity 5

Re-read the first page of a story of your choice. List two or three details that you now recognise as hints of what happens later. Was it easy to notice them the first time?

Related terms. A *red herring* is a false clue that misleads the reader, often in detective stories. A *flash-forward* is a direct jump into the future. Foreshadowing differs from both: it hints, but does not show.

7.4.2 Flashback

A **flashback** is a scene or passage that takes the reader back in time from the main story to an earlier event. The writer interrupts the present action to show something from the past, usually to explain a character's behaviour, to reveal a hidden fact or to deepen the emotion of the present moment.

Flashbacks may be presented as a character's memory, a dream, a diary entry, a story told to another person, or simply as a narrator's shift in time.

In Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (1743), the Ghost of Christmas Past carries Scrooge back to his childhood and youth. These scenes work as flashbacks because they explain how a lonely boy became a hard-hearted old man. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1747) goes further and tells most of its story as a recollection narrated by the housekeeper Nelly Dean.

Why do writers use flashbacks?

- to give background information without slowing the story at the beginning;
- to explain why a character acts or feels in a certain way;
- to create suspense by delaying an important piece of information; and
- to connect past and present so the reader sees how one has shaped the other.

Flashback, flash-forward and frame story. A *flash-forward* jumps ahead to a future event, and a *frame story* places one story inside another, as when a narrator introduces a tale that someone else then tells. A flashback differs from both because it returns to the past inside the main narrative. Writers often combine these devices to create a layered effect.

A flashback should be handled with care. If the shift in time is not clearly signalled, as with a phrase such as "Years ago…" or a change in tense, the reader may be confused. Overuse can also break the forward movement of the plot.

Activity 6

Write a short paragraph (6 to 7 lines) about a character who is waiting nervously outside an examination hall. In the middle, insert a flashback of two or three sentences that explains why the character is so nervous. Underline the words that signal the shift in time.

7.4.3 Irony

Irony is a contrast between what appears to be the case and what is really the case. It exists whenever there is a gap between expectation and reality, between words and meaning, or between what a character knows and what the reader knows. The word comes from the Greek *eironeia*, which meant

pretended ignorance. Irony is one of the most important tools of the writer because it adds a second layer of meaning that rewards attentive readers.

Three main kinds

(a) Verbal irony. The speaker says one thing but means something different, often the opposite. If it rains heavily on the day of a picnic and someone says, "What lovely weather we are having!", that is verbal irony. **Sarcasm** is a sharp, mocking form of verbal irony meant to hurt or ridicule. Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal* (1729) is a famous example on a larger scale: Swift pretends to suggest, in a calm and reasonable tone, that the poor of Ireland should sell their children as food, in order to attack the cruelty of public policy.

(b) Situational irony. The outcome of a situation is the opposite of what was expected. In O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*, a poor young wife, Della, sells her beautiful long hair to buy a chain for her husband Jim's treasured watch. At the same time, Jim sells his watch to buy a set of combs for her hair. Each sacrifices the very thing that would have made the gift useful, and the result is the exact opposite of what each planned. In Kate Chopin's *The Story of an Hour*, Mrs Mallard finds new freedom in the news of her husband's death. Just as she begins to enjoy it, he walks in alive, and she dies. The doctors say that she died of the "joy that kills", which is the reverse of what the reader knows to be true.

(c) Dramatic irony. The audience or reader knows something that one or more characters do not. This creates tension, because we watch the character act in ignorance. In Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus Rex*, the audience knows from early on who the murderer of the old king is, while Oedipus himself, who is searching for the murderer, does not know that it is he.

Kind	Who knows what?	Short example
Verbal irony	The speaker means the opposite of the words	"Oh, great!" said after spilling tea on a new shirt.
Situational irony	Outcome is opposite to what was expected	A fire station burns down.
Dramatic irony	The reader knows more than the character	The audience knows a character's secret plan, but the other

Kind	Who knows what?	Short example
		characters do not.

