

REVISION CHEAT SHEETS

Section A – Reading Skills

Section- A

Comprehension Passage

Reading Comprehension tests the ability to understand and analyze a written passage.

Case-based Factual Passage

- Based on visual input and statistical data represented by bar/pie/line chart, table etc.
- Deals with facts and figures requiring analytical, reasoning and inferential skills

Discursive Passage

- Of argumentative or persuasive nature
- Based on opinion and feedback
- Usually deals with information of 'why' and 'how' nature



Hacks

- Follow the Inverse Approach. Reading the questions before reading the passage helps to identify the lines that require more attention than the others.
- Check the case based passage for patterns, proportions and comparisons- decrease, increase, consistency etc. in data.
- Do not use any previous knowledge related to the topic to answer the question.
- Read in between the lines to make proper inferences.



Author's Words of Wisdom

“To ace **Section A Comprehension Passage**, consistent practice is key. The more passages you tackle during your preparation, the stronger your comprehension skills will become, ultimately leading to a higher score”.

Section B – Writing Skills and Grammar

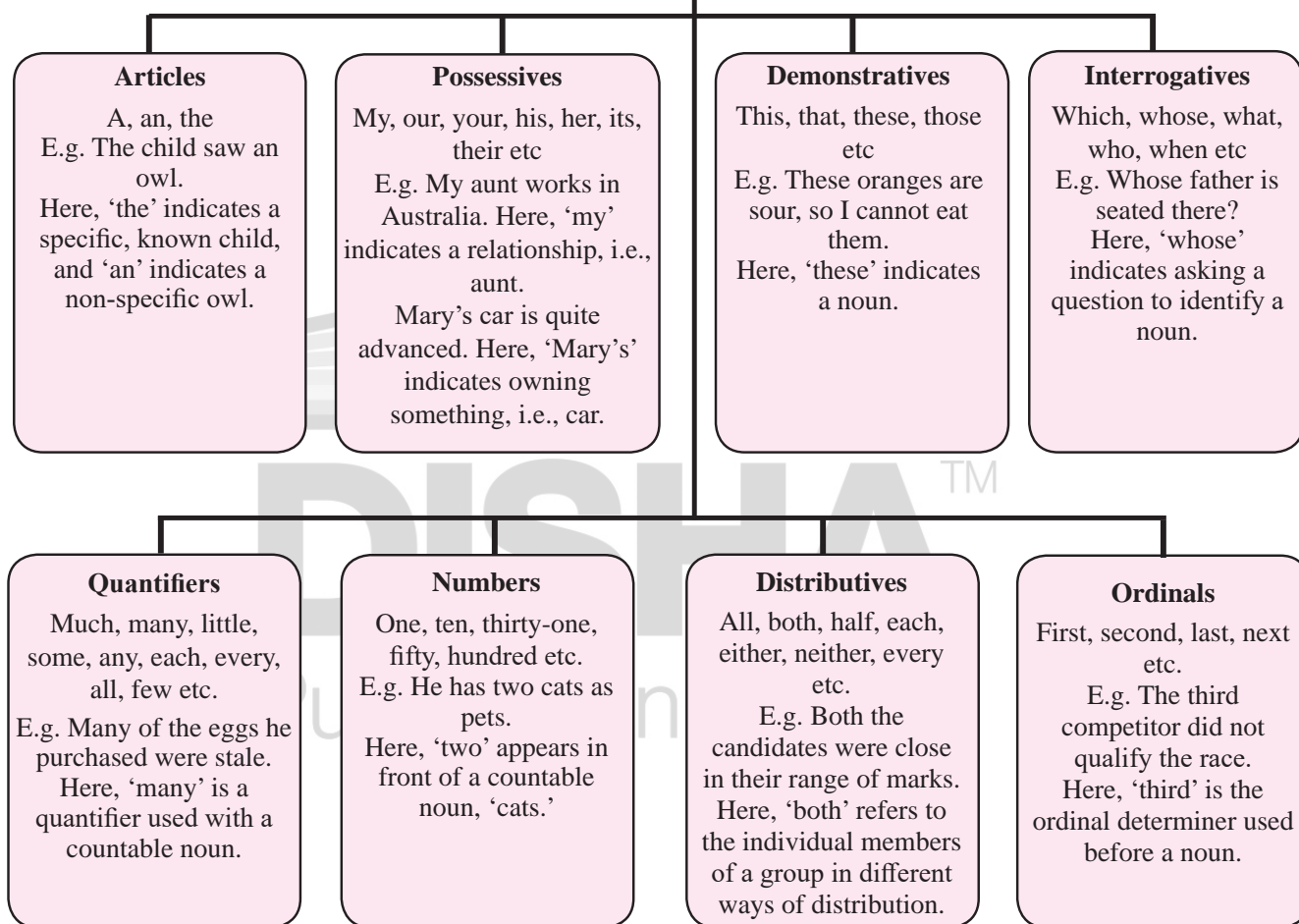
(a). Grammar

Determiners



Words used before a noun to indicate things or people referred to.

Types



Hacks

a) Few — A few
(countable nouns)

Few = not many

A few = some (small amount)

Little — A little

(uncountable nouns)

Little = not much

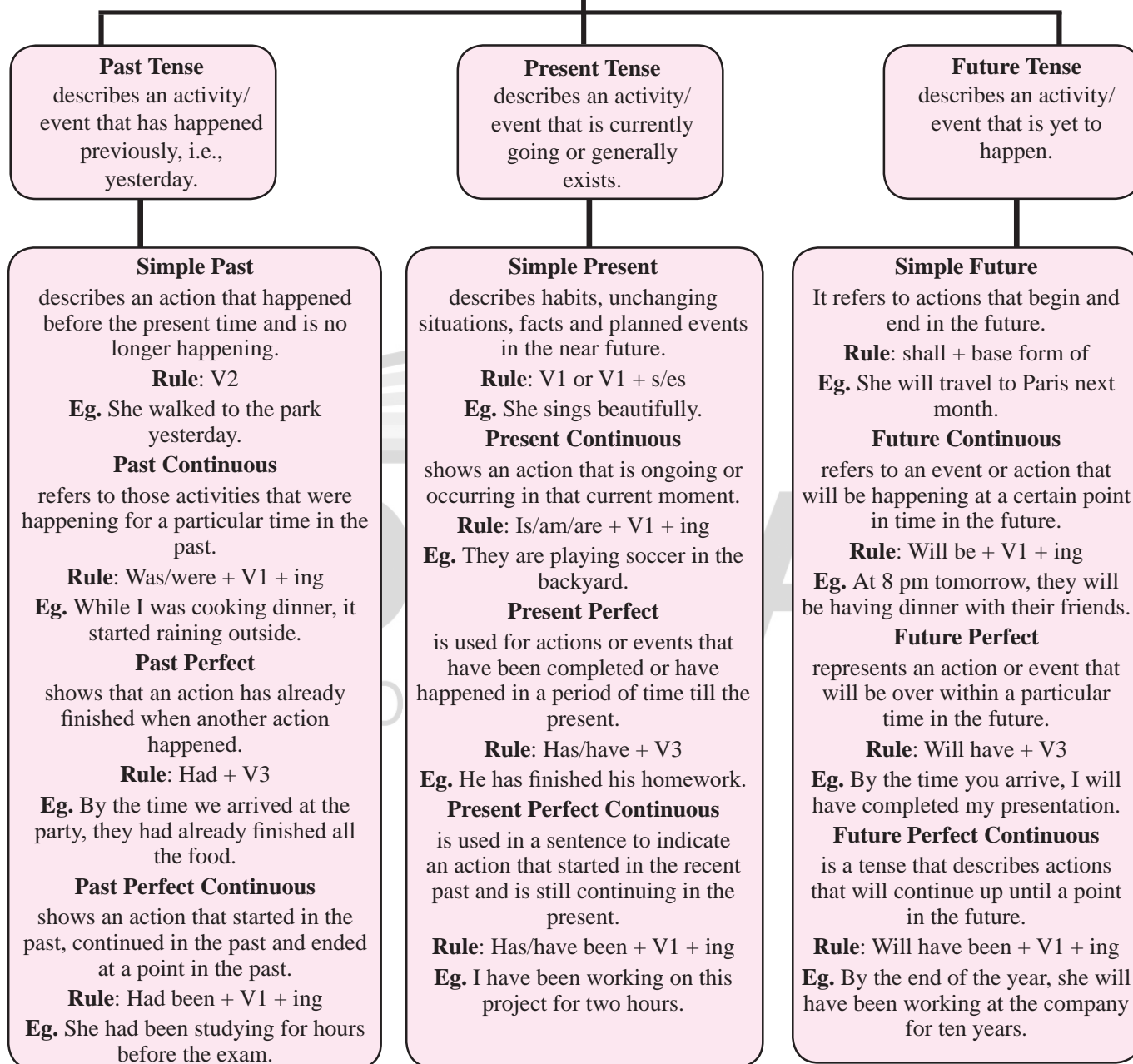
A little = some (small amount)

b) The article, 'an' is used in front of vowel sounds of a, e, i, o, u, Note that there is a difference between vowel and vowel sound, that is why it is 'a' university and not 'an' university even though it starts with 'u'.



Tenses

A form of the verb that allows you to express time.



Hacks

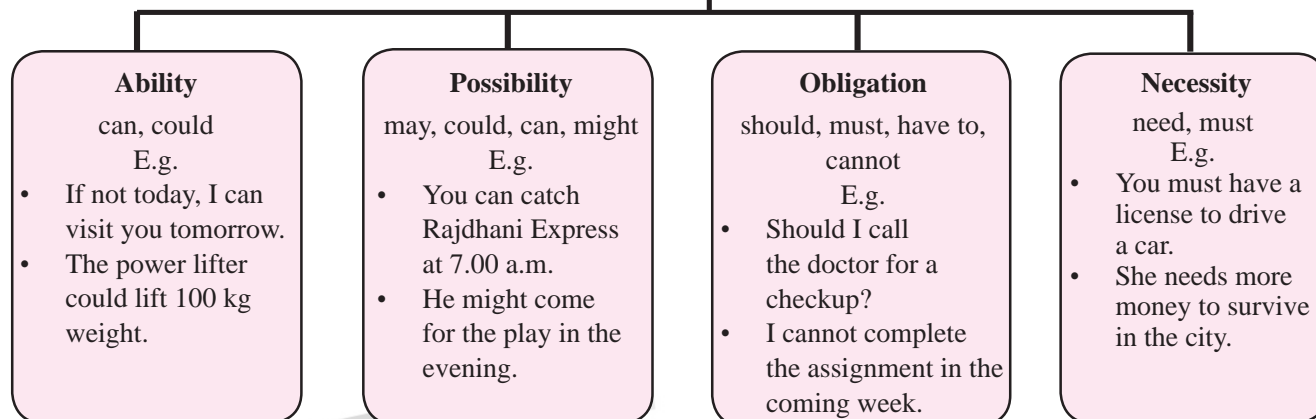
In simple tense, indicators like always, every, usually, normally, never etc can be found.



Modals

Words that are used with a main verb to express ideas such as ability, possibility, obligation or necessity.

Types



Hacks

a) Possibility:

- ✓ *May is used when there is 90% possibility*
 - May God shower his blessings on you. (to pray)
 - May I visit my friend's house? (to take permission)
- ✓ *Might is used when there is 10% possibility and in present perfect tense*
 - She might visit the temple today.
 - Rita might have called but the phone was on silent mode.

b) Ability:

- ✓ *Will is used to fulfil a promise or to convey a sense of determination.*
 - I will take you for a movie tonight (promise)
 - I will change the system of this school. (determination)
- ✓ *Would is used for past habits, to offer, to express a desire*
 - Would you like some tea? (to offer)
 - I would wake up at 6 every day. (past habits)
 - I would like to go on a trek. (to express a desire)

c) Obligation:

- ✓ *Shall is used in case of a legal document, official communication, meetings*
 - The applicant shall provide a valid identity. (legal document)
 - He shall convey the message to the concerned person. (official communication)

d) Necessity:

- ✓ *Should is used to give a suggestion/advice*
 - She should visit the doctor for her ailment. (advice)

Subject-Verb Agreement



A subject and its verb must be either singular or both plural, i.e., a singular subject takes a singular verb while a plural subject takes a plural verb.

