

# **READING LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

**Study Material**

COMMON COURSE IN ENGLISH

For

## **BA/B Sc/B Com**

### **II SEMESTER**

**(2011 Admission)**



## **UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

### **SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

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

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**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT  
SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

**STUDY MATERIAL**

**COMMON COURSE IN ENGLISH  
BA/B Sc/B Com – II SEMESTER**

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## **MODULE – I: PROSE**

### **1. THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL**

**Anne Frank**

#### **Objectives:**

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- a) Understand the art of diary writing.
- b) Realize how much suffering humanity has endured.
- c) Analyze the historical background.

#### **Introduction:**

You have heard of Kitty, the favourite companion of Anne Frank, a Jewish girl of fifteen. She was a victim of anti-Jewish laws of Nazi Germany. Her family was forced to go into hiding in an Amsterdam warehouse from 1942 to 1944. The diary talks about her experience in hiding. It was first published in Dutch and in 1952 translated into English under the title *The Diary of a Young Girl*. She died of typhoid in the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen in 1944.

#### **The text:**

The diary addressed to Kitty begins on Wednesday, 8th July 1942. Anne was surprised and shocked at what had happened on Sunday afternoon. The whole world seemed to have tumbled down. But the only relief was that she was alive, and that was a great thing under the trying conditions of the time. On Sunday afternoon, Daddy was served a call-up notice. To prevent Daddy being sent to jail mother had gone to the house of Van Daan. They were also getting ready to go into hiding as soon as Daddy came back from Joodse Invalide, after visiting some old people. It was really a time of unspeakable tension and everyone fell silent. No one dared to open the door when the bell rang, for fear of the officials. Van Daan, Mummy and Harry came back. Anne and Margot were sent to the room. Margot tried to console Anne, but it was of no use. There was a talk about going into hiding and Anne was anxious. The family extremely tense. Anne was not permitted to ask those questions that disturbed her much. Margot and Anne had to pack up their vital belongings. The first thing that Anne put in her satchel was her diary, because memories meant more to her.

When Anne's Daddy arrived at 5 'o' clock, Mr. Koophius was telephoned and asked to come over in the evening. Vaan Daan fetched Meip. Meip has been Daddy's business partner since 1933. Meip was also a good friend. She came and took a set of clothes and went away. The upstairs portion of Anne's house was given on rent to a certain Mr. Goudsmit. Again at eleven 'o' clock Meip and Henk Van Santen ( Meip's new husband) came and took some clothes and went away. Anne realized that it was her last day on her own bed. Nevertheless she fell asleep. Mother woke her up at 5.30. Everyone wore as many dresses as they could because it was not easy for Jews to travel with suitcases. Anne bid farewell to her cat and they started their journey, not knowing the destination. Here the diary stops with the statement "continued tomorrow." The next entry given is dated 25th may 1944, Thursday.

**Self-check questions:**

1. How does Anne address her Diary?
2. What happened on Sunday afternoon?
3. What is a call-up notice?
4. What did Anne first put in her satchel before going into hiding?

The second entry is about the vegetable man getting arrested for hiding two Jews. In hiding Anne heard news of respectable people being sent off to concentration camps. The others ruled the place. They had to cut out breakfast and be satisfied with porridge and bread for lunch and fried potatoes for supper if possible once or twice per week. Anne realized that they were going to be hungry.

In the next entry of Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1944, she writes with relief that she could sit quietly by a crack in the window and write everything to Kitty. That day Anne felt so miserable, The fate of the vegetable man, the Jewish question, the invasion delay, the bad food, the strain, the miserable atmosphere, her disappointment with Peter, Elli's engagement, Whitsun reception, flowers, Kraler's birthday, fancy cakes, stories about cabarets, films and concerts. The huge difference between the two experiences baffled her. A few days ago they were happy and light headed. Now they were in constant fear. Meip and Kraler were looking after them, taking great pains. Koophius and Elli had to live their ordinary lives in the outside world and help these people in hiding. All of them had their own problems as well. By now Anne and her family were in hiding for two years. She did not know when this situation would change, how long they would have to suffer the unbearable, ever- increasing pressure.

There was scarcity of water and using the water closet became difficult in the annexe. Meip sent them a currant cake with the inscription "Happy Whitsun". The word happy seemed to mock their situation. The police could get them any moment. The greatest danger was that they were sending their protectors into danger.

She asked herself many times whether it would have been better if they had not gone into hiding. But the thought of the concentration camp was horrible. So they continued hoping against hope, in constant fear and uncertainty waiting for the drama to end.

**Self-check questions:**

1. What happened to the vegetable man?
2. What were the two aspects of life that disturbed Anne?
3. What did Meip send on Whitsun?
4. What was Anne's response to the inscription on the cake?
5. What according to Anne forced them to continue in hiding?
6. What is whitsun?

**Write a paragraph:**

What type of a diary does Anne write?

**Topic for discussion:**

How intensely does Anne portray the miserable life of the Jewish community under the Nazis?

**Answers:**

**Self-check questions:**

1. Anne addresses her diary as *Dear Kitty*.
2. On Sunday afternoon Anne's family was served a call-up notice.
3. The call-up was an arrest warrant for the Jews, which meant imminent deportation to a concentration camp.
4. Anne first put her diary into the satchel before going into hiding.
5. The vegetable man was arrested for hiding two Jews.
6. The days of celebration before going into hiding and the days of misery in hiding disturbed Anne because they were entirely different experiences.
7. Meip sent a currant cake with the inscription "Happy Whitsun."
8. Anne felt that the inscription mocked them because their life was becoming worse day by day.
9. According to Anne it was hope that forced them to continue in hiding. A hope that everything would come to an end and a better day would arrive.
10. Whitsunday or Whitsuntide is the seventh Sunday after Easter. It is observed as a festival.

**Paragraph:**

Anne's diary reads like a novel. She includes realistic descriptions and details such as "packing up the vital belongings"; descriptive asides such as comments about weather, about the Whitsun cake etc; and also close detailing of sights, sounds, smell, and silence. Some of the passages are almost meditative as in "I feel miserable....." In this diary she uses different narrative techniques like that of autobiography, diary and letters. It is a chronological record of her experiences in the form of a disclosure to her confidante, Kitty. This diary is also a historical narrative and personal remembrance.

**Topic for discussion:**

Anne Frank's diary published in 1952 as *The Diary of a Young Girl* is prominent as a piece of unbiased reporting from the Jewish viewpoint. She was only 15 years old when she wrote her diary, but in it we get the picture of a girl growing up under the most trying circumstances.

The diary, addressed as Kitty, soon became a close companion of Anne who was leading a life in hiding fearing German persecution. In her diary, we read about the horrors unleashed by the S S, the fear and stigma associated with a 'call up' notice and so on. The call up notice was a notice ordering a person, usually a Jew, to show up before the S S. When Anne Frank's elder sister gets the call up notice, the family decides to go into hiding.

The fear and pain associated with the existence as a second-class persecuted citizen is very well conveyed by Anne. Every knock on the door frightens them, every sound made by a passer-by unnerves them. Fearing police intervention, the family of Anne Frank quickly slip out of their residence carrying only their bare essentials with them.

In an entry dated 25 May 1944, Anne Frank writes about the horrors awaiting those who got trapped by the S S for hiding Jews in their houses. Food is rationed, vegetables became unattainable and the family inevitably settles down to the idea of a life lived in hunger. As days and weeks pass by, the morale of the family is seriously affected. The family continued to discuss such issues as the vegetable man captured by the S S, the Jewish question, the invasion delay, the strain and at the same time joyous events taking place around them. At a certain point of time, Anne Frank even complains that while the strain and suspense was lifted off for the non-Jewish at least for a temporary period, for people like her, it never lifted for a moment.

As food became more and more precious, the signs of comfortable life also receded. The house has now plumbing problems and the fear of the police forcibly making an entry increases. What made matters worse for the Jews was the truth that as they suffered their miseries they were also dragging their protectors into danger.

Anne Frank's Diary ends three days before her family and friends were discovered by the Nazis. Anne died in 1944, in a Nazi concentration camp after contracting typhoid.

## 2. HOW TO ESCAPE FROM INTELLECTUAL RUBBISH

**Bertrand Russell.**

### Objectives

At the end of this lesson the student will:

1. Be acquainted with a great philosopher who is one of the most voluminous writers of his day.
2. Understand some the follies mankind is prone to.
3. Understand oneself and be able to correct themselves to a certain degree.

### About the author

Bertrand Russell was the greatest writer and philosopher of his time. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950. His specialty was an unconventional view and crystal clear prose style. He wrote about war, politics, sociology, education, sexual relation and divorce. Some of his works are *Mysticism and Logic*, *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism*, *Marriage and Morals*, *Education and the social order*, *Freedom and Organization*, *Let the People Think*, *Unpopular Essays*, *New hopes for a Changing World* and a collection of short stories called *Satan in the Suburbs*.

### Summary of the Essay :

This piece is a part of Russell's essay "An Outline to Intellectual Rubbish". It begins with the statement that no superhuman ability is needed to avoid foolish opinions. He asserts that there are simple rules to save you not from all the errors but from silly errors. He cites the example of Aristotle who declared that women had fewer teeth than men. Russell says that if Aristotle had asked Mrs. Aristotle to keep her mouth open until he finished counting, he would have saved himself from making a very serious mistake. He did not do so because he thought he knew. This according to Russell is the greatest mistake. He further illustrates this situation stating his own beliefs about hedgehogs and the beliefs of the ancient and medieval authors about unicorns and salamanders. Russell says that one's opinions are to be brought to the test of experience.

