

# ENGLISH

## Reading & Literature

### Class VIII



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Thimphu

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**Department of School Education**  
**Ministry of Education and Skills Development**  
**School Curriculum Division**



## Foreword

Following the advent of modern education in the country, the English language has been given an important place along with Dzongkha, the national language. English has, in fact, been the language of instruction for many school subjects, and it has served our purpose well even outside the curriculum.

The emphasis of the English curriculum is on the improvement of language skills of students, on literature studies written in the contemporary English language, the inclusion of non-fiction writing and changes in the approach to the assessment of students' performance. The curriculum also demands a change in the way in which students are taught, specifically a movement away from the teacher-centred classroom to a gender-sensitive, student-centred learning environment. This means that the teacher is responsible for designing activities that promote active learning while the students play a greater role in their own learning. The teacher will act as a facilitator to allow students to explore and create knowledge.

The selection of texts represents a conscious and rigorous effort to bring to our classrooms an assortment of rich and varied literary experiences presented through different genres which celebrate the dignity of content and the beauty of language.

The plans put forward in the curriculum offer a balanced programme with adequate instructional time to develop the skills in each strand of Reading & Literature, Writing, Listening and Speaking and Language. The goal is to provide adequate time to learn these skills so that students are able to communicate with eloquence and receive the communication of others with respect and clarity.

The Ministry of Education and Skills Development hopes that the English Curriculum will open the doors to new opportunities for our students to improve their English language skills. The learning programmes in the curriculum will ensure that they will acquire the knowledge to continue higher studies and the skills they require to become competent communicators – in reading, writing, listening and speaking as required in the workplace and society.

The Ministry wishes to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the teachers and teacher-educators to the development of the curriculum.

Tashi Delek.



**Karma Galay**  
**Director General**

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## Foreword to Reading & Literature

*“I am part of all that I have met;  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro’  
Gleams that untrav’l’d world, whose margin  
Fades for ever and for ever when I move.”*

- “Ulysses”, Alfred Lord Tennyson

Like Ulysses, when we read, we become travellers through worlds whose horizons beckon and entice us farther and farther into realms beyond our own daily experiences. We travel from our own world to different places and times, go to a universe beyond our own, a universe in which we meet people who hold ideas and beliefs which confirm, challenge, and elaborate what we know, understand and believe.

Reading is the key to unlocking the vault of the wisdom of the race. To read well is to be in contact with those who have gone before us, who have discovered what it is to be human and the best ways to organise themselves to achieve happiness

We do not always read for such exalted reasons. Reading is also something we use to do everyday things at work or at home: things like shopping, reading mail, getting information on topics of interest and getting instructions on how to do things or put things together. We also read to learn the ideas of others on more abstract issues like political thought or religious beliefs. We read for pleasure and to pass the time. Sometimes we read our favourite authors simply because we like to read their works. Whatever the reasons we have for reading, it is making meaning with text in an interactive process that engages the reader, the writer, and the text in a dialogue about the subject of the piece.

Engaging in the dialogue begins when the reader tries to be clear about what the writer or his/her characters are saying and doing. Frequently, once that has been achieved and is clear, the reader does not want to go further. The knowledge of what has been read is enough. But just as frequently, readers want to move beyond the simple knowledge of a book to levels of dialogue, which engage them, the writer, and the text in negotiations about the significance of what has been said or enacted in the piece. It is in this kind of dialogue that the focus shifts from the surface knowledge of the text to attempts to comprehend what has been read at more profound levels, to delight in

possible interpretations, to analyse how the writer achieves the cogency of the piece, and ultimately, the evaluation of the beauty and the validity of what has been said. Whatever the level of the dialogue, the readers bring to the table not only their knowledge of the text under study, but also their experiences with other texts, the experiences they have had in real life or have imagined, and quite likely, sets of beliefs that challenge the point of view of the writer. Students need to be taught the strategies to read in these ways. And they need time to participate in activities which are planned by the teachers to allow them to practise the strategies.

The literature in the syllabus provides the material to teach students how to read, while at the same time permitting them to read some of the best literature available in English. Students have to learn how to make meaning by themselves and to appreciate what it means to have met some of the best writers and their works in the course of their studies. If we can build classroom communities where that can be arranged, then, like Ulysses, our readers will be drawn to travel through new worlds of experience whose horizons keep expanding.

### **Standards for Reading & Literature for Key Stage III (Class VII – VIII)**

1. Read fluently and demonstrate comprehension of grade – appropriate texts with challenging themes and vocabulary from a variety of texts (fiction and non-fiction).
2. View and demonstrate comprehension of visual texts with complex ideas and specialized features (e.g., websites, reference books, magazines).
3. Use a variety of strategies to construct and confirm meaning, and evaluate texts in different media and technologies.
4. Understand and derive meaning from the structures and features of a range of texts.
5. Read academic articles to garner information and ideas.
6. Analyse how an author's choices of text structure create effects such as mystery, tension, and surprise.
7. Read relevant major literary works from Bhutan and other countries to reflect on the cultural and fundamental values like Truth, Goodness and Beauty.



## Learning Objectives for Reading & Literature

Sl No	Learning Objectives	Core Concepts/Topics	Essential Skills
1	Use appropriate reading strategies and skills developed in earlier classes to comprehend the texts.	Building on prior knowledge, concepts, and skills	<p>Language and literacy skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse texts to comprehend meanings at different levels of understanding</li> <li>Use words in a variety of contexts to bring out multiple meanings</li> <li>Identify figurative language and use them in their writing and speech</li> <li>Read critically to examine lexical and grammatical structures used in texts</li> <li>Pronounce unfamiliar words correctly by referring to the phonetic transcriptions in the dictionary and other resources</li> </ul> <p>Social, behavioural, and affective skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate empathy, appreciation of love, loyalty, and forgiveness.</li> <li>Emulate exemplary behaviour, conduct and language encountered in their reading in different contexts</li> </ul> <p>Note: Teachers should identify additional appropriate skills based on the lesson plans and learning activities.</p>
2	Identify features of a variety of texts and use them to support their reading.	Distinguish and differentiate features of a variety of texts	
3	Recognize the denotative and connotative effects of words in the texts they read.	Identify use of words with multiple meanings and effect	
4	Recognize the emotive effect of words in the texts they read.	Distinguish literal and figurative meanings	
5	Appreciate the beauty of language by identifying the uses of symbolism, imagery, allusion, and cadence.	Use of some advanced figurative tools and language	
6	Identify and discuss the use of free verse in different kinds of modern poetry.	Free verse poetry as the modern form of genre.	
7	Read texts and make personal connections.	Let children choose their genre according to taste and likes.	
8	Appreciate 'big' ideas expressed in literature – for example, forgiveness, loyalty, friendship and love.	Inculcate the ideas of forgiveness, love, and loyalty	
9	Use the dictionary and other resources to understand phonetic transcriptions and syllabic structure of words to help with reading and pronunciation.	Use of awareness and basic transcription	
10	Build their vocabulary in context, and use pronunciation skills to pronounce new words correctly.	Use of newly acquired vocabulary and speak with acceptable pronunciation	
11	Evaluate the main idea(s) of texts read and generate their own understanding.	Identify multiple themes	
12	Employ the features of fantasy stories to help them make meaning in their reading.	Identify fiction and fantasy elements in their reading	
13	Apply close and critical reading and viewing skills to enhance their understanding of how lexical and grammatical items are used in context.	Identifying lexical and grammatical items in language used	
14	Read and view widely, at least 40 pieces of literature, for pleasure to demonstrate independent reading and learning in content area.	Sustained reading	



# SHORT STORIES

# 1. The Fun They Had - Issac Asimov

## Genre: Short Story

### Rationale:

*Imagine a world where going to school means sitting in a room at your own house by yourself and learning from a mechanical teacher that is adjusted to teach just what you need to know. Scary? Fascinating? That is the vision of the future that the author imagines.*

*The story begins with two children finding an old paper book and reflects on how quaint it is when compared with the television screens on which they read on their own time. An actual book holds a special fascination for the children as a relic of the past. Let's read the story.*

Margie even wrote about it that night in her diary. On the page headed May 17, 2155, she wrote, "Today Tommy found a real book!"

It was a very old book. Margie's grandfather once said that when he was a little boy his grandfather told him that there was a time when all stories were printed on paper. They turned the pages, which were yellow and crinkly, and it was awfully funny to read words that stood still instead of moving the way they were supposed to-on a screen, you know. And then, when they turned back to the page before, it had the same words on it that it had when they read it the first time.

"Gee," said Tommy, "what a waste. When you're through with the book, you just throw it away, I guess. Our television screen must have had a million books on it and it's good for plenty more. I wouldn't throw it away."

"Same with mine," said Margie. She was eleven and hadn't seen as many telebooks as Tommy had. He was thirteen.

She said, "Where did you find it?"

"In my house." He pointed without looking, because he was busy reading. "In the attic."

"What's it about?"

"School."

Margie was scornful. "School? What's there to write about school? I hate school."

Margie always hated school, but now she hated it-more than ever. The mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography and she had been doing worse and worse until her mother had shaken her head sorrowfully and sent for the County

Inspector.

He was a round little man with a red face and a whole box of tools with dials and wires. He smiled at her and gave her an apple, then took the teacher apart. Margie had hoped he wouldn't know how to put it together again, but he knew how all right and, after an hour or so, there it was again, large and black and ugly with a big screen on which all the lessons were shown and the questions were asked. That wasn't so bad. The part she hated most was the slot where she had to put homework and test papers. She always had to write them out in a punch code they made her learn when she was six years old, and the mechanical teacher calculated the mark in no time.

The inspector had smiled after he was finished and patted her head. He said to her mother, "It's not the little girl's fault, Mrs. Jones. I think the geography sector was geared a little too quick. Those things happen sometimes. I've slowed it up to an average ten-year level. Actually, the over-all pattern of her progress is quite satisfactory." And he patted Margie's head again.

Margie was disappointed. She had been hoping they would take the teacher away altogether. They had once taken Tommy's teacher away for nearly a month because the history sector had blanked out completely.

So she said to Tommy, "Why would anyone write about school?"

Tommy looked at her with very superior eyes. "Because it's not our kind of school, stupid. This is the old kind of school that they had hundreds and hundreds of years ago."

He added loftily, pronouncing the word carefully, "Centuries ago."

Margie was hurt. "Well, I don't know what kind of school they had all that time ago." She read the book over his shoulder for a while, then said, "Anyway, they had a teacher."

"Sure they had a teacher, but it wasn't a regular teacher. It was a man."

"A man? How could a man be a teacher?"

Well, he just told the boys and girls things and gave them homework and asked them questions."

"A man isn't smart enough."

"Sure he is. My father knows as much as my teacher."

"He can't. A man can't know as much as a teacher."

"He knows almost as much I betcha."

Margie wasn't prepared to dispute that. She said, "I wouldn't want a strange man in my house to teach me." Tommy screamed with laughter, "You don't know much, Margie. The teachers didn't live in the house. They had a special building and all the kids went there."

“And all the kids learned the same thing?” “Sure, if they were the same age.”

“But my mother says a teacher has to be adjusted to fit the mind of each boy and girl it teaches and that each kid has to be taught differently.”

“Just the same, they didn't do it that way then. If you don't like it, you don't have to read the book.”

“I didn't say I didn't like it,” Margie said quickly. She wanted to read about those funny schools.

They weren't even half finished when Margie's mother called, “Margie! School!”

Margie looked up. “Not yet, mamma.”

“Now,” said Mrs. Jones. “And it's probably time for Tommy, too.” Margie said to Tommy, “Can I read the book some more with you after school?”

“Maybe,” he said, nonchalantly. He walked away whistling, the dusty old book tucked beneath his arm.

Margie went into the schoolroom. It was right next to her bedroom, and the mechanical teacher was on and waiting for her. It was always on at the same time every day except Saturday and Sunday, because her mother said little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours.

The screen was lit up, and it said: “Today's arithmetic lesson is on the addition of proper fractions. Please insert yesterday's homework in the proper slot.”

Margie did so with a sigh. She was thinking about the old schools they had when her grandfather's grandfather was a little boy. All the kids from the whole neighborhood came, laughing and shouting in the schoolyard, sitting together in the schoolroom, going home together at the end of the day. They learned the same things so they could help one another on the homework and talk about it.

And the teachers were people...

The mechanical teacher was flashing on the screen: “When we add the fractions  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$  ...”

Margie was thinking about how the kids must have loved it in the old days. She was thinking about the fun they had.

## About the Author:

*Issac Asimov was an American writer and professor of biochemistry at Boston University. He is best known for the Foundation series and robot stories. The story 'The Fun They Had' was taken from his The Complete Stories collection exploring the theme of innocence, change, technology, loss, and longing.*

*Word Bank crinkly: with many folds or lines, something that is crushed.*

*Telebooks: books on a screen like an e-book or a pdf.*

*scornful: show your dislike for something.*

*slot: a given space to place something.*

*geared (to): adjusted to a particular standard or level.*

*blanked out: erased.*

*loftily: in a superior way, with pride.*

*Betcha- bet you (used to express confidence or certainty that something is the case or will happen).*

*Nonchalantly- without much interest.*

## Make Connections

1. Describe Margie's mechanical teacher and her classroom in your own words.
2. Why did Mrs. Jones insist that Margie attend school every day at the same time? What does that tell you about her as a mother?
3. Why did Margie hate her school? What was she thinking about at the end of the story?
4. What was strange about the 'book'? Why did Margie find it strange?
5. Do you agree with Margie that schools today are more fun than the school in the story? Give reasons for your answer.
6. Do you think schools as described in the story would exist in future? Why?

## 2. The Nest - Robert Zacks

**Genre:** *Short Story*

### **Rationale:**

*The Nest* is a narrative short story of a young boy named Jimmy, who is rebellious by nature. The story focuses on the relationship of a son and his mother with regards to making decisions. His mother's sway over his will always gets on his nerves. But the story takes its turn when his mother admits, over his friend Paul, who has been to a reform school that she was wrong and Jimmy was right. For the first time he found himself on an uncomfortable platform which gave him a mixed feeling of pride and apprehension. He will have to decide on his own from now on.

Jimmy was fourteen. He was listening to his mother tell him, in her kindly, measured speech, why she didn't want him to go on the hike, and his clear gray eyes were clouded with sullen rebellion.

"All right, Mom," he said in the controlled voice he had learned from his parents. "If you say I can't go, then I can't, can I?"

Mrs. Swanson said gravely, "You make me sound like a dictator, Jimmy."

"Well, you are, kind of, aren't you?" said Jimmy coldly. "I have to do what you say."

His mother winced a little. She bit her lower lip and considered this.

"It isn't as simple as that," she said, pushing her mind with some difficulty toward coping with the point Jimmy had made. She smiled a little, however, in pleasure at such evidence of Jimmy's growing power to analyze a situation. "My decisions are made for your own good, Jimmy."

He misunderstood her smile. He thought she was relegating him to his position as a child. All his parents seemed to do these days was figure out how to hem him in. "Jimmy, you mustn't —"

The words, the restrictions, they wrapped around him like tentacles of an octopus, crushing in on his chest so he couldn't seem to breathe.



He was on his feet, yelling, the controlled, polite speech lost in his bursting anguish for freedom. “Everything is for my own good. Everything! But you aren’t telling me the truth. You know why you don’t want me to go on the hike? Because of Paul. You just don’t like him.”

He sucked in his breath, almost sobbing, shocked at himself and yet glad. Mrs. Swanson had an unhappy look. The Swansons were a happy family; but these days a strange restlessness had come into it.

“No,” she admitted. “I don’t think Paul is good for you. I don’t like your associating with him.”

Jimmy said, all his heart and soul in his words, “I like Paul. He’s my best friend.”

“His father is a drunkard,” said Mrs. Swanson quietly. “And Paul came out of reform school, didn’t he? He stole from a candy store —”

“He’s *nice!*” cried Jimmy, pain in his voice. “And he isn’t a crook. He made a mistake. He told me what happened. He was showing off. And now nobody will be friends —” “But he’s formed a gang already, hasn’t he? I’ve heard about it.”

“It’s just a club, that’s all,” said Jimmy. “And — and I’m a member. The club is running the hike.”

“We won’t discuss it further.” Mrs. Swanson’s voice was suddenly like steel. She stood up. She hesitated, pitying him, and tried to soften it with logic. “Remember, Jimmy, every time we’ve disagreed, it turned out I knew what I was talking about.”

But he didn’t listen further. Jimmy turned and blindly ran off the porch across the lawn toward the meeting place at Briggs’ Drugstore.

After three blocks he slowed down, panting, his face set with fury. The habit of thinking, encouraged by his parents at every opportunity, began to function.

“I know what’s best for you. I know what’s best for you. That’s all I ever hear!” muttered Jimmy.