Other forms are also recognised. **Cosmic irony** (or irony of fate) suggests that fate or the universe seems to mock human hopes; Thomas Hardy's novels and poems are often described in this way. **Socratic irony** refers to the pose of ignorance used by the philosopher Socrates to draw out the weaknesses in another person's argument.

Why do writers use irony?

- to create **surprise** and sharp, memorable endings;
- to **criticise** society, power or hypocrisy without direct attack;
- to add **depth**, since an ironic text can be read at more than one level; and
- to involve the reader as a **partner** who shares a secret with the writer.

Irony requires careful reading. When a tone seems too calm, too praising or too serious for the situation, ask yourself: *Is the writer really saying this, or is the real meaning the opposite?*

Activity 7

Identify the kind of irony in each case: (a) A fire-safety inspector's own house catches fire. (b) A teacher says "Wonderful!" when a student gives a completely wrong answer. (c) In a film, the audience sees a thief hiding behind a curtain, but the homeowner does not. Then write one original example of situational irony.

7.4.4 Wit

Wit is the quick, clever and intellectual use of language to say something surprising, sharp or amusing. It depends on a sudden connection between two ideas that seem far apart, on a neat turn of phrase, or on a clever play on words. Wit is mainly a product of the **mind**. It is brief, polished and often aimed at someone or something.

The word has had different meanings over time. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "wit" meant intelligence or inventive ability in general. Alexander Pope, in *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), described true wit as nature dressed to advantage, meaning a thought that is natural but expressed in a better form than we had imagined. Today we use it mainly for the clever, amusing remark.

Features of wit

- It is **sudden and brief**, often a single sentence or an epigram.
- It uses **paradox, puns, exaggeration, contrast or wordplay**.
- It needs **intelligence in the listener** as well as in the speaker, because the listener has to catch the point.
- It often has a **critical edge**, exposing weakness, hypocrisy or folly.

Oscar Wilde's comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1795) is packed with witty remarks and paradoxes. Jane Austen, too, is a witty writer. The famous opening of *Pride and Prejudice* (1713), which begins with the "truth universally acknowledged" that a rich single man must need a wife, is witty because it states a social assumption in the tone of a scientific law, and so quietly laughs at it. In India, the stories of Tenali Rama and Birbal, who defeat powerful opponents with clever replies, are popular examples of wit in oral tradition.

7.4.5 Humour

Humour is the quality in a person, situation or piece of writing that amuses us and makes us laugh or smile. It comes from the recognition of human weakness, absurdity or incongruity, and it is usually kind rather than cutting. The word is linked to an old medical theory in which the body was said to contain four fluids, or "humours" (blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile), whose balance decided a person's character. In the late sixteenth century, the dramatist Ben Jonson used the term to describe comic characters ruled by one exaggerated trait, as in *Every Man in His Humour* (1597). Slowly the word came to mean what we now understand by it: the ability to see and enjoy the comic side of life.

Common types of humour in literature

- **Gentle (good-natured) humour:** warm amusement at ordinary human habits. R.K. Narayan's stories of Malgudi are good examples.
- **Satire:** humour used to expose and criticise vice or folly in individuals or society.
- **Parody:** a comic imitation of a serious work or style.
- **Farce and slapstick:** exaggerated situations and physical comedy such as falls and mix-ups.
- **Black (dark) humour:** comedy that treats grim subjects such as death or war in a joking way.

- **Comic irony:** amusement produced by a gap between appearance and reality.

Example: Saki's *The Open Window*

A nervous visitor, Framton Nuttel, comes to a country house to rest his nerves. While waiting for his hostess, he is told by her teenage niece Vera a chilling story: three years ago, her aunt's husband and brothers went out hunting and never came back, and the aunt keeps the window open in the belief that they will return. When the men walk in through that very window at dusk, the horrified Framton runs out of the house. Vera then calmly explains his flight with another invented story.

The humour arises from the contrast between Framton's fragile seriousness and Vera's calm, inventive lying. The final line shows Vera's *wit*, while the whole situation produces *humour*.