Types

Pronoun-Verb Agreement – When a pronoun is used, it must be of the same number, gender and person as the noun for which it stands.

E.g.

- After a few hearings, the jury gave its verdict. (when singular)
- The jury were divided in their opinions. (when plural)
- Rama and Hari work hard. Their teachers praise them. (when two singular nouns are combined, they are joined by 'and')

Noun-Verb Agreement – When a verb is used, it must agree with its subject in number and person.

E.g.

- The quality of the mangoes were not good. (incorrect)
- The quality of the mangoes was not good. (correct)

Since a singular noun (quality) is used, therefore the singular verb (was) will be used.



Hacks

(a) **BOT Formula** for singular verb

B – Body

O – One

T – Thing

Words used: everybody, nobody, anything, anyone, everything

E.g.- Everybody **is** invited to the play at the National Science Centre for an exhibition.

(Every**body**) + **is** (singular verb)

(b) One of + Plural Noun = Singular verb

E.g.- One of my friends **was** (singular verb) not willing to watch the movie I had booked.

One of (one out of many) + was (singular verb)

(c) Nor, neither, either, or – Change in nearest subject

E.g.- Neither he nor his sister (singular subject) **was** (plural verb) going to the wedding.

He or his friends **are** (plural verb) to be blamed.

(d) Nouns joined by 'and' will have a plural verb

E.g.- (i) Priya and her mother **have** (plural verb) gone to the market.

(ii) *Bread and butter is* (singular verb) my favourite breakfast – because together it is a single dish.

(e) Collective Nouns will have singular verb – a group of students, a crowd of people

E.g.- A **group** of students **was** (singular verb) present at the fair.

(f) Pairings (a pair of shoes, pants, glasses, trousers) = Singular verb

E.g.- A **pair** of branded shoes **is** (singular verb) quite expensive.

(g) Abstract Noun + Uncountable Noun will be followed by a singular verb

E.g.- **Honesty** (abstract noun) **is** (singular verb) the best policy.

Good friendship **keeps** (singular verb) your mind healthy.

(h) When mentioning time, distance, sum of money, it will be followed by a singular verb

E.g.- 1267 kilometers (distance) **is** (singular verb) too long to travel.

(i) Each and every is followed by a singular verb

E.g.- Every student **has** (singular verb) been asked to do the assignment.



Reported Speech

When we tell someone what another person said, we use reported speech.

Types

Direct Speech: A representation of the actual words someone said.

Indirect Speech: A report of something that was said or written rather than the exact words spoken or written.

Rules of Conversion

Rules	Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
Simple Present → Simple Past	“I always go for a walk”, he said.	He said that he always went for a walk.
Present Continuous → Past Continuous	“I am cleaning the table”, she said.	She said that she was cleaning the table.
Present Perfect → Past Perfect	She said, “He has finished the project.”	She said that he had finished his project.
Present Perfect Continuous → Past Perfect Continuous	I have been to Kerala”, he told me.	He told me that he had been to Kerala.
Simple Past → Past Perfect	“James arrived on Sunday,” he said.	He said that James had arrived on Sunday.
Past Perfect → Past Perfect	“I had just finished taking a bath”, she said.	She said that she had just finished taking a bath.
Past Continuous → Past Perfect Continuous	“We were living in United Kingdom”, they told us.	They told us that they had been living in United Kingdom.

Change of Words in Speech Conversion

this	that
these	those
it	it
here	there
thus	so
now	then
just	then
ago	before
hither	thither
come	go
hence	thence
yet	till then

today	that day
tomorrow	the next day
the day after tomorrow	the day after the next day
yesterday	the day before
the day before yesterday	the day before the previous day
tonight	that night
next day	the following day
next week	the following week
last night	the night before

Other Necessary Changes

Reported Verbs	Reported Speech
'Said' will remain 'said'	He said, "I will go home." He said that he will go home.
'Says to' will change to 'tells'	She says to Ram, "Please get the bottle from the fridge." She tells Ram to get the bottle from the fridge.
'Said to' will change to 'told'	She said to him, "Let's go to the park." She told him to come with her to the park.
'Said to' will change to 'asked' in case of a question	I said to my wife, "What are you doing?" I asked my wife what she was doing.

(a). Writing Skills

Formal Letter



Written communication that follows a specific format and tone, used in professional or academic settings. It's characterized by formal language, a structured layout, and respectful greetings and closings.

Types of Letters

Letter of Enquiry

A formal letter written to enquire about something that one wants to know. It is important to mention all relevant details if information has to be obtained about a particular product/service to be availed.

Letter to Editor

A formal letter written to express one's concern over particular issues or to highlight core issues in society. These are written to editors of newspapers/magazines.

Letter of Complaint

A formal letter written to the concerned authorities to express disappointment or dissatisfaction over a service or to express a problem that needs to be rectified.

Order Letter

An order letter is written to inform the buyer / seller regarding the details of the items bought or sold.

Author's Words of Wisdom

Format for writing a formal letter with a HACK:

Students Don't Really Study Subject Because Confusion Never Ends

- S – Sender's name and address
- D – Date (e.g. 15th December, 2023)
- R – Receiver's name and address
- S – Subject (state the purpose of the letter)
- S – Salutation (Respected Sir/Ma'am)
- B – Body (follow IDC formula)
- C – Complimentary close (Thanking you/ Yours sincerely)
- N – Name of sender
- E – End (Add enclosures if any)

	Sender's Name and Address
	Date
	Recipient's Name and Address
	Subject
	Salutation
	Body
	Complimentary Close
	Name and Signature of Sender + Designation
	End (Enclosures can be added)

Example (From All India 2014)

J-Block
Rajouri Garden
New Delhi
28th March 2014

The Editor
Times of India
New Delhi

Sub: Need for drinking water

Sir

I am an aggrieved resident of Rajouri Garden. The residents in this area are facing an acute shortage of drinking water. The pipe supplying drinking water to our area has been damaged. We have not been getting any supply for the past 48 hours.

I am appealing to you and your esteemed newspaper to help us get a redressal, as all the pleas to the concerned authorities in the PWD department have fallen on deaf ears. Infants, school going children, office goers, housewives, and the aged are all suffering due to the apathy of people who matter. We request to be supplied with water through tankers till the problem is resolved.

I hope you would address our problem and help us convey our woes to the department. I will be highly grateful for the same.

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

Rahul

Note: While writing the subscription, please ensure that you DO NOT put an apostrophe in 'Yours'. 'Your's' is incorrect while 'Yours' is correct.

LOL Formula – Always 'Leave One Line' after every point



Hacks

1. No commas to be used anywhere
2. Body – IDC formula (Introduction, Detail, Conclusion)
 - a) **Introduction** – Through the columns of your esteemed newspaper, I would like to draw the attention of concerned authorities towards _____
 - b) **Details** – focus on causes, problems, suggestions and solutions
 - c) **Conclusion** – I hope my concern will reach the ears of the concerned authorities through your newspaper.

Analytical Paragraph



An analysis of any diagrammatic representation, be it a bar graph or pie chart. It typically includes an introduction, evidence or example, and a conclusion. Such an analysis helps students to articulate their thoughts clearly.

Steps of Writing an Analytical Paragraph

1. Heading: Provide a suitable heading to your paragraph

2. Introduction: Begin the paragraph with a clear opening statement so that it provides clarity and introduce the topic properly.

3. Evidence and Analysis: Analyze the data using the right vocabulary and mention your analysis in short and clear sentences.

4. Conclusion: End the analysis with a concluding statement. Sum up the overall analysis.

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Hacks

Introduction – Write in not more than 2-3 lines

Following are some opening lines for the paragraph.

- The above table suggests
- The chart given above describes
- The data given provides information about ...




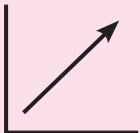

Body – Write in not more than 5-6 lines. Use words like ‘moreover’, ‘in addition to’, ‘furthermore’ etc.

- It is clearly evident from the above graph/from the above chart ...

Conclusion – Write in not more than 2-3 lines

- In a nutshell / Overall / To conclude

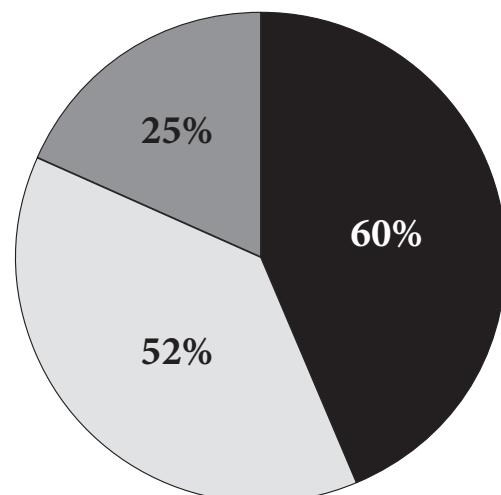
(A) Vocabulary for Line Graphs

Graph activity	Words to be used
<p>Graph going down</p> 	<p>Decrease, fall, drop, plunge, plummet</p>
<p>Graph going up</p> 	<p>Increase, rise, grow, double (2x), treble (3x), climb, rocket</p>
<p>No change</p> 	<p>Level off, stabilize, remain the same, remain unchanged</p>
<p>Constant</p> 	<p>Remains constant, increases/ decreases constantly.</p>
<p>Position</p> 	<p>Reach a high/peak of, reach a low (at), stood, start/begin at, end/finish at</p>

(B) Vocabulary for Pie Charts

For Pie Charts, you can use the following statements (in terms of percentages)

- (i) 60% can be written as **nearly two-thirds**
- (ii) 52% is **over half of all the respondents**
- (iii) 25% can be written as **a quarter**





Itinerary - for Accepting / Rejecting Tour Proposals

Acceptance of Proposal

Paragraph 1: How to open the paragraph
 A thorough analysis of the itinerary provided by reveals that the proposal should be accepted/rejected.

Paragraph 3: Conclusion
 Use words like overall, therefore, acceptance/rejection of proposal

Paragraph 2: Begin with mentioning the aspects
 When accepting the proposal:-
 First most important reason – use words like several features / well-rounded plan of events (mention positive aspects about the plan provided)
 Second most important reason / secondly / additionally
 Third most important reason / moreover

Hacks

Rejection of Proposal
 Follow the same format given above. Mention the most important reasons for rejecting the proposal first. Keep the positive aspects as the foundation of your proposal.



SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis is a framework used to assess the strength, weakness, opportunities and threats related to a task/situation.

For Accepting a Task: Focus on strengths and opportunities

For Rejecting a Task: Along with slight focus on positives, main focus should be on weaknesses, with suggested solutions.

	Helpful to achieving the objective	Harmful to achieving the objective
Internal origin (attributes of the organization)	S Strengths	W Weaknesses
External origin (attributes of the environment)	O Opportunities	T Threats



Hacks

Even when discussing strengths and opportunities, do discuss atleast 1-2 weaknesses along with their solutions.

Section C – Language through Literature

FIRST FLIGHT

(a). Prose

1. A Letter to God

Significance of the Title

Lencho, the farmer writes a letter to God for help when struck by disaster. The chapter depicts his unwavering faith in God.

Main Characters

- Lencho, a hard working farmer
- Post Master
- Post Office officials

Summary

Lencho, a simple and devoted farmer, tends his field of corn, hoping for a bountiful harvest. He observes the skies, eagerly anticipating rain to nourish his crops. Unfortunately, a hailstorm devastates Lencho's field, destroying his entire crop. Faced with the threat of starvation for his family, Lencho doesn't despair. Driven by his strong belief in God's benevolence, Lencho decides to write directly to God. In his heartfelt letter, he explains his situation and requests a hundred pesos to buy seeds and grow his crops. With complete trust, Lencho addresses the letter 'To God' and mails it. The postmaster, touched by Lencho's simplicity and faith, is struck by the letter. He realizes the desperate situation of the farmer and decides to help. Unable to send money from the post office, the postmaster collects money from his colleagues and sends it to Lencho anonymously, signing the envelope 'God'. On receiving the letter, Lencho gets angry as the envelope contains 70 pesos instead of the 100 that he had requested. He suspects that someone from the post office had stolen the remaining 30 pesos and calls the post office employees 'a bunch of crooks'. He urges God to send him the rest of the money since he was in urgent need of it. However, he requests God not to send the money through the mail this time. The postmaster is left with great amazement and dismay.