To his reluctant mind sprang memories. The time he insisted he could swim to the raft. Mr. Swanson had curtly said no, he couldn't risk it. Jimmy had raged, with his father quietly letting him run down. Then his father had told him to go ahead, but that he'd swim next to him.

Jimmy's throat strangled suddenly at the memory: the water was constricting his windpipe dreadfully, his eyes were bulging, his legs and arms numb with exhaustion from the too-long swim. And then the wonderful, strong, blessed arms of his father turning him on his back, pulling him back to shore —

It was confusing. Jimmy shook his head in bewilderment. Suddenly he felt uncertain, the rebellion drained out of him.

Paul was waiting for him at the drugstore with a stillness upon his face as he leaned against the glass front. He was about fourteen, with dark hair and bright dark eyes. He wore dungarees. Jimmy saw, when he came closer, traces of tears on Paul's cheeks.

“Well,” said Paul fiercely, “let's go.”

Jimmy started. “Where's everybody?”

“They changed their minds,” said Paul, hate in his voice.

The two boys looked at each other, and Jimmy understood. It made fury grow in him, it made him want to hit somebody. All those parents had stopped the gang from going with Paul because he was once in a reform school.

Paul said, his voice odd, “Maybe you can't go either?”

Jimmy looked deep into Paul's eyes. His heart beat fast with friendship and loyalty. “Don't be a jerk. Come on,” he said cheerfully.

Paul's face changed. The hate seeped away, leaving sweetness and humbleness. He flung an arm over Jimmy's shoulder happily.

“Your — your mother doesn't care if you go, huh?” he said.

Jimmy swallowed. Paul needed this so badly. So very badly. Paul had no mother at all. And his father just didn't like looking at the world without Paul's mother, and was always drunk.

"Nah," said Jimmy. "She — she even said I should bring you to supper, afterwards. What shall I tell her, huh?"

Paul turned ashen, then flushed a deep scarlet. "Sure," he muttered. "Be glad to."

"I got to call her," said Jimmy numbly. "Just a minute."

Jimmy went into the drugstore and called his mother. He told her in a choking voice he was going on the hike, just he and Paul, and he didn't care how mad she got. "Nobody else came," he shouted into the telephone, "because all the mothers —" He was unable to go on for a moment. Then he finished. "I'm bringing him to supper afterwards, Mom. I said you asked him."

He hung up before she could answer.

They had a wonderful day. Wonderful. It was May, and the leaves on the trees were chartreuse and new. They went six miles out of town. They watched chipmunks skitter. They lay on their backs and stared at fleecy white clouds changing shape. Paul's face showed his contentment. His eyes were dreamy.

But Jimmy, in one cloud, saw the stern face of his mother.

But Mrs. Swanson's face, when she greeted Paul, wasn't stern at all. She looked uncertain as she studied his wistful, shy smile. Jimmy knew, of course, that his parents would wait until later to lecture him. They never made a scene before other people.

Throughout supper, Mr. Swanson was very friendly to their guest. But Jimmy could see that at the same time his father was carefully studying Paul. And Paul, never knowing, thinking they'd wanted him, had invited him, glowed and showed the side of his personality that Jimmy liked.

After they'd washed the dishes (at Paul's suggestion), Mr. Swanson nodded to Paul. "Come on, Paul," he said. "I'll show you my tool shop."

As Paul eagerly followed him down the basement steps, Mrs. Swanson touched Jimmy's shoulder. Jimmy's heart thudded as he reluctantly lingered behind. He turned and glared in defiance.

"I don't care," he whispered. "Nobody else came. I couldn't —"

"Jimmy," she said softly, and bent and kissed him. "I'm proud of you, Jimmy. You did the right thing at the right time."

"But you said —" faltered Jimmy. "I mean —"

Her eyes were very bright. "I was wrong," she said steadily. "This time I was wrong. You were right. He's a nice boy, I think."

She turned away, patting his cheek as she did so.

At first, joy filled Jimmy. Joy and pride. *I'm the one who's right*, he thought, dazed. *My mother was wrong. Actually wrong. She admitted it.*

And then came a queer and frightening sense of loss, as well as of gain. It was like being alone, high up on a precipice where the footing was slippery with moss. Jimmy felt he had to be careful of each step. He had always been sure, even in his anger, of being able to depend on the wisdom of his father and mother. They'd always been right.

But not any more. Now they *might* be wrong. And Jimmy would have to decide.

### **Make Connections**

1. Would your parents allow you to be friends with someone like Paul? Why?
2. How is your father or mother like or unlike Jimmy's?
3. Is the title of the story appropriate? Explain how?
4. Share with your friends a similar experience you have had like Jimmy in the story.

### 3. The Red Sweater - Mark Hager

**Genre:** *Short Story*

***Rationale:***

*Sometimes when we think of giving we tend to think of only those things that we can buy. Yet the best kinds of gifts come from the heart. These gifts usually mean some kind of personal sacrifice and when we think of what makes community work self-sacrifice is a major part of it. Community is about caring about others more than ourselves. These are the things that matter most.*

*This story contains many elements you have encountered already in this book. The main characters are an old man and a young boy; there are dogs in the story; there are dreams and harsh realities. There is even a strange creature—the blue figure of “a great elk with high head and long horns.”*

Old Mr. Conway sent for me to come down to his house. He lived neighbor to us, and he was old, and I guessed it was just another of the ordinary chores my mother had been sending me to do for him ever since I had been big enough.

When I got there, the old gentleman wanted me to take his old shoes overtown to Mr. Gentile’s shoeshop and get them mended.

While I waited for him to pull off his shoes, the car drove up, and a man and a boy got out and asked for a drink of water. While I showed them the spring and where the tin cup hung, I noticed the boy’s sweater. The boy looked about fourteen, which was my age, and the sweater was my size, and it was the most beautiful sweater I had ever seen. On the front was stitched in blue the figure of a great elk with high head and long horns.

While the boy was getting a drink, old Mr. Conway’s two puppies started gnawing at his shoestrings. Then the boy turned and started playing with the puppies. After the boy got friendly like that with the puppies, I ventured to ask him where did he get his sweater and how much did one like that cost, and he said it cost three dollars, and told me the store overtown and said they had a whole rack full of them.

As the boy and his father went back to the car, I heard the boy put at his father to buy him one of the puppies, but it seemed as if the father wasn’t paying the boy any mind.

After they drove off, old Mr. Conway wrapped his old shoes in a newspaper. Then he dug in his pockets until he found a dollar and a quarter in change.

“Sorry, son,” he said, “that I ain’t got none extra for you to spend. The truth is, that is the last cent between me and the Judgment Day.”

I knew that was so. I had asked my mother more than once why old Mr. Conway lived alone when he had children who could take him home with them.

Then she'd explain he did not want to go home with them. She said the old man loved his little house, and I would tell her I did not see anything about it to love. She would say that was because I was a boy yet, and could not understand the minds and hearts and feelings of old people. She said he could love the cracks in the windowpanes, and the saggy, mossy roof; that he could love the sigh of the wind in the weeping willow tree, and the laugh of the spring that giggled as it came from the red bank. "Why, to him," my mother would say, "the old place is drowsy with dreams and mouldy with memories dear to his heart."

But all that made no sense to me. My fingers had ached when I had chopped his wood, and on this occasion my heart ached for a red sweater with the proud elk and the great horns.

As I took the old man's shoes under my arm and started down the road, he called from the door.

"Tell him to fix'em while you wait," he called. "Tell him I'll have to sit by the fire in my sock feet till you get back."

As I went down the road, I kept thinking of the red sweater, and when I got home, I slipped into the kitchen and felt in the money cup on top of the cabinet. I always remembered to feel in the cup first, because we kids could tell it hurt our mother to ask her for money when she did not have it.

But this time I felt bills in the cup and ran to my mother. I told her about the boy with the red sweater and the proud elk with the great horns stitched in blue, and after a little while I had wheedled the three dollars out of her.

When I got to town, I went first to the big store the boy had told me about, and searched along the rack of sweaters until I came to a red one with the elk on it, and bought it. Outside, I put it on. I did not run now. I walked slow and kind of proud, like the elk on my sweater.

Inside Mr. Gentile's shoeshop, I laid the old shoes on the counter. He unrolled them from the paper. He examined the old shoes. Then he looked at me and shook his head.

"Can't be fixed no more," he said. "Nothing left to sew the soles to."

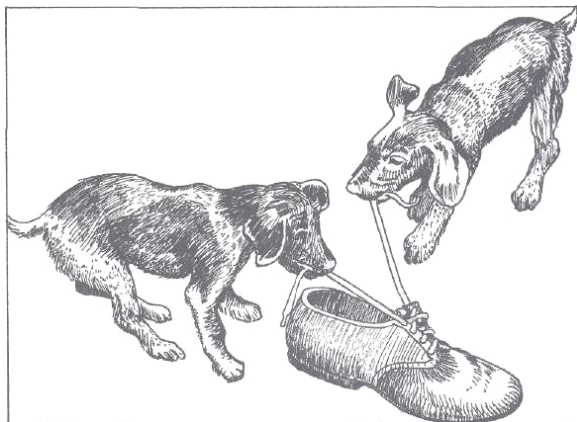
He pushed them back. I took the old shoes under my arm and walked out.

For a little while I stood on the street corner with the old shoes under my arm. I could see the old man waiting in his sock feet in the little house in the bend of the creek. I glanced down at the old shoes that bore the shape of the old man's feet, and I wondered if these old shoes hadn't been even closer to him than his best friends on earth.

I began to walk slowly around the block. In front of the big store, I stopped again. I felt of the one dollar and a quarter in my pocket. Then I pulled off my red sweater and went inside the store again.

“I decided I don’t want no sweater,” I told the man who had sold it to me. “I was just wondering do you have a pair of shoes, about the size of these old shoes, that you would trade me for the sweater and this dollar and a quarter.” I even explained to the man who I wanted the shoes for and how his old shoes could not be fixed any more.

“Why, I know that old gentleman,” the man said. “He’s been in here several times. He always feels of a pair of soft shoes. I still have them.”



He went back and pulled down a shoe box. I saw \$4.50 on the end of the box.

“I just got this sweater and this dollar and a quarter,” I said.

The man did not answer me. He just reached up and jerked down a pair of heavy, long, yarn socks, stuck one in each shoe, and wrapped the new shoes in the old newspaper.

I went out of the store, leaving my red sweater and the proud elk with the great horns lying on the counter, but I had a curious feeling inside me.

When I got back in sight of the old man’s little house, I slowed down and considered. I thought of curious things and sayings. I remembered my mother saying the sunshine always seemed brighter just after a dark storm cloud, and how she said dark hollows were good places to look at the stars from, and how happy you could get just after a streak of sorrow.

I thought I might make the old man happier by first making him a little more unhappy.

I recollect to this day how I found him waiting in his sock feet in his big old easy chair by the fire.

“Mr. Gentile couldn’t fix your old shoes,” I said. “He said there was nothing left to sew the soles to.”

What puzzled me was that what I said did not dim a curious gay twinkle I saw in the old man’s blue eyes.

“That’s all right,” he said, “just give ‘em here. I can manage in’em a little while longer.”

He took the old newspaper and unrolled the new soft shoes. I recollect how he felt of the soft leather with his old hands, and then some water came down his cheeks, and he got up. He walked over to his bed and from under the pillow he got a red sweater with a proud, high-headed elk stitched on the front, and the elk had great horns.

“I saw you eyein’ this sweater this mornin’,” the old man said. “As the hunters came back, I hit that boy up for a trade. I traded him one of the puppies for his sweater.”

I gave the old man’s neck a long, hard hug, and then I broke for home with my sweater on to show my mother the elk with the great horns.

### ***Notes to students:***

#### ***Reading***

*After reading this story ask yourself the question, ‘would you like to read something else by this author? Why or why not?’ Discuss this question with the person sitting next to you.*

#### ***Speaking & Listening***

*In small groups discuss the following dilemma: Would the ‘good times’ of this story have been as significant if the characters had not gone through the ‘bad times’ first? Your group will provide an oral summary of their collective response.*

#### ***Writing & Representing***

*You will write a personal anecdote based upon an incident where you have made a sacrifice in your life similar to the main character’s. If you have not experienced such an event you may write about an incident you have heard of either through your family or community.*

#### **Make Connections**

1. What do you think is the conflict in the story? How is it resolved?
2. Does Mr. Conway remind you of anyone you know? Share with your friends.
3. Many a times we want to have some things but have to give up because of some reasons. Write or talk about such situations when you had to give up something that you wanted badly. Emphasize on the reason(s) for giving up.



## 4. The Night Train at Deoli - Ruskin Bond

**Genre:** *Short Story*

**Rationale:**

*We sometimes meet or see someone who lives in our memory forever.*

*The Night Train to Deoli is such a story of a chance meeting, but the effect of which lasts for a long time. This is a story of an 18-year-old boy who goes through an adolescent infatuation, narrated in a simple tone yet brings out the values of innocence, memories, connections, acceptance among others.*

There are some moments in life that are never forgotten. It can be anything — a favourite toy from childhood, a time of shared laughter, the pain of lost love, the scent of a flower, sunlight on a distant mountain top, the platform of a small railway station in northern India, in the soft quiet light of early morning..

When I was at college, I used to spend my summer holidays at Dehra, at my grandmother's place. I stayed there in the hills from early May until late in July. Deoli was a small station about thirty miles from Dehra; it marked the beginning of the heavy jungles of the Indian Terai area.



Ruskin Bond  
born 1934



Great Northern Railway (1950s)

The train used to reach Deoli at about five in the morning, when the station was poorly lit with oil lamps, and the jungle across the railway line was just visible in the early light of day. Deoli only had one platform, a waiting room, and an office for the stationmaster. On the platform there was a tea stall, a fruit seller, and a few thin, hungry dogs; not much else, because the train stopped there for only ten minutes before rushing on into the forests.

Why it stopped at Deoli, I don't know. Nothing ever happened there. Nobody got off the train and nobody got on. But the train always stopped there a full ten minutes, and then a bell sounded, the guard blew his whistle, and soon Deoli was left behind and forgotten.

I used to wonder what happened in Deoli, behind the station walls. I always felt sorry for that lonely little platform, and for the place that nobody wanted to visit. I decided that one day I would get off the train at Deoli, and spend the day there, just to please the town.

I was eighteen, visiting my grandmother, and the night train stopped at Deoli. A girl came down the platform, selling baskets.

It was a cold morning and the girl had a shawl thrown across her shoulders. Her feet were bare and her clothes were old, but she was a young girl, walking like a queen. When she came to my window, she stopped. She saw that I was staring at her, but at first she pretended not to notice. She had a pale skin, shiny black hair, and dark, troubled eyes. And then those eyes, searching and expressive, met mine.

She stood by my window for some time and neither of us said anything. But when she moved on, I found myself leaving my seat and going to the door. I stepped out and stood waiting on the platform, looking the other way, away from her. I walked across to the tea stall. Water was boiling over a small fire, but the owner of the stall was busy serving tea somewhere on the train. The girl followed me to the stall.



'Do you want to buy a basket?' she asked. 'They are very strong, made of the finest...'

'No,' I said, 'I don't want a basket.' suddenly filled with light. We said nothing for some time, but we each knew what the other was feeling.

I wanted to put her on the train there and then, and take her away with me. I hated the idea of having to watch her disappear into the distance of Deoli station. I took the baskets from her hand and put them down on the ground. She put out her hand for one of them, but I caught her hand and held it.

'I have to go to Delhi,' I said.

She nodded. 'I do not have to go anywhere.'

The guard blew his whistle for the train to leave. How I hated him for doing that!

'I will come again,' I said. 'Will you be here?'

She nodded again, and as she nodded, the bell rang and the train started to move. I had to pull my hand away from the girl and run for the moving train.

This time I did not forget her. She was with me for the rest of the journey, and for long afterwards. All that year she was a bright, living thing in my mind. And when college finished, I packed and left for Dehra earlier than usual. My grandmother would be pleased at my eagerness to see her.



I was anxious as the train entered Deoli, because I was wondering what I should say to the girl and what I should do. I was determined not to stand helplessly in front of her, unable to speak or express my feelings.

The train came to Deoli, and I looked up and down the platform, but I could not see the girl anywhere.



I opened the door and stepped on to the platform, deeply disappointed, and fearing the worst. I ran up to the stationmaster and said, 'Do you know the girl who used to sell baskets here?'

'No, I don't,' he replied. 'And you'd better get on the train if you don't want to be left

behind.'

But I walked up and down the platform, and stared past the station buildings. All I saw was a tree and a dusty road leading into the jungle. Where did the road go? The train was moving out of the station, and I had to run up the platform and jump for the door of my compartment. Then, as the train gathered speed, I sat miserably in front of the window.

What could I do about finding a girl I had seen only twice, who had said very little to me, and about whom I knew nothing — absolutely nothing — but for whom I felt a fondness and responsibility that I had never felt before?