There are also many ways by which one can become aware of one's bias. If an opinion contrary to your own makes you angry you must understand that in your subconscious you are doubtful. He also explains the difference between Arithmetic and Theology. In Arithmetic there is knowledge, but in Theology there are only opinions. Knowledge is the result of observations but opinion need not be so. So whenever you get angry about another person's opinion, be on your guard and make observations to ascertain your idea.

There are ways to get rid of dogmatism as well. One way is to become aware of the opinions held in social circles different from your own. Travel is a good way of diminishing the intensity of insular prejudice. If you cannot travel, communicate with people who have other opinions or read a newspaper belonging to a party that is not yours. If such people and newspapers seem to you to be mad or perverse you may caution yourself that you are in the same situation.

Russell gives another interesting observation that knowing the customs of other countries will not always help. When the Manchus conquered China, it was the custom among the Chinese for the women to have small feet, and among the Manchus for the men to wear pigtailed. Instead of these two people dropping their foolish customs, each adopted the custom of the other. The Chinese continued wearing pigtailed until the Manchus dominion ended in 1911. We must, however, learn to judge and accept only what is good in other people and cultures. Blind conformity to another faith or practice will not do us any good.

Another method to avoid dogmatism is to imagine arguments with a person having a different bias. But one should be careful in taking opinions that flatter one's self-esteem. It is very difficult to handle this problem because everybody is conscious of his sense of superiority. According to Russell this should be tempered with a little modesty and reasonableness. Our standard of values should not be absolute. There are other people and other cultures. Their standards and systems of values are equally respectable and valued for in their lives.

Fear, Russell says, is another common source of error. Imagination works negatively and harmfully when we invent certain kinds of fear (disastrous war, ghosts) or entertain illusory gains (eternal life, heaven) etc. We must learn to admit, at least to ourselves, these fears. When we overcome fear we become less superstitious and more rational. Russell gives some examples to show how magic, sorcery and witchcraft only create illusions of freedom. We become really free only when we conquer fear rationally.

Russell, citing the example of Socrates on the day of his death, specifies that people speculate about future life (life after death) because they are unhappy with today's world. Such thoughts are also signs of fear.

### **Self- check questions :**

1. What are the simple rules that Bertrand Russell recommends to keep away from "silly errors"?
2. How did the Chinese begin wearing pig tails?
3. What is the most difficult error to be dealt with?
4. How should fear be dealt with?

### **Paragraph**

1. How can we free ourselves from dogmatism?

### **Topics for Discussion**

1. What suggestions are provided by Russell for overcoming silly errors in life?

**Answer to Self-check Questions**

- 1 .Russell suggests that observation is a good method to avoid silly errors. Instead of thinking that we know everything, our ideas ought to be brought to the test of experience.
2. The Chinese blindly followed the Manchu custom of men wearing pigtailed.
3. The most difficult aspect to control is the opinion that flatters your self-esteem.
4. Fear should be dealt with rationally.

**Paragraph**

Russell suggests five ways of avoiding dogmatism. One is by making oneself aware of opinions that are in opposition to his own. This can be achieved by traveling and also by mingling and conversing with people having different opinions. The second method is avoiding blind imitation or conformity. The third is by indulging in arguments with an imaginary character who holds a different opinion. The fourth way is by dealing with self-esteem or one's sense of superiority which is the most difficult one. The last one is overcoming fear, rationally. It is fear that leads to disastrous wars and unhappiness. So it has to be overcome consciously.

**Topic for discussion ;**

Refer summary of the text

### **3. HUMANITIES VS. SCIENCE**

**Dr. S. Radhakrishnan**

#### **Objectives;**

At the end of this unit the student will understand:

- 1) The need to link science and humanities.
- 2) The role of universities in nation building.
- 3) The aim and responsibility of the individual in nation building.

#### **About the author ;**

Sarvepally Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) was India's Vice President and President and also a great thinker, teacher and public intellectual. His interest was in Philosophy and Religion. He was elected to Oxford's most prestigious Spalding Professorship in Eastern Religions and Ethics. Every year our country observes September 5<sup>th</sup>, the day on which Radhakrishnan was born as Teacher's Day. The Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour, was conferred on him in 1954.

#### **Summary of the Essay**

The three obstacles in the way of national development that Radhakrishnan identifies are ignorance, disease and poverty. It is a chain – one connected to the other. By eradicating ignorance the other two can be eradicated. Educated people, who have competence and skill, sense of direction and a social purpose, can transform the world. Technological education without the complement of humanistic studies will be imperfect, lop-sided and deficient. Science divorced from moral values is not acceptable. Science is both knowledge and power. It has interest as well as utility. It demands disciplined devotion to the pursuit of truth. It develops an attitude of tolerance, open-mindedness, freedom from prejudice and hospitality to new ideas. It shows us the inexhaustible richness of the world, its unexpectedness, its wonder.

Humanities are equally important because they tell us about our own nature and how we have a deeper meditation over the subject of life. The obstacles to human well-being are in the minds of men. Hatred, folly, erroneous beliefs and uncivil passions make us blind to truth. To remedy this, we need, in addition to technological knowledge and skill, an understanding heart and wisdom.

So we have had a spiritual revolution, a social revolution, a political revolution, and an industrial revolution. In the ancient times Indian wisdom was intricately connected to the wisdom of other parts of the world. For example in the field of medicine or mathematics one finds the influence of the Greek, the Roman and the West Asian. The advances in science were brought about by Newton, an Englishman, Kepler, a German, Copernicus, a Pole and Galileo, an Italian. Their work brought about great changes in the world. They worked for the human world at large. Radhakrishnan finds, the period of political subjugation, as the event which cut India off from the mainstream of history. But he hopes that after independence India would become proficient enough to regain its past glory.

He asserts that if we want to remove the evils of society, we need to have a scientific outlook. We should erase from our minds old fashioned thoughts and superstitions. A sense of human dignity or self-esteem has to be regained along with a sense of responsibility. The problem with universities is that they produce either seers or men with mechanical skills. A blend of the two is possible and this should take place because truth is indivisible. Whether it is historical truth, scientific truth, literary truth, the approaches may be different, but the ultimate gain is the same.

Dr. Radhakrishnan emphasizes the fact that we are oppressed by many evils like poverty, disease, ignorance etc. But he also emphasizes that these difficulties are not due to forces outside, but a lack of control that we have. It is not weapons that destroy us but lack of wisdom. It is the human being who destroys the rest of the humanity. If we want to reform ourselves we have to aim at Atma Samskriti which is the development of human nature and refinement of the human spirit. All disciplines lead to one end( Sarvasastra prayojanam athmadarsanam)- an insight into oneself, an insight into reality should be the end of all disciplines. Every human individual must look up to himself not as living on the outer surface of things. There is a living depth in him. Even the arts that we foster are just a means to grasping the eternal. All sciences are there for us but we are incapable of using them for refining our own spirit. Adhyathma vidya or the knowledge of your own self is the greatest science.

### **Self Check Questions;**

1. What according to Radhakrishnan are the obstacles to national development?
2. What is Radhakrishnan's opinion about technological education without humanistic studies?
3. Who according to the author commits the greatest crimes against civilization?
4. How can we remove the evils of society?
5. What is the common goal of religion and science?

### **Paragraph**

1. What, according to Radhakrishnan are the characteristics of "a true university?"

### **Topics for discussion**

1. How does S. Radhakrishnan emphasize the need to link science and technology with humanistic studies?

### **Answers to self-check questions**

1. Ignorance, disease and poverty are three great obstacles in the way of national development according to S. Radhakrishnan.
2. Technological studies without humanistic studies, according to Radhakrishnan, will be imperfect, lop-sided and deficient.

3. The great crimes against civilization are committed not by the primitive and uneducated, but by the highly educated and the so-called civilized.
4. The evils of society can be removed only with a scientific outlook which would help erase old fashioned thoughts and superstitions.
5. The common goal of religion and science is knowledge of oneself.

**Paragraph**

The function of the universities, according to Radhakrishnan, is not merely to send out technically skilled and professionally competent men, but it is their duty to produce in the individual the quality of compassion, the quality which enables them to treat one another in a truly democratic spirit. Our religions have proclaimed that each human individual is to be regarded as a spark of the Divine. *Tat Tvam Asi*, that art thou, is the teaching of the Upanishads. So no university can regard itself as a true university unless it sends out young men and women who are not only learned but whose hearts are full of compassion for the suffering humanity. No one can be said to be truly educated if his knowledge is limited to one special branch.

**Topic for discussion:**

Refer summary of the text.

#### **4. THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY**

**Aldous Leonard Huxley**

##### **Objectives:**

At the end of the unit the student will have knowledge of:

- a) The recent trends in the modern cult of beauty.
- b) The growth of beauty industry in America.
- c) What is real beauty.

##### **Author:**

Aldous Leonard Huxley (1894-1963) is a prolific writer of fiction, travelogue, essays, philosophical speculations and psycho-philosophical articles. His first novel *Crome Yellow* was published in 1921. He commented on society, education and culture through his essays. His popular work of fiction is *Brave New World* (1932). It provides a dystopian vision of the world ruled by technology and scientism. The *Doors of Perception* earned him some notoriety. His essays are marked by very clear and bold thinking and striking forthright views. 'The Beauty Industry', written after the American Depression of 1929, is a good example of his style.

##### **Summary of the text**

Huxley's essay discusses the phenomenon called "Beauty Industry" where large amount of money is spent on enhancing physical beauty. He is critical of such manufactured beauty. Aldous Huxley expresses his wonder at the fact that the beauty industry in America seemed to be unaffected even by the great depression of 1929. Women still spend money on beautifying themselves. But 156 million pounds a year is a huge sum to spend on beauty industry, according to Huxley. He does not know what the European figures are. It may be less because Europe is poor. The women would probably satisfy themselves using soap and dreaming of a miraculous change like that of the ravishing creatures who smile so rosily and creamily, so peachily and pearly, from every hoarding. But even in Europe more money is spent on beauty than it was in the past.

