

READING FICTION

BA ENGLISH

2011 Admission (IV Semester)

2012 Admission (III Semester)

CORE COURSE



UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

CALICUT UNIVERSITY.P.O., MALAPPURAM, KERALA, INDIA – 673 635

161

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

STUDY MATERIAL

BA ENGLISH

2011 Admission (IV Semester)

2012 Admission (III Semester)

CORE COURSE

READING FICTION

Prepared by:

Ms. Gayathri Menon.K,
“Pranaam”,
House No.21,
Keltron Nagar,
Kolazhi,
Thrissur – 680 330.

Scrutinised by:

Dr. Prabha.P.K.
Associate Professor,
Department of English,
Z.G.College,
Calicut -14.

Layout & Settings

Computer Section, SDE

©

Reserved

CONTENTS

MODULE I	FICTION AND NARRATIVE STRATEGIES	05 – 12
MODULE II	THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA	13 – 25
MODULE III	READING SHORT FICTION	26 - 37

MODULE I

FICTION AND NARRATIVE STRATEGIES

Objectives

At the end of this module you should be able to:

- a) Know more about fiction, its forms and its history
- b) Understand the importance of fiction in our contemporary era
- c) Understand the role of plot, character and structure of novel

What is Fiction? Can you define it? Now read the following...

Fiction is the form of any narrative or informative work that deals in part or in whole, with information or events that are factual but imaginary invented by the author. It is a major branch of literary work. Most of the fiction that we read is in the form of novels.

The History of Fiction

Most of the Elizabethans wrote prose works of fiction such as John Lyly's didactic *Euphues*, *The Anatomy of Wit*, Robert Greene's *Pandosto*, Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* and Sir Philip Sydney's *Arcadia*. A realistic element can be seen in works like Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* and Thomas Deloney's *Of Reading Daniel Defoe*. In 1719 Daniel Defoe published *Robinson Crusoe* which is considered as "the first English novel of genius". Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* in 1726 must also be mentioned for its importance as a work of fiction.

Novel acquired its modern form during the first half of the eighteenth century. Samuel Richardson's *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) expressed a new way of portraying human feeling and motives. Following *Pamela's* moral theme. *Elariss* and *Charles Grandson* also attained popularity. Other famous novelists of the eighteenth century were Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollet,

Laurence Sterne etc. Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, which has practically no plot, opened up the possibilities of the novel as direct expression of the author's own whims, humours and opinions. Oliver Goldsmith, is another novelist of the later eighteenth century, who took pains in drawing his characters.

The raw technique of novel writing of the eighteenth century faced a kind of refinement during the nineteenth century. Gothic writers such as Horace Walpole, William Beckford and Mrs. Radcliffe brought back a love for chivalry, medievalism and adventure through their novels. Jane Austen asserted the place for women in novel writing. Then Sir Walter Scott inaugurated the historical novel. With Charles Dickens, who was born in 1812, the novel entered a new phase in its history. He was the first to evolve a more complex plot. Humour and pathos filled his novels and they aimed at social reform. Thackeray is another novelist of this century who tried to reveal the vanities of our society. George Eliot, Meredith, Charles Kingsley, William Morris etc are the other important novelists of this century.

The two world wars made changes in every sinew of society including literature. Its influence can be seen in fiction writing also. During the twentieth century we can see many changes and that too innovative changes in style and content of the Novel. Moreover, the psychological theories of Freud, Jung and the writings of postmodern novelists insisted on the freedom of expression of all human experiences and relationships. Joseph Conrad, Henry James, H.G. Wells, D.H. Lawrence etc. are some of the important novelists of the twentieth century. Now, the conventional idea of the novel as a story shattered and gave way to innovative, experimental, psychological concepts of plot, character and narration.

Types of Fiction

There are three major types of fiction: Realistic, Non-realistic and Semi fiction.

Realistic Fiction: Although untrue could really happen as some events, people and places may even be real – “faction”.

In the future, imagined events could physically happen. Jules Verne's novel *From the Earth to the Moon* which was a product of his rich imagination later proved to be realistic in 1939, when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin set foot on the Moon. They later returned safely to Earth.

Realistic fiction makes the reader feel that they are reading something that is actually happening. The description will be in a believable way that makes the reader visualize everything as actual events.

Non – Realistic Fiction

Here stories cannot happen in real life. They will be supernatural. Alice in Wonderland, Harry Potter and The Lord of the Rings belong to this group.

Stories coming under this group present geographical details and character description which makes the reader ignore the artifice, suspends his disbelief and goes deep into the author's imaginary world.

Semi – Fiction

This is fiction implementing a great deal of non-fiction. It may be a fiction based on true story or a biography fictionalized. Even though, sometimes it may be a true story, there may be significant additions and subtractions from the original story to make it fictional.

Other types of fiction

Science Fiction – this type has science or space theme.

Animal Fiction – here the main characters are animals.

Adventure – here the fiction will have exciting, dangerous plot.

Historical Fiction – This fiction story will be based on a historical event.

Mystery – A problem is solved by following certain clues.

Humorous Fiction – The story is based on some funny situation and the characters are also funny.

Biography – This is a true story of someone's life.

Autobiography – This is the true story of the author's life.

Fantasy – is a fiction that can't be real.

Folktales – They are stories passed down orally by different cultural groups.

Fables – They are similar to folktales but the characters are animals and have a moral lesson in it.

There are eight forms of fiction that can be written. The most popular fiction is novel which is an extended piece of fiction over 40000 words. The next popular one is a short story. Other forms are short story, vignette, prose poem, anti-story and novelette. Traditionally fiction includes not only novels and short stories but also fables, fairy tales, plays, poetry etc. It now includes even films, comic books and video games.

Although fiction can be considered as a form of entertainment, it has other uses also. It can be used for instructional purposes, in propaganda and advertising. Fables express moral lessons also.