My grandmother was not pleased with my visit after all, because I only stayed at her place for a couple of weeks. Feeling restless and worried, I took the train back, intending to ask further questions of the stationmaster at Deoli.

But at Deoli there was a new stationmaster. The previous man had been moved to another station, and the new man didn't know anything about the girl who sold baskets. I found the owner of the tea stall, and asked him if he knew anything about the girl with the baskets.

‘Yes, there was such a girl here, I remember quite well,’ he said. ‘But she has stopped coming now.’ ‘Why?’ I asked. ‘What happened to her?’ ‘How should I know?’ he said. ‘She was nothing to me.’ And once again I had to run for the train.

As Deoli platform slid away, I decided that one day I would have to break my journey there, spend a day in the town, make enquiries, and find the girl who had stolen my heart with nothing but a look from her dark, impatient eyes.

I cheered myself up with this thought during my last few months in college. I went to Dehra again in the summer and when, in the early hours of the morning, the night train came into Deoli station, I looked up and down the platform for signs of the girl, knowing I wouldn't find her but hoping just the same.

Somehow, I couldn't bring myself to break my journey at Deoli and spend a day there. (If this was a film, I thought, I'd get off the train, solve the mystery, and provide a suitable ending for the whole thing.) I think I was afraid to do this. I was afraid of discovering what had really happened to the girl. Perhaps she was no longer in Deoli, perhaps she was married, perhaps she had fallen ill...

In the last few years I have passed through Deoli many times, and I always look out of the train window, half expecting to see the same unchanged face smiling up at me. I wonder what happens in Deoli, behind the station walls. But I will never break my journey there. I prefer to keep hoping and dreaming, and looking out of the window

up and down that lonely platform, waiting for the girl with the baskets.

I never break my journey at Deoli, but I pass through as often as I can.

### **About the Author:**

*Ruskin Bond is an eminent contemporary Indian writer of British descent. He prolifically authored inspiring children's books and was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award to honor his work of literature. Born on May 19, 1934, in Kasauli, India, he was the son of Edith Clarke and Aubrey Bond. His father served in the Royal Air Force and frequently moved from places to places along with his son. Some of other notable works of Ruskin Bond include Blue Umbrella, A Flight of Pigeons and Funny Side Up. His works have also been adapted for television and film. A BBC TV-series is based on his debut novel, short story "Susanna's Seven Husbands" was adapted into a film as 7 Khoon Maaf and film Junoon is inspired by his A Flight of Pigeons.*

### **Make Connections**

1. How did the narrator react when he saw the girl for the first time?
2. What do you think about the end of the story? If you were the writer, how would you have ended it?
3. The narrator seems to have fallen in love at first sight with a girl about whom he does not know anything. Is this possible in real life? Discuss with your friends with examples.
4. From the information gathered from the story about the girl, think or talk with friends about her home and her family.



# **SUPPLEMENTARY**

## 1. The Cat and the Confession - *Co-authored by Nagaraj*

STRANGE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED IN MY LIFE, BUT NONE quite as strange as the one I'm about to tell you.

It happened when my wedding had been arranged with a girl from Delhi, and I felt the need for a separate and independent accommodation.

The house I had chosen was a single-storied, two-bedroomed one located on the outskirts of R.T. Nagar in Bangalore. The area had earlier been a coconut plantation which in due course of time was acquired by the Bangalore Development Authority and then converted into residential plots and sold. Tall and handsome coconut and areca nut trees completed the picturesque view of this calm and quiet locality. No one dared to step out of their houses after dark, what with the added fear of eerie noises from rustling leaves. But the queer things were yet to come.

My wife complained often to me about a white cat meowing pathetically at the kitchen window. "It never misses an opportunity to scratch the kitchen floor, God knows why!" she said. "It is not an auspicious sign. The cat doesn't want to eat anything, either." I wondered at the cat's unusual behaviour. It was as if there was something under the kitchen floor.

At first, I asked my wife to ignore it; but when the cat's visits became quite frequent, I decided to put an end to the matter. The very next day, I sealed the kitchen window with mesh. But this didn't stop the cat from crying and groaning near the window.

I realized that something was definitely fishy around here. But finding no other way to stop the cat from coming, I asked my wife to just ignore it. There was little I could do. That night, I recalled another incident that had taken place on the day after my wedding in Delhi. It was early morning, and I was sitting with my bride on the terrace of my house. We noticed two squirrels playing near the water-tank. My wife found them extremely cute, and she scurried back inside to get some groundnuts.

She came back with the nuts and fed some to the two squirrels; and then, three or four smaller squirrels decided to join in the jamboree. They looked like a happy family playing in the trees. All of a sudden, there was a commotion among them. They began to make a lot of noise, scampered towards us and back to the tank, and again towards us. We were baffled by this and could not make out what was going on, But after a while, the noise ceased and the squirrels vanished.

The next morning, I got up and opened the tap and found the water carrying a foul



stink. I went up to the terrace to check the water tank: and what did I see there? A baby squirrel, floating lifelessly in the water. Perhaps the squirrels were trying to tell us that one of their friends needed help. Sadly, we weren't able to understand. That's why I decided not to neglect the cat. Something was going on here, and I wanted to find out what.

Another frequent complaint of my wife was that a single sink was too small for household needs. It was time to hit two birds with one stone. The installation of a double sink would require the digging of the kitchen floor to accommodate a floor trap and a drainage pipe. And so, I would find out what lay beneath the floor... Under normal circumstances, my wife would never have allowed me to touch the kitchen floor!

I took the permission of my landlord, Mr. Venkat and arranged for a plumber and a labourer. And so the digging began. After about twenty minutes of digging, I decided to relax: when all of a sudden, a bloodcurdling scream echoed through the house. The labourer scampered out of the kitchen screaming "Bhoot! Bhoot".



"What happened? What happened, Manmohan?" I asked the labourer. He only pointed to the kitchen. I rushed inside and was horrified to find the hand of a skeleton in the half-dug trench.

Immediately, I called a neighbour, Madhavan Rao. He was stunned. Then he rushed to call the police.

The news spread like wildfire. By the time the police arrived, my house was surrounded by many of my neighbours, of whom a few entered the house.

I went outside and saw a few policemen disembarking from two jeeps. An inspector stepped up to me and said, "Hello Mr. Gupta, I'm officer Jai. I believe you have found a skeleton in your house. I'm here to investigate."

"You are welcome, officer Jai," I said, "Please step inside."

I showed him the way to the kitchen. He went in, followed by the rest of his crew.

Officer Jai saw the hand and ran to use my phone. In the next half hour, the forensic detectives arrived. In no time, the digging was completed and the rest of the skeleton exhumed. It was no ordinary one, either. It was a full-fledged skeleton and wore bangles, a chain and tattered pieces of cloth.

Suddenly a man from the crowd burst into tears, “It’s my daughter! Oh, my daughter!” It was Mr. Agarwal, one of my neighbours. The police had to restrain him as he ran towards the skeleton. In the midst of all this commotion, I saw the white cat crying as it ran back and forth between our house and Mr. Agarwal’s house.

My wife, of course, was scared to death by all this. She rushed to the bedroom. Officer Jai insisted on staying on for further investigation. I obliged him and went inside my bedroom to see my wife packing her bags.

“What are you doing?”

“I refuse to stay in this wretched house for another minute! I’m going to Asha’s house.”

So saying, my wife finished her packing and left. What could I say?

A couple of days later, the reports from the Forensic Department of Investigation arrived. Officer Jai showed me the report. It stated that the skeleton was of a girl, probably ten to twelve years of age. She possibly had had sharp facial features. She was killed about four years ago.

“Quite an astonishing report,” I said.

“Oh, yes,” officer Jai said. “But I’ll tell you what’s more astonishing. The chain which was found identified the skeleton to be that of a girl named Sushma, who was reported missing about four years ago. In fact she was the daughter of your neighbour, Mr. Agarwal.”

With the report from the FDI, the case of the missing girl, Sushma, which had been closed three years ago, was reopened. Further reports from the FDI deduced that she was strangled to death.

Of course, I was not staying in that house any longer, either. My wife and I stayed with a brother of mine before shifting to a flat in Malleshwaram a week after that. Officer Jai kept updating me on the case and the media wasn’t far behind.

I also came to know that my erstwhile landlord, Mr. Venkat, was questioned; but he, of course had bought the house recently and never lived in it.

So, the police started questioning the person who had sold the house to Mr. Venkat a year ago. He was Mr. Bala Murali. Officer Jai told me that Bala Murali was very frightened at the prospect of being questioned. He said that when the house was being

constructed, the watchman and the contractor had some problems and that both had left soon after.

I finally arrived at the conclusion that either the contractor or the watchman was responsible for the death of the girl. But when officer Jai arrived a few days later, his news stunned me yet again.

“Case solved, Mr. Gupta! We have finally found the murderer,” officer Jai announced triumphantly.

“Well, was it the contractor or the chowkidar (watchman) then?” I asked.

“Neither. Believe it or not, it was Mr. Bala Murali himself!”

“What?! Not the chowkidar or the contractor? But you had said that they had had problems and had left?”

“That was just a lie. Bala Murali lied to us, thinking that we would never be able to trace the contractor or his chowkidar as they were constantly on the move. But since he had revealed both their names, I alerted police forces all over the city; and we traced the duo.”

“What did they say?”

“Though both were questioned separately, their answers were the same—that they never had had any problems between them. Neither did they leave the site on their own. They said that it was Bala Murali who had forced them to leave, saying that he had some financial problems and that he would resume work after a month.”

“Then what happened?”

“A month later when work resumed, the contractor found that the kitchen floor concreting had already been done. He, of course, had questioned Bala Murali, who had said that a bag of cement had got wet in the rain; and that instead of wasting it, he had hired a labourer and got kitchen floor concreting done.”

“But if Bala Murali had had some financial problems, where had he got the cement bag from?”

“Well, the contractor wasn’t as bright as you; but he, too, realized this fact when he was questioned.”

“So, was that the only evidence against him?”

“No. On the second digging, we found a Parker pen an inch below where the skeleton was found. On showing it to the contractor and the chowkidar, both immediately identified it as Bala Murali’s.”

“How did Bala Murali react?”

“When I asked him where his favourite blue Parker pen was, he was perplexed and said in a sad tone that he had lost it. That’s when I showed him the pen. He immediately asked me where I had got it. I told him that it had been found just beneath the skeleton. On hearing this, he began to sweat profusely and started shaking. He was on the verge of wetting his pants.”

“Was that it?”

“No. It was only after a nerve-wracking interrogation and third degree methods that he found no other way to squirm out of his crime. He finally confessed that he had raped a girl called Sushma, who had entered the site out of curiosity along with her pet. He then murdered her, fearing that she would spill the beans. He himself dug the kitchen floor (that’s when the pen must have fallen), buried her, covered the body with slaked lime so that it would rot faster and not stink, and finally did the concreting in the absence of the contractor so that no one would dig further. The only eye witness, Bala Murali claimed, was the girl’s pet—a white cat.”

Curiosity killed not the cat, but its mistress.

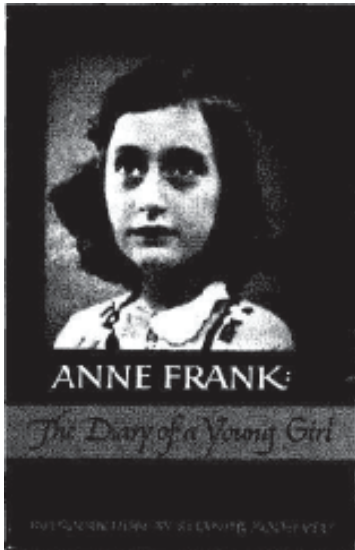
# ESSAY/NON-FICTION

# 1. Anne Frank's Diary - Anne Frank

**Genre:** *Non-Fiction (Diary)*

## **Rationale:**

*Anne Frank's Diary* has become a popular book world wide. It's an account of Anne Frank's life under hiding from the persecution meted out against the Jews by the Nazi Germany. The following passage is an excerpt from her diary. One finds from her diary that beneath Anne's bubbly exterior, however, there was a curious, questioning teenager.



Up until June 1942, Anne Frank's daily life in Amsterdam was happy and carefree: school, home, holidays, reading, friends, and fun. Though Holland was being ruled by the Nazi invaders, the Franks and all the other Jewish families there still tried to carry on their lives as normally as possible.

Beneath Anne's bubbly exterior, however, there was a curious, questioning teenager. *What was she really like? Who and what was important to her? Whom was she important to? Why did she feel alone and isolated, even amidst the love and closeness of her family and friends?*

On her thirteenth birthday (Friday, June 12, 1942) Anne received many lovely gifts. But perhaps the most special was a red-checkered diary book. She had never owned nor kept a diary before. Anne's first two entries were short, telling mostly about her birthday. Then...

*Saturday, 20 June, 1942*

I haven't written for a few days, because I wanted first of all to think about my diary. It's an odd idea for someone like me to keep a diary; not only because I have never done so before, but because it seems to me that neither I—nor for that matter anyone else — will be interested in the ideas and feelings of a thirteen-year-old schoolgirl. Still, what does that matter? I want to write, but more than that, I want to bring out all kinds of things that lie buried deep in my heart.

There is a saying that “paper is more patient than man”; it came back to me on one of my slightly melancholy days, while I sat chin in hand, feeling too bored and limp even to make up my mind whether to go out or stay at home. Yes, there is no doubt that paper is patient and as I don’t intend to show this cardboard-covered notebook, bearing the proud name of “diary”, to anyone, unless I find a real friend, boy or girl, probably nobody cares. And now I come to the root of the matter, the reason for my starting a diary: it is that I have no such real friend.

Let me put it more clearly, since no one will believe that a girl of thirteen feels herself quite alone in the world, nor is it so. I have darling parents and a sister of sixteen. I know about thirty people whom one might call friends—I have strings of boy friends, anxious to catch a glimpse of me and who, failing that, peep at me through mirrors in class. I have relations, aunts and uncles, who are darlings too, a good home; no — I don’t seem to lack anything. But it’s the same with all my friends, just fun and joking, nothing more. I can never bring myself to talk of anything outside the common round. We don’t seem to be able to get any closer, that is the root of the trouble. Perhaps I lack confidence, but anyway, there is a stubborn fact and I don’t seem to be able to do anything about it.

Hence, this diary. ... I don’t want to set down a series of bald facts in a diary like most people do, but I want this diary itself to be my friend, and I shall call my friend Kitty.



*A canal in Amsterdam, near the Franks' hiding-place*



*On Wednesday, July 8, Anne's father, Otto Frank, decided that he must quickly carry out the plans he had secretly made to protect his family from the oncoming Nazi persecution. The family would go into hiding until the war was over. Mr. Frank had prepared a hidden apartment in a warehouse-office building. Anne recorded 'moving day' in her diary.*

*Thursday, 9 July, 1942*

Dear Kitty,

So we walked in the pouring rain, Daddy, Mummy, and I, each with a school satchel and shopping bag filled to the brim with all kinds of things thrown together anyhow. We got sympathetic looks from people on their way to work. You could see by their faces how sorry they were they couldn't offer us a lift; the gaudy yellow star spoke for itself.

Only when we were on the road did Mummy and Daddy begin to tell me bits and pieces about the plan. For months as many of our goods and chattels and necessities of life as possible had been sent away and they were sufficiently ready for us to have gone into hiding of our own accord on July 18. The plan had had to be speeded up ten days because of the Nazi call-up [of Margot, Anne's older sister, to go and work as a labourer in Germany], so our quarters would not be so well organized, but we had to make the best of it. The hiding-place itself would be in the building where Daddy has his office. . . .

*The Frank family were soon joined by Mr. and Mrs. van Daan and their fifteen-year-old son, Peter, and later by an elderly Jewish dentist, Albert Dussel.*

*For the next two years, the group of eight refugees lived together in the secret apartment. They stirred only at night, since daily business was carried on as usual in the lower part of the building. Their Dutch friends in the office below kept the presence of the upstairs fugitives secret, coming only at night to bring food, gifts, and what little news they could of the outside world.*

*Meanwhile, Anne continued to fill her personal diary with questions, fears, dreams — and fights!*

*Friday, 21 August, 1942*

. . . I'm not working much at present; I'm giving myself holidays until September. Then Daddy is going to give me lessons; it's shocking how much I've forgotten already. There is little change in our life here. Mr. van Daan and I usually manage to upset each other; it's just the opposite with Margot whom he likes very much. Mummy sometimes treats me just like a baby, which I can't bear. Otherwise things are going better. I still don't like Peter any more, he is so boring; he flops lazily on his bed half the time, does a bit of carpentry, and then goes back for another snooze. What a fool! It is lovely weather



and in spite of everything we make the most we can of it by lying on a camp bed in the attic, where the sun shines through an open window.