Huxley probes into the reasons for this change. It may be general prosperity. The rich have always cultivated their personal appearance. So the poor who are a bit better off than their previous generation also might have become interested in beauty. But the modern cult of beauty seems not exclusively the function of wealth. It may be due to changes that have taken place outside the economic sphere. The change is in the status of women and of the changes in our attitude towards the 'merely physical'.

Women are freer than in the past to exercise the privilege of being attractive. Since the Christian dogmas of asceticism which do not bother them, they can do justice both to the body and soul by enhancing strength and beauty.

Huxley doubts whether all the efforts used to maintain physical beauty actually gives any positive result. All the time, money and energy spent on massage, health motors and skin foods seems to be both a tremendous success and a lamentable failure. It depends on how you look at the results.

It is good that more women retain their youthful appearance to a greater age than in the past. 'Old ladies' are becoming rare. In a few years, they will be extinct. The 'old lady' image would become old fashioned. The new age crone will be golden, curly and cherry-lipped, neat-ankled and slender. This may be due to the modern cosmetics and improved health. Ugliness is considered as one of the symptoms of disease and beauty that of health. Hence, a campaign for beauty also become a campaign for health.

Huxley agrees that if every woman becomes healthy and beautiful naturally it is good. But will such a situation occur? He says no. For real beauty is as much an affair of the inner as of the outer self. He sites the example of a porcelain jar which has a beautiful shape. It may be empty or dirty inside. But that does not matter. But a woman is alive and so her beauty is not skin-deep.

Huxley identifies numerous forms of psychological ugliness. There is an ugliness of stupidity, of unawareness, greed, lasciviousness or avarice. This brings on an expression of bad-tempered boredom which ruins their charm. Such women are repulsive.

Another common problem is hardness that spoils pretty faces. It is not due to psychological reasons but because of over painting. This makes them cease to look like human forms. One has to search hard to find the living softness beneath. But most often the face is not soft, and its hardness comes from within. They are outward visible signs of some emotional or instinctive disharmony, often of a sexual nature.

Huxley points out that so long as disharmony and boredom exists the beauty industry will thrive. To him outward beautification is not an important part of life. He asserts that all men and women will be beautiful only when the social arrangements give to everyone of them an opportunity to live completely and harmoniously in a world without vices. But Huxley knows that it is not easy. Still he hopes that at least fewer ugly human beings will be present in the world in the future.

**Self-check questions:**

1. Which is the only industry unaffected by the Great Depression of 1929?
2. What promotes the beauty industry?
3. What are the different forms of psychological illnesses according to Huxley?
4. When will all men and women be beautiful?

**Paragraph**

1. What are the reasons that have contributed to the growth of beauty industry in America?

**Topic for discussion**

1. How does Huxley emphasize that beauty is not external?

**Answers to self-check questions**

1. The only industry unaffected by the Great Depression is beauty industry.
2. Prosperity, freedom of women and consciousness about being healthy are the factors that promote beauty industry.
3. Stupidity, unawareness, greed, lasciviousness, avarice etc. are some of the psychological illnesses that Huxley has identified.
4. According to Huxley all men and women will be beautiful when society provides them the opportunity to live harmoniously and completely.

**Paragraph**

Huxley observes that the rich have always cultivated their personal appearance. The diffusion of wealth seemed to enable more people to be conscious of their health and beauty. This is one reason for the promotion of beauty industry. Another factor is the status of women. They are freer than in the past. They can perform social functions hitherto reserved for the male, but they are also free to exercise the more pleasing, feminine privileges. A third factor is that the earlier Christian dogmas no longer trouble people. So justice is claimed for both body and soul. This again results in the promotion of beauty industry.

**Topic for discussion**

Refer summary of text.

## **MODULE –II: POETRY**

### **1. ONE DAY I WROTE HER NAME UPON THE STRAND**

**Edmund Spenser**

#### **Objectives:**

At the end of the unit the student will:

- 1 Learn what a Sonnet is.
- 2 Understand 16<sup>th</sup> century poetry.
- 3 Grasp the greatness of Spenser.

#### **The Author**

Edmund Spenser (1592-1599) was born in London. He was made secretary to the Lord Deputy of Ireland. ‘The Fairie Queene’ is an allegorical poem in which he brings fair ladies, courtly knights, magicians and fearsome monsters. Queen Elizabeth I (Gloriana) is idealized. This flattering reference gained him a pension of 50 pounds. He was buried in Westminster Abbey. His important works are *The Shepherd’s Calendar*, *Prothalamion*, *Epithalamion*, *Astrophel*, *The Fairie Queen*, *Amoretti* etc.

#### **Sonnet**

A sonnet is a short poem of 14 lines. It has two parts – the octave and the sestet. The first eight lines comprise the octave and the last six lines, the sestet. The octave has two quatrains (four lines) and the sestet has two tercets (three line groups). Rhyme is very important in a sonnet. The sonnet first came into existence in Italy. It was perfected by Petrarch. The 16<sup>th</sup> century England received the Petrarchan sonnet. Later Shakespeare modified it and so the Shakespearian sonnet came into existence. The Shakespearian sonnet consists of three Quatrains and a concluding or clinching couplet. The sonnet is the best form to convey concentrated thought or feeling of the poet. Images and figures of speech decorate the poem. The Petrarchan sonnet has the rhyme scheme abba, abba, abc, abc. The Shakespearian sonnet has the rhyme scheme abab, cdcd, efef, gg. Most sonnets begin with a universal statement or a very common ordinary experience.

#### **The poem**

“One day I Wrote Her Name” is the 75<sup>th</sup> sonnet in *Amoretti*. Unlike the usual theme of despair in love, this sonnet celebrates a successful and faithful love. The lover vows to immortalize this ladylove through his verses, a theme which was later on liberally adopted by other poets including Shakespeare.

This sonnet conveys a noble and philosophical idea. The sentiment expressed is true and sincere. Its theme is the perishability of all material monuments. The poet substitutes material monuments for his verse which would stand the test of time and immortalize his love.

On the vast stretch of sands on the shore the poet and his lady love are seated close to each other. The poet starts to write the name of his lady love in the sand. But soon the waves come and wash it away. Again he tries but in vain. The beloved tells him that he is trying to immortalize a mortal thing. She is mortal and so too her name. But the poet is cleverer and more philosophical. He asserts that baser things die in dust. But his verse shall eternalize her rare virtues and her glorious name will be written forever in heavens. He is confident that even after death their love shall live. Thus Spenser immortalizes true and sincere love.

**Self-check questions:**

1. What is the theme of the sonnet 'One Day I wrote Her name'?
2. What is a sonnet?
3. What was the poet trying to do?
4. How did the waves of the sea interfere?
5. What was the response of the ladylove?
6. What are the two perishable things?
7. What reply does the poet give to the ladylove?
8. How does the speaker intend to immortalize her?
9. Pick out rhyming words from the poem.
10. What is the power of verse?

**Paragraph:**

1. How does Spenser describe his true love?

**Answers to self-check questions:**

1. Romance is the theme of the sonnet 'One Day I Wrote Her Name'.
2. A sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines divided into an octave and a sestet. The theme is often 'love'.
3. The poet was trying to write the name of his lady love on the seashore.
4. The waves of the sea came and washed the name written by the poet.
5. The ladylove said that it was a futile attempt to try to immortalize a mortal being.
6. The ladylove and her name are two perishable things.
7. The poet says that only baser things die in dust, but not his love.
8. The speaker intends to immortalize his beloved through his poetry.
9. Strand-hand; away-prey; essay-decay; immortalize-likewise; devise-eternize; fame-name; subdue-renew are the rhyming words in the poem.
10. Verse can immortalize the mortal.

**Paragraph:**

On the vast stretch of sands on the shore the poet and his lady love are seated close to each other. The poet starts to write the name of his lady love in the sand. But soon the waves come and wash it away. Again he tries but in vain. The beloved soon reacts and tells him that he is trying to immortalize a mortal thing. She is mortal and so too her name. But the poet is cleverer and more philosophical. He asserts that baser things die in dust. But his verse shall eternalize her rare virtues and her glorious name will be written forever in heavens. He is confident that even after death their love shall live. Thus Spenser immortalizes true and sincere love.

## **2. THE SLAVE'S DREAM**

**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

### **Objectives:**

On reading this unit the student will understand:

1. The theme of slavery.
2. How much the slaves of the past had suffered.
3. That slaves too have their dreams about a happy and peaceful life.

### **About the author:**

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) was a very popular American poet. Two of his popular works are *A Psalm of Life* and *The Song of Hiawatha*.

### **Summary of the text:**

H. W. Longfellow is a prominent poet of American origin. In the poem "The Slave's Dream", Longfellow describes the slave's dying moment as lost in a dream. He dreams of his African home, imagines a life of fun and gaiety in the company of his kinsfolk, and fancies himself as a king. The sights and sounds of his native land and the free life he had once led among his people are vividly recalled by the slave.

'The Slave's Dream' portrays the lost dreams and ambitions of a slave. The slave is captivated by the images of his family and native land. Holding his sickle in hand, the slave lies in the field, bare-breasted, his matted hair covered by sand.

Along the stretch of scenery of his dreams, the river Niger flows regally. He imagines himself to be a king, no more bound to the shackles of slavery, but free to do whatever he wishes. He strides majestically over the plains lined by palm trees. The slave is so empowered by his dream, that he visualizes himself in a land where he is an individual not just a slave.

