THE SHORT STORY: AS A MINOR FORM OF LITERATURE
DEVELOPMENT, ELEMENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS

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1.0 Objectives:

After learning this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning and origin of the short story
- Know the development of the short story
- Learn the elements and characteristics of the short story.

1.1 Introduction:

The desire to listen to stories is deeply rooted in human civilization world over. Man, being the social animal, is always interested in other man’s life. This feature of man’s mind might have created the art of story-telling.

Short stories date back to oral story-telling traditions which originally produced epics such as Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey. Oral narratives were often told in the form of rhyming or rhythmic verse, often including recurring sections. Such device helped
to recall the stories easily. Short sections of verse might focus on individual narratives that could be told at one sitting.

The origin of short story can be traced back to the oral story-telling tradition. Perhaps the oldest form of the short story is the anecdote which was popular in the Roman Empire. At the time, the anecdotes functioned as a kind of parables in the Roman Empire. Anecdote is a brief realistic narrative that embodies a point. The anecdotes remained popular in Europe well into the 18th century, when the fictional anecdotal letters of Sir Roger de Coverley were published.

The another form close to the short story is the fable. Fables, concise tales with an explicit moral were, said by the Greek historian, Herodotus to have been invented in the 6th century BCE by a Greek slave named Aesop, though other times and nationalities have also been given for him. These ancient fables are today known as Aesop’s fables.

In essence, the short story is a literary genre which presents a single significant event or a scene involving a limited number of characters. Short stories have no set length. In terms of word count there is no official boundary between an anecdote, a short story, and a novel. Rather, the form’s limits are given by the rhetorical and practical context in which a given story is produced and considered, so that what constitutes a short story may differ between genres, countries, eras, and commentators.

The short story has been considered both an apprenticeship from preceding more lengthy works, and a crafted form in its own right, collected together in books of similar length, price, and distribution as novels.

**Definition of Short Story**

Deciding what exactly separates a short story from longer fictional formats is problematic. A classic definition of a short story is that one should be able to read it in one sitting, the point most notably made in Edgar Allan Poe’s essay “Thomas Le Moineau (Le Moile)” (1846). Interpreting this standard nowadays is problematic, since the expected length of “One sitting” may now be briefer than it was in Poe’s era. Other definitions place the maximum word count of the short story at anywhere from 1,000 to 9,000 words. For example, Harris King’s “A Solitary Man” is around 4,000 words. In contemporary usage, the term short story, most often, refers to a work of fiction no longer than 20,000 words and no shorter than 1,000 words or 5 to
20 pages. Stories of fewer than 1,000 words are sometimes referred to as “short short stories” or “flash fiction”.

As a point of reference for the science fiction genre writer, the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America define short story length for Nebula Awards for science fiction submission guidelines as having a word count of fewer than 7,500.

Longer stories that cannot be called novels are sometimes considered “novellas”, and, like short stories, may be collected into the more marketable form of “collections”, often containing previously unpublished stories. For example, after Shirley Jackson died, a crate of unpublished short stories was discovered in her barn and collected into a short story collection in her memory. Sometimes, authors who do not have the time or money to write a novella or novel decide to write short stories instead, working out a deal with a popular website or magazine to publish them for profit.

It is reasonable to say that a firm definition of a short story is impossible. No simple theory can encompass the diverse nature of a genre in which the only constant feature seems to be the achievement of a narrative purpose in a comparatively brief space. Each definition emphasizes some aspects and cannot cover all. However, to get some idea about the form, we can highlight some definitions:

1. “A fictional prose tale of no specified length, but too short to be published as a volume on its own, as novellas sometimes and novels unusually are. A short story will normally concentrate on a single event with only one or two characters, more economically than a novel’s sustained exploration of social background”.


2. “A short story is a brief work of prose fiction, and most of the terms for analyzing the component elements, the types, and the narrative techniques of the novel are applicable to the short story as well.”


3. A prose narrative “requiring from half an hour to one or two hours in its perusal.”

   Edgar Allan Poe: Review of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Twice Told Tales.
1.2 Presentation of Subject Matter

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M. H. Abrams, Geoffrey Galt Harpham: 
_A Handbook of Literary Terms._

3. A prose narrative “requiring from half an hour to one or two hours in its perusal.”

Edgar Allan Poe: Review of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s _Twice Told Tales._

**DEVELOPMENT**

The short story is a comparatively recent development in English literature. In Europe, the oral story-telling tradition began to develop into written stories in the early 14th century with Geoffrey Chaucer’s _Canterbury Tales_ and Giovanni Bocaccio’s _Decameron._ Both of these books are composed of individual short stories set within a larger narrative story. At the end of the 16th century, some of the most popular short stories in Europe were the darkly tragic “novella” of Matteo Bandello (especially in their French translation). The mid-17th century in France saw the development of a refined short novel, the “nouvelle” by authors like Madam de Lafayette. In the 1690s, traditional fairy tales began to be published. One of the most famous collections was by Charles Perrault. The appearance of Antoine Galland’s first modern translation of the _Thousand and One Nights_ or _Arabian Nights_ would have an enormous influence on the 18th century European short stories of Voltaire, Diderot and others. For the sake of the convenience of study it is possible to study the development of the short story by dividing it into periods as follows:

**1790 – 1850**

There are early examples of short stories published separately between 1790 and 1810, but the first true collection of short stories appeared between 1810 and 1830 in several countries around the same period.

The first short stories in the United Kingdom were gothic tales like Richard Cumberland’s “remarkable narrative” “The Poisoner of Montremos” (1791). The Great novelists like Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens also wrote some short stories.
One of the earliest short stories in the United States was Charles Brockden Brown’s “Somnambulism”. Washington Irving wrote mysterious tales including “Rip van Winkle” (1819) and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (1820). Nathaniel Hawthorne published the first part of his *Twice-Told Tales* in 1837. Edgar Allan Poe wrote his tales of mystery and imagination between 1832 and 1849. Classic stories are “The Fall of the House of Usher”, “The Tell-Tale Heart”, “The Cask of Amontillado”, “The Pit and the Pendulum”, and the first detective story, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”. In “The Philosophy of Composition” (1846), Poe argued that a literary work should be short enough for a reader to finish in one sitting.

In Germany, the first collection of short stories was by Heinrich von Kleist in 1810 and 11. The Brothers Grimm published their first volume of collected fairy tales is 1812. E. T. A. Hoffmann followed with his own original fantasy tales, of which “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King” (1816) is the most famous.

In France Prosper Mérimée wrote *Mateo Falcone* in 1829.

In Russia Alexander Pushkin wrote romantic and mysterious tales, including “The Blizzard” (1831) and “The Queen of Spades” (1834). Nikolai Gogol’s “Nevsky Prospekt” (1835), “The Nose” (1836) and “The Overcoat” (1842) are dark humorous tales about human misery.

### 1850 – 1900

In the later 19th century, the growth of print magazines and journals created a strong demand for the short fiction between 3,000 to 15,000 words. Towards the end of the 19th century, all branches of literature and the arts became self-conscious. People began to acknowledge that the short story might be shaped according to its own principles. With the rapid industrialization people got less time to read the long pieces of literature. They expected to read something interesting in a short period in a single sitting. This demand was fulfilled by the short story and soon it became a popular genre of literature.

In the United Kingdom, Thomas Hardy wrote dozens of short stories, including “The Three Strangers” (1883), “A Mere Interlude” (1885) and “Barbara of the House of Grebe” (1890). Rudyard Kipling published the short story collections like *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888) for grown-ups as well as *The Jungle Book* (1894) for children. In 1892 Arthur Conan Doyle brought the detective story to a new height.

In the United States, Herman Melville published his story collection *The Piazza Tales* in 1856. “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras Country” was the title story of Mark Twain’s first book one year later. In 1884, Brander Matthews, the first American professor of dramatic literature, published *The Philosophy of the Short-Story*. At the same year, Matthews was the first one to name the emerging genre “short story”. Another theorist of narrative fiction was Henry James. James wrote a lot of short stories himself, including “The Real Thing” (1892), “Maud-Evelyn” and *The Beast in the Jungle* (1903). In the 1890s Kate Chopin publishes short stories in several magazines.

The most prolific French author of short stories was Guy de Maupassant. Stories like “*Boule de Suif*” (“Ball of Fat” 1880) and “*L’Inutile Beauté*” (“The Useless Beauty”, 1890) are good examples of French realism.

In Russia, Ivan Turgenev gained recognition with his story collection *A Sportsman’s Sketches*. Nikolai Leskov created his first short stories in the 1860s. Late in his life Fyodor Dostoyevski wrote “The Meek One” (1876) and “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man” (1877), two stories with great psychological and philosophical depth. Leo Tolstoy handled ethical questions in his short stories, for example, in “Ivan the Fool” (1885), “How Much Land Does a Man Need?” (1886) and “Alyosha the Pot” (1905). The greatest specialist of the Russian short story however was Anton Chekhov. Classic examples of his realistic prose are “The Bet” (1889), “Ward No. 6” (1892), and “The Lady with the Dog” (1899). Maxim Gorky’s a best known short story is “Twenty-six Men and a Girl” (1899).

The most prolific Indian author of short stories was Munshi Premchand, who pioneered the genre in the Hindi-Urdu language writing a substantial body of the short stories and novel in a style characterized by realism and an unsentimental and authentic introspection into the complexities of Indian Society. Premchand’s work including his over 200 short stories such as the story “Lottery” and his novel *Godaan* remain substantial works. Rabindranath Tagore with his “The Beggar Woman” (1877) in Bengali language introduced the genre of the short story.

In Poland, Boleslaw Prus was the most important author of short stories. In 1888 he wrote “A Legend of Old Egypt”.

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1900 - 1945

In the United Kingdom, periodicals like The Strand Magazine, The Sketch, Harper’s Magazine and Story-Teller contributed to the popularity of the short story. Hector Huge Munro (1870-1916), also known by his pen name of Saki, wrote satirical short stories about Edwardian England. W. Somerset Maugham, who wrote over a hundred short stories, was one of the most popular authors of his time. P. G. Wodehouse published his first collection of comical stories about butler Jeeves in 1917. Lots of detective stories were written by G. K. Chesterton, Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers. Short stories by Virginia Woolf “Kew Gardens” (1919) and “Solid Objects,” are about a politician with mental problems. Graham Greene wrote his Twenty-One Stories between 1929 and 1954. A specialist of the short story was V. S. Pritchett, whose first collection appeared in 1932. Arthur C. Clarke published his first science fiction story, “Travel by Wire!” in 1937.

In Ireland, James Joyce published his short story collection Dubliners in 1914. These stories, written in a more accessible style than his later novels, are based on careful observation of the inhabitants of his birth city.

In the first half of the 20th century, a number of high-profile American magazines such as The Atlantic Monthly, The New Yorker, Scribner’s, The Saturday Evening Post, Esquire, and The Bookman published short stories in each issue. The demand for quality short stories was so great and the money paid for it was so well that F. Scott Fitzgerald repeatedly turned to short-story writing to pay his numerous debts. His first collection Flappers and Philosophers appeared in a book form in 1920. William Faulkner wrote over one hundred short stories. Go Down, Moses, a collection of seven stories, appeared in 1941. Ernest Hemingway’s concise writing style was perfectly fit for shorter fiction. Stories like “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” (1926), “Hills Like White Elephants” (1927) and Dorothy Parker’s bittersweet story “Big Blonde” saw the light in 1929. A popular science fiction story is “Nightfall” by Isaac Asimov.

Katherine Mansfield from New Zealand wrote many of her short stories between 1912 and her death in 1923. “The Doll’s House” (1922) treats the topic of social inequity.
Two important authors of short stories in the German language were Thomas Mann and Franz Kafka. In 1922 the latter wrote “A Hunger Artist”, about a man who fasts for several days.

Ryūnosuke Akutagawa (1892-1927) is called the Father of the Japanese short story.

**After 1945: The Post-war Era**

The period following World War II saw a great flowering of literary short fiction in the United States. *The New Yorker* continued to publish the works of the form’s leading mid-century practitioners, including Shirley Jackson, whose story, “The Lottery” published in 1948, elicited the strongest response in the magazine’s history to that time. Other frequent contributors during the last 1940s included John Cheever, John Steinbeck, Jean Stafford and Eudora Welty. J. D. Salinger’s “Nine Stories” (1953) experimented with point of view and voice, while Flannery O’Connor’s “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (1955) reinvigorated the Southern Gothic style. When *Life* magazine published Ernest Hemingway’s long short story (or novella) *The Old Man and the Sea* in 1952, the issue containing this story sold 5,300,000 copies in only two days.


Stephen King, one of the best-selling novelists of all time, initiated his career by publishing numerous short stories in men’s magazines of the era (1970s) and stated in an interview with Rich Fahle regarding his short story collection *Just After Sunset* that “The novel is a quagmire that a lot of young writers stumble into. I started with short stories and I got comfortable with that format and never wanted to leave it behind.”
Minimalism gained widespread influence in the 1980s, most notably in the work of Raymond Carver, Ann Beattie and Bobbi Ann Mason. However, traditionalists including John Updike and Joyce Carol Oates maintained significant influence on the form, as did Canadian author Alice Munro. John Gardner’s seminal reference text, “The Art of Fiction”, appeared in 1983.

Many of the American short stories of the 1990s feature magical realism. Among the leading practitioners in this style were Steven Millhauser and Robert Olen Butler. Stuart Dybek gained prominence for his depictions of life in Chicago’s Polish neighborhoods and Tim O’Brien’s “The Things They Carried” tackled the legacy of the Vietnam War. Louise Erdrich wrote poignantly of Native American life. T. C. Boyle and David Foster Wallace explored the psychology of popular culture.

The first years of the 21st century saw the emergence of a new generation of young writers including Jhumpa Lahiri, Karen Russell, Nathan Englander, Kevin Brockmeier, George Saunders, German-American bilingual writer Paul-Henri Campbell and Dan Chaon. Blogs and e-zines joined traditional paper-based literary journals in showcasing the work of emerging authors.

Thus the development of short story is multi-concerned and distinctive. Its growth suggests the popularity of this genre.

**ELEMENTS OF THE SHORT STORY**

The short story is not merely a shortened novel. It shares, of course, the usual constituent elements of all fiction: plot, character, and setting. These elements cannot be treated with the same detail as in a novel. Each element is to be reduced for an overall effect and impression. Hence, plot is confined to the essentials, the characters to the indispensable, and the setting to a few suggestive hints.

1. **Plot:**

Plot is a literary term defined as the events that make up a story, particularly as they relate to one another in a pattern, in a sequence, through cause and effect, how the reader views the story, or simply by coincidence. One is generally interested in how well this pattern of events accomplishes some artistic or emotional effect. An intricate, complicated plot is called a mess, but even the simplest statements of plot may include multiple inferences, as in traditional ballads.
Aristotle on Plot:

In his Poetics, Aristotle considered plot (*mythos*) the most important element of drama-more important than character. A plot must have, Aristotle says, a beginning, a middle, and an end, and the events of the plot must casually relate to one another as being either necessary or probable.

Of the utmost importance to Aristotle is the plot’s ability to arouse emotion in the psyche of the audience. In tragedy, the appropriate emotions are fear and pity, emotions which he considers in his Rhetoric. (Aristotle’s work on comedy has not survived.)

Aristotle goes on to consider whether the tragic character suffers (pathos), and whether the tragic character commits the error with knowledge of what he is doing. He illustrates this with the question of a tragic character who is about to kill someone in his family.

The worst situation (artistically) is when the personage is with full knowledge on the point of doing the deed, and leaves it undone. It is odious and also (through the absence of suffering) untragic; hence it is that no one is made to act thus except in some few instances, e.g., Haemon and Creon in *Antigone*. Next after this comes the actual perpetration of the deed meditated. A better situation than that, however, is for the deed to be done in ignorance, and the relationship discovered afterwards, since there is nothing odious in it and the discovery will serve to astound us. But the best of all is the last; what we have in Cresphontes, for example, where Meropé, on the point of slaying her son, recognizes him in time; in Iphigenia, where sister and brother are in the like position; and in Helle, where the son recognizes his mother, when on the point of giving her up to her enemy. (Poetics book 14).

FREYTAG ON PLOT

![Freytag's Triangle]

1. *Exposition*
2. *Rising Action*
3. *Climax*
4. *Falling Action*
5. *Denouement*
A German novelist and playwright, Gustav Freytag considered plot a narrative structure that divided a story into five parts, like the five acts of a play. These parts are: exposition (of the situation); rising action (through conflict); climax (or turning point); falling action; and denouement or resolution.

- **Exposition:**

  The exposition introduces all of the main characters in the story. It shows how they relate to one another, what their goals and motivations are, and the kind of person they are. The audience may have questions about any of these things, which get settled, but if they do have them they are specific and well-focused questions. Most importantly, in the exposition, the audience gets to know the main character (protagonist), and the protagonist gets to know his or her main goal and what is at stake if he or she fails to attain this goal.

  This phase ends, and the next begins, with the introduction of conflict.

- **Rising action:**

  Rising action is the second phase in Freytag’s five-phase structure. It starts with the death of the characters or a conflict.

  “Conflict” in Freytag’s discussion must not be confused with “conflict” in Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch’s critical apparatus plots into types, e.g. man vs. society. The difference is that an entire story can be discussed according to Quiller-Couch’s mode of analysis, while Freytag is talking about the second act in a five-act play, at a time when all of the major characters have been introduced, their motives and allegiances have been made clear (at least for the most part), and they now begin to struggle against one another.

  Generally, in this phase the protagonist understands his or her goal and begins to work toward it. Smaller problems spoil the protagonist’s initial success, and in this phase his or her progress is directed primarily against these secondary obstacles. This phase shows us how he or she overcomes these obstacles.

- **Climax:**

  The point of climax is the turning point of the story, where the main character makes the single big decision that defines the outcome of their story and who they are as a person. The dramatic phase that Freytag called the “climax” is the third of the five phases, which occupies the middle of the story, and that contains the point of
climax. Thus “the climax” may refer to the point of climax or to the third phase of the drama.

The beginning of this is marked by the protagonist finally having cleared away the preliminary barriers and being ready to engage with the adversary. Usually, entering this phase, both the protagonist and the antagonist have a plan to win against the other. Now for the first time we see them going against one another in direct, or nearly direct, conflict.

This struggle results with neither character completely winning, nor losing, against the other. Usually, each character’s plan is partially successful, and partially foiled by his or her rival. What is unique about this central struggle between the two characters is that the protagonist makes a decision which shows us one’s moral quality, and ultimately determines one’s fate. In a tragedy, the protagonist here makes a “bad” decision, which is one’s miscalculation and the appearance of one’s tragic flaw.

The climax often contains much of the action in the story, for example, a defining battle.

- **Falling Action:**

  Freytag called this phase, “falling action” in the sense that the loose ends are being tied up. However, it is often the time of greatest overall tension in the play, because it is the phase in which everything goes most wrong.

  In this phase, the villain has the upper hand. It seems that evil will triumph. The protagonist has never been further from accomplishing the goal. For Freytag, this is true both in tragedies and comedies, because both of these types of play classically show good winning over evil. The question is which side the protagonist has put himself on, and this may not be immediately clear to the audience.

- **Resolution/ Denouement:**

  In the final phase of Freytag’s five phase structure, there is a final confrontation between the protagonist and antagonist, where one or the other decisively wins. This phase is the story of that confrontation, of what leads up to it, of why it happens the way it happens, what it means, and what its long-term consequences are.

  In the story “The Home-coming” the main characters, Phatik and Makhan are introduced at the beginning of the story. Their relation is also made clear at the
beginning. The action of the story rises with the incident of pushing of the log and reaches the climax with Makhan’s safety with mother’s love. The falling action begins with Phatik’s sufferings at his uncle’s home and it ends with his tragic death.

- **Other views:**

  Besides the classical view of plot, there are other ways of looking at it. Plot also has conflict in it so conflict has something to do with plot.

  1950s, During writing instructor, Foster-Harris, said that plot is an emotional problem caused by two conflicting emotions being felt by the same person (the main character), and the working-out of that conflict. His system for creating popular fiction is compatible with, but distinct from, the classical understanding of plot. In particular, his focus is not on analysis but generation: not how to write criticism about existing plots, but how to create one.

- **Plot Devices:**

  A plot device is a means of advancing the plot in a story, often used to motivate characters, create urgency or resolve a difficulty. This can be contrasted with moving a story forward with narrative technique; that is, by making things happen because characters take action for well-motivated reasons. As an example, when the cavalry shows up at the last moment and saves the day, that can be argued to be a plot device; when an adversarial character who has been struggling with himself saves the day due to a change of heart that is dramatic technique.

  Familiar types of plot devices include the Deus ex machina, the MacGuffin, the red herring and Chekhov’s gun. *A deus ex machina* (god from the machine); is a plot device whereby a seemingly unsolvable problem is suddenly and abruptly solved with the contrived and unexpected intervention of some new event, character, ability, or object. Depending on usage, it can be used to move the story forward when the writer has “painted himself into a corner” and sees no other way out, to surprise the audience, or to bring a happy ending into the tale.

  In fiction, a *MacGuffin* (sometimes McGuffin or maguffin) is a plot device in the form of some goal, desired object, or other motivator that the protagonist (and sometimes the antagonist) is willing to do and sacrifice almost anything to pursue, protect or control, often with little or no narrative explanation as to why it is considered so important. The specific nature of a MacGuffin may be ambiguous,
undefined, generic, left open to interpretation, or otherwise completely unimportant to the overall plot. The most common type of MacGuffin is an object, place or person, the exact details of which are not integral to the narrative. However, a MacGuffin can sometimes take a more abstract form, such as money, victory, glory, survival, power, love, or even something that is entirely unexplained, as long as it strongly motivates key characters within the structure of the plot. Whether the audience should care about or identify with a MacGuffin in a story is open to debate among producers of fiction. The MacGuffin technique is common in films, especially thrillers. Usually the MacGuffin is the central focus of the film in the first act, and then declines in importance as the struggles and motivations of characters play out. It may come back into play at the climax of the story, but sometimes the MacGuffin is actually forgotten by the end of the story. Multiple MacGuffins are sometimes derisively referred to as plot coupons.

Chekhov’s gun is a metaphor for a dramatic principle concerning simplicity and foreshadowing. It suggests that if one shows a loaded gun on stage in the first act of a play, it should be fired in a later act; otherwise, the gun should not be shown in the first place. The principle was articulated by Russian playwright Anton Chekhov and reported in various forms.

“Chekhov’s gun” is often used as an example of foreshadowing, with the sight of the gun preparing the audience for its eventual use. But the primary point of Chekhov’s advice was to caution against including unnecessary elements in a story or its staging. Failure to observe the rule of “Chekhov’s gun” may be cited by critics when discussing plot holes. The deliberate defiance of this principle may take the form of a red herring: something which the audience is meant to assume will be important to the plot’s outcome, but ultimately is not.

Red herring is an English-language idiom that commonly refers to a type of logical fallacy in which a clue is intentionally or unintentionally misleading or distracting from the actual issue. It is also a literary device employed by writers that leads readers or characters towards a false conclusion, often used in mystery or detective fiction.

- **Plot Outline:**

A plot outline is a prose telling of a story to be turned into a screenplay. Sometimes called a “one page” (one-page synopsis, about 1-3 pages in length). It is
generally longer and more detailed than a standard synopsis (1-2 paragraphs), but shorter and less detailed than a treatment or a step outline. There are different ways to create these outlines and they vary in length, but are basically the same thing.

In comics, a pencil, often pluralized as “pencils”, refers to a stage in the development where the story has been broken down very loosely in a style similar to storyboarding in film development.

The pencils will be very loose (i.e., the rough sketch), the main goals being to lay out the flow of panels across a page, to ensure the story successfully builds suspense and to work out points of view, camera angles and character positions within panels. This can also be referred to as a “plot outline” or a “layout”.

2. Character:

A character is a person or animal in a narrative work of art (such as a novel, play, or film). Derived from the ancient Greek work *kharaktēr*, the English word dates from the Restoration although it became widely used after its appearance in *Tom Jones* in 1749. From this, the sense of “a part played by an actor” developed. Character, particularly when enacted by an actor in the theatre or cinema, involves “the illusion of being a human person.” In literature, characters guide readers through their stories, helping them to understand plots and ponder themes. Since the end of the 18th century, the phrase “in character” has been used to describe an effective impersonation by an actor. Since the 19th century, the art of creating characters, as practiced by actors or writers, has been called characterization.

A character who stands as a representative of a particular class or group of people is known as a type. Types include both stock characters and those that are more fully individualized. The characters in Henrik Ibsen’s *Hedda Gabler* (1891) and August Strindberg’s *Miss Julie* (1888), for example, are representative of specific position in the social relations of class and gender, such that the conflicts between the characters reveal ideological conflicts.

The study of a character requires an analysis of its relations with all of the other characters in the work. The individual status of a character is defined through the network of oppositions (proairetic, pragmatic, linguistic, proxemic) that it forms with the other characters. The relation between characters and the action of the story shifts
historically, often miming shifts in society and its ideas about human individuality, self-determination, and the social order.

**Classical Analysis of Character:**

In the earliest surviving work of dramatic theory, *Poetic* (c. 335 BCE), the Greek Philosopher Aristotle deduces that character (*ethos*) is one of six qualitative parts of Athenian tragedy and one of the three objects that it represents (1450a12). He understands character not to denote a fictional person, but the quality of the person acting in the story and reacting to its situations (1450a5). He defines character as “that which reveals decision, of whatever sort” (1450b8). It is possible, therefore, to have tragedies that do not contain “characters” in Aristotle’s sense of the word, since character makes the ethical disposition of those performing the action of the story clear. Aristotle argues for the primacy of plot (*mythos*) over character (*ethos*). He writes:

But the most important of these is the structure of the incidents. For (i) tragedy is a representation not of human beings but of action and life. Happiness and unhappiness lie in action, and the end (of life) is a sort of action, not a quality; people are of a certain sort according to their characters, but happy or the opposite according to their actions. So [the actors] do not act in order to represent the characters, but they include the characters for the sake of their actions. (1450a15-23)

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle also introduced the influential tripartite division of characters in superior to the audience, inferior, or at the same level. In the *Tractatus coislinianus* (which may or may not be by Aristotle), comedy is defined as involving three types of characters: the buffoon (*bômolochus*), the ironist (*eirôn*) and the imposter or boaster (*alazôn*). All three are central to Aristophanes’ “Old Comedy.”

By the time the Roman playwright Plautus wrote his plays, the use of characters to define dramatic genres was well established. His *Amphitryon* begins with a prologue in which the speaker Mercury claims that since the play contains kings and gods, it cannot be a comedy and must be a tragicomedy. Like much Roman comedy, it is probably translated from an earlier Greek original, most commonly held to be Philemon’s *Long Night*, or Rhinthon’s *Amphitryon*, both now lost.
Types of Characters:

Round vs. flat

In his book *Aspects of the Novel*, E. M. Forster defined two basic types of characters, their qualities, functions, and importance for the development of the novel: flat characters and round characters. Flat characters are two-dimensional, in that they are relatively uncomplicated and do not change throughout the course of a work. By contrast, round characters are complex and undergo development, sometimes sufficiently to surprise the reader.

The protagonist is usually a dynamic character that changes the most during the course of the events. The antagonist is usually the opposite of the protagonist. The antagonist is someone who puts obstacles in the way of the main character, creates difficulties and challenges the protagonist. The essence of the character is often revealed through conflict between protagonist and antagonist.

Phatik ("The Home-coming"), Max Kelada ("Mr. Know-All"), Nicholas ("The Lumber Room"), an old man ("The Refugee"), and Rakesh ("The Cherry Tree") are the round characters who undergo changes and develop in the stories.

3. Setting:

The setting of the short story is where the action of the story happens. Setting includes place, time and culture of where the story happens. The setting of the story also provides as richness and depth to the story as it can relate to the main message or idea to get across to your readers. Think of the setting as a scenic background for which the drama of the tale will take place.

In works of narrative (especially fictional), the setting includes the historical moment in time and geographic location in which a story takes place, and helps initiate the main backdrop and mood for a story. Setting has been referred to as story world or milieu to include a context (especially society) beyond the immediate surroundings of the story. Elements of setting may include culture, historical period, geography, and hour. Along with plot, character, theme, and style, setting is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction.
Role of Setting:

Setting is a critical component for assisting the plot, as in man vs. nature or man vs. society stories. In some stories the setting becomes a character itself. The term “setting” is often used to refer to the social milieu in which the events of a novel occur. Novelist and novel-writing instructor Donna Levin has described how this social milieu shapes the characters’ values. For young readers in the US, the setting is often established as the “place” where the story occurs. As children advance, the elements of the story setting are expanded to include the passage of time which might be static in some stories or dynamic in others (e.g. changing seasons, day-and-night, etc.). The passage of time as an element of the setting helps direct the child’s attention to recognize setting elements in more complex stories. Setting is another way of identifying where a story takes place. Ali Ahmed is one of the writers most famous for vitalizing the uses of setting by altering perceptions and mental look upon the time and place of the setting.

Types of Setting:

Settings may take various forms: alternate history, campaign setting, constructed world, dystopia, fantasy world, fictional city, fictional country, fictional crossover, fictional location, fictional universe, future history, imaginary world, mythical place, other world (science fiction), parallel universe, planets in science fiction, simulated reality, virtual reality, utopia etc.

The setting of the “The Home-coming” is in the village and the city of Calcutta. “Mr. Know-All” is set on the ship. The most of the development of “The Lumber Room” takes place in the lumber room. There is the setting of the flood affected people and their life in “The Refugee”. “The Cherry Tree” is set in the garden.

4. Theme:

The theme means the story’s main ideas on the message the writer intends to communicate. Short stories often have single themes and illustrate a single idea such as the result of certain actions on behalf of either the protagonist or antagonist. Theme can be reflected in a variety of ways through the story. Theme can be incorporated in a story through setting, clothing, musing, sounds, certain smells, things, things the characters touch or hold, transportation and the occupation, abilities of the characters etc. For example, in the short story, “The Refugee” the
The theme of the aftermath of a natural disaster is developed through the old man’s behavior and his views.

The theme of the short story is the essential meaning of the tale. Short stories often have single themes and illustrate a simple idea, such as the result of certain action on behalf of either the protagonist or antagonist. Theme can be reflected in a variety of different ways throughout your story.

In contemporary literary studies, a theme is the central topic, subject, or concept the author is trying to point out, not to be confused with whatever message, moral, or commentary it may send or be interpreted as sending regarding said concept (i.e., its inferred “thesis”). While the term “theme” was for a period used to reference “message” or “moral”, literary critics now rarely employ it in this fashion, namely due to the confusion it causes regarding the common denotation of theme: “(t)he subject of discourse, discussion, conversation, meditation, or composition; a topic. One historic problem with the previous usage was that readers would frequently conflate “subject” and “theme” as similar concepts, a confusion that the new terminology helps prevent in both scholarship and the classroom. Thus, according to recent scholarship and pedagogy, identifying a story’s theme—for example, “death”-does not inherently involve identifying the story’s thesis or claims about “death’s” definitions, properties, values, or significance. Like morals or messages, themes often explore historically common or cross-culturally recognizable ideas and are almost always implied rather than stated explicitly. Along with plot, character, setting, and style, theme is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction.

**Thematic Patterning:**

Thematic patterning means the insertion of a recurring motif in a narrative. For example, various scenes in John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men* are about loneliness. This technique also dates back to *One Thousand and One Nights*.

A recurring motif of ‘home’ occurs in “The Home-coming”, a motif of refugee can be noted in “Refugee”, and the importance of trees is repeatedly emphasized in the “The Cherry Tree” by the development of the cherry tree planted by Rakesh. Various techniques may be used to express themes in the story.
5. **Style:**

In fiction, style is the codified gestures, in which the author tells the story. Along with plot, character, theme, and setting, style is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction.

**Components of Style:**

Style in fiction includes the use of various literary techniques. A writer of a short story writes with some aim. His story may be religious, humourous, satire, comic, tragic or a love story. But the writer has some purpose behind it. If he wants to say something effectively, he has to use suitable style. The style must suit the story and its purpose. Style takes into account suitable tone and suitable choice of diction.

6. **Narrator and Point of View:**

The narrator is the teller of the story, the orator, doing the mouthwork, or its imprint equivalent. A writer is faced with many choices regarding the narrator of a story: first-person narrative, third-person narrative, unreliable narrator, stream-of-consciousness writing. A narrator may be either obtrusive or unobtrusive, depending on the author’s intended relationship between himself, the narrator, the point-of-view character, and the reader.

**Point of View:**

Point of view is from whose consciousness the reader hears, sees, and feels the story.

The person who tells a story is called the narrator, and the angle from which the story is told is called its “point of view”. A story can be told by someone who is a character in the story or by an outside observer.

**First-person point of view**

The narrator speaking as “I” has the advantages of adding immediacy to a story. But such point of view also has limitation. The reader sees the events from the vantage point of only one character. The character can reveal his own thoughts but can’t get into the minds of other characters.
Third-person point of view

A story can be told from the third-person point of view, by an observer who does not play a role in the events.

The third-person narrator may be an omniscient, or all-knowing, observer, who knows what all the characters can see, hear, think, and feel, and who comments on the action and interprets the events. However, the narrator may enter the mind of only one character.

“The Home-coming”, “The Lumber Room”, “The Cherry Tree” are told in the third person narrations while “Mr. Know-All” is narrated from the first person point of view.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SHORT STORY

Development of Subject

The subject of a story must be one that can be adequately and effectively developed within the prescribed limits. On this point the reader’s own feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction will provide a sufficient test. Whatever may be the theme and object of a story, it should leave us with the conviction that even if nothing would have been lost, at least nothing should have been gained by further elaboration. It should impress us as absolutely clear in outline, well proportioned, full enough for the purpose yet without the slightest suggestion of crowding and within its own framework complete. For example, all the prescribed short stories show the development of the subject with the proper ending.

Unity

Unity of motive, purpose, action, and impression is a fundamental characteristic of a short story. A short story must contain one and only one idea and this idea must be worked out to its logical conclusion with absolute singleness of aim and directness of method. The perfection of workmanship in a short story - the complete adaptation of means to end - gives peculiar aesthetic pleasure to the thoughtful reader. The short story “The Home-coming” keeps the perfect unity of logical development of action and gives the aesthetic pleasure.
**Brevity or Economy**

Brevity or economy is the soul of a short story. The short story must present minimum number of events and character. It means that a short story must cover only a small chunk of human life. There should be no sub-plot as far as possible. Unnecessary characters should be avoided. The protagonist must be given weightage. “The Cherry Tree” gives a message to love plants through its fine balance of characters. “The Lumber Room” expresses the feelings of Nicholas by using the minimum events and characters.

**Language**

The language of the short story should be a model of economy. There should be nothing in the language that does not positively add something to the story. Every word in it should contribute to its effect. A novel often has passages which could be scored out without detriment to the plot but there is no room for these in the short story. It requires the apt word and the telling phrase. Descriptive passages are only valuable in so far as they contribute towards the total effect. “The Cherry Tree” gives a message to love plants through its fine use of perfect words.