Why humour matters in literature. Humour is not only a source of entertainment. It relieves tension in serious stories, makes characters lovable, and allows writers to question ideas that would be unwelcome if stated seriously. A comic writer often sees human faults clearly and forgives them, which is why humour can create sympathy as well as laughter. The Indian tradition of humour in folk tales, in the plays of Kalidasa's era and in the stories of modern writers such as R.K. Narayan shows how widely and how long people have used laughter to understand themselves.

Wit and humour compared

Point	Wit	Humour
Source	The intellect: cleverness with words and ideas	The heart and observation: understanding of human nature
Form	Brief, polished, deliberate	May be long, spread through a scene or a character
Tone	Often sharp, critical or sarcastic	Usually kind, sympathetic and tolerant
Response	Admiration of the cleverness	Laughter and affection
Example	An epigram or retort of Oscar	Comic misadventures in Jerome

Point	Wit	Humour
	Wilde	K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*

In practice the two often meet, and a single writer such as P.G. Wodehouse may use both, but it helps to remember the simple distinction: *we admire wit, and we enjoy humour*.

Activity 8

Read the following two lines and decide which is mainly witty and which is mainly humorous, and why. (a) A man trips over his own shoelace while proudly showing his new shoes to the guests. (b) "I can resist everything except temptation." (a remark often credited to Oscar Wilde's plays).

7.4.6 Narrator

The **narrator** is the voice that tells the story. It is very important to understand that the narrator is *not the same as the author*. The author is the real person who writes the work. The narrator is a role, a voice or a character that the author creates to tell the story. When the narrator of a story is a murderer or a liar, the author is not a murderer or a liar. The writer has simply chosen to tell the story through that voice.

Kinds of narrator

Kind	Description
First-person narrator	A character in the story tells it using "I". The narrator may be the main character (*protagonist-narrator*) or a witness who watches the events (*observer-narrator*). In *Kabuliwala*, the father of Mini tells the story as an observer who is slowly drawn into it.
Third-person narrator	A voice outside the story tells it using "he", "she" and "they". This narrator may know everything (omniscient) or only one character's mind (limited).
Reliable narrator	A narrator whose account the reader can trust.
Unreliable narrator	A narrator whose account the reader has reason to doubt because of madness, bias, self-interest, youth or deliberate lying. The critic

Kind	Description
	Wayne C. Booth gave this term its present meaning in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961).

The narrator of Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* insists again and again that he is calm and sane, but his own account of how he killed an old man because of the man's pale eye, and then confessed because he imagined he could hear a heart beating beneath the floor, proves the opposite. The reader must read *between the lines* to understand the truth. This is the great strength of the unreliable narrator: it makes the reader an active detective.

First-person narrators are common because they create a sense of truth and nearness, but they also invite caution. Nick Carraway, the narrator of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), is an observer who describes Gatsby's life and claims to be honest and tolerant, yet readers have long debated how far his judgments can be trusted. Stevens, the butler narrator in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1979), tells his story in a dignified manner while slowly revealing, without quite admitting it, how much he has missed in life. In both cases, the gap between what the narrator says and what the reader understands produces much of the meaning.

Activity 9

Take the opening scene of *The Open Window* or of any story you know. Decide whether the narrator is inside or outside the story, and whether the narrator is reliable. Write two sentences to justify your answer.

7.4.7 Point of View

Point of view (often shortened to POV) is the position from which the events of a story are seen and told. It decides *who tells the story, how much that person knows* and *how close we feel to the characters*. The narrator is the voice, while the point of view is the angle. A change in point of view can change the whole meaning of a story. Imagine the story of Little Red Riding Hood told by the wolf: the same events would produce an entirely different reaction in the reader.

Main types of point of view

1. First-person point of view. The story is told by "I". It feels personal and immediate, and the reader sees only what this person sees and feels. The limitation is that the narrator cannot know what other characters are thinking. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* use this point of view.

2. Second-person point of view. The story addresses "you" as if the reader were the character. It is rare and often experimental, but striking. Italo Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveler* and Jay McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City* are well-known examples.