The images of his family bring a tear to his eye. Like a king he rides his stallion in search of adventures. The lion's roar, the hyena's scream and the grunt of the hippopotamus sound like a glorious roll of drums to his ears. The sound from the forest and the desert introduces ideas of wildness and liberty in his mind. As he finally gasps for his last breath, he smiles in 'tempestuous glee'.

The recollections are so strong that his abject slavery and shameful death hardly trouble him. 'The Slave's Dream' is celebration of liberty and dignity. No master can deprive his slave of his liberty to dream. As the driver whips the slave, as the sun beats heavily on his body, the slave lies motionless as his soul has broken away from the fetters of his body. Death illumines his land of sleep as death has saved him from the miseries of life.

**Self-check questions:**

1. Who is the sleeper referred to in the following lines? Why does he weep?  
“A tear burst from the sleeper’s lids  
And fell into the sand.”
2. How does the poet describe the slave waiting for his death?
3. How does the slave die as a free man?
4. What special use of words do you see in this poem?

**Answers for self-check questions:**

1. The sleeper is a slave. The thought of his family made him weep.
2. The poet describes the slave as a man waiting for his death with fortitude. His dreams of liberty and a good life fortifies him.
3. The dream of his homeland and his kinsfolk and a free life their enabled him to die a free man.
4. The poet uses rhyming words like hand-sand-land; flowed-strode-road etc. and contrasts like death-life; stillness- movement; the fettered body-the free soul etc. to express the intensity of the suffering of the slave.

**Paragraph:**

What are the rosy dreams of the slave, as painted by the poet?

**Answer:**

The slave dreams of his African home, imagines a life of fun and gaiety in the company of his kinsfolk, and fancies himself a king. In the vast landscape of his dreams, the slave sees once again his land, Africa and the river Niger. Like a king he strode over the plains. He also dreams of his family – his wife and children and the warmth of love they share. Like a king he rode on the stallion holding the golden bridle reins. In this dream, he heard the roar of the lion, the cry of the hyena and the river horse. The whole of nature seems to him, in his dream, to be shouting for liberty. As the dream ends, the slave escapes to the kingdom of death.

**Topic for Discussion:**

“A Slave’s Dream” is a celebration of liberty and dignity. Discuss  
Refer Summary of text.

### **3. THE WALRUS AND THE CARPENTER**

**Lewis Carroll**

#### **Objectives:**

At the end of this unit the student will learn:

1. How even absurd aspects of life teach a lot about life.
2. The importance of keeping away from deceptive characters.

#### **About the author:**

Lewis Carroll is the pseudonym of Charles M Dodgson a writer of humorous works for children. Though a mathematics teacher, he became famous for his masterpiece *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*(1865), *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice found there*(1871)and a very long poem called *The Hunting of a Snark*(1876). The 'Walrus and the Carpenter' is a poem recited by Tweedledum and Tweedledee to Alice in *Through the Looking Glass*.

#### **Summary of the text:**

Lewis Carroll was one of the most well-known of nonsense writers. Nonsense verse has elements of absurdity, but it has many other dimensions of meanings as well. A nonsense poem tells a small tale which is humorous and playful. It usually resists rational and logical interpretations. The situation presented in the narrative may be absurd, but the listeners somehow get the impression that the poet is trying to say something more solemn and significant.

On one level, 'The Walrus and the Carpenter' could be read as a warning to innocent people who are misled by the cunning and the shrewd who just "eats them all up". The poem could also be interpreted at the political level as a commentary on political corruption and how the politicians grow fat at the expense of the people. The antagonists of the story are the walrus and the carpenter, two unpleasant greedy characters, who got the oysters to trust them and go with them. The carpenter is more direct in his approach. The two are so powerful that in their discussion of the quantity of sand on the beach, one could sense an attempt to control nature.

The promise of better days and better things, however, does not interest the elder oyster. The young and the innocent are more susceptible to the call of evil. In the Walrus' discussion of nonsensical topics, we can see an example of a politician's call to the people, once they have gathered their flock, they keep them entranced with tales of basic essentials. They start off making promises of things that appeal to their listeners or rather the things that the people think they need. But in actuality they do not have any consideration about them. Eventually the politicians degenerate into bubbling over useless issues, such as flying pigs.

In the end, after the corpses of the innocent litter the path of the walrus and the carpenter of the world, they will shed false tears of remorse. It is now the hypocrisy of these villains is exposed. As the walrus covered his face with his handkerchief to wipe the tears, he gobbled up as much oysters as he could. In short, as Alice herself comments, “They are both very unpleasant characters”.

**Self-check questions:**

1. What is a ballad?
2. What were the odd things that the walrus and the carpenter witnessed during their journey?
3. “I doubt it,” said the carpenter, / And shed a bitter tear”. What was he unsure of? Why was he so sad?
4. How did the oysters prepare themselves for the journey?
5. How did the Walrus express his sympathy for the oysters?

**Paragraph:**

1. Comment on the setting of the poem.

**Topic for discussion:**

1. How does this poem become a parallel to this world?

**Answer to self-check questions:**

1. A ballad is a narrative poem.
2. The Walrus and the Carpenter saw the sun shining brightly at midnight and the angry moon sulking. They also realized that the sea was wet and the sand was dry and there was no cloud to be seen. These were odd things that they experienced.
3. The carpenter could not believe that the sand could be cleared within half a year by seven maids with seven mops.
4. The oysters brushed their coats, washed their faces and cleaned their shoes but they had no feet at all.
5. With sobs and tears the Walrus expressed his sympathy for the oysters.

**Paragraph:**

1. The setting of the story is that of a fable. A fable tells a story with characters in it. Here the Walrus and the Carpenter are characters that deceive the young oysters. This is odd and it adds to the sense of the nonsense element in the poem. To increase this oddness the poet has described the setting with the sun shining very brightly at midnight making the moon angry for the intrusion. Again the sea is described as wet and the sand as dry as though usually it is not so. These peculiarities and the nonsense dialogues of the characters add beauty to the poem.

**Topic for discussion:**

Refer summary of the text.

## **4. MIRROR**

### **Sylvia Plath**

#### **Objectives:**

At the end of this unit the student will get to know:

- 1) Sylvia Path, the Poet .
- 2) The existential angst of an individual in the twentieth century.
- 3) About feminist concerns.

#### **About the Author**

Sylvia Path (1932-63) is a controversial poet of the generation. She was married to Ted Hughes, the poet, but she was not happy. Her autobiographical accounts tell us that she was volatile and mentally unstable for a long time. In 1960 her first collection of poems, *Colossus* appeared. During the last three years of her life she seemed to be troubled by her personal experiences and wrote frantically. She wrote as a 'Mother' and a 'Poet', to identifies very close to her heart.

#### **Summary**

"Mirror" by Sylvia Plath shows the shallowness and superficial concerns of women through the personification and description of a mirror reflecting a woman's life and her character. The poem is narrated by the mirror which does not really provide an impartial view contrary to its claim. Eventually it became difficult to differentiate between the women and the mirror. Like women, the mirror is subservient (faithfully reflects).

In the first stanza, the mirror introduces itself. It claims to have no 'preconceptions'. It represents itself as not cruel, only honest. This eventually becomes too honest and too blunt, for the woman who turns to the 'liars' that make her more beautiful – moonlight and candlelight.

"Mirror" could be termed an eye-opening poem because of its truthful descriptions of the relationship between the inner feelings of people and the outward appearances that they project which affect them in the public scene.

The second section of the poem introduces a woman into the life of a mirror. She looks towards the mirror seeking to find youth and beauty, and the mirror sees her agitation and depression. She is always looking into the mirror to make sure everything is perfect. In this, the mirror, over the years, the young girl transforms into an old woman. Each day she is reminded by the mirror of her lost youth and beauty that was once projected back to her so faithfully.

The woman's view of herself and her reluctance to accept her natural beauty shows how we all find it hard to accept ourselves for who we truly are.

Many readers have found in the poem the anxieties related to woman's desire to be loved and admired as well as a conflict between the ideal and the real. Throughout the poem, the mirror is shown as an arrogant object proud of its power and importance. The metaphor of the mirror being the "eye of a little god" is sustained throughout the poem signifying the power it has. The statement "I am important to her" states the value of the mirror for the woman and indicates that the woman is addicted to the mirror to the point where she is searching for what she really is in the mirror, despite the fact that the mirror is cruel and blunt.

### **Self Check Questions**

- 1) Why does the mirror say it has no "preconceptions"?
- 2) Note down some important metaphors used by the poet.
- 3) "Now I am a lake" – What does it mean?
- 4) What are the anxieties that the poet expresses through the poem 'Mirror'.
- 5) How does Plath portray the mother/child relationship through the poem?

### **Paragraph**

- 1) What feminist concerns inform Sylvia Plath's mirror?

### **Topic for discussion**

1) "I am important to her", says the Mirror. How significant is this statement in the light of a woman's life? Elaborate.

### **Answer to self –check questions:**

- 1) The mirror swallows immediately whatever it sees. Hence it claims to have no preconceptions.
- 2) Now I am a lake, the mirror, as women etc. are some of the metaphors used by Plath.
- 3) The statement - Now I am a lake - means that the pure, polished surface is like the lake that can drown a person. Here the woman, by looking into the mirror, performs the act of drowning. As years go by, the young woman is drowned and the old one appears.
- 4) A woman's desire to be loved, how she sees herself, how others see her, the ideal versus the real, old age, loss of youth and beauty etc. are some of the anxieties expressed in this poem.
- 5) The mirror/woman relationship is also a mother/daughter relationship because the daughter often grows up imitating her mother. The mother is the model for her.