**Moral**

Moral is a characteristic of a short story but it is not compulsory. A writer hopes to teach or instruct his readers through his writing. In such a case there may be a moral. Sometimes the moral is clearly stated. At times it is noticeable. But in majority of cases it is implied and we have to trace it out.

**Conflicts**

In a short story, there is generally a problem or struggle of some kind called a conflict. Conflicts are the soul of story. It is the most important element in a plot. A conflict can be external or internal. In a story, there may be a single conflict or there may be several related conflicts.

**End**

The end of the short story is vital in its structure. An unexpected shock or surprise at the end makes the story interesting. A good short story must end in an impressive way. “The Refugee” refers to the natural calamity and the human tragedy and ends in an impressive way. “The Cherry Tree” ends with the cheerfulness as well.
as the impressive understanding of the child. “The Home-coming” ends tragically creating the sympathy for Phatik and his mother.

**Title**

The title is an important aspect of a short story. It encourages readers to read the story. A short story deals with the personality or an incident. The title is expected to lead us to this central issue in the story. Title can be attractive by its contrast, suggestion, meaning etc. It is an inseparable part of a short story.

The title “The Home-coming” suggests the emotions of Phatik, “Mr. Know-All” satirizes the main character, “The Lumber Room” is important to highlight the development of the main character’s psyche, “The Refugee” and “The Cherry Tree” throw light on the main theme of the story.

**To conclude**, the short story becomes interesting with proper plot, setting, theme, and characters. In the same way, it must be accompanied with attractive title, effective language, clear point of view, and excellent end. Most of the famous short stories are capable of satisfying the readers world over.

**Check your progress:**

**2.1 Choose the correct alternative:**

1. Short stories have origin in ------- story-telling traditions.
   a. oral  b. written  c. legal  d. fast

2. *Canterbury Tales* is written by------.

3. Alexander Pushkin is a ------ writer.
   a. German  b. French  c. Russian  d.Swedish

4. Conan Doyle brought the ------- story to a new light.
   a. long  b. comic  c.tragic  d.detective

5. John Steinbeck is a famous ------- writer.

6. ------- pioneered the genre of short story in the Hindi-Urdu language.
7. Franz Kafka is a ------- story writer.
8. ------- wrote science fiction.
   a. H. G. Wells  b. Anton Chekov  c. Conan Doyle  d. Thomas Hardy
9. *Dubliners* is a collection by -------.
   a. James Joyce    b. G. K. Chesterton
   c. Isaac Asimov    d. Graham Greene
10. The oral story-telling tradition began to develop into written stories in the --
   ----- century.
    a. 17th    b. 14th    c. 18th    d. 19th

2.2 Check your progress:

   Fill in the blanks:
   1. ------- *Decameron* contains individual short stories.
   2. Kipling’s *The Jungle Book* contains short stories for -------.
   4. Ryūnosuke Akutagawa is called as the father of ------- short story.
   5. James Joyce’s stories made him popular in -------.

2.3 Check your progress:

   Answer the questions in one word/phrase/ sentence each:
   1. What is an anecdote?
   2. What is a fable?
   3. What was responsible for giving less time to people to read at the end of the 19th century?
   4. Who evolved the tale-with-a-purpose in the 18th century in the United Kingdom?
   5. Who was Aesop?
   6. What is *The Sketch*?
1.3 Summary:

A short is a work of fiction, usually written in narrative prose. Emerging from earlier oral story telling traditions in the 17th century, the short story has become a popular form of literature in the present time.

A short story has almost all the characteristics and the elements of novel but they are used in a short story in a different and limited way to bring their good effect. A short story concentrates on a small group of characters creating a single effect or mood. It is less complex than the novel. Usually a short story focuses on one incident; has a single plot, a single setting; and covers a short span of time. Short stories have no fixed length. The order of exposition, conflict, intensifying action, crisis, climax, resolution etc. may change from writer to writer. In modern times such order may or may not be followed by the writers. The form of the short story can be used by each writer in a different and innovative way.

1.4 Terms to remember and learn:

- **Antagonist**: Character in conflict with the main character.
- **Character**: A person, animal, or imaginary creature in literary work.
- **Characterization**: Creation of imaginary people who appear to be real to the reader. The writer gives information about the characters in the story.
- **Climax**: Action comes to its highest point of conflict.
- **Conflict**: A problem in the story that needs to be resolved.
- **Connotation**: Set of ideas associated with a word in addition to the word’s actual, explicit meaning.
- **Denotation**: Independent of other associations that the word may have.
- **Diction**: Word choice including vocabulary used, word appropriateness, vividness of language.
- **Dramatic irony**: Contradiction between what a character thinks and what the readers know is true.
- **Dynamic character**: A character that changes significantly throughout the course of a story.
Exposition/Introduction: Beginning of the story where the characters and the setting are revealed.

External conflict: Struggle (physical or emotional) between two characters or between character and other thing/s (e.g. nature etc.).

Falling action: Event and complications begin to resolve themselves.

Fiction: Imaginary characters and events. Fiction can be entirely imaginary or based on real events and/people.

Imagery: Descriptive figurative language.

Internal conflict: Struggle that occurs in character’s mind.

Ironic: Difference between appearance and reality, expectation and result.

Metaphor: One thing is spoken of as though it is something else completely.

Mood: Feeling created in the reader by the literary work.

Narrator: The person from whose perspective a story is told.

Personification: on-human object is given human characteristic.

Plot: A series of events through which the writer reveals what is happening, to whom, and why.

Point of view: The position of the narrator of the story and what the writer sees from that point.

Protagonist: Main character.

Resolution: Action after the climax until the end of the story/ the conclusion of the story.

Rising action: The events in the story become complicated and the conflict in the story is revealed.

Secondary character: Less important character who interacts with the main character.

Setting: Tells the readers where and when the story takes place.

Simile: Comparison between two unlike things using ‘like’.
- **Situational irony**: An event directly contradicts expectations of the readers or of the characters.

- **Static character**: A character that changes a little bit from the beginning to the end.

- **Symbol**: Something that has a literal meaning but also stands for or represents an abstract idea.

- **Theme**: The story’s main ideas. The ‘message’ the writer intends to communicate by telling the story.

- **Tone**: Attitude toward the subject that an author conveys in a piece of writing.

- **Verbal irony**: A word/phrase used to suggest the opposite of its actual meaning.

### 1.5 Answers to check your progress:

#### 2.1
1) a) oral  
2) d) Geoffrey Chaucer  
3) c. Russian  
4) d) detective  
5) b) American  
6) a) Munshi Premchand  
7) b) German  
8) a) H. G. Wells  
9) a) James Joyce  
10) b) 14th

#### 2.2
1) Bocaccio’s  
2) children  
3) Rabindranath Tagore  
4) Japanese  
5) Ireland

#### 2.3
1) A brief realistic narrative that embodies a point.  
2) A concise tale with an explicit moral.  
3) The rapid industrialization.  
4) Steele and Addison.  
5) A Greek slave  
6) A periodical in the U. K.

### 1.6 Exercises:

**Write short notes on:**

2. Plot of the short story.
3. Theme of the short story.
4. Setting of the short story.
5. Definition of the short story.
6. The importance of developing subject, unity, brevity in the short story.
7. The importance of language, moral in the short story.
8. The elements of the short story.
9. The characteristics of the short story.

1.7 Reference Books for further study:

Web
Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.
Contents

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2.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- Understand: Life and work of Rabindranath Tagore
- Explain: You can be able to explain the importance of home in man’s life.
- Find relationship between: Relationship between man’s external behavior and his internal feelings and emotions.

2.1 Introduction:

RABINDRANATH TAGORE (1861-1941), is a modern India’s most celebrated author. The poet, fiction writer, essayist, playwright, translator, painter and nationalist leader of great eminence, he received the Nobel Prize in 1913. He wrote in Bengali but his influence extended over all the regional literatures. He was a Bengali polymath who reshaped his region’s literature and music. Author of Gitanjali and its profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, he became the first non-European to win the Noble Prize in Literature. His poetry viewed as spiritual
and mercurial, his seemingly mesmeric personality, flowing hair and his dress earned him prophet-like reputation in the west. He is generally regarded as the outstanding creative artist of modern India. At the age of sixteen, he released his first poems. His novels, stories, songs, dance-dramas, and essays spoke on the political and personal topics. Gitanjali, Gora, The home and the world are his best-known works. His compositions are chosen by two nations as national anthems: India and Bangladesh.

‘The Home-Coming’ describes the life and feelings of a young boy of fourteen. Phatik is the chief character. By nature he was naughty and given to play. His widowed mother, however, did not like this aspect of the boy’s character. She, therefore, always took side of the younger boy, Makhan. One day, all the boys of village rolled a log of wood into the river. This was done under the direction of Phatik. Makhan did not cooperate with the boys and, therefore, he was rolled down along with the log. Makhan went home and reported to his mother. Phatik was called and beaten black and blue.

At that very moment, Bishamber, the maternal uncle of Phatik, arrived on the scene. When his sister complained against Phatik he offered to take Phatik to Calcutta with him. At Calcutta Phatik felt pain at being neglected. When he went outside, the busy streets and houses of Calcutta appeared killing. He pined for the love of the mother and the company of his young friends. He got home–sick. The treatment of the aunt was also very bad. He was taken to task for little things. The result was that he also remained dull and backward in his lessons at school. The boy got himself drenched one day and had to be recued by the police. He was taken seriously ill, and in the course of illness, his mind wandered to his home and to his mother.

The story shows to us the very great importance of love in the life of a young boy. When Phatik required love and care, nobody carried for him. As a matter of fact, a boy at the age of fourteen is always in this miserable condition. He wants love from others who regard him as a source of trouble. People cannot love him as a baby nor is he of any use to the parents. He is so-called and rebuked at every step. Therefore, he loses all his interest in life and begins to get sick of it all.

Phatik did not get the love when his heart hungered for it. He got disregard and was rebuked for no fault of his. But when he was about, everybody was showing love
and care on him. Even his mother grew restless on seeing his condition. She forgot all her prejudices against the boy. She threw herself on his body and cried out dear names for him. But Phatik unconsciously reminded her that the holyday had come for his soul to be free of this bodily existence.

2.2 The text:

Phatik Chakravorti was a ringleader among the boys of the village. A new mischief got into his head. There was a heavy log lying on the mud-flat of the river waiting to be shaped into a mast for a boat. He decided that they should all work together to shift the log by main force from its place and roll it away. The owner of the log would be angry and surprised, and they would all enjoy the fun. Every one seconded the proposal, and it was carried unanimously.

But just as the fun was about to begin, Makhan, Phatik’s younger brother, sauntered up, and sat down on the log in front of them all without a word. The boys were puzzled for a moment. He was pushed, rather timidly, by one of the boys and told to get up: but he remained quite unconcerned. He appeared like a young philosopher meditating on the futility of games. Phatik was furious. “Makhan,” he cried, “if you don’t get down this minute I’ll thrash you!”

Makhan only moved to a more comfortable position.

Now, if Phatik was to keep his regal dignity before the public, it was clear he ought to carry out his threat. But his courage failed him at the crisis. His fertile brain, however, rapidly seized upon a new manoeuvre which would discomfit his brother and afford his followers an added amusement. He gave the word of command to roll the log and Makhan over together. Makhan heard the order, and made it a point of honour to stick on. But he overlooked the fact, like those who attempt earthly fame in other matters, that there was peril in it.

The boys began to heave at the log with all their might, calling out, “One, two, three, go.” At the word go the log went; and with it went Makhan’s philosophy, glory and all.

All the other boys shouted themselves hoarse with delight. But Phatik was a little frightened. He knew what was coming. And, sure enough, Makhan rose from Mother Earth blind as Fate and screaming like the Furies. He rushed at Phatik and
scratched his face and beat him and kicked him, and then went crying home. The first act of the drama was over.

Phatik wiped his face, and sat down on the edge of a sunken barge on the river bank, and began to chew a piece of grass. A boat came up to the landing, and a middle-aged man, with grey hair and dark moustache, stepped on shore. He saw the boy sitting there doing nothing, and asked him where the Chakravortis lived. Phatik went on chewing the grass, and said: “Over there,” but it was quite impossible to tell where he pointed. The stranger asked him again. He swung his legs to and fro on the side of the barge, and said; “Go and find out,” and continued to chew the grass as before.

But now a servant came down from the house, and told Phatik his mother wanted him. Phatik refused to move. But the servant was the master on this occasion. He took Phatik up roughly, and carried him, kicking and struggling in impotent rage.

When Phatik came into the house, his mother saw him. She called out angrily: “So you have been hitting Makhan again?”

Phatik answered indignantly: “No, I haven’t; who told you that?”

His mother shouted: “Don’t tell lies! You have.”

Phatik said suddenly: “I tell you, I haven’t. You ask Makhan!” But Makhan thought it best to stick to his previous statement. He said: “Yes, mother. Phatik did hit me.”

Phatik’s patience was already exhausted. He could not bear this injustice. He rushed at Makban, and hammered him with blows: “Take that” he cried, “and that, and that, for telling lies.”

His mother took Makhan’s side in a moment, and pulled Phatik away, beating him with her hands. When Phatik pushed her aside, she shouted out: “What! You little villain! Would you hit your own mother?”

It was just at this critical juncture that the grey-haired stranger arrived. He asked what the matter. Phatik looked sheepish and ashamed.

But when his mother stepped back and looked at the stranger, her anger was changed to surprise. For she recognised her brother, and cried: “Why, Dada! Where have you come from?”
As she said these words, she bowed to the ground and touched his feet. Her brother had gone away soon after she had married, and he had started business in Bombay. His sister had lost her husband while he was in Bombay. Bishamber had now come back to Calcutta, and had at once made enquiries about his sister. He had then hastened to see her as soon as he found out where she was.

The next few days were full of rejoicing. The brother asked after the education of the two boys. He was told by his sister that Phatik was a perpetual nuisance. He was lazy, disobedient, and wild. But Makhan was as good as gold, as quiet as a lamb, and very fond of reading. Bishamber kindly offered to take Phatik off his sister’s hands, and educate him with his own children in Calcutta. The widowed mother readily agreed. When his uncle asked Phatik if he would like to go to Calcutta with him, his joy knew no bounds, and he said; “Oh, yes, uncle!” In a way that made it quite clear that he meant it.

It was an immense relief to the mother to get rid of Phatik. She had a prejudice against the boy, and no love was lost between the two brothers. She was in daily fear that he would either drown Makhan some day in the river, or break his head in a fight, or run him into some danger or other. At the same time she was somewhat distressed to see Phatik’s extreme eagerness to get away.

Phatik, as soon as all was settled, kept asking his uncle every minute when they were to start. He was on pins and needles all day long with excitement, and lay awake most of the night. He bequeathed to Makhan, in perpetuity, his fishing-rod, his big kite and his marbles. Indeed, at this time of departure his generosity towards Makhan was unbounded.

When they reached Calcutta, Phatik made the acquaintance of his aunt for the first time. She was by no means pleased with this unnecessary addition to her family. She found her own three boys quite enough to manage without taking any one else. And to bring a village lad of fourteen into their midst was terribly upsetting. Bishamber should really have thought twice before committing such an indiscretion.

In this world of human affairs there is no worse nuisance than a boy at the age of fourteen. He is neither ornamental, nor useful. It is impossible to shower affection on him as on a little boy; and he is always getting in the way. If he talks with a childish lisp he is called a baby, and if he answers in a grown-up way he is called impertinent. In fact any talk at all from him is resented. Then he is at the unattractive, growing
age. He grows out of his clothes with indecent haste; his voice grows hoarse and breaks and quavers; his face grows suddenly angular and unsightly. It is easy to excuse the shortcomings of early childhood, but it is hard to tolerate even unavoidable lapses in a boy of fourteen. The lad himself becomes painfully self-conscious. When he talks with elderly people he is either unduly forward, or else so unduly shy that he appears ashamed of his very existence.

Yet it is at this very age when in his heart of hearts a young lad most craves for recognition and love; and he becomes the devoted slave of any one who shows him consideration. But none dare openly love him, for that would be regarded as undue indulgence and therefore bad for the boy. So, what with scolding and chiding, he becomes very much like a stray dog that has lost his master.

For a boy of fourteen his own home is the only Paradise. To live in a strange house with strange people is little short of torture, while the height of bliss is to receive the kind looks of women, and never to be slighted by them.

It was anguish to Phatik to be the unwelcome guest in his aunt’s house, despised by this elderly woman, and slighted, on every occasion. If she ever asked him to do anything for her, he would be so overjoyed that he would overdo it; and then she would tell him not to be so stupid, but to get on with his lessons.

The cramped atmosphere of neglect in his aunt’s house oppressed Phatik so much that he felt that he could hardly breathe. He wanted to go out into the open country and fill his lungs and breathe freely. But there was no open country to go to. Surrounded on all sides by Calcutta houses and walls, he would dream night after night of his village home, and long to be back there. He remembered the glorious meadow where he used to fly his kite all day long; the broad river-banks where he would wander about the livelong day singing and shouting for joy; the narrow brook where he could go and dive and swim at any time he liked. He thought of his band of boy companions over whom he was despot; and, above all, the memory of that tyrant mother of his, who had such a prejudice against him, occupied him day and night. A kind of physical love like that of animals; a longing to be in the presence of the one who is loved; an inexpressible wistfulness during absence; a silent cry of the inmost heart for the mother, like the lowing of a calf in the twilight;—this love, which was almost an animal instinct, agitated the shy, nervous, lean, uncouth and ugly boy. No one could understand it, but it preyed upon his mind continually.
There was no more backward boy in the whole school than Phatik. He gaped and remained silent when the teacher asked him a question, and like an overladen ass patiently suffered all the blows that came down on his back. When other boys were out at play, he stood wistfully by the window and gazed at the roofs of the distant houses. And if by chance he espied children playing on the open terrace of any roof, his heart would ache with longing.

One day he summoned up all his courage, and asked his uncle: “Uncle, when can I go home?”

His uncle answered; “Wait till the holidays come.”

But his holidays would not come till November, and there was a long time still to wait.

One day Phatik lost his lesson-book. Even with the help of books he had found it very difficult indeed to prepare his lesson. Now it was impossible. Day after day the teacher would cane him unmercifully. His condition became so abjectly miserable that even his cousins were ashamed to own him. They began to jeer and insult him more than the other boys. He went to his aunt at last, and told her that he had lost his book.

His aunt pursed her lips in contempt, and said: “You great clumsy, country lout. How can I afford, with all my family, to buy you new books five times a month?”

That night, on his way back from school, Phatik had a bad headache with a fit of shivering. He felt he was going to have an attack of malarial fever. His one great fear was that he would be a nuisance to his aunt.

The next morning Phatik was nowhere to be seen. All searches in the neighbourhood proved futile. The rain had been pouring in torrents all night, and those who went out in search of the boy got drenched through to the skin. At last Bisbamber asked help from the police.

At the end of the day a police van stopped at the door before the house. It was still raining and the streets were all flooded. Two constables brought out Phatik in their arms and placed him before Bishamber. He was wet through from head to foot, muddy all over, his face and eyes flushed red with fever, and his limbs all trembling. Bishamber carried him in his arms, and took him into the inner apartments. When his
wife saw him, she exclaimed; “What a heap of trouble this boy has given us. Hadn’t you better send him home?”

Phatik heard her words, and sobbed out loud: “Uncle, I was just going home; but they dragged me back again.”

The fever rose very high, and all that night the boy was delirious. Bishamber brought in a doctor. Phatik opened his eyes flushed with fever, and looked up to the ceiling, and said vacantly: “Uncle, have the holidays come yet? May I go home?”

Bishamber wiped the tears from his own eyes, and took Phatik’s lean and burning hands in his own, and sat by him through the night. The boy began again to mutter. At last his voice became excited: “Mother,” he cried, “don’t beat me like that! Mother! I am telling the truth!”

The next day Phatik became conscious for a short time. He turned his eyes about the room, as if expecting someone to come. At last, with an air of disappointment, his head sank back on the pillow. He turned his face to the wall with a deep sigh.

Bishamber knew his thoughts, and, bending down his head, whispered: “Phatik, I have sent for your mother.”

The day went by. The doctor said in a troubled voice that the boy’s condition was very critical.

Phatik began to cry out; “By the mark!-three fathoms. By the mark-four fathoms. By the mark.” He had heard the sailor on the river steamer calling out the mark on the plumb-line. Now he was himself plumbing an unfathomable sea.

Later in the day Phatik’s mother burst into the room like a whirlwind, and began to toss from side to side and moan and cry in a loud voice.

Bishamber tried to calm her agitation, but she flung herself on the bed, and cried: “Phatik, my darling, my darling.”

Phatik stopped his restless movements for a moment. His hands ceased beating up and down. He said: “Eh?”

The mother cried again: “Phatik, my darling, my darling.”

Phatik very slowly turned his head and, without seeing anybody, said: “Mother, the holidays have come.”
2.3 Check your progress

Section -1
I. Objective type questions
i) Multiple choice questions:
1. There was no more backward boy in the whole school than ………………..
   a) Bishamber  b) Makhan  c) Phatik  d) Pratik
2. Bishamber asked the address of Charkravorti to ……………
   a) Servent  b) Makhan  c) Phatik  d) Mother
3. After seeing her brother mother cried with surprise…………..
   a) Why Dada b) My brother  c) Oh! My God  d) You are welcome
4. Bishamber lived in ……………
   a) Bombay  b) Calcutta  c) Madras  d) Delhi
5. Phatik was a …………… among the boys of village.
   a) captain  b) ringleader  c) president  d) member

Section-2
Check your Progress
II. Short answer type questions:
(2) Answer the following questions in a word /sentence / phrase each.
1. Who is the central character in the story?
2. Who asked the address of Chakravarti to Phatik?
3. What is the name of Phatik’s uncle?
4. Why does Bishamber need the help of Police?
5. How many children Bishamber had?.
6. What is the age of Phatik?
7. Where did Phatik’s uncle live?
2.4 Summary:

The present story deals with the teenage boy Phatik who pines for the love of widowed mother and the company of his friends. It is a tragedy about Phatik who is home-sick.

Phatik Chakravarti is the central character in the story, who lived with his mother and younger brother Makhan. He was the ringleader among the boys, once he got the mischief of pushing the log lying on the bank of river in the river. With the help of the boys he started to push the log in the river but Makhan didn’t like this idea so he sat on the log. Neglecting towards Makhan, Phatik ordered to roll the log with calling “1,2,3…… go”, log floted into the water with Makhan’s Philosophy. All boys shouted with delight but Phatik was frightened, furiously Makhan bate Phatik and went crying home complaining about Phatik. Pahtik nervously sat on the river bank and began to chew a piece of grass.

At the same time a middle aged stranger, with grey hair and dark mustache came by a boat and asked Phatik the address of the Chakravartis. Phatik showed only the direction which was the man didn’t understand and when he asked again Phatik replied angrily, “Go and find out”. Phatik’s servant came to call Phatik home, but he refused to come home but the servant carried him home.

His mother scolded Phatik for his mischief, at the same time the stranger came in the house. By looking at the stranger mother was surprised and cried, “Dada…..!” and she touched his feet. The stranger was Phatik’s maternal uncle, his name was Bishamber. He had gone to Bombay soon after his sister’s marriage. Now he was staying in Calcutta. When Bishamber was in Bombay, her sister lost her husband. Bhisambar decided to take Phatik to Calcutta for his further education; by listening to this Phatik and his mother were very happy.

Phatik’s arrival at Calcutta was not welcomed by his aunt. After some days he became bore in his uncle’s house; his position was like a stray dog who has lost its master. His uncle’s house is a strange house with strange people for Phatik. He doesn’t like busy and fast life in Calcutta. He was silent and dull boy in the school, there was no any backward boy in the whole school than him. When other students were out to play he used to stand near the window looking at the roofs of distant buildings.
Phatik was neglected so much that he used to ask his uncle when could he go back to his village. One day Phatik lost his lesson book so he couldn’t prepare the lessons and his teacher gave him a punishment. Now his cousins were ashamed of saying him their brother; they started teasing him more than the other children. He went to his aunty and asked for a new lesson book. Listening this, his aunty replied that she can’t afford a new lesson book.

That night Phatik had a fever and his body was shivering. While coming home from the school, he thought that he would be attacked by malaria fever. His, another great fear was that he would become a nuisance to his aunty.

The next morning Phatik was not found anywhere; it had started to rain. All the people who went to search him would come back home without any result. All the attempts were proved to be futile. So, at last Bishamber decided to take the help of police. At the end of the day, a police van stopped in front of the house. Two constables brought Phatik in the house. He was totally wet and was suffering from fever. His face had become red and limbs were all trembling. Bhisamber carried him in his arms and took him in his room. By seeing this, Phatik’s aunty asked her husband to send him to his village. Phatik replied that he was going to his village when these police took him back home.

The fever rose very high so Bishamber brought a doctor. Pahtik opened his eyes flushed with fever. Watching towards the ceiling, he asked his uncle when the holidays would come. Bishamber wiped tears from his eyes and took Phatik’s burning hands in his hands and sat with Pahtik the whole night.

The next day Phatik became conscious for awhile. He was watching towards the door that someone would come. Looking this, Bhisamber said that he had informed his mother and she would come now. The day passed. The doctor said that the boy’s situation was now more critical. Later, in the day Phatik’s mother arrived, and seeing at Phatik she started crying. Bhisamber tried to calm her but she didn’t stop. Phatik stopped his restless movements for a moment and slowly turned his head and without seeing toward anybody said’ “Mother, have the holidays come……?.”
2.5 Terms to remember

(Important terms in the unit along with their brief meaning):

GLOSSARY AND NOTES:

ringleader: Phatik was the chief of the mischievous boys of the village.

mud-flat: the river had left a muddy strip of land on its bank where the water stood during floods.

mast: the log of wood that was lying on the bank of the river was meant to be used for making the long upright pole of the boat.

sauntered up: when Phatik and his friends were making a plan of rolling the log into the river, Makhan leisurely walked up to the log and sat on it.

if Phatik was to keep his regal dignity: Phatik told Makhan that if he did not move from his position, he would beat him. When Makhan did not obey his elder brother, Phatik had to take some steps so as to prove to his companions that he was the master of the situation and he could act like a king.

meditate: think, ponder over

futility: uselessness, vanity

impotent rage: ineffective or useless anger

indignantly: angrily

on pins and needles: extremely eager, full of enthusiasm

sullenly: in a bad temper

bequeathed: when Phatik was leaving his village

in perpetuity: carelessness

espied (to espy): saw (to see)

regal dignity: his position as a king of other boys

fertile (brain): full of inventions and plans/ Phatik was very intelligent and his mind was most inventive in producing new plans.

man œuvre: how to roll the log and at the same time pushing Makhan that was the main problem, and soon he got a plan in his mind.
point of honour: he would feel himself disgraced if he gave way

rouse from Mother Earth blind as Fate, etc: when all the boys rolled the log of wood along with Makhan on it, Makhan felt very much insulted and angry. He fell on the ground but soon he got up and without caring for the consequences he rushed towards Phatik crying like the violent Goddesses of Anger and Violence. As the fate of man does not see anything but goes forward according to plan, similarly Makhan did not see to his right or left but rushed straight towards Phatik. He was wildly crying aloud like the violent Roman Goddesses of Blood and Despute.

hammered him with blows: when Phatik was called home and false accused by his mother of having beaten Makhan, he lost all patience and began to beat Makhan severely. He hurled his blows on Makhan as a black-smith delivers the strokes of hammer.

a perpetual nuisance: Phatik’s mother told her brother how Phatik was a cause of continuous trouble and anxiety to her.

Furies: these were supposed to be certain demons who pursued guilty men with loud cries.

Prejudice: the mother had formed an opinion about Phatik without any careful examination of his actions.

critical moment: at this exact moment when things were so dangerous

No love was lost between the two brothers: there was never any love between Makhan and Phatik. They did not love each other at all.

on pins: exceedingly restless

committing such an indiscretion: when Bishamber came back to Calcutta along with Phatik, his wife did not approve of his action. She thought that her husband had performed a rash and unwise act in bringing Phatik to their home and he should have thought well before doing this.

painful self-conscious: Phatik was a young boy of fourteen and he suffered all the miseries that such a boy suffers from. At this age, a boy comes to know and understand his own position. He becomes conscious of the treatment given to him and all this is quite painful to him.
most craves for recognition and love: a young boy of fourteen is most desirous of being loved. He wants his merit and deeds to be respected by others.

little short of torture: when a boy of fourteen does not find love in any quarter, he becomes sad and downcast. He cannot express these feelings to anybody but he goes on suffering excessively within himself. The condition of Phatik in the house of his maternal uncle could be compared to that of a man in a closed room. Phatik felt most uncomfortable and the whole atmosphere was suffering for him. He could no longer tolerate the lack of love and consideration.

cramed atmosphere of neglect: a young boy of fourteen is always conscious of getting love. He wants to be loved and when he does not get the thing he wants, he grows thoughtful and sad.

physical love: animal instinct just as a young animal clings to its mother for protection

pustfulness: delirious

by the mark: when a shallow point comes in sea or in a great river, one of the sailors throws a piece of string into water nothing the marks on the string and calls out the depth according to the mark

plumbing: to plumb is to get to the bottom of water. Phatik is pictured as going deeper into the sea of death, which none can fathom.

holiday: a Bengali word for “holiday”, meaning also “release”. It is as through the boy were saying, “My release has come.” This cannot be represented in English.

clumsy, country lout: when Phatik told his aunt how he had lost his lesson-book, she got very angry and called him a vulgar, awkward fellow without manners.

calling out the mark on the lead: Phatik, who used to play on the banks of the river, had often seen the sailors use an instrument for measuring the depth of the river. It consists of a plumb-line with a lead at one end so that it sinks in the water. The sailors pull the string or rope after making it and in this way they measure the depth in fathoms.

plumbing an unfathomable sea: after being taken ill, Phatik began to talk at random. He had lost all his senses and he repeated those terms which the sailors used
while measuring the depth of the river. Most probably it appeared that he was trying to find the depth of the unknown world to go after death.

Mother, the holidays have come: the mother addressed Phatik in the most endearing terms but Phatik did not listen to her. He was not in his senses. He did not look towards anybody in particular but turning his head, he declared that his last movement had come when his soul would become absolutely free from this bodily existence. He had ever looked forward to the holidays so that he might get back to his village home. But now the real holiday for his spirit had come.

2.5 Answers to check your progress:

Section -1
I. Objective type question:

I) Multiple choice questions:

1. c) Phatik
2. c) Phatik
3. a) Why Dada
4. b) Calcutta
5. b) Ringleader

Section-2
II. Short answer type questions:

(A) Answer the following questions in a word /sentence / phrase each.

1. Phatik Chakravarti is the central character in the story.
2. A stranger / Phatik’s maternal uncle / Bishamber asked the address of Chakravarti to Phatik.
3. The name of Phatik’s uncle is Bishamber.
4. Bishamber needs the help of police to find Phatik who has left the house.
5. Bishamber had three children.
6. Phatik is fourteen years old.
7. Phatik’s uncle lived in Calcutta
2.7 Exercises

Write answers of the following questions in four / five sentences each:

1. **What was the reason for quarrel between Phatik and Makhan?**

   Makhan was younger brother of Phatik. Phatik was mischievous, lazy, disobedient and wild while Makhan was as good as gold, as quiet as lamb and very fond of reading. As they both were very different they always quarreled. Once, Phatik got a mischievous idea and he explained the idea to the boys. The idea was that there was a log on the river bank and they would push the log into the river and the log would sink in the water. By seeing this, the owner of log would be angry and they would enjoy the fun. As decided, the boys went to the river bank and started to push the log in the water, at the same time Makhan came and sat on the log opposing the boys. But Phatik pushed the log and Makhan got angry so a quarrel took place between them.

2. **Why did Phatik go to his uncle’s house?**

   Phatik and Makhan quarrelled always with one another and mother was trying to stop them, at the same time Pahtik’s uncle entered the house. Uncle decided to stay for few days with his sister, his sister had lost her husband while he was in Bombay. He asked his sister about the education of the boys then he understood that Phatik was naughty, lazy, disobedient and wild while Makhan was as good as gold, as quiet as lamb and very fond of reading. Phatik was a ‘headache’ to his sister so decided to take him to Calcutta and Phatik also agreed to this. So Phatik went to Calcutta.

3. **What are the causes of mother’s fear?**

   Phatik and Makhan used to quarrel always, Phatik used to beat Makhan and by seeing this, their mother was in fear. She was in daily fear that Phatik would either drown Makhan in river some day or break his head in fight or run him in some danger or other.

4. **Why did Phatik ask about holiday again and again to his uncle?**

   Phatik was neglected in his uncle’s house so his physical and mental conditions had turned worst, as a result he was not performing well in schools. He was always scolded by his aunty and so lost all the interest in his city life and became home sick. One day he gathered all his courage and asked his uncle that when could he go to his
home in village, his uncle replied that he could go to the village in holidays. After that day his condition in the city became worse. He would never go to play with the other boys and only watched them through the window. Once he was suffering from fever so he thought that he would be nuisance to his aunty. So he decided to go to his village he was caught by the police at brought back and he would always ask that when he could go to his home in village.

III. Write short note on the following:

1. Phatik Chakravarti

Phatik Chakravarti, 14 years old naughty boy is the central character of this story. He lived with his widowed mother and younger brother Makhan. Phatik was the ringleader of the boys in village; under his guidance only the boys would do many mischievous activities but his brother Makhan always opposed him. Phatik to keep his image in the boys would always remove Makhan from his way. Just for fun one day all the boys of village rolled a log of wood into the river under the guidance of Phatik. Because of Phatik’s naughtiness his mother decided to send him with his maternal uncle to Calcutta. Phatik went to Calcutta very happily but he was neglected by his aunty. This negligence affected Phatik both physically and mentally due to this he started to hate city life and was eager to go back to his village where he could play with all his village friends. As a result he became home sick. He had lost interest in studies; he would watch at all the boys playing out through the window and never went to play with them. Once he had lost his lesson book so he couldn’t study the lesson so his teacher punished him severely, he told this to his aunty then she answered that she could not afford the lesson book then. The next day when Phatik was returning to home from school he realized that he was suffering from fever, he thought that he would be nuisance to his aunty. So he decided to go back to his village, his uncle searched him the whole day but he didn’t find him anywhere so he took the help of police. At the end of day police caught Phatik and brought him home. He was suffering from fever and the doctor said that his condition was very serious. Phatik would always ask his uncle that when he would be able to go to his house back.

2. Phatik’s days with his uncle in Calcutta

When Phatik decided to go to his uncle’s house in Calcutta he was very happy. But when he went to Calcutta he was unwelcomed by his aunty and was neglected in
house. His aunty thought that it was difficult to manage her three children and this unwanted guest would again be a trouble to her. The age in which a boy should get love from his family members there Phatik was being neglected. He always hated the big buildings of the city and the wall around them. For a boy of fourteen his house is Paradise but for Phatik his uncle’s house was like hell. If his aunty tells her to do a work he would do it overjoyed and do something extra for which he would be again scolded by his aunty. As he was hated in house his condition in school had become worse, he was poor in studies and so always punished by his teachers. He was the most backward in the school. His small wish was also not fulfilled in his uncle’s house. Once he had lost his lesson book and he told so to his aunty, his aunty answered that she can’t afford it. His cousins teased him more than the other students. He would always look at the other students playing on the ground through the window but never went to play with them. Due to such conditions he would always ask his uncle when he could go to his home in the village, as a result he became home-sick in his uncle’s house.

