



**B.COM. PART-I  
SEMESTER-I**

**ENGLISH  
(COMMUNICATION SKILLS)**

**UNIT NO. I**

**Department of Distance Education  
Punjabi University, Patiala**

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**LESSON NOS :**

**CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH PROSE**

- 1.1 : (i) The Judgement Seat of Vikramaditya  
(ii) The Selfish Giant
- 1.2 : (i) Engine Trouble  
(ii) The Conjuror's Revenge
- 1.3 : (i) The Man Who Knew Too Much  
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**Note:-** The students can download the syllabus from departmental website [www.pbide.org](http://www.pbide.org)

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**LESSON NO.1.1**

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**CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH PROSE**

- i) The Judgement Seat of Vikramaditya**
- ii) The Selfish Giant**

Dear Student,

In this unit, we will discuss **Contemporary English Prose**, edited by K.P.K.Menon (O.U.P. 1976) that has been prescribed for your study. Apart from the essay type questions on summary, theme, incident or character (in about 250 words), you will also have to attempt short-answer questions from this book. Answers to these questions should be in thirty words each. You will also have to tackle a comprehension passage from this book. Do not depend on our lessons alone. These are only supplementary in nature. You must read the text thoroughly and make yourself familiar with the meanings of the words and phrases.

I urge you, dear student, not to neglect the text. You will ignore the text, only at your own peril. Please read the text time and again and consult the dictionary for looking up the meanings of difficult words. I hope you will follow our instructions. In this unit, we shall be discussing two chapters from **Contemporary English Prose**.

**I. THE JUDGEMENT-SEAT OF VIKRAMADITYA**

**Introduction :**

Sister Nivedita (1867–1911), whose real name was Margaret Noble, was an American disciple of Swami Vivekananda. She made India her home and served its people with love. Her admiration for Indian way of life found expression in her re-writing the stories and legends from our holy books. She was inspired by the ideals of truth; beauty and justice that mark Indian culture. The present story is from her book ***Cradle Tales of Hinduism***.

**Summary :**

The Judgement Seat of Vikramaditya by Sister Nivedita narrates a legend from ancient India. It recounts<sup>1</sup> King Vikramaditya's passion for justice and truth which has become proverbial and has passed into many legends. He was the greatest judge in history. He was never deceived in deciding cases. His capital was Ujjain. Here, in Ujjain, there was king's court in his palace. He would sit on a raised platform, later known as the **The Judgement Seat of Vikramaditya**. The present legend is concerned with this Judgement-seat.

Long long ago after king Vikramaditya, the King's palace fell into ruins.

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1. tells

Sand heaped up over the palace covering stones and walls. There was dust and grass growing over the ruins. It was a wild land where people grazed their cattle. Shepherd boys would bring their cows from villages around Ujjain in the morning and grazed them there till dusk.<sup>1</sup> One day, these boys found under a tree a rough stone looking out of the earth. It was green mound, looking like a judge's seat. One of the boys sat on it and announced that he would act as judge and other boys would bring their disputes to him. It all started as fun. The boys dispersed in groups. After some consultation they made up some quarrel and brought it before the judge for settlement. Now a strange thing happened. Before the boy had sat on the judgement seat, he was a common boy. But when he heard the dispute from the playful boys, he looked serious. The judgement he gave was perhaps the wisest. The boys were impressed by his tone and manner and were a little frightened. They brought some other cases and got satisfactory decisions. The boy seemed to be possessed by the spirit of knowledge and justice.

Soon the news of this boy judge spread far and wide. Now villagers around began to bring their law suits to him. The judgement they got always satisfied both the parties. So all the disputes in the neighbourhood were settled. The present king of the country lived far away from Ujjain. So the news took some time to reach him. He thought that the boy judge must have sat on King Vikramaditya's Judgement Seat. The scholars and historians in the king's court supported the guess. This king had long desired to be possessed with the spirit of the law and justice. He had often felt weak and ignorant in deciding cases. He had heard about King Vikramaditya's sense of justice. He wanted to put it in his hall of justice and sit on it like the shepherd boy while deciding cases. He sent his men to uncover the mound. His men went to the place. They overturned the land where the shepherd boys had played. At last they found a slab of black marble supported by the hands and wings of twenty-five stone-angels. It was surely the Judgement-Seat of King Vikramaditya. It was removed from its place and brought to the king's hall of justice. Before the king sat on it, the nation was ordered to observe three days of prayer and fasting. On the fourth day when the king moved forward to sit on the Judgement-Seat, one of the stone angels began to speak. He asked the king to stop and answer if he was worthy to sit on it. The angel further asked him to answer if he had never desired to rule over kingdoms that were not his. The king searched himself and after a long pause replied that he was not worthy to sit on the judgement seat. The angel advised him to pray and fast for three days and purify himself. Then the angel spread its wings and flew away. Only twenty four angels were left there.

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1. *time just before it gets quite dark*

The king prayed and fasted. He prepared himself to sit on the Judgement-Seat on the fourth day. When, on the fourth day, he made an effort to sit, another angel addressed him and asked him if he had never desired to grab the wealth of another. The king again searched himself and replied that he had. The angel advised him to fast and pray for three days before he ascended the Judgement-Seat. The angel flew after giving his counsel to the king. In this way, all angels put him searching questions. He was found wanting and advised to fast and pray. At last, only one angel was left supporting the marble slab. On the hundredth day the king approached the seat with great confidence. The last angel asked him if his will was like that of a child. It added that if it was, he was worthy to sit on the seat. The king again searched his soul and answered that it was not and he was not worthy. The angel flew into the air and took the slab on its head. It was never seen again on earth.

The king thought over the matter. He came to understand the mystery of the whole affair realizing that only a man who was pure in heart like a child, could be perfectly just. The shepherd boy could sit on the Judgement-Seat because he was pure in heart but the king could not because he was not as pure.

#### STUDY NOTES

(Also please consult the **Notes** given at the end of this chapter in your textbook).

heaped	:	collected in a heap
mound	:	a raised ground like a hill
gravity	:	seriousness
pronouncing	:	giving
possessed	:	occupied the thoughts
tyrannical	:	cruel
pondered	:	thought deeply
mystery	:	secret

#### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. Why do people of India love the ancient city of Ujjain?**

**Ans.** The people love the city of Ujjain because it is one of the most famous historical cities and a great seat of learning. It had also been the home of great poet Kalidasa and the great astronomer Rajah Jey Singh of Jeypore.

**2. What evidence does the author give to establish that King Vikramaditya is clearly remembered even today?**

**Ans.** The people of India remember King Vikramaditya today by mentioning the date in their writings : in the Era of King Vikramaditya.

**3. To whom is King Vikramaditya compared?**

**Ans.** King Vikramaditya is compared to King Arthur and Alfred the Great, the two

popular kings of Britain.

**4. Why was the King Vikramaditya loved by the people of India?**

**Ans.** He was loved by the people of India because he was the greatest judge in history. He was esteemed because he was very strong, true and gentle.

**5. What picture does the author give of the Indian cows?**

**Ans.** Cows are useful, precious, gentle creatures with wild eyes. Cows are not teased and frightened but worshipped. Little girls pat them, garland them and say poetry to them. Cows appear to be the members of the family.

**6. What change came over the shepherd boy who sat on the judgement seat of Vikramaditya?**

**Ans.** The boy became very serious. There was seriousness in his tone and manner which was impressive. He also gave decisions full of wisdom and power.

**7. Why did the king want to install the judgement seat of Vikramaditya in his hall of audience?**

**Ans.** The king often felt weak and ignorant in his decisions. He wanted to possess the spirit of law and justice. He wanted to install the judgement seat of Vikramaditya in his hall of justice so that the spirit of the legendary king would descend on him, thus making him a just judge.

**8. Describe the judgement seat of Vikramaditya.**

**Ans.** The judgement seat was made of a slab of black marble. It was supported on the hands and wings of the twenty five stone angels.

**9. Why was the king not allowed to sit on the seat by the first stone angel?**

**Ans.** The first stone angel did not allow the king to sit on the judgement seat because the latter was unjust and had desire to rule over other kingdoms.

**10. Why did the second stone angel not allow the king to sit on the judgement seat?**

**Ans.** The second stone angel forbade the king to sit on the judgement seat because the latter had an eye on the wealth of others. The king was not worthy because he was greedy.

**11. What was the question of the last stone angel?**

**Ans.** The last stone angel asked the king whether he was pure in heart like a child.

**12. What happened to the stone angels and the judgement seat?**

**Ans.** The angels spread their wings and flew away one by one. The judgement seat was also carried away by the last angel. It was never to be seen again on the earth.

**13. How, according to the king, was the mystery explained by the last angel? Why was the shepherd boy able to sit on the judgement seat**

**while no king in the world could?**

**Ans.** The last angel suggested that only he who was pure in heart, like a little child, could be just. The shepherd boy could occupy the judgement seat because he was pure in heart. The king failed to do so because he was not pure and innocent like the child.

**WORDS AND PHRASES**

1. Fall into ruin (collapse) : The old castle has fallen **into ruin** now.
2. In the care of (under the supervision of) : I left my little son **in the care of** my mother.
3. At day break (at dawn) : We reached our destination **at day break**.
4. Delight in (to be happy in) : He **delights in** his own thoughts.
5. Break down (go out of order) : My bicycle **broke down** and I had to walk back home.
6. Make up the quarrel (settle some dispute) : He has **made up his quarrel** with his elder brother.
7. Prisoner in the bar (Prisoner facing trial) : I was surprised to see the bank cashier as a **prisoner in the bar**.
8. Come to one self (recovered consciousness) : He fell unconscious when he met with an accident, but soon he **came to himself**.
9. Instead of (in place of) : **Instead of** working hard for the examination, he visits the theatre daily.
10. Renowned (famous) : Lata Mangeshkar is a **renowned** singer.
11. Timid (shy) : He is too **timid** to meet any challenge.
12. Concocted (made up) : He **concocted** an excuse to escape the wrath of his teacher.
13. Perplex (confuse) : Mathematical figures always **perplex** me.
14. Convince (persuade) : Only you can **convince** her to accompany me.
15. Pronounced (announced : declare) : I **pronounced** my hostility to my neighbour.
16. Twilight (faint half light before sunset) : I go out for a walk in the **twilight**.
17. Pasture (meadow for grazing cattle) : The area under **pastures** is dwindling in India.
18. Gravity (seriousness) : You can never judge the **gravity** of the situation.
19. Ceased (stopped) : His heart **ceased** to beat and he fell dead.
20. Appreciate (praise) : I always **appreciate** his concern for the poor.
21. Incontrovertible (indisputable) : The decision of the Supreme Court of India is **incontrovertible**.
22. Chronicle (account; history) : Abul Fazal wrote a **chronicle** of the times of Akbar.
23. Countenance (expression of the face) : His **countenance** shows confidence even in the face of adversity.

24. Descend (come or go down) : I **descended** the stairs to receive him.
25. Prostrated (to lie down as an act of humility stretched out on the ground) : The Hindus **prostrate** before their gods.
26. Coveted (desire eagerly) : Everyone **covets** wealth these days.
27. Make good (compensate) : I rammed my car into a scooter. After an altercation, I **made good** the loss of the scooter owner.
28. Conscience (moral sense) : He is always guided by his **conscience**.
29. Stand by (to support) : He **stood by** me in the time of crisis.

## **II. THE SELFISH GIANT**

### **Introduction :**

Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) was a well-known writer of prose, poetry and plays. He was one of the great leaders of a literary movement called Art for Art's sake. He wrote a number of social comedies, the best known among which are "A Woman of No Importance", "An Ideal Husband" and "The Importance of Being Earnest". In **The Happy Prince and Other Tales**, which is a collection of short stories Wilde narrated some delightful tales with a moral purpose. "The Selfish Giant" is one of them.

### **Summary : The writer has personified many elements of nature.**

"The Selfish Giant" is a nursery tale<sup>1</sup> as well as an Allegory<sup>2</sup>. As a nursery story, it tells the tale of a selfish giant<sup>3</sup> who would not permit children to play in his garden. The garden was full of beautiful grass, star-like flowers, peach trees and birds. The children were very fond of playing in this little paradise.<sup>4</sup> The Giant was away to meet a friend in a neighbouring country. In his absence children would come and play in his garden after the school hours. They were very happy there.

One day when the Giant returned, he saw the children playing in his garden. He was very angry and commanded the children to get out of it. He surrounded his garden with a high wall and put up a notice board in front of the gate of the garden on which it was written that no one was to enter the garden. The children were very unhappy. They had no place for playing. They tried other places, but did not like them.

It was Spring. Flowers bloomed all over the country. The air was filled with the sweet scent and with songs of birds. But in the garden of the Selfish Giant, it was still winter. There were no birds and no flowers were blooming. There were snow, frost-biting north wind and hails. The Giant wondered why there was still winter in his garden when it was Spring outside. But he hoped that there would be a change of season soon. And he waited for the expected change.

- 
1. *A story for children.*
  2. *a story which can be studied at two levels, the deeper meaning being the more significant one.*
  3. *being of great height and stature.*
  4. *heaven, a beautiful place of joy*

One morning, when the Giant was still in his bed, he heard the sound of lovely music. It was a small bird singing outside his window. Soon there was sweet scent in the air. The wind and frost went away, and the hail stopped beating on the roof. The Giant thought that the Spring had come. He jumped out of his bed to see what had happened outside. He saw that through a hole in the wall, children had entered the garden. They were sitting in the branches of the trees. The trees had covered themselves with blossoms. The birds were flying about and singing.

In the farthest corner of the garden a small boy was standing under a tree. It was still winter there. The boy was so small that he could not reach the tree. So he was wandering round the tree and crying. The Giant was touched by the sight. He realised that he had been very selfish. He understood why Spring had not come to his garden for so long a time. He decided to knock down the wall around the garden and put the little boy on the top of the tree.