3. Third-person omniscient point of view. An all-knowing narrator stands above the story, enters the minds of several characters, and may comment on events. Many nineteenth-century novels, such as those of George Eliot and Leo Tolstoy, use this method. It gives breadth and allows the writer to show what no single character could know.

4. Third-person limited point of view. The narrator uses "he" or "she" but stays close to the thoughts and feelings of only one character. The reader knows only what this character knows. Kate Chopin's *The Story of an Hour* mainly follows Mrs Mallard's inner experience in this way.

5. Objective (dramatic or camera-eye) point of view. The narrator reports only what can be seen and heard, like a camera, and does not enter any character's mind. The reader must guess the feelings from action and dialogue. Ernest Hemingway's *Hills Like White Elephants* (1927), which is built almost wholly of a conversation between a man and a woman at a railway station, is a standard example.

Point of view	Pronoun	Effect on the reader
First person	I, we	Closeness, intimacy; limited knowledge; possible bias
Second person	You	Direct involvement; unusual and experimental
Third omniscient	He, she, they	Wide knowledge; authority; many minds
Third limited	He, she	Closeness to one mind; mystery about others

Point of view	Pronoun	Effect on the reader
Objective	He, she, they	Distance and suspense; reader must interpret

Think and reflect: same event, different points of view

Suppose a shopkeeper catches a boy taking a packet of biscuits without paying. In the **first person** (the boy), the story is full of fear, shame and the real reason for stealing. In the **first person** (the shopkeeper), it is a story of anger and suspicion. In the **omniscient third person**, the reader knows both minds and may feel sympathy for both. In the **objective** view, we see only the actions and words, and must guess who is right.

The event is the same in all four versions, but the *meaning* changes. This is why point of view is called one of the most powerful decisions a writer makes.

Narrator and point of view working together

Remember that these two terms are linked but not identical. A writer first decides *who* will tell the story (the narrator) and then decides *how much that narrator knows and sees* (the point of view). A story told by a child narrator in the first person will tell us less about adult affairs than the same story told by an omniscient narrator, but it will be richer in innocence, surprise and emotion. Good readers always ask: *Who is telling this? What do they know? What might they be leaving out?*

Activity 10

Rewrite this sentence in three points of view (first person, third limited, and objective): "The bell rang and the boy walked slowly into the classroom, afraid of what the teacher would say about his missing homework." Compare how much each version tells the reader about the boy's feelings.

7.4.8 Putting It All Together: Analysing a Story

Learning terms one by one is only the first step. The real purpose is to use them together when you read and write about a story. Let us do this for Kate Chopin's *The Story of an Hour* (1794), a very short story that you can read in about ten minutes.

Summary of the story. Mrs Louise Mallard, who has a weak heart, is gently told that her husband Brently has died in a railway accident. She weeps, goes to her room alone, and sits looking out of the

window. Gradually she is filled with a strange feeling of freedom, the thought that she will now live for herself. She is then horrified, and also thrilled, to realise this. Her sister Josephine begs her to open the door, and they go downstairs. At that moment the front door opens and Brently walks in, unhurt and unaware of the accident. Mrs Mallard dies, and the doctors say that she died of heart disease, "of joy that kills".

Literary term	**How it applies to the story**
Short story	Very brief; one main character; a single situation within one hour; a strong closing turn.
Fiction	Invented characters and events, though they comment on the real position of married women in the nineteenth century.
Plot	Exposition (the news of death); rising action (grief, then the growing sense of freedom); climax (Brently's entry); resolution (her death and the doctors' verdict). The main conflict is internal: love and duty against the wish for independence.
Theme	The desire for personal freedom and the limits placed on a woman within marriage. A minor theme is the difference between the way people appear to feel and what they really feel.
Foreshadowing	The opening sentence mentions her heart trouble, preparing us for the ending.
Flashback	There is no formal flashback, but she briefly thinks back over her husband's kind face and the years that lie ahead, which suggests the contrast between past and future.
Irony	Situational irony: the news that gave her a new life is followed by the return that ends her life. Dramatic irony: the reader understands her secret feeling, while the doctors and her sister do not. The last

Literary term	How it applies to the story
	line is a kind of verbal irony, because "joy" is the opposite of what she felt.
Wit and humour	The story is serious and has hardly any humour. The remark of the doctors is bitterly ironic, not comic.
Narrator and point of view	A third-person narrator who stays mostly within Mrs Mallard's mind (third-person limited), and steps outside her at the very end to report the doctors' opinion.