### **Paragraph:**

The mirror reflects the woman. The mirror meditates on the opposite wall. It has no preconceptions. In patriarchal societies women serve men in this way. They just reflect and never have an opinion. The narcissistic concerns of women are portrayed as well. The search for the true self is also a subject discussed here. Aging is another of feminist concern. Mother/daughter relationship is yet another important aspect of feminism discussed here.

### **Topic for discussion:**

Refer summary of the text.

## **5. FATHER RETURNING HOME**

**Dilip Chitre**

### **Objectives**

At the end of the unit the student will get acquainted with:

- 1) The boredom and alienation in the life of city dwellers
- 2) The plight of old age
- 3) Learn how to be sympathetic towards old people.

### **About the Author**

Dilip Chitre (1938-2008) is a Marathi writer. He is both a poet and essayist. He has published six collections of poems. *As Is Where Is* (2007) is one among them. He also translated the poems of Tukaram the Marathi Bhakti poet. His main theme is Mumbai life. He also deals with the discrepancy between words and thoughts as a theme in poetry.

### **Summary**

Alienation is a prominent theme found in many of Chitre's works. The pathos of an old father returning to a gloomy house late in the evening is well addressed in the poem. The insignificance of the father is brought out through minute details like soggy, mud-stained clothes and vacant eyes. The father is relegated to the background by his family. The monotony and meaninglessness of his life is expressed in the smile "like a word dropped from a sentence". The triviality of his actions is amusing. He ponders over "man's estrangement from a man-made world" in the toilet. His actions are all sordid, mechanical and divorced of human contact. His eyes are "unseeing" and "dimmed by age".

At the outset the poet describes his father coming home in an evening train. Father is silent and is unmoved by the sights of the suburbs because they are too familiar to him to catch his eye. His clothes are damp and dirty, his bag is disintegrating with the heavy load of books. Being old, he has lost the brightness of his eyes. The poet visualizes him getting out of the train and hastening along the platform.

At home, the alienation is not lessened. He is written off by his children. Even his tea is weak and the chapatti he eats is stale. His children are gloomy and do not interact with him. He has to be content with listening to the "static" on the radio. His life, having lost its charm, music fails to interest him. Yet his dreams are on a grander scale. They revolve round his ancestors and grandchildren. He dreams of Aryans entering Afghanistan through the Khyber Pas and the very thought makes him ecstatic.

### **Self-check Questions**

1. Who is the subject of the poem “Father Returning Home”?
2. Pick out words suggesting old age.
3. “Like a word dropped from a long sentence.” What does the poet mean by this statement?
4. How does the father spend his time at home?
5. What is the father’s dream?

### **Paragraph**

1. Is old age a comic phase in life? What do you feel while reading the poem?

### **Topic for discussion**

1. Discuss “Father returning Home” as a sketch characterized by mild irony and compassion.

### **Answers to self-check questions**

1. The poet writes about his father.
2. Late evening train, yellow light, unseeing eyes, eyes dimmed by age, fade homeward, grey platform etc. are expressions suggesting old age.
3. The father getting off the train is compared to a “word dropped from a long sentence”. It also suggests the awkward situation of an old man in this world. He is out of place in a busy world. The meaninglessness of life in general is also stressed.
4. At home he drinks weak tea, eats stale chapatti, reads books, meditates on the estrangement of man, dreams of his ancestors and grand children and listens to the static on the radio, since nobody at home shares a joke with him.
5. The father dreams of ancestors and grand children and thinks of nomads entering a subcontinent through a narrow pass.

### **Paragraph**

Shakespeare has described old age as the phase when your body shrinks inside the wide dress. The soggy dress and the unseeing eyes seems to make the old man comic but the son does not perceive the father as comic. He feels sorry for the lonely man but he is unable to help. Though the old man seems to be out of place in this world, he deserves sympathy. This is the idea conveyed by Dilip Chitre in *Father Returning Home*.

### **Topic for discussion**

- Refer summary.

## **6. POOR GIRL**

**Maya Angelou**

### **Objectives:**

At the end of the unit the student will come to know:

1. About an African American poet.
2. What a lyric and refrain is.
3. About the theme of betrayal in a woman's life.

### **About the author**

Maya Angelou (1928 - ) is a multi faceted personality. She is an Afro-American writer devoted to the cause of women. *I Know Why the caged Bird Sings* is one of her best works.

### **Summary**

'Poor Girl' by Maya Angelou is a simple lyric about lost love. Maya Angelou is one of the most distinguished African American writers devoted to women's lives and identities in the male dominated society.

Maya Angelou specializes in love poems. Their beauty lies in the simplicity with which she writes – and her ability to deeply and authentically connect with human experience. "Poor girl" could be described as a poem written for women. It speaks about the loss of a love, yet, at the same time it also addresses the other woman with whom her past lover is presently associated. The speaker is a woman who has come to terms with her loss.

The words "adores", "hanging on your words" etc. reveal that the speaker in the poem is a mature self. She is capable now of differentiating between true love and infatuation. There is a hint in the poem that the speaker realizes that her love was the result of a passing fancy.

Yet, in the middle of her pain, she takes efforts to warn the other woman. This is what makes the poem a true woman's lyric. The refrain in the poem, "poor girl just like me", leads us to believe that the sad story of her love is going to be told again and again. The refrain also conveys the speaker's belief that the outcome of this affair, too, is predictable.

Neither the man nor his new love is willing to listen to her. The male in the poem is presented as egotist, insensitive and whimsical. He is so confident about himself that he drifts from one woman to another. When he is tired of one, even without offering a proper excuse, he ends the relationship. The poor woman does not even/will not even realize what wrong she had done.

The situation in the poem is ironic because for all the knowledge the woman has now, she sees no way she might help the other woman by offering advice or warning her in good time.

**Self-check Questions**

1. Who is the speaker of the poem?
2. What is a lyric?
3. What is the theme of this poem?
4. Why does the speaker feel sympathy for the other girl?

**Paragraph**

1. What is a refrain? What is its purpose? How is it utilized by Maya Angelou?

**Topic for Discussion**

Maya Angelou's 'Poor Girl' cheated in lone is a bitter commentary on male chauvinism. Explain.

**Answer to the self-check Questions**

1. A 'poor girl' is the speaker of the poem.
2. A lyric is a short simple poem expressing powerful feelings. Earlier it was a poem composed to be sung to the accompaniment of a lyre.
3. 'Lost love' is the theme of this poem.
4. The speaker knows that very soon the girl would also be deceived and then she would start singing the same woeful song for herself.

**Paragraph**

1. In this poem the lines: "Poor Girl/ Just like me" is repeated thrice. This technique of repeating words or lines is called a refrain. It is used to produce a particular effect on the hearer. The first feature of a refrain is that it repeats the gist or motif of the poem. Here the poem is about two poor girls – one is already deceived and the other is trapped into it. The refrain also suggests the endless repetition in the lives of girls everywhere and at all times.

**Topic for Discussion**

Refer summary of text.

## **7. A RING TO ME IS BONDAGE**

**Mina Assadi**

### **Objectives**

At the end of this unit the student will be:

1. Acquainted with an Iranian Poet
2. Looking at a women's life from a different perspective and culture.
3. Learning about desert life

### **About the author**

Mina Assadi (1943 - ) is an Iranian poet. She has been living in exile in Sweden since 1988. She is a writer-activist who fought for the privileges of the downtrodden (especially women and children). She has received a number of awards including a grant from Human Rights Watch, U S A.

### **Summary**

Mina Assadi is a well known Iranian writer living in exile. As a writer-activist, Mina Assadi has always championed the cause of women. She has also raised her voice against the regime in Iran.

“A Ring to Me is Bondage” could be read as a poem where the poet introduces herself. It is very evident that the speaker in the poem is a very determined self. Her attitude towards religion and relationships is openly stated in the poem. Religion in her eyes consists of elements of subjugation. She prefers not to think of prayer-mats and confinement. A free outdoor life initiates in her a religious experience.

The contradictory spirit of the poet is evident in the second stanza. She fails to comprehend affection, she is not bothered by national boundaries, aloneness and solitude mean happiness to her, a lonely desert is home to her and anything that evokes sadness is ‘love’ to her.

The poet also pledges her allegiance to nature. Anyone who plucks a flower is blind in her eyes; anyone who traps a fish is a murderer. The sea is a source of constant fascination.

A ring, particularly a wedding ring, ought to signify bonding rather than “bondage” which is what it means to her. Mina Assadi seems to criticize the age old institutions of Family, Religion and even Government that subjugate women.

Also prominent in the poem are the images of fight and confinement. She seems to associate movement and outdoor life with freedom. Thus words like roads, sparrows, walk etc. signify the positive spirit. Phrases like prayer-mats, net, cage, gaoler etc. signify unhappiness.

In theme as well as in treatment, Assadi's poems provide a different, ‘contrary’ experience.

### **Self-check questions**

1. Why doesn't the poet think of prayer mats? What does she think of?
2. Why does the poet love to say her prayer on the "silk roads"?
3. Why does Mina Assadi call the desert "Home"?
4. "To Me a Ring is Bondage". Why does the poet think so?
5. What is the poet's idea of freedom?

### **Paragraph**

How differently does Mina Assadi look at the world?