First of all, he opened the front door of the garden, and went into it. When the children saw him there they were frightened and they ran out. The garden returned to its winter condition. The little boy who was crying did not see him, so he did not run. The Giant picked him up gently and put him up in the tree. The tree at once broke into blossoms. The birds began to sing there. The little boy kissed the Giant. The others boys saw all this. They thought that the giant was no longer unkind. So, they came running. The giant declared that it was their garden henceforth.<sup>1</sup> He knocked down the wall surrounding the garden and played with the children. In the evening, the children came to bid him good bye. The Giant did not find among them the little boy whom he had put up in the tree. He asked them where he was. The children did not know who he was and where he lived. The Giant was very sad because he still remembered his gentle kiss.

Everyday the children came to play there. But the little boy was never among them. The Giant was kind to the children. But he longed<sup>1</sup> to see the little boy. Years passed. The Giant grew weaker and weaker. He could not play with the children any more. So he sat in his armchair and watched the children play. He admired his garden for its beautiful flowers. The most beautiful flowers were the children he loved so much. He was now not afraid of winter. He knew that it will be soon followed by the Spring.

One morning, when he looked out of his window, he saw a lovely sight. In the farthest corner of the garden, the little boy was standing under a tree covered with flowers. The Giant ran towards the place where the child was standing. But as he came near, he saw the prints of two nails on the boy's hands and the prints of two nails on his little feet. The Giant was very angry and asked the boy who had

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1. *from then onwards*

injured him. He wanted to punish him. But the child replied that those were the wounds of love. The Giant now realised that the child was Jesus Christ. So he knelt before him. The child smiled and told him that since he had allowed him to play in his garden, he was invited to come to his garden, the Heaven. In the evening the children found the Giant lying dead under a tree in the garden. He was covered with white blossoms.

#### **THE ALLEGORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STORY**

Most of Oscar Wilde's stories can be studied on two planes; they can be enjoyed as stories and they can be interpreted as stories containing moral lessons. "The Selfish Giant" is also a story with a moral. It has the taste of a nursery tale and the depth of an allegory. All the characters and images in the story are symbols.<sup>2</sup> The Giant in the story is the symbol of selfishness. That is why he is called the Selfish Giant. The garden is the symbol of paradise. Children are the symbol of innocence. The little child is the symbol of Lord Jesus Christ.

The Giant is highly selfish. He deprives<sup>3</sup> the children of their right to play in the earthly paradise. This heartless act brings eternal<sup>4</sup> winter in the garden. By building a wall around the garden he banishes out joy from his life. It becomes as dry and painful as winter. He breaks his links with life. This causes unhappiness to him. But selfish as he still is, he does not understand the worth of life. He must suffer for some time before he reaches this higher understanding. He has done a wrong thing by disallowing children to play in his garden. He must realise his mistake through pain and suffering. When punishment is sufficient, he is afforded an opportunity to understand the cause of eternal winter in his garden. The song of the little bird gets him out of his selfishness. As he looks out of his window, he realises his mistake. He starts recovering from his spiritual<sup>5</sup> dryness. He must prove his love for life before he has finally recovered. So he goes to the gate and opens it. He is happy with the presence of children in his garden. He goes to help the small boy and puts him up in the tree. There is a corresponding<sup>1</sup> recovery in nature too; the trees blossom and the winter, with its north wind, hail, frost and snow disappears. All these are the symbols of spiritual dryness and absence of feeling. The soul of the Selfish Giant is like winter. The snow of feelinglessness starts melting when he welcomes the song of the bird. He knocks down the wall which had put a barrier between him and life. By keeping away children with the help of this wall, he had distanced himself from the joys of nature. This sign of his cruelty must be dismantled<sup>2</sup> before he can admit joy in his soul. But he would realise the full meaning of his senseless folly only when he

- 
1. *strongly desired*
  3. *takes away from*
  5. *of the spirit or soul*

2. *represent some qualities*
4. *everlasting*

knows how others have laid down their lives for their fellow beings, how they have suffered for love. The marks of nails on the hands and feet of the small boy bring home<sup>3</sup> to him the horrors of his cruelty. He can compare himself to Jesus Christ who sacrificed his life for human beings because he loved them. Here was a selfless man making the greatest sacrifice. Here is the Selfish Giant denying<sup>4</sup> the children the right to play in his garden. His understanding of his crime is now complete. His later behaviour shows that he will never be unkind to children.

Now that he has fully redeemed<sup>5</sup> himself, he will find a place in the paradise of Jesus. When he dies, he is covered with white blossoms. Even nature honours him because he is now worthy of flowers that cover him. We are sure that he will go to Heaven and enjoy its bliss. He has earned a passage to Paradise.

### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. Describe the Giant's garden in which the children played.**

**Ans.** The Giant's garden which is located in a huge castle, is large and beautiful. It has grassy lawns studded with beautiful flowers. There are also twelve peach trees which blossomed in spring and bore rich fruit in autumn. The garden also hummed with the sweet songs of the birds.

**2. Where did the Giant stay for seven years? Why did he return to his castle?**

**Ans.** The Giant stayed for seven years with his friend, the Cornish Ogre. He came back to his castle because he had finished his conversation with his friend.

**3. What did the Giant do there?**

**Ans.** The Giant had a brief conversation with his friend.

**4. What did the Giant do when he saw the children in his garden?**

**Ans.** The Giant was annoyed to see the children in his garden. He frightened the children away. He raised a high wall round it and put up a notice board "Trespassers will be prosecuted."

**5. Why didn't autumn give any fruit to the Giant's garden?**

**Ans.** The autumn gave no fruit to the Giant's garden because the Giant was selfish. The trees also forgot to blossom because of winter.

**6. Why was there eternal winter in the garden?**

**Ans.** The Giant was old and selfish. He banished the children from his garden. As a result of the selfishness of the Giant, the Spring avoided the garden and Winter ruled there.

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1. similar    2. removed ; pulled down    3. make him realise  
4. refusing to give    5. made up for

**7. How did the change come in the garden? What was its immediate effect?**

**Ans.** There was a sudden change in the garden because the children had entered the garden through a hole in the wall and were sitting in the branches of the trees. The Spring returned to the garden, the trees blossomed; the birds fluttered and sang with joy and the tiny flowers peeped out of the grass.

**8. How was one corner of the garden different from the rest of it?**

**Ans.** In the farthest corner of the garden, there was still Winter and the trees did not blossom. A small child was standing underneath it crying, because he could not climb it.

**9. What did the Giant do to the little child?**

**Ans.** The Giant lifted the small child gently up and placed him on a branch of the tree.

**10. What happened when he put the child on the tree?**

**Ans.** The tree broke at once into blossom and the birds came and started singing.

**11. Why did the children come back into the garden?**

**Ans.** The Giant was kind and helpful to the small child. He was no more wicked. This encouraged the children to return to the garden.

**12. Who was the Giant's favourite child and why?**

**Ans.** The small boy, Jesus Christ, was the Giant's favourite child. The Giant loved him because the child had kissed him.

**13. What were the wounds on the child's body?**

**Ans.** The wounds were the prints of the nails on the little hands and feet of the child. The nails were driven through the hands and feet of Christ to fix him for Crucifixion.

**14. What happened to the Giant in the end?**

**Ans.** The Giant lay dead under the tree covered with flowers. He was taken to Paradise by Jesus Christ.

**WORDS AND PHRASES**

1. All the year round (throughout the year) : It rains **all the year round** in hilly areas.
2. Knock down (pull down) : The municipal board **knocked down** the illegally constructed building.
3. Steal up to (to creep silently up) : The thief **stole up** the pipe, entered the house through the window and carried away gold ornaments.
4. Break into (to blossom) : In Spring most of the trees **break into** blossom.
5. All day long (throughout the day) : We have been waiting for the minister **all day long**.

6. Long for (eagerly desire) : The mother **longed for** the return of her son from England.
7. Rub one's eyes in wonder (rub the eyes in disbelief) : He **rubbed his eyes in wonder** when he found the number of his lottery ticket in the newspaper.
8. In order to (with a view to) : The government clamped curfew **in order to** control the riots.
9. Gruff (hoarse) : The **gruff** voice of the police officer unnerved me.
10. Trespassers (unlawful intruders into the property of others) : There is a notice board on the gate of the garden which reads "**Trespassers** will be prosecuted."
11. Prosecuted (tried in a court of law) : The cheat was **prosecuted** and convicted.
12. Delicious (tasty) : Milkfood ice-cream is very **delicious**.
13. Casement (window) : The **casements** of his castle remain always shut.
14. Blossoms (flowers) : The young tree was covered with **blossoms**.
15. Feeble (weak) : He looks very **feeble** after a long illness.

#### **COMPREHENSION OF A GIVEN PASSAGE**

Comprehension is the power of the mind to comprehend i.e. to grasp fully and to understand thoroughly. In order to grasp the ideas given in a passage, you need to have a good vocabulary; and for that you should cultivate the habit of consulting the dictionary frequently.

In a passage of comprehension you are asked to give answers to some of the questions from the original passage. Sometimes you may be asked to tell the theme of the passage. You may also be asked to give the meanings of some of the difficult words and phrases.

To answer such questions you must go through your books very carefully keeping the above mentioned points in mind. You should (while attempting a passage) give it at least three readings. In the first reading, you should try to grasp the theme. Second reading can help you to determine the attitude of the author. After this you can just look for the difficult words and phrases. You should make sure that you know their exact meaning. It is always safe to depend on your dictionary.

While answering questions you should be brief and to the point. You should not add anything of your own. The answers must be strictly pertaining to the subject matter of the original passage. The sentences should be lucid and meaningful.

Please study carefully the solved examples given below in order to learn the technique.

#### **Exercise - I**

He saw a most wonderful sight. Through a little hole in the wall the children had crept in and they were sitting in the branches of the trees. In every tree that he could see, there was a little child. And the trees were so glad to have the children back again that they had covered themselves with *blossoms* and were waving their arms

*gently* above the children's heads. The birds were flying about and *twittering* with delight and the flowers were looking through the green grass and laughing. It was a lovely scene. Only in one corner, it was still winter. It was the farthest corner of the garden and in it was standing a little boy. He was so small that he could not reach up to the branches of the tree and was wandering all round it crying *bitterly*. The poor tree was still covered with frost and snow and the North Wind was blowing and roaring above it. Climb up little boy, said that tree and it bent its branches down as low as it could, but the boy was too tiny.

And the Giant's heart melted as he looked out. "How selfish I have been!" He said, "now I know why the spring would not come here. I will put that poor little boy on the top of the tree and then I will knock down the wall and my garden shall be children's playground for ever and ever." He was really sorry for what he had done.

### Questions

1. What did the Giant see?
2. Why was it still winter in one corner of the garden?
3. How did the Giant's heart melt?
4. Why was spring so late in coming to Giant's garden?
5. After realizing his mistake what did the Giant decide to do?
6. Write down the meanings of the words in Italics and use them in sentences also.

### Answers

1. He saw a lovely sight. The children were playing in the garden and the Spring was there.
2. With the coming of the children Spring too had come into his garden, but in one corner of the garden, it was still winter because a small child was standing there and he could not climb up the tree.
3. To help the child, even the tree lowered its branches and invited him to climb up. But the small child could not do so. This scene moved the Giant's heart.
4. The Spring was late in coming to the Giant's garden because he was selfish and did not allow the children to play in it.
5. When the Giant realised his mistake he was really sorry for his selfish deeds. He, then, decided to knock down the wall and declared that his garden would be the children's play-ground for ever.
6. (a) *blossoms* (flowers) : The body of the leader was covered with white ***blossoms***.  
(b) *gently* (softly) : He touched the child ***gently***.  
(c) *twittering* (singing) : The birds were ***twittering*** in the garden.  
(d) *bitterly* (painfully) : The child was crying ***bitterly***.

**Exercise - II**

Now this king had long desired *to be possessed* with the spirit of law and justice. All sorts of disputes were brought to him by his subjects, but he was unable to decide matters that needed wisdom and strength. "If sitting on the *mound* brings it to the cowherd boy", he thought, "let us dig deep and find the Judgement-Seat. I shall put it in my hall of justice and on it shall sit to hear all cases. Then the spirit of Vikramaditya will *descend* on me also and I shall always be a just judge."

**Questions**

1. What was the cherished desire of the king?
2. Why did he want to be possessed with the spirit of law and justice?
3. How was this desire of the king prompted?
4. To whom did that Judgement-Seat belong?
5. Write down the meanings of the words in italics and use them in sentences also.

**Answers**

1. The king wanted to be a just king.
2. The king wanted to be possessed with the spirit of law and justice because many disputes were brought to him and he could not decide them judiciously.
3. He thought if a small child by sitting on the Judgement-Seat can become wise, why could he not be the same. This prompted his desire all the more.
4. The Judgement-Seat belonged to King Vikramaditya.
5. *To be possessed with* (to have; to own) : He was ***possessed with*** an evil design to betray his country.  
*mound* - (raised ground like a small hill) : The peasant sat on the ***mound*** covered with grass.  
*descend* - (go down) : He ***descended*** the stairs of his house.

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**LESSON NO. 1.2**

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**CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH PROSE**

- i) Engine Trouble**
- ii) The Conjuror's Revenge**

**I. ENGINE TROUBLE**

**Introduction:**

R. K. Narayan is one of the most important Indian writers in English. He was born in 1906 and died in 2001. His early education was supervised by his grandmother. It was with great difficulty that he could pass his B.A. as he was not very brilliant in studies. He tried his hand at a number of professions before settling down to creative writing. He worked in Mysore Secretariate but left the job as it did not suit his temperament. Later on, he became a teacher and left that too. Therafter, he was a correspondent of Madras Justice and a sub editor.