Themes

- Lencho's unwavering faith and absolute trust in God
- Humanity's compassion through postmaster's act of kindness and empathy

- The nature of belief which is problematized as Lencho believes in God's help but fails to notice the compassion of the postmaster and post-office officials

Character Sketch

- **Lencho-** Lencho was a hard working farmer and is referred to as 'an ox of a man'. He was devout, honest, simple and determined man. Given his faith in God, he thought that God always helped those who had a good conscience. He therefore sought to God for help when he and his family reached the point of hunger and had lost all hope. He demonstrates his naivety by making an effort to communicate with God directly.
- **Postmaster-** The postmaster had a very pleasant and humble personality. He was dutiful, empathetic, pragmatic and helpful. He admired Lencho's trust in God. Unlike Lencho, the postmaster knew that God does not have a physical address to which the letter could be delivered. Therefore, he decided to support Lencho and retain his faith in God by sending financial assistance. The postmaster's good intentions received a setback when Lencho doubted them.

2. Nelson Mandela -Long Walk to Freedom

Significance of the Title

'Long Walk to Freedom' refers to the years of struggle of the coloured people in fighting against apartheid and gaining a political representation through democracy.

Main Characters

- Mandela
- Zenani (Mandela's daughter)
- Thabo Mbeki
- Mr de Klerk

Summary

The chapter describes Nelson Mandela's inauguration ceremony as the first Black President of South Africa. This event marks the end of a long struggle against apartheid, a system of racial segregation that oppressed the Black majority in South Africa. Mandela expresses his gratitude to the international community for their support in dismantling

apartheid. He acknowledges the 'extraordinary human disaster' of apartheid, highlighting the years of oppression faced by Black South Africans.

Mandela reflects on the concept of freedom, contrasting his childhood freedom with the 'basic and honourable freedoms' that had been denied to Black South Africans. He emphasizes the importance of freedom not just for himself but for all his people. He stresses the need for forgiveness and reconciliation between the formerly oppressed and the oppressors. He envisions a South Africa where people of all races can live together in peace and harmony. Mandela discusses his 'twin obligations' - to his family and to his people. He emphasizes the importance of fulfilling both these responsibilities for a just and equitable society. The passage concludes with a hopeful outlook for the future of South Africa. Mandela expresses his belief in building a nation based on democratic values and equal rights for all.

Themes

- Triumph of democracy and the fight against apartheid
- Nelson Mandela's leadership, resilience, and commitment towards forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Importance of freedom, justice, and equality in building a society

Character Sketch

- **Mandela-** He became the first Black President after more than three years of white dominance. He demonstrated bravery, honour, fortitude and leadership. He was a peacemaker who never compromised on his beliefs and conviction.

3. Stories about Flying

(i). His First Flight

Significance of the Title

The story justifies the event when the young seagull was able to overcome his fear of flight and took the first flight of his life.

Main Characters

- A young seagull
- His parents and siblings

Summary

The story 'His First Flight' by Liam O'Flaherty is based on a young seagull who is afraid to take his first flight because he fears that his wings wouldn't support him while flying. All his siblings take the plunge to fly fearlessly in the open air despite having smaller wings than him. However, the young bird cannot muster up the courage as he is scared

of any failure. Whenever he tries to come forward towards the brink of the ledge to fly, he becomes afraid and goes back. His parents constantly upbraid and threaten him that unless he flies he would be made to starve alone on the ledge. However, unable to take the leap, the young seagull just watches his parents teaching his siblings how to skim the waves and dive for fish. One fine day, the whole family flies to a big plateau and taunts the young seagull for his cowardice. As the sun rays blaze on his ledge, he feels the heat and hunger. The young bird begs his mother to bring him some food. He utters a joyful scream when his mother quickly picks a piece of fish and flies across to him. He leans out eagerly and jumps at the fish, exasperated by hunger. Suddenly he falls outward in the open space, and a monstrous terror seizes him as he falls downwards. The next moment, his wings spread outwards, and he is able to fly fearlessly. Finally, the young seagull takes his first flight and soars higher. He skims through the waves and dives along with his siblings.

Themes

- Self-reliance, self-confidence and courage
- Overcoming fear by passing through hesitation and trial and error
- Family dynamics and support

Character Sketch

- **Young Seagull-** At first, the young seagull comes across as scared and stubborn to fly. Later, the seagull is made to overcome anxiety and fear to make its first flight.

(ii). Black Aeroplane

Significance of the Title

The aeroplane had no light on its wings and was totally black. It emerged from the black clouds and disappeared there in.

Main Characters

- Anonymous Pilot, narrator and protagonist
- Woman at the control centre

Summary

'Black Aeroplane' is a mysterious story written by Fredrik Forsyth. The narrator of the story is a pilot who wants to be with his family in England to enjoy a wholesome breakfast. In the course of the story, he is flying from France to England when an unusual event occurs. Once he crosses Paris, he comes across storm clouds that look like black mountains. However, he flies through the clouds and soon realizes that everything around him has turned completely black. Nothing is visible to him outside the aeroplane of which he loses all control. Suddenly, he notices that there is

another aeroplane with no lights on its wings. The pilot of that aeroplane waves his hands and signals him to follow. He begins to blindly follow the other pilot since no radio signals could be sent or received. Moreover, the fuel in the tank was quite low. Soon he passes through the dark clouds and lands safely on the runway with the help of the other pilot. Upon landing, he inquires at the reception about who the other pilot was for he wanted to thank him for saving his life in such a critical condition. But the woman at the control centre told him that there was no other aeroplane in the night sky other than his own.

Themes

- Miracle and mystery
- Determination and survival

4. From the Diary of Anne Frank

Significance of the Title

It is the Diary of Anne Frank named Kitty which gives us her account.

Main Characters

- Anne Frank
- Mr. Keesing, the math teacher
- Anne's classmates

Summary

From the Diary of Anne Frank is an autobiography of a young Jewish girl who maintains a diary from 12 June 1942 to 29 March 1944. At first, penning her thoughts seems like an unusual experience to her. She believed that no one in the near future would be interested to read about a random young girl's past experiences. However, she still decides to write her thoughts in her diary named 'Kitty'. She considers her diary to be her true and loyal friend. Anne felt that her diary had more capacity than other people with low patience levels to absorb thoughts. Further, she mentions how much she loved her family, especially her father, who gifted her the diary on her thirteenth birthday.

On 20th June 1942, Anne states an instance about her class which was nervous about their exam results. Although she was confident about other subjects, she wasn't quite sure about mathematics. Other students in the class panicked about the results. Anne, however felt that about a quarter of the students were dummies who should be detained as they did not participate in other school activities.

Besides, Anne also mentions how the math teacher, Mr Keesing, was annoyed by her talkative nature. He would punish her with extra homework whenever she talked more during his class. In the first punishment, he asked her to

write an essay on 'A Chatterbox', which for Anne was a weird topic. Nevertheless, she thought hard and decided to present convincing arguments in her essay, justifying her points in support of talking. Anne mentioned to her teacher that while she would try to improve herself, she could hardly do anything about the trait that she inherited from her mother. When her teacher read the essay, he found it amusing and assigned her a second essay, 'An Incurable Chatterbox', for her unreformable talkative nature.

But by the third lesson, Mr Keesing had read enough of her justifications and assigned Anne a topic entitled, 'Quack, Quack, Quack, Said Mistress Chatterbox' as another punishment. Anne had almost run out of thoughts after writing essays on similar topics previously. This time she takes the help of her friend, Sanne, who was good at poetry and writes the essay from beginning to end in satirical verse. When her teacher reads this essay he thoroughly enjoys it. Since then, Anne was allowed to talk in the class and was never assigned any extra homework by Mr Keesing.

Themes

- Diary entry as an important account of character portrayal of Anne
- Relationship between teacher-student
- Friendship and Inter-personal relationships

Character Sketch

- **Anne Frank-** Anne Frank was born on June 12, 1929, in Frankfurt, Germany, and was the younger daughter of Otto and Edith Frank. Even as a child, Anne displayed remarkable intelligence and was considered wise beyond her years. She had an inquisitive mind, was quick to learn, and had a vivid imagination. Anne was a free spirited child and didn't conform to the societal norms of her time. She was different from the other children of her age and often felt misunderstood. Despite facing numerous challenges in her life, Anne had a positive outlook towards life. She had a strong sense of humor, irony and sarcasm, which is reflected in her diary. She had the ability to write about her experiences in a clear and engaging manner, making her diary an inspiring read even today.
- **Mr. Keesing-** Mr. Keesing was an old-fashioned teacher of maths in Anne Frank's school. He was rather strict with his students and didn't allow much talking in the class. Ultimately, he assigned Anne to write an essay on 'A Chatterbox'. The essay gave the right message to Mr. Keesing. By chance, the joke fell on him. His approach towards Anne transformed. He allowed her to talk and never assigned her any extra homework again.

5. Glimpses of India

Significance of the Title

The chapter provides a cultural insight into places like Goa, Coorg and Assam.

(i). A Baker from Goa

Main Characters

- Pader- Goan baker
- Narrator, member of Goan community

The story is written by Lucio Rodrigues, who talks about Goa when it was ruled by the Portuguese. As a result of colonisation, Portuguese culture persisted and the people there were swayed by it. Baking was the conventional profession of the Goan people, and the bakers were known as 'paders'. This story particularly revolves around the bakers living in a Goan village. The author mentions how people in old times ate loaves of bread which were baked in large furnaces and were an important part of their culture. The paders would come to sell those loaves in the street and would make a jingling sound with the bamboo whenever they arrived. He further adds how the villagers enjoyed eating the loaves and the children liked the bread-bangles brought in baskets by the bakers.

The author also describes the special attire of the bakers called Kabai, which is a single-piece frock that would reach up to their knees. Besides, he also mentions how baking became the most profitable profession among people in Goa, and many bakers led a prosperous life. Their jackfruit-like physical appearance was a valid testimony of their well-being.

(ii). Coorg

Coorg is a story written by Lokesh Abrol. He describes Coorg as the smallest district of Karnataka. The author states that Coorg, or Kodagu is a beautiful place that is located midway between Mangalore and Mysore. The heavenly city has evergreen forests, spices and coffee plantations and many tourists throng to this destination from September to March every year. The air of this region is filled with coffee scents. The people of this region are independent and have some Greek or Arabic connection since the time Alexander's army had settled here. The latter married the local people and their traditions continue to exist. The people of Coorg wear Kuppia, which is a long black coat that is quite similar to the ones worn by Arabs.

The chapter mentions that the Coorgi people are very brave. One of the most significant regiments in the Indian Army is the Coorg Regiment. Notably, the first Indian Commander-

in-Chief of the Indian Army was General Cariappa, who hailed from this beautiful place. The hilly regions and forests of Coorg are a major source of water for the Cauvery River. Visitors who are interested in high-adventure sports can have fun and frolic in this place and also explore the different types of animals particularly found in this region.

(iii). Tea from Assam

Main Characters

- Pranjol
- Rajvir, his friend
- Pranjol's father, manager of a tea estate

Tea from Assam is a story written by Arup Kumar Datta. The story begins with two friends, Rajvir and Pranjol, travelling to Assam. On their way, they buy fresh tea from a roadside vendor and discuss the special tea of this region. As they sip the hot steaming tea, Rajvir and Pranjol discuss that over eighty crore cups of tea are consumed every day throughout the world. Rajvir thoroughly enjoys the scenic beauty of Assam, consisting of tea plantations and bushes, while Pranjol is engrossed in a detective book.

Rajvir further explains to Pranjol about Assam as a place that is famous for having the largest tea plantations. However, no one knows the origin of tea in the region. According to a Chinese legend, a few leaves of tea accidentally fell into a pot of boiling hot water. The Emperor enjoyed the delicious flavour of the liquid, and that's how tea came into being. Further, Rajvir mentions an Indian legend. Bodhidharma, who was a Buddhist monk, cut off his eyelids because he fell asleep during meditation. In no time, ten tea plants grew out of his eyelids and when these leaves were put in hot water, they helped in banishing sleep.

Soon, they arrived at Mariani Junction, picked up their luggage and made their way towards Dhekiabari Tea Estate. On their way, they saw batches of tea-pluckers who draped plastic aprons with bamboo baskets hung on their backs as they plucked the newly sprouted leaves. Pranjol's father had come to receive both of them. Pranjol's father was amazed at Rajvir's knowledge about tea plantations when he heard the young boy mention the second flush or sprouting period of tea that yields the best tea. Rajvir adds that he was keen to learn more about the place from Pranjol's father.