Common mistakes to avoid

- **Confusing plot with summary.** A plot analysis explains *how and why* events are arranged, not just what happens.
- **Confusing theme with subject.** Always state a theme as a complete idea.
- **Calling every surprise irony.** Irony needs a contrast between expectation and reality, not just an unexpected event.
- **Blaming the author for the narrator's views.** Always ask who is speaking.
- **Naming a term without evidence.** Whenever you use a term, support it with a detail or a short quotation from the text.

Activity 11

Choose one of the stories mentioned in this chapter and prepare a table like the one above with at least six terms. For each term, write one sentence showing how it is used in the story.

7.5 Check Your Progress

Answer the following questions to test your understanding. Check your answers with Section 7.9 only after you have written your own.

A. Choose the correct option

1. Who said that a short tale should aim at a single "effect"?

(a) Anton Chekhov (b) Edgar Allan Poe (c) E.M. Forster (d) Wayne C. Booth

2. Which of the following is a work of non-fiction?

(a) The Gift of the Magi (b) Idgah (c) Wings of Fire (d) The Lottery

3. According to E.M. Forster, "The king died, and then the queen died of grief" is an example of:

(a) story (b) plot (c) theme (d) motif

4. The turning point and moment of highest tension in a plot is the:

(a) exposition (b) falling action (c) climax (d) resolution

5. The boys picking up stones at the beginning of *The Lottery* is an example of:

(a) flashback (b) foreshadowing (c) satire (d) farce

6. In *The Gift of the Magi*, the outcome of the gifts is an example of:

(a) verbal irony (b) dramatic irony (c) situational irony (d) Socratic irony

7. Which term refers to a quick, clever and intellectual use of language?

(a) Humour (b) Wit (c) Motif (d) Dénouement

8. The narrator of *The Tell-Tale Heart* is best described as:

(a) omniscient (b) objective (c) unreliable (d) second-person

B. State whether true or false

9. A short story usually has many main characters and several unrelated plots.

10. The author and the narrator of a story are always the same person.

11. A theme is always stated directly in the last line of a story.

12. In dramatic irony, the reader knows something that the character does not.

13. Third-person limited point of view allows the narrator to enter the minds of all characters.

C. Answer in two to three sentences

14. Explain the difference between story and plot with an example.

15. What is the difference between subject and theme?

16. Give two reasons why a writer might use a flashback.

17. State two differences between wit and humour.

D. Match the following

Match each term in List I with its meaning in List II.

List I	List II
18. Foreshadowing	(a) A narrator whose account cannot be fully trusted
19. Flashback	(b) Hints about events that will happen later
20. Dramatic irony	(c) A return to an earlier time in the story
21. Unreliable narrator	(d) The reader knows what the character does not
22. Motif	(e) A repeated image or object that supports a theme

E. Fill in the blanks

23. The five-part plot pattern of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution is known as _____ pyramid.

24. A story told by "you" uses the _____ person point of view.

25. A narrator who knows the thoughts of every character is called an _____ narrator.

26. Ben Jonson used the word "humours" for comic characters ruled by one _____ trait.

27. Creative _____ tells true stories using the techniques of fiction.

7.6 Summary

In this chapter you have learnt eleven important literary terms and seen how they help us to read stories more carefully.

- A **short story** is a brief prose narrative with a limited number of characters, a focused conflict and unity of effect.