Post – Modern Trends in Fiction

The experimental tendencies of the 1920s and the 1930s seemed to have exhausted themselves by the end of the Second World War. The dislocation caused by the war, its anguish and horrors, the diminished role of Britain in world affairs can be considered as the reasons for this. One of the famous figures of this time, Graham Greene's novels are topical. It consisted of the topics like depression, cold war, war-scare etc. His novels also revolve round the crisis that human beings encounter in a society where God is absent.

The swing towards realism is further confirmed by the works of L.P.Hartley, C.P.Snow and Anthony Powell. The writers of 'The Movement' expressed their weariness and disillusionment with various institutions in the society. A representative novel of 'The Movement' group is Kingsley Amis's 'Lucky Jim'.

We can feel a surrealistic touch in the novels of William Golding who wrote during the 1950's.

The Post-War years also saw a number of publications by women writers. Feminist writing is one of the most interesting developments in the history of fiction. Iris Murdoch, Margaret Drabble, Muriel Spark, Doris Lessing, Elizabeth Bown are the famous feminist novelists of the post modern era. Apart from a decline in creative innovative styles, we can see some new trends and prominent works during this period.

PLOT, CHARACTER AND THE STRUCTURE OF NOVEL

Fictions are especially novels describing imaginary events. Novels have different kinds of plot form-tragic, comic, satiric or romantic, and to a great extent its characters reveal themselves and their intentions in dialogue. The novel is characterized as the fictional attempt to give the effect of realism, by representing complex characters with mixed motives that are rooted in a social class. It functions in a highly developed social structure. It also mixes up with many other characters. It is like a play with plot and characters. A dramatist must depend on what he can make us see and hear for ourselves, but a novelist can describe what could never be presented on any stage. He can tell us what is happening, explain it and finally give his own remarks on it. His story may not be symmetrical in exposition, crisis and denouement. At the beginning of the book there will be a crisis. After that before the climax, the book will devote its pages to show how the crisis arose. The novel has no strict frame work. Usually foreign critics have commented that English novels lack a sense of proportion even though it has richness and variety in it. Due to this the author takes full advantage of the freedom he gets. The novelist is eager to represent life in its fullness and its creative urge may overshadow his sense of artistic unity and balance in narrative, description, characterization and dialogue. But this will matter nothing if the author can keep the reader under his control with his plot, characters and narrative style until the story ends. The author's personality is a very important factor. Every novel must present a certain view of life and some of the problems of life. It should be a mirror reflecting the author's outlook of the world with all incidents, characters, passions and motives. It should be our agreement or disagreement with this view of life that decides our choice in fiction.

The earlier works of English fiction were stories of action. In modern novels the tendency has been to subordinate action to psychology. They try to find the central theme in the mental and spiritual development of the characters rather than in their physical adventures. In the greatest novels plot and characterization are organically connected. There is an argument that characterization is the most important aspect. Even if the reader cannot relate the complex plot, they will never forget the characters.

The setting of a novel can be in any part of the world. They can be set in any time past, present or future. Almost every period of English history has contributed a novel. Regarding the settings many authors have their own selection of places. Some have even marked out a region as their own. After reading the 'Waverley Novels' of Walter Scott, one looks for the places mentioned in the novels. Thomas Hardy dominates the south-western England for which he gave the name Wessex. Arnold Bennett selected the Midland region potteries as the background for his novels. These examples will be enough to show how English novelists responded to local influences. One can even classify the novels by their social settings.

Through every novel unintentionally the author comes up with his own views of life and problems. Older writers saw nothing wrong in this and it was a regular practice with them to give a type of running commentary. It was a time when people liked to be lectured rather than entertained. But in modern fiction, readers do not like the authors appearance since it interrupts his story. In fact, the readers like the lesson to be taught revealing through the plot and the characters rather than the author teaching them. The effect of this method will be great.

The Short Story is a prose narrative of shorter length than the novel especially one that has a single them. It is not merely a greatly shortened novel. It has all the usual constituents of a fiction. But the plot, character and setting cannot be treated with the same detail as in a novel. Each has to be reduced to the minimum, but should get the intended effect. The plot should be reduced to the essentials. Characters are used to the indispensables.

Sometimes the writer may construct a story of plot alone with characters and setting restricted to the requirement. At other times character alone may be prominent with plot and setting restricted.

The language of short story should contribute to its effect different from a novel which has passages that sometimes has nothing to do with the plot. This will drag the plot and lead it nowhere. Descriptive passages are only valuable in so far as they contribute towards the total effect. Short stories will long continue to meet the needs of readers and find new plots to suit the taste of the changing world.

FICTION AS BASE FOR OTHER LITERARY AND MEDIA WRITING

Fiction is the term for any invented literary narrative. It refers to novels, short stories and other works of art that do not try to tell true stories. While they may be inspired by real events or people fiction writers create characters dialogue and plots completely from their imagination. Story telling becomes the basis of most other entertainment media like movies, television and comic books.

In the 20th century, new media expanded, including motion pictures radio and television. These used fictional story telling structures borrowed from novels or stage drama.

In modern times thousands of works of fiction are published in many languages every year. Electronic media like audio books and e-books offer new ways for readers to enjoy stories of all kinds. Self publishing and online publishing make it possible for writers to find readers outside of traditional publishing places. In a wider sense, fiction remains the primary form of narrative in most of the media. Movies, television shows, and stage dramas still depend upon the fictional forms to tell stories. While the future of print media is uncertain, the art of the story has already established a strong presence in the field of electronic media.

A visual narrative is a type of story that is told completely through visual media. There are no restrictions on the types of narratives that can be made in a visual manner. Visual narrative as a story telling style permits a great deal of variety in methodology and presentation. Such a narrative can be a film, a graphic novel or comic book or a series of images. Here artists and story tellers have a great deal of space for experimentation. Visual narrative allows the story teller to tell stories from many different angles. They use a wide range of methods also to communicate various aspects of the narrative.

Written narratives and visual narratives have much in common. They have the same goals. Visual narrative is always aiming to communicate a story of some form just as a written story is. They even use similar plot elements, complex characters, conflicts, leading to the further development of the characters.