3. **Phatik and Makhan’s quarrel**

Makhan was younger brother of Phatik. Phatik was naughty, lazy, disobedient and wild, while Makhan was as good as gold, as quiet as lamb and very fond of reading. As they both were very different they always quarrelled. Phatik was the ringleader among the boys of village; he would guide all the boys to do mischievous activities. Once he got a mischievous idea and he explained the idea to the boys. The idea was that there was a log on the river bank and they would push the log into the river and the log would sink in the water. By seeing this, the owner of log would be angry and they will enjoy the fun. As decided the boys went to the river bank and started to push the log in the water, at the same time Makhan came and sat on the log to oppose the boys. The boys tried to push Makhan but he didn’t move. Phatik ordered Makhan to move from their way, Makhan didn’t listen so Phatik ordered the boys to push the log. The boys pushed the log and with the log Makhan also went in the river and Makhans philosophy was also vanished.

4. **The title of the story**

The title is alike a face of the story, which reflects the theme of the story. The present story entitled ‘The Home Coming’ is apt and suggestive. The entire story happens due to Phatik. To Phatik his house in the village was equal to heaven
whereas his uncle’s house equal to hell. Through the present story the writer wants to
tell us the importance of our house where we are born and brought up with
foundness, love and care. Phatik realizes the importance of the house after leaving
the house and becomes very eager to return to his home from his uncle’s house. In
this way Phatik’s journey towards home is the central issue of this story. And leaving
home creates a conflict in his life.

5. **Significance of the ending of the story**

The short story is a minor form of literature which is based on a single incident. Even though it is based on single incident it has beginning, middle and end. Well beginning, better middle and effective ending are the features of a good story. The ending of the story is also important element because it makes good impact among the readers or listeners’ mind. It is meaningful, suggestive and remarkable. It is indicative of its theme. The proverb “All is well that ends well” also tells us the importance of the ending of the story. The ending is quite significant and suggestive also. You have noted that Phatik’s home in the village is a paradise for him. In the act of going to the uncle’s house in Calcutta, the young sensitive boy is out of his paradise. If we remember this and read the ending carefully, we shall notice that perhaps the writer is moving the meaning of Phatik’s pathetic experiences to a higher level of consciousness. Here the expressions “home-coming” and “holidays” take on almost a spiritual meaning.

### 2.8 (A) Questions for further study:

1. Describe in detail the country life versus city life as depicted in the story.
2. Discuss a generation gap as a theme in the story.
3. What were the factors responsible for Phatik’s unhappy life?
4. What is the main theme of the story? Say what might happen in the absence of love?

### (B) Suggestion for written work:

Rewrite the story from Phatik’s point of view.
2.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit you will be able to

- **Understand**: Life and work of Ruskin Bond
- **Explain**: How, in spite of hurdles nature survives.
- **Find relationship between**: You can able to explain the relationship between man & nature.

2.1 Introduction:

Born in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh in 1934, Ruskin Bond is a well-known figure on the literary horizon of India. He achieved international recognition by winning the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize in 1957 for ‘The Room on the Roof’ written when he was seventeen years old. Since then he has written over a hundred short stories, essays, novellas and novels which include Vagrants on the Valley and A Flight of Pigeons. The latter novel has been made into a widely
acclaimed film *Junoon*. He has written more than thirty books for children. He has also published his two-volume autobiography: *Scenes from a Writer’s Life* which describes his formative years growing up in Anglo-India; and *The lamp is Lit* a collection of essays and episodes from his journal. In 1992 he received the Sahitya Akademi Award for English writing in India. He was awarded Padma Shree in 1999. His latest book is a collection of ghost stories entitled *A Season of Ghosts*. It was published in November 1999 and has done so well that it is being reprinted.

Rakesh plants a cherry seedling in his garden and watches it grow. As seasons go by, the small tree survives heavy monsoon showers, a hungry goat that eats most of the leaves and a grass cutter who splits it into two with one sweep. At last, on his ninth birthday, Rakesh is rewarded with miraculous sight—the first pink blossoms of his precious cherry tree!

2.2 The text:

One day, when Rakesh was six, he walked home from the Mussoorie bazaar eating cherries. They were a little sweet, a little sour; small, bright red cherries, which had come all the way from the Kashmir Valley.

Here, in the Himalayan foothills where Rakesh lived, there were not many fruit trees. The soil was stony, and the dry cold winds stunted the growth of most plants. But on the more sheltered slopes there were forests of oak and deodar.

Rakesh lived with his grandfather on the outskirts of Mussoorie, just where the forest began. His father and mother lived in a small village fifty miles away, where they grew maize and rice and barley in narrow terraced fields on the lower slopes of the mountain. But there were no schools in the village, and Rakesh’s parents were keen that he should go to school. As soon as he was of school-going age, they sent him to stay with his grandfather in Mussoorie.

Grandfather was a retired forest ranger. He had a little cottage outside the town.

Rakesh was on his way home from school when he bought the cherries. He paid fifty paise for the bunch. It took him about half an hour to walk home, and by the time he reached the cottage there were only three cherries left.
“Have a cherry, grandfather,” he said, as soon as he saw his grandfather in the garden.

Grandfather took one cherry and Rakesh promptly ate the other too. He kept the last seed in his mouth for sometime, rolling it round and round on his tongue until all the tang had gone. Then he placed the seed on the palm of his and studied it.

“Are cherry seeds lucky?” asked Rakesh.

“Of course.”

“Then I’ll keep it.”

“Nothing is lucky if you put it away. If you want luck, you must put it to some use.”

“What can I do with a seed?”

“Plant it.”

So Rakesh found a small spade and began to dig up a flower-bed.

“Hey, not there.” said Grandfather. “I’ve sown mustard in that bed. Plant it in that shady corner, where it won’t be disturbed.”

Rakesh went to a corner of the garden where the earth was soft and yielding. He did not have to dig. He pressed the seed into the soil with his thumb and it went right in.

Then he had his lunch, and ran off to play cricket with his friends, and forgot all about the cherry seed.

When it was winter in the hills, a cold wind blew down from the snows and went whoo-whoo-whoo in the deodar trees, and the garden was dry and bare. In the evenings Grandfather and Rakesh sat over a charcoal fire, and Grandfather told Rakesh stories-stories about people who turned into animals, and ghosts who lived in trees, and beans that jumped and stones that wept—and in turn Rakesh would read to him from the newspaper, Grandfather’s eyesight being rather weak. Rakesh found the newspaper very dull—especially after the stories—but Grandfather wanted all the news…

They knew it was spring when the wild duck flew north again, to Siberia. Early in the morning, when he got up to chop wood and light a fire, Rakesh saw the V-
shaped formation streaming northwards, the calls of the birds carrying clearly through the thin mountain air.

One morning in the garden he bent to pick up what he thought was a small twig and found to his surprise that it was well rooted. He stared at it for a moment, then ran to fetch Grandfather, calling: “Dada, come and look, the cherry tree has come up!”

“What cherry tree?” asked Grandfather, who had forgotten about it.

“The seed we planted last year-look, it’s come up!”

Rakesh went down on his haunches, while Grandfather bent almost double and peered down at the tiny tree. It was about four inches high.

“Yes, it’s a cherry tree,” said Grandfather. “You should water it now and then.”

Rakesh ran indoors and came back with a bucket of water.

“Don’t drown it!” said Grandfather.

Rakesh gave it as sprinkling and circled it with pebbles.

“What are the pebbles for?” asked Grandfather.

“For privacy,” said Rakesh.

He looked at the tree every morning but it did not seem to be growing very fast. So he stopped looking at it-except quickly, out of the corner of his eye. And, after a week or two, when he allowed himself to look at it properly, he found that it had grown-at least an inch!

That year the monsoon rains came early and Rakesh plodded to and from school in raincoat and gum-boots. Ferns sprang from the trunk of trees, strange-looking lilies came up in the long grass, and even when it wasn’t raining the trees dripped and mist came curling up the valley. The cherry tree grew quickly in this season.

It was about two feet high when a goat entered the garden and ate all the leaves. Only the main stem and two thin branches remained.

“Never mind,” said Grandfather, seeing that Rakesh was upset. “It will grow again, cherry trees are tough.”
Towards the end of the rainy season new leaves appeared on the tree. Then a woman cutting grass scrambled down the hillside, her scythe swishing through the heavy monsoon foliage. She did try to avoid the tree: one sweep and the cherry tree was cut in two.

When Grandfather saw what had happened, he went after the woman and scolded her; but the damage could not be repaired.

“May be it will die now,” said Rakesh.

“May be,” said Grandfather.

But the cherry tree had no intention of dying.

By the time summer came round again, it had sent out several new shoots with tender green leaves. Rakesh had grown taller too. He was eight now, a sturdy boy with curly black hair and deep black eyes. “Blackberry eyes,” Grandfather called them.

That monsoon Rakesh went home to his village, to help his father and mother with the planting and ploughing and sowing. He was thinner but stronger when he came back to Grandfather’s house at the end of the rains, to find that the cherry tree had grown another foot. It was now up to his chest.

Even when there was rain, Rakesh would sometimes water the tree. He wanted it to know that he was there.

One day he found a bright green praying-mantis perched on a branch peering at him with bulging eyes. Rakesh let it remain there. It was the cherry tree’s first visitor.

The next visitor was a hairy caterpillar, who started making a meal of the leaves. Rakesh removed it quickly and dropped it on a heap of dry leaves.

“Come back when you’re a butterfly,” he said.

Winter came early. The cherry tree bent low with the weight of snow. Fieldmice sought shelter in the roof of the cottage. The road from the valley was blocked, and for several days there was no newspaper, and this made Grandfather quite grumpy. His stories began to have unhappy endings.
In February it was Rakesh’s birthday. He was nine-and the tree was four, but almost as tall as Rakesh.

One morning, when the sun came out, Grandfather came into the garden to “let some warmth get into my bones,” as he put it. He stopped in front of the cherry tree, stared at it for a few moments, and then called out: “Rakesh! Come and look! Come quickly before it falls!”

Rakesh and Grandfather gazed at the tree as though it had performed a miracle. There was a pale pink blossom at the end of a branch.

The following year there were more blossoms. And suddenly the tree was taller than Rakesh, even though it was less than half of his age. And then it was taller than Grandfather, who was older than some of the oak trees.

But Rakesh had grown too. He could run and jump and climb trees as well as most boys, and he read a lot of books, although he still liked listening to Grandfather’s tales.

In the cheery tree, bees came to feed on the nectar in the blossoms, and tiny birds pecked at the blossoms and broke them off. But the tree kept blossoming right through the spring and there were always more blossoms than birds.

That summer there were small cherries on the tree. Rakesh tasted one and spat it out.

“It’s too sour,” he said.

“They’ll be better next year,” said Grandfather.

But the birds liked them-especially the bigger birds, such as the Bulbuls and Scarlet minivets-and they flitted in and out of the foliage, feasting on the cherries.

On a warm sunny afternoon, when even the bees looked sleepy, Rakesh was looking for Grandfather without finding him in any of his favourite places around the house. Then he looked out of bedroom window and saw Grandfather reclining on a cane chair under the cherry tree.

“There’s just the right amount of shade here,” said Grandfather. “And I like looking at the leaves.”
“They’re pretty leaves,” said Rakesh. “And they are always ready to dance, if there’s a breeze.”

After Grandfather had come indoors, Rakesh went into the garden and lay down on the grass beneath the tree. He gazed up through the leaves at the great blue sky; and turning on his side, he could see the mountain striding away into the clouds. He was still lying beneath the tree when the evening shadow crept across the garden. Grandfather came back and sat down beside Rakesh, and they waited in silence until the stars came out and nightjar began to call. In the forest below, the crickets and cicadas began tuning up; and suddenly the trees were full of sound of insects.

“There are so many trees in the forest,” said Rakesh.

“What’s so special about this tree? Why do we like it so much?”

“We planted it ourselves,” said Grandfather. “That’s why it’s special.”

“Just one small seed,” said Rakesh, and he touched the smooth bark of the tree he had grown. He ran his hand along the trunk of the tree and put his finger to the tip of a leaf. “I wonder,” he whispered. “Is this what it feels like to be God?”

2.3 Check your progress:

Section -1

I. Objective type questions:

Multiple choice questions:

1. Rakesh was born in -------- month.
   a) February    b) October    c) March    d) May

2. Rakesh went home to his village--------.
   a) to help his grandmother.    b) to help his father and mother.
   c) to help his uncle and aunt.    d) to help his friends.

3. When Rakesh was nine years old, the tree was --------.
   a) five    b) four    c) ten    d) three

4. Rakesh’s Grandfather was --------.
   a) a retired teacher    b) a ex-army man
   c) a retired forest ranger    d) a writer
5. Rakesh used to live with ---------.

   a) his parents   b) with his Grandfather  c) with his uncle  d) his friends

Section-2

II. Short answer type questions:

   (A) Answer the following questions in a word / sentence / phrase each.

   1. Who is the central character in the story?
   2. Who visited the Cherry Tree?
   3. Who planted the seed of Cherry tree?
   4. Which pleasure did Rakesh enjoy?
   5. Why did Rakesh spit out the small cherry?
   6. What are the last surprising words of Rakesh?
   7. Where did Rakesh’s Grandfather live?

2.4 Summary:

   Rakesh was a six years old school boy, who used to live with his Grandfather in Mussoorie. His parents lived in a small village fifty miles away where there was no school. So Rakesh lived with his grandfather in mussoorie. Rakesh’s Grandfather was a retired forest ranger. Rakesh had to walk half an hour from his school to reach his grandfather’s cottage. While coming to the cottage, he used to buy a bunch of cherries for fifty paisa. When he reached home only three cherries were left. He offered one of the cherries to his Grandfather who was working in the garden.

   Grandfather took one of the cherries and ate it and Rakeh ate the remaining two. Rakesh kept the last seed in his mouth for some time. Later on he took that seed in his hand and studied it. Rakesh asked his grandfather whether the cherry seeds are lucky. His Grandfather answered of course they are lucky, but they must be put in some use. So, Rakesh decided to plant it and started to dig for the plantation in the shady corner of the garden. Then he took his lunch and ran away to play cricket with his friends and forgot all about the cherry seed.
In the winter Rakesh and Grandfather sat in front of the charcoal fire, where grandfather used to tell stories to Rakesh; in return Rakesh would read newspaper for grandfather, as grandfather’s eyesight had become weak.

In the spring season Rakesh wake up early in the morning to chop wood and light fire. At the same time Rakesh saw a ‘V’ shaped formation streaming northward. One morning he bent to pick that small towing and was surprised to see that it was a well rooted cherry tree. He called his grandfather and confirmed it. Grandfather suggested him to water it regularly.

Rakesh looked at the tree every morning, but he didn’t find it growing. So, he stopped looking at the tree. Then he started to look at the tree weekly and found it growing one inch. In the mansoon the tree becomes two feet tall. One day a goat entered the garden and ate the lives of the cherry tree. By seeing this Rakesh became upset. Grandfather gave confidence to Rakesh. At the end of mansoon the cherry tree would grow again.

After few days a woman was cutting grass from the garden and at that time she cut the cherry tree into two parts. By seeing this grandfather scolded her and both Rakesh and grandfather lost the hope that the tree will grow again.

By the summer the tree grew again and Rakesh had also grown. That mansoon Rakesh went near his parents to help them in farms. After returning he had become thin but strong. He found the cherry tree had grown to his chest.

One day a small bird came on the cherry tree and Rakesh let it to sit there. The next visitor was a caterpillar, who started making the meal of leaves. Rakesh removed it and threw.

In winter the cherry tree bent with snow. In February it was Rakesh’s birthday. He was nine years old now. One morning, Grandfather came out and was surprised to see the small blossom on the cherry tree. Both watch it as if it was a miracle.

There were many blossoms that year and tree suddenly became taller, it became taller than grandfather. But Rakesh had grown too. He had learned to climb the trees and had read a lot of books. The cherry tree becomes a place for shelter for many birds.

In summer, there were some small cherries, Rakesh tasted one, it was too sour. But the birds like them especially the bigger birds.
One sunny afternoon, Rakesh was looking for grandfather. He found grandfather sitting under the cherry tree in his cane chair. Rakesh also led down there, when his grandfather went in the cottage. He was watching to the sky through the leaves. He was still lying down until the evening. His grandfather came and both were looking at stars. Rakesh asked grandfather, “What is special about the tree that we like this tree even though there are so many trees in forest.” Grandfather answered, “it is because it is planted by us”.

Rakesh whispered, “Only one seed turns in to a huge tree, I wonder, Is this what it feels like to be God”.

2.5 Terms to remember:

(Important terms in the unit along with their brief meanings):

GLOSSARY AND NOTES:

outskirts: the outer parts of a town or city
spade: a tool with a sharp edge
beans: an edible kidney shaped seed growing in long pods on certain leguminous plants.
to chop: cut with repeated sharp, heavy blows of an axe or knife.
pebbles: a small stone made smooth and round by the action of sand or water
plodded: walk doggedly and slowly with heavy steps
scythe: a tool used for cutting crops or corn with a long curved blade at the end of a long pole attached to one or two short handles.
swish: move or cause to move with a hissing or rushing sound.
damage: physical harm impairing the value
caterpillar: the larva of a butterfly or moth
grumpy: bad tempered and sulky
nectar: a sugary fluid secreted within flowers to encourage pollination by insects.
foliage: plant leaves collectively
feasting: a large meal, especially a celebratory one

reclining: lean or lie back in a relaxed position

stride: walk with long, decisive steps

crept: move slowly and carefully, especially in order to avoid being heard or noticed.

nightjar: an nocturnal insectivorous bird with gray, plumage, large eyes, gape, an a distinctive call

2.6. Answers to check your progress:

Section -1

I. Objective type questions:

Multiple choice questions:
1. a) February
2. b) to help his father and mother
3. b) four
4. c) retired forest ranger
5. b) his grandfather

Section- 2

II. Short answer type questions:

(A) Answer the following questions in a word / sentence / phrase each.
1. Rakesh is the central character in the story.
2. Caterpillars, small and big birds like Bulbul’s and Scarlets.
3. Rakesh planted the seed of cherry tree.
4. Rakesh enjoyed the pleasure of listening to the story of Grandfather.
5. Rakesh spat out the small cherry because it was too sour
6. “Is this what it feels like to be God?” are the last surprising words of Rakesh.
7. Rakesh’s grandfather lived in Mussorrie.
2.7 Exercises

I. Write answers of the following questions in four/five sentences each.

1. Who planted the cherry tree? And How?

   Ans: Rakesh planted the cherry tree. He planted the cherry seed on the advice of his grandfather. His grandfather told him how cherry seeds are lucky if we plant it in a proper place. So, Rakesh planted it in the garden where the earth was soft and yielding. He didn’t have to dig. He pressed the seed into soil with his thumb properly.

2. Why did Rakesh go home to his village in monsoon?

   Ans: Rakesh used to live with his grandfather, who was a retired ranger at Mussoorie. Rakesh’s parents were peasants, who lived in a small village. Education facility is not available in that village. So the parents send him to Mussoorie for his education. In every monsoon Rakesh went to his village for helping his father and mother in the farm. He helped to his parents in planting, ploughing and sowing.

II. Write short notes

1) Rakesh:

   Rakesh was a six years old hero of the story The Cherry Tree by Ruskin Bond. He was a sturdy boy with curly black hair and deep black eyes. He lived with his grandfather at Mussorrie. He belonged to the poor farmer’s family. His parents lived in a small village where there was no school. He liked to eat cherries. So, he spent fifty paisa for the bunch of cherries, which he ate on the way from school to the cottage. Once he planted a cherry seed in the shady corner. He used to play cricket with his friends.

   Grandfather told Rakesh the stories and in a return Rakesh readout newspaper to his grandfather even though he didn’t like it. His grandfather’s eyesight was weak. Rakesh was very enthusiastic about the planted cherry tree. One day he saw V-shaped formation streaming northwards and was surprised to see it was well rooted. As per the advice of his grandfather he used to water it and take care. One day he found a bunch of cherries on the tree and his happiness knew no bounds. Then he found some on the tree other visitors like a hairy caterpillar, butterfly and many other birds.
In this way Rakesh was very happy to see the big blossomed tree. He loved that
tree because he had planted it. In this way the small school boy shows us the very
good and great message about the plantation of tree to save environment.

2) The Grandfather:

Rakesh’s grandfather was a retired forest ranger who used to live in a small
cottage on the foothills of the Himalayas, near the forest in Mussoorie. Being a forest
ranger he loved to stay near tree. So he had developed a beautiful garden around his
small cottage. He inculcated many good values in his grandson Rakesh. He used to
tell Rakesh many stories about people who turned into animals and ghosts who lived
in trees. He was also very curious about current affair so he used to read newspaper
daily.

He loved Rakesh very much and guided him in various activities related to
gardening. His advice of planting the cherry tree shows his affection towards the
environment. He used to give confidence to Rakesh in some moments when the
cherry tree had broken. Grandfather sat under the cherry tree in his cane chair and
loved to watch the leaves. So, he is one of the ideal grandfathers who took good care
of his grandson.

3) The Cherry Tree:

The cherry tree plays a vital role in the present story. The story is based on the
plantation, growth, nursing and blossom of the cherry tree. The cherry tree is planted
by the six year old boy Rakesh. Inspite of many hurdles the cherry tree grows and
Rakesh feels happy at last as it blossoms. As seasons go by, the small tree survives
heavy monsoon showers, a hungry goat that eats most of the leaves and a grass cutter
who splits it into two with one sweep. At last, on his ninth birthday, Rakesh is
rewarded with miraculous sight—the first pink blossoms of his precious cherry tree.
Through the story, Bond conveys an important message. There is a kind of similarity
between the growth of the tree and Rakesh. Inspite of the heavy monsoon, and
cutting it by grasscutter into two, the tree survives and blossoms. It also provides a
shelter for many birds. Like the tree man also has to face many obstacles during his
lifetime. The obstacles and problems actually make man mature and his hardcore life
experiences make him to help others. Perhaps this significant message is conveyed
by Ruskin Bond through ‘The Cherry Tree’. 
2.8 Questions for further study:

A) 1. Ruskin Bond’s love of Nature reflected in the present story?
    2. What are the hurdles in the growth of the cherry tree?

B) Suggestion for written work:

    Imagine yourself as Rakesh and write your own observations about the tree you planted in your garden.
3.0 Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to-

- understand about Somerset Maugham as a famous British writer.
- explain the important elements of a short story.
- understand how one should not judge a person by his race or looks.
- find the description of the time after the First World War.
3.1 Introduction

William Somerset Maugham (1874 to 1965) is one of the most popular British writers. He is a dramatist, novelist and short story writer. He lost his parents at the age of 10 and was brought up by a paternal uncle. Though he became a doctor and practiced as a physician for some years, he started writing as early as at the age of 15. In 1907, he wrote a play Lady Fredrick, a comedy of manners that made him famous as a writer. Writing was so natural for him that once he said, “I took to it as a duck takes to water.” He had a long and very successful career of 65 years as a writer. He wrote many novels also. His novel Of Human Bondage is considered as a masterpiece. He took part in World War I and worked in British Secret Service. All these experiences are reflected in his short stories Ashenden or the British Agent, a collection of short stories about a gentlemanly, sophisticated, aloof spy. This character is considered to have influenced Ian Fleming's later series of James Bond novels.

The present story is an old story. It has been included in many collections of short stories. Like other stories by Maugham, this also is a sharp story full of irony and careful observation. The present story is taken from his Collection of Short Stories Vol. I. There is a narrator who tells the story. So the narration is in the first person singular ‘I’. This is also a story about culture, manners, first impressions, values and – most importantly of all – prejudice. Prejudice arises because it is human nature to stereotype new people we meet based on race or how they look before getting to know them. The message of the story can perhaps best be summed up in the English proverb: You should not judge a book by its cover.

Let us now read this interesting story. You can read the story with the help of the terms given in ‘Terms to remember’.

3.2 The text

3.2.1 Part I

I was prepared to dislike Max Kelada even before I knew him. The war had just finished and the passenger traffic in the ocean going liners was heavy. Accommodation was very hard to get and you had to put up with whatever the agents chose to offer you. You could not hope for a cabin to yourself and I was thankful to be given one in which there were only two berths. But when I was told the name of
my companion my heart sank. It suggested closed portholes and the night air rigidly excluded. It was bad enough to share a cabin for fourteen days with anyone (I was going from San Francisco to Yokohama), but I should have looked upon it with less dismay if my fellow passenger’s name had been Smith or Brown.

When I went on board I found Mr. Kelada’s luggage already below. I did not like the look of it; there were too many labels on the suitcases, and the wardrobe trunk was too big. He had unpacked his toilet things, and I observed that he was a patron of the excellent Monsieur Coty; for I saw on the washing-stand his scent, his hairwash and his brilliantine.

Mr. Kelada’s brushes, ebony with his monogram in gold, would have been all the better for a scrub. I did not at all like Mr. Kelada. I made my way into the smoking-room. I called for a pack of cards and began to play patience.

I had scarcely started before a man came up to me and asked me if he was right in thinking my name was so and so.

“I am Mr. Kelada,” he added, with a smile that showed a row of flashing teeth, and sat down. “Oh, yes, we’re sharing a cabin, I think.”

“Bit of luck, I call it. You never know who you’re going to be put in with. I was jolly glad when I heard you were English. I’m all for us English sticking together when we’re abroad, if you understand what I mean.”

I blinked.

“Are you English?” I asked, perhaps tactlessly.

“Rather. You don’t think I look like an American, do you? British to the backbone, that’s what I am.”

To prove it, Mr. Kelada took out of his pocket a passport and airily waved it under my nose.

King George has many strange subjects. Mr. Kelada was short and of a sturdy build, clean-shaven and dark-skinned, with a fleshy, hooked nose and very large lustrous, and liquid eyes. His long black hair was sleek and curly. He spoke with a fluency in which there was nothing English and his gestures were exuberant. I felt pretty sure that a closer inspection of that British passport would have betrayed the fact that Mr. Kelada was born under a bluer sky than is generally seen in England.
“What will you have?” he asked me.

I looked at him doubtfully. Prohibition was in force and to all appearances the ship was bone-dry. When I am not thirsty I do not know which I dislike more, ginger-ale or lemon-squash. But Mr. Kelada flashed an oriental smile at me.

“Whisky and soda or a dry Martini, you have only to say the word.”

From each of his hip pockets he fished a flask and laid it on the table before me. I chose the Martini, and calling the steward, he ordered a tumbler of ice and a couple of glasses.

“A very good cocktail,” I said.

“Well, there are plenty more where that came from, and if you’ve got any friends on board, you tell them you’ve got a pal who’s got all the liquor in the world.”

SECTION I: Check your progress

A. **Rewrite the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative.**

1. The narrator was prepared to ….. Max Kelada.
   a. dislike   b. like   c. admire   d. hate

2. The narrator was going from San Francisco to ……… on the board of an ocean liner.

3. According to Mr. Kelada, he was ………to the backbone.

4. Mr. Kelada was ‘a patron of Monsieur Coty’ means ………
   a. he bought perfumed articles for his toilet
   b. he bought beautiful mirror
   c. he bought costly clothes
   d. none of the above

5. Though Mr. Kelada spoke……… there was nothing English in his accents.
   a. with difficulty   b. with a fluency   c. hurriedly   d. slowly
B. **Answer the following sentences in one word/phrase/ sentence each.**

1. What is the time in the story?
2. Who was the narrator’s companion in his cabin on the ocean liner?
3. Which card game did the narrator begin to play?
4. What was the narrator sure about?
5. What did Mr. Kelada offer to the narrator?

### 3.2.2 **Part II**

Mr. Kelada was chatty. He talked of New York and of San Francisco. He discussed plays, pictures, and politics. He was patriotic. The Union Jack is an impressive piece of drapery, but when it is flourished by a gentleman from Alexandria or Beirut, I cannot but feel that it loses somewhat in dignity. Mr. Kelada was familiar. I do not wish to put on airs, but I cannot help feeling that it is seemly in a total stranger to put mister before my name when he addresses me. Mr. Kelada, doubtless to set me at my ease, used no such formality. I did not like Mr. Kelada. I had put aside the cards when he sat down, but now, thinking that for this first occasion our conversation had lasted long enough, I went on with my game.

"The three on the four," said Mr. Kelada.

There is nothing more exasperating when you are playing patience than to be told where to put the card you have turned up before you have a chance to look for yourself.

"It’s coming out, it’s coming out," he cried. "The ten on the knave." With rage and hatred in my heart I finished. Then he seized the pack. "Do you like card tricks?"

"No, I hate card tricks," I answered.

"Well, I’ll just show you this one."

He showed me three. Then I said I would go down to the dining-room and get my seat at the table.

"Oh, that’s all right," he said, "I’ve already taken a seat for you. I thought that as we were in the same state room we might just as well sit at the same table."

I did not like Mr. Kelada.
I not only shared a cabin with him and ate three meals a day at the same table, but I could not walk round the deck without his joining me. It was impossible to snub him. It never occurred to him that he was not wanted. He was certain that you were as glad to see him as he was to see you. In your own house you might have kicked him downstairs and slammed the door in his face without the suspicion dawning on him that he was not a welcome visitor. He was a good mixer, and in three days knew everyone on board. He ran everything. He managed the sweeps, conducted the auctions, collected money for prizes at the sports, got up quoit and golf matches, organized the concert and arranged the fancy-dress ball. He was everywhere and always. He was certainly the best hated man in the ship. We called him Mr. Know-All, even to his face. He took it as a compliment. But it was at mealtimes that he was most intolerable. For the better part of an hour then he had us at his mercy. He was hearty, jovial, loquacious and argumentative. He knew everything better than anybody else, and it was an affront to his overweening vanity that you should disagree with him. He would not drop a subject, however unimportant, till he had brought you round to his way of thinking. The possibility that he could be mistaken never occurred to him. He was the chap who knew. We sat at the doctor’s table. Mr. Kelada would certainly have had it all his own way, for the doctor was lazy and I was indifferent, except for a man called Ramsay who sat there also. He was as dogmatic as Mr. Kelada and resented bitterly the Levantine’s cocksureness. The discussions they had were acrimonious and interminable.

Ramsay was in the American Consular Service and was stationed at Kobe. He was a great heavy fellow from the Middle West, with loose fat under a tight skin, and he bulged out of his ready-made clothes. He was on his way back to resume his post, having been on a flying visit to New York to fetch his wife who had been spending a year at home. Mrs. Ramsay was a very pretty little thing, with pleasant manners and a sense of humour. The Consular Service is ill paid, and she was dressed always very simply; but she knew how to wear her clothes. She achieved an effect of quiet distinction. I should not have paid any particular attention to her but that she possessed a quality that may be common enough in women, but nowadays is not obvious in their demeanour. It shone in her like a flower on a coat.
SECTION II: Check your progress

A. Rewrite the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative.

i. Mr. Kelada was ……..
   a. dumb  b. funny  c. chatty  d. foolish

ii. It never occurred to Mr. Kelada that he was……..
   a. unwanted  b. wanted  c. admired  d. liked

iii. Mr. Kelada was called ‘Mr. Know-All’ by fellow passengers and he took it
    as a ……..
    a. complaint  b. comment  c. compliment  d. chance

iv. Mr. Ramsay was in ……… Consulate.

v. Mrs. Ramsay’s wife was living in New York for ……. year.
    a. three  b. one  c. five  d. two

B. Answer the following sentences in one word/phrase/ sentence each.

i. What did Mr. Kelada talk of?

ii. How many card tricks did Mr. Kelada show to the narrator?

iii. Who was as dogmatic as Mr. Kelada?

iv. Who is a Levantine?

v. What did Mr. Ramsay resent bitterly?

3.2.3 Part III

One evening at dinner the conversation by chance drifted to the subject of
pearls. There had been in the papers a good deal of talk about the cultured
pearls which the cunning Japanese were making, and the doctor remarked that
they must inevitably diminish the value of real ones. They were very good already;
they would soon be perfect. Mr. Kelada, as was his habit, rushed the new topic. He
told us all that was to be known about pearls. I do not believe Ramsay knew anything
about them at all, but he could not resist the opportunity to have a fling at the Levantine,
and in five minutes we were in the middle of a heated argument. I had seen Mr.
Kelada vehement and voluble before, but never so voluble and vehement as now. At last something that Ramsay said stung him; for he thumped the table and shouted.

“Well, I ought to know what I am talking about, I’m going to Japan just to look into this Japanese pearl business. I’m in the trade and there’s not a man in it who won’t tell you that what I say about pearls goes. I know all the best pearls in the world, and what I don’t know about pearls isn’t worth knowing.”

Here was news for us, for Mr. Kelada, with all his loquacity, had never told anyone what his business was. We only knew vaguely that he was going to Japan on some commercial errand. He looked around the table triumphantly.

“They’ll never be able to get a cultured pearl that an expert like me can’t tell with half an eye.” He pointed to a chain that Mrs. Ramsay wore. “You take my word for it, Mrs. Ramsay, that chain you’re wearing will never be worth a cent less than it is now.”

Mrs. Ramsay in her modest way flushed a little and slipped the chain inside her dress. Ramsay leaned forward. He gave us all a look and a smile flickered in his eyes.

“That’s a pretty chain of Mrs. Ramsay’s, isn’t it?”

“I noticed it at once,” answered Mr. Kelada. “Gee, I said to myself, those are pearls all right.”

“I didn’t buy it myself, of course. I’d be interested to know how much you think it cost.”

“Oh, in the trade somewhere round fifteen thousand dollars. But if it was bought on Fifth Avenue I shouldn’t be surprised to hear anything up to thirty thousand was paid for it.”

Ramsay smiled grimly.

“You’ll be surprised to hear that Mrs. Ramsay bought that string at a department store the day before we left New York, for eighteen dollars.”

Mr. Kelada flushed. “Rot. It’s not only real, but it’s as fine a string for its size as I’ve ever seen.”

“Will you bet on it? I’ll bet you a hundred dollars it’s imitation.”
“Done.” “Oh, Elmer, you can’t bet on a certainty,” said Mrs. Ramsay.
She had a little smile on her lips and her tone was gently deprecating.

“Can’t I? If I get a chance of easy money like that I should be all sorts of a fool
not to take it.”

“But how can it be proved?” she continued. “It’s only my word against Mr.
Kelada’s.”

“Let me look at the chain, and if it’s imitation I’ll tell you quickly enough. I can
afford to lose a hundred dollars,” said Mr. Kelada.

“Take it off, dear. Let the gentleman look at it as much as he wants.”
Mrs. Ramsay hesitated a moment. She put her hands to the clasp.