R. K. Narayan has been a prolific writer and has about a dozen novels, over two hundred short stories and four books of non-fiction to his credit. Some of his important novels are *Swami and Friends*, *The Dark Room*, *Waiting for the Mahatma*, and *The Guide*. He has received a number of literary awards and distinctions. He won National Prize of Indian Literary Academy in 1958, Sahitya Academy Award for *The Guide* in 1961, Padma Bhushan Award in 1964, National Association of Independent School Award in 1965. He has also been honoured by various Indian and outside Universities with D.Litt degrees.

His works have been acclaimed by such reputed novelists as Graham Greene.

R. K. Narayan is more popular for his short stories than for novels or for other forms of literature that he has tried to write. A large number of stories which he wrote were first published in a leading Madras daily *The Hindu*. Narayan also contributed some stories to leading foreign periodicals like *The Report*, *The New Yorker*, *In Vogue* and others. Later on they were compiled in six volumes *Dadu and Other Stories*, *Lawley Road and Other Stories*, *An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories*, and *A Horse and Two Goats*.

These stories belong to the native Indian soil and are redolent of its culture. They mainly depict the South Indian life and speak for the author's point of view. These stories are marked by simplicity of style. Plot is usually simple but captivating. Characters are lively and life-like. Economy of narration and simplicity of language are some other features of his stories. Narayan is gifted with a minute sense of humour and irony pervades his works. A complete absence of pomposity, verbosity and pretence marks his works.

The story "Engine Trouble" is typical of Narayan's style. It does not come in the category of his best stories and has been regarded as trivial also. But it is very amusing and is full of humour.

**Summary:**

There was a Gaiety Show running in the Gymkhana Grounds in the town where the narrator was living. The Gymkhana Grounds wore a bridal and a festive look. All sorts of fun and adventure could be had with a few annas only. There was fun, amusement and adventure. It was a great attraction for all and sundry. The Raffle Corner of the Gaiety Land was a special attraction. With a ticket of eight annas one could hope to possess pincushions, sewing machines, cameras and a road-roller. The narrator also bought a ticket. He won a prize also. The prize was a road-roller. How that road-roller came to be included in the list, the narrator knew nothing about. He became an object of curiosity. Some people giggled at the very idea of a person becoming a possessor of a road-roller.

The item was not as handy as could be carried home immediately. The narrator sought the help of the show-man in order to transport his newly acquired possession. The help was denied. However, he was allowed to keep the engine at the Gymkhana Grounds till the end of the show. The show-man could not even arrange a driver. The engine had proved quite a bother for the show-man himself. The narrator had various ideas. One of these was to sell it to the municipality. Friends and well-wishers not only congratulated him but also encouraged him since they believed that the possession would bring him large dividends even if the iron scraps were sold. The narrator affectionately patted it and caressingly touched its shining brass parts. He thought that the worthy possession would bring his poverty to an end and his anxieties and troubles would be over.

Soon the show was over and the narrator received a notice from the municipality to remove the engine from the ground or he would have to pay the rent. Thus started the miseries of the narrator. He had to pay ten rupees per month for the next three months. In order to meet the expense he had to pledge the jewels of his wife. His efforts to sell the road-roller also proved futile. He met the Secretary of the local Cosmopolitan club and the Chairman of the municipality also. He was prepared to sell the engine at a great concession, but of no avail.

The narrator had a great difficulty in maintaining the engine. Still somewhere a hope lurked that it would bring him dividends in lump sum and all his miseries would come to an end. But for the time being his sufferings were multiplied because he was asked to remove the engine from the Gymkhana Grounds within twenty-four hours as there was going to be a cattle show. The narrator frantically searched for a driver but not a single person in an area of fifty miles around knew anything about it. He solicited help from a Railway Engine driver which was refused instantly. Out of

his desperation he saw the priest of a temple who agreed to lend him the services of temple elephant. Fifty coolies were put into service to push the engine from behind. They had to be paid eight annas per head for doing so. One driver was engaged to steer the engine. The engine had to be driven to a field owned by a friend who had agreed to keep it for a few months.

With the hissing sound of the engine the narrator became exhilarated. There was a huge crowd all around. Out on the road instead of moving straight the engine wobbled. In spite of driver's efforts to keep it under control it banged into one of the walls of the opposite compound. The crowd gave rapturous cry. This panicked the elephant. The coolies ran in fear. There was a confusion. The owner of the house slapped the narrator. The situation could be saved only with the arrival of the police. The narrator's efforts to move the engine out of the Gymkhana Club landed him into Police lock-up. His miseries were multiplied when on his release he discovered that he had to get the broken wall repaired, and had to pay the driver's fee, medical bill for the treatment of elephant's knee and wages of the fifty coolies. Still the problem of removing the engine faced him. His inability to pay the bills earned him the wrath of his wife, who was under the impression that she would have to dispense with her jewels again. He became a laughing stock. He started making plans of running away from the town but then came an unexpected and sudden surprise. A Swami Ji, an expert in yoga feats, wanted a road engine to be driven on his chest. All of a sudden the narrator felt very important. Swamiji asked his driver to drive the engine on his chest on the chalk marks he had made. But before that, an assistant came with the order from the Magistrate preventing Swamiji from performing such feats. Swamiji along with his driver left in anger leaving the narrator and engine to their fate.

But then came an earthquake. The engine was thrown on the mouth of the disused well where it fitted like a cork. The owner of the house was grateful to the narrator for covering the well as he was saved from undergoing the harassment at the hands of the municipality. The narrator was exempted from getting the wall repaired. The land-lord agreed to pay the sundry expenses also. Thus, the narrator ultimately got his share of the prize.

**Some Comments :** R. K. Narayan is known for pithy details, ironic observation and humorous delineation. 'Engine Trouble', though a funny story, seemingly ridiculous also, exemplifies Narayan's skill as a story-writer. From the beginning to the end, one cannot miss the humorous touches the story abounds with. The central situation is quite funny. A man who becomes a centre of attraction because he wins a prize in lottery deserves congratulations from all, ultimately becomes a laughing stock all over. The irony of the whole situation is that the narrator has pinned great hopes on this worthy possession. Instead of relieving him from financial burdens it multiplies his miseries.

The vividness and lucidity of the author's style cannot be overlooked. We cannot miss the satirical touches. We are made to take notice of the author's dig at the municipality.

### STUDY NOTES

<b>Words</b>	:	<b>Meanings</b>
talkative man	:	here it stands for the narrator
giggled	:	laugh in half-suppressed way
decreed	:	determined : judicial order
acquisition	:	material gain
desperate	:	without hope
wobble	:	to move unsteadily
patronage	:	special support
feats	:	striking tricks
tensely	:	emotionally strained
rapture	:	ecstasy
indignant	:	helplessly angry
rattled	:	gave out short sharp sounds
beamed	:	shone, suited benignly
commotion	:	stir, disturbance

### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. What description does the Talkative Man give of Gaiety Land?**

**Ans.** The Gaiety Land that appeared on the Gymkhana Ground was decorated with banners and lamps. It presented all sorts of fun, gambling and side shows. It had performing parrots, racing motor cycles in the Dome of Death, lotteries and shooting galleries. One could even have a chance to win sewing machines, cameras or a road engine for an eight-anna ticket. The Gaiety Land attracted a huge crowd.

**2. How did he come into the possession of the road engine?**

**Ans.** The narrator happened to be the owner of a prize-winner lottery at the Raffle corner of the Gaiety Land show. So when the lots were drawn, he was declared the winner of a road engine.

**3. Why did the showman get it down? What was his experience with it?**

**Ans.** The showman got it down as a novelty for the show. The engine had caused a lot of botheration to the showman. He had to pay rupees one hundred to the driver. The driver was paid rupees five per day extra also.

**4. What was the attitude of the friends and well-wishers of the narrator to the road engine?**

**Ans.** The friends and well-wishers of the story-teller thought that even if the road engine was sold as scrap iron, it would bring a few thousand rupees.

**5. What was the narrator's own attitude to the engine in the beginning?**

**Ans.** Though he was stunned at first, yet he grew fond of it. Every day he paid a visit to the engine, patted it and was proud of its shining brass parts. He thought that the engine would solve all his problems.

**6. What was the first trouble that he had with the engine? How did he overcome it?**

**Ans.** The municipality asked him to remove the engine from the Gymkhana Ground or else he would be charged rent for using the municipal ground. He paid rupees thirty as rent for three months. He had also to pawn one or two jewels of his wife.

**7. Who were the people to whom he tried to sell the engine and with what result?**

**Ans.** He tried to sell the engine first to the Secretary of the local Cosmopolitan Club and then to the Chairman of the municipal committee, but he could not succeed.

**8. How did he plan to remove the engine from the Gymkhana Grounds to a field half a furlong away?**

**Ans.** He planned to remove the engine from the Gymkhana Grounds with the help of an elephant borrowed from the temple priest and engaged fifty coolies to push it from behind. He also engaged a driver to steer it.

**9. What were the circumstances that led to his arrest?**

**Ans.** The elephant was harnessed to the engine. Joseph steered it and fifty coolies pushed it from behind. When the engine reached the road and ran into the wall of the opposite compound, the shouts of the crowd annoyed the elephant who also damaged a portion of the wall. The coolies and the crowd fled in panic and the narrator was arrested for damaging the wall.

**10. Mention the consequences awaiting him when he came out of the lock-up?**

**Ans.** Many consequences awaited the narrator after his release from the pick up. He had to get the damaged compound wall repaired, the payment of the wages of fifty men and of the driver of the engine, the cost of treatment of the injured elephant as also the trouble of removing the engine from its present position.

**11. How did relief come to him at this stage?**

**Ans.** Relief came to the narrator in the form of a fire-eating Swamiji who performed so many miraculous feats. The Swamiji wanted a fire-engine to roll-over his body.

**12. Why was not the road-engine run over the Swamiji?**

**Ans.** When the engine was about to be run over the Swamiji, there came a police inspector with an order from the Magistrate which prohibited the engine from

being run over the Swamiji.

**13. How did Nature finally come to the rescue of the Talkative Man?**

**Ans.** An earthquake pushed the engine into a dirty well. The municipality had ordered the owner of the well to fill it up, but the cost was daunting. That job was done by the engine. The owner of the well agreed to compensate the narrator for all the expenses he had suffered on account of the engine. He instead wanted the narrator to leave his engine in the well. That is how Nature came to the rescue of the narrator.

**WORDS AND PHRASES**

1. In addition to (over and above) : **In addition to** promotion, she earned some increments also.
2. At short notice (a brief warning) : The police arrested him at **short notice**.
3. Keep out of one's way (avoid) : You should **keep yourself out of** Harnam's **way** as he is a cheat.
4. Hover about (walked around) : The truant students always **hover about** the theatres.
5. Come to an end (to end, to finish) : The meeting **come to an end** abruptly.
6. Littered with (made untidy with) : The road was **littered with** rubbish.
7. All and sundry (all individually and collectively) : **All and sundry** came to congratulate the new minister.
8. At a concession (at discount) : Cinema tickets are issued to the students **at a concession**.
9. Given away (distribute) : The principal **gave away** the prizes to the winners.
10. In great glee (in great happiness) : Everyone was **in a great glee** at the reception of the captain.
11. Zig zag (wavy, with sudden jerks right and left) : He followed a **zig zag** road to reach Nainital.
12. Be at one's wit's end (utterly at a loss) : He was at his **wit's end** when he suffered a huge loss in shares.
13. Put one off (evade) : He **put me** off with a lame excuse.
14. Raise a hue and cry (shout aloud) : He **raised a hue and cry** over the rejection of his candidature for presidentship of the union.
15. Heave a sigh of relief (to feel relieved) : We **heaved a sigh of relief** when our leaking boat touched the bank of the river.
16. Stunned (dazed with astonishment) : He was **stunned** when he heard the news of his father's death.
17. Giggled (laughed in a half-expressive way) : The girl students often **giggle** when a boy is scolded by the teacher.
18. Forlorn (lonely) : He felt **forlorn** in the deserted farm house.

19. Trepidation (alarm) : He rang the police in great **trepidation** when he saw a thief in his house.
20. Harangue (loud and forceful speech) : The preacher **harangued** for an hour to convince his audience about the existence of God.
21. Wobble (move unsteadily) : The deflated tyre of my car **wobbled** on the road.
22. Stupefaction (paralyzing amazement) : The accident victim was brought to the hospital in a state of **stupefaction**.
23. Morose (sullen, gloomy) : Why are you in a **morose** state? Face the problems boldly.
24. Rapture (great delight) : The audience was in **rapture** to hear me singing.
25. Commotion (noisy confusion) : When the train arrives at the platform, there always is great **commotion**.
26. Indignant (angry) : He felt **indignant** when he was insulted in public by his friend.
27. Reverberation (echo) : The melodious voice of the singer sent **reverberation** in the hall.

## II. THE CONJUROR'S REVENGE

### Introduction :

**Stephen Butler Leacock** (1869–1944) was a Canadian economist and humorist. He was born in England, but his father migrated to Canada in 1876. After his education he taught at Toronto and then shifted to McGill University, Montreal, where he headed the Department of Economics and Political Science. Besides his works on politics and economics, he wrote studies of Mark Twain and Dickens.

He is best known as a prolific and a humorous writer. His humorous stories and essays include : *Nonsense Novels*, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, *Frenzied Fiction*, *Winsome Winnie*, *Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy*.

A.P. Herbert, himself a humourist of the highest excellence, described him as the greatest humourist of the age. He was a humourist of the school of Dickens and Mark Twain. Warmth, understanding, sympathy and kindness were the chief traits of his character. Leacock's humour has a satirical touch.