Visual narrative primarily depends on images to communicate ideas by incorporating other media. This is done to enrich the story. Films often depend on speech and other audio components, even though most of the action is visual in nature. Most of the artists or story tellers like to tell their narratives by using images. These types of narrative will be highly informative and complex as any film or story.

MODULE – II

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

By Ernest Hemingway

Objectives

At the end of this unit you will be able to

- a) Know details about the life and works of Ernest Hemingway
- b) Understand new words
- c) Get introduced to the characters of the novel

Introduction

Ernest Hemingway is a major novelist of America. He is the ‘Spokesman of the lost generation’ of American writers which include writers like William Faulkner, Scott Fitzgerald, John Don Passos and Sinclair Lewis. Hemingway has written beautiful short stories. But he is more popular as a novelist. His most well known novels are *In Our Times*, *The Torrents of Spring*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *A farewell to Arms*, *Death in the Afternoon*, *Green hills of Africa*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Across the River and into the Trees*, *The Old Man and the Sea*. *The Old Man and the Sea* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* can be regarded as classics of American Literature.

The plots of Hemingway’s novels and stories are remarkably simple and the main characters gain status and stature in the course of the novel. Hemingway is a realist and naturalist. He uses symbols in his novels. His prose is clean and permanent. He is certainly remembered as a stylist. His idealism is a very endearing aspect.

Plot of *The Old Man and the Sea*

The Old Man and the Sea depicts the heroism of a Cuban fisherman Santiago who ventures into the deep sea alone and succeeds in hooking a huge marlin. It is an epic battle between an old, experienced fisherman and a large

marlin. The fisherman Santiago has gone 84 days without being able to catch a single fish. He is considered “Salao”, the worst form of unfortunate. Even his young apprentice, Manolin is not allowed by his parents to sail with Santiago. Manolin is sent with other fishermen who are more successful in their work. But the boy visits Santiago each night. He gets the old man food and talks about baseball. It is then that Santiago tells the boy his decision to venture far out into the Gulf to fish.

As decided, on the eighty fifth day. Santiago sets out alone, with his skiff and line. A big marlin takes his bait by the first day noon itself. He is unable to pull the fish because of its huge size. Instead the creature pulls his skiff. Two whole days it pulls him along with his skiff. Santiago suffers the pull of the fish on his body all this time and gets wounded in this struggle. Even then he considers his opponent as a brother and appreciates his strength.

On the third day of his venture Santiago faces a new crisis. The marlin begins to circle the skiff showing his tiredness. At this time Santiago stabs the marlin with a harpoon. This ends the battle between the two. Santiago straps the marlin to the side of his skiff and oars home. He is very much excited about the high market price the marlin will bring him. As he journeys back, the blood trail left by the marlin attracts mako sharks. Santiago kills a huge shark and loses his harpoon at this attempt. He ties his knife to the end of an oar and makes a new weapon. With this he kills five sharks and drives away many others. At last when Santiago reaches the shore, only the skeleton of the marlin is left with its backbone tail and head. Reaching his shack, he falls onto his bed and goes into deep sleep.

The next day, a group of fishermen gather around his skiff. They find the skelton of the 18 feet long marlin. A tourist mistakes it to be a shark. Manolin is relieved when he finds Santiago safe asleep. He gives his master coffee and newspaper promising to go with him to fish. Santiago goes to sleep again and dreams of the lions on an African beach and of his youth.

Detailed Summary

First Day

Santiago is an old fisherman. He has gone 84 days without catching a fish. A boy named Manolin has fished with him for the first forty days. But the boy's parent who considered Santiago a Salao, or "the worst form of unlucky" does not allow him to go with the old man. He is sent to try his luck with more lucky fishermen.

By working with these fishermen, Manolin earns some money. He returns to Santiago. He talks with him revealing that he had to obey his parents. Santiago is reminded of their life together going to catch fish. Manolin requests to let him provide fresh bait fish for him. Santiago humbly accepts his gift. He tells Manolin of his plan to go far into the Sea, the next day.

Santiago's shack has only the bare necessities. A bed, a table and chair and a place to cook. The Old Man offers the boy to have dinner of "yellow rice and fish". The boy declines the offer because there is no food in that house.

Santiago takes out a newspaper which he says was given by Perico at the bodega. He is very interested to read the baseball scores. By this time Manolin goes out to get the bait fish. He comes back with some food also which he says is the gift of the café owner Martin. Santiago is moved by Martin's action and promises to repay it. Then they go on talking about baseball. Santiago is a great admirer of DiMaggio whose father was a fisherman. They discuss the greatest baseball players and managers while Manolin tells that Santiago is the greatest fisherman. After Manolin leaves the shack, the old man goes to sleep. He dreams his sweet, recurring dream of lions playing on the white beaches of Africa. This is a scene he saw from his ship when he was a young man.

Second Day

The next day morning is the 85th day. Since the old fisherman has caught a fish. But this morning he had decided to go far into the sea. He goes to Manolin's house and wakes the boy up. Both of them have coffee together and take the gear to the boat. They reach the beach and wish each other good luck.

Santiago moves alone towards the deep waters of the Gulf Stream. He loves the sea, the small fish, the birds. He considers them as his friends. He admires the sea as a woman, sometimes her wild behavior is out of control and she becomes cruel. Santiago puts his fishing net into the sea and continues to move away from the shore. He observes the world around him. The flying fish pursued by the dolphins and seabirds whirling are sights seen by Santiago. He follows a sea bird hunting for fish. It becomes his guide. Then his fishing line becomes taut. He pulls hard and gets a ten-pound tuna. He says aloud that it will make a lovely piece of bread. Even he is surprised that he is talking to himself. If the other fishermen hear this they will think him to be crazy whom he knows he is not. By this time he has gone so far that he knows he cannot see the shore.

The marking stick of the line dips sharply and from its forceful pull Santiago realizes that the fish is of a huge size. The marlin pulls the boat and moves forward. Santiago cannot control it. The land is not at all visible to him.