Themes

- Diversity and Multiculturalism presented through differences in language, costumes, food and culture.
- Description of different states and their people

6. Mijbil the Otter

Significance of the Title

The story revolves around Mijbil, the Otter, Maxwell's pet suggesting that one should take good care of their pet and be friendly towards it.

Main Characters

- The writer
- Mijbil, his pet otter

Summary

The story, Mijbil the Otter, begins with the writer, Gavin Maxwell, who is traveling to Basra to the Consulate-General with his friend to collect and answer their mail from Europe. During their journey, Maxwell expresses his desire to keep an otter as a pet as he felt very lonely after losing his pet dog earlier. His friend suggests that he get an otter from the Tigris marshes in Iraq. When they reach the destination, his friend receives the mail immediately, while Maxwell has to wait for a while. Once he receives the mail, he takes the sack that was brought by two Arabs carrying a message from his friend and finds an otter inside it. He christens the otter 'Mijbil' and refers to it as Mij.

It takes a little while for the little creature to adapt to its surroundings. In due course, Maxwell observes that Mij enjoys playing with water and learns to open the bathroom faucet on its own. The writer is thoroughly amazed at the games played by Mij with its touch of creativity. Soon it was time for Maxwell to return to England with his pet otter. However, British Airlines has a few restrictions that bar animals from traveling with human beings, so he books another flight that allows Mij to travel with him. The new airlines insisted that Mij should be packed in a box so that it doesn't disturb other co-passengers onboard. Henceforth, Maxwell arranges for a box one hour before the flight, puts Mijbil inside, and leaves to grab a quick meal.

When he returns, he finds holes in the box and blood-stained edges. He understands that Mij must have injured himself inside the box. He cleans the box properly and reaches the airport a few minutes before the flight takes off. When he boards the flight, he explains the entire incident to an air hostess who advises him to keep his pet on his lap rather than locking his pet inside the container. Maxwell was filled with gratitude for her kind words. But the moment he opens the box, Mij leaps out and vanishes in thin air, which causes a lot of chaos on the flight. Many co-passengers become astonished to see the little creature moving around. But the

kind-hearted air hostess takes Mij and hands it to Maxwell in no time. Soon, they reach London, and Maxwell thanks the crew for their support onboard.

In London, Mij gets used to its surroundings gradually. It starts playing with marbles and ping-pong balls. The writer is also amazed by the game that Mij develops with his broken suitcase. Maxwell often took Mij for a walk, and the people of London would make wild guesses about his pet. Some called Mij to be a baby seal, others beaver, squirrel, or hippo. The most shocking response that Maxwell receives from a laborer, who was digging a hole, is "Here, Mister — what is that supposed to be?"

Themes

- Explores the relationship between owner and pet depicting the challenges experienced by the pet owner.
- Loneliness and a sense of loss in absence of a pet.

Character Sketch

- **Gavin Maxwell:** Gavin Maxwell, the narrator of the story "Mijbil the Otter" is a thoughtful and compassionate young man with a great love for animals. He shows deep compassion for the otter, Mijbil, and his situation throughout the entire story. Maxwell is a curious and adventurous person, as seen by his choice to explore the isolated hills of Iraq where he finds Mijbil. He was thrilled to own an otter as a pet. He worked tirelessly to ensure that Mijbil the otter is safe and healthy. He used his knowledge of animal behaviour to win the otter's affection, is concerned for him and assists Mijbil to adjust in his new environment. He is patient and understanding, allowing Mijbil to settle into his new home gradually. His love and compassion towards Mijbil serve as an example of how humans may have a positive impact on the natural world.
- **Mijbil, the Otter:** Mijbil, an otter previously unknown to science, was later identified as *Lutrogale perspicillata maxwelli*, commonly known as Maxwell's otter. Resembling a miniature medieval dragon, his body was covered in symmetrical pointed scales resembling mud armor, revealing a soft velvet chocolate-brown fur between their tips. On the second night, Mijbil bonded with Maxwell and slept in the crook of Maxwell's knees. Known for his affinity for water, he became agitated if any water remained undisturbed. Demonstrating intelligence, Mijbil successfully attempted to open a tap by himself. His high energy levels were evident as he engaged in playful activities, such as rolling a rubber ball around the room. Surprisingly, his preferred

plaything was marbles, as he skillfully rolled them on his belly without letting them fall. During travels, Mijbil's attempt to break through his box resulted in injuries. Despite his lively and chaotic behavior, Mijbil consistently returned to Maxwell, affectionately nuzzling his neck and face. He created unique games, including one with a ping pong ball and Maxwell's suitcase, captivating him for hours. On walks, Mijbil developed compulsive habits, touching specific iron railings and lamp posts. His routine included galloping on the low wall of a primary school, causing distractions for pupils and staff. Mijbil, a creature of habit, remained dedicated to his established routines.

7. Madam Rides the Bus

Significance of the Title

Valli, the 8 year old protagonist is referred to as 'Madam' because she summons the courage to ride on the bus alone, without any of her acquaintances and conducts herself quite maturely during the bus ride.

Main Characters

- Valli, an eight year old girl
- Her mother
- The bus driver
- The bus conductor

Summary

The story, Madam Rides the Bus, illustrates the story of a young eight-year-old Tamil girl, Valliammai. Valli was always curious to explore the outside world. She had no friends to play games with. So, her favorite pastime was to stand in the doorway of her house and watch all that was happening on the street outside. She would watch people get on and off the bus that travelled between her village and the nearest town. The bus that was filled with a new set of passengers filled her with a sense of unending joy. She had a strong urge to take a bus ride to explore the adventurous bus journey. Hence, she collected information about the bus timings by listening to the conversations of the people taking the bus ride. Soon she learned that the bus journey from her village to the nearest town was approximately six miles. The bus fare costs thirty paise for a one-way ride. So, Valli started saving enough money to take a ride on the bus. Valli planned to travel on the bus during the afternoon when her mother would be asleep. She stood on the roadside waiting for the bus. As the bus arrived, she told the conductor she wanted to go to town. The conductor happened to be a

jovial person and referred to her as 'madam' and told her to hop into the bus and take her seat. She got into her bus quickly and noticed that the bus was painted in green and white color stripes and looked brand new. The bus seats were luxurious, and the ride was comfortable. During her journey, Valli enjoyed looking at the greenery outside and the scenic natural beauty of the bus. She was thoroughly enjoying her bus ride and was amused when she saw a young cow that ran wildly in front of the bus and crossed the road. The driver blew the shrill horn as the cow crossed the road. This was a fascinating experience for Valli as she realized her dream of traveling on a bus had finally come true.

As Valli enjoyed watching the beautiful landscape outside, the bus started getting empty as the passengers got down to their respective stops. Soon, the conductor asked her if she would like to roam about the stalls in the town, but she told him that she had limited money, which she needed to take the return bus ride. Valli stayed on the bus and took a ticket from the conductor to return to her village. As the bus started again, she noticed a dead cow and realised that it was the same cow that had run wildly in front of her bus during her onward journey to the town. Looking at the sight of the bleeding cow made her very sad, and she understood the meaning of life and death from this incident. Soon, the bus dropped her at the bus stop near her home, and she returned home just in time. Thus, no one in her family knew about the adventurous bus trip that she had taken all by herself.

Themes

- Story presents the curious nature of the child and the adventure that she sets herself off on.
- Sensitivity in children and the failure of being understood by the adults

Character Sketch

- **Valliammai-** Valli emerges as a very clever, sensitive, self-respecting and fun-loving girl. She was just eight years old. She was very curious about things. She was a good observer of things. Her favourite pastime was standing in the front doorway of her house. She used to watch from there what was happening in the street outside. There were no playmates of her own age in the neighbourhood. Standing at the door was as enjoyable for her as any of the games children played. Valli was mature, clever and practical beyond her years. Saving sixty paise was not an easy job for a girl of her age. She thriftily saved every coin that came in her way. She was determined to resist any temptation. She sacrificed

buying peppermints, toys, balloons and having a joy ride on a merry go-round to save her money. Valli was full of excitement and enthusiasm. She enjoyed the landscape looking outside the window. The canal, palm trees, grassland, distant mountains and green fields gave her tremendous pleasure. The sight of a young cow running towards the bus at full speed enthused her. Later, the death of the cow depressed her and affected her deeply.

8. The Sermon at Benares

Significance of Title

The chapter is a recitation of an important preaching of Lord Buddha on the subject of life, death and suffering.

Main Characters

- Gautama Buddha
- Kisa Gautami

Summary

The Sermon at Benares illustrates the valuable preachings of Lord Buddha. Lord Buddha was born as a prince named Siddhārtha Gautama in North India. When he was twelve years old, he was sent away from home to study the sacred Hindu scriptures. He returned four years later and married a beautiful princess. They had a healthy son and led a life of royalty for ten years. Being a part of the royal family, he was protected from the sufferings and unpleasant happenings around the world.

One fine day while he went out hunting, the Prince saw an ailing man, an old man, a funeral procession and a monk begging for alms. He was moved by these encounters, and soon he left royalty behind to seek enlightenment to understand all the sorrows that he had witnessed. After seven years, he attained salvation and sat under a tree which is called the 'Bodhi Tree' (Tree of Wisdom) and began preaching and sharing his new understandings of human life and its intrinsic condition. Soon, he came to be known as the Buddha (the Awakened or the Enlightened one). He gave his first sermon at Benares, the holy city on the banks of river Ganges.

In one of his sermons, he talks about a lady, Kisa Gotami, whose only son had died. She was devastated and was in extreme grief for the sudden loss. She went from one house to another, seeking help and medicine to bring her son back to life. People thought that she had lost her mind owing to her grief.

One day, she met a man who directed her to approach Lord Buddha for guidance. He felt that Lord Buddha could possibly help her in this crisis. The lady approached the monk as directed and begged him to cure her son. Lord Buddha asked her to procure mustard seeds from a house where the family had never lost any member, relative or friend. Kisa Gotami was filled with a ray of hope and went from one house to another, but she could find none of the kind Buddha had asked for. She felt disheartened and finally realised how selfish she had been in desperately searching for something that was not possible to achieve. Thus, she understood that man is a mortal being; all who come to Earth have to leave behind all their relations and belongings when they die. This was the lesson that Lord Buddha taught her and wanted her to understand, that life and death are the cycles of the universe which no one could escape.

Lord Buddha's valuable lesson was that feelings of sorrow and grief only escalate man's suffering and pain. Therefore, a wise person is one who is completely aware of how nature functions. One must not lose hope or remain in constant grief for something that is bound to happen. It is only then one can enjoy life and stay happy.

Themes

- Presents the sufferings of man in human life
- Death, loss, sorrow and grief as ultimate truths of life.

Character Sketch

- **Buddha:** Gautama Buddha was born to a North Indian royal family as a prince and was named Siddhartha Gautama. When he was twelve years old, he was sent to a faraway place to study Hindu sacred scriptures and upon returning four years later, he got married to a princess. Soon, they both had a son and they continued to live the royal life for about ten years. The royals were shielded from all the unpleasant experiences of the world until one day, on his way to hunt, the Prince met a sick man, an aged man, a funeral procession and a monk begging for alms. These experiences acted as eye-openers for him and thus, he left all the royalty behind to seek a higher sense of spiritual knowledge.

9. The Proposal

Significance of the Title

From the beginning to the end of the play, the story revolves around a marriage proposal. Lomov comes to Natalya's house to propose to her but even before he makes the proposal it, they both start fighting over the meadows.

Main Characters

- Lomov, anxious landowner
- Chubukov, Lomov's neighbour
- Natalya, Chubukov's daughter

Summary

The chapter, *The Proposal*, is a comedy-drama or a farce that is based on the tendency of two wealthy Russian families seeking ties with each other to increase their estates. The play begins with Ivan Lomov, who visits Stephan Chubukov, a wealthy neighbour of Lomov. Lomov is a wealthy person who comes to seek the hand of Chubukov's twenty-five-year-old daughter, Natalya Stepanovna. Initially, Chubukov assumes that the young man had come to ask for money which he might not return.