### Summary:

The story "The Conjuror's Revenge" tells us how a conjuror took his revenge upon too clever a man who pretended to know the secret of every trick performed by the conjuror and threw ridicule on the performer by explaining the tricks in his own way.

The conjuror performing before an audience first showed them a piece of cloth which was absolutely empty and proceeded on to take out a bowl of goldfish from that empty cloth. The people present in the hall were wonderstruck and exclaimed in their astonishment. "How does he do it?" But amongst the audience was present the

so-called quick witted man, the Quick Man, who feigned to know the secret of his trick, explained it to the audience in a whispering sound with the words "He had it up his sleeve", i.e. the trick was not trick at all but the conjuror had hidden the bowl of goldfish up his sleeve. The people around him accepted his explanation as the valid one and repeated his words around the hall and they were all praise for the Quick Man.

The conjuror then passed on to his next trick of "the famous Hindostanee rings." He showed the audience some rings, which were distinctly separate. He struck the rings with his magic wand thrice and they were joined together. The audience was once again stupefied by the trick performed by the conjuror. The Quick Man once again came with his explanation and whispered. "He must-have-had-another-lot-up-his-sleeve." Thus he once again dismissed the trick as a mere fraud and belittled the value of the trick. And the audience once again accepted the explanation of the Quick Man and nodded in unison as if they too had discovered the truth behind the trick.

With his tricks being dismissed as mere trifles, the conjuror looked displeased but still persisted with his performance and presented a trick of taking out a number of eggs from a hat borrowed from a person in the audience. The audience was filled with surprise till once again the Quick Man whispered the words. "He-has-a-hen-up-his-sleeve." he thus once again ruined the trick.

The performance of the conjuror continued but at every performance the Quick Man came up with a similar explanation till the conjuror's reputation sank rapidly to the rock-bottom when he decided to make his final effort to salvage his sinking reputation. So he was prepared to present before the audience "the most famous Japanese trick recently invented by the natives of Tipperary." And in the process he asked for the gold watch of the Quick Man which was promptly handed over to him. Then he sought the Quick Man's permission to put it into a "mortar and pound it to pieces." The permission was readily granted with a smile by the Quick Man and the conjuror smashed the watch violently.

Then he asked for the Quick Man's handkerchief and with his permission punched holes in that and showed it to the audience.

Only this trick defied the explanation from the Quick Man and he was fascinated and delighted by the mystery of the trick. The conjuror then took the silk-hat of the Quick Man, crushed it beyond recognition under his feet under the pretext of his permission which was taken for granted. He then burnt his (the Quick Man's) celluloid collar and broke his spectacles with a hammer. This trick baffled the Quick Man and his features assumed a puzzled expression when he confessed, "I don't see through it a bit."

The audience also was completely silent when the conjuror addressed himself to the audience and recalled his tricks of breaking the Quick Man's watch, burning his

collar, smashing his spectacles and dancing upon his hat. He, however, further sought the permission of the Quick Man to take liberties with his overcoat and suspenders which was denied to him. The conjuror thus ended his performance "amid glorious burst of music from the orchestra." And the audience dispersed with a firm belief that "there are some tricks at any rate, that are not done up the conjuror's sleeve."

Thus, the story presents in a beautiful way how a conjuror wreaks vengeance upon too pretentious a man who spoiled his show with his remarks thus ridiculing the performer. The story also points out the gullible nature of the people in the general audience who accept every explanation at its face value without any rational validity. It also satirises and presents the plight of the persons who consider themselves too clever and pretend to know the secret of everything in this world.

#### STUDY NOTES

Words		Meanings
absolutely	:	completely
separately	:	divided, not joined or united
buzz	:	sound of the people
frown	:	drawing together of the brows
amusing	:	causing laughter or smiles
extracted	:	took out
ruined	:	destroyed
concealed	:	hidden or kept secret
pound	:	crush to power; break to pieces
savagely	:	fiercely or angrily
deception	:	deceiving, trick intended to deceive
fascinated	:	charmed or attracted greatly
recognition	:	recognising, identifying
assuming	:	taking up
withering	:	confusing
glorious	:	splendid, magnificent
dispersed	:	scattered; went in different directions
convinced	:	felt certain

#### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. What was the first trick of the Conjuror?**

**Ans.** In his first trick, the conjuror produced a bowl of goldfish from a piece of cloth that was absolutely empty.

**2. What did the people in the hall say about him?**

**Ans.** The wonderstruck people exclaimed how the conjuror had done that.

**3. How did the Quick Man explain away the trick?**

**Ans.** The Quick Man explained away the trick by saying that "he had it up his sleeve", i.e. that the trick was really no trick and that the conjuror had hidden the bowl of goldfish up his sleeve.

**4. What were the other tricks performed by the Conjuror and how were they explained by the Quick Man?**

**Ans.** The other tricks performed by the Conjuror included the joining of distinctly separate rings, as also taking a number of eggs out of his hat. The Quick Man explained the former with the words : "He must have had another lot up his sleeve." He explained the latter trick by saying that he had "a hen up his sleeve."

**5. What was the Japanese trick of the Conjuror ?**

**Ans.** In the Japanese trick performed by the conjuror, he took the gold watch of the Quick Man, put it into a mortar and pounded it to pieces.

**5. How did the Quick Man react to it?**

**Ans.** The Quick Man reacted to it with the words that "he's slipped - it - up - his sleeve."

#### WORDS AND PHRASES

1. Buzz off (to fly away) : The fly stung me and then **buzzed off**.
2. Brow was clouded (in a tense state) : His **brow began to cloud** as I accused him of telling a lie.
3. All through (throughout) : He kept awake all **through** the night.
4. Transpire (happen) : Things **transpired** in such a manner that my hopes were dashed on ground.
5. Rally (to gather all one's energy and skill) : All the followers of the Swami **rallied** around him.
6. Beyond recognition (beyond identification) : The document was mutilated **beyond recognition**.
7. See through (sense something) : We **saw through** his game and refused to help him.
8. Withering look (faded) : The old building has a **withering look**.
9. Grasped (seized) : I **grasped** the drowning child by his hair and pulled him out.

#### PASSAGES FOR COMPREHENSION

##### Passage - I

I left it alone for a few days, not knowing what to do with it. I received a notice from the municipality ordering that the engine should at once be *removed* from the ground as otherwise they would charge rent for the *occupation* of the Gymkhana Grounds. After deep thought, I consented to pay the rent, and I paid ten rupees a month for the next months. Dear Sirs, I was a poor man. Even the house which I and my wife *occupied* cost me only four rupees a month. And fancy my paying ten rupees

a month for the road-engine. It cut into my slender budget and I had to pledge the jewels belonging to my wife. And every day my wife was asking me what I proposed to do with this terrible property of mine and I had no answer to give. I went up and down the town offering it for sale to all and sundry. Someone suggested that the secretary of the local Cosmopolitan Club might be interested in it. When I *approached* him he laughed and asked what he should do with a Road engine. I'll dispose of it at a concession for you. You have tennis court to be rolled every morning. I began it even before I saw him smile. I knew it was a stupid thing to say. Next, someone suggested, See the Municipal Chairman. He may buy for the municipality. With great *trepidation* I went to the municipal office one day. I buttoned up my coat as I gave away the engine at a great concession. I started a great harangue on municipal duties, to regime of roller but before I was done with him I knew there was greater chance of my selling it to some child on the road side for playing with.

**Read the above passage and answer the questions given below :**

1. How do you know that the narrator was a poor man?
2. What answers did the narrator give to his wife?
3. What was the reaction of the Secretary of local Cosmopolitan Club?
4. Why was the narrator in a state of great trepidation?
5. Give the meanings of the words in italics and use them in sentences also.

#### **Passage - II**

The reputation of the conjuror was rapidly sinking below zero. At the close of the evening he *rallied* for a final effort.

'Ladies and Gentlemen', he said, 'I will present to you, in conclusion, the most famous Japanese trick recently invented by the natives of Tipperary. Will you, sir', he continued, turning toward the Quick Man, 'will you kindly hand me your gold watch?'

It was passed to him.

'Have I your permission to put it into the *mortar* and pound it to pieces?' he asked savagely.

The Quick Man nodded and smiled.

The *conjuror* threw the watch into the mortar and grasped a sledge hammer from the table. There was a sound of violent smashing, "he's-slipped-it-up-his-sleeve", whispered the Quick Man.

'Now, sir, continued the conjuror, 'will you allow me to take your handkerchief and punch holes in it? Thank you. You see, ladies and gentlemen, there is no *deception*; the holes are visible to the eye.'

The face of the Quick Man beamed. This time the real mystery of the thing *fascinated* him.

'And now, sir, will you kindly pass me your silk hat and allow me to dance on

it? Thank you.'

The conjuror made a few rapid passes with his feet and exhibited the hat crushed beyond recognition.

'And will you now, sir, take off your celluloid collar and permit me to burn it in the candle? Thank you, sir. And will you allow me to smash your spectacles for you with my hammer? Thank you.'

By this time the features of the Quick Man were assuming a puzzled expression. 'This thing beats me', he whispered. 'I don't see through it a bit.'

***Please read the above passage and answer the following questions :***

1. What was the final effort of the Conjuror?
2. Why did the face of the Quick Man beam?
3. When did the features of the Quick Man wear a puzzled look?
4. Why did the Conjuror speak in a savage voice?
5. Give the meanings of the words in italics and use them in sentences also.

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**LESSON NO. 1.3**

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**CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH PROSE**

- i) The Man Who Knew Too Much**
- ii) From Poverty to Independence**
- iii) J. C. Bose**

**I. THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH**

**Introduction :**

Alexander Baron (b.1917) is a playwright and novelist who has also written scripts for the films and also for television plays. Starting his career as an assistant editor of *The Tribune* he later became the editor of *New Theatre*. He also served in second world war. His novels include *There's No Home*, *The Human Kind*, *Queen of the East*, *Seeing Life* and *The Low Life*.

**Summary :**

The present story relates the interesting incidents of the disastrous fate that overtook a man who knew too much and took pride in showing off his learning in season and out of season.

The writer narrates the story of the fate waiting a man named Private Quelch at a training depot. Private Quelch "lanky, stooping, frowning through horn-rimmed spectacles," acquired a nickname of the "Professor" due to his appearance and his behaviour at the camp. The writer recalls an incident when they were being given a lesson in musketry by Sergeant who was describing the mechanism of a Service Rifle. He put the muzzle velocity or the speed at which the bullet leaves the rifle at "well over two thousand feet per second" when a voice interrupted him and presented the exact figure at "Two thousand, four hundred and forty feet per second". It was the voice of the Professor. The sergeant accepted his explanation without enthusiasm and continued with his lecture. After finishing his lecture, he put questions to the trainees and turned time and again to the Professor with a vengeance. But "the only result was to enhance the Professor's glory" as he had learnt technical definitions, parts of the rifle, its use and care, etc.

The Professor attributed his knowledge to "intelligent reading." He aimed at getting a commission. And as a first step he meant to get a stripe. In pursuit of his ambition he worked hard. He arranged training manuals and read them sitting up late at night. Then in the classes he teased the instructors with his queries. He participated in drills and on the training marches of the batallions with enthusiasm and emerged miraculously of the officers "like a Guardsman". His "horrible heartiness" infuriated his fellow privates.

All the time the Professor lectured to his fellow privates on every aspect of human knowledge and they held him in high respect. But soon this respect turned into a sense of terror at the very approach of the Professor. They tried to hurl sarcasms and played practical jokes on him which went unnoticed by the busy Professor. The Professor publically corrected a man who made many mistakes thus humiliating him. And whenever one of them shone "The Professor outshone him." He continually instructed them in his own way.

On another occasion, the Professor gave the full description of a North American Harvard Trainer plane flying overhead without even casting a glance at it and put the others who prided themselves on aircraft recognition to shame.

And then came the turning point in the life of the Professor. On a drowsy summer afternoon Corporal Turnbull was taking a lesson on the hand grenade. As he explained that the outside of a grenade was "divided into large number of fragments to assist segmentation," the Professor interrupted the Corporal and put the number of segments at forty-four. The Corporal felt annoyed though he did not say anything. And as he opened his mouth to resume his lecture, the Professor interrupted again as he asked, "Shouldn't you have started off with the five characteristics of the grenade?" The Corporal's face turned dark red with anger and he tossed the grenade to the Professor, asking him to deliver the lecture. Quite unabashed, Private Quelch rose and "gave an unexceptional lecture on the grenade." Corporal Turnbull stood and watched intently as the squad, listened to the Professor in a horrified kind of silence.

When the lecture was finished, the Corporal addressed the squad and said "the platoon officer has asked me to nominate one of you for..." and he gave a lingering pause thus producing an atmosphere of suspense when the entire company thought of "the great moment" for Private Quelch. Then suddenly the Corporal broke the suspense and he added "...for permanent cookhouse duties" to complete his sentence. And he nominated Private Quelch for the job. Thus the Corporal had his revenge upon Private Quelch by assigning him permanent cookhouse duties, thus ruining his career before his aspirations could soar too high.

The squad enjoyed the jobs for days afterwards, but this incident did not bring any change in the behaviour of the Professor who bored the cooks by parading his knowledge of matters connected with the art of cooking even.

Thus, the story presents the ultimate fate of a man who claimed to know too much and prided himself on the display of his learning. The author presents the character of a man of learning and pokes fun at him at the instance of his exhibition of his knowledge. He also produces suspense when everyone expects the Corporal to appoint the Professor to a high office. But the anti-climax comes when the Corporal assigns him permanent cookhouse duties, where his encyclopaedic knowledge is of no use. The writer also presents the plight of the other fellow privates who fled in

terror of the Professor in order to avoid the boredom of his lecture. Thus the story makes an interesting reading.