Throughout the day and night the fish pulls the skiff deep into the sea very much far away from the land. The old man braces the line with his back. He finds it difficult to pull the line and the strain is too much. So he wishes the boy has been with him at the time. The sun rises and still the marlin is not tired. It is now swimming in shallower waters. Santiago fears that the line will break and the fish will escape. If the hook makes a big cut in the fish, it will get away from it. Santiago feels a kind of love and respect to the fish but he swears that he will kill it before the end of the day.

Third Day

A small warbler flutters around Santiago's head and sits on the line. Just then the marlin jumps up nearly pulling Santiago overboard. The line cut his hand and it is bleeding.

Santiago eats the tuna he has caught the previous day which he keeps to use as bait. He does this in order to get strength. He cuts and eats the fish with his right hand, as his left hand pains him so much. He is angry still he feels a brotherly wish

to feel the Marlin. While he is waiting for the pain to subside, he realizes that he is alone there. He feels that it is impossible for a man to be alone on sea. Now the line slants and he knows that the fish nears the surface. Suddenly it jumps up into the air. Santiago gets shocked at the size of the marlin. It is two feet longer than the skill. The old man decides not to give the fish a chance to learn its strength.

The second day reaches dusk. He even wishes for the death of the marlin. Later his thoughts turn to baseball and the great Di Maggio who plays well even with a bone spur. He wishes this player to be with him in the boat. To boost his confidence he thinks of the arm-wrestling match he won while he was a young man.

Before nightfall he kills a dolphin for bait for the next day. He feels sorry for the marlin but he is determined to catch. This fish will be food for many. Now he decides to rig the oar so that the fish will have to pull harder and get tired. He decides to rest by simply putting down his hands and allowing the line to go across his back. He rests for two hours and remains without sleeping. While the marlin is quiet, he sleeps.

Fourth Day

A jerk is made on the line by the marlin and this wakes Santiago. As the sun rises the fish circles. This continues for four hours and makes Santiago feel dizzy. The fish passes under his boat and Santiago gets shocked at its size. He thinks that it is killing him. Then he admiringly says “I do not care who kills who”. He pulls the fish onto its side by the boat and pierces it with his harpoon. It jumps out of the water and falls back again staining the water with its blood. He pulls the boat to the side of the fish and ties it to the skiff.

After an hour, a mako shark comes getting the smell of the marlin’s blood. Santiago sinks his harpoon into the shark’s head. It takes the weapon and the rope along with it. It also bites off nearly forty pounds of the marlin’s flesh. Fresh blood spills into the water, attracting new sharks. Santiago realizes that his struggle with the marlin was for nothing since everything will be lost soon. But his determination makes him think “a man can be destroyed but not defeated”.

After a gap of two hours, a pair of shovel nosed sharks comes. Santiago fights them with a knife. He apologizes for having gone out so far to kill the marlin. Both the old man and the marlin had nothing good in this.

Santiago feels sad at the sight of the mutilated marlin. Another shark comes and Santiago kills it with his knife. But he loses it in this process. Two more sharks come and eat off a good portion of the marlin. Santiago imagines that he will be returning with the half fish that remains. During midnight a pack of sharks comes, he breaks off the boat's tiller and uses it as a weapon. When the last shark tries to bite off the head of the marlin, he plunges the tiller into the shark's flesh and the shark lets it go. Finally no meat is left on the marlin.

Santiago spits blood into the water. This frightens him. As he steers the boat, he forgets everything. He asks himself, what has defeated him and he gets the answer "Nothing..... I went out too far". He reaches the harbor. There is no light and room there. The skeleton of the marlin is still tied to the boat. He walks to his shack with the heavy mast on his shoulder. He sits down five times before he reaches home. Then he sleeps.

Fifth Day

The next day morning, Manolin comes to Santiago's hut. He cries seeing the wounded hands of the old man. He brings coffee for the old man. Both talk warmly. Santiago tells Manolin how he was wounded. Manolin wishes to work with Santiago again without regarding what his parents say. He tells that after Santiago left the shore, there has been a search for him by the coast guards and planes. In the meanwhile fishermen have gathered around Santiago's skiff and measured the marlin skeleton as eighteen feet. Santiago makes plans with Manolin. Then he sleeps again and dreams of the lions. Manolin goes away to fetch food and newspapers for Santiago and to tell Pedrico that the marlin's head is for him. Two tourists at the terrace café' mistake the marlin skeleton to be that of a shark.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Objectives

By reading the following you should be able to

- a) answer short questions from the text.
- b) attempt paragraph questions
- c) answer essay questions.

Self-check Questions and Answers

1. How many days had Santiago gone without catching fish?
He has gone eighty-four days.
2. What do Manolin's parents call Santiago? Why?
They call him 'Salao' which means 'the worst form of unlucky' as Santiago was like this.
3. How do the other fishermen greet him? Why?
They mock him for his fruitless voyages to sea.
4. Which description of Santiago makes the readers question his physical capabilities?
The descriptions of his crude hut, almost non-existent eating habits and thin body makes the readers question his capabilities.
5. What does Manolin offer Santiago?
He offers to return to Santiago after making some money with successful fishermen.
6. What plan did he announce to Manolin?
He announces his plan to go far out in the sea the following day.
7. How was Santiago's shack?
It was furnished with only a bed, a table and chair. There was a place to cook. On the wall were two pictures, one of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the other of the Virgin Cobre, the patroness.

8. What made Santiago feel lonely? What did he do for that?

The photograph of his wife made him feel lonely. So he threw it down.

9. What was Santiago's recurring dream about?

It was of lions playing on the white beaches of Africa, a scene he saw from his ship when he was a very young man.

10. How does he consider the sea?

He considers it as a woman whose wild behavior is beyond her control.

11. What objects does he observe while moving away from the shore?

He observes flying fish pursued by dolphins, a diving, circling sea bird, Sargasso weed, the purple Portuguese man of war, the small fish that swim among the jellyfish like creatures filaments.

12. How did Santiago know that a huge fish was pulling on the line?

He saw the projecting stick that marks the top of the hundred fathom line dip sharply.

13. Why cannot Santiago increase the tension on the line?

The line is too taut as the marlin is pulling the line. So it will break and the fish will get away.