Lomov is a thirty-five-year-old gentleman who suffers from severe heart-throbbing and palpitations. He thinks that Natalya is an excellent housekeeper, a well-educated and average-looking woman who would be an ideal partner to marry. When Chubukov hears about the proposal, he becomes happy.

With Natalya, Lomov begins the conversation about how both the families share a cordial relationship. As he speaks about his land Oxen Meadows, which was a disputed property, Natalya objects that the land belongs to her family. Lomov yells back at her, stating that the land belonged to him. Both of them have a heated argument on this topic until Lomov has a sudden palpitation attack with numbness in his feet. The father-daughter duo continue to abuse Lomov. Feeling insulted, Lomov rushes out of the house. Chubukov accidentally mentions to Natalya about Lomov's marriage proposal. Hearing which, Natalya immediately regrets insulting Lomov and asks her father to bring him back.

Chubukov rushes out of the house to call Lomov. When the young man returns, Natalya starts a conversation about their dogs. In no time, a second round of debate ensues between her and Lomov, where she mentions that her dog Squeezer was better than Lomov's dog, Guess. Soon, Chubukov enters the scene, and the argument worsens. All three people begin quarrelling, and soon Lomov faints with another attack of palpitation.

Seeing this, Natalya asks her father to wake Lomov up as she expresses her desire to marry Lomov. Suddenly when Lomov makes a movement, Chubukov puts Natalya's hand on his. They agree to marry, but the quarrel with respect to the dogs persists. However, Lomov remains adamant and refuses to accept that his dog, Guess, is inferior to Squeezer. The curtain goes down as the argument continues among the characters.

Themes

- Tendency of wealthy families to seek matrimonial ties, their purpose being increase of estates and property.
- Role of anger and unhealthy argumentation in ruining relationships.

Character Sketch

- **Natalya:** Natalaya, a young unmarried woman of twenty-five, resided in the same neighborhood as Lomov, a young unmarried man. She was not only an exceptional housekeeper but also possessed decent looks. Despite her father labeling her a lovesick cat, Natalaya was yearning for love. Lomov, on the other hand, claimed she was well-educated, though this aspect seemed questionable. Her natural disposition was quarrelsome and abusive, traits that became evident when she engaged in a bitter dispute with Lomov over a seemingly insignificant piece of land. While Natalaya initially expressed indifference towards the meadows, stating they held little value for her, she could not tolerate unfairness. However, when she discovered that Lomov had come to propose to her, all thoughts of fairness vanished, and she began lamenting the lost opportunity. Urging her father to recall Lomov, she soon resumed quarreling with him, this time over their respective dogs. The dispute centered around the perceived superiority of each other's dog breeds.
- **Lomov:** Lomov, a dubious landowner, is a prosperous unmarried man in his mid-thirties, plagued by various ailments. Nervousness triggers trembling, palpitations, and extreme agitation in him. Despite his search for an ideal match, he doesn't find one and, considering his age, reluctantly decides to propose to Natalya. However, lacking self-confidence, he struggles to initiate the proposal directly. Quarrelsome by nature, Lomov unexpectedly diverts into a dispute about the ownership of the 'Oxen Meadows,' concealing his true intention of proposing. He appears comical, failing to grasp the importance of focusing on the romantic proposal rather than foolishly asserting his claim over the meadows. Childish, unintelligent, and stubborn, he engages in senseless arguments with the lady he sees as a potential spouse. Lomov's lack of discrimination between the significance of different situations is evident. His immaturity leads him to hurl abuses at the Chubukov family during heated arguments about the meadows and dogs, jeopardizing the prospect of marriage. In the end, stubbornness and childish behavior nearly ruin the only chance for him to marry.

(b). Poems

1. Dust of Snow

Significance of the Title

‘Dust of Snow’ refers to fine particles of snow that symbolize natural joy and energy, and the passing of sad moments.

Summary

This poem presents a simple moment, but it has a larger significance. The poet says that he was in a sorrowful mood and was sitting under a hemlock tree. It was the winter season, and there was snow all around. A crow was sitting on the same tree. The crow was shaking down the dust of the snow on the poet. When a small particle of snow fell on the poet, he was awakened from his thoughts and then noticed the simple activity going around him. This changed the poet’s mood. He suddenly realized that he had wasted his time being in sorrow, and now, he should utilise his remaining day to do some useful tasks. This realization changes his mood and fills him with positive energy. His depression and sadness are washed away by the light shower of snow dust. His heart is filled with happiness, and he gets ready to use the rest of the day in a good manner and with positive vibes.

Themes

- Nature’s positive impact on human emotions
- The transformative ability of change of perception

Poetic Devices

The poetic device used in the poem is ‘alliteration’. In this device, the same letter or sound occurs at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.

Another poetic device used is inversion, i.e., when the structure of a sentence is changed by the poet to create rhyme. This poetic device can be seen in the first stanza.

2. Fire and Ice

Significance of the Title

The title suggests that passion and hatred can exist at the same time, perhaps in the same person.

Summary

The poem ‘Fire and Ice’ by Robert Frost explores the idea that humanity’s own nature holds the seeds of its destruction. It presents fire and ice as symbols for opposing destructive forces. Fire represents passionate desires that consume and

rage out of control. Ice symbolizes cold indifference and hatred. Both fire and ice reside within humans. The poem gives the message that our own insatiable desires and lack of empathy hold the potential to destroy us. It also serves as a warning because if we don’t find a way to control our destructive emotions, they will ultimately lead to our downfall.

Themes

- Human perceptions of desire and hatred that are capable of destroying the world

Poetic Devices

- Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in the same line such as the long sound of ‘o’ in the line, “I hold with those who favour fire.”
- Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds in the same line such as the sound of ‘f’ in the line, “I hold with those who favour fire.”
- Imagery is used to make the readers perceive things involving their five senses. In the line, “To say that for destruction ice, is also great.”
- Personification as a poetic device is also used in the poem wherein fire and ice are personified by giving them a mind which is capable of destroying almost anything.

3. A Tiger in the Zoo

Significance of the Title

The poem portrays the tiger’s mental state and helplessness in a zoo, and emphasizes that the zoo is not its natural home.

Summary

The poem describes a caged tiger’s frustration. Striped and powerful, he paces silently in his small cage. The poet contrasts this with the tiger’s natural life, hunting deer and lurking in the jungle. If the forest is gone, the tiger becomes a threat to villages. The final stanza emphasizes the tiger’s confinement despite his strength, ignoring the zoo visitors.

Themes

- Life of tiger in natural and man-made habitat respectively
- Captivity and Freedom

Poetic Devices

- Metaphor – there is a direct comparison carried out between two unlike things such as paws of Tiger are

compares with soft velvet represented as ‘pads of velvet’.

- Personification – the main character in the poem is defined by human characteristics. In the poem, the tiger is attributed by the word, ‘He’.
- Alliteration – the two words, ‘he hears’ use the same letter which begin with ‘h’.
- Imagery – the activities of the tiger have been best described by the line, ‘lurking in shadow’.

4. How to Tell Wild Animals

Significance of the Title

The poem humorously describes various wild animals.

Summary

This poem offers a humorous (and slightly dangerous) guide to identifying wild animals. It uses characteristics associated with the animals, but in an exaggerated or misleading way.

- Lion: Roars so loud you die of fright.
- Tiger: Has black stripes and eats you.
- Leopard: Spotted fur and won’t stop attacking even if you cry.
- Bear: Gives tight hugs that kill you.
- Hyenas: Smile when hunting prey.
- Crocodiles: Cry when eating prey.
- Chameleon: Small lizard-like creature that changes color and lacks ears and wings.

The poem’s humor comes from the deadpan delivery of obviously bad advice. It’s a reminder to be cautious in the wild and rely on proper identification methods.

Themes

Creative use of language to describe and create humour

Poetic Devices

- Imagery – use of descriptive language helps readers to visualize pictures in one’s mind. Here, the image of the Bengal tiger is created through the line, ‘A noble beast greets you, with black stripes with a yellow background.’
- Oxymoron – this figure of speech combines contradictory terms to create a new phrase that expresses a paradoxical idea. In the poem, the oxymoron is used in ‘noble wild beast’. The word “noble” implies a sense of honour, dignity, and grace, while “wild beast”

suggests an untamed, savage animal. These two terms are contradictory and create a paradoxical expression, making it an oxymoron.

- Metaphor – in the poem, ‘roar with pain’, i.e., the painful voice compared ironically with the roar of a leopard and ‘a noble wild beast’, i.e., the leopard is shown as noble are the metaphors used.
- Alliteration – the phrases ‘lep and lep again’, ‘roaming round’, ‘very, very hard’ are examples of alliteration used.
- Personification – the tiger in the poem is referred by ‘he’, i.e., bestowing human qualities on something that is not human.

5. The Ball Poem

Significance of the Title

The poem centres on the life lessons learned through loss of a ball which symbolizes material possessions.

Summary

The poem explores a boy’s loss of his ball, symbolizing the loss of innocence and carefree childhood. The boy’s deep sadness highlights the importance of those memories. A new ball can’t replace them. This experience teaches the boy his first lesson in responsibility and the impermanence of things. The poet uses the ball to represent how people lose things, both material and intangible, throughout life. One must learn to accept these losses and move forward.

Themes

- Loss and impermanence of things
- Experience of life & growing up

Poetic Devices

- Anaphora – repetition of a word at the start of two or more consecutive lines. For example, “What is the boy now, who has lost his ball, What, what is he to do? I saw it go.”
- Imagery – visual description such as “Merrily bouncing, down the street, and then, Merrily over there it is in the water!”
- Personification – the phrase, ‘merrily bouncing for the ball’ has been used as a poetic device, meaning a state of happiness which is characteristic among humans.
- Symbolism – the ‘ball’ is a symbol of childhood, which if lost, can’t be brought back.

6. Amanda!

Significance of the Title

The exclamation mark in the title denotes the acerbic tone of Amanda's parents.

Summary

The poem portrays Amanda's frustration with her mother's constant instructions. Her mother criticizes Amanda's posture, scolds her about chores, and restricts her diet. Amanda escapes these pressures through fantastical daydreams. She imagines being a carefree sea creature, a roaming orphan, or a secluded princess, anything to have freedom from her mother's watchful eye. The poem highlights the clash between a child's desire for independence and a mother's attempts to guide her. Amanda interprets her mother's care as control, demonstrating the communication gap that can arise during this stage.

Themes

- Control and Freedom
- Upbringing and Parenting
- Power of imagination

Poetic Devices

- Personification – the wind, the sun and the moon are personified in the poem. For example, the wind is described as a 'whisperer', the sun as 'golden eye', and the moon as a 'silver friend'.
- Imagery – the poem has a vivid and descriptive imagery that appeals to the reader's senses. It helps to create a more visual and sensory experience for the reader. For example, 'golden eye' of the sun, 'whisperer' of the wind.
- Metaphor – a metaphor is used to convey the love of a mother towards her daughter. For example, 'golden eye' is a term given to the sun that watches over Amanda.
- Alliteration – a musical and rhythmic effect has been created in the poem through alliteration. For example, 'whisperer wind' and 'silver friend' contain alliteration.

7. The Trees

Significance of the Title

'The Trees' is an extended metaphor that compares trees to women.

Summary

This poem uses the metaphor of trees yearning to return to the forest (once destroyed by humans) to depict nature's rebellion. The first stanza highlights the emptiness of the forest and the trees' confinement within human dwellings. The second stanza details the trees' efforts to escape, breaking free from houses and yearning for light. The third stanza shows the poet witnessing this silent exodus, ending with the triumphant return of the trees and the forest's revival.

Themes

- Transformation, growth and liberation
- Dynamic nature between humans and nature

Poetic Devices

- Imagery – the words and phrases in the poem create visual representations in the mind. For example, 'the trees inside are moving out into the forest'; 'the glass is breaking, the trees are stumbling forward'.
- Personification – when something is given human attributes, such as 'the trees inside are moving out into the forest'.
- Metaphor – the use of 'trees' metaphorically to represent helplessness of woman in the patriarchal society. The struggles of the nature or trees to be freed from the confinements of man is compared to that of the women's struggle for the same to get freedom from the men dominated society.
- Simile – a clear comparison between two or more things/people having same qualities. For example, 'like newly discharged patients', 'the moon is broken like a mirror'.
- Symbolism – using symbols to represent ideas or qualities, like the poet uses 'the trees' to signify forests and raise the issue of 'deforestation'.
- Alliteration – for example, long letters, leaves and

8. Fog

Significance of the Title

'Fog' refers to the beauty and mystery of the natural world.