### STUDY NOTES

<b>Words</b>	<b>Meanings</b>
liable to acquire	: likely to gain
stooping	: bending of body forward and downward
frowning	: drawing together of the brows
pursuit	: something at which one works or to which one gives one's time; act of pursuing
glance	: quick look
drowsy	: feeling sleepy; making one feel sleepy
impassive	: showing no sign of feeling, unmoved
intentness	: eagerness; earnestness
lingeringly	: protractedly
monotonous	: unchanging; often seen or heard
abominably	: unpleasantly

### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. Why was Private Quelch nicknamed the Professor?**

**Ans.** Private Quelch was nicknamed Professor because of his appearance.

**2. Describe his appearance.**

**Ans.** He had lanky, stooping and frowning appearance.

**3. How was the Professor's glory enhanced at the first lesson in musketry?**

**Ans.** At the first lesson in musketry, the instructor turned again and again to the Professor with his questions which were promptly answered. This enhanced the Professor's glory.

**4. How, according to him, did the Professor acquire his thorough knowledge of everything?**

**Ans.** The Professor acquired his thorough knowledge of everything through "intelligent reading".

**5. Why did his fellow privates live in terror of him?**

**Ans.** His fellow privates lived in terror of him because of his lectures which he delivered to them in his droning voice on every aspect of human knowledge.

**6. How did the Professor show his skill in aircraft recognition?**

**Ans.** The Professor showed his skill in recognizing the invisible plane as a North American Harvard Trainer by its harsh engine note, due to the high tip speed of the airscrew.

**7. Describe Corporal Turnbull. Why was he the privates' hero?**

**Ans.** Corporal Turnbull was a young and tough guy. He had just returned from

the harbour of Dunkirk. He loved animals. He was the hero of the privates because of his toughness.

**8. How did the Professor rouse the anger of Corporal Turnbull?**

**Ans.** The Professor roused the anger of Corporal Turnbull by interrupting him during his lecture.

**9. What was the punishment given to the Professor by the Corporal?**

**Ans.** The Corporal punished the Professor by assigning him permanent cookhouse duties.

**10. How did the Professor fare in the kitchen?**

**Ans.** Even in the cookhouse the Professor showed off his knowledge in matters connected with the art of cooking.

**WORDS AND PHRASES**

1. See to it (take care to make sure) : I will **see to it** that your passport should be ready in time.
2. Get on (to succeed) : He is **getting** on well with his new job.
3. Day in and day out (day after day) : He has been bothering me with requests for loan **day in and day out**.
4. Hit back at (react) : He will not pocket this insult. He will **hit back at** his enemies.
5. Condescending (patronising) : He seems to be **condescending** to my request.
6. Turning-point (crucial change) : His marriage was a **turning point** in his career. His business soared after that.
7. At bay (in a desperate position) : The robber found himself **at bay** when he was surrounded by the police.
8. Break out (begin) : Cholera **broke out** in Surat.
9. Muzzle (open-end of a fire arm) : The **muzzle** of my gun has broken edges.
10. Enhance (increase) : His success in life has **enhanced** his prestige among his relations.
11. Sarcasm (bitter remarks) : You should not treat the poor people with **sarcasm**.
12. Trifled with (treated in a light hearted way) : You should never **trifle with** fire arm.
13. Fall in (fall into line) : At last, the opposition have **fallen in** line with the ruling party on the issue of child marriage.
14. Sprawling (lying with arms and legs stretched out) : The Rashtrapati Bhawan has **sprawling** lawns.
15. Unbashed (unashamed) : The cheat has pocketed insult **unbashedly**.
16. Drone (deep humming sound) : The aircraft was not visible but its **drone** was audible.

**II. FROM POVERTY TO INDEPENDENCE**

**Introduction:**

Thomas Alva Edison (1847–1931) was one of the greatest American inventors. He had seen days of extreme poverty, but his courage, steadiness of purpose, character, experience and knowledge made him one of the greatest personalities that the world of science can boast of. The present chapter 'From Poverty to Independence' has been taken from his biography written by F. Trevelyan Miller, who belonged to the family of Edison's second wife, Mina, nee Miller. This extract narrates the story of Edison's rise to prosperity from the days of penury<sup>1</sup> and his first marriage.

Edison was born in the year 1847 in the village of Milan, Ohio in the United States of America. The family moved to Port Huron when the future inventor was only seven. He mastered Morse telegraph code and spent some years in Canada as a telegraph operator. Then he went to Boston and in 1869 he left for New York to try his luck in the new land. It is at this stage the present extract begins.

**Summary :**

In 1869 when Edison reached New York, he was penniless. He had spent his last penny to pay for his journey and had left all his belongings, including his books and instruments with people to be kept till he could pay his debts. Hungry and poor but with courage and a sense of purpose, he was roaming around when he saw a coffee house. A tea-taster was examining cases of fresh tea arrived from Ceylon, on breakfast in New York. After that he looked for the telegraph operators with whom he had conversed over the wires from Boston. He soon met one who was himself out of job but lent Edison one dollar. That night he ate out of that dollar, spending the money very frugally. Next he met Jerry Borst "the speed king" whom Edison has beaten in speed over the wires. Edison lived on borrowed money for three days before he walked into his first opportunity. An important instrument of Gold Indicator Company had developed some fault. The company recorded prices of Gold exchange. As a result of this disorder in the machine, the business of the company was at a standstill. Edison happened to meet Dr. Laws, the inventor of the instrument and said that he again could rectify the fault. Within two hours the instrument was repaired and all was going well. After a tough interview, Dr. Laws appointed Edison as incharge of the entire plant of Laws at a salary of three hundred dollars per month. Edison successfully worked for the company till it was taken over by Western Union. He then decided to set up business for himself.

On October 1, 1869, "The Telegrapher" announced the floating of "Pope, Edison and Co-Electrical Engineers and General Telegraph Agency." Edison started living with Pope, a telegraph engineer, and they continued to work for Western Union. They both worked hard during 1869 and made great improvements in printing telegraph and got their inventions patented. It was in the same year that Edison's universal printer was patented.

One day General Lafferts, president of the Western Union, asked Edison how much he wanted for the universal printer. Edison was ready to accept three to five thousand dollars but left the decision about the price to the General. When the General offered him forty thousand dollars, Edison was so excited that he did not believe it. When he received the money, he did not know what to do with it. But it was a welcome fortune for him and he helped his family with the amount.

Edison's rise and success did not turn his head. Rather he held that money is nothing, but means to an end. His success only encouraged him to work hard and still harder. Within six years from 1870 to 1876, he patented 122 inventions. He was an example for his fellow-men.

Edison, a great inventor and capable scientist, was not a good businessman. He was not good at keeping account books. For this reason the company once started a deficit of five hundred dollars. But money was not his purpose. His aim was his work and he did very useful work in telegraphy and gently improved the typewriters which became the fore-runner of Remington type writers.

In 1873, Edison married Mary Stillwell who had worked in his office for sometime. Different stories are told about the way he proposed to Mary Stillwell but when asked how the marriage materialized both husband and wife laughed and refused to say anything.

**Some Comments :** The whole chapter narrates the story of Edison's rise from a cup of tea to a fortune in a short time. He attained the heights of success because of his courage, sense of determination, hard and honest work. The great scientist who in his life patented more than 1300 inventions always remained a humble man. He felt sad and lonely when he lost his mother but when he got married to Mary Stillwell he again became happy.

#### STUDY NOTES

[Also please study the Glossary given at pp.64–65 of your text book]

harbour	:	place of shelter for ships
conversed	:	talked
lodged	:	lived
venture	:	undertaking in which there is risk
patent	:	grant of right to an invention
astonished	:	surprised

#### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. What was the financial state of Edison when he arrived in New York?**

**Ans.** Edison was penniless when he arrived in New York. He had also pawned his personal things and was under debt.

**2. What was his first breakfast in New York and how did he get it?**

**Ans.** A cup of tea was his first breakfast in New York and he got this cup of tea

from tea-taster of a big store.

**3. How did he spend his first day in New York?**

**Ans.** His first day was spent in visiting the telegraph offices to find the operators with whom he had conversed over the wires from Boston. He met one jobless operator who lent him a dollar. Edison dined that night at a famous coffee house.

**4. Give an account of Jerry Borst.**

**Ans.** Jerry Borst was known as "speed king", but Edison had beaten him in speed over the wires. He was a man of few words but this silent man entertained Edison in a good restaurant.

**5. What was the first opportunity that came Edison's way in New York?**

**Ans.** An important instrument of Gold Indicator Company recording prices on the Gold Exchange broke down. Edison told Dr. Laws, the inventor of the instrument, that he could fix the machine in two hours. He fixed the machine in two hours. Dr. Laws was so impressed that he appointed Edison as incharge of the whole plant on a monthly salary of three hundred dollars.

**6. Who was General Lafferts?**

**Ans.** General Lafferts was the President of the Western Union, a company of electrical engineers.

**7. How did General Lafferts purchase the 'Printing Telegraph' from Edison?**

**Ans.** General Lafferts sent for Edison and offered to buy his newly patented "Universal Printer". Edison left the price to the General. The latter offered him forty thousand dollars and Edison decided to sell his Universal Printer for this high price.

**8. Describe Edison's workshop.**

**Ans.** With his 40,000 dollars, he bought machinery and set up a small workshop in New York in New Jersey. The workshop was a busy centre of industry. He asked his men to follow him. They had to work with him through endless hours.

**9. Sum up Edison's work during 1870 to 1876.**

**Ans.** During this period Edison patented 122 inventions, more than one new invention every month. He and his associates also formed a company - the Automatic Telegraph Company - whenever money was needed.

**10. Show how Edison was a poor businessman.**

**Ans.** Edison was a poor businessman because he did not maintain his accounts properly. He kept two books, in one he entered the bills he owed and in the other he entered the bills owed to him. He never counted his profit. Later on, he employed a book-keeper to maintain the accounts.

**WORDS AND PHRASES**

1. Come across (meet) : I **came across** a friend on my way to school.
2. Out of work (unemployed) : My cousin remained **out of work** for the whole year.
3. Make a dollar go a long way (last long) : Edison got one dollar from his friend. He spent this money wisely. It was to **make the dollar go a long way**.
4. Break down (go out of order) : My car **broke down** yesterday and I had to push it to the workshop.
5. Fortune knocked at his door (favoured by fortune) : **Fortune knocked the door** of the poor beggar when he won bumper prize in lottery.
6. Feel one's heart stop (under a shock) : He **felt his heart stop** when he found his car heading for a tree.
7. Draw up (composed) : I **drew up** my will and got it registered.
8. Turn one's head (make one very proud) : Success in business had **turned the head** of my friend.
9. Harbour (place of shelter for ships) : Marmagao is a natural **harbour** of India.
10. Conversed (talked) : They **conversed** for a long time to reach an agreement.
11. Lodged (lived) : Where are you **lodging** in Delhi?
12. Venture (undertaking) : Business is a different **venture** for a teacher.
13. Patent (grant of right to an inventor) : Have you got **patent** for your new invention?

### III. J.C. BOSE

#### Introduction:

Aldous Huxley (1894–1963), a British author, was the grandson of the great scientist, Thomas Henry Huxley, who defended and propagated the ideas contained in Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Aldous Huxley went to Eton and Balliol but the disease of his eyes prevented him from continuing his education. He took to journalism and also wrote poetry and novels. *Brave New World* and *Point Counter Point* are his famous novels. He wrote a travel book *Jesting Pilate* too. The chapter on Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose is an extract from this book.

#### Summary:

In this essay, Aldous Huxley compliments the great Indian scientist, Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose. This praise of an Indian scientist becomes even more significant because the writer is not given to easy praise.

A talented scientist can explore the mysteries of nature even with the help of simple commonplace means at his disposal. Faraday experimented with the tea canister<sup>1</sup> wire, silk, sealing wax and some jam pots. And what did he achieve with these? The wonderful gift, electricity! Similarly Sir Bose, a prodigious<sup>2</sup> scientist, worked simply with some filament<sup>3</sup> and a little clockwork. He could make machines to show the world how plants live, feel and die like ordinary animals.

The writer had been going round the Bose Institute in Calcutta. He saw that Bose worked with great enthusiasm and zest. He had an overflowing store of ideas in his mind. Sometimes he felt overwhelmed by them and tried hard to explain them to his fellow scientists.

With a needle moving on a sheet of smoked glass the growth of a plant could be seen. If an electric shock was given, the plant trembled. It received its food and gave out oxygen in small quantities. At certain intervals, a bell rang to indicate a certain amount of oxygen collected. When the plant was placed under the sun, the bell rang at short intervals and regularly. But when the plant was shaded the bell rang after long intervals or did not ring at all. It shows how plants receive light and breathe out oxygen. If some stimulant was put in the water in which the plant was standing, the bell could be heard ringing violently. Sir J. C. Bose also proved that transplantation<sup>4</sup> of a grown-up tree was possible with the help of an anaesthetic.<sup>5</sup> After applying chloroform Bose operated upon a full grown tree. The tree took roots in its new place and flourished. The plants also react to chloroform like human beings. They cannot bear an overdose of chloroform.

The minute pulsations, 'immediately beneath the outer skin of a tree could be magnified on a large scale and recorded in a graph on a moving sheet of smoked glass. Bose showed with a system of very delicate and sensitive letters. It worked on the principles of the self-recording barometer.

Bose had a very fine insight into the organization of plants. The heart-beat of the plants recorded by him was very slow. He proved that it could be made rapid and faster by adding some coffee or camphor to the plant's water.