14. How does he keep his strength after his hand being cut?

He eats the tuna he caught the day before which he had expected to use as bait.

15. When does he declare that the marlin is great? What does he decide at that time?

The fish leaps into the air and Santiago sees that it is bigger than any he has ever seen. It is two feet longer than the skiff itself.

Santiago decides not to let the fish learn its own strength.

16. What are his thoughts about baseball and other games?

He thinks that the great DiMaggio plays brilliantly even though he had the pain of bone spur in his heel. He wonders if DiMaggio would stay with the marlin. To get more confidence, he recalls the great all-night arm-wrestling match he won as a young man. Having defeated the great Negro Cienfuegos, Santiago earned the title 'The Champion'.

17. When did Santiago wish that the boy was with him when the marlin repeatedly jumps out of the water?

Santiago is thrown into the bow of the skiff, face down in his dolphin meat. He tries to control the line with his back and hands. Then he wishes that Manolin was with him.

18. When does he feel 'I do not care who kills who'?

When the marlin begins to circle, riot against the line, battering the boat with its spear, Santiago feels faint and dizzy and sees black spots before his eyes. He thinks that the fish is killing him.

19. What does he feel after killing the marlin?

He thinks about how much money he will be able to make from such a big fish. He also imagines that DiMaggio the famous baseball player would be proud of him.

20. What happens an hour after killing the marlin?

Having smelled the marlin, blood, a mako shark comes. It hits the marlin and eats 50 pounds of its flesh. Santiago sinks the harpoon into its head and takes the weapon along with him.

21. How does he try to cheer himself?

By saying that "a man can be destroyed but not defeated" he cheers himself.

22. Why does he believe that he violated his luck when he sailed too far out?

When he finds that the flesh of the marlin is eaten by the sharks and only the bone with the head is left, he thinks thus.

23. According to Santiago what was the thing that defeated him?

It was that he went too far into the sea.

Paragraph Questions and Answers

1. Character Sketch of Santiago, the Hero of the novel

Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* highlight Santiago as the main character. He is the 'Old Man' of the title. Santiago is a Cuban fisherman. He has been unlucky for a great span of time. For eighty four days, he has been unable to catch a fish. He is proud of his abilities even after this defeat. He is humble and has great knowledge of the sea and its creatures. He is talented in his craft. He has great hope even after the unlucky circumstance he faces. He always faces challenges in his life. The marlin is the greatest challenge he faces and fights for three days continuously. His victory over this fish brings out his spirit of adventure.

2. Character Sketch of Manolin

Manolin is a minor character who appears in the beginning and at the end of the novel. His presence is very important since his devotion and love to Santiago reveals the Old Man's value as an individual and a fisherman. Even though Santiago is a failure as fisherman, Manolin likes to go fishing with him. Manolin shows this love openly. He is eager about Santiago's food and other necessities. Manolin is a good companion to Santiago even though their ages differ greatly. His parents want him to go with other successful fishermen but Manolin is determined to come back to Santiago after earning money. At the end of this novel we find Manolin abandoning his father and going to Santiago.

Essay Questions and Answers

1. Bring out the symbolism implied in the struggle of the old man against the sea in the novel.

The word symbolism came to be associated with Hemingway only after the appearance of the novel *The Old Man and the Sea*. In *The Old Man and the Sea*, we find that the symbolism of Hemingway has far deeper significance. Here also the story is only the small visible part built up by a series of parables and symbols. Hemingway himself has said, "I tried to make a real old man a real old man and a real boy, a real scene, a real fish and real sharks. But if I made them good and sure enough, they would mean many things. So apart from being a moving little story on fishing, the book could be read as personal parable and universal allegory".

Hemingway has taken many facts from his own life for this novel. Something of his character and personality is given to the hero of the novel. But in *The Old Man and the Sea*, the identification between the author and the hero is complete. In Santiago's story the reader is to detect the struggles of Hemingway his confidence and his determination. Santiago goes for his work always with care and precision. He shows extraordinary courage. He represents Hemingway. They are similar in many ways. In spite of the extreme difficulties Santiago triumphs over the fish, even though finally he is defeated by the sharks. He is happy that he did not surrender to the marlin or the sea. For Hemingway Gulf Stream is time. The marlin which is hidden in the deep sea is truth hidden in the depth of time. Hemingway is trying to understand this truth like Santiago who tries to catch the marlin from the depth of the sea. We see Hemingway's daring soul in Santiago's determination to go far into the sea.

The symbolism in the soul is not limited to personal level. The whole novel is underlined by a universal parable. It is the representation of life as a struggle against unconquerable natural forces. Victory is possible in this action. Santiago represents the great heroes of Greek tragedy fated to failure yet struggling nobly against the hatred of an adverse enemy.

Santiago's aspiration, personality and inevitable nature of his failure reminds us of those heroes. His words "man is not made for defeat, a man can be destroyed, but not defeated" reflects this comparison.

In the novel there is an unmistakable Christian strain. Santiago fights the good fight, without caring for the reward. Towards the end of his struggle, he even says, "I don't care who kills who". Santiago is an example of the doctrine of Christian love. He has the fisherman apostle and martyr from the sea of Galilee in him. He has also something of St. Francis in him as he feels for the birds and fishes. The natural compassion he feels towards creatures is essentially a Christian virtue. He repeatedly mutters "Hail Mary" but we cannot take him as a religious person. Instead we can see the Christian Spirit in him. He shows certain qualities of mind and heart which are clearly related to the character and personality of Jesus Christ in the parables.

Hemingway's use of symbolism is so restrained that he cannot be categorised along with those who are usually labeled as symbolists. He uses symbolism with a strict restraint so as to work protect his realism.

2. Write a note on Hemingway's style with special reference to 'Old Man and the Sea'.

"Use short sentences. Use short paragraph. Use vigorous English. Avoid the use of adjective especially such extravagant one 'splendid', 'gorgeous', 'grand', 'magnificent' etc". Ernest Hemingway was very much indebted to these rules which demanded fresh language and economy. Even the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954 came to Hemingway mostly because of his style – his mastery of the art of modern narration. The Old Man and the Sea is the best example of Hemingway's splendid style.