Yours, Anne

*Monday, 21 September, 1942*

Dear Kitty,

... I was being discussed [by the adults] and they decided that I'm not completely stupid after all, which had the effect of making me work extra hard the next day. I certainly don't want to still be in the first form [of high school] when I'm fourteen or fifteen.

Also the fact that I'm hardly allowed to read any decent books was mentioned. . . . First I must be more developed, like my talented sister. Then we talk about my ignorance of philosophy and psychology, about which I know nothing. Perhaps by next year I shall be wiser! . . .

*Sunday, 27 September, 1942*

Dear Kitty,

Just had a big bust-up with Mummy for the umpteenth time; we simply don't get on together these days and Margot and I don't hit it off any too well either. As a rule we don't go in for such outbursts as this in our family. Still, it's by no means always pleasant for me. Margot's and Mummy's natures are completely strange to me. I can understand my friends better than my own mother—too bad! . . .

Mrs. van Daan had another tantrum. She is terribly moody. She keeps hiding more of her private belongings. Mummy ought to answer each van Daan "disappearance" with a Frank "disappearance". How some people do adore bringing up other people's children in addition to their own. The van Daans are that kind. Margot doesn't need it, she is such a goody-goody, perfection itself, but I seem to have enough mischief in me for the two of us put together. You should hear us at mealtimes, with reprimands and cheeky answers flying to and fro. Mummy and Daddy always defend me stoutly. I'd have to give up if it weren't for them. Although they do tell me that I mustn't talk so much, that I must be more retiring and not poke my nose into everything, still I seem doomed to failure. If Daddy wasn't so patient, I'd be afraid I was going to turn out to be a terrific disappointment to my parents and they are plenty lenient with me. . .

*Friday, 16 October, 1942*

Dear Kitty,

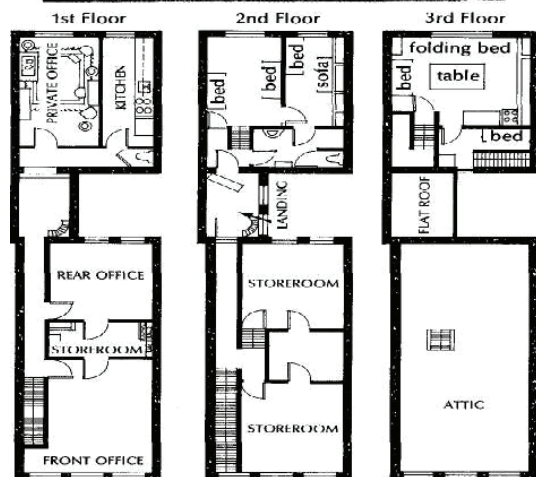
... Mummy, Margot, and I are as thick as thieves again. It's really much better. Margot and I got in the same bed together last evening, it was a frightful squash, but that was just the fun of it. She asked if she could read my diary. I said "Yes — at least, bits of it"; and then I asked if I could read hers and she said "Yes." Then we got onto the subject of the future. I asked her what she wanted to be. But she wouldn't say and made a great secret of it. I gathered something about teaching; I'm not sure if I'm right, but I think so. Really, I shouldn't be so curious!

This morning I was lying on Peter's bed, having chased him off it first. He was furious with me, not that I cared very much. He might be a bit more friendly with me for once; after all I did give him an apple yesterday.

I asked Margot if she thought I was very ugly. She said that I was quite attractive and that I had nice eyes. Rather vague, don't you think?

Till next time,

Yours, Anne



*Diagram of the house, with the secret apartment on the second and third floors*

*Monday, 9 November, 1942*

Dear Kitty,

Yesterday was Peter's birthday; he was sixteen. He had some nice presents. Among other things a game of Monopoly, a razor, and a lighter. Not that he smokes much; it's really just for show.

The biggest surprise came from Mr. van Daan when, at one o'clock, he announced

that the British had landed in Tunis, Algiers, Casablanca, and Oran [all in northern Africa]. “This is the beginning of the end,” everyone was saying, but Churchill, the British Prime Minister, who had probably heard the same thing in England, said: “This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.” Do you see the difference? There is certainly reason for optimism. Stalingrad, the Russian town which they’ve already been defending for three months, still hasn’t fallen into German hands.

But to return to affairs in our secret den. I must tell you something about our food supply. As you know, we have some real greedy pigs on the top floor. We get our bread from a nice baker, a friend of Koophuis. We don’t get so much as we used to at home, naturally. But it’s sufficient. Four ration cards have also been bought illegally. Their price is going up all the time; it has now gone up from twenty-seven florins to thirty-three. And all that for a little slip of printed paper! In order to have something in the house that will keep, apart from our 150 tins of vegetables, we have bought 120 kg of dried peas and beans. They are not all for us; some are for the office people. They are in sacks which hang on hooks in our little passage (inside the hidden door). Owing to the weight of the contents, a few stitches in the sacks burst open. So we decided it would be better to put our winter store in the attic and Peter was given the job of dragging it all up there.

He had managed to get five of the six sacks upstairs intact, and he was just busy pulling up number six, when the bottom seam of the sack split and a shower— no, a positive hailstorm of brown beans came pouring down and rattled down the stairs. There were about 20 kg in the sack and the noise was enough to waken the dead. Downstairs they thought the old house with all its contents was coming down on them. (Thank God there were no strangers in the house.) It gave Peter a moment’s fright. But he was soon roaring with laughter, especially when he saw me standing at the bottom of the stairs, like a little island in the middle of a sea of beans!

Yours, Anne

P.S. The news has just come over the radio that Algiers has fallen. Morocco, Casablanca, and Oran have been in British hands for several days. Now we’re waiting for Tunis.

*And so it went, month after captive month. Anne still confided her thoughts to her diary. But, eventually, she did find the real friend she was looking for, right in their secret hiding-place.*

*Thursday, 6 January, 1944*

Dear Kitty,

My longing to talk to someone became so intense that somehow or other I took it into my head to choose Peter.

Sometimes if I've been upstairs into Peter's room during the day, it always struck me as very snug, but because Peter is so retiring and would never turn anyone out who became a nuisance, I never dared stay long, because I was afraid he might think me a bore. I tried to think of an excuse to stay in his room and get him talking, without it being too noticeable, and my chance came yesterday. Peter has a mania for cross-word puzzles at the moment and hardly does anything else I helped him with them and we soon sat opposite each other at his little table, he on the chair and me on the divan.

It gave me an odd feeling each time I looked into his deep blue eyes, and he sat there with that mysterious laugh playing round his lips. I was able to read his inward thoughts. I could see on his face that look of helplessness and uncertainty as to how to behave, and, at the same time, a trace of his sense of manhood. I noticed his shy manner and it made me feel very gentle; I couldn't refrain from meeting those dark eyes again and again, and with my whole heart I almost beseeched him: oh, tell me, what is going on inside you, oh, can't you look beyond this ridiculous chatter?

But the evening passed and nothing happened, except that I told him about blushing—naturally not what I have written, but just so that he would become more sure of himself as he grew older.

When I lay in bed and thought over the whole situation, I found it far from encouraging, and the idea that I should beg for Peter's patronage was simply repellent. One can do a lot to satisfy one's longing, which certainly sticks out in my case, for I have made up my mind to go and sit with Peter more often and to get him talking somehow or other.

Whatever you do, don't think I'm in love with Peter—not a bit of it! If the van Daans had had a daughter instead of a son, I should have tried to make friends with her too....

Yours, Anne

## 2. Gandhi and the Salt March – Gerald Gold

**Genre:** *Biography*

### **Rationale:**

*When Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in India in 1869 the vast sub-continent of India-Pakistan was a part of the British Empire. Before he was shot to death in 1948, Gandhi had led India into freedom. But despite the anger and frustration of the millions of poor people in his native land, he and his followers won independence without fighting. Gandhi literally invented non-violent techniques such as organizing massive labour strikes, openly disobeying unjust laws, serving prison terms, and engaging in fasts. And he used them to prove that ordinary people can challenge their rulers and change the course of their own destiny.*

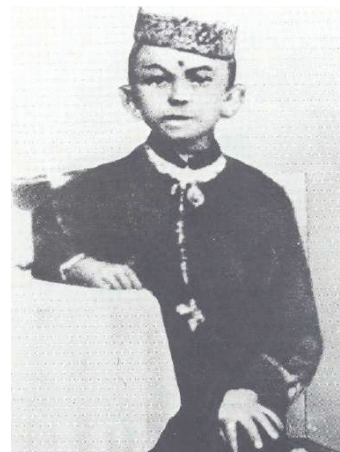
### **The Boy**

Gandhi's father had had a little schooling, but his mother had none, and she could neither read nor write. She was extremely devout, however, minutely observing religious vows for self-purification and self-discipline, and was given to frequent and extended fasting. It is clear where Gandhi got some of the impulses that were later to become cornerstones of his religious outlook, of his morality, and of his political methods. Gandhi writes: "The outstanding impression my mother has left on my memory is that of saintliness. She was deeply religious. She would not think of taking her meals without her daily prayers. She would take the hardest vows and keep them without flinching. To keep two or three consecutive fasts was nothing to her."

This asceticism, while very much in the Hindu tradition, was rather out of the ordinary, and there is no doubt that it had a profound effect on young Mohandas. From his earliest school days these ascetic qualities were in the forefront of Gandhi's thinking. They served later to create a saintly aura about him that was an important factor in his popularity in a country whose greatest heroes were religious men.

Gandhi's childhood was not so different from that of other children, except that he had an unusually developed sense of responsibility. He did what other youngsters did, including things he wasn't supposed to do, but he often felt terribly guilty about his escapades, and would draw morals from his actions and reactions even as a youngster. He and a friend picked up an uncle's cigarette butts and smoked them, and even got to the point of stealing servants' pocket money to buy cigarettes. They guiltily and boyishly contemplated suicide, but Gandhi finally just gave it all up as a silly business. He left the experiment behind and ever after denounced smoking as unhealthy.

When Gandhi was about seven years old, his father got a new post, as *dewan* or prime minister in Rajkot, about five days' journey from Porbandar by cart. Schooling continued, and life was pretty much the same until 1882, when Gandhi's life changed drastically and irrevocably. At thirteen years of age he was married to a girl the same age who had been chosen for him by his parents. Kasturba Makanji was the daughter of a Porbandar merchant. She had had no schooling, but, like Gandhi, lived in comfortable circumstances. Neither Gandhi nor his bride nor the parents nor anyone else found anything out of the ordinary in the arranged marriage, which was a common custom.



*Mohandas Gandhi at  
the age of seven*

The words of the marriage ceremony were traditional, and for the young people they were probably without solemn meaning. But some of the vows — especially those about living as “friends” and “serving the people”—took on extraordinary significance for the couple in the more than sixty years of their marriage.

## **The Man**

After graduating from high school at eighteen, Gandhi sailed to London, England, to study law. He practised law in India for two years before going to South Africa, where he led the fight for the rights of the Indian immigrants there. When he returned to India in 1915, he had already written a book stating his plans to liberate India. He was hailed as *Mahatma*, “great soul”. He stayed for the rest of his life, living frugally among the ordinary people.

The road toward independence was a long one, and Gandhi waged many campaigns before the end was reached. The Salt March was one of his most famous.

Like all of the Mahatma's greatest victories, the Salt March was starkly simple in its conception. It was immediately understandable to all, however ignorant or unlettered, and supremely suitable for maximum media impact. The symbolism was crystal clear, the act itself uncomplicated but on a grand scale. The point could not be mistaken by followers, enemies, or the world at large. And like so many of Gandhi's campaigns, it had a wonderfully practical purpose as well.



March 2, 1930

Dear Friend,

*Before embarking on civil disobedience and taking the risk I have dreaded to take all these years, I would fain approach you and find a way out. My personal faith is absolutely clear. I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less fellow human beings even though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine. While, therefore, I hold British rule to be a curse, I do not intend to harm a single Englishman or any legitimate interest he may have in India....,*

*In common with many of my countrymen, I had hugged the fond hope that the proposed Round Table Conference might furnish a solution [to the question of Indian freedom]. But when you said plainly that you could not give any assurance that you or the British cabinet would pledge yourselves to support a scheme of full dominion status\*, the Round Table Conference could not possibly furnish the solution for which vocal India is consciously, and dumb millions unconsciously, thirsting.*

*If India is to survive as a nation, if the slow death by starvation of her people is to stop, some remedy must be found for immediate relief....*

*This letter is not in any way intended as a threat but is a simple and sacred duty peremptory on a civil resister.*

Gandhi

**\*full dominion status:** making India a self-governing country like Canada

Here was India, a country largely surrounded by salt water; yet its foreign rulers held the monopoly on making salt—in a land where the heat made salt a necessity of life. Every time an Indian had to buy salt he paid a small but burdensome tax to his British rulers.

In accordance with his principles of non-violence, Gandhi first wrote a letter to the British viceroy, Lord Irwin, declaring his intention to mount a massive campaign of civil disobedience.

A young Quaker friend of Gandhi's, Reginald Reynolds, delivered the letter personally to the vice-roy's private secretary. The viceroy, through the secre-tary, sent back a formal note in which he expressed regret "at Mr. Gandhi's contemplating a course of action which was clearly bound to involve the violation of the law and danger to public peace".

Gandhi's reply was to say: "I repudiate the law, and regard it as my sacred duty to break the mournful monotony of the compulsory peace that is choking the heart of the nation."

So Gandhi set about his daring plan. He would defy British law and Britain's economic interests.

He would make salt.



With a shrewd eye for maximum dramatic impact, he would march from the community where he lived— slowly, very slowly—to the sea, a distance of 385 km, with a group of followers. No automobile, no train would be used; he and his people would march south to the coastal town of Dandi on foot. There the highly popular leader would scoop salt water from the sea and make salt in full view of the press.

On March 12, 1930, the Mahatma, now sixty-one years old, and scores of his colleagues, as well as a group of reporters, set out for Dandi. Local townspeople cheered the marchers on their way. Gandhi and his friends marched sixteen to twenty-four kilometres a day, resting frequently, greeted by admirers and sympathizers along the way. The viceroy, inclined to belittle the march, took no action, even though excitement over it grew with each day. The newspaper correspondents reported the drama in detail and Indians along the route turned out to cheer and sometimes to join in the march.

Finally, on April 5, the party reached Dandi, and on the morning of the 6th they waded into the sea for a ritual bath. Then, defying the law, Gandhi picked up salt from the seashore.

The march and the symbolic gesture gripped India's imagination. Suddenly everyone wanted to make salt, and the civil disobedience campaign spread throughout the country.

On the seashore or by salty streams people broke the law — and newspapers around the world reported it day after day. Mass arrests soon began.

Ultimately, during the night of May 5, Gandhi himself was arrested. Terrible violence was committed against Gandhi's followers before the Mahatma won his point with the British authorities. But eventually the making of salt for personal use was permitted, and 100 000 non-violent prisoners were released from jail.

Much later, on July 18, 1947, the British parliament passed a law giving India full independence.





## **Notes to students:**

### **Reading**

*In the modern world, many protesters use non-violent techniques pioneered by Gandhi. Think about which of these protest activities Gandhi would approve of? Be prepared to defend your position based upon your reading of the text.*

- *Ten thousand people march through city streets for peace.*
- *Hundreds of students sit on the floor of a university president's office to protest high tuition fees.*
- *Women live in tents around a nuclear weapons base to protest nuclear weapons.*
- *Anti-government protestors kidnap a political leader and demand concessions in return for her life.*

### **Speaking & Listening**

*In groups of three you will discuss what qualities of Gandhi's character would be good ones to develop within yourself as you get older. Provide reasons for your beliefs.*

### **Writing**

*Begin by rereading the letter written by Gandhi to the British viceroy. Rewrite this letter in 100 words or less, making sure that you include all of Gandhi's main ideas. Use the format of a Formal Letter for this assignment.*

### 3. Weathering the Storm in Ersama - Harsh Mander

**Genre:** *Non-fiction*

***Rationale:***

*How do people usually react when tragedy strikes? Do they stand helplessly and let things happen to them or do they face the challenges and make the best out of what is happening. 'Weathering the storm in Ersama' is a narration of true events of a boy after a terrible cyclone hits the coastal areas of Orissa in October 1999.*

On 27 October 1999, seven years after his mother's death, Prashant had gone to the block headquarters of Ersama, a small town in coastal Orissa, some eighteen kilometers from his village, to spend the day with a friend. In the evening, a dark and menacing storm quickly gathered. Winds beat against the houses with a speed and fury that Prashant had never witnessed before. Heavy and incessant rain filled the darkness, ancient trees were uprooted and crashed to the earth. Screams rent the air as people and houses were swiftly washed away. The angry waters swirled into his friend's house, neck deep. The building was of brick and mortar and was strong enough to survive the devastation of the wind's velocity of 350 km per hour. But the cold terror of the family grew with the crashing of trees that had got uprooted and fallen on their house, sometime in the middle of the night, damaging its roof and walls.