Huxley further illustrates how Bose put a poisonous drop of chloroform into the water. The plants in the water started breathing heavily and painfully. The graph flattered out halfway between the extreme rise and fall. The butchered plant was struggling vainly for life. When the line became level, the plant was declared dead. Huxley says that he can feel pained at the sight of a dying animal. But we are insensitive to the unseen anguish<sup>1</sup> of the plants. Now, we can realize how painful is the dying process in these extremely sensitive organisms is. And we feel shocked when we know that we had been dead to their feeling and impulses.

In the end, Huxley advises the vegetarians not to visit the Bose Institute. Perhaps they had given up taking meat after visiting a slaughter-house. Now after visiting this Institute they would reduce their food further and would take to only mineral<sup>2</sup> diets.

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1. *small box with a lid*    2. *marvellous ; wonderful*    3. *fine, thread-like bodies ; thin metallic wires (conductors) in electric lamps*    4. *taking up plants with their roots and planting them in another place.*    5. *a medicine (like chloroform) that is used for deadening pain when an operation is performed.*

Again they would be living in the world of make-believe. Bose had earlier proved that metals respond to stimuli, are subject to fatigue and react to poisons very much like living beings. They also live. The poor sensitive souls will have to go without food at all. Bose had discovered that there are no dividing lines separating the 'organic' and the 'inorganic' realms. Man has to be a cannibal<sup>3</sup> for the simple reason that everything about us is alive.

**Some Comments :-** Huxley has aptly and effectively brought out Bose's stupendous<sup>4</sup> contribution to the revelation of a great truth about life. Huxley belonged to a family of scientists and his grandfather was an advocate of one of the greatest men of modern age-Charles Darwin. Huxley's words of praise for the scientist have a great value because Huxley was by nature critical.

#### STUDY NOTES

[Please study also the Glossary given at Pages 72-73 of your text book.]

curious	:	eager to know; strange
mysterious	:	hidden secret
capture	:	arrest, catch
surrender	:	yield, accept defeat
devise	:	to make, to plan
twitch	:	momentary sharp pull
marvel	:	wonder
ardently	:	passionately
appraise	:	to estimate
implication	:	implied results
expound	:	to explain
amputate	:	cut off (esp. part of the body of man or animal)
anaesthetized	:	produced loss of sensibility and feelings
enormously	:	greatly; highly
contract	:	to make shorter or smaller
undulation	:	rise and fall
endow	:	impart; give
writhe	:	twist or roll about in pain
spasms	:	sudden convulsive movements
conscientious	:	guided by one's sense of duty
practitioners	:	followers of a practice

- 
1. *severe suffering*
  2. *substance obtained from mines.*
  3. *man who eats human flesh ; here it means one who eats living things.*
  4. *amazing ; great*

**SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

**1. What is the curious and special talent of a great experimenter like Faraday?**

**Ans.** He captured the secrets of electricity by suitably juxtaposing the wax, the glass jars and the wires.

**2. What did the machines devised by Bose make visible?**

**Ans.** The machines devised by J.C. Bose made the growth of the plants visible, the pulse of their vegetable hearts, the twitching of their nerves and the process of their digestion.

**3. How was the exhaling of Oxygen by plant, when it feeds, measured?**

**Ans.** The plant exhaled Oxygen in minute quantity when it fed. Each time the accumulation of exhaled oxygen reached a certain amount, a little bell automatically rang. The bell rang more frequently in the sun than in the shade.

**4. How did Bose successfully transplant a fully grown tree?**

**Ans.** Bose successfully transplanted a fully grown tree by first administering chloroform to it.

**5. Describe the instrument that records the beating of plant's heart.**

**Ans.** By a system of leaves, the minute pulsations beneath the rind of the stem are magnified and recorded automatically in a dotted graph on a moving thread of smoke glass by the instrument that records the heart-beat of a plant.

**6. What does Huxley say about effect which the researches of Bose may have on the practitioners of ahimsa?**

**Ans.** Bose has demonstrated that metals respond to stimuli and are subject to fatigue and react to poison very much as living vegetable and animal organisms do. The practitioners of ahimsa will come to know that they are also cannibals because everything, including the inanimate, is alive.

**WORDS AND PHRASES**

1. Pick-me up (stimulant) : Opium is a **pick-me up**.
2. Flourish (progress) : His business **flourished** in no time.
3. Paralyse (cripple) : His left side was **paralysed** after a prolonged illness.
4. Elucidate (make clear) : **Elucidate** your statement with examples.
5. Appraise (evaluate, estimate) : The Chemist **appraised** the quality of the drug.
6. Writhes in Distress (twist in distress) : We cannot see how an injured plant **writhes in distress**.
7. Self-denial (self negation) : **Self-denial** leads to the love of mankind.
8. Copious (plentiful) : He has taken **copious** notes of the lecture of his teacher.
9. Conscientious (dutiful, moral) : We need **conscientious** workers for greater industrial output.

10. Endow (gives us) : Religion **endows** us with moral sense.
11. Mortal (causing death) : Man is **mortal**.
12. Ahinsa (non-violence) : Gandhi practised **ahinsa**.
13. Menu (item of food) : We consulted the **menu** and ordered the dishes.
14. Agony (pain) : The widow was in great **agony** on account of the death of her husband.
15. Amputate (cut off) : He met with a serious accident and the doctor **amputated** his right leg.

**Passage - 1**

That was our introduction to him. We soon learned more about him. He saw to that. He meant to get on, he told us, he had brains. He was sure to get a *commission*, before long. As a first step, he meant to get a stripe.

In pursuit of his ambition he worked hard. We had to give him credit for that. He borrowed training manuals and stayed up late at nights reading them. He badgered the *instructors* with questions. He drilled with *enthusiasm*, and on route marches he was not only miraculously tireless but infuriated us all with his *horrible* heartiness. What about a song, chaps? is not greeted politely at the end of thirty miles. His salute at the pay table was a model to behold. When officers were in sight he would swing his skinny arms and march to the canteen like a guardsman.

And day in and day out, he lectured to us in his droning, remorseless voice on every aspect of human knowledge. At first we had certain respect for him, but soon we lived in clumsy *sarcasms* and practical jokes. The Professor scarcely noticed : he was too busy working for his stripe.

**Please read the above passage and answer the following questions :**

1. What was the Professor's ambition?
2. For what did the officers give him credit?
3. How did he behave when he saw the officers?
4. Why did the officers live in terror?
5. Give the meanings of the words in italics and use them in sentences also.

(Please send your answers to us along with your Response-Sheet).

**Passage - 2**

In 1869, Edison's 'Universal Printer' was patented and Fortune knocked at his door. On one *eventful* day the General *sent for* Edison. As he entered the office he noted from the expression of his chief that something of importance was on his mind. He had faced his chiefs so many times with unhappy results that he was prepared for better or worse.

'Edison' said the General, "how much do you want for your "Universal Printer". This was a very important moment. Edison thought that five thousand dollars would be a *suitable* price, but he was ready to take three thousand or even less. Luckily for

him he decided that it might be better to leave the matter for the General and asked him what he thought would be right price.

'Would forty thousand dollars suit you?' asked the General.

Edison was *so astonished* and excited that he almost felt his heart stop beating at last he said thoughtfully. 'Yes, I think that is fair.'

'All right', said the General, "I will have an agreement drawn up : come round in three days and I will give you the money."

When Edison went out of the office, he said that he had to pinch himself to see if he was alive. That night he sat down and *worked* out some figures for the value of his time, work and expenses, and he began to think that perhaps he had accepted too high a price. He need not have troubled, for his invention was worth to the Western Union many times the price given for it.

**Read the above passage and answer the questions given below :**

1. Why did Edison leave the matter to the General?
2. Why did Edison decide to pinch himself?
3. What did Edison notice on the face of the General?
4. What made Edison think that he had charged too high a price?
5. Give the meanings of the words in italics and use them in sentences also.

**Passage - 3**

At the Bose Institute in Calcutta, the great *experimenter* himself was our guide. Throughout an afternoon we followed him from marvel to marvel. Ardently and with an enthusiasm, with a *copiousness* of ideas that were almost too much for his powers of expression and left him impatiently stammering with the effort to elucidate methods, appraise result, unfold implications, he *expounded* them one by one. We watched the growth of a plant being traced out automatically by a needle on a sheet of smoked glass : we saw its sudden shuddering reaction to an electric shock. We watched a plant feeding. In the process it was *exhaling* minute quantities of oxygen. Each time the accumulation of exhaled oxygen reached a certain amount, a little bell, like the bell that warns you when you are nearly at the end of your line of typed writing, automatically rang. When the sun shone on the plant, the bell rang often and regularly. Shaded, the plant stopped feeding; the bell rang only at or long intervals, or not at all. A drop of stimulant added to the water in which the plant was standing set the bell wildly tinkling, as though some record-breaking typist, were at the machine. Near it for the plant was feeling out of doors-stood a large tree. Sir J. C. Bose told us that it had been brought to the garden from distance. Transplanting is generally fatal to a full-grown tree : it dies of shock. So would most men if their arms and legs were *amputated* without *anaesthetic*. Bose administered chloroform. The operation was completed successfully. Waking, the anaesthetized tree immediately took root in its new place and flourished.

***Read the above passage and answer the questions given below :***

1. What happened when the accumulation of exhaled oxygen reached a certain point?
2. What was being recorded on a sheet of smoked glass?
3. Why was Bose stammering?
4. How was the plant transplanted?
5. Give the meanings of the italicised words and use them in sentences also.

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**LESSON NO. 1.4**

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**CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH PROSE**

- i) The Story of the Sea**
- ii) Hardy and Ramanujan**
- iii) The Escape**

**I. THE STORY OF THE SEA**

**Introduction:**

This chapter by William and Stella Nida has been taken from the book *Men of Science and Their Discoveries*. It describes the importance of the sea and gives us many interesting facts about it. We also come to know about the queer and odd animals that live in the sea.

**Summary:**

The sea covers about three-fourth of THE earth : it is vast, limitless and admits no restrictions. The beautiful green, blue and purple waters of the sea appeal to man's love of adventure and the unknown. The sea lures man to start his quest for the fresh lands.

In spite of vastness of sea there are some villages and towns in America and Australia where people have never seen the sea and felt its waves. But in England, there is no place which is more than a hundred miles from the coast. That is why the Britishers have a great love for the sea.

The sea offers man an interesting field of study. Though the surface of the sea appears to be the same everywhere, yet its floor is very uneven. On its floor there are mountains and plains. At places the summits of these mountains rise to the surface and form islands such as the Hawaian group. The average depth of the sea is about two and a half miles but at places its depth is more than six miles. It means, the sea can submerge the highest mountain of the world i.e. Everest. The waters of the sea are exposed to the direct heat of the sun but the sun affects only a thin layer on top. The deeper waters always remain cold and dark. The pressure of air on earth is about fifteen pounds per square inch but in sea this pressure doubles at a depth of thirty five feet and it goes on increasing with depth. It is only sea animals who can withstand this pressure of tons as their bodies are almost entirely filled with water.

The sea water contains salt and this salt makes the sea water heavier than the fresh water of rivers and lakes. Because of the salt only, the ice that covers the sea in the far north is heavier than the fresh water ice. Tides break this salt ice sheet into pack ice and it is piled into mountains. In summer, ice plane breaks up into floe. In Antarctic ocean, there are large ice-bergs. These ice-bergs move away from poles

towards warmer waters. At times, they come in the paths of ships and cause horrible collisions. On 14th April, 1912, **The Titanic**, the largest ship in the world at that time struck an iceberg and sank. In this tragedy more than fifteen hundred lives were lost.

The sea contains a lot of living matter perhaps more than there is on the earth. There are tiny plants in the sea and fish feed upon these and upon one another.

The largest sea animal and the largest creature of the animal world is the whale. Sperm whales and white whales are fifty to seventy feet long whereas blue whales reach ninety feet. It is believed that the whales once lived on earth. They have traces of hindlegs till date and feed their young ones like mammals do on earth. But whales have such physical features as make them well suited to live in waters.

In sea, there are also many odd-looking birds. Penguin is one of them. Penguins cannot fly as their wings have been changed into swimming flippers. These flippers help them in diving upto a depth of thirty feet and they catch their prey for food while diving. They sleep on land and stay on land for rearing their young. A single egg is laid which is hatched by mother and father both by sitting on it by turns.

Life exists upto six miles below the water surface. It is absolutely dark there except for some light emitted by some kinds of fish. There is a large variety of strange animals moving about in complete darkness. Some of these animals have long feelers and others have long limbs. Many animals produce their own light-red, orange and green. They use this light to see in the deep sea and sometimes to attract other sea animals to feed upon them. Some of these light producing fish are even called lantern fish. Some kinds of fish like eels can even generate electricity. They use this for defending themselves from other animals.

Seal is another animal which rears its young on land and comes to land for rest. An interesting feature about the seal is that baby seals do not take naturally to the waters. They have to be taught swimming.

Many sea birds such as gulls, terns, sandpipers and cormorants spend part of their time on land. All these animals are interesting subjects for study.

Long back many treasure ships sank in the sea. Diving bells were used for search of these treasures. Diving bell-a strong heavy vessel of wood or metal is perfectly air and water-tight at the top and sides and is open at the bottom. A man can go in a diving bell deep into the sea and work for hours. In 1683, a man named William Phipps made use of diving bell to search a rich Spanish wreck. Though he failed in his first attempt yet finally he succeeded in the mission.

The sea offers the cheapest means of transportation and in modern times, wars have been fought for getting more and better ports and sea coast. Though it was the fish that attracted man to sail the sea yet the sailors found new lands through their

adventure on the waters of the sea.

