

753 - HONEYCOMB

Textbook for Class 7

ISBN 81-7450-676-4

First Edition

February 2007 Phalguna 1928

Reprinted

October 2007 Kartika 1929 March 2009 Phalguna 1930 January 2010 Magha 1931 November 2010 Kartika 1932 January 2012 Magha 1933 December 2012 Agrahayana 1934 October 2013 Asvina 1935 November 2014 Agrahayana 1936 December 2015 Agrahayana 1937 December 2016 Pausa 1938 November 2017 Agrahayana 1939 December 2018 Agrahayana 1940 September 2019 Bhadrapada 1941 January 2021 Pausa 1942 August 2021 Shravana 1943 November 2021 Kartika 1943

PD 500T RSP

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₹ 65.00

Printed on 80 GSM paper with NCERT watermark

Published at the Publication Division by the Secretary, National Council of Educational Research and Training, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 016 and printed at Prabhat Printing Press, D-23, Industrial Area, Site-A, Mathura-281 001 (U.P.)

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Foreword

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centered system of education outlined in the National Policy of Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers

have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the advisory committee in languages, Professor Namwar Singh, and the Chief Advisor for this book, Professor R. Amritavalli, for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this textbook; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, materials and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinements.

New Delhi
20 November 2006

Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training



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Acknowledgements

The National Council of Educational Research and Training is grateful to Professor M.L. Tickoo, formerly of the Central Insitute of English and Foreign Languages. Hyderabad, and the Regional Language Centre, Singapore, for going through the manuscript and making valuable suggestions. Special thanks are due to Professor R. Amritavalli for editing the texts of two Units in the book and preparing their accompanying exercises in addition to her overall monitoring and assistance as Chief Adivsor.

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Special thanks are also due to the Publication Department, NCERT, for their support. NCERT also acknowledges the contributions made by Parash Ram Kaushik, *Incharge*, Computer Station; Razi Ahmad and Arvind Sharma, *DTP Operators*; and Mathew John and Shahzad Husain, *Proof Readers*.

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