The crazed destruction wrought by the cyclone and the surge of the ocean continued for the next thirty-six hours, although wind speeds had reduced somewhat by the next morning. To escape the waters rising in the house, Prashant and his friend's family had taken refuge on the roof. Prashant will never forget the shock he experienced at his first glimpse of the devastation wrought by the super cyclone, in the grey light of the early morning. A raging, deadly, brown sheet of water covered everything as far as the eye could see; only fractured cement houses still stood in a few places. Bloating animal carcasses and human corpses floated in every direction. All round even huge old trees had fallen. Two coconut trees had fallen on the roof of their house. This was a blessing in disguise, because the tender coconuts from the trees kept the trapped family from starving in the several days that followed.

For the next two days, Prashant sat huddled with his friend's family in the open on the rooftop. They froze in the cold and incessant rain; the rainwater washed away Prashant's tears. The only thought that flashed through his mind was whether his family had survived the fury of the super cyclone. Was he to be bereaved once again?

Two days later, which seemed to Prashant like two years, the rain ceased, and the rain waters slowly began to recede. Prashant was determined to seek out his family without further delay. But the situation was still dangerous, and his friend's family pleaded with Prashant to stay back a little while longer. But Prashant knew he had to go.

He equipped himself with a long, sturdy stick, and then started on his eighteen-kilometer expedition back to his village through the swollen flood waters. It was a journey he would never forget. He constantly had to use his stick to locate the road, to determine where the water was most shallow. At places it was waist deep, and progress was slow. At several points, he lost the road and had to swim. After some distance, he was relieved to find two friends of his uncle who were also returning to their village. They decided to move ahead together.

As they waded through the waters, the scenes they witnessed grew more and more macabre. They had to push away many human bodies — men, women, children and carcasses of dogs, goats, and cattle that the current swept against them as they moved ahead. In every village that they passed; they could barely see a house standing. Prashant now wept out loud and long. He was sure that his family could not have survived this catastrophe.

Eventually, Prashant reached his village, Kalikuda. His heart went cold. Where their home once stood, there were only remnants of its roof. Some of their belongings were caught, mangled, and twisted in the branches of trees just visible above the dark waters. Young Prashant decided to go to the Red Cross shelter to look for his family.

Among the first people he saw in the crowd was his maternal grandmother. Weak with hunger, she rushed to him, her hands outstretched, her eyes brimming. It was a miracle. They had long given him up for dead.

Quickly word spread and his extended family gathered around him and hugged him tight in relief. Prashant anxiously scanned the motley, battered group. His brother and sister, his uncles, and aunts, they all seemed to be there.

By the next morning, as he took in the desperate situation in the shelter, he decided to get a grip over himself. He sensed a deathly grief settling upon the 2500 strong crowd in the shelter. Eighty-six lives were lost in the village. All the ninety-six houses had been washed away. It was their fourth day at the shelter. So far, they had survived on green coconuts, but there were too few to go around such a tumult of people.

Prashant, all of nineteen years, decided to step in as leader of his village if no one else did. He organized a group of youths and elders to jointly pressurize the merchant once again to part with his rice. This time the delegation succeeded and returned triumphantly, wading through the receding waters with food for the entire shelter. No one cared that the rice was already rotting. Branches from fallen trees were gathered to light a reluctant and slow fire, on which to cook the rice. For the first time in four days, the survivors at the cyclone shelter were able to fill their bellies. His next task was to organize a team of youth volunteers to clean the shelter of filth, urine, vomit, and floating carcasses, and to tend to the wounds and fractures of the many who had been injured.

On the fifth day, a military helicopter flew over the shelter and dropped some food parcels. It then did not return. The youth task force gathered empty utensils from the shelter. Then they deputed the children to lie in the sand left by the waters around the shelter with these utensils on their stomachs, to communicate to the passing helicopters that they were hungry.

The message got through, and after that the helicopter made regular rounds of the shelter, airdropping food and other basic needs. Prashant found that a large number of children had been orphaned. He brought them together and put up a polythene sheet shelter for them. Women were mobilized to look after them, while the men secured food and materials for the shelter.

As the weeks passed, Prashant was quick to recognize that the women and children were sinking deeper and deeper in their grief. He persuaded the women to start working in the food-for-work programme started by an NGO, and for the children he organized sports events. He himself loved to play cricket, and so he organized cricket matches for children. Prashant engaged, with other volunteers, in helping the widows and children to pick up the broken pieces of their lives. The initial government plan was to set up institutions for orphans and widows. However, this step was successfully resisted, as it was felt that in such institutions, children would grow up

without love, and widows would suffer from stigma and loneliness. Prashant's group believed orphans should be resettled in their own community itself, possibly in new foster families made up of childless widows and children without adult care.

It is six months after the devastation of the super cyclone. This time Prashant's wounded spirit has healed simply because he had no time to bother about his own pain. His handsome, youthful face is what the widows and orphaned children of his village seek out most in their darkest hour of grief.

### **About the Author:**

*Harsb Mander (born 17 April 1955) is an Indian author well-known researcher, columnist and social activist and has worked for the welfare of victims and survivors who are homeless and orphans due to mass violence.*

### **Glossary**

menacing: dangerous and harmful

incessant: unceasing; continual

swirled: moved or flowed along with a whirling motion

carcasses: dead bodies of animals

bereaved: lost a close relation or friend through his/her death

remnants: small remaining quantities

motley: disparate; varied in appearance or character

tumult: uproar of a disorderly crowd

### **Make Connections**

1. What did you feel or think about after reading the title?
2. What are some of the things Prashant might have learnt being away from home?
3. How was Prasant able to cope or bear his personal loss? Would you be able to act similarly?
4. What image came to your mind after reading the text.
5. Do you think Prasant would make a good leader? Why?
6. How are you similar to or different from Prasant?

# 4. Prayer blowing in

# flags the wind

- by *Gustasp Irani*



**Genre:** *Essay*

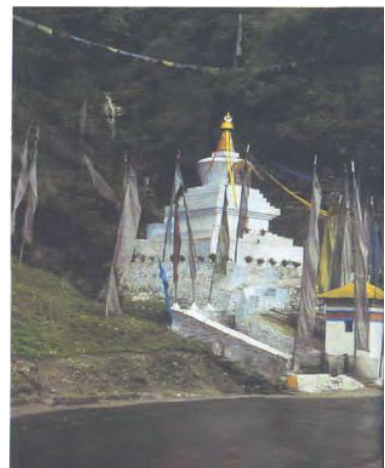
### ***Rationale:***

*What has become one of Bhutan's most enduring symbols is also one of its most spiritual. There isn't a student in a Bhutanese school who hasn't encountered one of these divine spires; yet, do they understand what they symbolize? What are prayer flags all about – and what is actually blowing in the wind?*

The Druk Air aircraft began its final descent towards Paro airport. It flew through a corridor of mighty mountains towards the runway in the little valley below. I gazed out of the window at the dramatic landscape and instinctively a prayer sprang to my lips. Almost immediately, as though to allay my apprehensions, my eyes fell upon a cluster of prayer flags fluttering their devotion in the wind at the summit of one of the towering peaks.

Yes, prayer flags are an integral part of the landscape and also the cultural and religious heritage of Bhutan especially the textiles and weaving craft. They were everywhere; in and around monasteries, chortens or small shrines, dzongs, shops, homes, on the railings of bridges and mountainous roads, and invariably on or near the summit of the mighty peaks that preside over the country. Red, blue, green, yellow and white, they add a splash of rainbow colours to the rugged landscape.

Deeply religious, the people of Bhutan believe that with





each flutter, a flag releases the prayer printed on it into the air which in turn carries it to the heavens. The more the flag flaps, the greater is its divine value. It is for this reason that prayer flags are positioned in locations that catch the wind-high up on the forested slopes of mountains, across bridges, nearby rivers and streams that tumble down the valleys and anywhere where there is a wind tunnel effect.

But the intensity of the wind is not the only criterion in positioning prayer flags. They are placed around everything that is sacred and important to the people, from monasteries to homes and farmlands, to protect them with a shield of divinity.

The different colours used in a prayer flag represent the five elements in nature: red for fire, blue for water, yellow for earth, white for sky and green for vegetation and life. Indeed, the prayer flags serve as the bridge between heaven and earth. And white flag is the link between the living and the dead. A minimum of 100 flags wave them as they journey into the next world.



The prayers, taken from Buddhist scriptures, printed on the flag differ from those put up for the dead and those meant to help the living during their life on earth. There are prayers for protection, recognised by the picture of a sword printed upon it, to blunt the darts of jealous enemies and the ravages of natural calamities. There are others for luck, the smile of fortune, the blessings of the gods on the starting of a new venture and, of course, thanks for boons granted.

The prayers for each occasion and situation, all accompanied by their own special symbols, are etched onto wooden printing blocks which are then dipped in ink and embossed onto the flag. Flags flown on posts may contain a number of prayers on the same strip of fabric; each flutter releasing them all in the wind.

Indeed, there is a prayer floating on almost every gust of wind across the countryside. The land is dotted with prayer flags. In my journey across the country, I marvelled at the sight of colourful flags fluttering in the wind in the remotest and seemingly inaccessible regions of the mountain terrain.

To me the colours of the prayer flags, each one representing the elements of nature, reflected the essence of the people whose spirituality was eventually deeply rooted in the land. I loved the way they placed them around monasteries and chortens or small shrines, to constantly remind the gods in heaven of their commitment towards their wards back on earth.



The interweaving of the two words around a prayer flag was best captured when I drove up to Chelela, the highest point in Paro valley. Wild flowers painted the forest floor in startling shades of yellow, pink and violet and pine trees littered the road with acorns. As we drove into the higher reaches, we came upon a nomadic tribe that followed a herd of semi-domesticated yak grazing on these slopes.

When finally we reached the summit, it was covered in a veil of light mist. Yet, I could still see it draped in brilliant colours-thousands of prayer flags fluttering in the wind. I stepped out of the vehicle, braced myself against the nip in the air and walked down the path leading up to the rainbow mound. And each time I unwittingly stepped on the vegetation underfoot, it said ‘ouch’ and sprayed the most divine fragrance into the air: Yes, if there is a place where heaven and earth meet, then surely this is it!

*Text & photographs: Gustasp Irani*

### **Notes to students:**

#### **Reading**

*You will be provided with a list of ten comprehension questions based upon this essay. Answer each in your exercise notebook using complete sentences.*

#### **Speaking & Listening**

*In pairs you will be asked to consider and discuss the question: “If you could create one simple message of your own to share with the world – what would that message be?” You will be asked to share and elaborate your ideas with the class.*

#### **Writing & Representing**

*You will write a Lyric or Free Verse poem in the format of a prayer flag. Your poem will express a valuable message that you wish to share with the world. Based upon what you have learned about prayer flags be attentive to both colour and design. Your personal prayer flag will be displayed in your classroom so that its message might be circulated throughout the whole school!*



# **SUPPLEMENTARY**

# 1. Fast Food NATION

*by Eric Schlosser*

A fast food restaurant could be a nice place to visit—but you might not want to work there —**especially if you *are a teenager*.**

**The Story So Far** In *fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser takes you behind the scenes of the fast food industry in often-gory detail. But even when his report isn't turning your stomach, it will surely turn your head.

EVERY SATURDAY ELISA ZAMOT GETS UP AT 5:15 IN THE MORNING. IT'S A STRUGGLE, and her head feels groggy as she steps into the shower. Her little sisters, Cookie and Sabrina, are fast asleep in their beds. By 5:30, Elisa showered, done her hair, and put on her McDonald's uniform. She's sixteen, bright-eyed and olive-skinned, pretty and petite, ready for another day of work. Elisa's mother usually drives her the half-mile or so to the restaurant, but sometimes Elisa walks, leaving home before the sun rises. Her family's modest townhouse sits beside a busy highway on the south side of Colorado Springs, in a largely poor and working-class neighbourhood. Throughout the day, sounds of traffic fill the house, the steady whoosh of passing cars. But when Elisa heads for work, the streets are quiet, the sky's still dark, and the lights are out in the small houses and rental apartments along the road.

When Elisa arrives at McDonald's, the manager unlocks the door and lets her in. Sometimes the husband-and-wife



Reprint 2014

No other industry in the United States has a workforce so dominated by adolescents. About two-thirds of the nation's fast food workers are under the age of twenty

cleaning crew are just finishing up. More often, it's just Elisa and the manager in the restaurant, surrounded by an empty parking lot. For the next hour or so, the two of them get everything ready. They turn on the ovens and grills. They go downstairs into the basement and get food and supplies for the morning shift. They get the paper cups, wrappers, cardboard containers, and packets of condiments. They step into the big freezer and get the frozen bacon, the frozen pancakes, and the frozen cinnamon rolls, they get the frozen hash browns, the frozen biscuits, the frozen McMuffins. They get the cartons of scrambled egg mix and orange juice mix. They bring the food upstairs and start preparing it before any customers appear, thawing some things in the microwave and cooking other things on the grill. They put the cooked food in special cabinets to keep it warm.

The restaurant opens for business at seven o'clock, and for the next hour or so, Elisa and the manager hold down the fort, handling all the orders. As the place starts to get busy, other employees arrive. Elisa works behind the counter. She takes orders and hands food to customers from breakfast through lunch. When she finally walks home, after seven hours of standing at a cash register, her feet hurt. She's wiped out. She comes through the front door, flops onto the living room couch, and turns on the TV. And the next morning she gets up at 5:15 again and starts the same routine.

Up and down Academy Boulevard, along South Nevada, Circle Drive, and Woodman Road, teenagers like Elisa run the fast food restaurants of Colorado Springs. Fast food kitchens often seem like a scene from *Bugsy Malone*, a film in which all the actors are children pretending to be adult. No other industry in the United States has a workforce so dominated by adolescents. About two-thirds of the nation's fast food workers are under the age of twenty. Teenagers open the fast food outlets in the morning, close them at night, and keep them going at all hours in between. Even the managers and assistant managers are sometimes in their late teens. Unlike Olympic gymnastics—an activity in which teenagers consistently perform at a higher level than adults—there's nothing about the work in a fast food kitchen that requires young employees. Instead of relying upon a small, stable, well-paid and well-trained workforce, the fast food industry seeks

out part-time, unskilled workers who are willing to accept low pay. Teenagers have been the perfect candidates for these jobs, not only because they are less expensive to hire than adults, but also because their youthful inexperience makes them easier to control.

The labor practices of the fast food industry have their origins in the assembly line systems adopted by American manufacturers in the early twentieth century. Business historian Alfred D. Chandler has argued that a high rate of “throughput” was the most important aspect of these mass production systems. A factory’s throughput is the speed and volume of its flow—a much more crucial measurement, according to Chandler, than the number of workers it employs or the value of its machinery. With innovative technology and the proper organization, a small number of workers can produce an enormous amount of goods cheaply. Throughput is all about increasing the speed of assembly, about doing things faster in order to make more.

Although the McDonald brothers has never encountered the term “throughput” or studied “scientific management,” they instinctively grasped the underlying principles and applied them in the Speedee Service System. The restaurant operating scheme they developed has been widely adopted and refined over the past half century. The ethos of the assembly line remains at its core. The fast food industry’s obsession with throughput has altered the way millions of Americans work, turned commercial kitchens into small factories, and changed familiar foods into commodities that are manufactured.

At Burger King restaurants, frozen hamburger patties are placed on a conveyer belt and emerge from a broiler ninety seconds later fully cooked. The ovens at Pizza Hut and at Domino’s also use conveyer belts to ensure standardized cooking times. The ovens at McDonald’s look like commercial laundry presses, with big steel hoods that swing down and grill hamburgers on both sides at once. The burgers, chicken, french fries, and buns are all frozen when they arrive at a McDonald’s. The shakes and sodas begin as syrup. At Taco Bell restaurants the food is “assembled,” not prepared.

The guacamole isn’t made by workers in the kitchen; it’s made at a factory in Michoacan, Mexico, then frozen and shipped north. The chains taco meat arrives frozen and precooked in vacuum-sealed plastic bags. The beans are dehydrated and look like brownish corn flakes. The cooking process is fairly simple. “Everything’s add water,” a Taco Bell employee told me. “Just add hot water”

Although Richard and Mac McDonald introduced the division of labor to the restaurant business, it was a McDonald's executive named Fred Turner who created a production system of unusual thoroughness and attention to detail. In 1958, Turner put together an operations and training manual for the company that was seventy-five pages long, specifying how almost everything should be done. Hamburgers were always to be placed on the grill in six neat rows; french fries had to be exactly 0.28 inches thick. The McDonald's operations manual today has ten times the number of pages and weighs about four pounds. Known within the company as "the Bible," it contains precise instructions on how various appliances should be used, how each item on the menu should look, and how employees should greet customers. Operators who disobey these rules can lose their franchises. Cooking instructions are not only printed in the manual, they are often designed into the machines. A McDonald's kitchen is full of buzzers and flashing lights that tell employees what to do.