“I can’t undo it,” she said, “Mr. Kelada will just have to take my word for it.”
I had a sudden suspicion that something unfortunate was about to occur, but I
could think of nothing to say.

Ramsay jumped up. “I’ll undo it.”
He handed the chain to Mr. Kelada. The Levantine took a magnifying glass from
his pocket and closely examined it. A smile of triumph spread over his smooth and
swarthy face. He handed back the chain. He was about to speak. Suddenly he caught
sight of Mrs. Ramsay’s face. It was so white that she looked as though she were
about to faint. She was staring at him with wide and terrified eyes. They held a
desperate appeal; it was so clear that I wondered why her husband did not see it.

Mr. Kelada stopped with his mouth open. He flushed deeply. You could almost
see the effort he was making over himself.

“I was mistaken,” he said. “It’s a very good imitation, but of course as soon as I
looked through my glass I saw that it wasn’t real. I think eighteen dollars is just
about as much as the damned thing’s worth.”

SECTION III: Check your progress

A. Rewrite the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative.
   i. Japanese were making…….. at that time.
      a. real diamond b. imitation jewellery
c. cultured pearls  d. cultured diamonds

ii. The doctor thought that soon the cultured pearls would be …….
   a. perfect  b. imperfect  c. ready  d. good

iii. ………. was going to Japan to look in to the pearl business.
   a. Mr. Ramsay  b. Mr. Kelada
   c. The narrator  d. the doctor

iv. The bet about the pearls was between Mr. Kelada and ……….
   a. Mr.Ramsay  b. the doctor  c. the narrator  d. Mrs. Ramsay

v. Mrs. Ramsay ………… when her husband told her to take her pearl chain off her neck.
   a. was happy  b. became sad  c. was curious  d. hesitated

B. Answer the following sentences in one word/phrase/ sentence each.
   i. What adjective is used to describe the Japanese?
   ii. How did Mr. Kelada know everything about pearls?
   iii. What was the name of Mr. Ramsay?
   iv. How much money did Mr. Ramsay bet with Mr. Kelada?
   v. Who accepted the defeat in the bet?

3.2.4 Part IV

He took out his pocketbook and from it a hundred dollar note. He handed it to Ramsay without a word.

“Perhaps that’ll teach you not to be so cocksure another time, my young friend,” said Ramsay as he took the note.

I noticed that Mr. Kelada’s hands were trembling.

The story spread over the ship as stories do, and he had to put up with a good deal of chaff that evening. It was a fine joke that Mr. Know-All had been caught out. But Mrs. Ramsay retired to her stateroom with a headache.
Next morning I got up and began to shave. Mr. Kelada lay on his bed smoking a cigarette. Suddenly there was a small scraping sound and I saw a letter pushed under the door. I opened the door and looked out. There was nobody there. I picked up the letter and saw it was addressed to Max Kelada. The name was written in block letters. I handed it to him.

“Who’s this from?” He opened it. “Oh!”

He took out of the envelope, not a letter, but a hundred-dollar note. He looked at me and again he reddened. He tore the envelope into little bits and gave them to me.

“Do you mind just throwing them out of the port-hole?”

I did as he asked, and then I looked at him with a smile.

“No one likes being made to look a perfect damned fool,” he said.

“Were the pearls real?”

“If I had a pretty little wife I shouldn’t let her spend a year in New York while I stayed at Kobe,” said he. At that moment I did not entirely dislike Mr. Kelada. He reached out for his pocketbook and carefully put in it the hundred-dollar note.

SECTION IV : Check your progress

A. Rewrite the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative.

i. Mr. Kelada took out his …….. to give hundred dollars to Mr. Ramsay.
   a. packet   b. purse   c. handbook   d. wallet

ii. The narrator noticed that Mr. Kelada’s ……… were trembling.
    a. hands    b. legs    c. eyes    d. fingers

iii. When everybody was laughing at Mr. Kelada, Mrs. Ramsay retired to her room with a……..
    a. laugh.   b. headache.   c. smile.   d. none.

iv. The next day, there was a ………pushed under the door.
    a. letter   b. paper   c. newspaper   d. card

v. In the end the narrator says that he did not……….. dislike Mr. Kelada at that moment.
B. Answer the following sentences in one word/phrase/ sentence each.

i. What did Mr. Ramsay remark when Mr. Kelada gave him a hundred dollar note?

ii. What story was spread over the ship?

iii. Whom was the letter addressed to?

iv. What was in the envelop?

v. What did Mr. Kelada reply to the narrator?

3.3 Summary

The setting of the story is a shipboard. The time is meant to be about 1919 or 1920, just after the First World War. There is an assortment of travellers cruising from the US to Japan. Among them is Kaleda, a fellow who boasts that he knows everything and that he can never be wrong. The narrator dislikes him for his breezy manners and for his cocksureness.

Mr. Kelada never understands that he is disliked by all the travellers. Because of his habit of doing so many things on board the ship and always boasting that he knows everything he is called ‘Mr. Know-All’ by fellow travellers and he takes it as a compliment.

During one dinner the conversation turns to pearls. Mr. Kelada, as per his habit, tells everything that is to be known about pearls. There is a traveller Mr. Ramsay, who hates Mr. Kelada’s cocksureness, argues bitterly with him. Kaleda now tells his fellow travellers that he is in pearl business and ought to know about pearls. Mr. Ramsay bets that the pearl necklace that his wife is wearing is imitation jewellery. Mr. Kelada is sure that it is of high quality. He accepts the challenge of Mr. Ramsay and bets an amount and asks the lady to unfasten and give the necklace for him to examine. He examines it by his magnifying glass and looked triumphantly to the people. But when he looks the desperate appeal in the eyes of Mrs. Ramsay, he suddenly stops. He has to control himself to tell that it is not real. Next day an envelop is pushed in their room. It contains a hundred dollar note. The narrator comes to know the humanity of Mr. Kelada.
3.4 Terms to Remember

**know-all**: someone who behaves as if he/she knows everything

**Yokohama**: a city in Japan

**Ocean liner**: a big ship of a big boat company

**berth**: sleeping place in a ship or a rail

**ebony**: a hard heavy black wood

**he was a patron of the excellent Monsieur Coty**: he bought perfumed articles for his toilet

**brilliantine**: a perfumed grease for the hair, to keep it shiny

**Monogram**: a figure formed of two or more letters combined, printed or sewn

**to scrub**: to rub hard to clean

**call for**: demand

**solitaire**: game of cards

**to exasperate**: to annoy or make extremely angry

**state room**: passenger’s large private room on a ship, here Mr. Kaleda makes fun of the smallness of the room

**British to the back bone**: completely British

**prohibition**: at the time the story was written, it was forbidden to sell alcoholic drinks in some parts of U. S.

**bone-dry**: there was no alcohol on board the ship, as it had just sailed from an American port

**a good mixer**: he found it easy to get to know people and to make conversation with strangers

**sweeps**: lotteries

**snub**: to treat somebody rudely

**auction**: a public meeting at which goods are sold to person who offers the most money
quoits: a ring that is thrown over a small upright post in a game often played on ships

frigidly: coldly in manner, unfriendly

dogmatic: a person who holds his belief very strongly

resent: to feel anger and dislike about something

cocksure: too self-confident, offensively sure of oneself

overweening: conceited

demeanour: the way one behaves

Levantine: a person born in the countries on the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, such as Turkey or the Lebanon

acrimonious: sharp, bitter, manner or language

interminable: endless, especially when very uninteresting

Kobe: a city in Japan

resume: to begin again

sense of humour: ability to understand, judge and understand what is funny

drift: a mass of something blown together by wind (snow or sand)

resist: oppose, strive against

have a fling: to make an attempt

vehement: showing strong feelings, forceful

voluble: talking a lot

errand: a short journey to do get some thing

half an eye: very quickly, without spending time

grim: determined in spite of great difficulty, (grimly: adv.)

deprecating: (normally not used in progressive forms): to express disapproval of (an action etc.)

about to occur: to take place, especially something unplanned
**magnifying glass**: a piece of glass curved on one or both sides, with a frame and handle, which magnifies things seen through it

**swarthy (face)**: rather dark coloured

**terrified**: very much afraid, badly frightened

**desperate**: some action done as last attempt

**appeal**: strong request for help or support

**flush**: become red in the face

**put up with**: to suffer (something annoying or unpleasant) without complaint

**chaff**: to make fun of (someone) in a friendly way

**to reach out**: to stretch out (a hand or arm)

**pocket-book**: a woman’s handbag, especially one without a shoulder strap

**Answers check your progress**

**Section I**:  
A. i. a. dislike ii. c. Yokohama iii. a. British  
iv. a. he bought perfumed articles for his toilet v. b. with a fluency  

B. i. The time is just after the First World War, that is, in the year 1919 or 1920.  
ii. Mr. Kelada iii. The game of patience  
iv. The narrator was sure that Mr. Kelada was not British. v. Wine

**Section II**:  
A. i. b. cultured pearls ii. a. unwanted iii. c. compliment iv. d. American  
v. b. one

B. i. Mr. Kelada talked of San Francisco and New York. ii. Three iii. Mr. Ramsay  
iv. A Levantine is a person born in the countries of Eastern Mediterranean Sea such as Turkey or Lebanon. v. The cocksureness of Mr. Kelada
Section III:
A.  i.  c. cultured pearls  ii. a. perfect  iii. b. Mr. Kelada  iv. a. Mr. Ramsay  v.  d. hesitated
B.  i.  Cunning  ii. He was in pearl business. iii. Elmer  iv. one  v. Mr. Kelada

Section IV:
A.  i. handbook  ii. a. hands  iii. b. headache  iv. a. letter  v. d. entirely
B.  i.  “Perhaps that’ll teach you not to be so cocksure another time.”
   ii. Mr. Know-All had been caught out.  iii. Mr. Kelada  iv. A hundred dollar note
   v.  “If I had a pretty little wife I shouldn’t let her spend her spend a year at New York while I stayed at Kobe”.

3.6 Exercise
Q.1. Write Short Notes
   1.  The reasons of dislike of the narrator for Mr. Kelada
   2.  Activities of Mr. Kelada on the ship
   3.  The bet between Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Kelada
   4.  The character of Mrs. Ramsay
   5.  The title “Mr. Know All”

Q.2. Write detailed answers to the following questions.
   1.  Write a critical appreciation of the story.
   2.  Sketch the character of Mr. Kelada.
   3.  What do you think about Mr. Ramsay?
   4.  Narrate the climax of the story in your own words.

3.7 Reference for further reading.

3.0 Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to–

- understand about Saki (H.H. Munro) as a famous British writer.
- understand how autobiographical elements influence the writer.
- explain the characters in this short story.
- find the relationship of the characters in the short story.
- the world of children and their curiosity in those things which are kept away from them.

3.1 Introduction

Hector Hugh Munro, better known by the pen name Saki (1870-1916), and also frequently as H. H. Munro, is a British writer. His witty, mischievous stories satirise
Edwardian society and culture. Saki was born in (Burma) Myanmar, where his father was a member of the Civil Service. However, he had his education in England. He began his literary career as a political satirist. He wrote in Westminster Gazette in the beginning. His first book The Rise of the Russian Empire (1900) was a serious one. However, he turned to the fiction when he found it suitable to his talent. In his fiction there is humorous and satiric representation of life. He wrote two novels, but his short stories brought him name and fame. Munro was killed in the First World War.

Reginald (1904) was the title of his first collection of short stories. Other collections are Reginald in Russia, The Chronicle of Clovis, Beasts and Superbeasts. Graham Greene, a famous English writer, tells us that Munro had to experience many miseries in his childhood which affected his mind and writing. The present story is an example of it. We can easily understand why the author takes the side of mischievous Nicholas against the petty minded aunt.

The name Saki may be a reference to the cupbearer in the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, a poem mentioned disparagingly by the eponymous character in "Reginald on Christmas Presents" and alluded to in a few other stories. It may, however, be a reference to the South American primate of the same name—a small, long-tailed monkey from the Western Hemisphere.

Now read this beautiful story. You can take the help of the ‘Terms to Remember’ to understand the meanings of difficult words in the story.

3.2 The Text

3.2.1 Part I

The children were to be driven, as a special treat, to the sands at Jagborough. Nicholas was not to be of the party; he was in disgrace. Only that morning he had refused to eat his wholesome bread-and-milk on the seemingly frivolous ground that there was a frog in it. Older and wiser and better people had told him that there could not possibly be a frog in his bread-and-milk and that he was not to talk nonsense; he continued, nevertheless, to talk what seemed the veriest nonsense, and described with much detail the colouration and markings of the alleged frog. The dramatic part of the incident was that there really was a frog in Nicholas’ basin of bread-and-milk; he had put it there himself, so he felt entitled to know something about it. The sin of taking a frog from the garden and putting it into a bowl of wholesome bread-and-
milk was enlarged on at great length, but the fact that stood out clearest in the whole affair, as it presented itself to the mind of Nicholas, was that the older, wiser, and better people had been proved to be profoundly in error in matters about which they had expressed the utmost assurance.

“You said there couldn’t possibly be a frog in my bread-and-milk; there was a frog in my bread-and-milk,” he repeated, with the insistence of a skilled tactician who does not intend to shift from favourable ground.

So his boy-cousin and girl-cousin and his quite uninteresting younger brother were to be taken to Jagborough sands that afternoon and he was to stay at home. His cousins’ aunt, who insisted, by an unwarranted stretch of imagination, in styling herself his aunt also, had hastily invented the Jagborough expedition in order to impress on Nicholas the delights that he had justly forfeited by his disgraceful conduct at the breakfast-table. It was her habit, whenever one of the children fell from grace, to improvise something of a festival nature from which the offender would be rigorously debarred; if all the children sinned collectively they were suddenly informed of a circus in a neighbouring town, a circus of unrivalled merit and uncounted elephants, to which, but for their depravity, they would have been taken that very day.

A few decent tears were looked for on the part of Nicholas when the moment for the departure of the expedition arrived. As a matter of fact, however, all the crying was done by his girl-cousin, who scraped her knee rather painfully against the step of the carriage as she was scrambling in.

“How she did howl,” said Nicholas cheerfully, as the party drove off without any of the elation of high spirits that should have characterised it.

“She’ll soon get over that,” said the SOI-DISANT aunt; “it will be a glorious afternoon for racing about over those beautiful sands. How they will enjoy themselves!”

“Bobby won’t enjoy himself much, and he won’t race much either,” said Nicholas with a grim chuckle; “his boots are hurting him. They’re too tight.”

“Why didn’t he tell me they were hurting?” asked the aunt with some asperity.

“He told you twice, but you weren’t listening. You often don’t listen when we tell you important things.” “You are not to go into the gooseberry garden,” said the
aunt, changing the subject. “Why not?” demanded Nicholas. “Because you are in disgrace,” said the aunt loftily.

Nicholas did not admit the flawlessness of the reasoning; he felt perfectly capable of being in disgrace and in a gooseberry garden at the same moment. His face took on an expression of considerable obstinacy. It was clear to his aunt that he was determined to get into the gooseberry garden, “Only,” as she remarked to herself, “because I have told him he is not to.”

Now the gooseberry garden had two doors by which it might be entered, and once a small person like Nicholas could slip in there he could effectually disappear from view amid the masking growth of artichokes, raspberry canes, and fruit bushes. The aunt had many other things to do that afternoon, but she spent an hour or two in trivial gardening operations among flower beds and shrubberies, whence she could keep a watchful eye on the two doors that led to the forbidden paradise. She was a woman of few ideas, with immense powers of concentration.

SECTION I: Check your progress

A. Rewrite the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative.

i. The children were taken to the Jagborough sands as a ……..
   a. feast  b. special treat  c. picnic  d. none

ii. Nicholas argued that there was …….. in his wholesome bread and milk.
   a. a cockroach  b. an insect  c. a frog  d. an ant

iii. The cousin’s aunt is styling herself as Nicholas’ ………. also.
   a. aunt  b. sister  c. mother  d. grandmother

iv. Nicholas’ girl cousin cried because she …….. her knee against the step of the carriage.
   a. slipped  b. dashed  c. touched  d. scraped

v. Nicholas could neither go to the Jagborough sands nor into the gooseberry garden because he was in ……..
   a. trouble  b. disgrace  c. school  d. a room
B. Write answers to the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence each.

i. Who put the frog in bread and milk?
ii. How was the younger brother of Nicholas?
iii. What did Nicholas know about Bobby’s boots?
iv. How many doors the gooseberry garden had?
v. Why did the aunt do gardening?

3.2.2 Part II

Nicholas made one or two sorties into the front garden, wriggling his way with obvious stealth of purpose towards one or other of the doors, but never able for a moment to evade the aunt’s watchful eye. As a matter of fact, he had no intention of trying to get into the gooseberry garden, but it was extremely convenient for him that his aunt should believe that he had; it was a belief that would keep her on self-imposed sentry-duty for the greater part of the afternoon. Having thoroughly confirmed and fortified her suspicions, Nicholas slipped back into the house and rapidly put into execution a plan of action that had long germinated in his brain. By standing on a chair in the library one could reach a shelf on which reposed a fat, important-looking key. The key was as important as it looked; it was the instrument which kept the mysteries of the lumber-room secure from unauthorised intrusion, which opened a way only for aunts and such-like privileged persons. Nicholas had not had much experience of the art of fitting keys into keyholes and turning locks, but for some days past he had practised with the key of the schoolroom door; he did not believe in trusting too much to luck and accident. The key turned stiffly in the lock, but it turned. The door opened, and Nicholas was in an unknown land, compared with which the gooseberry garden was a stale delight, a mere material pleasure.

Often and often Nicholas had pictured to himself what the lumber-room might be like, that region that was so carefully sealed from youthful eyes and concerning which no questions were ever answered. It came up to his expectations. In the first place it was large and dimly lit, one high window opening on to the forbidden garden being its only source of illumination. In the second place it was a storehouse of unimagined treasures. The aunt-by-assertion was one of those people who think that
things spoil by use and consign them to dust and damp by way of preserving them. Such parts of the house as Nicholas knew best were rather bare and cheerless, but here there were wonderful things for the eye to feast on. First and foremost there was a piece of framed tapestry that was evidently meant to be a fire-screen. To Nicholas it was a living, breathing story; he sat down on a roll of Indian hangings, glowing in wonderful colours beneath a layer of dust, and took in all the details of the tapestry picture. A man, dressed in the hunting costume of some remote period, had just transfixed a stag with an arrow; it could not have been a difficult shot because the stag was only one or two paces away from him; in the thickly-growing vegetation that the picture suggested it would not have been difficult to creep up to a feeding stag, and the two spotted dogs that were springing forward to join in the chase had evidently been trained to keep to heel till the arrow was discharged. That part of the picture was simple, if interesting, but did the huntsman see, what Nicholas saw, that four galloping wolves were coming in his direction through the wood? There might be more than four of them hidden behind the trees, and in any case would the man and his dogs be able to cope with the four wolves if they made an attack? The man had only two arrows left in his quiver, and he might miss with one or both of them; all one knew about his skill in shooting was that he could hit a large stag at a ridiculously short range. Nicholas sat for many golden minutes revolving the possibilities of the scene; he was inclined to think that there were more than four wolves and that the man and his dogs were in a tight corner.

But there were other objects of delight and interest claiming his instant attention; there were quaint twisted candlesticks in the shape of snakes, and a teapot fashioned like a china duck, out of whose open beak the tea was supposed to come. How dull and shapeless the nursery teapot seemed in comparison! And there was a carved sandal-wood box packed tight with aromatic cottonwool, and between the layers of cottonwool were little brass figures, hump-necked bulls, and peacocks and goblins, delightful to see and to handle. Less promising in appearance was a large square book with plain black covers; Nicholas peeped into it, and, behold, it was full of coloured pictures of birds. And such birds! In the garden, and in the lanes when he went for a walk, Nicholas came across a few birds, of which the largest were an occasional magpie or wood-pigeon; here were herons and bustards, kites, toucans, tiger-bitterns, brush turkeys, ibises, golden pheasants, a whole portrait gallery of undreamed-of creatures. And as he was admiring the colouring of the mandarin duck
and assigning a life-history to it, the voice of his aunt in shrill vociferation of his name came from the gooseberry garden without. She had grown suspicious at his long disappearance, and had leapt to the conclusion that he had climbed over the wall behind the sheltering screen of the lilac bushes; she was now engaged in energetic and rather hopeless search for him among the artichokes and raspberry canes.

SECTION II: Check your progress

A. Rewrite the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative.
   i. Nicholas had ……. to enter the gooseberry garden.
      a. an intention      b. a purpose      c. no intention      d. no interest
   ii. For Nicholas the elders are………. persons.
       a. privileged b. angry      c. kind      d. not so kind
   iii. There was a big fat key on a …….in the library.
        a. shelf       b. rack       c. cupboard       d. closet
   iv. The lumber room was the store of unimagined………..
        a. things      b. objects         c. toys        d. treasure

B. Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase/ sentence each.
   i. What was convenient for Nicholas?
   ii. How could one reach the shelf in the library?
   iii. From where did the light come in the lumber room?
   iv. What was the tapestry used for ?
   v. What did Nicholas see in the book with black covers?

3.2.3 Part III

   “Nicholas, Nicholas!” she screamed, “you are to come out of this at once. It’s no use trying to hide there; I can see you all the time.”

   It was probably the first time for twenty years that anyone had smiled in that lumber-room.

   Presently the angry repetitions of Nicholas’ name gave way to a shriek, and a cry for somebody to come quickly. Nicholas shut the book, restored it carefully to its
place in a corner, and shook some dust from a neighbouring pile of newspapers over it. Then he crept from the room, locked the door, and replaced the key exactly where he had found it. His aunt was still calling his name when he sauntered into the front garden.

“Who’s calling?” he asked.

“Me,” came the answer from the other side of the wall; “didn’t you hear me? I’ve been looking for you in the gooseberry garden, and I’ve slipped into the rain-water tank. Luckily there’s no water in it, but the sides are slippery and I can’t get out. Fetch the little ladder from under the cherry tree—”

“I was told I wasn’t to go into the gooseberry garden,” said Nicholas promptly.

“I told you not to, and now I tell you that you may,” came the voice from the rain-water tank, rather impatiently.

“Your voice doesn’t sound like aunt’s,” objected Nicholas; “you may be the Evil One tempting me to be disobedient. Aunt often tells me that the Evil One tempts me and that I always yield. This time I’m not going to yield.”

“Don’t talk nonsense,” said the prisoner in the tank; “go and fetch the ladder.”

“Will there be strawberry jam for tea?” asked Nicholas innocently. “Certainly there will be,” said the aunt, privately resolving that Nicholas should have none of it.

“Now I know that you are the Evil One and not aunt,” shouted Nicholas gleefully; “when we asked aunt for strawberry jam yesterday she said there wasn’t any. I know there are four jars of it in the store cupboard, because I looked, and of course you know it’s there, but she doesn’t, because she said there wasn’t any. Oh, Devil, you HAVE sold yourself!”

There was an unusual sense of luxury in being able to talk to an aunt as though one was talking to the Evil One, but Nicholas knew, with childish discernment, that such luxuries were not to be over-indulged in. He walked noisily away, and it was a kitchenmaid, in search of parsley, who eventually rescued the aunt from the rain-water tank.

Tea that evening was partaken of in a fearsome silence. The tide had been at its highest when the children had arrived at Jagborough Cove, so there had been no sands to play on—a circumstance that the aunt had overlooked in the haste of
organising her punitive expedition. The tightness of Bobby’s boots had had disastrous effect on his temper the whole of the afternoon, and altogether the children could not have been said to have enjoyed themselves. The aunt maintained the frozen muteness of one who has suffered undignified and unmerited detention in a rainwater tank for thirty-five minutes. As for Nicholas, he, too, was silent, in the absorption of one who has much to think about; it was just possible, he considered, that the huntsman would escape with his hounds while the wolves feasted on the stricken stag.

SECTION III: Check your progress

A. Rewrite the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative.

i. The aunt was …….. after the name of Nicholas.
   a. shouting  
   b. screaming  
   c. calling  
   d. crying

ii. Nicholas was the first in twenty years time who …….. in that lumber room.
   a. laughed  
   b. cried  
   c. shouted  
   d. talked

iii. The aunt slipped into the ……….. tank.
   a. safety  
   b. deep  
   c. rainwater  
   d. none

iv. Nicholas called the aunt………..
   a. an angel  
   b. a goblin  
   c. a ghost  
   d. an Evil One

B. Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase/ sentences each.

i. Where did Nicholas replace the key?

ii. Why did aunt not get out of the tank?

iii. What did the aunt tell Nicholas to fetch?

iv. Who according to the aunt always tempts Nicholas?

v. Who rescued the aunt?
3.3 Summary

Nicholas, a boy, is in disgrace because he has put a frog in his wholesome bread and milk and then refused to eat it. To feel him guilty, his cousin’s aunt plans to send the children to the Jagborough sands and exaggerates the joy they will enjoy there. Though Nicholas agrees that the reason of his being in disgrace is true, he does not accept that he cannot enter the gooseberry garden. However it is not his intention to enter the garden. He only makes the aunt feel it. When the aunt is busy in her self-imposed-sentry-duty, he slips into the library to execute his plan.

He takes the key of the lumber room and opens it. He is very much curious to see what is there because the elders of the house never permit the children to go there and never answer their curious questions about the lumber room.

Nicholas finds a tapestry with a painting on it, some old crockery, a roll of Indian hangings, a book full of the pictures of different coloured birds. He imagines the picture as a true incident and is involved in the hunter, the stag that he shoots with his arrow, his dogs and the dangerous wolves. Just then he hears the screaming of the aunt after him. When he comes out of the lumber room, the voice of the aunt changes into the call for help. Nicholas enjoys the situation as she is slipped into the rainwater tank. He pretends not to recognize her voice and that it is the Evil One, who, according to the aunt, always tempts him.

The children come back. They have not enjoyed the expedition because of full tide. The aunt has suffered undignified and unmerited detention. It is Nicholas who enjoys his adventure in the lumber room. When the story ends he is still thinking of the hunter man, his dogs and the wolves after the stricken stag.

3.4 Terms to Remember

lumber room: a room in which useless or broken furniture etc. is kept.
treat: something that gives great pleasure or delight especially when unexpected
to be in disgrace: regarded with disapproval
wholesome: healthy
seemingly: apparently
frivolous: not serious or important
veriest: ‘very’ is an adjective, we know, that is used as an expression to describe especially to a great degree. Here, the superlative degree of ‘very’ is used to describe the nonsense talk of Nicholas.

alleged: declared without proof or before finding proof. Here the word is used as an adjective

basin: a bowl
sin: an offence against God or religious law
profoundly: felt deeply or very strongly
tactician: a person skilled in tactics, i.e. a plan or method intended to gain a desired result

unwarranted: unwelcome, and done without good reason
styling: to give (a title) to describe oneself in a specified manner
expedition: journey made for a special purpose
forfeit: to have (something) taken away from a person as a punishment or as the result of some action.

improvise: to do or make something owing to an unexpected situation or sudden need

offender: one who hurts the feelings of others or causes displeasure
rigorously: carefully, thoroughly and exactly
debar: officially prevent from (doing something)
unrivalled: extremely good
depavity: evil in character
look for: to try to find
scrape against: to rub roughly against a surface and get hurt or injured
scramble: to climb quickly over a rough or steep surface
howl: to cry loudly in pain sorrow or anger
elation: a state of being filled with pride and joy
soi-disant: so-called, pretended or would be (aunt)
chuckle: to laugh quietly
asperity: (an example of) roughness or severity, e.g. in speech or manner
loftily: showing that one thinks better he/she is better than other people
obstinacy: a refusal to change one’s behavior/ opinion
effectually: effectively artichokes, raspberry canes etc.
 whence: from where
sorties: short attacks
wriggle: to twist from side to side with short quick movements when moving along
evade: to avoid using deception
convenient: suited to one’s need or situation
sentry-duty: duty of a guard or a soldier
fortified: made stronger, effective
execution: performance or completion of an order or plan
germinate: to start or cause (a seed) to start growing. (fig.) to start (an idea) growing in mind
repose: to lie or be placed
unauthorized: without formal permission
intrusion: the act of entering (a place) without permission
privileged: having a special advantage limited to a particular person or group
stiffly: not friendly
stale: no longer fresh
steal from: to take or get quickly, without permission
concerning: with regard to, in connection with
illumination: light
**aunt-by-assertion**: aunt by force, here, the aunt forcefully declared herself as Nicholas’ aunt.

**consign**: to put into the control/care of somebody/something

**bare**: not hidden

**tapestry**: cloth with pictures or designs woven in it, used to hang on walls as a decoration or as a covering for furniture

**hangings**: curtains and any other materials hanging over the walls, windows doors, etc.

**remote period**: some time in the past

**transfix**: to force a whole through with a sharp pointed weapon

**paces**: a single step in running or walking

**heel**: to move along at the heels of someone

**galloping**: moving at the fastest speed (that of a horse)

**to cope with**: to deal successfully with difficult situation

**quiver**: a container for carrying arrows

**ridiculously**: extremely

**inclined to**: to tend to, feeling a wish

**tight corner**: a difficult situation

**hump-necked**: a large lump or round part on the neck (of bulls)

**goblin**: a small, often ugly, fairy that is usually not kind or is evil and plays tricks on people

**behold**: to see, look at

**shrill**: high and sounding sharp to the ear, piercing

**assign**: to allot, give something as share or duty

**vociferation**: shouting loudly, especially as a complaint

**leapt to the conclusion**: came to conclusion hurriedly

**the Evil One**: Satan, the Devil
**resolve**: to decide firmly

**discernment**: ability to make good judgements

**gleefully**: showing joy and satisfaction

**parsley**: a small plant (herb) with curly strong tasting leaves, grown in gardens, used in cooking

**punitive**: intended as punishment

**detention**: the state of punishment. For example, he was kept in detention by the teacher for talking during the class. However, here, the aunt thinks that it was ‘unmerited’ detention because she had to wait to be rescued from water tank.

### 3.5 Answers to check your progress

**Section I:**

A. i. b. special treat ii. c. frog iii. a. aunt iv. d. scraped v. b. disgrace

B. i. Nicholas ii. Quite uninteresting

iii. They were too tight and were hurting him.

iv. Three v. To keep an eye on Nicholas

**Section II:**

A. i. c. no intention ii. a. privileged iii. a. shelf iv. d. treasure

v. b. China duck

B. i. The aunt should believe that he wanted to enter the gooseberry garden.

ii. by standing on a chair in the library.

iii. From a high window opening in the garden. iv. a fire screen

v. coloured pictures of birds.

**Section III:**

A. i. b. screaming ii. a. laughed iii. c. rainwater tank iv. d. an Evil One

B. i. on the shelf ii. because the sides of the tank were slippery.

iii. To fetch the small ladder iv. the Evil One v. a kitchen maid
3.6 Exercises

Q.1 Write short Notes.
   i. Nicholas’ disgrace
   ii. The petty habit of the aunt
   iii. The tapestry picture
   iv. Other objects in the lumber room
   v. The expedition of the children
   vi. The title “The Lumber Room”

Q.2 Answer the following questions in detail.
   i. Write a critical appreciation of the present short story.
   ii. Sketch the character of the aunt.
   iii. Do you agree with the statement – Nicholas is mischievous?
   iv. Describe the picture on the tapestry and how Nicholas thought about it.

3.7 Reference for further reading


Content
4.0 Objectives
4.1 Introduction
4.2 The Text
4.3 Check your progress
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4.6 Answers to check your progress
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4.0 Objectives:
After studying this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the importance of home in man’s life.
- Understand that how different natural catastrophes threaten us.
- Understand different aspects of human nature.
- Realize the importance of seeds in man’s life.
- Explain the importance of land in human life.
- Realize that along with the present, man has to think seriously of his future.
4.1 Introduction:

Pearl S. Buck was born on June 26, 1892 in Hillsboro, West Virginia. She spent her youth in China, in Chinkiang on the Yangtse River. Buck published eighty works, including novels, plays, short story collections, poems, children’s books, and biographies. She was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938. She was the third American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, following Sinclair Lewis and Eugene O’Neill. Pearl Buck’s first novel East Wind: West Wind (1930), received a great critical recognition. Her next best novel The Good Earth appeared in 1931. The book gained a wide audience, and was made into a motion picture. She wrote about the love of Bettina, a farmer slave, and Tom, a Southerner who fought for the army of the North in The Angry Wife (1949). In The Hidden Flower (1952) she wrote about a Japanese girl falling in love with an American Soldier. Her Pavilion of Women appeared in 1946. The Patriot (1939) focussed on the emotional development of a University student, whose realism is crushed by the brutalities of war. She wrote a personal story of her own daughter, in The Child Who Never Grew (1950), whose mental development stopped at the age of four. Buck’s famous novel The Good Earth was filmed in 1937. In 1932 it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Buck died at the age of eighty in Danby, on March 6, 1973.

The story ‘The Refugee’ describes to us the flow of the village people who had been uprooted from their homes by flood and starvation. All their land had been destroyed. They had eaten up even their seed. Therefore, they were coming to the town with whatever little remained with them. The city people feared that their food resources might be reduced. A large number of beggars moved from place to place. The number of rickshaw pullers also increased. The city became a scene of great miserable crowds, who moved about begging from door to door or who were prepared to do any work at very low rates. Naturally the people of the town grew frightened and in their fear, their outlook towards these refugees became very bitter.

The old man is the main character in the story. His son and his son’s wife had died in the course of the flood. So, he carries in his basket his young grandson, who is dry and shrivelled because of starvation. The old man is anxious about one thing only. He wants to save money for new seeds so that he may put them back into the land and farm it again for the sake of his grandson. When a passerby gives him a
silver coin, he does not spend it. He spends only a copper coin to feed his little grandson.

The old man must preserve the life of the grandson but he must also save money for seeds. Other people cannot understand him. The noodle-seller fails to understand the mind of old man. He does not like to give him noodles free after he has seen a silver coin with him. But the old man does not care for all this. He knows that the people in the city cannot understand because they do not have land. If he does not put the seeds back into the land, there will be shortage of food grains next year also. Therefore, by saving money for seeds he is doing the best he can for his grandson. He knows that even if he died, the land should not be neglected; it has to be farmed.

4.2 The Text

They walked through the new capital, alone and from a far country, yes, although their own lands were only a few hundred miles perhaps from this very street upon which they now walked. But to them it was very far. Their eyes were the eyes of those who have been taken suddenly and by some unaccountable force from the world they have always known and always thought safe until this time. They, who had been accustomed only to country roads and fields, walked now along the proud street of the new capital, their feet treading upon the new concrete side-walk, and although the street was full of things they had never seen before, so that there were even automobiles and such things of which they had never even heard, still they looked at nothing, but passed as in a dream, seeing nothing.

There were several hundred of them passing at this moment. If they did not look at anything nor at anyone, neither did any look at them. The city was full of refugees, many thousands of them, fed after a fashion, clothed somehow, sheltered in mats in great camps outside the city wall. At any hour of the day lines of ragged men and women and a few children could be seen making their way towards the camp, and if any city-dweller noticed them it was to think with increased bitterness:

“More refugees—will there never be an end to them? We will all strive trying to feed them even a little.”