### **Topic for discussion**

1. Discuss the themes of Bondage and freedom in Mina Assadi's poem.

### **Answers to self-check questions**

1. The poet does not think of prayer mats because it is a symbol of religion and bondage. She loves instead to think of gardens and open roads that suggest her desire for freedom.
2. The silk roads are open and free. So a freedom lover like Mina Assadi loves the silk roads rather than prayer mats.
3. The poet loves loneliness. She is happy with the loneliness of the desert. So she calls it her 'home'. Home is where you are free, happy and secure.
4. The 'ring' is an enclosure. The ring attached to marriage rites is bondage because marriage confines the freedom of women. So Mina Assadi does not like the 'ring'.
5. Mina Assadi resists all kinds of bondage – religion, family, school etc. She wishes for the roads that open into this wide world. She loves the freedom and loneliness of the desert. She calls upon every woman of the world to resist, to battle against oppression of any kind.

### **Paragraph**

Mina Assadi expresses herself through the poem, as a self-determined individual. The bold phrasing and metaphoric turns of thoughts are evidence to this. She brings together unrelated thoughts, places and objects in the short span of ten lines. She seems to emphasize the unrelatedness of things that usually seem to be related. She loves aloneness and desert is her home. She resists prayer mats and opts for the silky roads. In short she tries to resist all the institutional elements in society that hinder the free growth of a female and loves to grasp everything that would assure freedom for the body and mind of woman.

### **Topic for discussion**

Refer summary of text.

## **MODULE – III: SHORT STORIES**

### **1. ONE AUTUMN NIGHT**

**Maxim Gorky**

#### **Objectives**

At the end of this unit the student will learn:

1. About Maxim Gorky's great vision.
2. About the Russian situation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
3. The truth that poverty provides great lessons in life.

#### **About the Author:**

Aleksei Peshkov known to us as Maxim Gorky (1868 – 1936), was a great writer of his time. He wrote his stories drawing experiences out of his own life. His sympathy always resided with the poor and miserable. He wrote an autobiography, plays and longer fiction during his mature days. *Mother* and *The Lower Depths* are important works of Gorky.

#### **Summary of text**

This story 'One Autumn Night' is about two young and miserable people who spent a night together one autumn season. The young man, the narrator is eighteen years of age. He had sold his clothes for small sums of money in order to drive away hunger. But that money was also spent and the autumn night was miserable and cold. While he was walking along meditating about great things in the world, he saw a creature in woman's dress digging behind a crate. He asked her what she was doing. She replied that she was trying to get some food out of the crate. The narrator then helped her. The crate was closed on the underside. So they broke the lock open, took some bread, hastily pushed it into their mouth and ran away together. They took shelter under an upturned canoe. The night was cold and soon the young man could not bear it. He was chattering and muttering, when the girl went to his help. She stretched herself over the narrator giving him the warmth of her body. The selfless act on the part of the poor miserable girl soothed and perplexed him at the same time.

In between, the girl unravels her story to the narrator. Her name is Natasha. She is in love with Pashka, a baker. At first he was very good to her. But later he began torturing her. To add to her misery Pashka started moving around with another girl named Dimka. This was too much for poor Natasha. She was ready to bear torture but not this. So she protested and Pashka punished her so much that she was forced to run away with all the bruises on her face and heart.

Here the narrator reflects on how a girl who is not learned, who does not know about the big world, selflessly helps him by keeping him warm. The narrator who knows the world is vain, self-centered and had a very low opinion about women. But all his vain ideas seemed to vanish in the presence of Natasha. The experience of that autumn night was an eye opener for the young man. It changed his view of the world. He realized that life is an invaluable book that teaches worthy lessons.

**Self-check questions.**

1. "In our present state of culture, hunger of the mind is more quickly satisfied than hunger of the body". What satisfies the hunger of the mind'?
2. "Good ideas rarely visit the minds of women, but, as you may see, they do visit some times." Who is the speaker? What is the idea being referred to here?
3. What makes Natasha think that all men are wretched?
4. What are the narrator's ideas of himself?
5. Who is the girl that Natasha found her husband moving with?

**Paragraph**

1. The significance of the title 'One Autumn Night'.

**Topic for discussion**

How does the narrator's encounter with Natasha change his view of the world?

**Answers to self-check questions**

1. The hunger of the mind can be satisfied by books and the experiences in urban situations.
2. The speaker is the young narrator of 'One Autumn night'. The idea is to break open the lock of the crate to get some food out of it.
3. Her experience with Pashka makes her feel that all men are wretched.
4. The narrator had a feeling that he was far above the other miserable creatures of the world because he had read books and has traveled a bit to gain experience of the world.
5. Dimka was the girl with whom Pashka, Natasha's husband was going around.

**Paragraph**

1. The young narrator of the story was intelligent. He read books and traveled a bit. So he was in the habit of meditating about subjects like riches, poverty, criminality, and ethics. He also held a very low opinion about women. In that autumn night, the narrator was truly hungry and he had no money. He realized that books and sights never ease out hunger of the body. When he met Natasha, he was able to quench his hunger by getting bread from the crate. After that when it became difficult for him to endure the cold, Natasha hugged him and kissed him and shared all her warmth with him. The way in which Natasha handled both the issues changed his low opinion of women. He understood that they were more practical and selfless unlike the narrator who was meditative and self-centered. This revelation made a great change in the life of the narrator. The autumn night became a turning point in the narrator's life. The title is apt and significant.

**Topic for discussion**

Refer summary of the test.

## **2. HEAVEN IS NOT CLOSED**

**Bessie Cemery Head**

### **Objectives**

At the end of the unit the student will understand:

1. The African way of life
2. The colonial impact on Africa
3. Religion's role in colonization.

### **About the Author**

Bessie head (1937–1986) was born in South Africa. She could not tolerate apartheid. So she left South Africa and settled in Botswana. Her first novel is *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1969). *The Collector of Treasures and Other Botswana Village Tales* (1977) is her fine collection of stories. They probe into the socio-cultural life of black women and children. She also focuses on the oral tradition and folk ways of pre-colonial Africa.

### **Summary**

“Heaven is not Closed” narrates two stories in one. First, it tells us about an old woman's death in a Botswana village. The mourners gather at her place and quickly realize that this ninety year old woman, Galethebege, is no ordinary person. The whole village holds her in high esteem, because of her very long and ardent devotion to God. She had apparently known about her end. She uttered her last words hoping for eternal rest willed by her God. The mourners comprise mostly her grandchildren.

Modise, brother to Ralokae, whom the old woman has married, now tells her story.

Ralokae was a farmer who firmly believed in Setswana customs and laws. Many young people of those days found it fashionable to reject the Setswana law and become Christian. The missionaries from the West persuaded the local black folk to embrace Christianity and be “civilized” like the white people. Ralokae, however, was among the few young people of the village to reject Christianity. Within a year of his marriage Ralokae loses his wife in childbirth. For a year he imposes on himself all the restrictions of a widower mandated by the Setswana law of mourning.

During this year of mourning, however, Ralokae begins to notice Galethebege, his young neighbour. Her life was quiet and orderly. Ralokae began to fancy her. A year later, Ralokae proposed to Galethebege, who was pleased and rather perplexed. Everyone in the village knew that Ralokae was an unbeliever, unlike Galethebege who went to the Christian church.

Galethebege imagined that Ralokae would also embrace Christianity, but he seemed quite firm in believing that for people like them the Setswana traditions are quite as good. Ralokae tried to convince Galethebege how the missionary religion is being canvassed by bad, insincere people. He rejected all things “foreign” because he saw through the pastors and missionaries of the local church. They had only contempt for the black people.

Galethebege, however, tried to discuss this difficulty with the missionary and sought his advice. Heaven's gate is shut against the non-believer. This message shocks her. Ralokae did not relent and he chose to take Galethebege as his wife strictly in accordance with the Setswana custom. The church expelled her. Her expulsion hurt not only Galethebege but the entire village ward. Since both Ralokae and Galethebege were highly respected by the village folk, they, too, rejected the church. The marriage of Galethebege and Ralokae was solemnized strictly according to the Setswana ceremonial custom.

Galethebege, however, continued to pray. She refused to believe that God shuts the door of heaven for non-believers. The listeners of the story narrated by Modise began to wonder (like their forbears, contemporaries of Ralokae-Galethebege) whether the Christian religion was, after all, as unforgiving of sinners (non-believers) as the old missionaries made it out to be. All her life, Galethebege's effort, perhaps, was to appeal to God through her prayer to open the doors of heaven even for non-believers like Ralokae.

### **Self-check questions**

1. How devoted was Galethebege to God? Give two instances of her devotion.
2. Why was Galethebege rather hesitant to first marry Ralokae?
3. What according to Ralokae, was "wrong with the people" who taught the gospel?
4. Why was Galethebege expelled from the church?
5. What was the importance of cow in the Setswana marriage ceremony?
6. Who narrates the story of Galethebege?

### **Paragraph**

1. Describe the character of Ralokae.

### **Topic for discussion**

'Heaven is not Closed' tells the story of two mutually opposed traditions. Discuss.

### **Answer to self-check questions**

1. Galethebege was a believer to the core. Before her marriage she went to church regularly. But after marriage she was expelled from church and that made her sad. After Ralokae's death, Galethebege talked only of God and she was even able to predict the time of her death.
2. At first Galethebege was hesitant to marry Ralokae because he was a non-believer.
3. The people who taught the gospel enslaved the black people with love. This was the problem that Ralokae identified.
4. Galethebege was expelled from church because she married Ralokae, a non-believer.
5. The cow was important in Setswana marriage ceremony because the cow was part of their life and custom. They took their clothes from the cow and their food from the cow and it was the symbol of their wealth. So the cow was a holy thing in Setswana life.
6. Modise narrates the story of Galethebege to the grand children.