Summary

The poem "The Fog" by Carl Sandburg uses a cat metaphor to describe the fog silently creeping into a harbor city. It arrives unnoticed, then sits quietly observing everything, before silently disappearing again. The poem highlights the unexpected and mysterious nature of fog.

Themes

- Effect of fog on human senses
- Mystery and uncertainty of fog

Poetic Devices

- Metaphor – the poet has compared the fog to a cat in the first two lines of the poem.
- Personification – the fog has been personified by the use of phrases such as ‘comes on little cat feet’, ‘sits looking over harbour’.
- Imagery – the visual description of the fog is seen in the entire poem.

9. The Tale of Custard the Dragon

Significance of the Title

The poem is a parody narrating the bravery of the dragon called Custard who is considered a coward.

Summary

The poem tells the story of Belinda and her unusual pets: Ink, a kitten; Blink, a mouse; Mustard, a dog and a cowardly dragon named Custard. Despite his fearsome appearance, Custard cries for a safe cage and is mocked by the other pets who believe themselves to be brave.

Suddenly, a pirate breaks in, terrifying Belinda and her pets. All the ‘brave’ animals run away except Custard. In a surprising turn of events, the dragon attacks the pirate and devours him whole.

Afterward, everyone celebrates their “bravery” while Custard remains humble. Despite saving them all, he’s still considered a coward. The poem ends with a playful repetition of the beginning, highlighting the irony of the situation.

Themes

- Appearance versus Reality
- Hypocrisy
- Courage and Determination

Poetic Devices

- Simile – the sound of the dragon is compared to the sound of an engine, i.e., ‘snorting’ like an engine; the attack of dragons is compared to a robin (bird), i.e., ‘like a robin at a worm’.
- Onomatopoeia – the use of words that are associated with sound, like clatter, clank, jangling.
- Consonance – prominent sound of the consonant, ‘L’, like ‘clatter and clank in a jangling squirm’.
- Alliteration – the repetition of a letter at the start of closely placed words, for example, the repetition of ‘g’ in ‘gulped some grog’.

10. For Anne Gregory

Significance of the Title

The poem ‘For Anne Gregory’ expresses speaker’s adoration for Anne.

Summary

This poem, ‘For Anne Gregory,’ by W.B. Yeats, explores the concept of true love. The poet worries that Anne’s beauty, symbolized by her golden hair, attracts shallow admirers who don’t see her inner self. Anne proposes changing her hair colour to find someone who loves her for who she is. The poet, however, believes only God can love us for our true selves, as humans are drawn to outward appearances.

Themes

- The idea of ideal beauty and the influence it has upon others
- Difference between external beauty and internal beauty

Poetic Devices

- Alliteration: The poet repeats the letter “h” in the phrase “he had” and the letter “y” in the phrase “your yellow”.
- Metaphor: The poet compares Anne Gregory’s hair to the ramparts of a castle, suggesting that her hair protects her face from being seen fully.

Footprints Without Feet

1. A Triumph of Surgery

Significance of Title

The title is justified as the entire story revolved around the dog, Tricki, and his illness. The small dog was very much pampered by his mistress, Mrs. Pumphrey. She often overfed him and this led to some serious illness. Mr. Herriot, the veterinary surgeon, helped Triki by giving him plenty of water and no medicines and no food. At last, Triki recovered and was back with Mrs. Pumphrey. She was very happy and in her excitement said that it was a triumph of surgery.

Characters

Dr. Herriot, Mrs. Pumphrey, Tricki (the dog)

Summary

The story is about a small dog, Tricki, who was always indulged by his rich mistress, Mrs. Pumphrey, with tasty and unhealthy treats. Gradually, Tricki gained weight and became lazy. He hardly exercised or went for a walk. In due course of time, his lack of movement worried Mrs. Pumphrey. Soon, she consulted Dr. James Herriot, a veterinary surgeon, for treatment of her lethargic dog. Dr. Herriot was shocked to see Tricki's condition and took him to the hospital. He knew Mrs. Pumphrey's overindulgence would never let her dog lead a healthy lifestyle. The dog didn't move for the first two days and didn't eat any food either. On the third day, Tricki went outside and played with other bigger dogs in the hospital. He ate the food that was given to him and also licked the bowls of other dogs for leftover food. Dr. Herriot gave a balanced diet to Tricki along with plenty of physical exercises. Gradually, Tricki's condition started improving, and he started fighting with other dogs for meals. His mistress would send eggs so that her pet didn't starve and get enough energy to recover from the treatment. She also sent bottles of wine to enrich Tricki's blood. But those were consumed by Dr. Herriot and his colleagues. As the little dog started showing improvement, the vet decided to call the wealthy lady. When she arrived in the hospital to fetch Tricki, he was very happy and jumped on her. Mrs. Pumphrey was filled with gratitude towards Dr. Herriot for curing her dog.

Themes

- The blind love which we possess for the one whom we love the most.
- The transformative power of modern medicine and the impact it can have on individuals.
- Common sense about repairing the health of the dog, i.e., a balanced diet and exercise is the cure for every health related ailment.

Character Sketch

Dr. Herriot: He is a veterinary surgeon passionate about his work and cares deeply for animals. He is described as a tall, lean man with a weathered face and bright blue eyes. He has thick curly brown hair and a thick mustache. He is kind and compassionate who is dedicated to his work. He is patient and gentle with animals and treats them with utmost care and respect. He is also a good listener and is always willing to lend an ear to his clients.

Dr. Herriot is a highly skilled veterinarian who is well-respected in his field. He takes his work very seriously and is always striving to improve his skills and knowledge. He is meticulous in his work and always ensures that he provides the best possible care to his patients. He is willing to go to great lengths to save the lives of his patients and is always looking for new and innovative ways to treat them. He is also very patient with his clients and takes the time to explain their pet's condition and treatment options in detail. He has a great sense of humor and is known for his ability to make his clients and colleagues laugh.

Mrs. Pumphrey: She is a rich middle-aged woman. She treats all her visitors with warmth and generosity. She has a strong emotional bond with her little pet dog, Tricki. She is concerned about Tricki's miserable condition. She pampers the dog by giving him chocolates, cakes, juice, eggs and wine. Mrs. Pumphrey overindulges to the point of disregarding Dr. Herriot's advice to give him exercise. When Tricki's health deteriorates and he is taken to the hospital for treatment, she is very upset. She is silly but tender-hearted. She becomes happy when her pet dog becomes fine. She is grateful to Dr. Herriot for making Tricki healthy.

Tricki: Tricki is greedy for food, thus being overfed with sweets makes him very fat. He becomes restless and listless. The doctor advises Mrs. Pumphrey to keep him on a strict diet with plenty of exercise.

2. The Thief's Story

Significance of the Title

The readers get an insight into the life of a thief and the circumstances that force people to resort to such criminal activities.

Characters

Hari Singh (thief), Anil

Summary

The story is about a fifteen-year-old boy, Hari Singh, who befriended people in order to rob them. One day, he met Anil during a wrestling match. Anil was a twenty-five-year-old man who was leading his life casually.

He was a struggling writer who would make small money with his writing prowess. Hari flattered Anil by trying to befriend him and asked him for some work.

Anil asked Hari if he could cook, to which the young boy replied affirmatively. Hearing this, Anil also promised to teach Hari how to read, write, add numbers and cook delicious meals. Sometimes, Anil would give a rupee to Hari as a tip for his efforts.

One fine day, Anil received a bundle of notes for his published articles. He kept the money under his mattress, and Hari happened to notice this. At midnight, when Anil was fast asleep, Hari slipped his hand and stole the money from under the mattress.

He immediately left for the railway station to board a train to Lucknow. Unfortunately, he missed the train. As it was pouring heavily, he got drenched completely.

Hari felt agitated and was regretful for stealing money from an honest man like Anil. He felt guilty for cheating Anil, who taught him to read and write.

Suddenly, Hari had a change of heart, and decided to return. Although the notes had become soggy due to the rain, he kept the money in the same spot from where he stole it.

The following day, when he woke up, he found Anil behaving normally. The young man offered Hari fifty rupees and said that he had rightfully earned it. Anil further said that he would pay Hari regularly. However, when Hari touched the money, he realised that the money was still damp.

Hari understood that Anil was aware of his misdeed the previous night, but the young man still didn't get angry at him. After this incident, Hari was filled with gratitude and respect for Anil, and he decided to mend his ways.

Themes

- The story is based on friendship, betrayal, aspirations, connection, trust, guilt, change, kindness, loyalty, revenge and honesty.
- It shows how love and kindness can transform even the most destructive minds of thieves.
- It also involves an inner conflict between guilt and survival instinct.
- In terms of survival instinct, the protagonist steals to survive, to feed himself and his family. At times, it is the circumstances that force a person to indulge in wrong acts.
- It also revolves around a moral dilemma whether it is right to steal in order to survive.

Character Sketch

Anil

- Simple: Anil, a kind, simple, and laid-back young man with a tall and lean stature, had a keen interest in sports, particularly wrestling.
- Kindness: He was not wealthy and couldn't afford to hire Hari as a cook. However, displaying patience and kindness, he not only taught Hari how to cook but also educated him in reading, writing, and arithmetic.
- Empathetic: Aware that Hari was pilfering small amounts of money from him, Anil chose to overlook this fact.
- Trusting: As a writer contributing to magazines, Anil's income fluctuated. Despite earning substantial amounts at times, he stored his money beneath the mattress rather than securing it with a lock and key, showcasing his trusting nature.
- Generous: Anil's generosity extended to compensating Hari whenever he had some money. Despite Hari attempting to steal from him, Anil, displaying forgiveness, continued to be benevolent and kind toward him.

Hari Singh

- Experienced and Successful Thief: Despite his young age, Hari is already an experienced and fairly successful thief. He adopts the practice of frequently changing his name to avoid detection by former employers or the police, showcasing a certain level of cunning and resourcefulness in his criminal activities.
- Deceptive: Hari's deceptive nature is evident in his interactions with people, including Anil, whom he cheats when buying daily groceries. This trait highlights his ability to manipulate situations for personal gain.

- **Aspirations for Education:** Despite his involvement in illegal activities, Hari harbors a strong desire to receive an education. He envisions a future where he can become a respected and accomplished individual. This aspiration reveals a longing for personal growth and a departure from his life as a thief.
- **Regretful and Reflective:** After stealing a significant amount of money from Anil, Hari experiences regret. He realizes that this act has cost him his chance at education, indicating a level of introspection and remorse for his actions.
- **Courageous and Motivated to Change:** Despite the potential consequences, Hari gathers the courage to return the stolen money to Anil. His strong desire for personal transformation and the pursuit of a better life motivates him to take the risk, demonstrating a willingness to change his ways.

3. The Midnight Visitor

Significance of the Title

The title is appropriate for the story as it accurately describes the central event and character in the story. The story revolves around a strange man who visits the protagonist's house in the middle of the night, making him the focus of the story.

Characters: Ausable (agent), Fowler (writer)

Summary

The story is about a secret agent Ausable. One day, he and his friend Fowler had gone out to spend an evening together. As the two men talked, Ausable told him that Fowler must have imagined him to be a secret agent who dealt with espionage and danger.

On the contrary, when Fowler met Ausable, he found the latter to be a chubby-looking spy who spoke French and German moderately.

Soon, both of them headed towards Ausable's room; he unlocked the door and switched on the light. When they entered the room, Fowler was startled to see a man holding a small automatic pistol halfway across the room.

Ausable immediately recognised the other man to be Max, a secret agent. Max had come to demand the report related to missiles that Ausable was expecting.

In the meantime, Ausable began his hypothetical story of the balcony beneath the window of the room to divert Max's attention. Just then, somebody knocked at the door,

and it continued until the thumping became louder and more frequent.

Ausable said that the police might have come to visit him as they did on a regular basis. Hearing this, Max was confused, and while he pointed his gun towards the other two men in the room, he said he would wait in the balcony until the police left.

Max warned that he would shoot them if they didn't listen to him. Saying so, he jumped out of the window, and suddenly there was a loud scream.

Ausable opened the door, and the waiter brought wine that he had ordered. The waiter kept the wine bottle, glasses and tray on top of the table and left.