This bitterness, which is the bitterness of fear, made small shopkeepers bawl out rudely to the many beggars who came hourly to beg at the doors, it made men ruthless in paying small fares to the rickshaw pullers, of which there were ten times
as many as could be used, because the refugees were trying to earn something thus. Even the usual pullers of rickshaws, who followed this as their profession, cursed the refugees because, being starved they would pull for anything given them, as so fares were low for all, and all suffered. With the city full of refugees, then, begging at every door, swarming into every unskilled trade and service, lying dead on the streets at every frozen dawn, why should one look at this fresh horde coming in now at twilight of winter’s day?

But these were no common men and women, no riff-raff from some community always poor and easily starving in a flood time. No, these were men and women of which any nation might have been proud. It could be seen they were all from one region, for they wore garments woven out of the same dark blue cotton stuff, plain and cut in an old fashioned way, the sleeves long and the coats long and full. The men wore smocked aprons, the smocking done in curious, intricate, beautiful designs. The women had bands of the same plain blue stuff wrapped like ker-chiefs about their heads. But men and women were tall and strong in frame, although the women’s feet were bound. There were a few lads in the throng, a few children sitting in baskets slung upon a pole across the shoulders of their fathers, but there were no young girls, no young infants. Every man and every lad bore a burden on his shoulder. This burden was always bedding, quilts made of the blue cotton stuff and padded. Clothing and bedding were clean and strongly made. On top of every folded quilt, with a bit of mate between, was an iron cauldron. These cauldrons had doubtless been taken from the earthen ovens of the villages when the people saw the time had come when they must move. But in no basket was there a vestige of food, nor was there a stress of food having been cooked in them recently.

This lack of food was confirmed when one looked closely into the faces of the people. In the first glance in the twilight they seemed well enough, but when looked more closely, one saw they were the faces of people starving and moving now in despair to a last hope. They saw nothing of the strange sights of a new city because they were too near death to see anything. No new sight could move their curiosity. They were men and women who had stayed by their land until starvation drove them forth. Thus, they passed unseeing, silent, aline, as those who know themselves dying are alien, to the living.

The last one of this long procession of silent men and women was a little wizened old man. Even he carried a load of a folded quilt, a cauldron. But there was
only one cauldron. In the other basket it seemed there was but a quilt, extremely ragged and patched, but clean still. Although the load was light it was too much for the old man. It was evident that in usual times he would be beyond the age of work, and was perhaps accustomed to such labour in recent years. His breath whistled as he staggered along, and he strained his eyes to watch those who were ahead of him lest he be left behind, and his old wrinkled face was set in a sort of gasping agony.

Suddenly he could go no more. He set his burden with great gentleness, sank upon the ground, his head sunk between his knees, his eyes closed, panting desperately. Starved as he was, a little blood rose in the dark patches on his cheeks. A ragged vendor selling hot noodles set his stand near, and shouted his trade cry, and the light from the stand fell on the old man’s dropping figure. A man passing stopped and muttered, looking at him:

“I swear I can give no more this day if I am to feed my own even nothing but noodles – but here is this old man. Well, I will give him the bit of silver I earned today against tomorrow and trust to tomorrow again. If my own old father had been alive, I would have given it to him.”

He fumbled in himself and brought out of his ragged girdle a bit of a silver coin, and after a moment’s hesitation and muttering, he added to it a copper penny.

“There, old father,” he said with a sort of bitter heartiness, “let me see you eat noodles.”

The old man lifted his head slowly. When he saw the silver he did not put out his hand. He said:

“Sir, I did not beg of you. Sir, we have good land and we have never been starve like this before, having such good land. But this year the river rose and men starving even on good land, at such times; Sir, we have no seed left, even. We have eaten our seed. I told them, we cannot eat the seed. But they were young and hungry and they ate it.”

“Take it,” said the man and dropped the money into the old man’s smocked apron and went on his way sighing.

The vendor prepared his bowl of noodles and called out:

“How many will you eat, old man?”
Then was the old man stirred. He felt eagerly in his apron and when he saw the two coins there, the one copper and the other silver, he said:

“One small bowl is enough.”

“Can you eat only one small bowl, then?” asked the vendor, astonished.

“It is not for me,” the old man answered.

The vendor started astonished, but being a simple man he said no more but prepared the bowl, and when it was finished, he called out “Here it is.” And he waited to see who would eat it.

Then the old man rose with a great effort and took the bowl between his shaking hands and he went to the other basket. There, while the vendor watched, the old man pulled aside the quilt until one could see the shrunken face of a small boy lying with his eyes fast closed. One would have said the child was dead except that when the old man lifted his head so his mouth could touch the edge of the little bowl he began to swallow feebly until the hot mixture was finished. The old man kept murmuring to him:

“There, my heart – there, my child.”

“Yes,” said the vendor. “Your grandson?”

“Yes,” said the old man. “The son of my only son. Both my son and his wife were drowned as they worked on our land when the dikes broke.”

He covered the child tenderly and then, squatting on his haunches, he ran his tongue carefully around the little bowl and removed the last trace of food. Then, as though he had been fed, he handed the bowl back to the vendor.

“But you have the silver bit,” cried the ragged vendor, yet more astonished when he saw the old man ordered no more.

The old man shook his head. “That is for seed.” He replied. “As soon as I saw it, I knew I would buy seed with it. They ate up all the seed and with what shall the land be sown again?”

“If I were not so poor myself,” said the vendor, “I might even have given you a bowl, but to give something to a man who has a bit of silver!” He shook his head puzzled.
“I do not ask you, brother,” said the old man. “Well, I know you cannot understand. But if you had land you would know, it must be put to seed again or there will be starvation yet another year. The best I can do for this grandson of mine is to buy a little seed for the land – yes, even though I die, and others must plant it, the land must be put to seed.”

He took up his road again, his old legs trembling, and straining his eyes down the long straight street, he staggered on.

4.3 Section – 1

Check your progress

I. Objective type questions.

i) Rewrite the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative.

1. …. gives the silver coin to the old man.
   a) The passerby       b) The child
   c) The vendor        d) The shopkeeper

2. The old man carries in his basket …
   a) vegetables       b) food
   c) his young grand-son  d) noodles

3. The old man wants to save money for …
   a) buying new seeds   b) purchasing land
   c) noodles           d) his grand-son

4. The old man buys noodles worth only …
   a) a silver coin     b) a copper coin
   c) a rupee           d) ten rupee

5. The old man’s son and his daughter-in-law had died …
   a) of starvation     b) in the course of the flood
   c) in the firing of the Army   d) of cancer
II. **Short Answer Type Questions.**

(A) Answer the following questions in a word / sentence / phrase each.

8. Who is the central character in the story?
9. What does the old man carry in his basket?
10. What makes the people of the city bitter and harsh towards the refugees?
11. Why does the old man want to save money?
12. Who were the refugees?

**4.4 Summary:**

The short story ‘The Refugee’ deals with a social problem. It describes the aftermath of a natural disaster. The story takes place in a city in China.

The flooding of the river has forced the farmers of an unnamed country to leave their homelands and look for food and shelter in the capital a few hundred miles away. The city is full of ragged and starving refugees and nobody really knows how to cope with the problem. They have to live in great camps outside the city wall trying to find work and food. The situation is causing a lot of bitterness among the local inhabitants.

One day some new refugees arrive. They are different from the others in that they are not “riff- raff from some community always poor and easily starving in a flood time”. They are all from the same region and are well-built, neatly and cleanly dressed and obviously take pride in themselves, despite their hopeless situation. There are, however, no young girls and no infants, which suggest that they must have perished during the floods. All of them carry bedding and cauldrons, though there is no trace of food in any of them. The lack of food shows in their faces and their apathy towards the things around them. An old man, old for the heavy burden he is carrying, is the last of the procession. He can hardly keep up with others. When he can no longer go on he sits down near a stand selling hot noodles. A man passing by takes pity on him and offers him some coins, although he himself does not know...
where his next meal is to come from. The old man is reluctant to take the money. He
does not want to be thought as a beggar and so explains the situation. He says that his
people had good land, but that the river rose and they had no food left. In desperation
they even ate the seeds which had been brought for farming the land. He takes pain
to defend his people, saying that they were too hungry and too inexperienced to think
of the future, although he warned them not to eat the seed.

The passer-by drops a silver coin and a copper penny into the old man’s apron
and goes on his way. To the noodle vendor’s surprise the old man does not spend all
the money on food, but only the copper coin. He gives the noodles to his small
grandson, whom he is carrying in one of his baskets. The boy’s mother and father
had died in the floods and the old man is now looking after the child. He himself
only eats the few scraps left by the boy. Then he hands the bowl back to the
astonished vendor, who cannot understand why a starving man with a silver coin
does not buy more food for himself. The old man explains that the rest of the money
is for seed. He says that the best thing that he can do for his grandson is to buy seed
to ensure against more starvation on the following year.

4.5 Terms to remember:

(important terms in the Unit along with their brief meaning):

- Glossary and notes:

  who have been taken suddenly and by some etc.: the refugees were those
  persons who had been uprooted from their land and home. All of a sudden, some
  strange, unforeseen thing had happened. As a result of that, these people had to move
  out of their homes. Up to this time they had always thought that their home and their
  village was perfectly safe for them. That was their entire world. They had never
  thought that they would have to leave it one day. But strange circumstances had
  forced them, and uprooted them.

  who had been accustomed only to country road and fields: the refugees were
  mostly villagers.

  the bitterness of fear: the people of the city did not like this flow of refugees.
  They thought that if all the food they had was to be shared with these newcomers, the
townsmen would run short of food. This fear of shortage and starvation made them
bitter and harsh towards the refugees.
bawl out rudely: whenever the refugees went to the small shopkeepers to beg, they shouted at them in a very cruel and harsh manner.

fresh horde: there were new groups of refugees coming.

twilight: the new group, which contained the old man, entered the city late in the evening when the sun had set.

no ruff-raff: the people of the new group were not commonplace, good-for-nothing, creatures. They were not that useless stuff which is found in every community.

smocked aprons: the men were wearing long shirt-like overalls which had embroidery work done over them.

the women’s feet were bound: the feet of the women were tied up in iron shoes. (In China it was a custom to put iron shoes on the feet of young girls so that their feet did not grow very large.)

a vestige of food: the refugees carried baskets but these baskets did not contain even the slightest sign of any kind of food.

those who know themselves dying are alien to living: It is common principle in life that those who are about to die lose all interest in the healthy and living people. These refugees were in the grip of death due to starvation and, therefore, it appeared as if it made them strangers to the healthy and lively people of the city. They were indifferent to them like foreigners.

a little wizened old man: There was an old man in the crowd. He was shot-statured and looked dry and shriveled.

his breath whistled as he staggered along: as this old man walked unsteadily on the road, he found it difficult to hold his breath to himself. So he went on sending out sharp shrill sounds as he moved along.

his old wrinkled face was set in a sort of gasping agony: the old man’s face was full of wrinkles as he walked along, he panted hard. It appeared as if he suffered from a great mental pain.

panting desperately: the old man was not able to hold his breath. He was gasping hard because of exhaustion and there was sign of hopelessness on his face.
**noodles**: it is a Macaroni type of food generally taken by Chinese.

**drooping figure**: the old man could not stand erect. He was bending low because of old age and weakness

**the bit of silver**: a small silver point was passed into the old man by the passerby.

**he fumbled in himself**: the passerby moved his fingers inside his pocket so as to find money for the old refugee.

**Stirred**: after the noodle vendor had prepared a bowl of noodles, he called to the old man and the old man was roused from his sleep.

**shrunken face**: inside the basket of old man, there was a small boy whose face had withered and gone dry because of starvation.

**dikes**: a high bank of earth and stones etc, is constructed to protect the low-lying areas from floods. These dikes were broken and all the land was flooded.

**squatting on his haunches**: after feeding the child, the old man sat down on his legs, bent on the knees with his body resting on the hips.

**straining his eyes down the long straight street**: when the old man found that the vendor of noodles could not understand the value of the land or the old man’s sentiment, he took up his basket and started on his journey. As he moved along, he moved his eyes along the long road that lay before him. Being old, he had to make a great effort in looking down in front of him.

### 4.6 Answers to check your progress:

- **Section – 1**
  - **I. Objective type questions.**
    - 1) **Multiple choice questions:**
      1. a) The passerby
      2. c) his young grand-son
      3. a) buying new seeds
      4. b) a copper coin
      5. b) in the course of the flood
Section – 2

II. Short Answer Type Questions.

(A) Answer the following questions in a word/sentence/phrase each.

1. The old man is the central character in the story.
2. The old man carries in his basket his young grand-son.
3. The fear of shortage of food and starvation makes the people of the city bitter and harsh towards the refugees.
4. The old man wants to save money for new seeds so that he may put them back into the land and farm it again.
5. The refugees were the people who had been uprooted from their homes by flood and starvation.

4.7 Exercises

• Write answers of the following questions in four/five sentences each.

1. Why did the small shopkeepers bawl out rudely to the beggars?

   The refugees were the village people who had been uprooted from their land and home. All their land had been destroyed by the flood. They were coming to the town with whatever little remained with them. The people of the city did not like this flow of refugees. They thought that if all the food they had was to be shared with these refugees, the townsmen would run short of food. This fear of shortage of food and starvation made them bitter and harsh towards the refugees. So, whenever the refugees went to the small shopkeepers to beg, they shouted at them in a very cruel and harsh manner.

2. What made the usual rickshaw-pullers curse the refugee?

   The city was full of refugees. The refugees were prepared to do any work at very low rate. They entered in every unskilled trade and service. Naturally the number of rickshaw pullers also increased. The usual pullers of rickshaw cursed the refugees because being starving they would pull for anything they were given. The fares too become low. This made them all to suffer.
3. What do you understand by the “bitterness of fear”? How did the city-dwellers suffer from it?

The flooding of the river had forced the farmers of an unnamed country to leave their homelands and look for food and shelter a few hundred miles away. The city was full of ragged and starving refugees and nobody knew how to cope with the problem. They had to live in great camps outside the city wall trying to find work and food. The city became a scene of miserable crowds, that moved about begging from door to door. It caused a lot of bitterness among the local inhabitants. They grew frightened and their outlook towards the refugees became very bitter. Being starved, refugees were prepared to do work at low rates. The member of rickshaw puller also increased. A large number of beggars moved from place to place. It made the shopkeepers ruthless. The usual rickshaw pullers also cursed them. Thus, the horde of refugees made the city-dwellers suffer a lot.

4. Why did the refugees have to leave their land?

The refugees were mostly villagers. They had good land and they had never been starved like this before having good land. But the natural disaster, flood, had made them to move out of their homes. All their land had been destroyed by the flood and they had to leave their land.

5. How did the local inhabitants feel about all the refugees in their city?

After the natural disaster of flood, the refugees found shelter in great camps outside the city wall. Almost at any hour of the day they could be seen making their way towards the camps. It made the local inhabitants to think with bitterness—will there never be an end to them? They feared that their food resources might be reduced. The small shopkeepers bawled out rudely at many beggars. The rickshaw pullers cursed the refugees as they made them to suffer a lot. The people of the town grew frightened and in their fear, their outlook towards the refugees became very bitter.

6. How did the refugees feel about the new place? Which words tell the reader that the place where they come from is very different from where they are now?

While walking upon the street of the new capital the eyes of the refugees were the eyes of those who had been taken suddenly and by some unaccountable force
from the world they have always known and always thought safe until this time. They had been accustomed only to country roads and fields. Now they walked along the proud street of the new capital, their feet treading upon new concrete side-walk. Although the street was full of things they had never seen before like automobiles and the things which they had never even heard, still they looked at nothing, but passed on as in a dream, seeing nothing. The words like the proud street, concrete side-walk and automobiles tell the reader that the place where they come from is very different from where they are now.

III. Write short notes on the following.

1. The Refugees:

The author has given the title ‘The Refugee’ because it aptly describes the story of homeless people who are in trouble in a strange city.

The refugees were the people who had been uprooted from their land and home. All of a sudden, some strange thing had happened. As a result, these people had to move out of their homes. Up to this time they had always thought that their village and their homes were perfectly safe for them. That was their entire world. They had never thought that they would have to leave it one day. But strange circumstances had forced them, and uprooted them. They were mostly villagers who had been accustomed only to the country roads and fields. In the new capital they tread upon the new concrete side-walk as if in a dream. They did not look at anything nor at anyone. They find shelter in great camps outside the city wall. They were ragged men and women and a few children; all starved and exhausted.

Having left their villages, they find everything in the city new, strange and unfriendly. Used to walking on farmlands they now had to walk on concrete side-walks. They did not have proper accommodation and had to live in camps on the outskirts of the city. The residents of the city were resentful of these refugees and would treat them harshly. The refugees had to either beg for a living or had to pull rickshaws to make a living. Since they did not have proper clothing, many would die on the streets during the cold winter. They often had nothing to eat and were therefore in poor health.

While the life of the refugees were harsh, some fine human qualities were manifested in their suffering. Every refugee carried his own load. From the behavior of the old man; we can say that the refugees looked after the young people in the
group. Whatever little food the old man got – he gave to his grandson. Even though they had come to the city after many sufferings and many hardships, they did not want to beg as far as possible. Even though they were in the city, their intention was not to stay in the city. They wanted to go back to their villages as soon as possible. The old man had a silver coin with which he could buy more food. However, he did not want to spend it for food. He wanted to save the money to buy seeds for sowing his land.

The refugees did a variety of menial jobs for a living. They would pull rickshaws for a small sum of money- which was much less than what professional rickshaw pullers charged. Some of the refugees would go to the shops and beg for money.

The refugees were not welcome in the city because the residents of the city thought that the refugees were a burden to the resident of the city. They thought that in trying to feed the refugees, they themselves would have to starve.

The hope the refugees had for the future was that if they could get some seeds they could go back to their village and sow for the next crop. They were not interested in living in an unwelcome environment in the city.

2. **The Old Man:**

The old man is the symbol of suffering humanity because he undergoes the pain that million of people undergo everyday. Like the old man, who should not be doing hard work at his age, there are millions of old people who have to have work to make ends meet. The old man’s son and daughter-in-law have died and he has the burden of taking care of his grandchild. Again he is the symbol of suffering humanity because he has to live on money given to him out of pity. The old man does not want to beg, he does not want anyone’s money, yet he has no choice but to accept the money which is given to him so that he can give his grandson some food.

The old man shows that there is light at the end of the tunnel because he puts the needs of the grandson before his own needs. He feeds the grandson first and then licks the leftover. He carries his grandson in basket even though he himself has barely enough strength to walk. He saves the piece of silver that he has for buying seeds which will ensure that the same calamity does not occur the next year.
3. The Situation in the City:

After the flooding of the river the village people leave their homelands and search for food and shelter in the new capital. They have to live in great camps outside the city wall. With the city full of ragged and starving refugees, nobody knows how to cope with the problem. The city becomes a scene of miserable crowds, that move about begging from door to door. It causes a lot of bitterness among the local inhabitants. They grow frightened and in their fear, their outlook towards the refugees become bitter. Whenever the refugees go to small shopkeepers to beg, they shout at them in a very cruel and harsh manner. The people of the city do not like the flow of the refugees. They are worried that if all the food they have is to be shared with these refugees, the townsmen will run short of food. This fear of shortage of food and starvation makes them bitter and harsh towards the refugees. The refugees work at low rates. The number of rickshaw pullers also increases. Naturally, the usual rickshaw pullers curse them. Since the refugees do not have proper clothing, many would die on the streets, during the cold winter. They often have nothing to eat and are therefore in poor health. The situation in the city really becomes worse.

A) Questions for further study:

1. What natural catastrophes threaten us?
2. What can the reader learn from the story?

B) Suggestions for written work:

a) Imagine you are a citizen of the capital, a shopkeeper. You have had enough of all these refugees and do not want any more to come. You saw the new ones arrive yesterday. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper explaining your point of view and demanding that something be done about the situation. Words from the story will help you.

b) Imagine you are the person who gave the money to the old man. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper explaining how you feel: say that you want the city to do more to help the refugees both in their present situation and in the future. Suggest some ways of preventing a second catastrophe. Explain what will happen if there is no long-term help.
Unit-5
The Novel as a Form of Literature

Contents:

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5.3 Types of the novel:
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   5.3.1.1 Terms to Remember
   5.3.2. Historical Novel
5.0 Objectives:
After studying this unit you will be able to:
- understand the nature and features of the novel,
- learn the elements of the novel,
- recognize the types of the novel, and;
- understand the importance of the novel in the history of English literature.

5.1. Introduction:
The novel is a long prose narrative. It depicts the social, political, and personal realities of life with clarity and in aesthetic terms. Etymologically the novel means ‘story of something new’ and the roots of such fictitious or real tales are found in the heroic and adventurous stories of the medieval period. However, the germs of the modern English novel are found in Thomas Moore’s *Utopia* (1516). During the Elizabethan era Thomas Nash paved the way of novel while Mrs. Afra Behn laid the foundation of prose fiction in the seventeenth century. In short, novel writing is not a new trend in English literature. We get several fictitious tales from the medieval period to the eighteenth century.

Although there were fictitious stories before the eighteenth century, the novel as a form of literature emerged in the eighteenth century and developed in the
capitalistic society of the nineteenth and twentieth century. The novelists such as Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollet, and Laurence Stern brought about maturity to this genre. They made the novel as the glory of England. So they are called as the founders (four wheels of the novel) of the novel. Besides these contributors, several social factors such as the spread of education, the rise of the middle class reading public, the popularity of the periodical essay, democratic spirit of the day, and the decline of the drama contributed greatly in the rise and the development of the English novel.

In fact, the novel has a long history and during this long period several novelists and scholars attempted to explain its nature and features. According to R. J. Rees: “Until the seventeenth century the word ‘novel’, if it was used at all, meant a short story of the kind written and collected by Boccaccio in his Decameron”. By about 1700 it had got a precise meaning as given in The Shorter Oxford Dictionary as “a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length in which characters and actions representative of real life are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity”. In his History of the English novel E. A. Baker has made a successful attempt to explain the specific nature of the novel. According to him the novel is “a prose story, picturing real life or something corresponding thereto, and having the unity and coherence due to plot or scheme of some kind, or to define intention and attitude of mind on the part of the author”. These definitions show that the novel is a fictitious tale in prose based on real or imaginative incidents. It presents the picture of human life and society. As the novel has dealt with the different varieties and aspects of life, it has been categorized into the several types. In order to get the clear idea of the novel as a form of literature, it is necessary to have a glance on the elements and types of the novel.

Check Your Progress I

A) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative:

i) The roots of the novel are found in the heroic and adventurous stories of the __________ period.
   a) medieval  b) ancient  c) modern

ii) __________ laid the foundation of prose fiction in the seventeenth century.
   a) Thomas Nash  b) Mrs. Afra Behn  c) Thomas Moore
B) Fill in the blanks:
   i) The novel as a form of literature emerged in the --------------century.
   ii) The germs of the modern English novel are found in ------------------.

C) Answer the following questions in a word/phrase/sentence:
   i) Who are called as the four wheels of the novel?
   ii) What, according to E. A. Baker, is the precise nature of the novel?

5.1.1 Terms to Remember
- medieval – of the Middle Ages (the period about 1100 – 1400)
- narrative - story, tale
- aesthetic – artistic, beautiful, pleasing
- etymological -the study of the origins of words or parts of words and how they have arrived at their current form and meaning
- fictitious -not true or genuine, imaginative
- emerge - come into view
- germs – beginning, the first sign of something that will develop
- distinguished- well-known
- coherence – consistency, unity

5.2 Elements of the Novel:

In his book *An Introduction to the Study of English Literature* W. H. Hudson discusses the several elements of the novel. According to him: “plot, characters, time and place of action, style, and a stated or implied philosophy of life, then, are the chief elements of entering into the composition of any work of prose fiction, small or great, good or bad”. Like Hudson, E. M. Forster also discusses the elements of the novel in his *Aspects of the Novel*. The major elements of the novel are as follows:

5.2.1 Plot:

Plot is the artistic arrangement of events or actions in the life of the characters in the novel. The term ‘action’ here consists of both the physical and verbal activities of
the characters. These actions result from some type of conflict, generally between man and man, man and nature, man and social or religious conventions, or man to himself. Typically, the conflict is revealed at the exposition, or beginning of the story and is developed during the complication, which is the longest section. At the climax, the conflict reaches its turning point, and its solution becomes clear. In the final part of the story, the resolution, the conflict is settled. In short, the plot is defined by the conflict, either internal or external and this conflict makes the novel readable and artistic. So plot is the most important aspect of the novel.

In his *Aspects of the Novel* E. M. Forster makes the difference between plot and story. According to him, both plot and story are narratives of events arranged in their time sequence. However, the basic difference between them is the sense of causality. For instance, ‘the king died, and then the queen died’ is a story, but ‘the king died, and then the queen died in grief’ is a plot. In both the statements the time-sequence is preserved but the sense of causality overshadows the second statement. In short, the story is a bare synopsis of the incidents but the plot is concerned with the emotional effects of the incidents. So plot is defined as “a structure of actions aiming at emotional and artistic effects”.

There are several types of plot. They are tragic plot, comic plot, romantic plot, simple plot, complex plot, etc. The tragic plot deals with the suffering of the characters while the comic plot creates the laughter. In the tragic plot we get the conflict between two characters or ideologies whereas in the romantic plot we get the union of characters. W. H. Hudson divides plot into two types- loose plot and organic plot. According to him, there is neither artistic unity, nor a logical connection between incidents in a loose plot. The organic plot, on the other hand, has a logical and organic unity. The characters and episodes are neatly organized with precision in an organic plot. In short there are several types of the plot but the excellent plot of the novel is really a complex plot having balance and logical connections between the incidents.

The plot of the novel is not a mere framework or mechanism. It is the first principle and the final end of the novel. So it is called as the soul of the novel. It achieves the intended effect and makes the novel interesting and readable. In the traditional novel we get the pyramidal shape of the plot consisting the rising action, climax and falling action. The protagonist of the earlier novel was isolated form society, living his world of personal joys and sorrows. During the age of capitalism,
the novelists presented several socio-cultural problems of the day through the organic plot. However, the life became more and more complex with the passage of time. As a result the structure of the plot of the novel became more complex. The modern novelist is not satisfied with a simple story or with a well organized plot and an objective narration. He is more interested in the inner life or struggle of the characters. As a result the traditional concept of plot disappeared from the modern novel. The psychological probing and interior monologue have ousted the well-knit plot altogether.

It is true that modern psychological novels have rejected the traditional concept of plot. It doesn’t mean that the modern novels are plotless. The fact is that the concept of the traditional plot is changed. In a nutshell, plot doesn’t mean a summary of the happenings in the novel. It is the synthesis of the elements of action, character and thought. The novel, which has a structure of actions aiming at emotional and artistic effects, provides both pleasure and teaching to the readers and the modern novel is not exception to this. So plot is regarded as the first principle and the final end of the novel.

**Check Your Progress II**

**A) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative:**

i) ‘The king died, and then the queen died in grief’ is an example of -------.
   a) setting  b) characterization  c) plot

ii) There is no logical connection between incidents in-------plot.
   a) a loose  b) an organic  c) a comic

**B) Fill in the blanks:**

i) ------- is the synthesis of the elements of action, character and thought.

ii) The tragic plot deals with the ------ of the characters in the novel.

**C) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:**

i) What is the difference between the tragic and the comic plot?

ii) What is an organic plot?
5.2.2.1 Terms to Remember

- synopsis - outline, summary
- intended – planned, proposed
- protagonist - central character
- probing - inquiring, questioning
- monologue - long speech by one person in conversation, dramatic composition for one performer
- synthesis - fusion, combination

5.2.2 Characters:

The novel is a long prose narrative that presents real or imaginative incidents in the life of characters in the form of a sequential story. It means that the actions in the story are carried out by people or by creatures endowed with human characteristics. These people or creatures are called as the characters in the novel. There are generally two types of characters. They are the major characters and the minor characters. The main action of the novel revolves around the major characters while the minor characters are involved in this action or the conflict. In other words, the protagonist demonstrates the conflict while the minor characters comment upon the conflict. The protagonist is a specific individual with a certain physical appearance, speech, tastes, and actions. At the same time he has universal qualities enabling the reader to identify with him as he confronts and resolves his conflict. Being an important aspect of the novel the character plays an important role in making the novel interesting and readable. The characters in the novel present values and traits of minds through their actions and behaviour. These actions show the nature and type of the characters in the novel.

In his *Aspects of the Novel* E. M. Forster explains two types of characters. They are: flat characters and round characters. The flat character is a person which is built around a single quality. We do not get any development in the personality of the flat characters. They lack individuality or identity. In short, one can easily understand flat characters. A character which is very complex and difficult to understand is called as round characters. It is hardly possible to understand the motives of round character due to its complex personality. We also get the development in the personality or
identity of the round characters. Such round characters are generally found in heroic and adventurous novels.

So far as the methods of characterization in the novel are considered, we get two main methods of characterization—showing and telling. In showing method the characters themselves talk about their personality and behaviour while in telling method the narrator describes the qualities of the characters. The showing method is called as an indirect or dramatic method while the telling method is called as the direct method. The direct method of characterization is very helpful to the reader because every detail of the characters such as their nature, hopes, desires, loneliness and other traits of their personality have been made clear through the narration and nothing is left to discover on the part of the reader. In dramatic method the novelist presents the traits of the characters through their actions and development. This second method of characterization is more favoured because it requires the reader to use his brain to understand characters. The novelist can use both the methods in a single work of art. In short, the characters play an important role in the development of the plot of the novel. As there is a correlation between the plot and characterization, the character is regarded as an inseparable part of the novel.

Check Your Progress III

A) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative:
   i) The ---------is a person which is built around a single quality
      a) round character       b) flat character       c) protagonist
   ii) The telling method of characterization is called as ------------------
       a) an indirect method  b) the direct method   c) dramatic method

B) Fill in the blanks:
   i) A character which is very complex and difficult to understand is called as --
      ------character.
   ii) The -------- method of characterization is more favoured because it requires
       the reader to use his brain to understand characters.

C) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:
   i) What is the showing method of characterization?
ii) What is the difference between the round character and the flat character?

5.2.2.1 Terms to Remember

- endowed - gifted
- confront - to meet/ face
- resolve - determine, decide
- lack - be short of, be deficient in
- motive - object, purpose
- correlation - link, connection
- traits - qualities

5.2.3 Setting:

The novel is a fictitious story in which the characters perform action to present the intended purpose of the novelist. The setting of the novel makes this intention more intelligible to the readers. Here setting means the location or the place and the background where the action of the characters is performed or happened. In fact, setting is not just the background of the novel but it is an integral part of the novel. It is used to explain the period or age of action, and the socio-cultural conditions of the day. In his Aspects of the Novel E. M. Forster explains that setting provides the specific idea of the novel. We can understand whether the novel is rural or urban, social or historical, real or imaginative through its setting or background. We can get these different settings in a single novel. For instance, the hero of the picaresque novel wanders from one place to another, so the setting of such picaresque novel changes frequently.

Setting in a novel is generally of two kinds-social and material. The social setting consists of the nature of life of the people in the specific area, their language, and their socio-cultural conditions. For instance, the novel Ice-Candy Man by Bapsi Sidhwa presents socio-political conditions of India at the time of partition of India. The material setting of the novel provides the detailed description of the several places where the action of the novel takes place. In this novel the novelist Bapsi Sidhwa gives the detailed graphic description of the rural and urban area, and the socio-political conditions of the day. Besides this social and graphic description,
setting provides the mood and idea of the writer. Sometimes the setting looks like the characters in the novel. For instance, in Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* we get sea as the background of the novel. However, Hemingway here looks upon the sea as a woman. In short setting is an important aspect of the novel.

**Check Your Progress IV**

**A) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative:**

i) The hero of the--------- novel wanders from one place to another.
   a) historical  b) psychological  c) picaresque

ii) The novel *Ice-Candy Man* is written by --------
   a) Daniel Defoe  b) Bapsi Sidhwa  c) E. M. Forster

**B) Fill in the blanks:**

i) The setting of the novel makes the intention of the novelist ---------- to the readers.

ii) The ------- of the novel provides the detailed description of the several places where the action of the novel takes place.

**C) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:**

i) What is the setting of the novel?

ii) What is the social setting of the novel?

**5.2.3.1 Terms to Remember**

- intention - purpose
- intelligible – understandable
- partition - separation, division

**5.2.4 Point of View:**

Point of view means the mode of presenting the novel. It consists of the different modes and techniques of the narration. In fact, the mode of narration decides the fame of the novel. The different modes of narration as explained by E. M. Forster in his *Aspects of the novel* are as follows:
I) The First Person Point of View:

When the incidents or events in the novel are presented from the narrator’s point of view, it is called as the first person point of view. This mode of narration can not fully express the feelings and minds of the major characters. The narrator narrates the life and activities of the others from his/her point of view.

II) The Third Person Point of View:

The third person point of view has no scope for the development of characters. In the same way, we do not get significance of the third person point of view in the history of the novel. In such narration the author assumes in getting the story across the reader. So the third person narration is neither popular nor prevalent in the history of the English novel.

III) Omniscient Point of View:

In this narration the feelings, ideas and even motives of the characters are narrated by the narrator. Here the role of the narrator is omniscient. He not only narrates the story but also comments and evaluates other characters. The novels such as *Tom Jones* by Fielding, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy, etc. belong to this type of narration.

IV) The Limited Point of View:

In the limited point of view the narrator narrates only about himself. The incidents in the novel are limited to the feelings of the narrator. The best example of this point of view is the stream of consciousness novel.

In short, the point of view is regarded as an important aspect of the novel. We get the narrative skill of the writer through his narrative technique. In fact, the success of the novel and the fame of the novelist are based upon the point of view or the mode of narration.

Check Your Progress V

A) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative:

i) When the incidents or events in the novel are presented from the narrator’s point of view, it is called as--------
   a) the first person point of view   b) Omniscient Point of View
c) The Third Person Point of View

ii) In the limited point of view the narrator narrates only about -------
    a) society  b) himself  c) characters

B) Fill in the blanks:

i) ---------point of view has no scope for the development of characters.

ii) *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is written by -----------

C) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:

i) What is the point of view?

ii) Who wrote *Aspects of the Novel*?

5.2.4.1 Terms to Remember

• assume - suppose

• prevalent - common, established

• omniscient narrator - an all-knowing kind of narrator very commonly found in works of fiction written as third person narratives

5.3 Types of the novel:

The novel has a long history and during this long period we get the several types of it such as; picaresque tales, the romances, epistolary novel, the historical novel, the realistic novel, the social novel, the political novel, biographical novel, the psychological novels, etc. The major types of the novel prescribed in your syllabus are: the epistolary novel, the historical novel and the psychological novel.