At the front counter, computerized cash registers issue their own commands. Once an order has been placed, buttons light up and suggest other menu items that can be added.

Since most teenagers still lived at home, they could afford to work for wages too low to support an adult, and until recently, their limited skills attracted few other employers.

Workers at the counter are told to increase the size of an order by recommending special promotions, pushing dessert, pointing out the financial logic behind the purchase of a larger drink. While doing so, they are instructed to be upbeat and friendly. "Smile with a greeting and make a positive first impression," a Burger King training manual suggests. "Show them you are GLAD TO SEE THEM. Include eye contact with the cheerful greeting."

The strict regimentation at fast food restaurants creates standardized products. It increases the throughput. And it gives fast food companies an enormous amount of power over their employees. "When management determines exactly how every task is to be done... and can impose its own rules about pace, output, quality, and technique," the sociologist Robin Leidner has noted, "[it] makes workers increasingly interchangeable." The management no longer depends upon the talents or skills of its workers—those things are built into the operating system and machines. Jobs that have been "de-skilled" can be filled cheaply. The need to retain any individual worker is greatly reduced by the ease with which he or she can be replaced.

Teenagers have long provided the fast food industry with the bulk of its workforce. The industry's rapid growth coincided with the baby-boom expansion of that age group. Teenagers were in many ways the ideal candidates for these low-paying jobs. Since most teenagers still lived at home, they could afford to work for wages too low to support an adult, and until recently, their limited skills attracted few other employers. A job at a fast food restaurant became an American rite of passage, a first job soon left behind for better things. The flexible terms of employment in the fast food industry also attracted housewives who needed extra income. As the number of baby-boom teenagers declined, the fast food chains began to hire other marginalized workers: recent immigrants, the elderly, and the handicapped.

English is now the second language of at least one-sixth of the nation's restaurant workers, and about one-third of that group speaks no English at all. The proportion of fast food workers who cannot speak English is even higher. Many know only the names of the items on the menu; they speak "McDonald's English."

The fast food industry now employs some of the most disadvantaged members of American society. It often teaches basic job skills—such as getting to work on time—to people who can barely read, whose lives have been chaotic or shut off from the mainstream. Many individual franchisees are genuinely concerned about the well-being of their workers. But the stance of the fast food industry on issues involving employee training, the minimum wage, labor unions, and overtime pay strongly suggests that its motives in hiring the young, the poor, and the handicapped are hardly altruistic.

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*Elisa Zamot is a junior at Harrison High. In addition to working at McDonalds on the weekends, she also works there two days a week after school. All together, she spends about thirty to thirty-five hours a week at the restaurant. She earns the minimum wage. Her parents, Carlos and Cynthia, are loving but strict. They're Puerto Rican and moved to Colorado Springs from Lakewood, New Jersey. They make sure Elisa does all her homework and impose a midnight curfew. Elisa's usually too tired to stay out late, anyway. Her school bus arrives at six in the morning, and classes start at seven.*



# You Have Rights

EVERY YEAR ABOUT 28,000 TEENAGERS ARE INJURED ON THE JOB AT A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT. HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF? ONE WAY IS BY KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS.

1. Under federal law, teens 16 and up can work as late as they want and for as many hours as they want. But it's their choice. When school is in session, 14 - and 15-year-olds can work 18 hours a week, but they can't work during school hours, before 7 a.m., or after 7 p.m. When school is out, they can work 40 hours a week, with a maximum of 8 hours a day, but they can't work before 7 a.m. or after 9 p.m. Note that studies have shown that young people experience benefits of work up to 15 hours a week. At more than 15 hours a week, however, there starts to be a decline in academic performance and an increase in drug and alcohol abuse. When you hit 20 hours a week, the problems are even more significant.
2. Under federal law, if you're under 18 you can't drive as a regular part of your job. You also can't operate a forklift, a box crusher, or a meat slicer, or work where you might be exposed to radiation. Other jobs off-limits to anyone under 18: wrecking, demolition, roofing, mining, and logging.
3. The federal minimum wage is \$5.15 per hour, A special minimum wage of \$4.25, however, applies to workers under the age of 20 during their first 90 calendar days of employment. It's considered a transition period. Of course, you don't have to take this low wage. If you want, you can look for another job.
4. Employers have the right to set any kind of dress code they want, but they can't require you to pay for the uniform.
5. You have the right to report your boss for violating any of your rights. It is illegal for your employer to fire or punish you for reporting a problem in the workplace



Elisa had wanted to work at McDonalds ever since she was a toddler—a feeling shared by many of the McDonald’s workers I met in Colorado Springs. But now she hates the job and is desperate to quit. Working at the counter, she constantly has to deal with rude remarks and complaints. Many of the customers look down on fast food workers and feel entitled to treat them with disrespect. Sweet-faced Elisa is often yelled at by strangers angry that their food’s taking too long or that something is wrong with their order. One elderly woman threw a hamburger at her because there was mustard on it. Elisa hopes to find her next job at a Wal-Mart, at a clothing store, anywhere but a fast food restaurant. A good friend of hers works at FutureCall, the largest telemarketer in Colorado Springs and a big recruiter of teenaged labor. Her friend works there about forty hours a week, on top of attending Harrison High. The pay is terrific, but the job sounds miserable. The sort of workplace regimentation that the fast food chains pioneered has been taken to new extremes by Americas telemarketers.

“TT’S TIME FOR BRINGING IN THE GREEN!” a FutureCall recruiting ad says: “Lots O’ Green!” The advertisement promises wages of \$10 to \$15 an hour for employees who work more than forty hours a week. Elisa’s friend is sixteen. After school, she stays at the FutureCall building on North Academy Boulevard until ten o’clock at night, staring at a computer screen. The computer automatically dials people throughout the United States. When somebody picks up the phone, his or her name flashes on the screen, along with the sales pitch that FutureCall’s “teleservice representative” (TSR) is supposed to make on behalf of well-known credit card companies, phone companies, and retailers. TSRs are instructed never to let someone refuse a sales pitch without being challenged. The computer screen offers a variety of potential “rebuttals.” TSRs make about fifteen “presentations” an hour, going for a sale, throwing out one rebuttal after another to avoid being shot down. About nine out of ten people decline the offer, but the one person who says yes makes the whole enterprise quite profitable. Supervisors walk up and down the rows, past hundreds of identical cubicles, giving pep talks, eavesdropping on phone calls, suggesting rebuttals, and making sure none of the teenage workers is doing homework on the job. The workplace at FutureCall is even more rigorously controlled than the one at McDonald’s.

After graduating from Harrison, Elisa hopes to go to Princeton. She’s saving most of her earnings to buy a car. The rest is spent on clothes, shoes, and school lunches. A lot of kids at Harrison don’t save any of the money earned at their fast food jobs. They buy beepers, cellular phones, stereos, and designer clothes. Kids are wearing Tommy Hilfiger and FUBU at Harrison right now; Calvin Klein is out. Hip-hop culture reigns, the West Coast brand, filtered through Compton and LA.



During my interviews with local high school kids, I heard numerous stories of fifteen-year-olds working twelve-hour shifts at fast food restaurants and sophomores working long past midnight. The Fair Labor Standards Act prohibits the employment of kids under the age of sixteen for more than three hours on a school day, or later than seven o'clock at night. Colorado state law prohibits the employment of kids under the age of eighteen for more than eight hours a day and also prohibits their employment at jobs involving hazardous machinery. According to the workers I met, violations of these state and federal labor laws are now fairly commonplace in the fast food restaurants of Colorado Springs. George, a former Taco Bell employee, told me that he sometimes helped close the restaurant, staying there until two or three in the morning. He was sixteen at the time. Robbie, a sixteen-year-old Burger King employee, said he routinely worked ten-hour shifts. And Tommy, a seventeen-year-old who works at McDonald's, bragged about his skill with the electric tomato dicer, a machine that should have been off-limits. "I'm like an expert at using the damn thing," he said, "'cause I'm the only one that knows how to work it." He also uses the deep fryer, another labor code violation. None of these teenagers had been forced to break the law; on the contrary, they seemed eager to do it.

Most of the high school students I met liked working at fast food restaurants. They complained that the work was boring and monotonous, but enjoyed earning money, getting away from school and parents, hanging out with friends at work, and goofing off as much as possible. Few of the kids liked working the counter or dealing with customers. They much preferred working in the kitchen, where they could talk to friends and fool around. Food fights were popular. At one Taco Bell, new employees, departing employees, and employees who were merely disliked became targets for the sour cream and guacamole guns. "This kid, Leo, he smelled like guacamole for a month," one of the attackers later bragged.

The personality of a fast food restaurant's manager largely determined whether working there would be an enjoyable experience or an unpleasant one. Good managers created a sense of pride in the work and an upbeat atmosphere. They allowed scheduling changes and encouraged kids to do their schoolwork. Others behaved arbitrarily, picked on

A lot of kids at Harrison don't save any of the money earned at their fast food jobs. They buy beepers, cellular phones, stereos, and designer clothes.

workers, yelled at workers, and made unreasonable demands. They were personally responsible for high rates of turnover. An assistant manager at a McDonalds in Colorado Springs always brought her five-year-old daughter to the restaurant and expected crew members to baby -sit for her. The assistant manager was a single mother. One crew member whom I met loved to look after the little girl; another resented it; and both found it hard to watch the child playing for hours amid the busy kitchen, the counter staff, the customers at their tables, and the life-size Statue of Ronald McDonald.

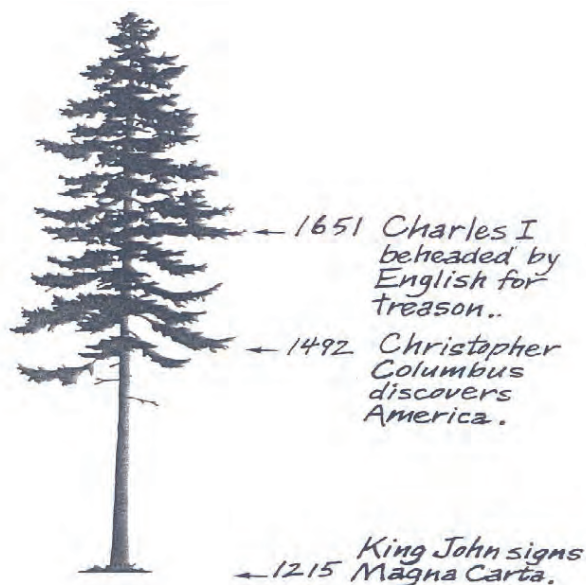
None of the fast food workers I met in Colorado Springs spoke of organizing a union. The thought has probably never occurred to them. When these kids don't like the working conditions or the manager, they quit. Then they find a job at another restaurant, and the cycle goes on and on..



*The first fast food hotel in Paro town.*

## 2. Death of a Giant - Bruce Hutchison

A man with a mechanical saw attacked a huge Douglas fir tree near here today and quickly felled the work of several centuries. I counted the annual rings of growth on the butt and reached a total of 703 when those circular lines, the record of recent times, became too thin for the naked eye.



Through something over 703 years that tree had stood indestructible, until a revolving belt of steel ended its labours in less than half an hour. The man with the saw said that the tree stood in the way of his new garage and had to be removed.

He is a practical man, not given much to speculation and careless of history. But any historian would have found food for thought in the spectacle of that mighty stump, cleanly severed, and the prostrate mass of wood—enough material to build a house which might last,

with care, for a single lifetime.

King John must have been signing a certain document on the island of Runnymede about the time when a seed sprouted on an unknown continent and a tiny sprig of green thrust itself up, among many others, from the floor of the jungle.

When Columbus discovered the new world the seedling had become a tree two and a half centuries old, had hardly reached its prime, was just getting into its stride and stood a mere thirty metres high.

When an English axe was severing the neck of a Stuart king the tree, safe from any axe stroke, was approaching healthy middle age. It had begun to decline at the time of Waterloo.

How often the tree had grasped the spring wind and transformed it into the music of the first harp, shredded it through innumerable fingers in the rustle and dry tick of summer, and uttered the organ tones of the winter gale when no ear was present to hear it!

How many billion tonnes of water were sucked from the earth over the years and hoisted into the trunk and limbs, no mathematician can calculate. How the tree extracted the soil's chemicals and rendered them into bark, cambium layer, heartwood, and green needles, no scientist has been able to guess. How such a frame could stand upright in the storms of seven hundred winters or support an overpowering load of snow on nothing but a frail network of roots, no engineer or architect can imagine.

It could not have been an easy business. Around one tree stronger than its fellows countless competitors raised their heads briefly, withered in the shade of the giant, and died. It ate their mouldering bodies with ravenous appetite and converted them again into living wood. Nothing but a human being could threaten that massive organism.

People arrived late in the tree's life. The first human eye to see it doubtless belonged to some wandering Indian whose stone axe was too blunt to use on such formidable fuel. Then came a white logger with a steel axe, across-cut saw, and a team of oxen, and he left his little mark. The gash of his axe remained on the trunk, almost covered over by the spreading bark. After a few futile strokes he had left the tree as too large for his tools, too heavy for his oxen. Later on some hunter had driven a spike into the wood, perhaps to hang up a deer while he skinned it. His spike had rusted away and broke in my fingers.

Nothing but a modern man, with his high intelligence and cunning implements, could end the life of seven hundred years. This he proceeded to do and finished the job in twenty minutes by my watch. The tree swayed with a scream of torn wood and wings outstretched. The man who felled it was well pleased with his work. He could now drive his car conveniently into the new garage.

# POETRY

## 1. Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening - Robert Frost

**Genre:** Poetry

### *Rationale:*

*Frost's works are usually characterized by beginning in fun and enjoyment but ending in wisdom, as is seen in this poem. What starts as an ordinary and trivial act of travelling and stopping ends in a deep revelation of life and death. "...But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep....." The icy hands of Death spares no one, but before that we all have many duties to fulfill, and many works and responsibilities to complete. Robert Frost seems to convey this message through the poem.*

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

### **Make Connections**

1. Why do you think the speaker wanted to stop by the woods?
2. What kinds of feelings do you get after reading the poem?
3. What season is described in the poem?
4. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem? What effect does this have when you read the poem aloud?
5. What promises do you think the speaker has to keep?
6. Why do you think are the last two lines repeated?

## 2. My Land Is Fair for Any Eyes to See - Jesse Stuart

**Genre:** Poetry

### **Rationale:**

*Being a part of a community means being proud of your place in that community. This is a part of a concept called patriotism. The Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary defines patriotism as when you love your country and you are proud of it. Although someone wrote this poem from another place as you read it think of your own community – think of Bhutan. As you read visualize your own relationship with ‘your’ land and consider if any of the poet’s words and feelings echo your own.*

My land is fair for any eyes to see—  
Now look, my friends—look to the east and west!  
You see the purple hills far in the west—  
Hills lined with pine and gum and black-oak tree—  
Now to the east you see the fertile valley!  
This land is mine, I sing of it to you—  
My land beneath the skies of white and blue.  
This land is mine, for I am part of it.  
I am the land, for it is part of me—  
We are akin and thus our kinship be!  
It would make me a brother to the tree!  
And far as eyes can see this land is mine.  
Not for one foot of it I have a deed—  
To own this land I do not need a deed—  
They all belong to me—gum, oak, and pine.

### **Notes to students:**

#### **Reading [10 minutes]**

*After having read this poem reflect upon this statement: ‘the sky belongs to one universe or one family.’ Which line(s) from the poem supports this idea? Be prepared to discuss your answer.*



### ***Speaking & Listening [20 minutes]***

*You will be asked to reflect extemporaneously upon what you believe is the most beautiful aspect of your immediate community. You will speak for one minute about this topic providing a description and reasons for your choice.*

### ***Writing***

*After reading the poem you will construct a comparison and contrast chart linking the poet's 'vision' of his land most fair and the local equivalents you can think of in your own community and nation. Draw two columns in your exercise book. Label the left 'Features in Poem' and label the right 'Feature in My Community'. Fill out the chart.*

*[15 minutes]*

*You will write a one-paragraph response to one of ten different questions your teacher will ask you to discuss with a group of your fellow classmates. Your response should be formal in presentation and be added to your portfolio.*

*[15 minutes]*

### 3. Drop a Pebble in the Water - James W. Foley

**Genre:** *Poetry*

***Rationale:***

*Have you ever noticed the ripples in water when you drop a pebble into it? The ripples circle out in concentric lines that reach every corner of the pond. The first ripples are large but even the smallest eventually arrive at their destination. Consider how an action generates a reaction. How hurtful words spoken in haste can cause waves of reactions from members of our family or friends.*

Drop a pebble in the water: just a splash, and it is gone;  
But there's half-a-hundred ripples circling on and on and on,  
Spreading, spreading from the center, flowing on out to the sea.  
And there is no way of telling where the end is going to be.