Fowler was surprised to see all this and asked him about the police. To this, Ausable lied about the police as he was trying to intimidate Max.

Fowler again asked that Max must be waiting in the balcony, to which Ausable said there was no balcony attached to his window. He cooked up the entire story about the balcony in order to convince Max to believe him, which he blindly did.

Themes

- The story teaches us the outcomes of greed and the importance of honesty.
- It also gives us valuable lessons about the consequences of our actions.
- It tells us the importance of doing the right thing.
- It gives us an overview about justice, i.e., a person will always be punished for wrong deeds.
- It also tells us that people who are quick-witted take advantage of situations wherein they involve other people in order to put them into trouble.

Character Sketch

Ausable: He is a complex character who is difficult to understand. He is secretive and does not reveal much about his past or his intentions. He has a reputation in the town for being a recluse, which adds to his air of mystery. Physically, he may be fat but mentally he is very agile and quick-witted. He knows all the tricks of his trade. He is very quick to react and can cook up stories that may fit in all kinds of situations. He had a very important paper and when Max had come to him to pinch that paper, he fabricated a story about the balcony and the police to befool Max. The story was so convincing that Max jumped down the window.

Fowler: He is a young writer who writes romantic books. Shifting from this genre, he wants to write a book on detectives. Fowler forms a very romantic and grand picture

of a secret agent in his mind – mysterious figures in the night, the crack of pistols, drugs in wine. According to his imagination, the detective would be young with attractive personality who gets messages slipped into his hand by dark-eyed beauties. He assumes Ausable/ to be of the same kind which he is not.

4. A Question of Trust

Significance of the Title

The title implies that the story revolves around a situation or dilemma where trust becomes a central theme. It suggests that there may be doubts, uncertainties or conflicts related to trust between characters in the story.

Characters

Horace Danby, Lady Thief

Summary

The story is about Horace Danby, an unmarried fifty-year-old man who used to work as a locksmith. He was a successful businessman too. Although he was a respectable man, he was not completely honest. He had a liking for rare and fancy books and would purchase them by any means.

To pursue his expensive hobby, he would rob once every year and purchase expensive books. He would chalk out a well-devised plan before making any burglary attempt.

He had his eyes on a house at Shotover Grange, and carefully studied its structure for two weeks. One fine afternoon, Horace realised that it was the best time to execute his act. He came out from behind a wall of the garden and entered the house with all his tools packed in his bag. He quickly wore his gloves to avoid leaving fingerprints behind. He took the key from the hook and opened the door. He spotted the dog, Sherry that wagged its tail when it saw Horace.

Danby knew the safe (cupboard containing valuables) was hidden behind a painting in the drawing room. There was a beautiful vase with flowers kept on the table. He was allergic to their fragrance, so kept sneezing repeatedly.

He used his tools to cut the burglar alarm. As he sneezed loudly, he heard the voice of a young lady in the doorway. The lady dressed in red pretended to be the house owner's wife, and convinced Horace to believe her. She said that she had come to collect her jewels as she wanted to wear those at a party.

Danby was frightened that the lady might hand him over to the police, so he requested her to let him go. She told him that she would allow him to leave only if he opened the safe

for her. She mentioned that she had forgotten the safe's lock combination. Danby opened the safe without his gloves. The young lady took out all the jewels. He left the house assuming that he had escaped imprisonment. However, a policeman arrested him on the third day for the burglary.

His fingerprints were found all over the robbed place. Later, he confessed to committing the crime and that he had opened the safe for the young lady but didn't steal the jewels. In reality, it so happened that the lady was also a thief who had convinced Horace to break open the safe.

When he told this story to the police, no one believed him since the owner's wife was a sixty-year-old woman, not the one Danby mentioned in his statement. So the police arrested him. He often thought of the charming young lady who was also a thief and tricked him into believing her.

Themes

- The story states that one should not trust anyone without discovering out about that person.
- It also tells that when one wants to achieve a goal, he/she uses any means to do so.
- When a person sets a goal, he/she plans in meticulous ways to achieve success.
- The story gives us an insight about how one person uses another person in order to get their goals accomplished.

Character Sketch

Horace Danby: A fifty-year old unmarried man, Horace lived with a housekeeper who was very concerned about his health. He was in the business of making locks. Everyone around him considered him honest and respectable. But he was a robber who robbed one safe (a locker to keep jewels safe) every year in order to buy rare and expensive books. The amount of money that he would steal would last him for a year. When he decides to rob a rich man's house, he plans everything carefully. Yet he is fooled by a woman during the robbery. She made him rob the safe on false promises and he was caught by the police after a few days. In prison, he served as the assistant librarian, still thinking about how he was fooled by the clever woman.

Lady Thief: The lady thief, dressed in a red colour attire, was very witty. She was extremely talented in fooling Horace Danby by making him believe that she was the house owner's wife that he had entered to rob. She knew tricks and traps to make Horace believe her story, thus making him commit the robbery of the jewellery from the safe. After escaping safely with the jewels, she called the cops to get Horace caught, thus plotting a story against him.

5. Footprints Without Feet

Significance of the Title

The story revolves around a scientist who is able to make himself invisible.

Characters

Griffin (scientist), Mrs. Hall (inn owner's wife)

Summary

The story is about a brilliant scientist named Griffin who had developed a drug that could make a man invisible. He was successful in his experiment and developed a formula that had the power of invisibility.

Griffin carried out the experiment on himself and his body became transparent like a sheet of glass. But he stepped in mud, and the fresh muddy imprints of his feet were all over the place. It was first seen by two young boys who followed his footprints until they became fainter and disappeared.

Griffin was an outstanding scientist, but he was also a lawless man. His landlord disliked him. In vengeance, Griffin set the house on fire and wandered around the streets without food, money and clothes.

Owing to his invisibility, no one could see him. While walking down the streets, he started feeling cold and entered a big London shopping centre. After the stores were shut, he picked up some comfortable clothes to warm himself and ate something from a nearby restaurant. Later he slept on a pile of quilts in the store.

The following morning some associates started approaching him, so he removed all his clothes and became invisible again.

As Griffin wandered without clothes in the chilly weather, he could feel the biting cold and decided to take some clothes from a theatre company. Soon, he found an appropriate shop and wore bandages around his forehead, a false nose, dark glasses, big bushy side-whiskers and a huge hat.

He went to a shopkeeper's store and stole all the money. He realised that staying in a crowded city like London could be difficult, so he thought of moving to Iping village. He had booked two rooms at the local inn in the village and reached there by boarding a train from London.

It was an unusual experience for the villagers to expect an outsider with a strange appearance to come to the hotel during winter. Mrs. Hall, the wife of the landlord of the inn, tried to be friendly, but Griffin did not want to talk to her.

Soon enough, his money was exhausted, and he started

stealing to sustain himself. Due to his suspicious appearance, the owner and his wife attempted to check his room while he was away.

Out of anger, Griffin damaged the furniture of the inn and threw it across the room towards them. The owner and his wife got scared, thinking that there were spirits in the room.

Mrs. Hall then requested the town constable to inquire about the identity of this individual and arrest him for damaging her furnishings.

It annoyed Griffin further, and he decided to reveal his identity as he started unwrapping his bandages, whiskers, spectacles and nose. Everyone was shocked to see this, as there was no normal human being hidden behind the bandages.

The constable could not catch hold of Griffin as he took off all his garments, became invisible and disappeared into thin air.

Themes

- One should not misuse science and its great discoveries as this can turn even a brilliant scientist into a threatening lawless person.
- Behaving in a manner that goes against laws of society is an offence.
- Illegal ways to achieve something will only lead to punishment.

Character Sketch

Griffin: He is a highly intelligent scientist who is obsessed with discovering the secret of invisibility. He spends years researching and experimenting until he finally succeeds in making himself invisible. Though he is extremely arrogant and believes that his discovery makes him superior to other people. He looks down upon others and feels that he can do whatever he wants because he is invisible. He has no concern for the welfare of others and is willing to harm anyone who gets in his way. Griffin is seen desperately finding a way to reverse his invisibility and return to a normal life. However, his desperation leads him to make increasingly reckless and dangerous choices.

6. The Making of a Scientist

Significance of the Title

There are three qualities that make a scientist- a great mind, curiosity and the will to win for the right reasons.

Characters: Richard H. Ebright (scientist), Ebright's mother

Summary

This prose is about a renowned scientist, Richard Ebright, who was a bright yet curious child from the early years of his life. He was very fond of collecting butterflies, and when he was in the second grade, he had already collected 25 species of butterflies in his home town.

His mother always encouraged him in his efforts and gifted him a book named 'The Travels of Monarch X'. The book was a turning point in his life as it opened the world of science to him. It explained how monarch butterflies would migrate to Central America and made him more eager to explore the species.

He participated in the county science fair and understood that he needed to do something exceptional. He continued with his efforts until he made a place for himself in the fair with valid experiments.

In his eighth-grade project, he tried to discover the disease caused by a virus that killed most of the monarch caterpillars every year. Ebright assumed that a beetle might be the carrier of the disease, so he started breeding caterpillars along with beetles. However, he didn't get any results from this experiment, yet he exhibited this experiment at the county science fair and won the competition that year.

During his second year of high school, Ebright started his scientific research about the discovery of a mysterious insect hormone, which led to his brand-new theory on the life of cells. His experiment was to find the main purpose of the twelve tiny golden spots on a monarch pupa. His project won first prize in a county science fair, and he got an opportunity to work at the entomology lab at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

As a junior in high school, he continued with his upgraded experiments on the monarch pupa and finally was successful in identifying the chemical structure of hormones. One fine day, while he was checking the X-ray photos of the chemical structure of a hormone, he understood how the cell could 'read' the blueprint of its DNA.

Ebright and his roommate in college, James R. Wong, worked day and night and drew pictures and constructed plastic models of molecules to illustrate how DNA works. This was a major leap in Ebright's career as he secured a graduation degree from Harvard with the highest honours. His work was also published in a science magazine.

Themes

- The story highlights the importance of curiosity, experimentation and observation, imagination,

persistence, creativity, collaboration and communication in any scientific process.

- It showcases the passion for science and joy of discovery that comes with it.

Character Sketch

Richard Ebright: He had a multifaceted, versatile personality. He was a man of science, but he also had a knack for sports and other extracurricular activities. Ebright showed a keen interest in science from a young age, especially in the area of molecular biology. In grade eight, he conducted an experiment to identify the virus that caused the deaths of monarch butterflies. Ebright persisted in wanting to become a scientist despite encountering many obstacles and disappointments. He put in a lot of effort to overcome challenges, whether it was getting financial assistance for his study or surviving the competitive educational environment. He was a dedicated researcher who used molecular biology to shed light on the secrets of the natural world. He developed his theory of living cells while he was just twenty-four years old.

Richard's Mother: She was a dedicated, encouraging, and supporting person. She is a single mother who raised Richard by herself after losing her husband when he was just nine years old. Despite the difficulties of being a single parent, she always placed a high priority on his intellectual and educational advancement. She recognized his love for science and went out of her way to provide him with the resources and opportunities to pursue his interests. She frequently accompanied him to the library and even bought for him equipment including a telescope, a microscope, cameras, mounting materials, etc. that would be helpful in many ways. She encouraged Richard to set high standards for himself and instilled in him the value of hard work and perseverance. She had a significant role in making Richard what he was.

7. The Necklace

Significance of the Title

Necklaces often serve ceremonial, religious, magical or funerary purposes and are also used as symbols of wealth and status, knowing that they are made of precious metals and stones.

Characters

Matilda Loisel (the protagonist), Monsieur Loisel (Matilda's husband), Madame Forestier (Matilda's friend)

Summary

The story is about a pretty lady, Matilda Loisel, who lives in a small yet cosy flat with her husband. He worked as a clerk in the office of the Board of Education. They were not so well-off to be able to have a luxurious lifestyle.

Matilda was unhappy about her condition and desired to be rich. She often brooded over her financial condition for not having a huge mansion and a lot of money. She always wanted to dress beautifully with matching jewellery.

One day, her husband brought an invitation to a party at the Minister's residence. He expected her to be excited upon seeing the invitation letter. On the contrary, she expressed her resentment and started sobbing. When asked, she complained about not having an appropriate attire.