5.3.1 Epistolary Novel:

An epistolary novel is a novel written as a series of documents. The usual form of an epistolary novel is letters. However, the diary entries, newspaper documents and recordings are also used in the epistolary novels in modern times. Etymologically the word ‘epistolary’ is derived from the Greek word meaning a letter. As this letter form added greater realism to a story, it became very popular among the readers during the eighteenth century.
The epistolary novel demonstrates the series of happenings in the life of the protagonist. The first epistolary novel to expose such happenings is Aphra Behn's *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister*. It was appeared in three volumes in 1684, 1685, and 1687. Behn explored a realm of intrigue and complex interaction with the help of the several letters. During the eighteenth century Samuel Richardson made a successful attempt of the epistolary novel through *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1749). He made the epistolary novel popular in England. Montesquieu in France and Goethe in Germany also used the epistolary form to a great dramatic effect and made the epistolary novel a successful genre. The epistolary novel was very popular in the eighteenth century but it slowly fell out of use in the late eighteenth century. Although Jane Austen tried her hand at the epistolary in her novella *Lady Susan*, she abandoned this structure for her later work. It is thought that her lost novel *First Impressions*, which was redrafted to become *Pride and Prejudice*, may have been epistolary novel because it contains an unusual number of letters.

Although epistolary novel was not very popular in the subsequent age, it was survived by the several nineteenth century novelists. In Balzac's novel *Letters of Two Brides*, two women who became friends during their education at a convent correspond over a 17 year period, exchanging letters describing their lives. Mary Shelley also employed the epistolary form in her novel *Frankenstein* (1818). Shelley presented the story through the letters of a sea captain and scientific explorer attempting to reach the North Pole who encounters Victor Frankenstein and records the dying man's narrative and confessions. Published in 1848, Anne Bronte’s novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is framed as a retrospective letter from a hero to his friend and brother-in-law. In the late 19th century, Bram Stoker released one of the most widely recognized and successful epistolary novel, *Dracula* (1897). It is compiled entirely of letters, diary entries, newspaper clippings, telegrams, doctor's notes and ship's logs. In it Stoker skillfully employs to balance believability and dramatic tension.

There are three types of epistolary novels: monologic, dialogic and polylogic. In monologue we find that only one character especially the protagonist writes a letter to express his feelings and emotions. Dialogic epistolary novel is concerned with the exchange of letters between two characters. In polylogic epistolary novel we get three or more letter-writing characters. As all these types of epistolary novels tend to
be rather long and slow moving, it fails to attract the modern readers. However, the major advantage of the epistolary novel is that it has a lot of space for the exploration of human mind.

Check Your Progress VI

A) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative:
   i) Etymologically the word *epistolary* is derived from the -----word meaning a letter.
      a) Greek       b) Latin       c) Roman
   ii) Aphra Behn's *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* appeared in -----volumes.
      a) three       b) two        c) four

B) Fill in the blanks:
   i) An -------novel is a novel written as a series of documents.
   ii) Samuel Richardson made a successful attempt of the epistolary novel through -----and -----.

5.3.1.1 Terms to Remember

- **epistolary** - contained in or carried on by letters
- **demonstrate** - show
- **intrigue** – conspiracy, deception
- **realm** – area
- **genre** – a class or category of artistic endeavor having a particular form, content, technique, or the like
- **novella** – short novel
- **polylogic** - polylogic describes the integration of more than one logic domain in a single structure
- **retrospective** - based on memory
5.3.2 Historical Novel:

The novel which takes its origin, characters and events from history is called as a historical novel. In Encyclopedia Britannica, it is defined as; ‘a novel that has, as its setting, a usually significant period of history and that attempts to convey the spirit, manners, and social conditions of a past age with realistic details and fidelity to historical fact’. This view states that the historical novel is based on history. However, its intention is not to provide the historical facts but to entertain the readers. So historical novel is not a record of historical events. It may deal with actual historical characters or it may contain a mixture of fictional and historical characters. It depicts imaginative incidents just to glorify or idealize the history. Sir Walter Scott, Victor Hugo, Leo Tolstoy, Charles Dickens and others developed the historical novel to teach and please the readers.

The historical novel began and popularized in the nineteenth century. Sir Walter Scott is regarded as the first to write the historical novel. George Luckacs, in his *The Historical Novel*, argues that Scott is the first fiction writer who saw history not just as a convenient frame in which to stage a contemporary narrative, but rather as a distinct social and cultural setting. His novels of Scottish history such as *Waverley* (1814) and *Rob Roy* (1817) focus upon a middling character who sits at the intersection of various social groups in order to explore the development of society through conflict. His *Ivanhoe* (1820) gains credit for renewing interest in the middle Ages. Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831) furnishes another 19th-century example of the romantic-historical novel as does Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. In the United States, James Fenimore Cooper was a prominent author of historical novels. In French literature, the most prominent inheritor of Scott's style of the historical novel was Balzac. Many early historical novels played an important role in the history of the English novel; however, it did not attract the readers of the day. So it is not as popular as picaresque or regional novels of the day. The main features of the historical novel are as follows:

1. The historical novel takes its origin, characters and events from history, so it appears as the book of history.

2. It attempts to convey the spirit, manners, and social conditions of a past age with realistic details and fidelity to historical fact but its intention is not to provide the historical facts but to entertain the readers.
3. The knowledge of early history of culture and society is made easy and possible by the historical novel.

4. The historical novel presents the realistic picture of the important historical events to glorify or idealize the history.

5. The historical novel encourages the national spirit and creates love for the nation and its culture, so it becomes the national novel.

The historical novelists such as Sir Walter Scott, Leo Tolstoy, Charles Dickens and others made knowledge of history of the nation easy and possible through their works. The best examples of the historical novels are *Ivanhoe*, *War and Peace*, *A Tale of Two Cities*. These novels made the historical novel very popular in the history of English literature. The historical novelists attempted to idealize the historical events but it did not become very popular due to its negligence of the contemporary issues. As man is interested in the contemporary socio-cultural issues, the historical novel remained marginalized in the history of English literature. However, it has played a significant role in the development of the English novel.

**Check Your Progress VII**

**A) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative:**

i) The historical novel is based on history but its intention is --------------. 
   a) to provide the historical facts  
   b) to entertain the readers.  
   c) to present the realistic picture

ii) The historical novel began and popularized in --------------
   a) the eighteenth century  
   b) the nineteenth century  
   c) the twentieth century

**B) Fill in the blanks:**

i) The historical novel does not become very popular due to its negligence of the ---------

ii) The novel *War and Peace* is written by--------- .
C) **Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:**

i) What is meant by the historical novel?

ii) Name two historical novelists.

5.3.2.1 **Terms to Remember**

- Encyclopedia - index, information list/bank
- Convey - communicate
- Fidelity - faithfulness
- Convenient - suitable
- Distinct - different, separate
- Negligence - neglect, disregard
- Glorify - praise, honour
- Marginalize - to refer or confine to an unimportant

5.3.3 **Psychological Novel:**

A novel that focuses on the complex mental and emotional lives of its characters and explores the various levels of mental activity is called as the psychological novel. It lays emphasize on the motives, circumstances, and internal actions of the characters. It delves deeper into the mind of a character than novels of other genres. So the psychological novel is called as a novel of the "inner man". The major technique used in the psychological novel is stream-of-consciousness technique or interior monologue. So it is also called as the novel of the stream-of-consciousness.

We get emphasis on the inner life in the eighteenth century traditional novel especially in Richardson’s *Pamela* and Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*. However, their use of the stream-of-consciousness technique was for the occasional effect. The psychological novel reached its full potential with the growth of psychological discoveries of Sigmund Freud in the 20th century. The detailed recording of external events' as practiced by Henry James, the associative memories of Proust, the stream-of-consciousness technique of James Joyce and William Faulkner, and the
continuous flow of experience of Virginia Woolf made the psychological novel as a peculiar product of the modern age.

In the psychological novel, plot is subordinate to and dependent upon the probing delineation of character. Events may not be presented in chronological order but rather as they occur in the character’s thought, memories, fantasies, reveries, contemplations, and dreams. For instance Joyce’s *Ulysses* takes place in Dublin in a 24-hour period, but the events of the day evoke associations that take the reader back and forth through the characters’ past and present lives. In the complex and ambiguous works of Franz Kafka, the subjective world is externalized, and events that appear to be happening in reality are governed by the subjective logic of dreams.

The psychological novel is thus a peculiar product of modern novel. It is mainly concerned with the flaw of human consciousness. Strictly speaking the modern psychological novel began with the publication of *Remembrance of Things Past* in 1913 by Marcel Proust, James Joyce’s *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* in 1914 and Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage* in 1915. These three novelists made a drastic change in the history of the novel by focusing the inner world of man’s life. Sigmund Freud’s theory of psycho-analysis also supported the psychological novel and made people to look at things from new perspective. The experiments were made in the light of Freud’s psycho-analysis and the stream-of-consciousness became the major technique of the psychological novel. The major features of the psychological novel are as follows:

- **Features of the Psychological Novel:**
  1. The psychological novel is thoroughly different from the traditional novel. Well organized plot is the strength of the early novels while the absence of logical arrangements is the feature of the psychological novel.
  2. The action of the psychological novel moves backward and forward in time.
  3. The psychological novel argues that the character is a process and not a static state.
  4. As the psychological novel is concerned with the stream-of-consciousness technique and chaotic structure of man and society, it doesn’t have a specific form and pattern like the traditional novel.
5. The psychological novel is neither a criticism of life nor a means of entertainment. It is a rendering of life in all its fluidity, complexity and subtlety.

6. Preoccupation with time, subjectivity, inwardness, absence of action and the delineation of the subconscious are the major traits of the psychological novel.

7. As there is no plot, no characterization, and no logical arrangements of events, the psychological novel is called as a reaction against the traditional novel.

8. The chief aim of the novelist is not to create memorable characters but to find out exactly what people are like, and to record his discoveries.

9. The traditional writers used the stream-of-consciousness technique merely as a device for occasional effects, but with the psychological novelists it has become an end in itself.

10. Interior monologue is the essence of the psychological novel.

   In short, the psychological novel opened up new horizons of art and brought the readers into close contact with interior picture of human mind. The major exponents of this new trend of technique are Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Marcel Proust.

Check Your Progress VIII

A) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct alternative:
   i) ------is subordinate in the psychological novel.
      a) character  b) plot  c) setting
   ii) The psychological novel is mainly concerned with ---------------
       a) the flaw of human consciousness
       b) criticism of life  c) entertainment

B) Fill in the blanks:
   i) The major technique used in the psychological novel is -------------
   ii) The psychological novel is called as a reaction against -------------
C) **Answer in a word/phrase/sentence:**
   
i) Who made the psychological novel as a peculiar product of the modern age?
   
ii) What is the major objective of the psychological novel?

### 5.3.3.1 Terms to Remember
- **delve** – investigate, look at
- **reverie** – daydream, trance
- **delineation** – explanation, description
- **psycho-analysis** - The method of psychological therapy originated by Sigmund Freud
- **perspective** – viewpoint, outlook
- **chaotic** - disordered confused
- **rendering** – representation, description
- **exponent** – supporter, proponent

### 5.4 Answer to Check Your Progress (1, 2, 3…)

#### ★ Check Your Progress I

A) i) medieval
   
ii) Mrs. Afra Behn

B) i) eighteenth.
   
ii) Thomas Moore’s *Utopia*

C) i) Richardson, Fielding, Smollet, and Stern
   
ii) a prose story, picturing real life or something corresponding thereto, and having the unity and coherence due to plot.

#### ★ Check Your Progress II

A) i) plot
   
ii) a loose
B) i) The plot
   ii) sufferings
C) i) The tragic plot deals with the suffering of the characters while the comic plot creates the laughter.
   ii) The organic plot has a logical and organic unity. In it the characters and episodes are neatly organized with precision.

★ Check Your Progress III
A) i) flat character
   ii) the direct method
B) i) the round
   ii) telling/direct
C) i) The method in which the characters themselves talk about their personality and behaviour is called as the showing method of characterization
   ii) The flat character lacks individuality or identity while the round character has complex personality.

★ Check Your Progress IV
A) i) picaresque
   ii) Bapsi Sidhwa
B) i) more intelligible
   ii) material setting
C) i) The setting means the location or the place and the background where the actions of the characters in the novel are performed or happened.
   ii) The social setting consists of the nature of life of the people in the specific area, their language, and their socio-cultural conditions.

★ Check Your Progress V
A) i) the first person point of view
   ii) himself
B) i) The third person
   ii) Thomas Hardy

C) i) Point of view means the mode of presenting the novel.
   ii) E. M. Forster

★ Check Your Progress VI

A) i) Greek
   ii) three

B) i) epistolary
   ii) Pamela and Clarissa

★ Check Your Progress VII

A) i) to entertain the readers
   ii) the nineteenth century

B) i) contemporary issues
   ii) Leo Tolstoy

C) i) The novel which takes it origin, characters and events from history is called as a historical novel.
   ii) Sir Walter Scott, Leo Tolstoy, Charles Dickens.

★ Check Your Progress VIII

A) i) plot
   ii) the flaw of human consciousness

B) i) stream-of-consciousness technique.
   ii) the traditional novel

C) i) Henry James, Proust, James Joyce, and William Faulkner, Virginia Woolf.
   ii) The psychological novel is concerned with the stream-of-consciousness and chaotic structure of man and society.
5.5 Exercises:

I. Write Short Notes on the following topics:
   1. The plot of the novel
   2. Setting of the novel
   3. The historical novel
   4. The stream-of-consciousness technique

5.6. Reference for further study:


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6.0 Objectives:

After reading this unit you will be:

- introduced to the life of William Golding
- able to know about the work of Golding
- introduced to the novel *Lord of the Flies*
- able to summarize the novel in brief

6.1 Introduction:

In the previous unit, you are introduced with the novel as a form of literature. In the unit you came to know about what is the novel? What are the elements of the novel? And, various types of the novel, viz. the epistolary novel, the historical novel and the psychological novel are explained in details.

In the present unit, you are introduced with the life and work of William Golding. You will be acquainted with Golding’s novel, *Lord of the Flies* with the help of the brief summary of the novel. And the next two units will discuss in detail
the chapter-wise-summary, and the critical analysis of the novel respectively. So let us get introduced with the novelist, William Golding as well as his novel, *Lord of the Flies* in this chapter.

## 6.2 Life and Work of William Golding:

William Golding was born in Cornwall, England in 1911 in his grandmother’s house and spent his childhood days there. He grew up at his family home in Marlborough, Wiltshire, where his father, Alec Golding, was a science master at Marlborough Grammar School. His father was a socialist and had belief in scientific rationalism. William Golding and his elder brother educated in the same school where their father was a school master and became proficient in Greek. His mother, Mildred, was a suffragette. William, in 1930, went to Brasenose College, Oxford to become a graduate in the Natural Sciences for two years but during his college days he was inclined to English literature. He completed his B. A. degree with Second Class Honours in the summer of 1934. In the same year, his first book, *Poems*, was published in London through the help of his Oxford friend, the anthropologist Adam Bittleston.

Golding married Ann Brookfield, an analytic chemist, on 30 September 1939 and they had two children, Judith and David. Golding joined the Royal Navy in 1940. During the World War II, he took part in the battle and involved in the pursuit and sinking of the German battleship, Bismarck. He also participated in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day, commanding a landing ship that fired salvoes of rockets onto the beaches. He then took part in a naval action at Walcheren in which 23 out of 24 assault craft were sunk. He witnessed first-hand the terrible destructive power of man operating during war, essentially outside the restrictive limits of society. With war as his tutor, he began to view man, instead, as a creature with a very dark and evil side to his nature. After the War was over, he returned to his school and resumed to teaching and writing. In 1962, he left his job at Bishop Wordsworth’s School and became a full time writer.

In 1985, Golding and his wife moved to Cornwall, where he died of heart failure, eight years later, on 19 June 1993. He was buried in the village churchyard at Bowerchalke, South Wiltshire. He left behind the draft of a novel, *The Double Tongue*, which was published posthumously.
Golding’s literary career started with the publication of a small volume of poetry named *Poems* appeared in 1934. And his first significant novel *Lord of the Flies* was published in 1954. The second novel *The Inheritors* and the third *Pincher Martin* came out in 1955 and 1956 respectively. All these three novels were the result of his first-hand experience of war and of his concern for good and evil as well as the future of human civilization. His next three novels—*Free Fall* (1960), *The Spire* (1964) and *The Pyramid* (1967)—explore his changed approach towards theme and technique. While the first three novels are generally appreciated as great fables, the next three are social novels in which Golding’s ideas of good and evil are wedded to his social awareness. *Darkness Visible* (1979) focuses on good and evil as being in a tussle with each other. *Rights of Passage* (1980), *The Paper Man* (1984), *Close Quartets* (1987), *Fire Down Below* (1989) highlight Golding’s preoccupation with guilt and the inner depravity of man.

Besides the novels, he also published a collection of novellas *The Scorpion God* (1971), three short plays—*The Brass Butterfly* (1958), *Miss Palkinhom* (1960) and *Break My Heart* (1962)—and collections of critical essays and non-fiction writings including *The Hot Gates* (1965), *A Moving Target* (1982) and *An Egyptian Journal* (1985). Golding was made a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1955. He won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1979, and in 1980 he received the Booker McConnell Prize for his novel *Rights of Passage*. But the most recognizable achievement in his writing career came when he received the Nobel Prize for literature for the 1983.

Golding used various sources for his novels, which was, sometimes, interpreted as his lack of originality. But the fact is that, through these sources, he attempted to search for a literary tradition, and to add a new dimension to them. He was a devoted student of Greek literature, especially the classics of adventure. He read some Greek stories in his childhood days which had everlasting influence on his life. He proclaimed with pride that he took up Greek literature as his literary parentage.

6.3 Introduction to the novel: A Summary in Brief

*Lord of the Flies* is set during the atomic war. A plane carrying a group of British schoolboys is shot down over the Pacific. The pilot of the plane is killed but the boys survive the crash and find themselves deserted on an uninhabited island. They are there without adults. The main protagonists of the story are introduced in
the beginning of the novel. Ralph is among the oldest boys, who is fair-haired, handsome and confident, while Piggy is the fat, asthmatic boy with glasses.

When they are swimming in a shallow pool inside a lagoon, Ralph finds a beautiful conch shell. Piggy suggests him to blow the conch so that other boys will get the signal and collect together. All the boys of ages between six and twelve appear from the jungle. Among them are identical twins Sam and Eric, the quiet but strange Roger, thoughtful Simon, and charismatic Jack Merridew, leader of the choir. Ralph is chosen by other boys as their chief, and he now leads Jack and Simon on an expedition to explore the island. As they are on deserted island so they decide to find food for them. The three boys find a wild pig caught in some creeper vines. Jack prepares to kill the pig with a large knife but he hesitates and the pig escapes.

Ralph uses the conch to call another meeting. It is decided that whoever holds the conch shell will have the right to speak at the meeting. A small boy with a mulberry-coloured birthmark obscuring half of his face receives the conch. He tells the other boys of a beastie that comes in the dark and wants to eat him. Some deny its existence, but Jack vows to hunt it when he and his hunters hunt pig for meat. Then, the boys decide that they must make a signal fire on the mountain to attract ships to rescue them. They gather wood and use Piggy’s glasses to start the fire. In their exuberance and inexperience, they allow the fire to rage out of control and it consumes a large portion of the jungle. The small boy with the mulberry-coloured birthmark disappears and is never seen again. It is implied he was killed in the fire.

Jack, now, learns the art of hunting, but still hasn’t got a pig. While he hunts, Ralph and Simon build poorly constructed shelters on the beach from palm trunks and fronds. Jack returns from his unsuccessful hunt. And he and Ralph clash over the decision to hunt or build the shelters. Simon discovers a secret place in the jungle. It is a hollow completely obscured by creeper vines. He sits there, away from the others, and contemplates the beauty of the jungle.

As time passes, the boys begin to resemble less and less the civilized British school children they used to be. Their uniforms deteriorate and their hair grows long and ragged. A marked boundary begins to grow between the younger children (littluns) who play all day, and the older children (biguns) who seem to be growing divided as to their responsibilities. Ralph, Piggy, Simon, and Sam and Eric see the need for order and civilization, while Jack and his hunters become obsessed with the
ideas of finding meat and protecting the littluns from the beast. Jack introduces the hunters to the notion of camouflaging their features with red and white clay and black charcoal for hunting. This gradual masking of their identities allows them to become more ruthless and effective hunters.

The smoke from a ship passing the island is discovered, but Jack and the hunters, preoccupied with hunting, have let the signal fire they were tending go out. Jack returns from the hunt, triumphant over killing a pig and slitting its throat himself, only to be rebuffed by Ralph for neglecting the fire. The boys clash on the matter, but eventually all share in consuming the meat. Ralph calls another meeting to deal with the situation involving the signal fire. Another littlun, Phil, speaks of his dreams of the beast. This again inspires Jack to lobby for the necessity of his hunters. He and Ralph argue again over the importance of the signal fire versus the meat. Jack declares his disgust, and he and his hunters leave the meeting. Ralph considers giving up being chief but Piggy, who fears Jack, tries to convince him not to.

There is a fight between aircraft ten miles in the sky over the island, which has not been seen by the boys. A dead parachutist lands on the side of the mountain in a sitting position. The wind, catching in the parachute, makes the figure rock back and forth. Now, the boys think that it is the beast and argue over whether or not to approach it. Ralph leads the boys with an angry Jack in tow to go to the mountainside to see the beast. Jack sees the natural bridge to the island’s outcropping. He decides that the separate island, joined to the main island by a rock ledge, would make a great fort. It contains many rocks that could be rolled onto the approach path to kill enemies. He and Ralph argue again, and Jack verbally denies any further loyalty to the conch and its power. Their expedition is interrupted when the boys flush a boar. Ralph wounds it when it charges him. The boar escapes, but they celebrate the encounter with another primitive blood lust dances in which Robert, pretending to be the pig, is beaten by the hunters who are overly excited by the dance. Ralph’s bravery in the face of the boar’s charge is forgotten. As the evening comes, most of the boys have returned to the shelters, but Ralph, Jack, and Roger have pressed on and apprehensively approach the figure. The wind causes it to move and the boys see its decaying face in the darkness. All of them flee from there.

At the next meeting, Jack and Ralph question each other’s bravery on the mountain. Jack convinces his hunters to separate themselves from the rest.
Following Piggy’s suggestion Ralph, Simon, and Samneric (Sam and Eric) try to maintain a signal fire down off the mountain, away from Jack and his hunters. Jack orders his hunters to kill a pig for a feast, hoping that the roasting meat will draw the others’ loyalty away from Ralph. They kill a pig and he orders them to mount its head on a stick as a sacrifice for the beast.

Simon, who had been in his hiding place, contemplates the head of the boar that the hunters had unknowingly impaled near him. He imagines a conversation with the head, and begins to see in it the source of evil on the island. He has an epileptic seizure. He awakens, and the head again reveals itself to him as the symbol of anarchy on the island. Simon has a second seizure. He then gets up again and climbs the mountain to view the figure of the dead parachutist that boys believe in the beast. He discovers that it is harmless, and that the true nature of what the boys should fear, the real beast, is symbolized by the pig’s head. He returns to tell the others about the reality.

Meanwhile, Jack and his hunters roast the pig, and the others, including Ralph and Piggy, join the feast. Ralph and Jack argue again and most of the boys take the side of Jack this time. Ralph tries to convince them that they need shelters, but Jack distracts them by commanding another blood lust dance. The boys become so swept up in the dance that Simon, emerging from the forest, is mistaken for the beast. All the boys, marginally including Ralph and Piggy, beat him to death. The tide sweeps his body out to sea.

Back at the shelters, Ralph, Piggy, and Samneric discuss about their role in the Simon’s death. That night, Jack and his hunters attack them and steal Piggy’s glasses for a fire. The next day, Ralph, Samneric, and Piggy approach Castle Rock, where Jack’s tribe has gathered, to demand the return of Piggy’s glasses. Ralph wants to re-establish the power of the conch. He and Samneric approach the hunters while Piggy and the conch stay on the stone bridge. Jack and Ralph argue again while the hunters take Samneric prisoner. Roger releases a rock they had rigged to guard the bridge. It falls on Piggy, smashes the conch, and plunges Piggy over the edge to his death.

Anyhow Ralph escapes and the hunters hunt him. He hides near Castle Rock but only manages to learn that Roger has tortured Samnric into joining the hunt. Samneric now fear Roger, the sadist, more than Jack. Eventually, the hunters corner
Ralph in Simon’s old hiding place. They flush him from concealment with a fire. Ralph manages to escape to the beach with the hunters right behind. He, now, comes face to face with a shocked naval officer. A battle cruiser has docked in the lagoon, drawn by the smoke from Jack’s fire. The officer is appalled at the savage condition of the children. The naval officer thinks that the boys have only been playing games, so he scolds them for not behaving in a more organized manner as is the British custom. Ralph assumes responsibility for what appears to be poor leadership. Jack, then, emerges onto the beach without his hunting camouflage or weapons. Only Piggy’s broken glasses on his belt give any indication of his previous savagery. One of the littluns even cannot remember his own name. As the boys prepare to leave the island, Ralph begins to weep for the three dead children and the end of the boy’s innocence.

6.4 Check your progress:

I. Choose the correct alternative:

1. ……………… finds a conch shell.
   a. Jack    b. Simon
   c. Ralph    d. Piggy

2. The identical twins Sam and Eric are referred to as ……………….
   a. Samsonic    b. Samneric
   c. Samoric     d. Summeric

3. The leader of the hunters is …………….
   a. Ralph    b. Jack
   c. Phil     d. Eric

4. …………… convences Ralph not to leave the position of a chief.
   a. Piggy    b. Simon
   c. Sam      d. Roger

5. …………… is offered as a sacrifice for the beast.
   a. a conch shell    b. the glasses
   c. a pig’s head     d. the rock
6. ………… is mistaken as the beast.
   a. the dead pig  
   b. the rock
   c. the mountain  
   d. the dead parachutist

II. Answer the following questions in a word/sentence/phrase each.
1. Who is the leader of the boys?
2. How does Ralph call the meeting of the boys?
3. What do the boys use to start the fire?
4. Who has a dream of the beast?
5. Who are taken as prisoners by the hunters?
6. Where does Ralph hide to escape from the hunters?
7. Why does Ralph weep in the end?

6.5 Words/terms to remember:
- **survive**: continue to live or exist
- **deserted**: a place with no people in it
- **uninhabited**: with no people living there
- **lagoon**: a lake of salt water which is separated from the sea
- **expedition**: a journey with a particular purpose
- **explore**: travel around an area in order to learn about it
- **vines**: climbing plants
- **mulberry**: a tree with broad dark green leaves and berries that can be eaten
- **exuberance**: energy and excitement
- **fronds**: long leaves of some plants or trees
- **contemplate**: to think seriously
- **deteriorate**: to become worse
- **obsess with**: completely fill somebody’s mind that the person cannot think of anything else
camouflage: a way of hiding soldiers and military equipment, using paint, leaves or nets, so that they look like part of their surroundings.

apprehensively: worried or frightened by something unpleasant may happen.

impale: push a sharp pointed object through something.

epileptic: having disorder of the nervous system that causes a person to become unconscious suddenly.

seizure: a sudden attack of an illness, especially one that affects the brain.

anarchy: disorder; no governance; no control.

concealment: the act of hiding something.

cruiser: a large fast ship used in war.

appalled: horrified or disgusted.

savagery: behaviour that is very cruel and violent.

6.6 Answers to check your progress:

I. Correct Alternatives:
   1. c) Ralph
   2. b) Samneric
   3. b) Jack
   4. a) Piggy
   5. c) Pig’s head
   6. d) the dead parachutist

II. Answer in one word/phrase/sentence:
   1. Ralph is the leader of the boys.
   2. Ralph calls the meeting of the boys by blowing the conch.
   3. The boys use Piggy’s glasses to start the fire.
   4. Phil has a dream of the beast.
   5. Sam and Eric are taken as prisoners by the hunters.
6. Ralph hides near Castle Rock to escape from the hunters.
7. Ralph weeps in the end for the death of the three dead boys.

6.7 Exercises:

A. Write answers of the following questions in two to four sentences each.
   1. What is the plan of the boys to attract ships?
   2. How does the fire affect the jungle?
   3. Why do the boys beat Simon?
   4. How is Piggy killed?

B. Write short notes on the following.
   1. The hunters
   2. The death of Simon
   3. The conch shell
   4. Rivalry between Ralph and Jack
   5. Ralph’s escape from the hunters

C. Essay/ descriptive type questions.
   1. Why do Ralph and Jack argue again and again?
   2. How does Simon find the truth about the beast?
   3. How do the boys come in face to face with a naval officer?

6.8 References for further study:
LORD OF THE FLIES

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7.2 Chapter-wise summery of Lord of the Flies with comments
7.3 Check your progress
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7.0 Objectives:

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the whole summery of the novel.
- Understand boyish character – the relation between the older boys and the younger ones.
- Explain important issues in the novel critically.
- Probe deeper into the recesses of the human heart.
- Realize that good and evil exist side by side in the darkness of man’s heart.
- Realize that once the restrains of civilization are removed, evil begins to rule over us.

7.1 Introduction:

The title of the novel may be traced back to the Jewish hierarchy of demons where Beelzebub is called, ‘Lord of the Flies’ and the true representative of false gods. The title is most appropriate as Golding tries to convey the moral that the
world is not a reasonable place and that all power corrupts and that one has to live with the darkness of man’s heart. Here we should remember one thing that Golding wrote this novel in the post-war era when there was much misunderstanding and disbelief among the nations of the world. *Lord of the Flies* (1954) is a novel of boyish adventure. But the novel conveys a message which goes beyond the simple story of boyish adventure. There is much similarity in Ballantyne’s *Coral Island*, published almost a century back in 1857, and *Lord of the Flies*. But *Lord of the Flies* is a deliberate attempt by William Golding to probe deeper than Ballantyne into the recesses of the human heart. There is another novel *Swiss Family Robinson* dealing with the similar story by J.R. Swiss. But the story of *Lord of the Flies* is never stereotyped or stale. We become more and more aware of the originality of design as the story proceeds.

William Golding was born on September 19th, 1911 in Cornwall a small village in England. His father was a distinguished school master. He did his primary education at the Marlborough Grammar School and joined the Brasenose College, Oxford. He took his degree in English literature. Philosophy dominates his writings. He started his career as a school master at Bishop Wordsworth’s school in Salisbury. During the second World War, he joined the Royal Navy. After the war, he resumed teaching and gave it up in 1962, and become a full-time writer. *Lord of the Flies* is his first and the most famous novel. His second novel *The Inheritors* (1955) is considered as the best novel about primitive man. Golding’s other works include *Pincher Martin* (1956), *The Spire* (1964), and *The Scorpion God* (1971). The beliefs behind his work are the fundamental moral or spiritual views of mankind. Gilding is also described as a novelist of artistic value and in *Lord of the Flies* he excels as a portrayer of Nature.

7.2 Chapter-wise summery of *Lord of the Flies* with comments

**CHAPTER 1 : THE SOUND OF THE SHELL**

Soon after the crash-landing of the passenger tube, a fair-haired boy lowers himself down some rocks towards a lagoon on a beach. He makes his way through the creepers to the calm blue lagoon below. At the lagoon, he encounters a short fat boy with thick spectacles. The fair haired boy introduces himself as Ralph and the fat one introduces himself as Piggy. Through their conversation we learn that in the midst of war, a transport plane carrying a group of boys was shot down over the
ocean. It crashed in thick jungle on a deserted island. Scattered by the wreck, the surviving boys lost each other and cannot find the pilot. Piggy is frightened at the prospect of a life without grown-ups. But Ralph is delighted at the thought of a realized ambition. Ralph tells Piggy that his father is a commander in the navy and sure enough he would come to rescue them. But Piggy shatters his belief by declaring that the crew of their plane as well as the people in the airport are killed in the nuclear attack. Ralph now realizes the gravity of the unusual situation. Just then they discover a large pink and cream coloured shell. Piggy immediately says that it could be used as a trumpet to summon the other boys scattered over the island. Ralph blows it and hearing the sound, the boys start to assemble onto the beach. The oldest among them are around twelve; the youngest are around six. Among the group is a boy’s choir, dressed in black cloaks and led by an older boy named Jack. The boys taunt Piggy and mock his appearance and nickname. After the boys are introduced by Piggy, Ralph tells them that they are holding a meeting. He lifts the conch and says that they ought to have a chief to decide things. The boys decide to elect a leader. The choirboys vote for Jack, but all other boys vote for Ralph. Ralph becomes the chief and naturally Jack feels depressed but soon feels happy when Ralph declares him as the leader of the ‘Hunters’. Now they decide to explore the land and find out if they are really on an island. Mindful of the need to explore their new environment, Ralph chooses Jack and a choir member named Simon to explore the island, ignoring Piggy’s requests to be picked up. The three explorers leave the meeting place and eventually they reach the end of the jungle, where high sharp rocks jut toward steep mountains. The explorers climb up the mountain and feel the thrill. They reach the summit and find water all around them. From the peak they can see that they are on an island with no signs of civilization. On their way back, they find a wild pig caught in the creepers. Jack, the newly appointed hunter draws his knife and steps in to kill it, but hesitates, unable to bring himself to act. The pig frees itself and runs away to safety before he could stab it. Jack vows that the next time he will not flinch from the act of killing. The three boys make a long trek through dense jungle and move towards the group of boys waiting for them on the beach.

**Comments** – In this introductory chapter we get the background of the novel through the conversation of Ralph and Piggy. They hint at a nuclear war raging in Europe. We see that the boys, unsure of how to behave with no adult presence overseeing them, largely stick to the learned behaviours of civilization and order.
They attempt to recreate the structures of society on the deserted island. They elect a leader, establish a division of labour and set about systematically exploring the island. But even at this early stage, we see the danger that the boys’ innate instincts pose to their civilization: the boys cruelly taunt Piggy, and Jack displays a ferocious desire to be elected the group’s leader. The bespectacled Piggy is introduced as a representative of the scientific and intellectual aspects of civilization. Piggy thinks critically about the conch shell and determines a productive use of it. The conch shell represents law, order, and political legitimacy, as it summons the boys from their scattered positions on the island and grants its holder the right to speak in front of the group. Finally the exploration provides Golding, a novelist of artistic value, the opportunity to expand on nature description.

CHAPTER 2 : FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN

This chapter begins with a meeting in which Ralph explains the result of their exploration. He tells the boys that they are on an uninhabited island and they shall have to look after themselves. Jack reminds Ralph of the pig they found trapped in the creepers and Ralph agrees that they will need hunters to kill animals for meat. Ralph declares that they need certain rules and regulations to guide them and says at meetings, the conch shell will be used to determine which boy has the right to speak. Whoever holds the shell will speak, and others will listen silently until they receive the shell in their turn. Jack agrees with this idea.