Drop a pebble in the water: in a minute you forget,  
But there's little waves a-flowing, and there's ripples circling yet,  
And those little waves a-flowing to a great big wave have grown;  
You've disturbed a mighty river just by dropping in a stone.

Drop an unkind word, or careless: in a minute it is gone;  
But there's half-a-hundred ripples circling on and on and on.  
They keep spreading, spreading, spreading from the center as they go,  
And there is no way to stop them, once you've started them to flow.

Drop an unkind word, or careless: in a minute you forget;  
But there's little waves a-flowing, and there's ripples circling yet,  
And perhaps in some sad heart a mighty wave of tears you've stirred,  
And disturbed a life was happy ere you dropped that unkind word.

Drop a word of cheer and kindness: just a flash and it is gone;  
But there's half-a-hundred ripples circling on and on and on,  
Bearing hope and joy and comfort on each splashing, dashing wave  
Till you wouldn't believe the volume of the one kind word you gave.

Drop a word of cheer and kindness: in a minute you forget;  
But there's gladness still a-swelling, and there's joy a-circling yet,  
And you've rolled a wave of comfort whose sweet music can be heard  
Over miles and miles of water just by dropping one kind word.

*Notes to students:*

**Reading**

*After having read this poem you will find several examples of onomatopoeia. Make a list of the examples provided in the poem and write three of your own.*

**Speaking & Listening**

*Reread stanzas three and four. Prepare to explain the meaning of each in your own words.*

**Writing**

*You may opt to choose any one of seven questions pertaining to the theme of this poem. Write a response in the form of a well-organized paragraph.*

## 4. The Grumble Family - Lucy Maud Montgomery

**Genre:** *Poem*

***Rationale:***

*Life is full of challenges. It is not a bed of roses – a cliché as it may be yet, holds tremendous truth in today's world.*

*The grumble family describes the negativism in people in a humorous way introducing a grumble family whom everyone despises to meet. The poet brings out the goodness of optimism and positivity in a sarcastic manner with ample use of figures of speech and other poetic devices.*

There's a family nobody likes to meet;  
They live, it is said, on Complaining Street  
In the city of Never-Are-Satisfied,  
The River of Discontent beside.

They growl at that and they growl at this;  
Whatever comes, there is something amiss;  
And whether their station be high or humble,  
They are all known by the name of Grumble.

The weather is always too hot or cold;  
Summer and winter alike they scold.  
Nothing goes right with the folks you meet  
Down on that gloomy Complaining Street.

They growl at the rain and they growl at the sun;  
In fact, their growling is never done.  
And if everything pleased them, there isn't a doubt  
They'd growl that they'd nothing to grumble about!

But the queerest thing is that not one of the same  
Can be brought to acknowledge his family name;  
For never a Grumbler will own that he  
Is connected with it at all, you see.

The worst thing is that if anyone stays  
Among them too long, he will learn their ways;  
And before he dreams of the terrible jumble

He's adopted into the family of Grumble.  
And so it were wisest to keep our feet  
From wandering into Complaining Street;  
And never to growl, whatever we do,  
Lest we be mistaken for Grumblers, too.

Let us learn to walk with a smile and a song,  
No matter if things do sometimes go wrong;  
And then, be our station high or humble,  
We'll never belong to the family of Grumble!

### **About the Author:**

*Lucy Maud Montgomery (November 30, 1874 – April 24, 1942), published as L. M. Montgomery, was a Canadian author best known for a collection of novels, essays, short stories, and poetry beginning in 1908 with Anne of Green Gables. She published 20 novels as well as 530 short stories, 500 poems, and 30 essays. Anne of Green Gables was an immediate success; the title character, orphan Anne Shirley, made Montgomery famous in her lifetime and gave her an international following. Most of the novels were set in Prince Edward Island, and those locations within Canada's smallest province became a literary landmark and popular tourist site – namely Green Gables farm, the genesis of Prince Edward Island National Park. She was made an officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1935.*



### **Make Connections**

1. What do you think the phrase 'to keep our feet from wandering' mean?
2. If you were to live in the Complaining Street, how would you deal with the people who grumble?
3. Who do you think is the poem written for?
4. How is your family like, or not like, The Grumble family in this poem?
5. What values or lessons do you learn from this poem?

## 5. We Have Forgotten Who We Are -

*U.N. Environmental Sabbath Program*

**Genre:** *Poetry*

### **Rationale:**

*Make a connection between this poem and “Earth”. This poem is about what we would be as humans but are not. So, ‘we have forgotten who we are’. We take so much from the earth and its elements, but do we give it anything back?*

We have forgotten who we are.

We have forgotten who we are  
We have alienated ourselves from the unfolding of the cosmos  
We have become estranged from the movements of the earth  
We have turned our backs on the cycles of life.

We have forgotten who we are.  
We have sought only our own security  
We have exploited simply for our own ends  
We have distorted our knowledge  
We have abused our power.

We have forgotten who we are.

Now the land is barren  
And the waters are poisoned  
And the air is polluted.

We have forgotten who we are.

Now the forests are dying  
And the creatures are disappearing  
And humans are despairing.

We have forgotten who we are.

We ask forgiveness

We ask for the gift of remembering

We ask for the strength to change.

We have forgotten who we are.

### **Notes to students:**

#### **Reading**

*After you have read 'We Have Forgotten Who We Are' invent a new title that you feel is better, more creative, and imaginative. Share your ideas with others and as a class decide on the most effective title of all!*

#### **Speaking & Listening**

*In groups of five discuss what ought to be our responsibilities towards Mother Earth. Create a Top 10 List of Humankind's Earthly Responsibilities. What can humankind do to make the world a better place to live in? Be prepared to share your group's responses.*

#### **Writing**

*Choose one of the following two exercises to complete:*

*Exercise #1: **Translation** – Rewrite the poem using a sentence format. After you have developed a working paraphrase of the poem share your translation and compare your prose interpretation with the poem's original meaning.*

*Exercise #2: **Official Plagiarism– Maintaining a poetic format restate and/ or reorder the poem in whatever way you wish. You can even add a few of your own words. Create an original title and be prepared to share a reading with your friends.***

*Shift your point-of-view! Alter your perspective! Write a **Free Verse** poem pretending that you are Mother Earth. Make a statement to the world and respond to how you have been treated by humankind. Be prepared to share your poem with the whole class.*





# **SUPPLEMENTARY**

## 1. *Desiderata* - Max Ehrmann

Go placidly amid the noise and haste  
and remember what peace there may be in silence.  
As far as possible be on good terms with all persons.  
Speak your truth quietly and clearly and listen to others,  
even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.  
Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit.  
If you compare yourself with others you may become vain or bitter;  
for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.  
Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.  
Keep interested in your career; however humble;  
it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.  
Exercise caution in your business affairs,  
for the world is full of trickery.  
But let this not blind you to what virtue there is.  
Many persons strive for high ideals  
and everywhere life is full of heroism.  
Be yourself.



Especially do not feign affection.  
Neither be cynical about love,  
for in the face of all aridity and disappointment  
it is as perennial as the grass.  
Take kindly the counsel of the years,  
gracefully surrendering the things of youth.  
Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.

But do not distress yourself with imaginings.  
Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.  
Beyond a wholesome discipline be gentle with yourself.  
You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars.  
You have a right to be here.  
And whether it is clear to you or not,  
no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.  
Therefore be at peace with God,  
whatever you conceive him to be,  
and whatever your labours and aspirations in the noisy confusion of life,  
keep peace with your soul.  
With all its sham and drudgery and broken dreams  
it is still a beautiful world.  
Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

## 2. The Puritan's Ballad - *Elinor Wylie*

My love came up from Barnegat\*,  
The sea was in his eyes;  
He trod as softly as a cat  
And told me terrible lies.

His hair was yellow as new-cut pine  
In shavings curled and feathered;  
I thought how silver it would shine  
By cruel winters weathered.

But he was in his twentieth year,  
This time I'm speaking of;  
We were head over heels in love with fear  
And half a-feared of love.

His feet were used to treading a gale  
And balancing thereon;  
His face was brown as a foreign sail  
Threadbare against the sun.

His arms were thick as hickory logs  
Whittled to little wrists;  
Strong as the teeth of terrier dogs  
Were the fingers of his fists.

Within his arms I feared to sink  
Where lions shook their manes,  
And dragons drawn in azure ink  
Leapt quickened by his veins.

Dreadful his strength and length of limb  
As the sea to foundering ships;  
I dipped my hands in love for him  
No deeper than their tips.

But our palms were welded by a flame  
The moment we came to part,  
And on his knuckles I read my name  
Enscrolled within a heart.

And something made our wills to bend

As wild as trees blown over;  
We were no longer friend and friend,  
But only lover and lover.

“In seven weeks or seventy years—  
God grant it may be sooner!—  
I’ll make a handkerchief for your tears  
From the sails of my captain’s schooner.

“We’ll wear our loves like wedding rings  
Long polished to our touch;  
We shall be busy with other things  
And they cannot bother us much.

“When you are skimming the wrinkled cream  
And your ring clinks on the pan,  
You’ll say to yourself in a pensive dream,  
‘How wonderful a man!’

“When I am slitting a fish’s head  
And my ring clanks on the knife,  
I’ll say with thanks, as a prayer is said,  
‘How beautiful a wife!’

“And I shall fold my decorous paws  
In velvet smooth and deep,  
Like a kitten that covers up its claws  
To sleep and sleep and sleep.

“Like a little blue pigeon you shall bow  
Your bright alarming crest;  
In the crook of my arm you’ll lay your brow  
To rest and rest and rest.”

*Will he never come back from Barnegat  
With thunder in his eyes,  
Treading as soft as a tiger cat,  
To tell me terrible lies?*

\* Barnegat: a bay off the New Jersey coast

*Ballads are often about revenge or love, especially love that is not returned as promised. How much faith should be placed in promises of everlasting love? That’s the question being raised in this poem. It is also a question which could be asked today as well.*

## Time Allocation for VIII

The maximum number of instructional days available for curriculum delivery excluding examination is 150 days in a year. The school year divided into two terms of fifteen weeks each, and that each week will have 6 periods of 40 minutes for teaching English. The total time allocated for English in a week is 240 minutes. Therefore, class VII will have 120 hours in a year which is 180 periods.

The following is the suggestive period and time allocation per week for all strands.

	<b>Period</b>	<b>Time (minutes)</b>
Reading & Literature	2	80
Writing	2	80
Listening & Speaking	1	40
Language and Grammar	1	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>240</b>

## Modes of Assessment

### Continuous (CA) and Examination Weighting for Class VIII

Term One			Term Two			Grand Total (Total A + B + C)	
CA (Total A)		Mid Term Exam	Total	CA (Total B)			Common Examination (Total C)
Listening and Speaking	10%	30%	50%	Listening and Speaking	10%	60%	100%
Reading Portfolio	5%			Reading Portfolio	5%		
Writing Portfolio	5%			Writing Portfolio	5%		

#### Note:

- The term one examination should be conducted out of 80 marks and converted to 30%. The 10% CA marks from the Listening and Speaking, 5% from the Reading Portfolio, and 5% from the Writing Portfolio should be added to the examination marks to make it 50%.
- The common examination should be conducted out of 80 marks and converted to 60%. The 40% CA marks from the Listening and Speaking, Reading Portfolio and Writing Portfolio for both the terms should be added to the written examination marks to make it 100%.
- Listening and Speaking activities such as debates, extempore speeches, presentations, book talks, reports, and discussions should be conducted consistently throughout the year ideally by integrating in other strands so that the students get maximum time to practice the skills. Teachers need to develop their own additional listening and speaking exercises wherever necessary. Use Continuous Formative (CFA) to help students achieve the desired goals.
- At the end of each term, a formal test should be administered to assess each learners' competencies in listening and speaking through oral test items and other listening and speaking exercises. The final score or mark should be converted to 10%.
- The Reading and the Writing Portfolios of each learner should be monitored regularly and consistently to check their progress on reading and writing skills. Teachers should provide timely feedback, support and take necessary remedial measures so that the learn-



ers achieve the expected objectives and competencies. At the end of each term, both the portfolios should be assessed and award marks accordingly, as shown in the table above.

### English Paper (Writing, Reading and Literature, and Grammar) - Written Examination Marks Break-up

Sl No	Genre	Weighting	Remarks
1	Essay/story writing	15 marks	Realistic fiction/narrative writing
2	Personal letter/leave application/invitation	8 marks	Any ONE can be asked
3	Grammar	15 marks	Items to be derived from the competencies and objectives. Questions can be asked from the lower classes as well.
4	Short Story	16 marks	From the prescribed short stories. Questions on more than ONE story can be asked.
5	Essay	16 marks	From outside the prescribed textbook
6	Poetry	10 marks	Any ONE from the prescribed or outside textbook.
Total		80	

#### Note:

The above matrix is a sample of question items that can be tested in the examinations. The question types and patterns for written examinations shall remain dynamic. Questions can be asked to assess any of the competencies/learning objectives, which includes a combination of different types of writing items including short story and report writing.

Listening and Speaking CA (20%)

Listening and Speaking activities	Remarks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening and Speaking skills</li> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Debates</li> <li>• Extempore speeches</li> <li>• Presentation of their written pieces</li> <li>• Book talk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers can design additional activities as per the lesson plans.</li> <li>• Conduct oral test/listening and speaking tests and marks converted to 10% at the end of each term.</li> </ul>

## Writing Portfolio and Reading Portfolio CA (20%)

Reading Portfolio (10%)	Writing Portfolio (10%)	Remarks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record of reading</li> <li>• Critical response to books read</li> <li>• Text talk or book talk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best pieces of writing selected by students</li> <li>• Best pieces selected by teacher</li> <li>• Journal writing for book review</li> <li>• Resumes</li> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Fantasy</li> <li>• Summary writing</li> <li>• Simple poems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use notebooks for maintaining portfolios.</li> <li>• Consider process while assessing the quality of work.</li> <li>• The writing portfolio should show the records of the Writing Process</li> <li>• Plagiarism to be prohibited.</li> <li>• Both Reading and writing portfolios should be assessed at the end of each term and marks awarded accordingly.</li> </ul>

# Reading Strategies

## Secondary Reading Strategies

Reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among:

- the reader's existing knowledge,
- the information suggested by the written language, and
- the context of the reading situation.

Four general purposes of reading are:

- to gain information
- to perform a task
- to experience and enjoy literature
- to form opinions

## Critical Reading

Critical reading means **learning to look through texts rather than at them**; it means **reading beyond and beneath** surface meanings to the assumptions, arguments, and strategies behind them. Critical reading means learning about **how texts work**: how they make their meaning, how they appeal to your emotions and intellect, how they present arguments that are explicit and implicit; how they reason with readers and manipulate them.

To be a critical reader, you need to learn how to “slow down” your reading. Slowing down your reading doesn't mean you ought to read more slowly; it means that you need to **read in such a way that you learn to be aware of a text's various parts and processes**. Running your eye over the words on the page it is easy to think of any piece of writing as a smooth and solid object. But all writing — whether a short story by a famous writer or a paper by one of your classmates — is the result of a process and the product of a context. Both the process and context that produce a piece of writing are reflected in various ways in a text's parts and layers. When you learn to slow down your reading you will be able to see that all writing is made up of parts and layers that come together in the writing process to make something that seems whole.

## Critical Reading Classroom Environment

For active, critical reading to occur, teachers must create an atmosphere which fosters inquiry. Students must be encouraged to question, to make predictions, and to organize ideas which support value judgments. Two techniques for developing these kinds of critical reading skills include **problem solving** and **learning to reason through reading**. Flynn (1989) describes an instructional model for problem solving which promotes analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of ideas. She states that, “When we ask students to analyze we expect them to clarify information by examining the component parts. Synthesis involves combining relevant parts into a coherent whole, and evaluation includes setting up standards and then judging against them to verify the reasonableness of ideas.”

Beck (1989) adopts a similar perspective, using the term “reasoning” to imply higher order thinking skills. Comprehension requires inferencing, which plays a central role in reasoning and problem solving. For Beck, children’s literature has the potential to engage students in reasoning activities.

When literature is approached from a problem solving perspective, students are asked to evaluate evidence, draw conclusions, make inferences, and develop a line of thinking (Riecken and Miller, 1990). According to Flynn (1989), children are capable of solving problems at all ages and need to be encouraged to do so at every grade level. (See, for example, “Using Fairy Tales” 1991 for young children; Anton 1990 for elementary children; Johannessen 1989 for middle school children.) Teachers may want to experiment with a particular children’s book and plan a lesson which places reasoning at the center of instruction.

Wilson (1988) suggests that teachers re-think the way they teach reading and look critically at their own teaching/thinking processes. She cautions against skills lessons that are repackaged in the name of critical thinking but which are only renamed worksheets. She points out that teaching students to read, write, and think critically is a dramatic shift from what has generally taken place in most classrooms.