### STUDY NOTES

[Please also study the notes given at pages 84–86 of your book]

in quest of	:	in search of
lofty summits	:	high peaks
squeezed	:	pressed
torn to shreds	:	broken into pieces
ancestors	:	forefathers
hindlegs	:	legs at the back
buoyant	:	able to keep floating
enormous	:	big ; huge
haunts	:	frequently visited places
enormous	:	huge
fitful gleams	:	occasional ray of soft light
devoured	:	eat greedily
snout	:	nose and mouth of animal
to paralyse	:	to make helpless
to buoy	:	to float
descend	:	go down
compress	:	to press from all sides
upkeep	:	maintenance

### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. What is the importance of sea?**

**Ans.** Three-fourth of the planet earth is covered by sea. Sea separates and unites different races of mankind. It is great highway available to all. Sea appeals to man's love of perilous and unknown, to his love of conquest, his love of knowledge and his love of gold. It beckons people to quest for fresh fields.

**2. Why is the love of the sea in the very blood of the British people?**

**Ans.** In the British Isles, the Sea is nowhere more than a hundred miles from the most inmost part. That is why the love of the sea is in the very blood of the British people.

**3. Describe the floor of the sea.**

**Ans.** The sea-floor is very uneven. It has mountains, plains and also great depths. It has also valleys. The sea floor has mountains whose lofty peaks rise to the surface of the sea and form islands.

**4. To what depth does the power of the sun affect the sea? How cold are the deeper waters?**

**Ans.** The sun affects the sea only upto a depth of a hundred feet. The deeper

waters of the ocean remain near the freezing point of fresh water.

**5. Why is it that we cannot dive to great depths in the sea?**

**Ans.** The air pressure increases with the depth of the sea. We, therefore, cannot dive to great depths of the sea because of the air-pressure.

**6. How do the animals live at a depth of three miles and more in the sea in spite of the high pressure?**

**Ans.** The bodies of the animals down there are filled with water and gases and this saves them from being crushed. That is why animals can live in such depth.

**7. Why is it easier to swim in sea water than in fresh water?**

**Ans.** Sea water is heavier than fresh water and this makes swimming easier in the sea.

**8. How did the Titanic sink?**

**Ans.** The **Titanic** sank in 1912 on her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York because it struck an iceberg in the fog.

**9. What is the largest sea-animal? How long and how heavy is it?**

**Ans.** The whale is the largest sea-animal. The blue whale is ninety feet long and weighs seventy tons.

**10. Why are whales said to have descended from land mammals?**

**Ans.** The whales are descendents of the land mammals. They still have slight traces of hind-legs. They are warm-blooded animals and feed their babies as land mammals do.

**11. How is the whale adapted to live in the sea water?**

**Ans.** The whale is adapted to live in water because its body is shaped like a submarine boat with a tail which acts as power paddle. The flippers on her sides keep her balanced. The layers of oil under the skin furnish heat and make the body light.

**12. How does a whale breathe?**

**Ans.** The whale has enormous chest and lungs. It has also blow holes with valves on the top of its head. It comes to the surface and stays there for two minutes to inhale the sufficient quantity of air. That is how it breathes.

**13. How does it catch its prey?**

**Ans.** The whale can see in the water. The whale swims with its mouth open. The water is forced out through the fringes of whale round the jaw, leaving the catch in the mouth. That is how the whale catches its prey.

**14. Name some curious and great animals living in the great depths.**

**Ans.** Curious and strange animals like the lantern fishes, stilts, cuttle-fishes, true fishes, feeler fishes and rays live in the great depths.

**15. What kinds of fishes produce electricity? To what use do they put it?**

**Ans.** Fishes like eels and rays produce electricity to protect themselves and also

to paralyse and capture their prey.

**16. Describe the seal and its peculiarities.**

**Ans.** Seal is an amphibious animal that divides its time on sea and land. It comes to the shore to rear its young ones and also to rest. The shape of the seal facilitates swimming. The sensitive whisker hairs can be used as feelers in water. It can close its nostrils in water. The seal has blubber that keeps him afloat and provides him with energy. It is also used as food when the weather is too stormy. The seal can swim at the rate of 10 miles per hour. Baby-seals have to be taught swimming.

**17. Name some sea birds that spend part of their time on shore.**

**Ans.** The sea birds that also spend time on land are sea-gulls, terns, cormorants, sandpipers and curlews.

**18. What is a diving-bell? Who first used it successfully and why?**

**Ans.** A diving-bell is a strong heavy vessel of wood or metal made perfectly air and water-tight at the top and sides, but open at the bottom. The water will not enter the bell. A man can go in water upto the depth of thirty feet. William Phipps first used it to salvage treasure from a sunken Spanish wreck.

**WORDS AND PHRASES**

1. At one's will (freely) : You can use my car at **your will**.
2. Hem in (enclosing, surrounding) : The tennis field is **hemmed in** by a hotel and a factory.
3. Keep in good repair (keep in good order) : **Keep** your car **in good repair** if you want to avoid any inconvenience.
4. Is in the very blood of (national characteristic) : Ahimsa **is in the very blood of** the Indians.
5. Tear to shreds (tear to pieces) : He **tore** his shirt to **shreds** in anger.
6. Break up (end) : The meeting **broke up** at four.
7. Break off (snap) : I have **broken off** my ties with Sheela.
8. Withstand (bear) : How can you **withstand** such insulting remarks?
9. Odd-looking (strange) : He gives an **odd looking** appearance when he wears felt hat.
10. Prowl about (go about in search of prey) : Everyday the lion goes **prowling about** in the forest.
11. Strike off (direct one's course) : The shark **struck-off** in the direction of the floating corpse.
12. Beyond one's ken (beyond one's range of sight) : What is on the other side of the horizon is **beyond our ken**.
13. Perilous (dangerous) : The stormy sea is always **perilous**.
14. Buoyant (able to keep floating) : The oil under blubber of whale keeps it **buoyant**.

## II. HARDY AND RAMANUJAN

### **Introduction:**

Charles Peroy Snow, a great novelist was a professional scientist in his early career. His first novel was a detective story. "**Death Under Soil**" (1932) followed by "**New Lives for Old**" (1933), and "**The Search**" (1934). After these Snow wrote a series of ten novels entitled *Strangers and Brothers* (the title of first volume, 1940). He also published a book called *Variety of Men* where in he has given biographies of nine eminent men of the world.

The present extract is taken from the life of Godfrey Harold Hardy given in Snow's book *Variety of Men*. G. H. Hardy, a great mathematician, was a professor of Mathematics at Cambridge. In the given chapter, Snow describes how Hardy and Srinivasa Ramanujan, a great Indian genius, came in contact with each other. Ramanujan happened to write to Hardy on some mathematical problem. It was from there that Hardy discovered the genius of Ramanujan. Their association was of great importance in the sense that Ramanujan and Hardy together did some work of the highest order. Ramanujan's work was well received and he has the distinction of being elected Fellow of the Royal Society. Hardy himself has left an account of his association with the Indian genius in his book *Ramanujan*.

### **Summary:**

Hardy was a world famous mathematician. One morning in 1913, he received a letter containing some sheets, almost soiled and crumpled. He glanced at the letter written by an unknown Indian asking him to give his opinions on the mathematical discoveries written therein. Hardy felt bored and irritated and put the manuscript aside and continued doing his daily work. But somehow on that day, the things did not seem to happen as per routine. Mentally, he was engrossed in the theorems that he had received. Sometimes he thought these to be the work of a genius and sometimes considered these to be a curious kind of fraud. Finally, he sent a word to John Edenser Littlewood, another known mathematician of his time. Both of them sat together and examined the manuscript received by Hardy. They concluded that the manuscript was a work of a genius. This manuscript was the work of Ramanujan. Earlier, Ramanujan had sent his manuscripts to two eminent English mathematicians but both of them had sent the manuscripts back without any comments.

Hardy was so impressed by Ramanujan's work that he decided that he must be brought to England. In the beginning it appeared that Ramanujan would not break the caste prescriptions and cross waters. But somehow things worked in such a way that Ramanujan's mother allowed her son to go to England and finally in 1914 Ramanujan arrived in England.

Hardy found Ramanujan to be a genius that was, even in mathematics, almost untrained, Ramanujan had failed to enter Madras University as he could not matriculate

in English. And in England, he was working with mathematicians of Hardy and Littlewood's calibre. Hardy had to teach some formal mathematics to this genius. Together they produced five papers of the highest class.

Thus, working in England, Ramanujan won fame and distinction. He was elected a fellow of Royal Society and fellow of Trinity at the age of thirty. He was the first Indian to get these distinctions.

But as ill-luck would have it, Ramanujan soon fell ill. He had contracted tuberculosis. Hardy frequently visited him in the hospital at Putney. On one of his visits to the hospital, Hardy told Ramanujan that the number of his taxi was 1729 which sounded to him rather dull. But Ramanujan replied that it was that smallest number which can be expressed as the sum of two cubes in the two different ways (1729 is  $12^3 + 1^3$  and  $10^3 + 9^3$ ).

Back in Madras, Ramanujan died two years after a fight with the disease at the age of thirty three.

#### STUDY NOTES

[Please also study the notes given at pages 95–99 of your book]

holograph	:	document written wholly by the person in whose name it appears.
cryptograms	:	secret code
glanced	:	looked
scolded	:	rebuked
stroll	:	(noun) leisurely walk
nagged	:	annoyed
remorseless	:	without mercy
unsolicited	:	not asked for
pantheist	:	concerned with the belief that God is in everything and everything is God
benevolence	:	kindness
amiable	:	friendly
baffling	:	puzzling
rigour	:	strict discipline

#### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. What, according to Hardy, was the most romantic incident in his life?**

**Ans.** The discovery of Ramanujan was the one romantic incident in Hardy's life.

**2. What did Hardy find in the letter he received from India?**

**Ans.** In that letter he found the crumpled sheets of paper containing lines and lines of symbols, wild looking Theorem. It was a letter from Ramanujan.

**3. Why was he bewildered and irritated when he read the contents?**

**Ans.** When Hardy read the contents of the letter, he felt bored and irritated because the manuscript contained wild and fantastic looking Theorems.

**4. Describe Hardy's daily routine.**

**Ans.** Hardy's daily routine consisted of reading *The Times* at breakfast table, preferring the latest cricket score. He would work mathematical problems. After lunch, he played the game of tennis in the University courts. Occasionally he watched the cricket game, if there was any.

**5. What did Hardy do after he had a second look at the manuscript?**

**Ans.** When Hardy had a second look at the Indian manuscript, he sent for Littlewood. It was an invitation to come and discuss the manuscript of Ramanujan.

**6. How does Snow contrast Hardy and Littlewood?**

**Ans.** Hardy had clarity, intellectual dash while Littlewood was imaginative, powerful and humorous. Littlewood was also more pleasure-loving than Hardy.

**7. What were their conclusions on pursuing the manuscript?**

**Ans.** They recognised that the writer of these papers was a genius like Gauss and Euler in the field of natural mathematics.

**8. Why could not Ramanujan make a contribution to mathematical history on the same scale as Gauss and Euler?**

**Ans.** Ramanujan could not contribute much to the mathematical history because of his faulty education and his late arrival on the mathematical scene.

**9. What was the human help required to bring Ramanujan to Cambridge?**

**Ans.** Human help was in the form of the financial assistance that could be had from Trinity College.

**10. Which was the super-human help required? How was it got?**

**Ans.** The superhuman help was required to help Ramanujan, a Brahmin, to break the religious prescriptions and cross the waters. Ramanujan's mother had a dream in which she saw her son in England. That was how superhuman help was got.

**11. What honours were conferred on Ramanujan in England?**

**Ans.** He was made a fellow of Royal Society and also a Fellow of Trinity.

**12. How is the number 1729 interesting?**

**Ans.** The number 1729 is interesting because it is the smallest number which can be expressed as the sum of the cubes in two different ways. 1729 is  $12^3 + 1^3$  and also  $10^3 + 9^3$ .

### WORDS AND PHRASES

1. Romantic (remote from experience) : People have sometimes **romantic** notions about science.
2. Put aside (keep aside) : My application was **put aside** and no action was taken on it.

3. At the back of one's mind (in the know of someone) : I had his welfare **at the back of my mind**.
4. Getting in the way of (interrupting; preventing) : Poor education is **getting in the way of** his career advancement.
5. Nag away (persistently annoyed or worried) : The quarrelsome wife **nagged** away her husband.
6. Go into action (to start the operation) : The Government has **gone into action** against the rebels.
7. Turn out to be (was found to be) : He looks very gentle. Later on he **turned out to be** a cheat.
8. Stand in the way of (prevent or obstruct) : Caste system **stands in the way of** social unity in India.
9. Come to terms after (reconcile) : The adversaries have **come to terms after** secret negotiations.
10. Laid out (set fourth) : The next five year plan has been **laid out** in advance.
11. Amiable (friendly) : Anu is an **amiable** girl.
12. Baffling (puzzling) : The solution to the Kashmir problem appears to be quite **baffling**.
13. Rigour (strict discipline) : It is very difficult to stand the **rigours** of a hilly journey.
14. Benevolence (kindness) : Ashoka was known for his **benevolence** to both men and animals.
15. Scolded (rebuked) : The headmaster **scolded** the naughty boy.

### III. THE ESCAPE

#### Summary:

Sisir K. Bose is the son of the elder brother of the great revolutionary of Indian freedom struggle, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. He was imprisoned several times during the Quit India Movement. In "The Escape", Sisir, who was then a medical student, reveals the manner in which Subhash Chandra Bose managed to escape from Calcutta. Immediately after his release from jail in 1940, Netaji was put under house arrest. In his escape in January 1941, Netaji's elder brother played a significant role. Prior to his escape Netaji realised that he was going on fast in isolation. He took a separate room in the house and announced that no one should see him. When the appointed day came and his plan for escape was finalised, he saw that the entire family had gone to bed except one of his nephews who suspected that something unusual was happening in the house. Netaji at once took the clue lest his plan should be thwarted, he directed Dwijendra to hold his cousin.