Piggy speaks painfully about the fact that no one knows they have crashed on the island and that they could be stuck there for a long time. The prospect of being stranded for a long period is too harrowing for many of the boys, and the entire group becomes silent and scared. At this moment a small boy with mulberry coloured birth mark claims that he saw a snakelike ‘beastie’ the night before. Ralph tries to explain that snakes are found only in big countries like Africa and India and not in an island like theirs. But a wave of fear ripples through the group at the idea that a monster might be prowling the island. The older boys try to reassure the group that there is no monster. Ralph now tells them that it is imperative for them to think of being rescued. He proposes that the group build a large signal fire on top of the island’s central mountain, so that any passing ships might see the fire and know that someone is trapped on the island. No sooner Ralph mentions it than the boys rush to the mountain under the leadership of Jack, shouting, “A fire! Make a fire!” Only Ralph and Piggy lag behind. Piggy doesn’t like this show of emotion. He shouts out in
disgust, “Like kids! Acting like a crowd of kids.” But even Ralph moves up and Piggy too follows him. The boys collect a mound of dry wood and use the lenses from Piggy’s glasses to focus the sunlight and set the wood on fire. As the heap of dry wood bursts into flame, the boys dance round it in sheer joy. But the fire soon dies out and they find it difficult to keep up such a huge fire. Jack volunteers his group of hunters to be responsible for keeping the signal fire going. In their frenzied, disorganized efforts to rekindle the fire, the boys set many trees ablaze. Piggy points out their foolishness and reminds them, “Put first things first and act proper.” What they most needed in the circumstances is shelter and not a signal fire. But the boys only laugh him down. They realize the gravity of his words only when he recollects that one of them is missing - a small boy with mulberry coloured birth mark. It is the first death on the island. The boys are crest fallen and shocked, and Ralph is struck with shame.

**Comments** – In this chapter we find the boys organizing themselves. They still have recollection of their civilized school life. At school they had plenty of rules and here too they are willing to accept the rules laid down by their chosen leader, Ralph. Another important development is the mention of the beast. The beast plays an important role in the novel. At this point the beast is merely an idea that frightens some of the boys. But as the novel progresses, the beast comes to represent the instincts of power, violence and savagery that lurk within each human being. Thirdly we have the lighting of the fire. The boys act like kids neglecting the priority of things. They act out of emotion rather than by reason. The fire too plays an important role in the novel. The fire has a double role – the one of purification and salvation and the other of destruction and death. The signal fire serves as a barometer for the boys’ interest in maintaining ties to civilization. As long as it burns, they retain some hope that they will be rescued and returned to society. When the fire ultimately burns out, the boys’ disconnection from the structures of society is complete.

**CHAPTER 3 : HUTS ON THE BEACH**

In this chapter we find the frustration of both the leaders- Ralph and Jack. Carrying a stick, Jack trails a pig through the thick jungle, but it evades him. Irritated, he walks back to the beach, where he finds Ralph and Simon at work building huts for the younger boys to live in. Everyone was to help building the shelters except the hunters who went out to hunt pigs. But the bitter experience of Ralph is that no one seemed to take things seriously. In fact Simon alone remains
with him. Most of the other boys splash about and play in the lagoon. Ralph says that all the boys act excited at meetings, but none of them is willing to work to make the plans successful. He points out that Jack’s hunters have failed to catch a single pig. This makes Jack angry and he asks, “Are you accusing?” They come to the verge of open rivalry. Their values are different. Ralph stands for shelter and fire while Jack is only interested in hunting. Jack claims that although they have so far failed to bring down a pig, they will soon have more success. Ralph also worries about the smaller children, many of whom have nightmares and are unable to sleep. He tells Jack about his concerns but Jack, still trying to think of ways to kill a pig, is not interested in Ralph’s problems. The feeling of rivalry again raises its head and Ralph retorts, “All you can talk about is, Pig, Pig, Pig.” Ralph further complains that Jack and the hunters are using their hunting duties as an excuse to avoid the real work. Jack responds to Ralph’s complaints commenting that the boys want meat. Jack and Ralph continue to bitter and grow increasingly hostile toward each other. In order to forget their bitter feelings, they decide to have a swim, but their feelings of mutual dislike remain and fester. In the meantime Simon goes into the forest to pluck fruits and enjoy his solitude among the flowers and creepers until dark.

**Comments** - We find in this chapter boys’ psychology once more in action. They never take anything seriously. They are off bathing or eating or playing as they please. The most important development in this chapter is the beginning of the personal conflict between Ralph and Jack. The conflict between the two boys starts as early as the election in chapter 1 but remains hidden beneath the surface, masked by the feelings of friendship. In this chapter, however, the conflict erupts into verbal argument for the first time. Where Ralph represents the orderly forces of civilization and Jack represents the primal, instinctual urges, Simon represents a kind of goodness that is innate rather than taught by human society. We see Simon’s kind and generous nature through his actions: he helps Ralph to build the huts; helps the little boys reach a high branch of fruit.

**CHAPTER 4 : PAINTED FACES AND LONG HAIR**

In this chapter the author gives us an idea of the life of the little boys who are around six year of age. They are given the generic name “littluns”. Their life on island soon develops a daily rhythm. They live a distinct life of their own. They eat a lot of fruits and consequently suffer from constant stomach aches and diarrhoea. The fear of beast makes them huddle together. Morning is pleasant with cool air and
sweet smells, and the boys are able to play happily. They are often troubled by some images. Piggy dismisses these images as ‘mirages’ caused by sunlight striking the water. The littluns, who spend most of their days eating fruit and playing with one another, are particularly troubled by visions and bad dreams. They obey the summons of the conch and Ralph is for them the link with the adult world. They generally enjoy the meetings and play together on the beach building castles with sand. On that particular day Roger and Maurice were on duty at the fire. When they are relieved from duty, Roger cruelly walks through the castles built by the little boys. He even throws stones at one of the boys, although he does remain careful enough to avoid actually hitting the boy with his stones. Jack, obsessed with the idea of killing a pig, paints his face with clay and charcoal and enters the jungle to hunt. He thinks the only way to approach close to the pigs is to paint them. He is joined by several other boys. He compels the twins, too, to join his hunting party. They were supposed to be on duty at the fire, but Jack compels them. On the beach, Ralph and Piggy see a ship on the horizon – but they also see that the signal fire has gone out. They hurry to the top of the hill, but it is too late to rekindle the flame. Ralph shouts in despair, “Come back! Come back”, but the ship moves farther and farther. Ralph is furious with Jack, because it was the hunters’ duty to see that the fire was maintained. Ralph now notices a procession moving towards them. Jack and the hunters return from the jungle, covered with blood and chanting a bizarre song. They carry a dead pig on a stake between them. Furious at the hunters’ irresponsibility, Ralph speaks gravely, “You let the fire out”. Jack could not understand Ralph’s mood and is irritated by the irrelevance of Ralph’s words. However, he explains that even the twins who were supposed to be on duty at the fire, were needed to complete the ring. When Piggy shrilly complaints about the hunters’ immaturity, Jack slaps him hard, breaking one of the lenses of his glasses. Jack taunts Piggy by mimicking his whining voice. Ralph and Jack have a heated conversation. At last Jack admits his responsibility in the failure of the signal fire. This puts him in the right and Ralph obscurely in the wrong. The hunters admire him for his generous apology. Ralph considers it a dirty verbal trick. Jack never apologizes to Piggy. Ralph goes to Piggy to use his glasses to light a fire, and at that moment, Jack’s friendly feelings toward Ralph change to resentment. The positive action of gathering fire wood relieves the tension. The boys roast the pig and the hunters dance wildly around the fire, singing and reenacting the savagery of the hunt. When the noise dies down, Ralph announces that he is calling a meeting and walks down the hill toward the beach, all by himself.
Comments - In this chapter we get some serious developments. There is good relationship between some bigger boys and the smaller ones. But some bigger boys are cruel to them – Roger and Jack to mention a few. In short two conceptions of power emerge on the island, corresponding the novels philosophical poles – civilization and savagery. Ralph, Piggy and Simon represent the idea that power should be used for the good of the group. Roger and Jack represent the idea that power should enable those who hold it to gratify their own desires. Thus while the first group represents order and morality, the second represents instinct toward savagery. Another thing is hunting becomes a passion for Jack. He paints himself so that the pigs might not notice him. In other words they wear masks and the masks compel them. The mask is symbolic. It is the mask that people put on, that often compels them to actions they otherwise would not do. The boys’ failure to understand each other’s point of view creates a gulf between them.

CHAPTER 5 : BEAST FROM WATER

Walking along the beach, Ralph thinks about the points he wanted to make in the speech. He wanted this meeting must not be fun, but business. It should not break up in confusion as their assemblies usually did. He wanted to bring the group back into line. Late in the evening, he blows the conch shell, and the boys gather on the beach. At the meeting he complains, “We decide the things but they do not get done.” He puts forth the examples like the decision to store fresh water from the stream, the building of shelters, the place for lavatory and above all the tending of the fire. He expresses anger over the boys’ failure to uphold the group’s rules. He restates the importance of signal fire and tells that smoke is more important than the pig. He attempts to remove the group’s growing fear of beasts and monsters. Ralph says it is nonsense to fear a beast that does not exist. Jack also speaks of the silly fear of the ‘littluns’. Piggy too seconds their rational claim and tells them that they need not fear as there could be no beast on the island. Then one of the littluns, Phil speaks up and claims that he has actually seen a beast. When the others press him ask where it could hide during the day time, he suggests that it might come up from the ocean at night. This terrifies all the boys and another little boy, Percival starts weeping. He says that he has seen the beast coming out of the sea. Maurice supports that there are huge animals in the sea. Someone now mentions the ghost being a beast. This frightens them all more because it was already becoming dark. The meeting plunges into chaos. Suddenly, Jack proclaims that if there is a beast, he and his hunters will
hunt it down and kill it. There follows a heated discussion on the ghost and angry words are exchanged between Piggy and Jack. Jack torments Piggy and runs away, and many other boys run after him. Only Ralph, Piggy and Simon are left on the platform. In the distance, the hunters who have followed Jack dance and chant their hunting song. Piggy wants Ralph to blow the conch and call them back but Ralph hesitates. He is not sure they would return. He feels dejected and tells Piggy and Simon that he might give up the leadership of the group. But they reassure him that the boys need his guidance and ask him to continue as chief. They think of what the grown ups would have done in the circumstances. As the group goes back to the shelters, the sound of someone’s wail echoes along the beach.

Comments - Ralph wants to hold a serious meeting regarding certain issues - the ship passing away and the fire being neglected by the hunters. But like all other meetings, this meeting also ends up in confusion. Ralph becomes unpopular with his decision to have only one fire. Jack on the other hand becomes popular. He assures them that he will hunt down the beast. He leads the boys out in a mock hunting and Ralph hesitates to summon them back because he is not sure they will return. Secondly, we find the beast appearing from the sea and it is frightening situation because they are surrounded by the sea. Ralph finds himself helpless. In despair he even thinks of giving up the leadership.

CHAPTER 6 : BEAST FROM AIR

In the darkness late that night, Ralph and Simon carry a littlelun named Percival back to the shelter before going to sleep. A sign from the world of grown-ups comes in the night. At that time there was no child awake to read it. As the boys sleep, military airplanes batter fiercely above the island. None of the boys sees the explosions and flashes in the cloud because even the twins Sam and Eric, who were supposed to watch the signal fire have fallen asleep. An aeroplane catches fire and a figure drops down beneath a parachute. It lands on the mountain. His chute gets tangled in some rocks and flaps in the wind, while his shape casts fearful shadows on the ground. When the wind blows, its head seems to rise; peer across the mountain and fall. But when the wind drops, the figure bows forward with its head between the knees. It was the dead body of the pilot but the boys mistake it as the “beast form air”. When Sam and Eric wake up, they tend to the fire to make the flames brighter. Eric happens to see the twisted form of the dead parachutist and mistakes the shadowy image for the figure of the dreaded beast. They rush back to the camp, wake
Ralph up and tell him what they have seen. Ralph immediately summons an assembly at which Sam and Eric describe frightening experience. They also claim that the monster assaulted them Jack suggests that they should hunt it down. The boys organize an expedition to search the island for monsters. They set out, armed with wooden spears, and only Piggy and the littluns remain behind. Ralph allows Jack to lead the search. The boys soon reach the part of the island that none of them has explored before. They reach a narrow ledge of rock leading to a peak. The boys are afraid to go across the ledge. As chief Ralph decides to go and investigate. Soon Jack too joins him. They see a sort of half-cave but see no sign of the beast there. They find it an ideal spot for a fort. The boys begin to play games, pushing rocks into the sea, and many of them forget the purpose of the expedition. Ralph angrily reminds them that they are looking for the beast and says that they must return to the other mountain so that they can rebuild the signal fire. The other boys lost in playing games are displeased by Ralph’s commands but unwillingly obey.

Comments - We come to know here that a bloody war is waged elsewhere in the world. Jack had wished a sign from the world of grown-ups. It comes in the figure of a dead pilot. As fear about the beast grips the boys, the balance between civilization and savagery on the island shifts, and Ralph’s control over the group diminishes. Jack alone courageously comes forward with the idea of hunting it down. Thus he becomes a symbol of courage among the boys. It is true that Ralph takes the risk and shows his courage at the castle rock. But his insistence to return to the mountain against the wishes of the majority, makes him unpopular. He is obsessed with the idea of the fire smoke and rescue.

CHAPTER 7 : SHADOWS AND TALL TREES

The boys return from the castle rock along a pig trail. When they reach the area of fruit trees, they have their meal of fruit. Sitting on a rock, Ralph thinks of his dirty clothes, overgrown hair and long finger nails. He gazes at the ocean and muses on the fact that the boys have become undisciplined. As he looks out at the vast expanse of the water, he feels that the ocean is like a divider, a barrier blocking any hope the boys have of escaping the island. Simon, however, lifts Ralph’s spirits by reassuring him that he will get back to home. That afternoon Roger shows the droppings of a pig and they follow it. Jack suggests they hunt the pig while they continue to search for pig. Ralph remains alone thinking of home and the joy he had experienced, watching the snow flakes fall. He thinks of the books he had read. Suddenly he hears
the rush of the hoofs. He sees a pig running towards him. Excitedly he raises his spear and hits it. But it runs away to safety. Jack comes up and tells him that he should have waited a little more. Ralph is now thrilled and joins the hunters. Although the pig escapes, the boys remain in frenzy in the aftermath of the hunt. Excited, they reenact the chase among themselves with a boy named Robert playing the pig. They dance, chant, and jab Robert with their spears. Eventually, they forget the fact that they are playing a game. Beaten and in danger, Robert tries to drag himself away. The group nearly kills Robert before they remember themselves. When Robert suggests that they use a real pig in the game next time, Jack replies that they should use a littlun instead. After this they decide to move towards the mountain. It is already late afternoon and Maurice suggests they should get back to Piggy and the littluns before dark. Only then Ralph thinks of it and feels it is better that someone go to inform Piggy that they will return only after dark. Simon volunteers to return to the littluns. Darkness falls, and Ralph proposes that they should wait until morning to climb the mountain because it will be difficult to hunt the monster at night. The majority of the boys agree with the idea as by now, they were completely exhausted. But Jack alone insists that they should go alone. He challenges Ralph to join the hunt, and Ralph finally agrees to go simply to regain his position in the eyes of the group. While the two of them go up, the others return to the camp. Soon Roger too joins the two. Ralph, Roger and Jack start to climb the mountain, and then Ralph and Roger wait somewhere near the top while Jack climbs alone to the summit. He returns, breathlessly claiming to have seen the monster. Ralph and Roger climb up to have a look and see a terrifying specter, a large, shadowy form with the shape of a giant ape, making a strange flapping sound in the wind. At the same time the wind blows and the creature raises its head and peers at them. Terrified, the boys hurry down the mountain to warn the group.

**Comments** - The pig-hunt and the boys play afterward makes clear one thing - the power of human instincts towards savagery. The important development in this chapter is that the search for the beast ends successfully. The beast spoken of by the ‘littluns’ becomes a reality even for the bigger boys. Had the boys climbed the mountain in the daylight as Ralph wished, they would have seen the dead parachutist. As they go at night, however, they see the parachutist distorted by shadows and believe it to the beast. As the story of the novel progresses it becomes clear that the
beast is a symbolic manifestation of the boys’ primitive inner instincts. The beast dominates the story now onwards.

CHAPTER 8 : GIFT FOR THE DARKNESS

Ralph, Roger and Jack tell the other boys what they have seen on the mountaintop. Piggy is visibly frightened and asks Ralph if he is sure of the beast and whether they will be safe down on the beach. Ralph is sure of one thing that they will not be able to fight a thing of that size. Even Jack and his hunters will be powerless against it. The hunters are after all “Boys armed with sticks.” This remark makes Jack furious and he seizes the conch shell and blows into it clumsily, calling for an assembly. When the boys gather around the platform, Jack addresses them. He tells the boys that there is definitely a beast on the mountain and goes on to claim that Ralph is a coward who should be removed from his leadership role. But no hands go up to support him. In frustration he announces his decision to break away from Ralph. He puts down the conch, jumps off the platform and walks away along the beach, saying that anyone who likes is welcome to join him. Deeply troubled, Ralph does not know what to do. Piggy meanwhile is thrilled to see Jack go, and Simon suggests that they all return to the mountain to search for the beast. The other boys are too afraid to act on his suggestion. Ralph slips into depression. But Piggy cheers him up with an idea that they should light a fire on the beach rather than on the mountain. Peggy’s idea restores Ralph’s hope and he admires him. The boys set to work and build a new fire. Many of the boys sneak away into the night to join Jack’s group. Piggy tries to convince Ralph that they are happier without them. He wants to celebrate the occasion and goes into the forest with the twins to gather some fruits. When they sit down to have the feast of fruits, Ralph notices that Simon too is missing. In the meanwhile Jack too is happy with his small group of hunters. He announces himself their chief. In a savage frenzy, the hunters kill a sow. Roger drives his spear forcefully into the sow’s anus. Jack cuts her throat and they leave it on a sharpened stick as an offering to the beast. Soon they move away with the meat. Simon who had wandered off by himself, witnesses the drama of killing the sow and the gift for darkness. He becomes afraid thinking that perhaps the beast might come to accept the gift. It is swarmed with flies now. The sight mesmerizes him, and it even seems as if the head comes to life. The head speaks to Simon in the voice of the “Lord of the Flies”, ominously declaring that Simon will never be able to escape him, for he lies within all human beings. Terrified and troubled by the apparition,
Simon collapses in a faint. As Piggy and Ralph sit in the old camp thinking of the fire, some painted creatures rush at their fire and steal burning sticks from the fire on the beach. Jack stays back to announce that they are having a feast of pork that night. He tells Ralph’s followers that they are welcome to come to his feast that night and even to join his group. The hungry boys, tempted by the idea of pig’s meat, go to the camp of Jack. Finally even Piggy and Ralph go to join the feast.

**Comments** - The relations between Ralph and Jack get much worse. Jack cannot bear the insulting remarks of Ralph about his hunters. He summons an assembly to remove Ralph from leadership. He organizes his camp. There is no election of the leader. He simply announces that he is chief. His word is the law and he takes decisions without inviting opinions from others as Ralph had done through the assemblies. The democratic way of life is thrown overboard. He offers meat to draw away more and more boys from Ralph’s group. Another important thing in this chapter is that Jack takes the boys back to the primitive life from civilization. Like the primitive man Jack tries to appease the beast through offerings. For Jack the beast becomes a necessity. The boys will stand behind him as long as they fear of the beast. The most important development in this chapter is the Lord of the Flies’ scene. For the first time in the novel there is mention of the ‘Lord of the Flies.’ It is the head of the killed sow swarmed with flies. It tells Simon in his fit, “There is none to help you expect me and I’m the beast.” Thus the beast and Lord of the Flies are identified with each other. Further it tells, “I am part of you.” The beast or evil is within every man and we cannot escape from it. Now it is the rule of Jack, the rule of dictatorship. The smooth happy life of the boys under the democratic rule of Ralph has ended. They start the evil by stealing fire.

CHAPTER 9 : A VIEW TO A DEATH

Simon awakens and finds the island darkened by rain clouds. His nose is bleeding and he staggers towards the mountain in a daze. He crawls up and, in the failing light, sees the dead pilot with his flapping parachute. Watching the parachute rise and fall with the wind, Simon realizes that the boys have mistaken this harmless object for the deadly beast. The parachute strings had given it the life-like movements. This has plunged their entire group into chaos. When Simon sees the corpse of the parachutist, he begins to vomit. When he is finished, he entangles the parachute lines, freeing the parachute from the rocks. Now he wants to tell his companions the truth. He finds that there is no fire by the platform. He, however,
notices a fire farther down the beach. He walks down in that direction to tell the other boys what he has seen. Ralph and Piggy realize that they are alone. Even Bill and the twins have left for the camp of Jack. There is no point in their staying back alone. So Piggy suggests that perhaps they should also go. When they reach the place the feast was almost over. At the feast, the boys are laughing and eating the roasted pig. They see Jack sitting like a king on a throne, with his face painted like a savage. There are piles of meat, fruits and coconut shells filled with fresh water. Jack orders meat for Ralph and Piggy and they too sit down and eat. He wants a drink and Henry brings him a coconut shell. After the large meal, Jack extends an invitation to all of Ralph’s followers to join his tribe. Most of them accept, despite Ralph’s attempt to dissuade them. The boys one by one declare that they would join the tribe of Jack. At this moment there starts heavy downpour. Ralph now taunts them about their shelters. In response, Jack orders his tribe to do its wild hunting dance. The boys again reenact the hunting of the pig and reach a high pitch of frenzied energy as they chant and dance. Suddenly, the boys see a shadowy figure creep out on the forest – it is Simon. In their wild state, however, the boys do not recognize him. Shouting that he is the beast, the boys descend upon Simon and start to tear him apart with their bare hands and teeth. Simon tries desperately to explain what has happened and to remind them of who he is. But he trips and plunges over the rocks onto the beach. The boys fall on him violently and kill him. The storm explodes over the island. In the whipping rain, the boys run for shelter. At the same time, the wind blows the body of the parachutist off the side of the mountain and onto the beach. Howling wind and waves wash Simon’s corpse into the ocean.

**Comments** - Simon finds out the mystery of the beast. He reaches the camp, crawling on all fours. He is mistaken for the beast and is beaten to death. Simon’s death exemplifies the power of evil within human soul. With the brutal, animalistic murder of Simon, the last sign of civilized order on the island comes to an end, and brutality and chaos takes over. The storm washes away the dead bodies of Simon and the parachutist, eradicating the proof that the beast does not exist. Jack establishes his tribe, becomes the chief and disregards the claims of Ralph. The democratic way of life comes to an end as Jack sets up his dictatorship. He draws away the boys with the lure of meat and a sense of security. The boys, now, disregard their democratic civilized life. Jack places himself as the idol for them to adore. He tightens his grip on the boys in every possible way. Jack is leading them back to barbarism.
CHAPTER 10 : THE SHELL AND THE GLASSES

Only Piggy, Sam and Eric, and a few littluns are left with Ralph. All others have joined Jack. The next morning, Ralph and Piggy meet on the beach. They feel awkward and deeply ashamed of their behaviour the previous night. He looks on Simon’s death as murder. Piggy tries to rationalize it. He calls it a pure accident. But Ralph, clutching the conch desperately and laughing hysterically, insists that they have been participants in the murder. Piggy flatly denies the charge. At the castle Rock, Jack rules with absolute power. Roger admires Jack saying he is a proper chief. Boys are punished for no apparent reason. Jack ties up and beats a boy named Wilfred. He warns the guards against Ralph and his small group, saying that they are a danger to the tribe. The entire tribe, including Jack, seems to believe that Simon really was the beast, and that the beast is capable of disguise. Jack states that they must continue to guard against the beast, for it is never truly dead. He says that he and two other hunters, Maurice and Roger should raid Ralph’s camp to obtain more fire. In case the beast comes again, they would do their dance again. In the meanwhile Ralph tries to light a fire. Then they go to gather fruits for their meal and return in the evening. They could not get firewood anymore in the dark. Depressed and loosing interest in the signal fire, the boys at Ralph’s camp go off to sleep. Ralph sleeps fitfully, plagued by nightmares. They are awakened by howling and shrieking and are suddenly attacked by a group of Jack’s hunters. The hunters badly beat Ralph and his companions. Ralph and his companions do not even know why they were assaulted. Piggy thinks they had come for the conch but it was safe on the platform. But then Piggy knows that the hunters have stolen his glasses.

Comments - Jack’s power over the island is complete, and Ralph is left an outcast, subject to Jack’s whims. Now Jack is a dictator. He does the things as he pleases. We find Jack cautioning his supporters for no obvious reason. The existence of the beast is a necessity for him. He does not admit the beast has been killed. He wants to keep the boys in constant fear. Only then they will need the protection he promises. Piggy’s glasses fall into Jack’s hand. Significantly enough, this also indicates the demise of the boys’ hopes of being rescued.

CHAPTER 11 : CASTLE ROCK

Early next morning, Ralph and his companions try to light the fire in the cold air. But there is no hope without Piggy’s glasses. Piggy suggests that Ralph should
hold a meeting to discuss their opinions. Ralph blows the conch shell, and the boys who have not gone to join Jack’s tribe assemble on the beach. Ralph once more repeats his usual words about the fire. Now Jack has made it impossible for them to keep the signal fire. Piggy wants that they should go to ask Jack to return his glasses. He might be stronger but has to do it because ‘what’s right’s right.’ So they decide to set out for the camp of Jack, the castle Rock. They go as clean as they could. They want to show that they are civilized as opposed to the savage life in the camp of Jack. Ralph takes the conch shell to the castle Rock, hoping that it will remind Jack’s follower’s of his former authority. When they reach the place, they are challenged by the guards. Ralph blows the conch shell, but the guards tell them to leave. Robert tells him that Jack has gone out hunting and they are not to let them in. Suddenly, Jack and a group of hunters emerge from the forest, dragging a dead pig. Jack commands Ralph to leave his camp. Ralph demands that he should return Piggy’s glasses as he is quite helpless without them. Further he says that there was no need to steal them because they could have the fire whenever they needed. Jack immediately becomes furious because he is accused as a thief. He rushes at Ralph with his spear and they fight. Ralph struggles to make Jack understand the importance of the signal fire. But the savages burst into laughter. Angrily Ralph calls them a pack of painted fools. Jack orders his hunters to capture Sam and Eric and tie them. He expects Ralph to make an attempt to rescue them. This makes Ralph furious and he calls Jack a beast, a swine and a bloody thief. Ralph and Jack fight for the second time. Holding the conch, Piggy tells them that they are acting like a crowd of kids. Roger shoves a massive rock down the mountainside. Ralph hears the rock falling and throws himself flat on the ground. It strikes Piggy, shatter the conch shell he is holding, and knocks him off the mountainside to his death. This is the tragic end of Piggy. Now Jack throws his spear at Ralph, and the other boys quickly join him. Ralph escapes into the jungle. Roger and Jack begin to torture Sam and Eric, forcing them to submit to Jack’s authority and join his tribe.

Comments - The fight between the two leaders signify the struggle between democracy and dictatorship. Piggy, the symbol of intelligence and reason is mercilessly murdered. The conch shell, the symbol of ordered life and democratic ways, is shattered to a thousand pieces. Now the dictatorship of Jack is firmly established. Ralph has no choice but run for life.
CHAPTER 12 : CRY OF THE HUNTERS

Ralph hides in the jungle and thinks miserably about the chaos that has overtaken the island. He thinks about the deaths of Simon and Piggy, and realizes that all the signs of civilization have been stripped from the island. He is now all alone. Piggy is dead and the twins are made captives. As the evening advances he is filled with fear. He moves towards the castle Rock out of the need of human company. He finds Robert on guard. Someone comes up and gives Robert a piece of pork. He argues within himself that they would leave him alone. But the thought of the death of Simon and Piggy comes to his mind and he shudders. He moves towards the beach and takes his meal of fruits. He could not remain alone in the shelters and almost unconsciously he traces his steps to the castle Rock. Suddenly, he stumbles across the sow’s head, the Lord of the Flies, now merely a gleaming white skull. Angrily and disgusted, Ralph knocks the skull to the ground and takes the stake, it was impaled on, to use as a weapon against Jack. He is tired but could not sleep for fear of the tribe. He is an outcast now. That night, he sneaks down to the castle Rock and finds Sam and Eric guarding the entrance. They give Ralph food but refuse to join him. They warn him to leave the place immediately. They also tell him that the tribe is planning to hunt him down like a pig the next day. Before he leaves, Ralph tells the twins that he will be hiding in the thicket close to the castle Rock. He asks them that they should keep the hunters away from that spot. Sam gives him a chunk of meat and Ralph moves away hastily. Ralph hides into the thicket and soon falls asleep. In the morning he hears the shouts of the savages searching for him. He also hears Jack talking and torturing one of the twins to find out where Ralph is hiding. Soon the voices move away to the cliff and he hears them heaving a huge rock. It crashes onto the thicket and he hears them cheering. Soon the second rock comes, tearing away the bushes and creepers but fortunately it has not hit his spot. Someone now moves up the thicket and Ralph hits out with his sharpened stick and the savage withdraws in pain. It is Jack. Since they find it impossible to reach him, they decide to smoke him out. They set fire to the thicket and soon Ralph is choked with the smoke. He could not remain there any longer. He rushes out towards the forest and hits down the savage. Chased by a group of body-painted-warrior-boys, Ralph ends upon the beach, where he collapses. He staggers to his feet crying for mercy. But to his surprise, he looks up to see a naval officer standing over him. The officer tells the boy that his ship has come to the island after seeing the blazing fire in
the jungle. Jack’s hunters, with their sharpened sticks, reach the beach. The officer thinks that they are having a game. When he learns what has happened on the island, the officer is reproachful. He asks how this group and the English boys could have lost all reverence for the rules of civilization in such a short time. Ralph bursts into tears and the other boys gather round him. They also weep as if in sympathy. Moved and embarrassed, the naval officer, gives them time to regain their composure before taking them to the cruiser.

Comments - The boys are finally rescued and their life of loneliness ends. With the destruction of the pig’s skull, their safety comes closer. The fire does its double function of destruction and salvation. Whatever the circumstance in which a man finds himself, he should hold up his traditions, civilization and not fall into barbarism as the boys under Jack does. This is the message that Golding seems to give through the novel.

7.3 Check your progress:

1. Choose the correct alternative:

1. The novel *Lord of the Flies* was published in …
   a) 1954, b) 1989, c) 1945, d) 1965

2. … sets up his rival camp in the Castle Rock.
   a) Ralph, b) Jack, c) Piggy, d) Simon

3. … are twins.
   a) Ralph and Jack, b) Jack and Simon, c) Piggy and Roger, d) Sam and Eric

4. … speaks, first, of a beast from water.
   a) Ralph, b) Jack, c) Roger, d) Percival

5. … becomes helpless without glasses.
   a) Ralph, b) Jack, c) Piggy, d) Simon

6. … discovers the truth about the beast.
   a) Ralph, b) Jack, c) Simon, d) Percival

7. … becomes the symbol of authority.
a) The Conch  b) Jack  c) Simon  d) The beast

8. ..... is used as a trumpet to summon the boys.
   a) The Conch b) Pig’s head  c) Fire  d) The beast

9. Ralph offers ……  the post of second in command.
   a) Percival  b) Jack  c) Simon  d) Piggy

10. ..... offers gifts for the beast.
    a) Ralph  b) Jack  c) Roger  d) Percival

11. The boys are finally rescued by ……
    a) Beast  b) Lord of the Flies  c) a naval officer  d) Ralph

II. **Answer the following questions in a word / sentence / phrase each.**

1. What is the beast from air?
2. What is the Conch?
3. Who uses the conch as a trumpet?
4. Why do Jack and his hunters kill Simon?
5. What does Jack offer as a gift for the beast?
6. Who turns the boys into a tribe of savages?
7. What leads the boys to break up of their ordered life?
8. Who are the ‘littluns’?
9. Who suggests ‘vote for the chief’?
10. What did Jack and his followers steal from the camp of Ralph?
11. Who is the first boy introduced by Golding in the novel?

**7.3 Terms to Remember:**

**Chapter 1**

**Lagoon (N)** - a lagoon is an area of calm sea water that is separated from the ocean by a line of rock and sand.

**Shriek (V)** – a short, but very loud cry.
**Typhoon (N)** – a very violent tropical storm.

**Mirage (N)** – a mirage is something you see when it is extremely hot, and which appears to be quite near but is actually a long way away or does not really exist.

**Effulgence (Adj)** – shine brightly

**Trot (V)** – more fairly fast between walking and running, taking small big steps.

**Shell (N)** – shells are hard objects found on beaches. They are the covering which used to surround small sea creatures.

**Crumple (V)** – creased and wrinkled.

**Applause (N)** – approval expressed by clapping.

**Choir (N)** – an organized group of singers.

**Squeak (V)** – a short, high-pitched sound

**Chapter 2**

**Shrimp (N)** – a small, physically weak person.

**Perpendicular (Adj)** – at an angle of 90 degree to the ground, vertical.

**Induce (V)** – succeed in persuading or leading (someone) to do something.

**Smirk (V)** – smile in an irritatingly smug or silly way.

**coign (N)** – a projecting corner or angle of a wall

**wilt (V)** – become limp through loss of water, heat, or disease; droop

**silhouette (N)** – the dark shape and outline of someone or something visible in restricted light against a brighter background

**tirade (N)** – a long speech of angry criticism or accusation

**Chapter 3**

**Sprinter (N)** – a sprinter is a person who takes part in short, fast races

**Vicissitude (N)** – a change of circumstances or fortune, typically for the worse.

**Contrite (Adj)** – feeling or expression remorse i.e. sadness or regret about something wrong that you have done.
Antagonism (N) – active hostility or opposition

Indignant (Adj) – shocked and angry because you think something is unjust or unfair.

Opaque (Adj) – difficult to understand
Declivity (N) – a downward slope
Susurration (N) – whispering or rustling

Chapter 4

Opalescence (N) – showing many small points of shifting colour against a pale or dark ground

Loom (V) – appear as a vague form, especially one that is threatening
Extinguisher (N) – one who puts an end to
Chastisement (N) – punishment
Beckon (V) – make a gesture to instruct someone to approach or follow.
Sundial (N) – an instrument showing the time by the shadow of the pointer cast by the sun on to a plate marked in hours.
Squint (N) – look at someone or something with partly closed eyes.
Wisp (V) – a small thin bunch or, amount of something.
Carcass (N) – the dead body of an animal
Snivel (V) – complain in a whining or a tearful way
Grimace (N) – an ugly, twisted expression on a person’s face, typically expressing disgust, or pain.
Dribble (V) – if a person dribbles, saliva drops slowly from their mouth

Chapter 5

Reverence (N) – deed respect
Scowl (N) – an angry or bad tempered expression
Jabber (V) – talk rapidly and excitedly but with sense
Muck (N) – dirt or rubbish
Derisive (Adj.) – expressing contempt or ridicule

Flinch (V) – make a quick nervous movement as an instinctive reaction to fear or pain

Coax (V) – persuade someone gradually or by flattery to do something

Effigy (N) – a sculpture or model of a person

Indigo (N) – a colour between blue and violet in the spectrum

Gibberer (V) – speak rapidly and unintelligibly, typically through fear or shock

Chapter 6

popping (N) - short sharp sound made by bursting a balloon or pulling a cork out of a bottle

trail (N) - a rough path through forests

speck (N) – a tiny spot

festoon (N) – an ornamental chain or garland of flowers, leaves or ribbons, hung in curve.

smudge (N) - a smoky outdoor fire lit to keep off insects or protect plants against frost

snigger (N) – a smothered or half-suppressed laugh

tremulous (Adj) – timid, nervous

bristle (N) - a short, stiff hair on an animal’s skin or a man’s face

embroil (V) – involve deeply in a conflict or difficult situation

bastion (N) – a projecting part of a fortification allowing an increased angle of fire

leviathan (N) – a sea monster; something very large or powerful

guano (N) - the excrement of sea-birds

mutinous (Adj) – tending to mutiny; rebellious.
Chapter 7

scurf (N) – flakes on the surface of the skin that form as fresh skin develops below, occurring especially as dandruff.

brine (N) – water saturated or strongly impregnated with salt; seawater.

obtuse (Adj) – annoyingly insensitive or slow to understand.

swirl (V) – move or cause to move in a twisting or spiraling pattern.

funk(N) - a state of panic or depression

drench (V) - wet thoroughly; soak

daunt (V) – cause to feel intimidated or apprehensive

sputter (V) - say in a rapid indistinct way

slither (V) – move smoothly over a surface with a twisting motion

bulge (N) – a rounded swelling distorting a flat surface

bravado (N) – boldness intended to impress or intimidate

nausea (N) – a feeling of sickness with an inclination to vomit.