The most remarkable quality of the style of 'The Old Man and the Sea' is its simple conversational tone. The fresh and simple, colloquial and unemotional style suited Hemingway's objective narrative technique very well. The very beginning of the novel is informal, simple, forceful and relaxed, putting the reader immediately at ease. The simple style which

Hemingway has chosen has great appropriateness to this story of simple fisherman. Carefully chosen formal words would have been incongruous with the theme and setting which are simple too. In the simplest possible words Hemingway conveys the deepest feelings of the old man.

Hemingway has practiced the strictest objectivity in writing. The author remains deliberately in the background, never thrusting himself forward. Though the story is one of much suffering, the descriptions never reach emotional heights. The author is just like a neutral onlooker and careful details kindle our imagination and tell the story themselves.

The chief features of Hemingway's style are objectivity, dramatic emphasis employing a terse dialogue, and terse sentences with little subordination.

To achieve immediacy, Hemingway has used words sparingly, with a powerful suggestion of action and experience behind these words.

Hemingway's contribution to modern literature consists of employing the raw language of every day life in literature. The novel's swift action and vivid style have contributed to its great success.

In short, Hemingway's style in 'Old Man and the Sea' fully reveals his involvement in writing the novel. Moreover he was able to keep up his style unflaggingly throughout the whole book.

Suggested Questions

1. Give an account of the character of Santiago in Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea'.
2. Ernest Hemingway as a realist.
3. The novel reflects the basic human qualities of comparison, courage and endurance. Justify (refer summary of the text.)

MODULE III

READING SHORT FICTION

Objectives

After reading the stories in this module you should be able to

- a) enter deep into each story
- b) appreciate the story
- c) understand each story in relation to human life

UNIT 1

THE PHOENIX – Sylvia Townsend

Introduction to the author

Sylvia Townsend Warner (1893-1978) was an English novelist, short story writer and biographer. Her first and best seller story is *Lolly Willows*. In 1940, she published *The Cats Cradle Book*. When she was 84 she published her last and most remarkable book, *Kingdom of Elfin*.

Summary

Lord Strawberry had the finest Aviary in Europe. All the apartments for birds like eagles, humming birds, snow buntings had a climate that suited them perfectly. But for many years the finest set of apartments meant for Phoenix remained empty. It carried the label “Phoenix : Habitat : Arabia”.

Many scientists on birds told the Lord that Phoenix is a fabulous bird which is extinct. But the Lord did not believe. His family had always believed in Phoenixes. Meanwhile his agents reported of birds like orioles, macaws, turkey buzzards, dyed orange etc; saying that they were phoenix. They sent their statements along with the expense of it.

Lord Strawberry himself went to Arabia, found a phoenix and brought it home. It was a remarkable fine bird than the other birds in the aviary. The Lord was much attached to it. Ornithologists, poets, journalists and millionaires were impressed by it. They constantly visited it. But the bird was not attracted by these attentions. All the time it ate well and seemed perfectly calm.

Lord Strawberry lost his wealth in keeping this aviary. He died penniless. The aviary was left to be sold. Usually, with such a rare bird as the Phoenix, it would have been costly but it happened that the Lord died just after the World War Money and bird seed became hard things to come by.

At first a fund called Strawberry Phoenix Fund, was opened by the London Zoo. To it students and naturalists contributed according to their ability. As their means were small, the fund raised was not high. So Lord Strawberry's executors who had the death duties to consider accepted the offer of Mr. Tancred Polder, owner and proprietor of Poldero's Wizard Wonderland. He considered his phoenix a bargain. It adapted itself to its new surroundings. It makes profits to Mr. Poldero until the crowds began to lose interest. Poldero goes on a new venture to gain profits learning that it will give a grand show of flames at the end of its life. He proceeds to age the bird unnaturally. He didn't give it proper food, made it cold and put disagreeable birds and alley cats with it. He did all these because its natural environment was Arabia, a dry place. When he understood the phoenix was nearing death, he called the media to shoot the spectacular show of the bird's death and rebirth. The bird died and was reborn in the flame but the greedy Poldero and viewers also died in the process.

This story is a satire on the human desire to view strange things. The irony is that the crowd who came to see the end of the Phoenix faced their own death.

Self-Check Questions

- 1 Consider *The Phoenix* as a satire on the human need to see strange things and disordering the natural phenomenon.
2. Bring out the irony in "The Phoenix".
3. The story is a conflict between Man and self and Man and Nature.

UNIT 2

OF WHITE HAIRS AND CRICKET – Rohinton Mistry

Introduction to the Author

Rohinton Mistry born on 3rd July 1952, is an Indian born Canadian writer in English. He belongs to the Parsi community. He published 11 short stories in the Penguin Books. He won the Governor General's Award for his second novel *Such a Long Journey*. It also won the commonwealth writer prize for Best Book. His third book *A fine Balance* got the Giller Prize. His books picture the different aspects of Indian socioeconomic life and Parsi Zoroastrian life, customs and religion.

Summary

This story is taken from the collection 'Swimming Lessons and other Stories'. It is a first person view through a 14-year old boy Kersi Boyce's eye. It is a concern over age and mortality. Every Sunday morning Kersi has to pull the white hairs from his father's head. He is looking for a job and wants to look young. He has been unemployed and is seeking for one. The father, during this time goes through the classified advertisement for jobs. Kersi's grandmother Mamaiji has had her cataract surgery and is supposed to be taking rest. But she insists on spinning thread. She winds the thread in a very experienced way. Kersi is fascinated by this. Kersi's father declares a certain ad promising and wants the boy to pluck every white hair. Mamaiji always disagrees with him saying that the boy is underfed. It is now that the father says that the ad will end their troubles. Kersi's mother always speaks optimistically but this day she keeps silent. At the end mother asks him to forget planning and leave things to God. Kersi gets sick of pulling out the white hair. He goes into the compound and finds Dr.Sidhwa visiting Viraj's house. Kersi sees his best friend Viraf and greets him. He waits for a bit and then goes and speaks to Viraf.