**Paragraph**

1. Ralokae was a young man who lost his wife in childbirth. He observed the traditional restraints and disciplines of *boswagadi* or mourning for the deceased. A year later he underwent the cleansing ceremony. Then he was ready to resume normal life as a man. He then fell in love with Galethebege. He was so persistent that she had to oblige. Ralokae was a believer of the traditional customs of Setswana. He did not believe in the gospels and the church. He saw that the church enslaved the black men. Now the blacks were crying for love. In Setswana one never had to cry for love. Respect was there for people all the time. So he rejected these foreign ideas. He never interfered in the belief of Galethebege. He loved her very much and lived a satisfied life.

**Topic for discussion.**

1. Refer summary of text.

### **3. I AM A CAT**

**Natsume Soseki**

#### **Objective**

At the end of the story the student will learn:

1. About the genre of autobiography.
2. The need for tolerance towards fellow creatures
3. About the characteristics that human beings ought to change.

#### **About the author.**

Natsume Soseki (1867 – 1916) was a popular Japanese writer of comic novels in the Meiji era. *I am a Cat* (1905) and *Master Darling* (1906) are two of his great works. His stories focused on the modern intellectual in Japan and satirized the unsympathetic and pretentious ways of the academic and artistic worlds. He has also written an autobiographical novel *Grass on the Wayside*. (1915).

#### **Summary of the text**

This story is an excerpt from the novel *I am a Cat*. It is a narrative, having sly, earthy humour and keen observation. It is written from the point of view of a cat that is distanced from the human world and at the same time part of the human world.

The story begins with a catchy, deceptive statement “I am a cat but I have no name”. The cat goes on to narrate its story from birth as though it is trying to remember each moment of its life. Its first encounter with the human world was his meeting with the student. The cat callously observes and describes the student. The student’s face was a slippery thing like a kettle. The middle of his face was protruded and on this there were two holes through which smoke emerged. This was what the cat disliked because it felt so choked by the smell of tobacco. While the cat snuggled on the student’s palm it felt a quick movement and did not quite understand what was happening. Later it realized that it was thrown into a bamboo bush by the side of the pond. By night it felt very hungry and desperately searched for food. Fortunately it saw a hole in the fence and reached the estate of a school teacher. At the teacher’s house the cat’s first encounter was with Osan, the maid servant. She was not friendly but the master took pity on the cat and ultimately it made its home there.

The cat describes the master as a school teacher who pretends to be very intelligent and busy. The family thought that the master was engaged in serious studies. But the cat who had the freedom to sneak into his room realized that most of the time he was dozing off or fidgeting with a book. He always complained about work. Seeing all this, the cat observes that school teachers are fortunate because a teacher can keep his job and still sleep as much as he liked. The cat also expresses its wish like this: “If I were to be reborn a man, I would, without doubt, become a teacher”.

The cat had a few friends as well with whom it shared views about the human world. Shiro was a female cat who had four cute little kittens. But the student had thrown all of them into the pond. She also had the opinion that for cats to fulfill parental affection, they ought to overthrow the human race. Mi-ke the tom-cat also shared the same opinion. He was extremely angry about the human ways and attitudes.

The narrator-cat then to describe his master's hobbies. The master actually did not have the skill to do anything perfectly but he poked his nose into everything. Sometimes he contributed poems to *Hototogisu* magazine and sometimes to *Myojo* magazine. But the strangest experience the cat had was his master's desire to become a painter. He tried painting but it did not come out good. One friend advised him that Andrea del Sarto had said that to be a good painter one should start painting nature. It was then that the school teacher started drawing the picture of the cat. The narrator-cat had a sly smile on its face as it posed for the painting. It took a long time and the painting was very bad. At this point the cat comments that "if this is what they called the Andrea del Sarto way of drawing pictures, it wasn't worth a sen".

The cat however respected his master's enthusiasm. But it could not stay still for a long time so it stretched and yawned and ran away to respond to the call of nature. This made the master angry and he shouted 'you fool' after the cat. The cat observes that this was the only way his master knew to swear. The cat concludes by stating how callous and inhuman the attitude of mankind towards animals was. It places the suggestion that some power ought to control them better or they would go beyond their limits.

### **Self-check questions**

1. What type of a story is this?
2. "But at that time, I did not have the slightest idea of all this so I wasn't frightened a bit." Who is the speaker? Why wasn't he/she frightened?
3. "I came to dislike Osan all through". Who is Osan? What was the reason for the dislike?
4. Why does the cat think that school teachers are fortunate? How does it become an attack on his master?
5. How did the cat co-operate with the master as a model?
6. Who is Andrea del Sarto?

### **Paragraph**

1. Comment on the cat's estimation of his master's character?

### **Topic for discussion**

1. 'I am a Cat' is a satire on human pretensions and hypocrisy. Discuss.

**Answer to self-check questions**

1. This is a semi-auto biographical story because it is not just the story of the cat but of its master's as well.
2. The speaker is a cat who is the narrator. It was not frightened because it was unaware of the cruelties of the mankind.
3. Osan is the maid-servant in the school teacher's house. She threw the hungry and cold little cat out of the house several times.
4. After a close observation of the life of its master, the cat feels that a school teacher's life is fortunate because one can keep his work and at the same time sleep as much as he wanted.
5. The cat suppressed a smile that surged and sat still pretending to sleep.
6. Andrea del Sarto (1486-1531) is a painter who was the contemporary of Michelangelo and Raphael. Robert Browning the Victorian poet has written a poem on this 'faultless painter'

**Paragraph**

The cat describes the master as a school teacher who pretends to be very intelligent and busy. The family thought that the master was engaged in serious studies. But the cat who had the freedom to sneak into his room realized that most of the time he was dozing off or fidgeting with a book. He always complained about work. Seeing all this, the cat observes that school teachers are fortunate because a teacher can keep his job and still sleep as much as he liked. The master actually did not have the skill to do anything perfectly but he poked his nose into everything. Sometimes he contributed poems to *Hototogisu* magazine and sometimes to *Myojo* magazine. But the strangest experience the cat had was his master's desire to become a painter. He tried painting but it did not come out good. One friend advised him that Andrea del Sarto had said that to be a good painter one should start painting nature. It was then that the school teacher started drawing the picture of the cat. The narrator-cat had a sly smile on its face as it posed for the painting. It took a long time and the painting was very bad. At this point the cat comments: "if this is what they called the Andrea de Sarto way of drawing pictures, it wasn't worth a sen". The cat however respected his master's enthusiasm. But it could not stay still for a long time so it stretched and yawned and ran away to respond to the call of nature. This made the master angry and he shouted 'you fool' after the cat. The cat observes that this was the only way his master knew to swear

**Topic for discussion**

Refer summary of the text

## **MODULE IV: DRAMA**

### **1. THE BOY COMES HOME**

A A Milne

#### **Objectives**

At the end of this unit the student will be able to ponder upon:

1. The aspects of a one-act play.
2. Whether war is necessary or not.
3. The conflict between the young and old generations.

#### **About the author**

A A Milne (1882 – 1956) is a well-known English playwright, novelist and essayist of the 1930s and 40s. He started as a journalist and gained popularity as writer of light comic essays for *Punch*. *Mr. Pim Passes By* (1919) and *The Dover Road* (1921) are among his important plays.

#### **Summary of the text**

The play “The Boy Comes Home” is a light comedy. It throws light on the generation gap. The old generation thinks that the young generation is immature just like a school boy. It should obey the old generation. In fact, the young generation is mature and it can take the right decisions.

Philip is a young man of 23. He lives with Uncle James, who is his patron. He has returned after four years of war. On the very first morning he comes for breakfast at ten. Uncle James keeps a strict discipline in the house. According to his orders breakfast is served at eight. Philip has a row with Mrs. Higgins because of this. She threatens to leave the job if she is asked to prepare breakfast at ten. Philip handles her in a very clear and clever way.

The first conflict between Philip and Uncle James is that Philip does not like his uncle’s authoritative attitude and his strict discipline in the house. When we read the play “The Boy Comes Home” carefully, we find the authoritative attitude of Uncle James. He treats Philip as an inexperienced schoolboy. He thinks that he will decide everything for Philip. He wants to use his authority as a patron. Aunt Emily asks him to let Philip decide his career. But he wanted Philip to be clear of his decision. Philip wanted the money left by his father to learn a profession. Uncle James does not want to give him the money till he is 25. Philip does not like this attitude. Uncle James tells Philip that he will use the power of purse if he does not submit to his orders. Then Philip uses the power of revolver and bomb. He frightens Uncle James to death and he is now ready to do what Philip wanted.

Uncle James waits for Philip to ask him to join his jam business. However just before Philip’s entry into the room, he dozes off. In his dream, he meets with Philip. He orders him to join the jam business. Philip also wants to learn some profession. Uncle James thinks that he is

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just like a schoolboy as he cannot choose a career for himself. The dream sequence has great importance in the play “The Boy Comes Home” for a number of reasons. The first and the most important reason is that in normal life, it looks very awkward and immoral for a nephew to aim a revolver at his uncle and to make him kneel down and beg for his life. So the writer has used a dream sequence to present this awkward and immoral situation. He makes the reader believe that all this has happened in a dream and it should not be taken seriously. Secondly the dream sequence ends the conflict between Philip and Uncle James. We see that after his dream Uncle James is a new man. Now there exists no conflict between them. He is now a reasonable man. Now he understands the problems of the young generation. Thirdly the dream sequence is a source of comedy.

To prove that he is mature, Philip relates his experience at Somme. Somme was the battle front, where Philip’s company would launch an attack the next day. They were in a trench. The Germans knew about them. Therefore, they were firing. The company commander wanted to move from that place. He consulted his C. O. The C. O. ordered them to stay there and wait until the next day. Later, the Germans killed the company commander. After his death, Philip became the new company commander. He knew something about scouting too. Therefore he found another trench. They had lost about half the company by that time. Now Philip had three options. First, he might stay there and wait until the next day. Second, he might move to another trench against orders. Third, he might go back himself and explain the situation to the C. O. It was a very difficult situation. Lives of many soldiers depended on his decision. He moved the company to the other trench. Then he went back to the C. O. and told him that he had moved. After that he went back to the company again.