According to Wilson, critical literacy advocates the use of strategies and techniques like formulating questions prior to, during, and after reading; responding to the text in terms of the student’s own values; anticipating texts, and acknowledging when and how reader expectations are aroused and fulfilled; and responding to texts through

a variety of writing activities which ask readers to go beyond what they have read to experience the text in personal ways.

### **Critical Reading Strategies**

Mastering these strategies will not make the critical reading process an easy one, it can make reading much more satisfying and productive and thus help students handle difficult material well and with confidence.

Fundamental to each of these strategies is annotating directly on the page: underlining key words, phrases, or sentences; writing comments or questions in the margins; bracketing important sections of the text; constructing ideas with lines or arrows; numbering related points in sequence; and making note of anything that strikes you as interesting, important, or questionable.

**Previewing:** Learning about a text before really reading it. Previewing enables readers to get a sense of what the text is about and how it is organized before reading it closely. This simple strategy includes seeing what you can learn from the headnotes or other introductory material, skimming to get an overview of the content and organization, and identifying the rhetorical situation.

**Contextualizing:** Placing a text in its historical, biographical, and cultural contexts. When you read a text, you read it through the lens of your own experience. Your understanding of the words on the page and their significance is informed by what you have come to know and value from living in a particular time and place. But the texts you read were all written in the past, sometimes in a radically different time and place. To read critically, you need to contextualize, to recognize the differences between your contemporary values and attitudes and those represented in the text.

**Questioning to understand and remember:** Asking questions about the content. As students, you are accustomed to teachers asking you questions about your reading. These questions are designed to help you understand a reading and respond to it more fully, and often this technique works. When you need to understand and use new information though it is most beneficial if you write the questions, as you read the text for the first time. With this strategy, you can write questions any time, but in difficult academic readings, you will understand the material better and remember it longer if you write a question for every paragraph or brief section. Each question should focus on a main idea, not on illustrations or details, and each should be expressed in your own words, not just copied from parts of the paragraph.

**Reflecting on challenges to your beliefs and values:** Examining your personal responses. The reading that you do for this class might challenge your attitudes, your unconsciously held beliefs, or your positions on current issues. As you read a text for the first time, mark an X in the margin at each point where you feel a personal challenge to your attitudes, beliefs, or status. Make a brief note in the margin about what you feel or about what in the text created the challenge. Now look again at the places you marked in the text where you felt personally challenged. What patterns do you see?

**Outlining and summarizing:** Identifying the main ideas and restating them in your own words. Outlining and summarizing are especially helpful strategies for understanding the content and structure of a reading selection. Whereas outlining reveals the basic structure of the text, summarizing synthesizes a selection's main argument in brief. Outlining may be part of the annotating process, or it may be done separately (as it is in this class). The key to both outlining and summarizing is being able to distinguish between the main ideas and the supporting ideas and examples. The main ideas form the backbone, the strand that holds the various parts and pieces of the text together. Outlining the main ideas helps you to discover this structure. When you make an outline, don't use the text's exact words.

**Summarizing** begins with outlining, but instead of merely listing the main ideas, a summary recomposes them to form a new text. Whereas outlining depends on a close analysis of each paragraph, summarizing also requires creative synthesis. Putting ideas together again — in your own words and in a condensed form — shows how reading critically can lead to deeper understanding of any text.

**Evaluating** an argument: Testing the logic of a text as well as its credibility and emotional impact. All writers make assertions that want you to accept as true. As a critical reader, you should not accept anything on face value but to recognize every assertion as an argument that must be carefully evaluated. An argument has two essential parts: a claim and support. The claim asserts a conclusion — an idea, an opinion, a judgment, or a point of view — that the writer wants you to accept. The support includes reasons (shared beliefs, assumptions, and values) and evidence (facts, examples, statistics, and authorities) that give readers the basis for accepting the conclusion. When you assess an argument, you are concerned with the process of reasoning as well as its truthfulness (these are not the same thing). At the most basic level, in order for an argument to be acceptable, the support must be appropriate to the claim and the statements must be consistent with one another.

**Comparing and contrasting related readings:** Exploring likenesses and differences between texts to understand them better. Many of the authors we read are concerned with the same issues or questions, but approach how to discuss them in different ways. Fitting a text into an ongoing dialectic helps increase understanding of why an author approached a particular issue or question in the way he or she did.

## THE STUDENT ROLE

Critical thinking implies that a reader is actively and constructively engaged in the process of reading. The reader is continually negotiating what s/he knows with what s/he is trying to make sense of. The role of background knowledge and the student's ability to draw upon it are essential to critical thinking/learning.

It is not an easy task to incorporate higher level thinking skills into the classroom, but it is a necessary one. For students to participate in the society in which they live, they must have experiences which prepare them for life. In order to become critical thinkers, it is essential that students learn to value their own thinking, to compare their thinking and their interpretations with others, and to revise or reject parts of that process when it is appropriate.

A classroom environment which is student-centred fosters student participation in the learning process. Learning that is both personal and collaborative encourages critical thinking. Students who are reading, writing, discussing, and interacting with a variety of learning materials in a variety of ways are more likely to become critical thinkers.

## THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Teachers who encourage **pre-reading discussions** to help readers activate prior knowledge or fill in gaps in background knowledge set the stage for critical reading. They help students identify purposes for reading, formulate hypotheses, and test the accuracy of their hypotheses throughout the reading process. In addition, asking students to examine their own reading and learning processes creates the awareness necessary for critical reading.

**Post-reading activities that extend texts** provide an opportunity for teachers to check for learning. Transforming ideas from reading into artwork, poetry, etc. is an evaluative, interpretive act that reveals the student's level of understanding. Critical readers are active readers. They **question, confirm, and judge** what they read

throughout the reading process. Students engaged in such activities are likely to become critical thinkers and learners.

## **How Do I Sharpen My Critical Reading Strategies?**

Reading critically does not mean that you are criticizing the writer's message but rather that you are **assessing the validity and reliability of the writer's material**. Critical readers are also aware that they bring their beliefs, values, experiences, and prior knowledge to the reading process. Critical readers ask questions about themselves, the writer, and the writing. Below is a set of questions to sharpen your critical reading strategies.

### **Menu of Critical Reading Questions**

#### **1. Reader's Background and Value Assumptions**

- What do I know about the topic?
- What are my beliefs and values regarding the topic?
- What is my purpose for reading this material?

#### **2. Writer's Background and Value Assumptions**

- What is the writer's background?
- How might it affect the writer's approach to the topic and the selection and interpretation of the evidence presented?
- What are the writer's value assumptions regarding this topic?

#### **3. Writer's Argument, Conclusion, and Evidence**

- What is the topic of the writer's argument?
- What is the writer's conclusion?
- How has the writer limited the scope of the argument through definitions of key terms and the use of qualifying words and phrases?

#### **4. Writer's Use of Evidence to Support the Conclusion**

- Are there any logical fallacies?
- What sort of evidence does the writer use to support the conclusion(s)?
- Does the evidence offer adequate support for the writer's conclusion?
- Are the sources creditable?
- If the writer uses research studies as evidence, does the research satisfy these conditions:



- Is it timely?
- Is the sample group representative of the target population?
- Who conducted the research? What was the purpose of the research?
- Has the research been replicated?
- Are the statistical findings and writer's conclusion focused on the same topic?
- Do the graphic illustrations represent the data in a truthful manner?
- Do the various physical dimensions of the graphic accurately portray the numerical relationships?
- What is the source of the data in the illustration?
- Are the statistical findings and the writer's conclusion focused on the same topic?

## 5. Reader's Reaction to the Reading

- Do I accept the writer's evidence as reliable and valid support of the conclusion?
- To what degree do I accept the conclusion?
- How does the conclusion relate to what I already know and believe about the topic?
- How has the writer's argument changed my views on this topic?

**Here are some strategies that may be used:**

### 1. Take inventory of what you will be reading.

Think about what you already know about the subject. Write down some notes on these thoughts. Look over the material you are reading - look for key words and phrases that may be in italics or boldface. Look for any graphs, captions, pictures or other graphics. See if there is a summary at the end or a set of comprehension questions. Most textbooks have summaries and questions. These can be very helpful to guide your reading. You should always read the summary and the questions before you read the text. These will give you a good idea of what to look for when you read. Remember: not everything in the text is equally important: read for the main ideas.

### 2. See the forest, not the trees!

There is an English idiom that says, "You can't see the forest for the trees." This means that a person cannot see the overall picture or idea because she/he is concentrating on the details too much. When you are reading, don't try to understand every word - get the overall idea.

### **3. Don't just read —WRITE!**

Take notes while you are reading. Sometimes notes can be words and phrases that help you remember main ideas. However, you can also draw pictures or diagrams of key ideas. It's like drawing a map with roads connecting different cities or locations. If each location is an idea, connect them together in your notes.

### **4. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.**

If possible, read the text more than once.

### **5. Don't be afraid to make guesses.**

Try to guess at meaning by looking at the context. The sentences and words immediately before and after the point you are reading can give you good ideas.

### **6. Try to analyze the text.**

Look for the introduction and conclusion. Look for the topic sentences in each paragraph.

### **7. Make connections.**

Try to make connections between main ideas and supporting details. Well-written texts will attempt to make connections of their ideas in a logical way.

### **8. Summarize & Paraphrase.**

When you have finished reading a paragraph or a portion of the text, stop and try to summarize in your own words what you have read. You can do this in your notes or you can explain it orally to someone else.

### **9. Talk with your friends.**

Discuss what you have read with others who have also read the same text.

### **SQ3R....for students & teachers**

When you read, it is important to have a strategy or a plan for reading effectively. If you do not have a plan, you may be easily distracted or may not focus on the right things in the text. As a result, when you are finished reading, you may not understand very much of what you have read. Also, you may not have developed your English very much, either.

When you read, you must be actively involved in the reading process in order to understand most effectively. The SQ3R method is one way to help you do this.

### **How does the SQ3R method work?**

#### **Survey**

Survey means to scan the main parts of the text you are going to read. This includes looking at the title, headings of paragraphs, introduction and conclusion, first lines of each paragraph, and any extra information that may be presented in boxes on the page. Doing this gives you some basic understanding of what the text is about and helps you know what to expect when you read in more detail.

#### **Question**

Questions are very helpful when you read a text. Most of the time, people read first, and then look at questions at the end of the text. However, this is not the best way to read. If possible, read the questions provided for you **FIRST**. This will help you know what specific information to look for. Questions (those that are provided with text and those provided by your teacher) are designed to focus on the main points. Therefore, if you read to answer these questions, you will be focusing on the main points in the text. This helps you read with a goal in mind - answering specific questions.

#### **3 R's**

##### **Read**

Once you have some idea of what the text is about and what the main points might be, start reading. Do not be afraid if the text has many words you cannot understand. Just read!

##### Follow these suggestions:

- Do not use your dictionary the first time through the text.
- Try to understand as much as you can from the context.
- Take notes as you go.
- Make a note of places that you do not understand, or words that are unclear.
- Go through the text a second time.
- Try to answer the questions.

## **Recite**

Studies have suggested that students remember 80% of what they learn, if they repeat the information verbally. If they do not repeat verbally, they often forget 80%. Writing down the answers to questions from the text and saying these answers will help you remember the information. One good way to do this is to discuss the information with a friend or classmate, or with the professor. Try to summarize the main points you have learned from the reading and add to your knowledge from the comments and responses of the person you are talking with.

## **Review**

Review means to go over something again. In order to remember information, you cannot simply memorize it one day and then put it aside. After you have read and discussed and studied your information, it is important to review your notes again a few days or weeks later. This will help you keep the information fresh in your mind.

## **Strategies for Teaching Reading Strategies**

### **Modes of Reading**

Different modes of reading offer varying levels of support for students, from having the teacher read the entire text aloud to having students read the text independently. It is frequently appropriate to combine several modes of reading at once. The combination provides a scaffold for learning that gradually releases responsibility to the students and helps them to become more proficient readers. Different combinations are used to meet the differing needs of students in relation to the materials they are reading.

### **Reading Aloud**

The teacher reads aloud from a text that is too challenging for the students to read and comprehend alone. Usually the students do not have a copy of the text. The teacher may complete the text in one reading or may continue reading a longer text over a period of time. Reading aloud is used to develop background information, to make connections across texts, or for enjoyment.

### **Teacher-Directed Interactive Reading**

Using grade level materials which may include magazine or newspaper articles, poems, charts, or other forms of print, the teacher provides direct, supported reading of text to the whole class. The text is read in a variety of ways.

- The teacher introduces the text and sets a purpose for independent, silent reading of a part or all of the text.
- The teacher reads the text or part of the text aloud while students follow the reading in their own texts. The teacher pauses for predictions, clarifications, and questions. A summary of what was read is developed orally or in writing with the class.
- Students are paired for buddy reading of the text.
- Small groups of students read the text together using reciprocal teaching strategies.
- The teacher reads the text aloud to a small group of students while the rest of the class reads the selection independently, with a buddy, or in a small group.
- Groups of students or the whole class may read the text together as a choral reading activity.

### **Guided Reading**

The teacher provides small group instruction using materials at the instructional level of the group. The teacher supports the development of effective reading strategies for processing new texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty. This progression of difficulty must be in increments small enough to allow the reader to bridge the gap without being frustrated. Therefore, the best materials for guided reading are sets of books that have the progression built in. For elementary school students whose instructional reading level is close to grade level, the grade level basal may be used to provide guided reading instruction.

During Guided Reading, the teacher works with a small group of students who use similar reading processes and are able to read similar levels of text with support. The teacher introduces a text to this small group and works briefly with individuals in the group as each student reads to him/herself. The teacher may select one or two reading strategies to present to the group following the reading and may have students participate in extension activities. Basic to Guided Reading is that the text is one that offers the reader a minimum of new concepts to learn so that students can read the text with the strategies they currently have, but it provides an opportunity for new learning.

### **Structured Independent Reading**

Students build reading fluency, practice strategic reading skills, and increase their vocabularies by spending sustained periods of in-class time engaged in independent

reading. Books may be self-selected or teacher assigned, but is at the students' independent reading levels. Time for this fluency practice must be built into the school day and must include a daily homework assignment.

Students in Pre-primary should spend a minimum of 15 minutes each day in developmentally appropriate independent reading behavior. **Students in grades 1-12 must spend 30 minutes each day on in-class independent reading. All students, PP-12, must read 30 minutes each night as daily reading homework.**

Activities which support and strengthen independent reading include:

- drawing a picture of a favorite part of the book;
- discussing the book/chapter read with a partner or a small group;
- keeping a record or log of each book completed;
- writing a brief summary of the content;
- making a personal response to the reading in a log or journal;
- writing dialogue journals to the teacher about the independent reading material; and/or
- taking the Accelerated Reader test.

### **Working With Words**

Students receive daily explicit, systematic instruction in one or more of the following as appropriate:

- phonemic awareness, students are taught the sounds of the language;
- phonics instruction, students receive instruction in letter/sound matching;
- blending and segmenting sounds, and decoding;
- graphophonic instruction, students learn to use letter/sound correspondence to write;
- syntactic, students learn word patterns and spelling, prefixes, suffixes, root words, etymologies; and
- vocabulary, students learn word meanings, analogies, usage, and cognates.

### **Reciprocal Teaching**

Students are taught to become **strategic readers through an active dialogue** with a teacher/leader and other students. Working in small groups, students practice the following critical reading strategies:

- making predictions based on titles, captions, pictures, prior knowledge, etc.;
- formulating good questions based on the text (e.g., writing test questions);

- seeking clarification of words, phrases, or concepts not understood;
- summarizing, getting the main idea; and
- forming visual images while reading.

## Questions and Discussion

Critical to reading comprehension is the ability to ask and answer higher order thinking questions about text and to defend or challenge answers using information and details from the text to support positions. Students at all levels and in all subject areas **must have daily opportunities** to raise questions to be used in group discussions about texts. Student-generated questions should be used to formulate teacher-made tests.

## Read and Retell

Retellings are powerful tools because they serve authentic instructional and assessment purposes. Students retell, orally or in writing, narrative or expository text. In the retelling, they use the same form, style, and language of the original text. This strategy aids comprehension of text, expands vocabulary, and provides good models for students to transfer to their personal writing. Retellings provide insights into the thinking, organization, and comprehension levels of the readers. In primary grades students may use drawings in combination with oral retelling.

## Learning to Write, Writing to Learn

Writing and reading are reciprocal skills which strongly support one another. It is important that students receive daily instruction in effective writing and that they use writing to demonstrate what they have learned. Writing is thinking made visible. It supports students in learning to construct meaning and become proficient readers. It involves many activities including:

- exploring different modes of writing;
- mini-lessons that include modeling; and
- engaging students in meaningful interactions with text.

## Acknowledgments

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