Kersi finds his friend very much upset. He understands that his friend's father is ill. Kersi goes to see the sick person. He is in bed, needles sticking out of him. Now he thinks about his father. He is also mortal. He understands that his father is growing old. He remembers how his father used to take him and his brother out for playing. Now his father does not do that. Kersi thinks of the white hairs on his father's head. It is growing more and more. This makes him realize that his father is growing old.

He returns and wants to pluck out the white hairs in his father's head, to stop him growing old. But his ego stops him. He wants his father to ask him first. He doesn't ask his father, instead goes to his room and cries. The thought of death comes to him when he sees Viraf's father's end. Many things give him the thought of mortality, growing up and death. They are the loss of childhood, cricket matches, and the increasing weakness of Mamaiji and the father's vain hope of getting a new job. The story stresses on the fact that death and aging are envitable.

Self-check Questions

1. Bring out the plot in the story.
2. Give the character sketch of Kersi and his Dad.
3. How is the inevitability of aging shown through the story?
4. What role does Viraf's father play in the story?

UNIT 3

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLS – O.Henry

Introduction to the author

William Sydney Porter (1862-1910) was known by his pen name O.Henry. He was an American writer. His stories are known for their clever twisty endings. His most energetic period of writing started in 1902. His stories are set in the early 20th century. His famous stories are *The Cop and the Anthem*, *The Clarion Call*, *The Last Leaf*, *The Gift of the Magi*, *A Retrieved Reformation*, *The Ransom of Red Chief* etc..

Summary

Old Jerome Warren was rich and lived in a hundred-thousand dollar house at 35, East Fifty Sforth Street. He was a down-town broker. He adopted his old friend's son named Gilbert. He was a well-known painter. Old Jerome had a stepniece also, Barbara Ross. Old Jerome had no family of his own. He always took up the burdens of others.

Gilbert and Barbara went on friendly. There was an understanding between the two. They instructed the minister to keep old Jerome's money in a state of confusion.

Thirty years before, there was a brother of Jerome named Dick who went to the west to seek his fortune. Nothing was heard of him until one day old Jerome got a letter from Dick. Dick was in trouble and had become a drunkard! All that his thirty years of prospecting had gained him was one daughter. She was nineteen years old. Dick sent her by ship. He prepaid Jerome her charges to clothe, feed, educate, comfort and cherish for the rest of her natural life or until her marriage.

Jerome met Neveda Warren at the station. She was an unsophisticated good-looking little girl. Everyone was friendly towards her. But as usual a complication emerged between one man and two ladies. So upon the coming of Neveda, she and Gilbert and Barbara Ross formed a figurative triangle.

One day a messenger – boy delivered a letter to Niveda. He waited for her reply. Before opening it, she knew it was from Gilbert. She asked old Jerome about Gilbert. She wanted him to read the letter Gilbert had just sent him. Jerome read it three

times. He told Neveda that Gilbert in his letter had asked whether Neveda and Barbara will be ready at four in the afternoon for an automobile drive over to Long island. Jerome found nothing wrong in his request and gave her permission to go. But he wanted her to give just a line of note to Gilbert in return. But Neveda didn't give a reply in writing. But she said that she loved a ride in an automobile as she never had gone in one.

After two months, Barbara was sitting alone in the study of the house. Old Jerome and Neveda had gone to the theatre. Barbara had a sealed letter in her hand. It was from Gilbert to Neveda. It had been delivered at nine after Neveda had left. She tried to read the lines of the letter by holding the envelope up to a strong light but she couldn't. When Neveda returned and went to the study to Barbara, Barbara handed over the letter to her. Neveda was unbuttoning her elbow gloves. She asked Barbara whose letter it was. She was tugging at a button. Barbara guessed from the little gold palette at the corner of the envelope that it was Gilbert's. When Barbara asked her to read and find out the contents of the letter. Neveda pretended as if she was had difficult in unbuttoning and wanted Barbara to read it. Out of curiosity Barbara readily read it. She told Neveda that it was Gilbert's invitation to Neveda to go to his studio at twelve that night.

Neveda went to Gilbert's studio. Gilbert asked if she had read his letter. She told him that Barbara read it for her and she saw it later. Gilbert telephoned his old friend Jack Peyton and his sister saying that it was going to get married. He wanted her to show him the letter. They were going to have a drive. While he pretended putting on his raincoat, he asked Neveda to read the newspaper. It was then that she said she had never been to school and never learned to read or write. After their marriage Gilbert told Neveda what he had written in that letter. It was about some flowers, hydrangea and lilac. Barbara played the joke anyway.

Self-check Questions

1. Character sketches of Gilbert, Barbara and Neveda
2. Bring out the suspense in the story.
3. How did Barbara act as a mediator of Gilbert and Neveda?
4. What incident culminated in the marriage of Gilbert and Neveda?
5. How did Barbara help them to get married?

UNIT 4

DIAMOND NECKLACE – Guy de Maupassant

Introduction to the author

Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893) is a well known 19th century French novelist, short story writer and poet. He is regarded as one of the fathers of the modern short story. His stories have the special feature of economy of style and twist at the end. He wrote some 300 short stories, six novels, three travel books and one volume of verse. His masterpiece story is *Ball of Fat*.

Summary

Mathilde Loisel is “pretty and charming”. She always feels uncomfortable in being married to a lowly clerk in the Ministry of Education. She believes that she has been born into a family of unfavourable economic status. Mr.Loisel was able to provide her only with a humble life style. She feels sorry in having to live like this. She imagines a luxurious life. She dreams of the extravagant rooms and food. She does not possess any costly jewels or clothing. She always wishes for this. She never goes to her rich friend Madame Forestier since it would make her still unhappy thinking of her life.

One day Mr.Loisel comes home from office with a special surprise. He is proud of it. It is an invitation to a formal party hosted by the Ministry of Education. Loisel thinks that Mathilde will be excited for getting a chance to attend such a party where many important people may come. She cries and tells him that she doesn't have any good dress to wear. She tells him that a suitable dress may cost 400 francs. She buys a beautiful dress with it.