The war has greatly affected Philip’s personality. The words spoken by Aunt Emily are very important and meaningful. She says to Uncle James, “Well, I think that Philip’s four years out there have made him more of a man, he doesn’t seem somehow like a boy who can be told what to do. I’m sure they have taught him something.” She further says, “You’ll find him different”. Before going to the war Philip was an inexperienced boy. Now he is a grown up man. Before going to the war, he used to do what he was asked to do. Now he makes his own decisions and nobody can dictate to him. The army has taught him something. He is different now. He has learned how to handle people. He has also learned to use power against power. Uncle James threatens to use the power of purse, but suddenly Philip takes out a revolver and levels at him. Uncle James tells him it is not fair to settle arguments by force.

In the meanwhile, Uncle James wakes up. He is now a changed man. When Philip actually comes to talk to him, he is rather confused and repeats the same things that he had said in his dream. Philip at once agrees to join the jam business. Uncle James is not sure about his dream. At the end of the play, Uncle James’ condition creates a lot of comedy when he laughs with a forced heartiness. The relief expressed by Philip about the ending of war brings home the idea that war makes everyone miserable. The soldiers, the common people and others suffer equally. No one desires war.

### **Self-check questions**

1. What are the “sacrifices” that Uncle James claims to have made for the country during the war?
2. What, according to Uncle James, has the army not taught Philip?
3. How did Philip prove that he was twenty five?
4. Why was Philip relieved that the war was over?

### **Paragraph**

1. Comment on the themes dealt with in the play.

### **Topic for discussion**

1. Discuss, *The boy comes Home* as an anti-war comedy.

### **Answers to self-check questions**

1. Uncle James claims to have sacrificed his nephew for the war. He had also suffered from shortage of potatoes.
2. According to Uncle James, the army has not taught Philip discipline.
3. He convinced his uncle that he had seen and experienced a lot during the war and that he was now capable of taking up business.
4. Philip is relieved that the war is over so that he could spend the rest of his life in the British Museum and be happy.

### **Paragraph**

The Boy Comes Home is a comedy that discusses many serious issues in a light vein. The first theme is the conflict between generations. Uncle James who thinks highly of discipline is disappointed when Philip does not adhere to it. Philip, the representative of the young, wishes to enjoy his freedom after four years of strict discipline at the war front. The play presents certain aspects of life in England like varying degrees of politeness, decency, and respect expressed in exchanges. This play is also about war. It breaks all illusions about war: bravery, cruelty, love of one's country, hatred of enemy, the support of fellow soldiers, discipline etc.

### **Topic for discussion**

Refer summary text.

## **2. REFUND**

**Fritz Karinthy**

### **Objectives**

At the end of the unit the student will get to know:

1. The false notions regarding education system.
2. About the genre called farce.
3. That every individual possesses the skill to survive in this world.

### **About the author**

Frigyes (Fritz) Karinthy (1887 – 1938) was once described by A A Milne as a ‘pseudo-humorist’. According to Hungarians he brought satire to his country by translating Jonathan Swift, Heinrich Heine and Mark Twain into modern Hungarian. He never took a moralistic stand in writing. He wrote for all type of audience.

### **Summary**

The play *Refund* is full of humour which deals with an extraordinarily ludicrous situation. The main character in the play is Wasserkopf. Wasserkopf in German means one with a ‘water-head’, an eccentric person. He is forty years old. The play opens with the visit of an alumnus (Wasserkopf) to his former school with a peculiar motive. He wanted the principal to refund the tuition fees that he paid to the school while he was a student. He claimed the refund because according to him he did not learn anything at school. He retorted that his school certificate was useless as he had not been able to secure a job so far. This unique idea of claiming a refund of fees was given to him by his classmate, Leaderer. The Principal, who had never encountered such a baffling situation before, summons an emergency meeting of the staff. The Masters did not take long to realize that they were dealing with a crafty and cunning individual. Wasserkopf’s idea was to take a re-examination, fail in the exam and go home with a refund. The masters realized that Wasserkopf’s real intention was to fail in the exam and claim the refund. Therefore, they decided to outsmart the old student by proving all his answers right, however erroneous they might be. The Mathematics Master said that in the implementation of the plan they had to stick together. They had to be united and ought to help each other in implementing their plan. The exam was an oral one as Wasserkopf’s refusal to sit down was interpreted by the Mathematics Master as a signal to dispense with the written form of examination. The first question was from the History Master. The Master asked him how many years the ‘Thirty Years’ war lasted. The answer was in the question itself. But Wasserkopf who was keen on giving wrong answers, said that the ‘Thirty Years war’, lasted seven metres. The History Master did not know how to prove this answer right. Fortunately for him, the Mathematics master aided him by proving that the answer was right on the basis of Einstein’s Theory of Relativity. The Master argued that time and space are relative terms and therefore years can be represented in terms of metre. Therefore, Wasserkopf’s answer was right. Wasserkopf called the History Master a numskull. One by one each teacher put

questions to him and justified his wrong answers to be correct and they marked him excellent. Though Wasserkopf provided wrong answers and used abusive words to each teacher, they did not show their anger because they had to prove that he was an excellent student. The Physics Master's question was whether objects actually become smaller as people moved away from it or if it was an optical illusion. To this question, the answer given by Wasserkopf was 'Ass'. This is also proved correct by the Physics Master who demonstrated that the melancholic look of the ass is also an optical illusion. Therefore, Wasserkopf has given a metaphorical explanation. Wasserkopf called him a cannibal. The Geography Master asked him "what city of the same name is the capital of the German Province of Brunswick?" The Geography master did not have much difficulty in proving that the capital of the German Province of Brunswick is 'Same' as Wasserkopf had insisted. Wasserkopf called his Geography Master "old reprobate". The Mathematics Master was the smartest of them all. He laid a clever trap and the student fell into that trap. First, the master asked the student an 'easy' (Which is actually difficult) question, on the circumference of a one-hundred and nine sided regular polyhedron. The question shocked all the Masters and the Principal. Wasserkopf, with all his knowledge, would have found that question difficult. But he gave an almost correct answer. The Mathematics master said that the student had failed in Mathematics and hence should be given the refund. And he cleverly trapped Wasserkopf and made him calculate the exact amount that should be refunded. Wasserkopf did not realize that this was his difficult question. He calculated the exact amount and said it was 6,450 crowns and 50 Heller. Once the Mathematics Master got the exact answer he revealed to Wasserkopf that the second question was his 'difficult' question. Wasserkopf addressed him as 'old stick – in the - mud'. By giving the right answer to the difficult question he was assigned the title of 'Mathematical Genius'. Thus through the combined efforts of all the masters Wasserkopf was made to pass the re-examination. Finally, he was shown the door without a refund. The masters had finally succeeded in outwitting a crafty and sly pupil.

### **Self-check questions**

1. What prompted Wasserkopf to go to his school seeking a refund of his tuition fee?
2. "Whatever his answer, we agree beforehand that they are correct." Who is the speaker? Who is he speaking to? Why?
3. How does Wasserkopf try to provoke his teachers? Why?
4. Why was Wasserkopf awarded "Excellent" in manners?
5. How does the mathematics master interpret Wasserkopf's refusal to be seated?
6. What was the difficult question put to Wasserkopf by the Mathematics teacher?

### **Paragraph**

1. How does the history teacher establish that Wasserkopf has correctly answered his question?

### **Topic for discussion**

How do the teachers and principal get the better of the villain Wasserkopf in the play *Refund*?

### **Answers to self-check questions**

1. The fact that he was jobless and without money and the advice of his friend Leaderer prompted Wasserkopf to go to his school to get refund of his fees. He felt that the education he had received was not worth the fee paid for it.
2. The Mathematics Master is the speaker. He is speaking to the other teachers of the school. Wasserkopf, according to the Mathematics Master, was a sly, crafty individual who will try to get the better of the teachers. So they had to agree that all the answers he gave were correct and thereby avoid refund of fees.
3. Wasserkopf tries to provoke his teachers by insolently entering without permission or greeting and staring rudely at them with hands in pockets. He did this to show that he had not learnt manners a cordial behaviour from the institution.
4. When the teachers greeted Wasserkopf he swore at them. According to their earlier decision he was given an “Excellent” in manners.
5. Wasserkopf refused to sit down. The Mathematics Master immediately concluded that he could take oral examination, not a written one. He also asserted that Wasserkopf’s physical condition was splendid. So an “Excellent” was awarded in physical culture as well.
6. “How much do we owe you, Herr Wasserkopf?” was the easy question put by the Mathematics Master.

### **Paragraph**

The History Master’s question was “How long did the ‘Thirty Years War’ last?” Wasserkopf answered that it was exactly seven metres, knowing well that it was an incorrect answer. But the History Master agreed quickly that his answer was right. Then the Mathematics Master supported him with quantum theory, Planck and Einstein. The History Master explained that during the thirty years war exact warfare took place only during half of each day which meant twelve hours and hence the thirty years could be taken as fifteen. Then all the time taken for eating and leisure and sleeping had to be deducted, which brought down the total hours of warfare. Then again the Mathematics Master asserted that the actual time of warfare was exactly equivalent to seven metres according to Einsteinian theory. And before Wasserkopf could argue, he assigned ‘very good’ as grading in history.

### **Topic for discussion**

Refer summary of the text.