- **Fiction** is imaginative writing; **non-fiction** presents real facts, people or events. Forms such as historical fiction and creative non-fiction blur the boundary.
- **Plot** is the causal arrangement of events and usually passes through exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution. Conflict drives the plot.
- **Theme** is the central idea about life that a story suggests. It should be distinguished from subject, moral and motif.
- **Foreshadowing** gives early hints of later events, and **flashback** takes the story back to an earlier time.
- **Irony** is a gap between appearance and reality, and its main kinds are verbal, situational and dramatic.
- **Wit** is quick intellectual cleverness with words; **humour** is a kindly amusement at human life.
- The **narrator** is the voice that tells the story, and is different from the author. **Point of view** is the angle from which it is told: first person, second person, third omniscient, third limited or objective.

7.7 Keywords

- **Short story:** A brief prose narrative read at one sitting, with unity of effect.
- **Fiction:** Imaginative prose writing about invented characters and events.
- **Non-fiction:** Writing based on real people, events and facts.
- **Plot:** The planned, cause-linked arrangement of events in a story.
- **Conflict:** The struggle between opposing forces that drives the plot.
- **Climax:** The point of greatest tension and turning point in a plot.
- **Theme:** The central idea or insight a story expresses.
- **Motif:** A repeated image, object or phrase that supports a theme.
- **Foreshadowing:** Hints early in a story about later events.
- **Flashback:** A return to an earlier time within a story.
- **Irony:** A contrast between appearance and reality or expectation and outcome.

- **Wit:** Clever, sharp and brief use of language and ideas.
- **Humour:** Amusement arising from the comic side of human life.
- **Narrator:** The voice that tells the story, distinct from the author.
- **Point of view:** The perspective from which the story is told.
- **Unreliable narrator:** A narrator whose account cannot be fully trusted.

7.8 Self-Assessment Test

These questions correspond to the learning objectives listed in Section 7.1. Attempt them in your own words.

Q1. Define a short story. Explain its main features with reference to any one story you have read.

Q2. Distinguish between fiction and non-fiction. Why is creative non-fiction difficult to classify?

Q3. What is plot? Describe its stages, using a story of your choice to illustrate each stage.

Q4. Explain the difference between subject, theme and moral. State the theme of *Idgah* or *Kabuliwala* and support your answer with evidence from the text.

Q5. Write short notes on foreshadowing and flashback, giving one example of each.

Q6. What is irony? Discuss its main kinds with suitable examples.

Q7. "We admire wit and we enjoy humour." Discuss this statement.

Q8. Differentiate between narrator and author. Explain the different kinds of narrator with examples.

Q9. Explain the different points of view in narration. How does the choice of point of view affect a reader's response to a story?

Q10. Write a short paragraph on each of the following: (a) Freytag's pyramid, (b) round and flat characters, (c) unreliable narrator, (d) Chekhov's principle.

Q11. Choose a short story and write a one-page analysis of it, using at least five of the literary terms studied in this chapter.

7.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

A. Choose the correct option

1. (b) Edgar Allan Poe 2. (c) Wings of Fire 3. (b) plot 4. (c) climax 5. (b) foreshadowing 6. (c) situational irony 7. (b) Wit 8. (c) unreliable

B. True or false

9. False (it has few characters and one main conflict). 10. False (the narrator is a voice created by the author). 11. False (a theme is usually implied). 12. True. 13. False (third limited stays within one character's mind; the omniscient narrator enters many).

C. Short answers

14. A *story* is a list of events in time ("The king died and then the queen died"). A *plot* links the events by cause ("The king died and then the queen died of grief"). Plot is story plus causation and design.

15. The *subject* is what the story is about in a word or phrase (for example, poverty). The *theme* is what the story says about that subject, stated as an idea (for example, "love can be stronger than poverty").

16. Any two of: to give background without slowing the opening; to explain a character's behaviour or feelings; to create suspense by delaying important information; to connect past and present.

17. Any two of: wit comes from the intellect while humour comes from observation and feeling; wit is brief and polished while humour can be extended; wit often has a critical edge while humour is kindly; wit draws admiration while humour draws laughter and affection.

D. Match the following

18 – (b) 19 – (c) 20 – (d) 21 – (a) 22 – (e)

E. Fill in the blanks

23. Freytag's 24. second 25. omniscient 26. exaggerated (or single) 27. non-fiction

7.10 References / Suggested Readings

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