She wanted to look beautiful at the party such that everyone would admire her. Feeling pity for Matilda, her husband gave her four hundred francs to buy a dress. He had saved to buy a rifle.

When the week of the grand party approached, Matilda seemed to be anxious again. She didn't have any matching jewellery with her dress. Her husband suggested she request her friend, Jeanne Forestier, for a neckpiece. Matilda went to Jeanne's house immediately and borrowed a sparkling diamond necklace.

Matilda attended the party with her husband and was happy about her appearance. She was happy that she could garner the attention of the attendees at the reception. After the party, when they reached home, Matilda realised that the necklace was missing. They were panicked thinking that it might have fallen in the cab while returning. Her husband immediately went to search the streets in case it might have fallen somewhere.

Her husband then decided to approach the police and put up an advertisement in the newspapers offering a reward, but nothing came out. He asked her to write a letter to her friend, Jeanne Forestier and mention that the clasp had broken and she would return it once repaired.

In the meantime, they had successfully found a replica of the necklace and decided to replace it with the old one. However, the new necklace was very expensive. Matilda's father-in-law had left eighteen thousand francs for his son. They decided to borrow the rest of the money to buy the expensive necklace. They bought the necklace with all the money they had and borrowed funds.

In the next few years, their condition worsened as their lives took a drastic turn due to the huge loan. They moved to a smaller place to live in, and Matilda did all the household

chores. Her husband worked odd hours in multiple jobs to repay the loan. Ten years passed, and with that, their appearances also changed.

One day, Matilda met Jeanne, who couldn't identify her as she looked weary and aged. Loisel revealed the truth to her friend about how she and her husband were left in ruins to repay the loan of the expensive necklace. Hearing this, Jeanne was stunned and told her that the necklace that she gave her for the ball party was fake and was worth not more than five hundred francs.

Themes

- The story tells us that one should not crave for luxuries. One must be satisfied and content with what one has.
- Desires lead to unhappiness.
- Always be true to oneself and others.

Character Sketch

Matilda Loisel: Matilda is a pretty, young lady. She wanted to lead a rich and luxurious life. But she was born into a humble family and had to marry an ordinary man. She felt sad about her petty economic and social status. When Matilda got an invitation to a ball, she wanted to pretend as a rich woman. She gave in to vanity. She disregarded the advice of her good husband. She is a woman who sought the praise and admiration of others. She feels very happy when men appreciated her beauty and grace at the dance ball. Matilda is a woman lacking wisdom and prudence. Just to show off a day at the ball, she loses her borrowed necklace. This leads to enormous suffering for her and her husband for a number of years. She does not understand the importance of living within one's means.

Monsieur Loisel: Mr. Loisel is a simple man working as a clerk. He loves his wife and does everything to make her happy. He gets an invitation to a ball with his wife. When his wife wants a costly necklace, he suggests she should borrow a necklace from her rich friend, Madame Forestier. When Matilda loses her necklace, he uses his hard-earned savings to buy a new necklace. He starts working very hard to repay the debt they had incurred. Mr Loisel is ready to make an enormous sacrifice to maintain his family. He is a man who believes in living a life within one's means. Unfortunately, because he is lenient towards his wife, he has to undergo much suffering.

Madame Forestier: She was a school friend of Matilda Loisel. Even after being extremely rich, she treats Matilda nicely, but Matilda is jealous of her wealth. She is a kind and wonderful person who offers Matilda a beautiful diamond necklace to wear to a fancy ball without any concern.

8. Bholi

Significance of the Title

'Bholi' is for the protagonist in the story. She was called 'Bholi' because she had been looked upon as a simple girl since her childhood. When she was ten months old she had fallen from the cot; some part of her brain had been affected consequently. She had been a slow learner.

Characters

Bholi, Ramlal (Bholi's father), School Teacher

Summary

A young girl, Sulekha was popularly referred to as 'Bholi' for her simple nature. At ten months, she fell from her cot, which caused damage to her brain, and she stammered when she learnt to talk.

Bholi suffered from smallpox that left dark pock-marks on her face. The ugly marks spoiled her appearance, and people would make fun of her. Bholi's parents were worried about how to get her married when she grew older as she had delayed growth.

One day, Tehsildar Sahib had come to perform an inaugural ceremony at a primary school for girls in the village. He told Ramlal to send all his daughters to school. When Ramlal discussed this with his wife, she objected and stated that nobody would marry their daughters if they were sent to school.

Initially, Bholi was skeptical about going to school. However, on the first day of school, she was groomed properly and sent to school. When she reached school, she was elated to see girls of her age. When the class teacher asked her name, she stammered and all the girls started laughing. She started crying and understood that nobody would like to be friends with her.

Her teacher, a kind-hearted lady, encouraged her to tell her name. She stammered yet again but was finally able to say her full name. Her teacher gave her a few good books to read as it would help her to overcome her stammering.

There was a marriage proposal for Bholi a few years later. The bridegroom, Bishamber Nath, was a limping old man. Ramlal's family agreed to the alliance. On the wedding day, when Bishamber was about to put the garland around her neck, a woman slipped the veil from Bholi's face. The groom was surprised to see pockmarks on her face and refused to marry her without a dowry of five thousand rupees. Bholi's father arranged the amount.

As the groom tried to garland the bride, Bholi held his hand and refused to marry. All the people present were stunned to see how confidently she spoke without stuttering. Bholi assured her father that she would take care of them in their old age and would teach in the same school. Looking at this, Bholi's teacher felt a sense of relief and satisfaction at her courage and confidence in front of so many people.

Themes

- The story talks about the impact of the family on children.
- It also illustrates how proper moral and emotional protection is necessary to be given to children during the formative years.
- It also shows that education transforms the child's thought process and makes him/her independent to take their own decisions.

Character Sketch

Bholi: Bholi (Sulekha) was the fourth and the youngest child of Ramlal. She was given the name Bholi since everyone thought she was a simpleton. She was an introverted, under confident, and neglected little girl. She also cherished Lakshmi, her beloved cow. She suffered from small pox as a child, which left marks on her face, and she had a head injury that caused her to respond slowly than a typical child of her age. She took a very long time to learn how to talk, and even once she could, she stumbled. She was mocked and imitated by other kids. She continued to be illiterate and was despised by her family and the other locals. She was reluctant to attend school because of her condition. But after receiving education and support from her teacher, she developed into a self-assured, articulate, and charitable young woman. When Bholi found out that her father had given the groom a hefty dowry on the day of her wedding, she openly refused to wed him and stood up for herself.

Ramlal: He is a man of middle age. He was the village numberdar. He has seven children – three sons and four daughters, Bholi being the youngest of them. He was a stern, narrow-minded, diligent worker, and well-respected member of his community. Ramlal observed gender inequality by sending only boys to the city for higher education excluding the girls. He thought they should get married. He was very worried about Bholi because of her ugly looks lack of intelligence. The only reason he sent Bholi to school was due to pressure from the tehsildar.

Bholi's Teacher: She is a kind-hearted and encouraging teacher. She gave Bholi a lot of support and helped her

get over her restrictions and communication impairment. She taught her how to communicate without pausing and encouraged her to believe in herself. She showed her that if she could get above her imperfections, people would stop making fun of her. Bholi's teacher motivated and inspired her, instilling in her the virtues of courage, boldness, and self-assurance. She had a kind, caring, and compassionate instructor who had a significant impact on her life. Bholi's teacher's efforts raised her student's morale and sense of self-worth.

9. The Book that Saved the Earth

Significance of the Title

Think-Tank realized that the earthlings were more powerful than them and that they were planning to attack them. He got scared and decided to migrate to Alpha century, which was one hundred million miles away from Mars. This was how the Earth got saved by a book of nursery rhymes.

Characters

Mighty Think-Tank, Apprentice Noodle, Captain Omega, Lieutenant Iota and Sergeant Oop.

Summary

In the twenty-fifth century, while sitting in The Museum of Ancient History, the Historian depicts the story of the Martians who visited Earth in the twentieth century to invade the planet. A character, Think-Tank considers himself the most powerful and intelligent fellow among all the Martians and decides to visit Earth with his team.

He always thinks that since he has a big balloon head, he is the most intelligent of all. He and his team are eager to know how the Earthlings (people living on Earth) live and how the Martians can put that planet under the generous Martian rulership.

They arrived at the Centerville Public Library on Earth, which was full of books. However, they are unable to understand the purpose of those objects kept on the shelves. To exhibit his acumen, the mighty Think-Tank tells his crew that Earthlings are fond of eating, so probably those things arranged on shelves are sandwiches. Soon after, he orders Captain Omega, Lieutenant Iota and Sergeant Oop to eat the book. Captain Omega and Lieutenant Iota cleverly transfer this responsibility of eating the book on Sergeant Oop's shoulders.

Having no choice, Sergeant Oop eats a corner of the book, but he does not like the taste. He confirms to the mighty

Think-Tank that it is not delicious at all. From this, the crew realises that the book is not meant for eating.

After some time, Apprentice Noodle suggests to the mighty Think-Tank that probably the book is being used for communication with ears. They all tried to hear the book by holding it close to their ears, yet there was no sound coming from it. Later, Noodle suggests Think-Tank that the book may be used for communication with eyes. The mighty Think-Tank agrees and orders the entire crew members to open and read the book. The name of the book is Mother Goose, which is a children's rhyme book. However, they are unable to understand how to read it.

In no time, Apprentice Noodle reminds Think-Tank that the Mars chemical department had given some vitamin pills to boost the intelligence of the crew. Think-Tank immediately orders his crew to have those pills. The crew pop in the capsules before reading the book. Soon, Sergeant Oop starts reading the rhyme book, and they start taking the literal meaning of lines in the rhymes.

From all the information gathered about Earthlings, the mighty Think-Tank calls his Martian crew and says they should postpone the idea of invading Earth for the time being. So, he asks his crew to run away from that place immediately without leaving a trace and evacuate Mars. He orders his team to head towards Alpha Centauri, a hundred million miles away.

Themes

- It teaches students that a person who thinks greatly of himself but has little knowledge can be dangerous.
- The story also tells that if one does not explore or get information about a particular aspect, they can make mistakes in interpretation and understanding.

Character Sketch

Think-Tank: He was believed to be the most powerful and intelligent creature in the play. He was the commander in chief of Mars space control. Think Tank is a living human being from mars whose head is huge and egg-shaped. So far as his robes are concerned he wears a long robe decorated with stars and circles. He thinks himself to be the ruler of Mars and commands the Mars space control. He considers books as communication sandwiches. He is superior in his intelligence and authority so he wants to be appreciated. He boasts of his intelligence and power but decides to evacuate his planet and escape as soon as he gets to know that people from Earth had planned to take control of Mars.

Apprentice Noodle: He was one of Think-Tank's brilliant servants. Though he is the one to make the right decisions, he makes sure that his boss, Think-Tank gets all the praise. This shows his modesty and humility. He is good at handling tasks by himself. He is wise and uses logical reasoning, which is evident in the way he recognizes that the books are some means of communication. He has an act to tackle and flatter his boss. Whenever he had to correct him, he would present his thought as being of no particular importance. He rectifies his mistakes in a humble manner. He is a polite member of Think-Tank's crew and cooperates with the other members and effectively carries out the order of the commander. He is a practical man in real.

Captain Omega: He thinks of himself as the ruler of Mars and commands the Mars area. Also he is leader of a crew that has Captain Omega, Lieutenant Iota, Sergeant Oops and Apprentice Noodle. He likes to be praised owing to his intelligence and authority. Lieutenant Iota is a nonsense and serious character. He is completely focused

on the mission and sees the human characters as obstacles to overcome rather than potential allies. He has a short temper and is quick to resort to violence when provoked. Despite his intimidating demeanor, Lieutenant Iota is shown to be a skilled fighter and strategist. He leads the attack on the human base where the book is being kept, and his military training and tactics help him to overcome the humans' defenses.

Sergeant Oop: He is a small, green alien from Mars who is sent to Earth to retrieve a book that contains information to save his planet from destruction. He has a long, pointed nose and large, bulbous eyes that protrude out of his head. He is a dedicated and determined character who takes his mission seriously. He is the one who brings the book to Zog that contains the information needed to save their planet from destruction. He is shown to be intelligent and resourceful, using his knowledge of Earth's customs and language to communicate with the human characters. He is polite and friendly in his interactions with the humans, but also firm and willing to use force to achieve his goal.