Her next complaint was that she doesn't have any jewels to wear. Mr.Loisel suggests of wearing flowers, but Mathilde refuses. He tells her to borrow one from her friend Madame Forestier. Mathilde does so.

At the party she becomes the target of everyone's attention. At 4 in the morning she goes home with Loisel in a cab. At home she shockingly realizes that she has lost the diamond necklace. They search everywhere but finally has to buy one to give as substitute. It costs 40000 francs. The jeweler gives it for 36000 francs.

The Loisels begin to lead a life of poverty. It takes ten years to repay the debts. One Sunday she sees Madame Forestier. She cannot recognize Mathilde because she looks different. Mathilde says that the changes are because of Forestier and explain the 10 year life of strain. It is then that Forestiers tell that the diamond necklace Mathilde lost is not original but a fake one, an imitation of costume jewellery which cost nothing.

Self-check Questions

1. Character sketch of Mathilde.
2. Character of Mr.Loisel
3. Role of the necklace in the life of the Loisel's
4. How apt is the title to the story?
5. "There is a deceptiveness of Appearance in the story". Refer closely to the text and justify the statement.

UNIT 5

MISS BRILL – Katherine Mansfield

Introduction to the author

Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923) was a prominent modernist writer of short fiction. She was born and brought up in New Zealand. Her first published stories appeared in the High School Reporter. She was interested in the works of Oscar Wilde. Mansfield was recognized to be a great writer in the last years of her life. Most of her works remained unpublished at her death. It was Murry who did the editing and publishing work for her. She is considered to be one of the best short story writers of her age. Many of her works including *Miss Brill*, *Prelude*, and *The Garden Party* are famous. *The Dolls House* and *The Fly* are well known. *The Dolls House* is made into a film. She died of tuberculosis.

Summary

Miss Brill has The Jardin Publiques in a French town as its setting. It is an early autumn Sunday afternoon. Miss Brill is a middle aged spinster. This character is revealed through her own thoughts. This is called the stream-of-consciousness narration.

The air is still and Miss Brill is happy to have worn her fur stole. The stole is like any other stoles as per the fashions of the times. It is made in such a way that its fake eyes and nose can be connected to its tail. This will help the wearer to have it secured around the neck. She prepares to go for her usual Sunday stroll to the park. She brushes the fur so that she feels that life has come back into its dim eyes.

Miss Brill is happy to be in the park and watches the people. The sound of the bands seem to be louder and happier for her than it has been on previous Sundays. She sits in her special seat with two others sitting nearby-an old man and woman. They did not speak. Miss Brill always expects to listen to talks. So she is disappointed at this. The old couple left after sometime.

She remembers the previous Sunday. An Englishman and his wife are having a talk over the selection of spectacles for the lady. Miss Brill feels that nearly all of the people coming Sunday after Sunday are the same. There is something funny about them.

Two young girls come by and two young soldiers meet them. They pair and go-off arm-in-arm. Two peasant women pass with donkeys. A cold, pale nun hurries by. A beautiful woman comes along and drops a bunch of violets. A little boy hands it to her. She taintes of the old invalid gentleman to whom she reads the newspaper four afternoons a week while he sleeps in the garden.

By this time the band has been having rest. Now they start again. Just at this time a boy and girl comes and sits down where the old couple has been. They are in love. Miss Brill's happy mood is shattered by the ridiculous comments made by them. She returns to her tiny apartments and places her fur back in its box. She imagines that she hears its crying.

Self-check Questions

1. How is Miss Brill revealed through her thoughts?
2. What is the role of the stolen fur in her life?
3. What are the usual things that Miss Brill came to notice in the park?

UNIT 6

MISERY – Anton Chekhov

Introduction to the Author

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1860-1904) was a Russian physician, dramatist and above all the greatest writer of short stories. He first wrote stories for financial gain. Later his artistic desire grew and he made novel changes which have influenced the evolution of modern short story. He died of Tuberculosis. Chekhov's works have been translated into many languages.

Summary

The story opens with the wet snowy evening in a Petersburg street. The street has just been lighted. Iona Potapov is a sledge driver. He sits on the box without getting a fare. His mare is covered with the falling snow and it is also motionless. It's a long time since Iona has gone driving with a passenger.

It is then that an officer in a military overcoat with a hood over his head came to the sledge. He orders Iona to take him to Vyborgskaya. Iona begins to make his drive but all through the journey, the officer scolds him for driving improperly. Iona was so much depressed since he has lost his son. His son died that week after suffering from fever. He laid three days in the hospital and then died.

On their way, another coachman swears at Iona, a pedestrian crossing the road brushes the horses' nose with his shoulder. He looks angrily at Iona. Iona looks at the officer and begins to say something. It is about his son's death. He wants to share his sorrow with someone. The officer is unwilling to listen to his sorrows. Finally they reach the destination.

After sometime, three young men-two tall and thin, one short and hunchbacked, come up railing and shouting at each other. They get into the sledge and demand Iona to take them to the Police Bridge. Inside the sledge they quarrel for the seats. Using bad language, they abuse each other.

Again Iona tries to tell about his son's death but the three are not ready to listen to him. They just mocked at him. Ion's misery is immense, beyond all bounds. If his heart is to burst and his misery to flow out, it will flood the whole world.

The three get down at their destination paying twenty kopecks. They disappear into a dark passage. Then he sees a house-porter with a parcel. This man also is not in a state to listen to him.

Iona can bear his sorrow no longer. He goes back to his place of residence. There also he finds no one to listen to his sorrow. He wants to talk of his son's death, the funeral and went to the hospital to get his son's clothes. Iona still has a daughter Anisya.

Finally he goes to the stables where his mare is standing. There he talks to his mare all his sorrow. He asks his mare to imagine herself to be a mother thinking of her colt that died. The little mare just goes on munching.

Self-check Questions

1. Give a character sketch of Iona.
2. How are his different passengers responding to his grief?
3. How did his mare become his silent listener?