Now Netaji put on a pathan's robes - a deep brown overcoat, broad pyjamas and

the black fez cap - and took an old pair of glasses. All this time Dwijendra was watching the movements on the road from his room situated on the top floor so as to give a green signal. He was also taking care of the suspicious nephew of Netaji.

When the signal actually came, Netaji made an exit after bidding good bye to his niece, Aurobinda. He put the bedroll into the car and Netaji quietly got into the car as Sisir started and drove it out. Netaji's car turned from Elgin Road to Allenby Road and later on the Lawrence Road before reaching the circular road. As a precautionary measure, they were looking back to see whether they were being followed by anybody. As it was the dead of night, the residents of Calcutta were asleep with the exception of a few taxi drivers and carriage drivers who were awake near Howrah bridge. As they passed by the G. T. Road, they saw some armed policemen in the Industrial Area who could never imagine Netaji's mission.

During their journey by car, Netaji did not have even a wink of sleep as he thought that it would be bad for the driver. So he gave Sisir a cup of coffee and continued the discussion on details of how Netaji would enter his nephew's house at Bararee. At first, it occurred to them that they should send a telegram to Sisir's father but later on they dropped the idea as it might have led to a possible clue about their whereabouts.

After travelling through Chin Surah and Chander Nagar, they arrived at a place called Burdwan. As the road was smooth, Sisir drove fast so that they reached Asansol early in the morning where petrol was filled in the car. Sisir was cautious that no one should see Netaji in disguise.

When they reached Gobindpur, a policeman entered the car number in his register as a matter of routine. Netaji left the car and Sisir now went to his brother's house. He told his brother of Netaji's plan to escape and that he would soon come there on the pretext of an insurance business. Naturally, his brother would request him to stay on. It was also decided they would hold the conversation in English before servants. Soon the servant informed that a guest has come. So Sisir's brother went out and brought him inside. Netaji was comfortably accommodated in the additional bed room. Strangely enough even when Sisir went into the room, he was casually introduced to Netaji as his brother made a departure for his factory. Later Sisir got the petrol filled into his car once again.

Now it was decided that Netaji would board a train at Gowoh. His brother and sister-in-law accompanied them as Sisir did not know the route. So dinner was served quickly to the guests and Sisir left the house along with his brother and sister-in-law on the pretext that they are going to call on some friends.

When they reached the station, it was time for the train to arrive. The luggage was carried to the platform with the help of a porter. As the train left, remaining party came back as Netaji went to Delhi on his way to Kabul.

On coming back, Sisir met his father to inform him about his escape. Then he went to the Elgin Road residence to take food that was supposed to be served to Netaji because no one knew about his departure. Then a technical difficulty arose. A court case, which was pending against Netaji, was to come up for hearing on 20th January. But his lawyer secured an adjournment for a week on account of an old medical report.

As per the schedule, food meant for Netaji was left untouched on 26th January. When the cook noticed the food, there was a row. Sisir's cousin came to him and his father at a place called Rishra and gave the news about his sudden disappearance. Everyone flocked to the Elgin Road residence in Calcutta where close relatives and friends of the family were called. In search of Netaji, telegrams and search parties were sent to various places.

For the subsequent two months, there was a lot of anxiety about Netaji's whereabouts. All kinds of rumours and reports were afloat. Sisir's father used to discuss with him the information gathered from the people working in the government, police, politicians and even astrologers. At last the news came from an escort Bhagat Ram who had travelled with Netaji from Peshawar to Kabul that Netaji had safely reached the Soviet Union.

#### VOCABULARY

stick around	:	keep awake and be about
stubborn	:	obstinate
going on	:	happening
as time wore on	:	as it was getting late
Dwijendra	:	a cousin of Sisir
Mohd.Ziauddin	:	Netaji disguised himself as a Pathan and assumed the name of Mohd. Ziauddin. He described himself as the travelling inspector of an Insurance Company.
behind the screen	:	A few days before the escape, Netaji said that he was going to undertake a <b>vrata</b> (fast) in solitude. He retired behind a screen which divided his room into two. No one was allowed to see him.
discarded	:	rejected; cast aside; gave up
watch the road	:	for the persons who would help Netaji to escape. As they gave the signal, Dwijendra would clear his throat loudly which was the signal that it was time for Netaji to start.
holding on to	:	keeping in check (the suspicious cousin)
clearing his throat	:	i.e. coughing artificially

improvised vestibule	:	The vestibule is an anteroom or a hall or lobby next to the outer door of a house and from which doors open into the various rooms. Here it refers to the anteroom formed by the screen in front of the portion occupied by Netaji.
carved out	:	used here in the sense of ' <b>made</b> '
Ila	:	a female cousin of Sisir
Aurobinda	:	another cousin
formed the rear	:	was behind all the others
make-shift bed	:	temporary or substitute bed made for the occasion improvised.
the Elgin Road house	:	Netaji's residence at Elgin Road, one of the ancestral houses.
dashboard	:	board beneath the windscreen of a car for keeping instruments and small things
reassured	:	confident; freed from fears
hackney carriages	:	horse drawn carriages for hire
encounter	:	hostile meeting
Chandernagore	:	It was then a French pocket. If there was an encounter with the French police, Sisir would have had to act the part of an expert driver ('master chauffeur').
hideout	:	hiding place
dacoits	:	armed robbers
outskirts	:	outer border
Dhanbad	:	mining town in Bihar
barrier	:	usually a long pole which can be raised and lowered from one end. When it is lowered it lies across the road preventing vehicles from passing
top secret	:	secret of the highest importance
bearer	:	servant
embarkation	:	literally going on board a ship. Here boarding a train.
followed suit	:	acted likewise
demonstratively	:	so as to be seen by all
silouetted	:	showing only the outline against the background of the moonlit sky
rumble	:	sound as a thunder, heavy cart, etc.
blazing	:	brilliantly lighting

heading for	:	proceeding towards
carefree	:	free from worry
injudicious	:	imprudent, unwise
Desabandhu	:	One of the earliest and staunchest freedom fighters of India.
C.R.Das	:	Giving up a highly lucrative practice at the Calcutta bar, he became Mahatma Gandhi's follower who died in 1926
attractive food...in	:	Netaji was supposed to be observing his <b>vrata</b> in the part of the room screened off from the improvised vestibule; and his meals were placed regularly at the door.
in absentia	:	in (his) absence
disclosure	:	revelation
simulated	:	pretended
row	:	disturbance; commotion; noise
ethereal	:	heavenly
relaxing	:	resting without tension; in a carefree mood
escort	:	One who accompanies another in a journey for protection or guidance.
from Peshawar to Kabul	:	i.e. from the North-West Frontier Province to Afghanistan. Peshawar was the capital of the North-West Frontier Provinces (of undivided India) and Kabul is the capital of Afghanistan.

### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. What was initial difficulty that arose as the time for the escape drew near? How was it got over?**

**Ans.** When his plan for escape was finalised, Netaji saw that one of his nephews suspected that something unusual was happening in the house. Netaji at once took a clue and lest his plan should be thwarted, he directed Dwijendra to hold his cousin.

**2. How did Netaji disguise himself?**

**Ans.** Netaji disguised himself in a Pathan's dress. He put on a deep brown overcoat, broad pyjamas and a black fez cap and an old pair of glasses.

**3. Why did Netaji refuse to sleep in the car?**

**Ans.** He did not sleep because he thought it would be bad for the driver. To keep the driver alert, Netaji gave him a cup of coffee.

**4. What precautions to avoid detection did Sisir take when he refilled the petrol tank at a pump on the outskirts of Asansol?**

**Ans.** Sisir parked the car a little ahead of the petrol pump so that the vendor operated from behind and Netaji is not noticed.

**5. What precautions were taken at the house to put the servants off the suspicion?**

**Ans.** In order to remain above suspicion, Netaji should visit the house on the pretext of an insurance business. The conversation was to be carried on in English in the presence of the servants so that they did not suspect anything.

**6. What decision did Netaji and Sisir take on the way?**

**Ans.** Netaji gave details to Sisir to how they would enter Sisir's brother's house at Bararee. They also decided not to send a telegram to Calcutta as it would prove their absence from Calcutta both to the government and the relatives.

**7. Why did Sisir drive alone into his brother's house at Bararee?**

**Ans.** Sisir dropped Netaji at a safe distance and entered the house of his brother alone so that the entry of Netaji into the house should not be noticed.

**8. Why did Sisir tell his father on his return to Calcutta? Where did he go that evening?**

**Ans.** Sisir gave an account of his trip with Netaji after his return to Calcutta. That evening he went to attend the marriage of the grand daughter of Deshbandhu C. R. Das.

**9. How was the adjournment of the case against Netaji secured?**

**Ans.** Last adjournment for a week was obtained by the lawyer of Netaji on the basis of the old medical report.

**10. On what day was the disclosure of Netaji's disappearance made and why was it made on that day?**

**Ans.** The disclosure of Netaji's disappearance was made on 26th January, 1941. The disclosure was made on this day because it happened to be the day of complete Swaraj (Independence).

#### WORDS AND PHRASES

1. Stick around (keep awake and be about) : The watchman **sticks around** the street at night.
2. Going on (happening) : The warden visited the hostel to see what was **going on** in the common room.
3. Time wore on (as it was getting late) : The **time wore on** as Netaji was preparing for escape.
4. Give up (leave, drop) : He has **given up** his bad habits.
5. Hold on to (keep in check) : Dwijendra was sent upstairs to **hold on to** the suspicious cousin there to avoid any detection.
6. Form the rear (behind) : The guard escorted the officer and his private secretary **formed the rear**.

7. Invoke (utter) : He **invoked** the name of God before he started his new business venture.
8. Reassure (free from fear) : The timely arrival of my brothers **reassured** me against any attack.
9. Follow suit (acted likewise) : I fired a gun and my cousin **followed suit**.
10. Carefree (free from worry) : He is a rich man. He leads a **carefree** life.
11. Heading for (moving towards) : The army is **heading for** the Pakistan border.
12. Work well (succeed) We succeeded because my scheme **worked well**.
13. Stubborn (obstinate) : He will never mend his ways because he is very **stubborn**.
14. In absentia (in absence) : The Court convicted him **in absentia**.

### PASSAGES FOR COMPREHENSION

#### Passage - 1

A diving-bell is a strong, heavy vessel of wood or metal, made perfectly air- and water-tight at the top and sides, but open at the bottom. When it is lowered carefully into the water, the air in it cannot escape, and therefore, the bell will not fill with water. Thus a man may *descend* in this bell, breathing the air in it, and work for several hours. When the air becomes bad, fresh air is pumped into it through a tube. When the bell is at a depth of thirty feet, the pressure of the water *compresses* the air into one-half its former *volume*, and so the bell becomes half full of water. Thus the bell cannot be used in very deep water. Diving suits are now made in which divers have gone down nearly three hundred feet and recovered the *cargoes* of ship wrecked vessels. Submarines today roam about in the depths of the ocean.

It is well-known that the sea is the cheapest of all highways, for there is no cost for upkeep as there is for railways, and no upstream pull as in rivers. The ocean steamer can strike off in any direction. Every nation desires as many sea-ports as possible.

**Read the above passage and answer the following questions :**

1. Why did the bell not fill with water?
2. Why could not the bell be used in very deep water?
3. Describe a diving bell.
4. What helps the divers now to dive upto a great depth?
5. Give the meanings of the words in italics and use them in sentences also.

#### Passage - 2

That is an occasion at which one would have liked to be present. Hardy with his combination of remorseless clarity, an intellectual dash (he was very English), but in argument he showed the characteristics that Latin minds have often *assumed* to be their own. Littlewood, imaginative, powerful, humorous. *Apparently*, it did

not take them long. Before midnight they knew, and *knew for* certain. The writer of these *manuscripts* was a man of *genius*. That was as much as they could judge, that night. It was only later that Hardy decided that Ramanujan was, in terms of natural mathematical genius, in the class of Gauss and Euler : but that he could not expect, because of the defects of his education and because he had come on the scene too late in the line of mathematical history, to make a contribution on the same scale.

**Read the above passage and answer the questions given below :**

1. How was Hardy very English?
2. What was the quality of the Latin minds?
3. How was Hardy different from Littlewood?
4. What was their opinion of Ramanujan?
5. Give the meanings of the words in italics and use them in sentences also.

**Passage - 3**

When we reached the outskirts of Asansol, dawn was just breaking. I noticed a petrol station just outside the town and wanted to refill my tank. Uncle did not quite like the idea. He clearly did not want *strangers* to come too near. I parked the car a little ahead of the petrol bunk so that the vendor operated from behind. I drove through Asansol Town as fast as I could. Between Asansol and Dhanbad, we drove in early morning light. For once I felt his *disguise* was good.

There was a check-post for passing vehicles at a village called Gobindapur, a short distance from where the road to Dhanbad *branched off* from the Grand Trunk Road. As I approached it, I saw the barrier coming down slowly. I slowed down and found a man coming forward with pencil and book in hand. When I came *sufficiently* near, he moved back and the barrier was lifted. I told Uncle that the man had taken down the number of the car, adding that it was a routine practice. He asked me more than once if I was sure that the man had noted the number down.

Passing through Dhanbad I felt *uncomfortable* in broad daylight out of the risk of our being recognised. I saw my brother's house in the distance and also the Coke Oven Plant behind it. Around 8.30 a.m., I dropped Uncle at a safe and reasonable distance from the house, gave him the directions to it and drive in alone.

**Read the above passage and answer the questions given below :**

1. Why did he park the car ahead of the bunk?
2. Where was the village of Gobindapur located?
3. Why did he feel nervous while passing through Dhanbad?
4. Why did he drop his uncle at a safe distance from his brother's house?
5. Give the meanings of the words in italics and use them in sentences also.