Chapter 8

serenade (N) - a piece of music sung or played in the open air, especially by a man at night under the window of his beloved.

tremor (N) - a sudden feeling of fear or excitement

babble (V) – talk rapidly and continuously in a foolish, excited, or incomprehensible way.

skewer (N) – a long piece of wood or metal used for holding pieces of food together during cooking.

cynic (N) – a person who believes that people are motivated purely by self-interest.

canyon (N) - a deep gorge, especially a river flowing through it.

obscene (Adj) - offensive or disgusting by accepted standards of morality and decency.
**Lord of the Flies (Ph)** - in the Jewish hierarchy of demons Beelzebub is called, ‘Lord of the Flies’ and he is considered the true representative of false gods.

**Chapter 9**

*corpulent (Adj) – (of a person) fat*

*squirt (V) – wet with a jet of liquid*

*turf (N) – grass and the surface layer of earth held together by its roots.*

**Chapter 10**

*shrill (Adj) – (of a voice or sound ) high-pitched and piercing*

*diminish (V) – make or become less*

*cram (V) – force too many (people or things) into a room or container*

*spangle (N) – a spot of bright colour or light*

*woebegone (Adj) – sad or miserable in appearance*

*convulsion (N) – a sudden, violent, irregular movement of the body caused by involuntary contraction*

*exult (V) – show or feel triumphant elation.*

**Chapter 11**

*myopia (N) – short-sightedness*

*devastate (V) – destroy or ruin*

*propitiate (V) – appease*

*crouch (V) – adopt a position where the knees are bent and the upper body is brought forward and down*

*shaggy (Adj.) – (of hair or fur) long, thick and unkempt.*

*jeer (V) – make rude and mocking remarks at someone*

*truculent (Adj.) – eager or quick or argue to fight*

*falter (V) – lose strength or momentum/ move or speak hesitantly*

*foliage (N) – plant leaves, collectively.*
Chapter 12

covet (V) – yearn to possess

ambush (N) – a surprise attack by people lying in wait in a concealed position.

inimical (Adj.) – tending to obstruct or harm; hostile

antiphonal (Adj.) – (of church music) sung, recited or played alternately by two groups.

ravenous (Adj.) – voraciously hungry

ensconce (V) – establish in a comfortable, safe, or secret place

ululate (V) – howl or wail, typically to express grief

diaphragm (N) – a thin sheet of material forming a partition

excruciate (V) – torment physically or mentally

squirm (V) – twist the body from side to side, especially due to nervousness or discomfort

spasms (N) – a sudden brief spell of activity or sensation.

7.5 Answers to check your progress:

I. Correct Alternatives:

1. c) 1945  
2. b) Jack  
3. d) Sam and Eric  
4. d) Percival  
5. c) Piggy  
6. c) Simon  
7. a) The Conch  
8. a) The Conch  
9. b) Jack  
10. b) Jack  
11. c) a naval officer

II.  1. A dead body of the parachutist /pilot

2. A beautiful shell, deep cream in colour and eighteen inches long

3. Ralph

4. Because they mistake Simon for the beast and kill him.

5. The head of the dead pig

6. Jack

7. The fear of the beast
8. The boys around six years of age
9. Roger
10. The spectacles/glasses of Piggy
11. Ralph

7.6 Exercises:

A. Write answers of the following questions in four/five sentences each.
   1. Describe election of Ralph as leader.
   2. What was the “beast from air”?
   3. Describe the roll of fire.
   4. How did the boys miss their first opportunity to be rescued?
   5. Describe the role of beast.

B. Write short notes on the following.
   6. Gift for the darkness
   7. Life of the “Littluns”
   8. Ralph
   9. Jack
   10. Piggy

C. Essay/descriptive type questions.
   1. Comment on the novel Lord of the Flies as a study of boyish psychology.
   2. Describe how Simon came to be murdered.
   3. How did the boys come to be finally rescued?
   4. Bring out the appropriateness of the title “Lord of the Flies”.
   5. How does difference of opinion and rivalry between Ralph and Jack develop?
7.7 References for further reading

1. In what sense Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* differs from Ballantyne’s *Coral Island*, since both deal with the adventures of English boys on an island?

**Suggestion for written work:**

1. Point of the similarities in J.R. Wyss’s *Swiss Family Robinson* and Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*.
2. Try to collect information about the post-War era.
Critical Analysis of *Lord of the Flies*

**Contents**

8.0 Objectives
8.1 Introduction
8.2 Plot Structure and Setting
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8.4 Answers to check your progress
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**8.0 Objectives:**

The aim of the unit is to give you tools to understand and analyse the prescribed novel on your own. After going through this unit, you should be able to analyse the characters, the theme/s, setting, point of view, and the use of symbols and imagery; in short, you will be able to critically appreciate the novel.

**8.1 Introduction:**

In the last two units you have already got introduced to the novel *Lord of the Flies*, its writer and also studied at some length the plot structure of the novel. In this Unit, we are going to go a step further and try to understand what the writer is trying to say through this novel and how this is achieved by use of some tools and techniques.

**Critical Analysis:**

Critical analysis explains what a work of literature means, and how it means it. The ultimate purpose of critical analysis is to get a deeper understanding and a fuller appreciation of the text – to learn to uncover or create richer, denser, more interesting meanings. As literature uses language, images and symbols, our analysis should
address these elements. A literary work is also located in a specific time and place and hence we should also be aware of the cultural delineations of the work and its ideological aspects.

A novel is a narrative. It has characters, a setting, is told by a narrator, and is an attempt to represent 'the world' in some way. So, while analyzing a novel, elements like plot, character, theme, setting, the plot structure, the narrator, the world-view, symbols-imagery, etc., have to be analysed. We are going to look at some of these in the sections below.

Let us start with understanding how Golding structures the plot, creates his characters and how this characterization and use of symbols, motifs help him to bring in focus some particular themes or ideas.

8.2 Plot Structure and Setting:

8.2.1 Plot Structure:

A plot's structure is the way in which the story elements are arranged. Writers make different arrangements of structure depending on the needs of the story. A plot is a casual sequence of events, the "why" for the things that happen in the story. The plot draws the reader into the character's lives and helps the reader understand the choices that the characters make. So, to understand the plot structure, one has to understand the characters, the setting, the reasons behind the action of the characters, their actions and the effect. As you already know, plot is a narrative structure consisting of five parts - exposition (of the situation); rising action (through conflict); climax (or turning point); falling action; and resolution.

Coming back to Lord of the Flies, think on the following:

- What does the beginning of the work tell us?
- How is suspense build up by the plot?
- What techniques (like flashback or foreshadowing) are used?
- How are the events arranged? In a chronological order? In logical order? In cause-effect relationship?
- What are the events that lead to climax and conclusion?

The plot is structured round the theme/idea of the innate evil in human nature.
A group of boys escaping the devastation of a nuclear war crash on an isolated island with plenty of fruits to eat. Initially, the children are delighted at the freedom from the adults and rules, and enjoy themselves. The group soon turns away from civilised beings to primitive savages. In the end, with the arrival of the naval officer, they are rescued, but only return to an adult world ridden with war. They can’t return any longer to the innocence of the childhood after their close experience with evil in human nature. They also understand that civilization through its laws and punishments, offers just a thin cover to hide man’s true nature.

Conflict: Struggle against conflicting instincts within each child- the instinct to work toward civilised society and the instinct to give up to violence and chaos.

Rising action: Growing tensions between Ralph and Jack. Fight over what is more important- need to hunt or the need to build shelters and keep the signal fire going. The fear of the beast divides the group into two camps. Jack is deeply involved with hunting and savagery.

Climax: Simon encounters the Lord of the Flies in the forest glade and realizes that the beast is not a physical entity but rather something that exists within each boy on the island. When Simon tries to approach the other boys and convey this message to them, they fall on him and kill him savagely.

Falling action: Virtually all the boys on the island abandon Ralph and Piggy and descend further into savagery and chaos. When the other boys kill Piggy and destroy the conch shell, Ralph flees from Jack’s tribe and encounters the naval officer on the beach.

8.2.2 Setting:

Setting is when and where the work takes place. Elements of setting include location, time period, time of day, weather, social atmosphere, and economic conditions. Setting creates mood or atmosphere. To analyse the setting, make use of questions like: Does the setting reflect the work’s theme? How does the setting impact the characters? Does a change in the setting affect the mood, characters, or conflict?

The setting of Lord of the Flies is a key aspect to everything that happens in this novel.

Setting (Time): Near future/ during nuclear war
Setting (Place): A deserted tropical island

Although Golding never tells us the exact location of the island, he describes it to a great extent, so that we can imagine what happens where. There are at least 4 important parts:

1. A mountain at one end – here the boys decide to keep the signal fire burning.
2. At the other end is the castle rock where jack and his tribe create their fortress.
3. In between these two, is the forest. In it is Simon’s secret place and the clearing used by the boys to impel the ‘Lord of the Flies’ on a stake as an offering.
4. The beach and the nearby platform, etc.

The island is depicted as boat-shaped. This is also symbolic because boat shape is an ancient symbol of civilization. The island symbolizes isolation too.

Check your Progress:

Select the correct alternative:

1. When does the story take place?
2. What is ‘Castle Rock’?
   a. The place where Jack and his tribe create their fortress at the end of the novel.
   b. The place where Simon is killed
   c. The place where the sow head is impaled on a stake
   d. The place where signal fire is kept burning

3. Where was the airplane carrying the boys going when it met the crash?
   a. To a safe place away from England.  b. To England
   c. To Germany d. To America

4. What is the shape of the island?
   a. Circular  b. Triangular
   c. Like a boat d. Like a rocket

5. Where does the pilot land?
   a. On the Beach  b. on the lagoon
   c. On the castle Rock d. On the mountaintop

6. What brings the navy ship to the island?
   a. The fire in the jungle b. The roar of the beast
   c. The signal fire d. The shortwave radio

7. What will you call Ralph’s fleeing from Jack’s tribe?
   a. Rising action b. Falling action
   c. Climax d. Conflict

8.2.3 Character Analysis:

   The novel Lord of the Files explores some very serious shades of human nature and emotions like fear, anger, jealousy, lust for power, etc., and much of the strength of the novel lies in its characterization. To start with, let’s look at the major characters while not forgetting that all the major characters in the novel are boys, whose age ranges from 6 to 11 years.
A writer uses some characterization techniques such as physical description, description of the character’s actions, dialogue, interior monologue or the character’s thoughts, etc. Before you read the next part, try to jot down the things you remember about the major characters in the novel from this perspective.

1. **Ralph**: Ralph is a tall boy with blonde hair. He is very athletic and is a natural leader. We come to know that his father is a naval officer and he comes from a middle class family. Ralph is elected the leader, but he is not able to retain this position for long. Ralph is not very good at thinking or at taking decisions. It is Piggy who does the thinking for him many times. Ralph is a dreamer, an idealist, and represents our desire to have civilization. He opposes the savage instinct. At the end of the novel we see him no longer as an idealist and dreamer. He has become disillusioned and understands reality of human nature. Even in his disillusionment at the end, he wants to still stick to his position as the leader. At the end, with the entry of the naval officer, Ralph is rescued and returned to civilization, he weeps with the burden of his new knowledge about the human capacity for evil.

In the beginning, Ralph is very much concerned about building huts and keeping the signal fire burning, while other boys are seen more interested in playing, having fun while avoiding work. However, he doesn’t have all the qualities of a leader. Ralph increasingly recognizes his essential failure to lead, but maintains an appearance of successful leadership. He is surprised by each turn of events and the way boys turn against all that he wants to be done and is also shocked by his incapacity to perform his duties. He could have given up his position to Jack and have preferred to look after the signal fire instead. He could have been more supportive of Piggy. But he lacks the vision. He also can’t give up his vanity and ambition for the greater good and follows a path of appeasement instead of facing the issues head on.

Ralph’s main wish is to be rescued and returned to the society of adults. His loyalty to civilisation and morality is his strength and this strength gives Ralph a moral victory at the end of the novel, when he throws down the ‘Lord of the Flies’ to the ground and takes up the stake it is stabbed on to secure himself from Jack’s hunters. He is disgusted at first by the dancing and chanting of the hunters but as the novel progresses, he too experiences the thrill of the hunt, the bloodlust and violence. At Jack’s feast, he too dances on the edge of the group, gets frenzied like them and participates in the killing of Simon. Ralph too like Simon before him, has understood
that the evil, the savagery exists within the boys, within him, within human beings. This knowledge brings complete gloom over him but it also helps him to throw down the ‘Lord of the Flies’.

2. **Piggy**: Piggy is a fat, asthmatic, bespectacled boy who is physically very unfit to live in a jungle. He is a whimpering child who is an orphan and lived with his auntie. His language reveals he comes from a lower class than the other boys. He is physically unattractive. However, he is an intelligent boy. Even if Ralph found the conch, it is Piggy who told him how to use it. It is his glasses that help to create fire. He is thoughtful and he does most of the thinking for Ralph and counsels him. He supports Ralph’s democratic parliamentary rule. He can’t accept the existence of the beast as the idea is unscientific.

If Ralph is the public face of civilisation, Piggy is its voice. He is the one who speaks for the ‘littluns’ and defends their rights. He tries to create civilization in the wilderness for he knows civilisation protects the weak and different but the wilderness doesn’t. The wilderness, in fact, as symbolized by Jack, Roger, and their followers, chooses the weak and different as its first prey. The boys soon make the connection between the boy “Piggy” and the animals “piggies”. Piggy is made into a favourite victim and his good ideas, in the end, count for nothing. He sounds too much like a parent making him an outcast. For the most part, Piggy is right; but this is not enough. Piggy is not beautiful, popular, strong, or charismatic, and so no one really likes him. And no one wants him to be right. But, when he is found to be right, they resent him for it. He speaks again and again, and even if what he says is right, his presentation is weak and done at the wrong time. At the very end, when he says— "Which is better—to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill?" – he is again the voice of civilisation. But, unfortunately, this is said at the wrong time. He has seriously misjudged the mood of the boys and so his mention of the hunt transforms practically into an invitation to hunt him.

Piggy’s role is highly symbolic. Piggy’s inventiveness frequently leads to innovation, such as the makeshift sundial that the boys use to tell time. Piggy represents the scientific, rational side of civilization. His gradual loss of sight and loss of influence and finally his death shows gradual degeneration of the boys.

3. **Jack**: Golding depicts Jack Merridew as a thin, tall boy with red hair and light blue eyes. Jack is Ralph's antagonist in the novel. He represents the instinct for
savagery and power within human beings. As Ralph and Piggy represent the civilizing instinct, he is in constant conflict with them, especially with Piggy. By the end of the novel, Jack has learned to use the fear in the minds of the boys to control their behaviour. Golding seems to remind us of how religion and superstition can be manipulated as instruments of power.

We see him first as the leader of the group of choir boys who are dressed in a kind of uniform. Jack makes them march in military style. It points to his dictatorial leadership which, at the end of the novel, becomes increasingly wild, barbaric and cruel. In the beginning, these features are not so obvious, probably due to yet strong control of the rules of adult world instilled in him by parents and society. When he first sees the pig, he is not able to kill it but gradually he gives up himself completely to bloodlust. Jack represents some worst aspects of human nature when uncontrolled by society.

When Jack gets to rule, he just unchains the wickedness of human nature. He starts punishing other children. He is able to increase the frenzy to a level where it leads to the murder of Simon. The twins are tortured until they accept his authority. He leads the boys to kill Ralph too, but Ralph is saved at the last moment by the sudden arrival of the naval officer to rescue the boys.

His red hair and the mask of war paint would seem to make him look almost devil-like.

4. **Simon:** Simon is a shy and sensitive boy in the group. He is a small, thin boy with pointed chin and very bright eyes. His hair is coarse and black and his forehead is low and broad. He goes barefooted. He was originally a part of the choir group. He is very helpful in nature. He helps the littluns and also Ralph to build the shelters.

Simon represents the innate spiritual goodness in human beings and at the opposite end of Jack’s evil. His goodness doesn’t spring from the rules imposed by the society. So he stands on a very different plane from that of Jack (innate evil) and Ralph and Piggy (imposed morality of civilisation). While other boys want to act good because they are conditioned by the rules of the adults, Simon acts moral because he believes in the value of morality.

As his behaviour is different, he gets isolated from others and is considered “odd” by other boys. But he is closely connected to nature and has extraordinary
experiences when listening to the sounds on the island. He likes to be alone with
nature and is often walking alone in a dreamy state. He has intuitive intelligence and
shows exceptional bravery too. Simon suffers from frequent fits of fainting and
hallucination. He is asthmatic. He could be epileptic in nature. He is a visionary and
earlier in the novel has predicted to Ralph that Ralph will “get back alright” implying
that only Ralph (but not Simon) will be saved. He has a hallucination that the ‘Lord
of the Flies’ (the Sow’s head left on stick by Jack as an offering to the beast) is
deriding and taunting him. The pig's head tells Simon that the boys themselves
"created" the beast and claims that the real beast is inside them all. After this
hallucination, Simon also discovers that the supposed beast on the mountain is just a
dead parachutist caught on the mountain. He comes to share this knowledge with
other boys, but the boys, ironically, mistake him for the beast and kill him brutally in
their frenzied dance. It is implied that Ralph, Piggy, Sam and Eric also take part in
this killing. In the novel, Simon becomes a Christ figure who tries to bring truth
(salvation) to the boys; but they refuse to hear him and kill him instead. He
represents peace and positivity and his death represents the loss of truth, innocence
and common sense.

5. Roger: Roger is a slight and secretive boy with black hair and low
forehead. He is made ‘lieutenant ‘of his tribe by Jack. Roger is a sadistic boy and
Jack's close companion. As long as he is under the control of civilised laws, he
doesn’t hurt anyone (though we see him throwing stones at littluns in the earlier part)
But gradually, he turns completely savage, ignoring all the rules of civilized
behaviour. Piggy gets killed because Roger pushes the boulder at him which was not
thrown in fun to miss. He becomes the executioner and torturer of Jack’s tribe. He
makes the twins to join the tribe by torturing them. The fact that he carried a stick
sharpended at both ends in the final hunt for Ralph suggests that he intended to offer
Ralph’s head as a sacrifice to the beast. He represents the person who enjoys hurting
others, and is only restrained by the rules of society.

6. Sam and Eric: Sam and Eric, a pair of twins, are always together, are
called “Sammeric” as they are treated as a single entity by the boys. They alternate
sentences when they talk. They are very likeable, irresponsible and fickle boys. They
serve the person who is the current leader and so are with Ralph until Jack takes over
his position. They let the fire go out when they were assigned the duty to look after
it. They are the ones who see the beast (the dead parachutist).
The twins represent the unthinking masses of the common people – peaceful and good-natured – but easily influenced and convinced to serve any leader.

Check your Progress

A. Select the correct alternative:

1. What age span are the boys?
   a) 3 to 11
   b) 6 to 12
   c) 7 to 13
   d) 8 to 12

2. Who is a Christ-like figure?
   a) Ralph
   b) Percival
   c) Eric
   d) Simon

3. What do Ralph and Piggy find on the beach?
   a) A conch shell
   b) A map
   c) A dead parachutist
   d) Remains of a ship

4. What do the older boys call the younger boys?
   a) Babies
   b) Hooligans
   c) Littluns
   d) Brats

5. Why does Jack form a new tribe?
   a) For lack of anything better to do
b) He is angry that the boys will not vote for a new leader
c) He was voted out of the other tribe
d) The more the merrier

6. Where does Simon go to contemplate the boys' actions?
   a) The Castle Rock
   b) Into the jungle
   c) An underwater cave
   d) His sandcastle

7. Who has red hair?
   a) Ralph
   b) Simon
   c) Piggy
   d) Jack

8. Match the characters on the left with the qualities they represent on the right.
   i. Ralph               a. Civilisation
   ii. Piggy              b. Goodness
   iii. Simon             c. Rationality
   iv. Roger              d. Sadism
   v. Jack                e. Masses
   vi. Samneric           f. Evil

8.2.4 Theme/s, Motifs, Symbols and Point of View:
Theme/s

A theme is the central topic a text treats. It is an idea or concept that is central to a story. In fiction, unlike a fable or parable, the theme is not intended to teach or preach. In fact, it is not presented directly at all. It has to be extracted from the characters, action, and setting. A story may have several themes. Theme, structure
and plot of the novel are connected to each other. To uncover the theme, look out for the following:

- Title - it may tell something about the theme
- Repeating patterns and symbols.
- Allusions

Some of the major themes in *Lord of the Flies* are discussed here:

1. **Human Nature:** Golding has said that he wanted to trace so… The English boys left alone on a remote island are as if in an experiment to see what happens when controls of society are loosened. Golding shows that the civilization that the boys initially tried to develop in their world collapses not because of any enemy outside, but due to their innate savagery. Most of the children do not prefer to work hard or to follow rules. They prefer to have fun and play games. These games become increasingly menacing and savage. Instead of using logic and reason, they succumb to fear. This fear is not really of some animal, but of the unknown. Finally, Golding shows that selfishness, cruelty, will to dominate and have power prove much more powerful than the attempts to maintain some resemblance to a civilized society governed by moral and rational rules. Though the boys think the beast lives in the jungle, Golding makes it clear that it exists within their hearts.

2. **Civilisation versus Savagery:** Golding depicts civilization as a veil that through its rules and laws just masks the evil within every individual. Civilisation doesn’t eliminate the beast. The beast lives on beneath this veil. *The Lord of the Flies* is about civilization giving way to the savagery within human nature. Ironically, Golding shows a group of British boys. This is done as the British consider themselves an extremely supremely civilized society and superior to all other communities. Even these British children become savages – ruled only by fear, superstition, and desire. Hints of the savage beast within children are shown long before they succumb to Jack’s poser. Piggy's love of food, the way the boys enjoy when Jack mocks Piggy, their irrational fear of the "beast" are such hints. However, if the boys on the island give up civilization for savagery, are they rescued when the adults finally come and stop their savage behavior? Golding depicts that these supposedly "civilized" adults are engaged in a savage and brutal nuclear world war.
3. **The Weak/ the strong:** This theme is related to the earlier one. Golding delves into the power dynamics on the island. Boys want to be respected and to belong to the group. This is not just happening on the island in the novel, but is observed among all school children. The main way they choose to gain respect is to seem strong and powerful. In the novel, this leads them to mock the weaker boys, or to ignore them and finally to physically hurt them. This is a sign of vulnerability as a boy who feels vulnerable, chooses to target a weaker boy to save himself.

Piggy is aware that he is weak and hence at danger in this set up. And wants to return to the civilized society of the adults as civilization protects the weak, the wilderness doesn’t.

4. **Innate goodness:** The boys can be divided into two neat groups – those like Jack who succumb to the violence and savagery and those like Ralph and Piggy whose love for righteousness is result mainly from fear of rules imposed by the society. However, Golding also shows through Simon an alternative to civilized suppression and beastly savagery. While other boys want to act good because they are conditioned by the rules of the adults, Simon acts moral because he believes in the value of morality from his heart. He is a real truth-seeker, who is not afraid to look into his own heart and to accept that there is a beast within, and face it head-on.

5. **Loss of Innocence:** The novel traces a journey – the well-behaved children waiting for rescue in the beginning of the novel to the violent bloodthirsty savages with no desire to return to civilization at the end of the novel. The loss of innocence resulting in their hunting, torturing and killing animals and human beings, is, according to Golding, a result of innate savagery within human beings. This is underlined at the end of the novel when Ralph weeps when he is rescued from the island and the hunters:

   “Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man’s heart, and the fall through the air of a true, wise friend called Piggy.”

6. **The universal fascination with power:** Lust for power seems to be a universal feature. It is exhibited even in the play of children who like to take on roles associated with power – father, police officer, king, hero, etc. This tendency is used by Golding in the novel in many forms. For example, a young child Henry amuses
himself on the beach by playing, controlling small sea creatures and experiencing power over them. This desire for power is the reason for all the strife on the island. Jack wants to be the leader and forms his own tribe of hunters. Each child tries to assume power by finding a weaker child and exerting power over him. However, Golding depicts that this feeling of power and control is just an ‘illusion of mastery’. And so, it is soon lost. Even Jack’s power is temporary and is gone the moment adults arrive to rescue them. Various means of gaining power-physical force, knowledge, looks, insight, currency (here meat) are tested and proved to be false.

7. **The universality of fear:** Fear is a fundamental emotion. But like power struggles, fear, if beyond useful limits, can become a destructive force. Secondly, people, especially children, when facing sudden changes, create an imaginary danger if some real danger is not present. The same happens in the novel. The real cause for fear for the children should be the failure of getting rescued and being returned to the world of adults. But this fear is mentioned only by Piggy.

2. **Motifs:**

   Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, and literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text’s major themes. Golding uses the following in *Lord of the Flies*:
   
   - Biblical parallels
   - Natural beauty
   - The maltreatment of the weak by the strong;
   - The outward trappings of savagery (face paint, spears, totems, chants)

3. **Symbols:**

   Symbols are objects, characters, figures, and colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts. Symbols represent something else because they bring about an association to the mind of the reader. They help the author to show how two seemingly different things are actually related. Symbols are of two types:

   1. The universal symbol that anyone can recognize
   2. An object that has no particular meaning on its own but that becomes symbolic only from the way it is used in the work.
Sometimes it is not only objects but actions too can be symbolic. The entire structure of a story can be symbolic on some conceptual idea, as in an allegory.

Golding uses a number of symbols in this novel. Some are discussed here.

1. **The Conch Shell**: The conch is discovered by Ralph and Piggy on the beach. Piggy helps Ralph to learn to blow it. Piggy also suggests to Ralph the use it can be put to—to call the other boys and using it as a symbol of legitimacy and democratic power. So, conch is a symbol of civilization. When Piggy dies under the boulder, the conch is also shattered. This signifies the fall of the civilized instinct among the stranded boys.

2. **Piggy’s Glasses**: Piggy, the most rational and intelligent of the boys wears glasses. These glasses are used to create fire. The glasses represent the power of science and intellectual efforts.

3. **The Signal Fire**: Keeping the signal fire burning is essential to ensure that elders are able to locate the lost boys and rescue them. So, the signal fire signifies the degree to which the children are connected with the adult civilized world. As long as the boys are fixed on being rescued, the fire is kept burning. But when it goes out, it indicates the boys have strayed away from their desire to be rescued. However, at the end of the novel, not the signal fire but the huge fire resulting from the hunters’ savage behavior attracts the attention of the adults, and brings a ship to rescue them.

4. **The Beast**: The ‘beast’ is a symbol used for the savage urges within human mind. This beast is kept in control by civilization. Civilisation compels people to act in a rational and moral way. In the novel, Ralph and Piggy do this. When civilization loses its control, the beast is released, as in the case of Jack and his tribe. The beast grows in the same proportion as the belief in the beast grows. It grows so much that in the later part of the novel, the boys are treating it as a totemic god and offering it sacrifices.

5. **The Lord of the Flies**: The Lord of the Flies is actually the cut head of the sow hunted by Jack’s tribe and left as an offering impaled on a stake at the forest glade. This is a complicated symbol. Covered with flies, the head is seen by Simon when he goes to his favourite place the forest glade, which symbolised the paradise earlier. Simon hallucinates that the head speaks to him and tells him the truth that evil lies with every human being. When the head says it will have some fun with Simon, it foreshadows Simon’s death. So, the head/Lord of the Flies is a physical sign of the
Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Simon, and Roger: Many characters in the novel signify some important ideas/themes. For example, Ralph – Order, Leadership; Piggy – Scientific/intellectual and rational aspect of civilization; Simon – natural human goodness; Jack- innate savagery in human heart; Roger- brutality and sadism; Eric and Sam – Masses; Littluns – common people; the big boys – ruling class;

Other symbols: Knife, Huts, the boys, the island, etc.

The novel has a lot of references to the book *Coral Island*, written in 19th century by R.M Ballantyne. The *Coral Island* story was about three boys named, Ralph, Peterkin, and Jack landing on an island.

4. Point of View:

The narrator speaks in the third person, primarily focusing on Ralph’s point of view but following Jack and Simon in certain episodes. The narrator is omniscient and gives us access to the characters’ inner thoughts.

8.3 Check your Progress:

A. Select the correct alternative:

1. What powers does Jack says the beast has after Simon’s murder?
   a. Immortality and the power to change shape
   b. Telepathy and the power to change shape
   c. Immortality and telepathy
   d. Enormous strength and murderous cunning

2. How does the first boy disappear?
   a. Roger crushes him with a boulder.
   b. The other boys kill him with their bare hands.
   c. A boar wounds him.
   d. He burns to death when the signal fire ignites the forest.
3. Who is the first boy to disappear?
   a. Piggy
   b. Simon
   c. Clark
   d. A littlun

4. Where does the beast go during the day, according to one littlun?
   a. Into the ocean
   b. Into the air
   c. Into the fire
   d. Into the caves near the Castle Rock

5. Match the symbol on the left with what it stands for on the right.
   i. Conch shell  a. Microcosm of the larger world
   ii. Glasses  b. Attempt to create Civilisation
   iii. Huts  c. Violence
   iv. Knife  d. Power of democracy
   v. Boys  e. Intellectual efforts

8.4 Summary:
In this unit you have read how to critically appreciate a novel by analyzing its
plot, structure, themes, characters, symbols, motifs and point of view.

8.5 Terms to Remember:

Narrative: A story.

Narrator: The person (sometimes a character) who tells a story; the voice
assumed by the writer. The narrator and the author of the work of literature are not
the same person.

Character: A person, animal, or any other thing with a personality that appears
in a narrative.

Protagonist: The main character around whom the story revolves.
**Antagonist:** The entity that acts to frustrate the goals of the protagonist. The antagonist is usually another character but may also be a non-human force.

**Plot:** The arrangement of the events in a story, including the sequence in which they are told, the relative emphasis they are given, and the causal connections between events.

**Conflict:** The central struggle that moves the plot forward. The conflict can be the protagonist’s struggle against fate, nature, society, or another person.

**Climax:** The moment of greatest intensity in a text or the major turning point in the plot.

**Setting:** The location of a narrative in time and space. Setting creates mood or atmosphere.

**Theme:** A fundamental and universal idea explored in a literary work.

**Symbol:** An object, character, figure, or color that is used to represent an abstract idea or concept.

**Motif:** A recurring idea, structure, contrast, or device that develops or informs the major themes of a work of literature.

**Point of View:** The perspective that a narrative takes toward the events it describes.

**Plot:** The arrangement of the events in a story, including the sequence in which they are told, the relative emphasis they are given, and the causal connections between events.

**8.6 Difficult Words:**

- **Beelsebub:** the devil
- **Chaos:** Total disorder
- **Civilization:** cultured society
- **Degeneration:** collapse
- **Disillusioned:** disheartened
- **Executioner:** killer
- **Fickle:** One who changes easily
Hallucination: To have illusions
Innate: natural, inborn
Inventiveness: capacity for creating new things
Irrational: illogical
Sadistic: Cruel, one who enjoys seeing others in pain
Salvation: Rescue
Savage: member of an uncivilized undeveloped tribe/ a violent wild person
Vulnerability: Weakness
Wilderness: harsh surroundings

8.7 Answers to Check your Progress:

2.1  1. d, 2. a, 3. b, 4. c, 5. d, 6. a, 7. c
2.2  1. b, 2. d, 3. a, 4. c, 5. b, 6. b, 7. d, 8. i-c, ii-a, iii-b, iv-d, v-f, vi-e
2.3  1. a, 2. d, 3. d, 4. a, 5. i-d, ii-e, iii-b, iv-c, v-a

8.8 Exercises

Q. 1 Discuss the following questions with your friends and write down in short what you think:

A.

1. Why does Golding show at the end of the novel *Lord of the Flies* that the boys are rescued? How does this affect the total meaning of the text? What other endings can you think of? What will be the effect of these endings on the meaning of the total work?

2. In Chapter One, we meet all the boys. How do the various introductions of each boy set up the story that follows?

3. Do the chapter titles tell anything to you?
B. 1. Complete the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Physical appearance</th>
<th>Family background</th>
<th>Principal Actions</th>
<th>Principal Emotions</th>
<th>At the beginning</th>
<th>At the end</th>
<th>Symbolizes/Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ralph</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piggy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jack Merridew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam-Eric</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Before we are told the names of the boys, the author uses labels such as "the fair boy," and "the fat boy". Why do you think the author does this? This is a characterization tool. What is the effect of using it?

3. Do the major characters appear real people or universal or stock characters? On what evidence do you make this judgment?

4. Do the major characters change as the story proceeds—that is, do their experiences make them stronger or weaker, nobler or more corrupt, than they were at the beginning? If so, do you feel that the change is justified by what happens within the story?

C.

1. The story is about a group of boys waiting for rescue on an isolated island. What would adults do if they are caught in a similar situation?

2. Is this novel an allegory?

3. What role do fear and struggle for power play in *Lord of the Flies*?
4. *Lord of the Flies* was published in 1954. How far is its message relevant today?

5. We hear just one female voice— that of Piggy’s aunt that too indirectly through Piggy. Would this story have been different in any important ways if it were a group of girls stranded on the island? Is this a story about the capacity of human beings for violence, or is it a story about the male capacity for violence?

**Q. 2. Write short notes on the following topics:**

1. Piggy
2. Simon
3. The conch shell
4. Evil in the novel
5. ‘Lord of the Flies’

**Q. 3. Answer the following questions in detail:**

1. Attempt a note on the major characters in *Lord of the Flies*.
2. Bring out the plot structure of the novel *Lord of the Flies*.
3. Write a detailed note on the use made of images, symbols and motifs in the novel *Lord of the Flies*.
4. What, according to you, is the major theme of the novel *Lord of the Flies*?

**8.9 Books for Further Study:**


